DISCOURSE EFFECTS ON THE ACQUISITION OF THE ENGLISH CAUSATIVE FORMS: STRUCTURED INPUT VS. STRUCTURED OUTPUT PRACTICE

by

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Declaration of Authorship

I declare that this thesis is my own work and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain material published or written by a third party, except where permission has been obtained and/or appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

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Dedication.

I would like to dedicate my thesis to my parents who supported me and my country that gave me the trust and care to get my Master’s degree.

Abstract

This research presents the results of a quasi-experimental empirical study investigating the effects of structured input activities and structured output tasks on the acquisition of English causative forms. The study is framed on VanPatten's (1996) input processing theory. The form chosen for this investigation is affected by a processing strategy called the 'First Noun Principle'. Participants in this study were school-age learners (aged 12-13) from a L1 Arabic background who were studying English as a second language. A pre and post-test procedure was adopted. Two instructional groups were created: (i) structured input; (ii) structured output. Discourse-level tasks were used to assess the effectiveness of the two instructional treatments. Results were analyzed using descriptive statistics and ANOVA. The main findings from this study support the view that structured input is an effective pedagogical intervention in helping young L2 learners from L1 Arabic background to process, interpret and produce accurate English causative forms at discourse-level. The main findings of this study have theoretical and pedagogical implications for language learning and teaching.

Keywords: *Input processing, First Noun Principal, English causative form, processing instruction, young learners, Arabic L1, discourse-level instrumentation.*

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction

The study presented in this thesis is a quasi-experimental empirical study conducted to investigate the effects of structured input (SI) activities and structured output (SO) tasks on the acquisition of the English causative forms. More specifically, the main purpose of this investigation is to compare the effectiveness of structured input tasks and the effectiveness of the structured output tasks on young learners from L1 Arabic background when measured by interpretation and production discourse-level tests. The main questions of this study arise from previous empirical findings measuring the effects of structured input activities and structured output tasks. The research design adopted and the results obtained in this study will be presented. The final part of the thesis will interpret the results and highlight implications, limitations and possible avenues for further research.

1.1 The Theory of Input Processing

This study is framed on the input processing theoretical model. Input processing is a theory that was developed in the nineties by VanPatten (1996). Research and theory within this framework investigated what L2 learners process or do not process when they are exposed to language input. The input processing theory also explains the conditions that allow L2 learners make connections between a form and its meaning.

The input processing theory is concerned with (i) moment-by-moment connection of form to meaning, and (ii) moment-by-moment computation of sentence structure during comprehension. Based on these two main constructs, it consists of two main principles: The Primacy of Meaning Principle and The First Noun Principle.

The Primacy of Meaning Principle asserts that ‘‘learners process input for meaning before they process it for form” (VanPatten, 2004, p.14). For instance, when L2 learners listen to a sentence such as “*Yesterday, Dana studied in the library*”, they would process *Yesterday* as an indicator of past tense before the ending *-ed*. This is because both the lexical item (temporal adverb) and the grammatical form, encode the same semantic information. L2 learners therefore would rely (due to limited processing capacity) on the first lexical item they encounter in the sentence to process the sentence for its meaning. The inability for L2 learners to initially connect form and meaning would reduce the amount of input actually processed (intake) and it would cause a delay

in the acquisition of verbal morphology (in this case the processing of the *-ed* past tense marker).

Research within the input processing framework has consistently demonstrated the failure of L2 learners to make appropriate from-meaning mappings (Faerch and Kasper, 1986; Klein, 1986; Wong Fillmore, 1976; among others).

The First Noun Principle asserts that L2 learners normally process the first noun or pronoun they encounter in the sentence as the subject of that sentence. According to this principle ‘‘learners tend to process the first noun or pronoun they encounter in a sentence as the subject/agent’’ (VanPatten, 2004, p.18). This processing behavior would often lead to a misinterpretation of the sentence L2 learners hear or read. For example, in a sentence such as “*The student was rewarded by the teacher*”, L2 learners would misinterpret the sentence as if were *The student* who rewarded *the teacher*. The lack of comprehension of this sentence causes a delay in acquisition.

Evidence for this processing strategy comes from a number of studies. LoCoco (1987) measured learner’s comprehension of oral and written sentences containing word order in German and Spanish. One-hundred and fifty-one university students participated in the study. Their L1 was English. Seventy-three were studying Spanish and seventy-eight were studying German. The experiment included an aural comprehension task and a written comprehension task. The tasks included sentences with a variety in word order and participants had to establish ‘who did what to whom’. Also, responses were classified as correct or incorrect.

The results of the study clearly indicated that word order in both languages played a vital role in the participants’ interpretation and comprehension of sentences. Sentences with the word order subject-verb-direct object were nearly always interpreted correctly. However, students made many more mistakes in interpreting other sentences in which the first noun they encountered in the sentence was not the subject. In the following sentence *Den lastwagen schiebt der junge* (LoCoco, 1987, p.122), the meaning of the sentence is that ‘the boy pushes the truck’. However, in the sentence the object of the sentence precedes the subject ‘the truck pushes the boy’. Because of this particular word order in the sentence, 76% of the students interpreted it incorrectly, by processing the sentence as if it were ‘the truck who pushes the boy’.

In another study investigating the effects of the First Noun Principle, VanPatten and Wong (2004) conducted an empirical study in two universities in the United States. The target form under investigation was the French causative form. In a sentence like

"*Jean-Paul fait lire le journal a Henri* (Jean-Paul makes to read the newspaper to Henri/ Jean-Paul makes Henri read the newspaper)" (VanPatten & Wong, 2004, p.104), most participants would process Jean-Paul as the one who reads the newspaper, and therefore misinterpret the meaning of the sentence because of the First Noun Principal.

Participants were undergraduates enrolled in French courses who didn't receive any formal instruction on the French causative form before the experiment. They were distributed into three groups: the first group with twenty-nine subjects received processing instruction (PI); the second with twenty students received traditional instruction (TI); and the third with twenty-eight subjects as a control group that received no instruction. Pre and post-tests interpretation and production tests were administered. The results showed that only the processing instruction group improved significantly in the interpretation test from pre to post-test. The traditional instruction group did not. However, for the production test both processing instruction and traditional instruction groups improved almost equally.

In the current study, the acquisition of English causative forms will be investigated. This syntactic feature is also affected by the First Noun Principle (FNP). The use of this universal and default processing strategy by L2 learners causes misinterpretations and delays in acquisition. The present study will make use of structured input practice and investigate its effectiveness compared to structured output practice in enabling young learners from L1 Arabic background to circumvent this processing principle and ensure L2 learners are in the best position to process word order correctly when exposed to English causative forms.

Chapter 2: Processing Instruction

2.1 Processing Instruction

Processing instruction is a pedagogical intervention derived from the input processing theory and it aims at facilitating the cognitive processes by which L2 learners make form-meaning connections and/or compute sentence structure during comprehension. For example, L2 learners prefer to process lexical items first, before grammatical items when both items encode the same semantic information (Benati, 2010, p.32). Processing instruction has been described in detail in previous work (Benati, 2019; VanPatten, 2015). The main characteristic of processing instruction is that it makes use of a particular type of input practice (structured input) to push learners away from non-optimal processing principles so that they are more likely to process input correctly and appropriately. Processing instruction is mainly concerned with the processing of morpho-phonological units in input strings and the development of underlying linguistic representation. Most simply, a main objective of processing instruction is to ensure that L2 learners process forms and structures (one at a time) accurately and efficiently in the input they receive. Processing instruction consists of two main components: (i) L2 learners are given explicit information about a linguistic structure or form and the particular processing principle that may negatively affect their picking up of the form or structure during language processing; and (ii) L2 learners are pushed to process (not produce) the target form or structure during structured input (SI) activities. In structured input activities, the input is structured so that L2 learners can process the grammatical markers that otherwise would not be processed, "SI activities require L2 learners to process form correctly in order to get meaning. SI activities are designed to ensure that learners are indeed making the proper form-meaning connections" (VanPatten, 2004, p.198).

2.2 The Effects of Structured Input Activities

Structured input practice pushes L2 learners to process the form or structure during activities in which the input is manipulated in particular ways so learners become dependent on form to get meaning. In structured input activities the input is manipulated in particular ways to push learners to become dependent on form and structure to get meaning. So, processing instruction "pushes learners to abandon their inefficient

processing strategies for more optimal ones so that better form-meaning connections are made" (Wong, 2004, p.35).

The positive effects of structured input practice have been measured in a number of empirical studies (Benati, 2019) and generalized to different learners' backgrounds and L1s, different forms/structures (verbal and nominal morphology), different processing strategies, and languages (both romance and non-romance languages). Structured input practice has been compared to output-based instruction (including traditional instruction) using both offline and online measurements.

VanPatten and Oikkenon (1996) originally investigated the effects of processing instruction components. Three groups were compared: explicit instruction only group, structured input practice only group and full processing instruction group. The results of this study demonstrated that the processing instruction and the structured input groups made similar gains, whereas, the explicit information only group did not. The main findings of this study clearly indicated that the structured practice is the causative factor in explaining the positive results of processing instruction. Benati (2004a, 2004b), Farley (2004), and Wong (2004) replicated this original study and obtained similar findings. Lee and Benati (2007) established that performing structured input activities is an effective treatment for helping native-speakers of Italian make grammatical gains with the Japanese past tense marker. Specifically, they compared the results of structured input practice with no explanation with those of traditional output instruction. The structured input group outperformed the traditional instruction group on the interpretation post-test, whereas, both groups made equal gains on the production post-test.

Wong and Ito (2018) compared changes in processing patterns between L2 learners receiving structured input and traditional instruction on the acquisition of the French causative. In this pre-and post-test experimental study, a dichotomous scene selection eye-tracking task was used to measure eye movement patterns and accuracy in picture selection while learners were processing auditory sentences. The results indicated that the structured input group gained higher scores for accuracy than the traditional instruction group. Also, a change in eye movement was observed in learners only after the processing instruction training and not after the traditional instruction training.

Benati and Batziou (2019a, 2019b) have explored the discourse and long-term effects of structured input and structured output practice when delivered in isolation or in combination on the acquisition of the English causative forms. These studies included young (10-12) Greek learners and adult (18-20) Chinese learners. The results of both studies were similar and showed that L2 learners who received the structured input instructional training benefitted more than L2 learners receiving structured output instructional training. In both studies, structured input practice alone was sufficient to improve learners' performance on both interpretation and production discourse tests containing English causative forms regardless of the learners' age or native language. These findings support the *Age Hypothesis* which suggests that "PI will be just as effective an intervention with young learners as it is with older learners" (Benati & Lee, 2008, p. 168). In addition, these findings support the *Native Language Hypothesis* which suggests that "PI will be effective for instilling target language specific processing strategies, no matter the native language of the learners" (Benati & Lee, 2008, p. 166). The effectiveness of structured input practice has been generalized to different learner backgrounds and L1s, different forms/structures (verbal and nominal morphology), different processing strategies (Primacy of meaning principle and its corollaries) and languages (romance languages and Japanese).

Benati (2020) investigated the effects of structured input and traditional instruction on accuracy when measured by an eye-tracking picture selection task among Chinese native speakers learning English. A pre and post-training design was adopted. An eye-tracking picture selection task was used for assessment. Students had to listen to a sentence through a headphone, answer by choosing a picture from the two pictures displayed deciding on who did the action in every sentence and then move on to the sentence after it. The results of this study showed that the improvement of the structured input group reached 70% in the learners' ability to process and interpret the causative form. In contrast, the traditional instruction group didn't improve in their performance at all. Structured input treatment also increased the learners gaze towards the correct picture in the tests compared to the traditional instruction. Therefore, the results of this eye-tracking assessment task indicated that the structured input group achieved significantly higher accuracy.

2.3 Research Measuring Discourse-Level Effects

There is a large body of research on processing instruction (Lee and Benati, 2009; Benati and Lee, 2010) which provides evidence that learners who received this type of instruction performed significantly better on sentence-level interpretation tasks than learners receiving other type of instruction such as traditional instruction (paradigmatic explanations of rules followed by drill practice) or less mechanical output-based interventions to grammar instruction (e.g. structured-output tasks, more later). In addition, processing instruction can cause equal improvement compared to output-based approaches in learners' performance in different sentence-level production tasks (oral and written). However, few studies have investigated whether processing instruction effects can be measured on discourse-level interpretation and production tasks.

Benati and Lee (2010) assessed the effects of processing instruction using discourse-level interpretation tasks. They showed that processing instruction on English past tense led to improved scores on both a sentence-level and discourse-level interpretation task. Benati, Lee and Hikima (2010) showed that processing instruction on Japanese passive constructions led to improved scores on two different discourse-level interpretation tasks (immediate effects), both presented aurally. The processing instruction group also made measurable gains in the discourse-level task. These results confirm Lee's original hypothesis ''PI will yield significant improvement on discourse level interpretation tasks'' (Lee, 2004, p.322)

With regard to production, VanPatten and Sanz (1995), Sanz (1997, 2004) and Sanz and Morgan-Short (2004) showed that processing instruction on Spanish direct object pronouns led to improved scores on oral and written video-based retellings and oral and written structured interviews. Other types of discourse-level assessment tasks have been used in processing instruction research. Cheng (2002, 2004) found positive effects for processing instruction on Spanish copular verbs using a picture-based guided composition. Benati, Lee and McNulty (2010) used a guided composition and found a positive effect for processing instruction on the Spanish subjunctive after *cuando*. Empirical findings from these studies have indicated that processing instruction is effective not only at the sentence level but at discourse level production tasks (immediate and short-term effects). Research examining the effects of processing

instruction using discourse-level instrumentation is in the minority and certainly future work could well investigate how learners process and produce discourse containing different target forms and whether these effects are durable. Therefore, in this study discourse-level instrumentation was used.

Hence, this study is significant because the studies that investigated the effectiveness of structured input practice on young learners from L1 Arabic background by using discourse-level instrumentation is in the minority. Thus, replications including these three variables (young, Arabic L1 and discourse-level instrumentation) are very much needed because they will allow us to include a larger population of learners on which the positive impact of structured input practice has been experimented and confirmed. Therefore, although this study is a replication yet it is an important one as the purpose of this study is to provide additional empirical evidence for the effectiveness of structured input practice in improving L1 Arabic background young learners' ability in processing, interpreting and producing the English causative form using discourse-level instrumentation. Moreover, this study will contribute to the field by providing additional empirical evidence for the so-called *Age Hypothesis* and *Native Language Hypothesis* (Benati & Lee, 2008).

Chapter 3: Design

3.1 Motivation and Research Questions

Overall, the empirical work measuring structured input practice has indicated that it is an effective pedagogical intervention for grammar instruction. A growing body of research (Benati, 2019, Benati and Batziou, 2019a, 2019b) has compared discourse-level effects of structured input practice versus structured output practice on the acquisition of various linguistic features across different romance and non-romance languages. Most of these empirical studies have involved adult learners.

Despite the existing research within this line of investigation, there are still a number of issues that have not been addressed: (a) Would structured input and structured output practice have beneficial effects among L1 Arabic school-age learners? (b) Would L1 Arabic school-age learners receiving structured input practice be able to interpret and produce discourse containing English causative forms?

The aim of the present study is twofold:

a) To compare and contrast two instructional treatments: structured input (SI) practice versus structured output (SO) practice, on the acquisition of English causative forms by L1 Arabic school-age learners;

b) To measure short-term effects of structured input practice and structured output practice on discourse-level interpretation and production tasks.

Based on these aims, two specific questions were formulated:

Q1: What are the short-term effects of structured input and structured output on the acquisition of English causative forms as measured with discourse-level interpretation tasks?

Q2: What are the short-term effects of structured input and structured output on the acquisition of English causative forms as measured with discourse-level production tasks?

3.2. Subjects and Procedure

To address the two main questions of this study, a quasi-experimental classroom study was carried out. Before conducting the experiment and collecting the data the American University of Sharjah's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained. Two existing classes in a school in Kuwait were used to collect data. Although no randomization procedure was adopted, yet participants in these classes are normally distributed by the administration to include students with high, moderate and low school performance including language proficiency level in English. This is done to avoid having a class with high achievers and another class with low achievers only.

The original pool was reduced to twenty-seven subjects (L1 Arabic) who were enrolled in an English course in a public school in Kuwait. They were young female learners (aged 12-13). The final pool consisted of the following two groups: SI (n=15); SO (n=12). Each group was taught separately. No control group was used. Instruction lasted for two hours over three days in a pretest and posttest design measuring immediate effects of the two instructional treatments. The three-day treatment was designed and implemented specifically for this study. The English causative was neither a structure included in the curriculum pupils were currently studying, nor part of the curriculum of previous English courses they studied. Therefore, it was assumed that they had not received any formal instruction related to the targeted form prior to the experiment.

Participants were removed from the final data pools if they scored over 40% on the pre-tests (administered prior to the beginning of the instructional treatment). Only those participants who had participated in all phases of the experiment were included in the final data analyses. The instructor was the researcher. She acted as a facilitator and delivered the instructional treatment in both classes (see an overview of the study in Table 1).

Table 1:*Overview of the study*

Phase	Description
Pre-tests	Discourse-level interpretation and production tests
Instructional Period Over 3 days = 2 hours instruction	Structured input (SI) vs. Structured output (SO)
Post-tests (immediate)	Discourse-level interpretation and production tests

The current study obtained ethical approval from the university and the Ministry of Education in Kuwait. In order to obtain approval from The Ministry of Education in Kuwait all the materials used in the experiment were translated and submitted for consideration.

3.3 Target Grammar Feature

The targeted grammatical feature selected for the current study was the passive English causative form. It was chosen because it is affected by the First Noun Principle (VanPatten, 1996, 2002, 2004). According to this principle, L2 learners tend to assign agent status to the first noun or pronoun they encounter in a sentence. For example, in the sentence *Jury had her dress mended last Monday*, learners would process *Jury* as the person who actually mended the dress. The use of this default processing strategy would cause misunderstanding and delay in the acquisition of the target feature and word order pattern. The main goal of structured input is to aid learners parse English causative correctly and appropriately. Previous research within the input processing framework has provided evidence for the positive effects of structured input in circumventing the First Noun Principle and helping learners to correctly interpret and produce sentences containing the target feature (Benati and Lee, 2010).

3.4 Instructional Treatments

Two instructional treatments were used in the present study. The materials were adopted from the materials used in a previous study (Benati and Batziou, 2019a,

2019b). They were balanced in terms of activity types (seven), number of target features (seventy targets), duration of activities, vocabulary items (high frequency and familiar items) and use of visuals. The activities were provided to learners on worksheets. No explicit instruction about the target feature was provided and participants were given equal time to complete their activities in both instructional treatments. At no time did the participants receive either explanation or feedback about the target form. Participants in the two groups were only informed whether they were right or wrong but no explanation was given at the end of each activity.

The structured *input (SI) treatment*

Structured input (SI) is the practice component of processing instruction. During structured input tasks, learners are pushed to process the targeted form or structure through activities in which the input is manipulated in particular ways so learners become dependent on the form or the structure to get meaning. Structured input activities created for this study were referential. Referential tasks are those for which there is a right or wrong answer and for which the learner must rely on the targeted grammatical form to get meaning. The structured input treatment, developed for this experiment, contained in total seventy target items in seven activities (see sample in Figure 1. and samples in Appendix C) It was developed according to the following guidelines provided by Lee and VanPatten, (1995) and Farley (2005) for developing structured input activities: 1) present one thing at a time (one target feature at a time); 2) keep meaning in focus; 3) move from sentence to discourse 4) use both written and oral input; 5) have learners do something with the input; and, 6) keep learners' processing strategies in mind. More specifically, the activities included were both aural and written input. Activities were structured in a way so that L2 learners relied on the causative structure to correctly understand meaning in the input. They were developed so that they aided learners to circumvent the First Noun Principle by manipulating word order and contrasting passive (English) causative structures to SVO order active structures where the first noun was the causer/agent of the action. All the activities were communicative and meaningful and learners were asked to interpret input correctly. No activities were included where learners had to produce the targeted grammatical feature.

1:

A) Fatima had her homework written.

B) Fatima wrote her homework.

2:

A) Abdullah checked his teeth.

B) Abdullah had his teeth checked.

Figure 1*: Sample of a SI activity*

The structured output (*SO) treatment*

The structured output treatment contained in total seventy target items in seven activities (see example in Figure 2. and samples in Appendix D.) that were developed according to the following guidelines provided by Lee and VanPatten (1995) to develop structured output activities:1) Present one thing at a time (one target feature at a time); 2) Keep meaning in focus; 3) Move from sentence to discourse 4) Use both written and oral production; 5) Other learners must respond to the content of the output; and, 6) Learners must have some knowledge of the form or structure. Learners included in the final pool had a limited knowledge of the target form as only learners who scored up to 40% of the maximum score available in the pre-tests were included in the final pool. Each activity contained two to three steps that pushed learners to produce both written and oral output. All activities were meaningful and communicative in nature and no mechanical practice was included. They were working in pairs to complete each task. Each activity included familiar items and a list of vocabulary items was also provided. Structured output has two characteristics: ‘‘involves the exchange of previously unknown information; requires learners to access a particular form or structure in order to express meaning’’ (Lee & VanPatten, 1995, p.21)

Step 1. Write at least six winter activities that you had to do last winter. Write down how many you did yourself and how many you had done by someone else.
Example: “I drank hot chocolate, but I had it prepared by my mother, I was too busy”

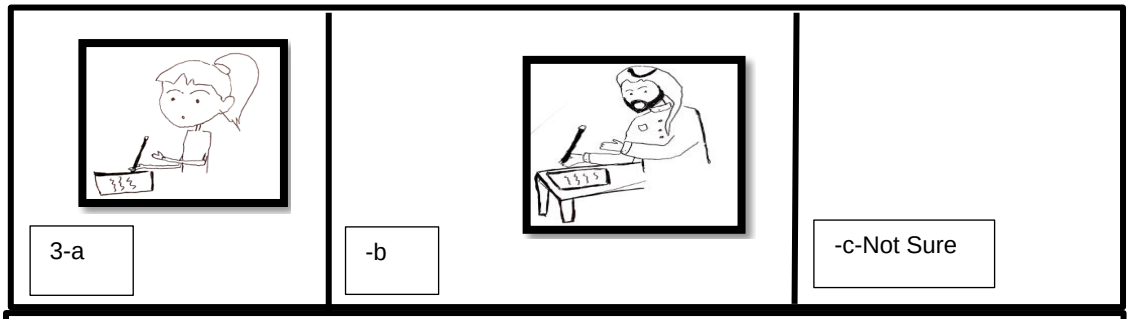
Step 2. Write at least six summer activities that you had to do last summer. Write down how many you did yourself and how many you had done by someone else.
Example: “I ate ice cream, but I had it bought by my father, I don’t know much was it.”

Figure 2: *Sample of a SO activity*

3.5 Assessment Tasks and Scoring

A pretest and posttest design was used. There were two versions of the interpretation and production tests. Pretests were administered prior to the instructional period to both experimental groups. Immediate posttests were administered at the end of the instructional period. The assessment tasks consisted of a discourse-level interpretation task and a discourse-level production task. The two versions of each assessment test were developed and balanced in terms of difficulty and vocabulary.

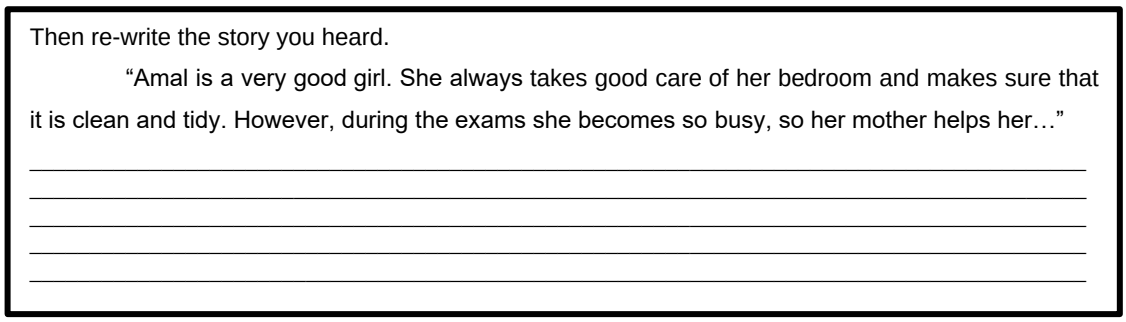
The discourse-level interpretation task (see Figure 3. Appendix B) was developed to measure the learners’ ability to interpret correct English passive causative forms when these forms are embedded in discourse. Participants had to listen to a story which was presented in three segments each containing three target items and two distractors. The task had nine target items and six distractors in total. A booklet was constructed for the discourse-level interpretation task. Learners heard the story segment only once, then turned to the appropriate answer sheet (pictures showing two different characters doing the same action), and they had to decide who was performing the action or opt for *Not Sure* if they could not understand who the agent was. Participants received 1 point for each correct selection and 0 point for each incorrect one.



((audio)) …She had a list of interesting places written on a paper, she really wanted to see the pyramids….

Figure 3: *Sample of a discourse-level interpretation task*

The discourse-level production task (see Figure 4. Appendix A) was developed to measure learners' ability to produce correct English passive causative forms at discourse-level (text reconstruction). It contained five target items (instances of the English causative form). Participants had to review some key vocabulary items before the beginning of the assessment. The instructor played the audio of the story, which was read by a native English language speaker, at a normal pace providing information about the context at the beginning. As the instructor played the audio of the story it was also projected on the whiteboard enabling participants to read and listen at the same time. After listening to the story, participants were asked to re-write the story they had just heard. They had 5 minutes to reconstruct the story with the help of some prompts. For each correct use of the target structure one point was awarded. However, if the participants had used the correct structure of the target item but the wrong form of the verb (i.e., an infinitive instead of a participle) they were awarded half a point. The maximum score for the discourse level tasks was five points as this was the maximum number of target items learners needed to complete the story.


Then re-write the story you heard.

"Amal is a very good girl. She always takes good care of her bedroom and makes sure that it is clean and tidy. However, during the exams she becomes so busy, so her mother helps her…"

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Figure 4*: Sample of a discourse-level production task*

3.6 Data Analysis

One-way ANOVA was conducted on the raw scores for the interpretation and the production-discourse level tasks to assess whether there were any statistically significant differences among the class means of any of the pre-test's measures. A repeated-measures ANOVA was carried out on the raw scores of both the interpretation and the production discourse-level tasks. The between-subjects factor was 'Treatment' (SI vs. SO) and the within-subjects factor was 'Time' (pre-tests vs. post-tests).

Chapter 4: Results

3.1 Discourse-Level Interpretation Data

A one-way ANOVA was carried out on the pre-test scores of the two groups (SI and SO). The one-way analysis indicated no significant differences among the two groups before instruction (F (1,27) = 1.346 p = .89). Any differences found after instruction will be attributed to the effects of the instructional treatments. In Table 2, the descriptive statistics for learners' performance on the discourse-level interpretation tasks are presented. They show the means of the two groups in the discourse-level interpretation task (pre-test, and immediate post-test). The structured input group improved from pre-test to post-test scores. The structured output group did not.

Table 2*: Interpretation discourse-level task (descriptive statistics).*

		Pre-test		Post-test	
Variable	n	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
SI	15	2.1	0.500	3.4	0.650
SO	12	2.2	0.340	1.8	0.560

A two-way ANOVA was performed on the raw scores of the discourse-level interpretation task. The results indicated a significant main effect for Treatment (F (1,27) = 34.358, p< .001); a significant main effect for Time F (1,27) = 12.130, p< .001; and significant interaction between Treatment and Time F (1,27) = 6.235, p< .001.
The results of the ANOVA and the descriptive statistics indicated that only the subjects in the structured input group gained (from pre-test to post-test) in their ability to interpret the target forms presented at the discourse-level.

4.2 Discourse-Level Production Data

A one-way ANOVA was conducted on the pre-test scores of the two groups. It showed no significant differences among the two instructional groups (SI and SO) before instruction (F (1,27) = 2.139 p = .103). Any differences found after instruction will be attributed to the effects of the instructional treatments. In Table 3 below the descriptive statistics for learners' performance on the discourse-level production tasks are presented. They showed the means of the two groups in the discourse-level production task (pre-test, and immediate post-test). Once again, like the interpretation task, the structured input group was the only group improving from pre-test to post-test scores.

Table 3*: Production discourse-level task (descriptive statistics).*

		Pre-test		Post-test	
Variable	n	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
SI	15	0.4	0.100	1.2	0.150
SO	12	0.3	0.050	0.3	0.100

A two-way ANOVA was carried out on the raw scores of the discourse-level production task. The results indicated a significant main effect for Treatment (F (1,27) = 23.376, p< .003); a significant main effect for Time F (1,27) = 10.129, p< .001; and significant interaction between Treatment and Time F (1,27) =6.237, p< .001. The results from the ANOVA and the means of both groups in the post-test indicated that only subjects in the structured input group gained in their ability to produce the target forms presented at the discourse-level.

4.3 Summary of Findings

The first research question was: What are the short-term effects of structured input and structured output on the acquisition of the English causative form as measured with discourse-level interpretation tasks?

The results of the interpretation discourse-level task clearly indicated that structured input helps learners process the English causative form correctly and appropriately in an immediate post-test. The structured input instructions were more effective than the structured output in interpreting the target forms embedded in discourse.

The second research question was: What are the short-term effects of structured input and structured output on the acquisition of the English causative forms as measured with discourse-level production tasks?

The results of the production discourse-level task indicated that the instructional group structured input performed better than the structured output only group in an immediate post-test.

The structured input instructions were more effective than the structured output in helping the students produce the target forms embedded in discourse.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Interpretation of Results

The aim of this study was to investigate the effects of structured input tasks and structured output tasks on the acquisition of the English causative form by young learners from L1 Arabic background using both interpretation and production discourse-level tasks. The findings from the interpretation discourse-level task provide empirical support for the view that structured input practice is better than structured output practice in changing the way learners process input. Structured input practice is a better pedagogical intervention for ensuring learners' correct interpretation of English causative forms including young learners from L1 Arabic background receiving discourse-level instrumentation. One of the possible explanations for the results obtained in the interpretation discourse-level task is that the structured input practice pushed learners to abandon their default processing strategy, the First Noun Principal, and process word order correctly in interpreting English causative forms.

The main findings from the production discourse-level task indicated that structured input practice has also a positive effect on L1 Arabic background young learners' production of the target feature at discourse-level. The statistical analysis indicated that only structured input practice made statistically significant gains from the pre-test to the immediate post-test. A possible explanation of this particular finding is that structured input practice has clearly altered the way L2 learners processed input and must have had the following effects: (i) a positive effect on L2 learners' developing system; (b) a subsequent effect on what L2 learners in this group could access for production.

The findings from the interpretation and the production discourse-level tasks are in line with previous research findings measuring the effects of structured input practice (Benati and Lee, 2015; Benati, 2017). Overall, the findings are consistent with the original study conducted by VanPatten and Cadierno ''Learners who receive instruction that attempts to alter input processing receive a double bonus: better processing of input and knowledge that is apparently also available for production''. (VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993, p. 40)

This view is further supported by the fact that in this study, learners receiving structured input practice were able to produce the targeted form by receiving discourse-level instrumentation, which is a less controlled situation, instead of sentence-level instrumentation. While the structured input treatment seems to be successful at circumventing processing problems and consequently having an impact on learners' developing system, the structured output treatment was not successful at helping L2 learners to interpret and produce the target feature at discourse-level. The discourse-level production task used in this study was not used as a measure of skill. The main purpose of this production task was to see if L2 learners can access newly developed knowledge. Although with a note of caution, considering the small sample of population in this study, the structured input practice was once again successful in helping L2 learners to develop their underlying knowledge.

5.2 Implications

Overall, the main findings from this study make a number of theoretical and pedagogical contributions to the ongoing debate on the effects of structured input and structured output practice.

Firstly, the results of this quasi- experimental study confirm the key role of structured input as an effective pedagogical intervention designed to alter processing problems such as the First Noun Principle. Structured output alone is not successful in bringing about similar effects to those brought about by structured input in interpretation discourse-level tasks. The findings from this study reaffirm the importance of input-based practice as a key pedagogical tool in language teaching, and make a contribution to the view that input practice should precede output practice. Structured output practice did not have an effect on interpretation of language discourse.

Secondly, structured input is effective in developing learners' ability to access the developing system for speech production. L2 learners in the structured input practice group were able to produce English causative forms in language discourse by using discourse-level task, which is a less controlled situation, instead of sentence-level tasks. Structured output practice did not have an effect on production of language discourse.

Thirdly, the main results from this study provide new short-term effects evidence of structured input practice on school-age learners from an Arabic background. Given that very little research has investigated the effectiveness of structured input tasks on Arabic background young learners, hence, the findings of this study are highly significant as they allow us to include a larger population of learners on which the effectiveness of structured input practice has been observed. In this respect the overall findings from this study lend support to a number of hypotheses formulated within the processing instruction research framework. The positive results obtained in this study lend support to the so-called *Age Hypothesis* (Benati & Lee, 2008). Confirming that structured input is an effective intervention with young learners just as it is with older learners. It also supports the so-called *Native Language Hypothesis* (Benati & Lee, 2008). The present study contributes to the expanding of the *Native Language Hypothesis* by adding Arabic, a non-western language, to the current list of languages on which the effectiveness of structured input practice has been observed.

5.3 Limitations and Further Research

Despite the positive outcomes of the present study, there are some limitations. The lack of a control group (due to attrition and other practical issues) is a methodological limitation. Future research should replicate this study using a control group. Also, no randomization procedure was applied as existing classes were used. However, in this particular school context, students were equally distributed by the administration taking into consideration high, moderate and low school performance, and English language proficiency.

The sample of the population is relatively small for a quasi-experimental study. Future research should use a larger sample in order to generalize these findings.

This study measured short-term effects of structured input and structured output on the interpretation and production of discourse-level tasks. Future research should aim at measuring long-term effects. In this study, delayed post-tests were not used because of the school closure due to the current circumstances.

Overall, research measuring the effects of structured input practice should use more spontaneous tasks that include time pressure, reaction time measures, and do not allow

learners to monitor their responses. This research might also consider the role and effects of structured input and structured output practice with or without explicit information.

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Appendix A:

Sample:

Discourse Level Production Test (Version A).

Discourse Level Production Task:

You will hear a story once, which will also be projected on the whiteboard. When the projector is turned off. You will be asked to re-write it with the help of the prompts provided to you. You have also been given some words; please write their definition before the story begins. If you still have unknown words in the following story you can ask your instructor after you listen to it.

"Amal is a very good girl. She always takes good care of her bedroom and makes sure that it is clean and tidy. However, during the exams she becomes so busy, so her mother helps her…"

Amal came from school. She had her bed tidied. She hanged her dress in the cupboard. She had her desk dusted. She put her school books on the bookshelf to study later on. She had her flowers watered and her goldfish fed. She had the windows cleaned, so she opened the curtains. She was so happy that her room was clean and tidy, so she can study all day comfortably.

Version A:

Discourse Level Production Task:

Name:

Give the definitions of the following words. Ask your instructor for help if you need any. Then re-write the story you heard.

Dusted=

Fed=

Watered=

"Amal is a very good girl. She always takes good care of her bedroom and makes sure that it is clean and tidy. However, during the exams she becomes so busy, so her mother helps her…"

Appendix B:

Sample:

Discourse-Level Interpretation Task (Version A).

Instructor's script

VERSION A

(Corresponding pages on students' test: 2-5)

Sara's trip to Egypt.

Segment 1 (pictures:1-5, page:3)

Sara was so excited because the summer holiday began. After a long semester and passing all of her exams. She and her family were busy preparing for their trip to Egypt. She prepared her luggage. She had the tickets booked online. She had a list of interesting places written on a paper, she really wanted to see the pyramids. She had a tour guide called and informed about the places they were interested in visiting. She also had a suit reserved in a hotel on the Nile.

Segment 2 (pictures:6-10, page:4)

They all enjoyed their vacation in Egypt. Sara took many pictures for the pyramids. She had many souvenirs bought for her relatives. She had delicious lunch served in a restaurant on the Nile. She wore sunglasses because she spent most of her time outdoors. Finally, she had the car driven back to their hotel for them to rest.

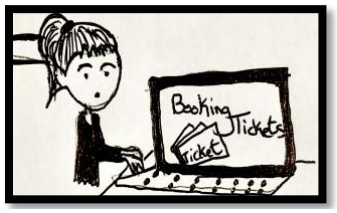
Segment 3 (pictures:11-15, page:5)

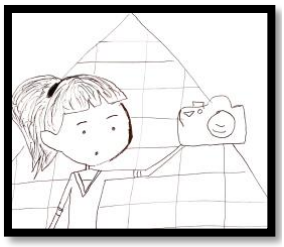
After their vacation was over, Sara and her family had the car driven to the airport. They went to a café waiting for the airplane to arrive. Sara had a terrible headache. So, she had a cup of coffee poured. She took a final selfie to remember her vacation. Finally, she sat beside the window to enjoy the view.

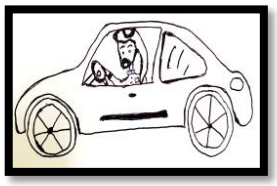
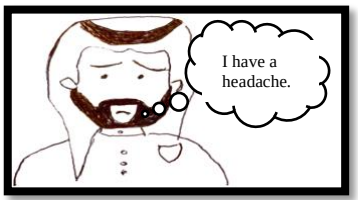
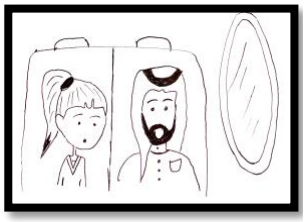
VERSION A

DISCOURSE INTERPRETATION TASK

NAME: _____

1-a) 	b) 	c) Not sure
 2-a)	b) 	c) Not sure
3-a) 	b) 	c) Not sure
4-a) 	b) 	c) Not sure
5-a) 	b) 	c) Not sure

1-a) 	b) 	c) Not sure
2-a) 	b) 	c) Not sure
3-a) 	b) 	c) Not sure
4-a) 	b) 	c) Not sure
5-a) 	b) 	c) Not sure

1-a) 	b) 	c) Not sure
2-a) 	b) 	c) Not sure
3-a) 	b) 	c) Not sure
4-a) 	b) 	c) Not sure
5-a) 	b) 	c) Not sure

Appendix C:

Sample:

Structured Input Materials.

SCRIPTS FOR THE INSTRUCTORS ONLY (aural activities)

Structured Input Materials

ACTIVITY 1

Match each picture below to the statement that conveys the same meaning. Pay close attention to the structure of each sentence to understand who is actually performing the action.

1:

A) Fatima had her homework written.

B) Fatima wrote her homework.

2:

A) Abdullah checked his teeth.

B) Abdullah had his teeth checked.

3:

A) Salim read his favourite book.

B) Salim had his favourite book read.

4:

A) Fahad drove his car to work.

B) Fahad had his car driven to work.

5:

A) Tota had her food prepared.

B) Tota prepared her food.

6:

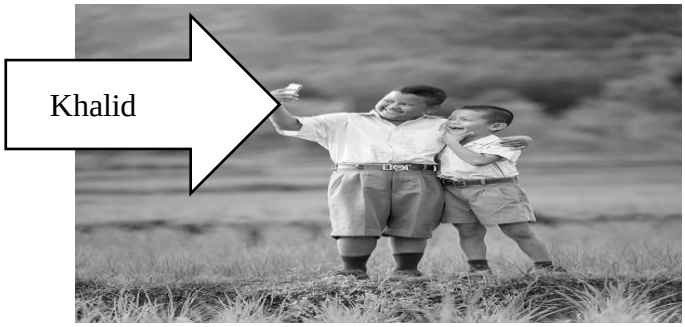
A) Sara had her bike ridden.

B) Sara rode her bike.

7:

A) Ali caught fish.

B) Ali had the fish caught.



8:

A) Khalid had his picture taken.

B) Khalid took his picture.

9:

A) Yusuf had the lunch served.

B) Yusuf served the lunch.

10:

A) Faisal took the sizes of clothes.

B) Faisal had the sizes of clothes taken.

ACTIVITY 2

1) Hadeel had her dress mended last Monday.
2) Munira repaired the car herself.
3) Mariam had flowers sent to her friend.
4) Jury had the fence painted pink.
5) Ibrahim took a driving test.
6) Jabir had a very beautiful horse when he was younger.
7) Bassam invited everyone to the party
8) Saleh had the tickets had the tickets booked last week.
9) Dawood played the game often so he knew the rules well
10) Rashid had breakfast served for him and his wife.

Listen to the sentences and answer the questions, you can circle option (C) if you are not sure. Pay careful attention to the structure of each sentence in order to understand *who* is actually performing the action:

1) Who mended the dress?
   a) Hadeel b) someone else c) Not sure.
2) Who repaired the car?
   a) Munira b) someone else c) Not sure.
3) Who delivered the flowers?

a) Mariam b) someone else c) Not sure.

4) Who got dirty with pink paint?
   a) Jury b) someone else c) Not sure.
5) Who took a test?
   a) Ibrahim b) someone else c) Not sure.
6) Who had a beautiful horse?
   a) Jabir b) someone else c) Not sure.
7) Who invited all the people to the party?
   a) Bassam b) someone else c) Not sure.
8) Who booked the tickets?
   a) Saleh b) someone else c) Not sure.
9) Who had played the game?
   a) Dawood b) someone else c) Not sure.
10) Who served breakfast?
   a) Rashid b) someone else c) Not sure.

ACTIVITY 3

Read the following statements carefully. Then, write the name of the person who performed the action or tick "someone else" if the person who actually performed the action is not mentioned in the sentence.

1) Majid had his shirts washed.
2) Eman had a salad for lunch.
3) Badr had the fence painted.
4) Yahya had his teeth checked.
5) Nassir took a test yesterday.
6) Mariam had her car painted pink.
7) Hessa had some juice served at the party.
8) Tariq had eggs for breakfast yesterday.
9)Farah had her favourite book bought.
10)Suleiman posted his pictures on Instagram.

	Name	Someone else	Not Sure
1) Who washed the shirts?	_____	_____	_____
2) Who ate a salad?	_____	_____	_____
3) Who painted the fence?	_____	_____	_____
4) Who checked Yahya's teeth?	_____	_____	_____
5) Who took a test?	_____	_____	_____
6) Who painted Mariam's car	_____	_____	_____
7) Who served juice at the party?	_____	_____	_____
8) Who ate eggs for breakfast?	_____	_____	_____
9) Who bought the book?	_____	_____	_____
10) Who posted the pictures?	_____	_____	_____

ACTIVITY 4

Alhassan Ibn Al-Haitham is a famous Arab scientist. He is one of the greatest scientists in history in optics. He was born in the year 965. Read the following questions and choose the sentence that makes more sense and you think it is right, as a result of what you read. Pay close attention to the structure of the verb "had" so that you avoid misunderstandings:

1) Ibn Al-Haitham wrote a book called the "Book of Optics"

a) He thought that he had important information so he wrote it down.

b) He asked someone else to write because he cannot write.

2) **He had his book translated to different languages**.

a) He learned different languages and translated his book.

b) Other translators who were interested in his book did the translation.

3) He experimented the eyes and sight, to know how do people see.

a) He wanted to know how people see so he did experiments himself.

b) He asked someone else to do the experiments because he doesn't care.

4) He had the title "The Father of Modern Optics" given to him.

a) He gave himself this title to become famous.

b) Other scientists from all over the world decided to give him this title.

5) **He proved his opinion which is that the light reflects from things to our eyes and makes us able to see, also that vision happens in the brain.**
    a) He proved his opinion by doing many experiments.
    b) Other scientists proved this opinion as a result of their experiments.
6) **He corrected the widely spread idea then, which says that the light that makes us see actually comes out of our eyes.**
    a) He proved the opposite by his experiments and corrected this idea
    b) His students tried to correct this idea because he wasn't able to.

7) **He had his name translated to "Alhazen" to some languages in history instead of Alhassan.**
    a) He translated his name as Alhazen because he liked it more than his real name.
    b) Other translators translated his name to Alhazen, as a result of different translations in history.
8) **He lived in Iraq and Egypt.**
    a) He spent his life in Iraq and Egypt.
    b) His family lived in Iraq but he didn't he lived in Egypt.

9) **He had things in space named by his name to thank him for his science like "Alhazen crater" and "59239 Alhazen asteroid."**
    a) He called these things and gave them his name to become famous.
    b) Other scientists named these things with his name to thank him.
10) **He had a lot of his knowledge written in different books, he lived a long life and taught many students.**
    a) He wrote all of these books that has his knowledge.
    b) His students wrote many books that saved his knowledge.

Appendix D:

Sample:

Structured Output Materials.

ACTIVITY 1

Which activities would you definitely avoid?

Step 1. Indicate which of the following activities you did **yourself** and which **you asked someone else** to do for the last party you had.

Example: "Last party, I prepared the invitations, but I had them delivered to my friends by the driver."

Activities	**Done by myself**	**Have it done by someone else**
Cooked the food		
Decorated the room		
Do my hair and make up		
Cleaned the room		
Bought new cloths		
Prepared a camera		

Step 2. Using the information from step 1, create a series of questions (maximum 5) to ask your classmate during an interview.

Example: "Did you deliver the invitation cards by yourself? Or did you have someone else deliver them for you?"

Step 3. Interview your classmate. Be sure to write down your classmate's response because you will need them later.

ACTIVITY 2

Step1. *Saud Alsanousi the Kuwaiti writer and Novelist, who was born in 1981, is one of the best Kuwaiti writers in the 21st century. He won many prizes and some of his books were translated to other languages. Read the following questions and choose the sentence that makes more sense and you think it is right, as a result of what you read. Pay close attention to the structure of the verb "had" so that you avoid misunderstandings.*

Number	**Column A**	**Column B**
1-	Saud Alsanousi (write/ a novel) called the "Bamboo Stalk".	a) Other specialized readers of literature chose his book
2-	He (chose/ his book "Bamboo Stalk") as the best Arabic Novel in 2013.	b) The organizers of the competition thought it was the most interesting and, therefore, chose it.
3-	He also (write/ articles) in an Arabic magazine called "Zahrat Al Khaleej"	c) Journalists and some of the readers that liked his writings posted all of these pictures and wrote about his achievements.
4-	He (pick/his short story "Bonsai and the old man") as the best in "Alarabi" magazine competition in 2011.	d) He wanted to explain a social problem so he wrote it down in a story.
5-	He (publish/ his first book) in 2010.	e) Other translators translated his book to different languages
6-	He (translate / some of his books) to other languages.	f) He worked hard until he reached his dream in becoming a successful writer.
7-	He (win/ "Laila Othman's prize") in 2010 for his Novel "Prisoner of Mirrors"	g) He is a good writer so he wrote the articles and then published them.
8-	He (post/ his pictures and achievement) in many websites,	h) Many channels invited him and had interviewed him, because they want to have answers to his

	magazines and social media accounts.	readers' questions about his journey to success.
9-	He (achieve/ his goals) by being a writer.	i) He published it himself, and faced all of the difficulties.
10-	He (interview/ himself) to answer his readers' questions.	j) The prize was given to him for his creative writing.

c) _____
d) _____
e) _____
f) _____
g) _____
h) _____
i) _____
j) _____
k) _____
l) _____

ACTIVITY 3

Do you prefer summer or winter?

Step 1. Write at least six winter activities that you had to do last winter. Write down how many you did yourself and how many you had done by someone else.
Example: "I drank hot chocolate, but I had it prepared by my mother, I was too busy"

Step 2. Write at least six summer activities that you had to do last summer. Write down how many you did yourself and how many you had done by someone else.
Example: "I ate ice cream, but I had it bought by my father, I don't know much was it.

ACTIVITY 4

Step 1. Pay close attention to the structure of each sentence to understand who is actually performing the action. Complete the sentences below using the words in brackets so that they convey the same meaning the picture is showing. Put the ***words*** and ***letters in bold and italics in order*** to find out what really happened. Then, check with your instructor to see if you got it right.

1: Adil…….. (check/ his daughter's homework) yesterday.

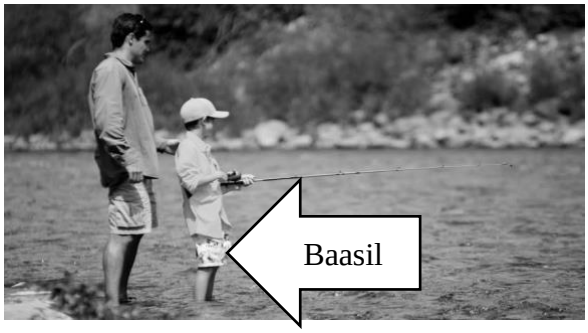
2: Dr. Dawood ……. (***visit/ his clinic***) yesterday by a patient.

3: Jabir……. (***read/ his favourite book***) last weekend, he enjoyed it so much.

4: Rashid…… (drive/ his car) to work yesterday, fortunately he was on time.

5: Badr…… (***prepare/ the cat's food***) last morning, the cat ate it all because it was delicious.

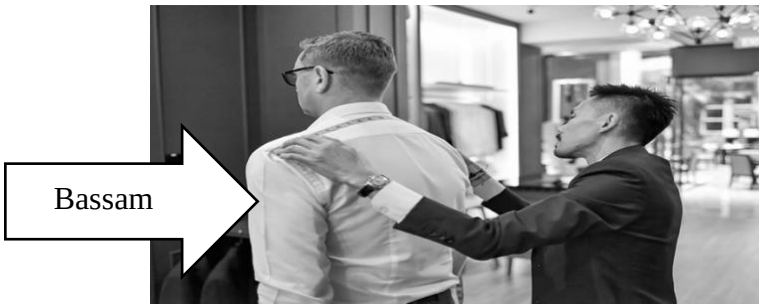
6: Waleed……. (ride/ his daughter's bike), she grew up now and she can do it.



7: Baasil…… (***catch/ fish***) last holiday, he liked it.

8: Anas…… (take/ picture), when he traveled to South Africa.

9: Saeed ……. (***serve/ lunch***), it was a busy day.



10: Bassam ……. (take/ size), for his new cloths.

Step 2. Write down at least eight things that you do in winter. How many of them do you do yourself and how many do you ask someone else to do for you?

Vita

Najat Alabdullah was born in 1990 in Kuwait. She received her primary and secondary education in Kuwait. She received her bachelor degree in English Language linguistics from Kuwait University 2012. She has experience in translation as she worked as a translator in the Foreign Relations Department, Ministry of Social Affairs in Kuwait from 2013 to 2016. She has translated text from English to Arabic and from Arabic to English including documents, resolutions, CVs, letters and contracts from ministries, banks, international organizations and embassies. Therefore, she is highly proficient in both Arabic and English. She also has experience in teaching as she taught English language courses in 3 different intermediate stage public schools in Kuwait from 2012 to 2013 and from 2016 to 2018. Therefore, she developed skills in teaching and classroom management. She has a certificate in creating a cartoon for education (2019) and teaching online (2020) from the TAC Technology Institute for Private Training, in Kuwait.

In September 2018, she joined the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MA TESOL) master's program in the American University of Sharjah. Her research interests are in second language acquisition.