

The Grammatical Competence
of Adult Monolingual American
English-Speaking Learners of Amharic

By:

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Department of Linguistics and Philology
(Graduate Program)
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Appendix ii

Supplementary Data

1. Substitution Ejective Sounds with Non-ejective Counterparts

Pronunciation		
NASs	MLAESALs	Gloss
/p'awlos/	/pawlos/	'Paul'
/t'ərəp'p'eza/	/təɾəpeza/	'table'
/p'wagume/	/pagume/	'13 th month'
/t'irr/	/tir/	'January'
/indəmət't'aš/	/indəmətaš/	'as you come' (2SG.F)
/it'an/	/itan/	'gum'
/k'əmməsə/	/kəməsə/	'He tasted.'
/lak'ə/	/lakə/	'becomes top'
/dink'/	/iink/	'precious'
/k'uč'č'it/	/kučt/	'regret'
/č'ılfa/	/čilfa/	'ladle'
/č'ube/	/čube/	'dagger'
/s'əbaj/	/səbaj/	'virtue'
/s'əgur/	/səgur/	'hair'
/fis's'um/	/fisum/	'perfect'

2. Omission of the Palatalization

	Perfective	Pronunciation 2SG.F.IMP		
		NASs	MLAESALs	Gloss
1	/gəmmətə/	[gəmmiči]	/gəmti/	‘Guess!’
2	/ləmmədə/	[liməji]	/limədi/	‘Adapt!’
3	/gəllət’ə/	[giləč’i]	/giləti/	‘Clarify!’
4	/dassəsə/	[dassiši]	/dasi/	‘Touch!’
5	/addələ/	[addiji]	/adli/	‘Distribute!’
6	/addənə/	[addiñi]	/adni/	‘Haunt!’
7	/gəzza/	[giži]	/gizi/	‘Buy!’
8	/gəssəs’ə/	[gəssič’i]	/gəssi/	‘Restrict!’
9	/dəmmərə/	[dəmmir ^y i]	/dəmri/	‘Add!’

3. Substitution of Trill with Flap

/gɪnbar/ **/ginbar/** ‘forehead’

/resa/ **/resa/** ‘corpus’

/gət’ər/ **/gətr/** ‘countryside’

/wənbər/ **/wənbər/** ‘chair’

4. Pairs of Words with Relatively Similar Pronunciation

/lakə/ ‘He sent.’ /ləkka/ ‘He measured.’

/bərr/ ‘door’ /wər/ ‘month’

/gidgida/ ‘wall’ /godgwada/ ‘deep’

/dib/ ‘bear’ /jib/ ‘hyena’

5. Text Data from the Students of the Four Phases

Student A. (Phase 2)

jəgətər lij wiha kəwənz jəwəsda/ wədə atiklitoč jakərbal/ indəzih inatu jirədal/ wədə zaf laj jiwətal and ajnət filafle jəkortal/ bəbet wist jisū inat jildal/ bəbet wiči bəgoaro atkilt jəkort kirničafoč jəsəbəsbal/

Student T. (Phase 3)

jəgətr lij bəfijəl wətət agəñə/ maskəməča bətəwət wətət ləmisa jasfəlīgal/ bet sigəbə jəsū abat ijəkorətə nəbər/ and kifl ləlīju sətə/ košaša ijəsəbəsəbə ləkosə.

Student J. (Phase 4)

jəgətər lij bəzafə sir ijətəmaru nəw/ ijanəbəbu nəw/ minalbat and konjo tərət ijətərəkə nəw/ kənəsu fit tikur səleda alə/ inəsu bəmərət laj ijətkəmtu nəw/ and kifl wist ijətkəmətu nəw/ and and gətər lij libs jəlačəwm/ jəkətəma lijoč libs jəlačəwm/ bəkətəma bizū biskiletoč alə/ hulum abirəw jəwədədərəlu/ šilmatm jəsətačəwal/ jəgətər lijoč gin ajšələmum/

Student R. (Phase 4)

nəbsətur mit gize ajfəkdum isa wədənəsu mətəč/ bet wiči nat/ jəkətəma nibsətur set lijoč bəhkim bet yitəbikalū/ gin jəsa kifl wist ajədələm/ bizū mašnoč alū/ gətər mašinoč jəlum/ set ibet tiwəldaləč/ wədəkətəma atihedm/ kəwələdəč bəhala betəsəbu gətər wist lijoč məjəməriə bet gəban/ jənət ina lij ajū/ jastamami wəd abatutu konjo gize nəbər/ ahun dəhina nən/ siləzih atifira aləč/ jəkətəma astamami wəd jətəbək kifl hedəč/ misrač betəsəb hulu təwələdə kifil jəgəbalū/ inat ina liju jajalu/ hulum dəs alū/ kiflu təməči nəw/ jəhakim bet and and gize aməči ajədələm/

Student J. (Phase 3)

jəgətər lij fijəloč alačəw/ gətər bətam səfi nəw/ and gibi wist bizū betoč alū/ wənz dar ijənoru nəw/ insəstoč alačəw/ jəgətər bet sar bet nəw/ k'ib načəw/ tiniš načəw/ jəkətəma bet tinš načəw/ məkinawoč alačəw/ jənəsu bet gibi wist nəw/ məngəd laj ijənoru nəw/

Student C. (Phase 2)

and lij səmajawi kumita jələbəse lij bənčət kirnčaf fijəloč jənəda nəw/ minalbat jəsū talak wəndim kisu gar ijənəda nəw/ liju bətam dis alə/ fəgəg al/ jih ajnət sira sətə walə/ yəkətəma lij kəsponj ina kəwəha məkina ijatəbə nəw/ man nəw jantə ihit isua inəsu and laj ijatəbu nəw/ jih sira bizū gize ajšərum/ and gize biča bəwər jisərəlu/

Student M. (Phase 4)

alex jəgidgida sil təšəkəməčiw/ ina wəd wənbər tərāmədəč/ ina jəgidgida sil bəgidgida laj askəmətəč ina kəzia bəhala wəd wənbər hedəč ina bəwənbəru laj wətəč/ jəwənbər čaf koməč

bəgra ij mismar jazəñ/ ina bəkəñ ij mədoša jazəč/ ina isa ijazəgaǰəč nəw/ ina təməta mətə nəw/ səgura tikur nəw/ alex biǰ tatoč sil jazəč/ ina bəmangəča sil jazəč/ ina təšəkəməč/ wədəwənbər isa hedəč ina sil askəməthč/ wənbər jazəč ina gidgida atəgəb askəmətəč/ bəwənbər laǰ alex koməč/ ina mədoša jazəč bəmədoša mismar ləməmtat azəgaǰə/ jəgiri tatoč wənbər laǰ alkoməčm/ alex səgur tikur nəw/

Student S. (Phase 3)

kətimhirit bet bəhala wədə hana timhirit bet hediku/ kəsəhat bəhala məǰəməriǰ misa bəlan/ kəziam təčawtin bəǰwaǰwe bizu zələln/ rotn/ təčawətn/ kizia bəhala ine wiša wəsədəč/ bəkfil wərru/ askəmətku/ bərun zig/

Student A. (Phase 2)

tilant kətmihirit bet bəhala bete hedku/ ina bəfit foto bet hedku/ məkanisa atəgəb/ and foto aləč asfəlagi/ and foto azəzku/ kəziam ibete hedkuñna misa bəlaku/ tiniš təñku/ posta bet tenbir gəzaku. yand tembir waga ?arat bir kəsəlasa santim nəw. tembir postawoču lay bəmiri ake atabəku/ kətmihirit bəhala tilant wədə migb bet hedin tinš migb alə/ misa azəzn kəziam bəlan/ kəzia bəhala ine wəd bet hedku/ tinš təñaku/ jəgəna kardoč wədə posta bet amətu/ ina jəgəna kardoč laku wəd america/ kəzia bəhala jəne gadəña ine ina bek wədə buraju wəsəduñ/ ine ina bekin mələsn/ irat bəlahuna film aju ina təñku/

Student L. (Phase 2)

alex and jəgidgida sil təšəkəməč/ isa jəgidgida sil məskl tifəlgaləč/ isa acir nat/ siləzi wənbər wəsədəč/ ina gidgida atəgəb askəmətəč/ alex bəwənbər laǰ koməčina mismar mətəč/

Student Cr. (Phase 2)

/alex jəgdigda sil təšəkəməč/ ina təlamədəč/ ina wənbər čaf koməč/ ina mədoša jalex iras bəlaǰ jač/ ina bələla ij mismar jazəč/ jəgdigda sil məskəl ijazəgaǰəč nəw/ suriwa səməyawı nəw/

Student R. (Phase 4)

/hig məsirat infəlgalən alu/ jəzh hig yəhulum/ səwoč wədə dariwos sələyu/ lela gods məsələǰ kilkil nəw/ siləzih and adis hig lədariwos sətu/ dariwos pasd zə lo/ siləzh təgədədu/ and səw danel jəmibal səw nəw/ gin isu yəigziabher liǰ nəbər/ hul gize bəkən sost gize wədigziabher yisəlj nəbər/ and kən lela tilik səwoč aju/ isu wədə igziabher sələjə/ məskoto kəfto wədə igziabher sisəlj nəbər/ alkoč daneln aju ina wədə dariwos heduna danel ləhig algəzam al alu/ ina daneln wəd gudgad anbsa wərəwəru/ isu wəd gudgad twərwro isu wədə igziabher səljo almotəm /

Abstract

This paper identifies the acquisition order of seven grammatical morphemes of Amharic and analyses the most recurrent grammatical errors (phonological and morpho-syntactic errors) committed by the target group. The subjects of this study were 45 adult monolingual American English-speaking learners of Amharic as a second language at Joint Language School. They were selected via purposive sampling technique from four phases. This research employed Cross-sectional Research Design. The elicitation techniques were: (i) Structural Natural Conversation (guided by Bilingual Syntax Measure) to gather data for morpheme acquisition order analysis. In this case, both oral and written testes were given for the target group; (ii) Unstructured Natural Conversation (through picture description, storytelling and classroom speech) was used to collect the data which was utilized to analyze the regular and logical errors committed by the subjects. Following this, on one hand, the acquisition order of seven grammatical morphemes was analyzed using Group Score Method which is developed by Dulay and Burt (1974). This part of the analysis was also accompanied by two scoring systems: (i) Scoring System One: which gives 2 points for correct morpheme, 1 point for malformed morpheme and 0 point for no morpheme; (ii) Scoring System two: which awards 2 points for correct morpheme and correct vocabulary but assigns 0 point for other cases. On the other hand, the errors were analyzed based on Creative Construction and Contrastive Analysis theories. The study revealed that: (i) There is an acquisition order of grammatical morphemes. For instance, the plural marker /-očč/ and the passive marker /tə-/ are acquired earliest and latest among the investigated seven grammatical morphemes respectively. (ii) The learners' grammatical competence in Amharic phonology, morpho-syntax is low, and (iii) the errors were caused by such factors as the inconsistency in the morphological rules of Amharic, overgeneralization of the target langue rules, misapplication of rules as well as the interference of the subjects' mother tongue to Amharic. This finding will have significant contribution: (i) to widen and develop the roles of Amharic for Ethiopian socioeconomic development; and (ii) for pedagogical purposes such as: textbook preparation, curriculum designing, teaching method development, and test items preparation. The study offered certain feasible recommendations based on the conclusion and indicated further research areas too.

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Key for Pronunciation and Distribution of Amharic Phonemes

Amharic has 27 consonant and 7 vowel phonemes. Most of these phonemes have similarity in pronunciation with their English equivalents; however, some of them are absent in the English sound system. Therefore, it is important to introduce the pronunciations and distributions of all Amharic phonemes before going to the detailed analysis of the data in the subsequent sections.

Amharic Phoneme	Similar to	As in English word	Word Initial	Gloss	Word Medial	Gloss	Word Final	Gloss
/b/	b	bag	/bunna/	coffee	/wənbərr/	chair	/hizb/	people
/p/	p	pen	/pant/	pant	/papaja/	papaya	-	-
/pʰ/	-	-	/pʰapʰas/	bishop	/tʰərəpʰeza/	table	-	-
/m/	m	moon	/məngəd/	road	/gəməd/	rope	/hilm/	dream
/f/	f	food	/fentʰa/	locust	/kifl/	class	/kɪnf/	wing
/w/	w	wood	/wənd/	male	/dəwl/	bell	/səw/	human
/t/	t	tin	/təbaj/	insect	/wəttadər/	soldier	/gənnət/	paradise
/d/	d	did	/dənn/	forest	/wənnidm/	brother	/gɪnd/	log
/tʰ/	-	-	/tʰind/	pair	/atʰint/	bone	/biltʰ/	tactful
/n/	n	no	/nib/	bee	/tinñ/	insect	/min/	what
/s/	s	see	/set/	female	/hassət/	false	/kuwas/	ball
/z/	z	zero	/zəbəña/	guard	/hazən/	sorrow	/wənz/	river
/sʰ/	-	-	/sʰəlot/	pray	/asʰm/	skeleton	/gilsʰ/	clear
/l/	l	look	/lam/	cow	/məlak/	angel	/giməl/	camel
/r/	-	-	/rub/	quarter	/gərəd/	servant	/gibr/	tax
/ʃ/	sh	she	/ʃiggutʰ/	pistol	/išoh/	thorn	/fəsaʃ/	liquid
/ʒ/	s	measure	/ʒantʰila/	umbrella	/wiʒnibr/	confusion	/azzaʒ/	leader
/č/	ch	church	/čənəfər/	hazard	/ačča/	equal	/dinnič/	potato
/j/	j	jump	/jib/	hyena	/anjət/	intestine	/lij/	child
/čʰ/	-	-	/čʰira/	tail	/bečʰa/	yellow	/gunčʰ/	chine
/ñ/	gn	cognac	-	-	/hakʰkʰəña/	honest	/sinñ/	verse
/j/	y	year	/jifa/	open	/ajtʰ/	rat	/səmaj/	sky
/k/	k	look	/kəsəl/	charcoal	/hukət/	violence	/dink/	dwarf
/g/	g	good	/gunfan/	flu	/ləggas/	generous	/bəg/	sheep
/kʰ/	-	-	/kʰənd/	horn	/tʰikʰur/	black	/wərkʰ/	gold
/h/	h	hot	/habt/	wealth	/dihnet/	poverty	/nəh/	You're.
/i/	ee	feet	/ijəsus/	Jesus	/biləwa/	knife	/anasʰi/	carpenter
/e/	e	red	/eli/	tortoise	/bet/	house	/bərə/	ox
/a/	a	car	/arat/	four	/sahn/	plate	/dula/	stick
/o/	o	note	-	-	/bokʰkʰolo/	corn	/doro/	chicken
/u/	oo	boot	-	-	/muz/	banana	/mulu/	full
/ə/	a	above	-	-	/səlam/	peace	/jazə/	He caught.
/i/	io	education	/ijəsus/	Jesus	/libs/	cloth	/fikʰr/	love

Abbreviations and Symbols			
CA	Contrastive Analysis	M	Masculine
EA	Error Analysis	NOM	Nominative
IL	Interlanguage	OBJ	Object
L ₁	First Language	PAS	Passive
L ₂	Second Language	PFV	Perfective
MLAESALs	Monolingual American English- Speaking Amharic Learners	PL	Plural
NAS	Native Amharic Speakers	POSS	Possessive
SLA	Second Language Acquisition	PRT	Perfect
TL	Target Language	PRS	Present
1	First Person	PROG	Progressive
2	Second Person	PST	Past
3	Third Person	REL	Relative
ACC	Accusative	SBJ	Subject
ART	Article	SG	Singular
AUX	Auxiliary	Symbols	
CAUS	Causative	C	Consonant
COP	Copula	ej	Ejective
DEF	Definite	v	Voiced
DEM	Demonstrative	V	Vowel
F	Feminine	v1	Voiceless
FOC	Focus	-	Morpheme Boundary
FUT	Future	[]	Phonetic
GEN	Genitive	*	Ill formed
IMP	Imperative	//	Phonemic
LOC	Locative	?	Doubtable

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Samuel Mekonnen

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and all the sources of the material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the Study

Chapter one: provides the background of the study; discusses the current role of the target language; presents the statement of the problem; states the purpose of the study; shows the importance of the study; talks about the scope of the research; and finally defines the terms used in the study.

1.1. Background of the Study

Ethio-Semitic languages such as: Amharic, Ge'ez, and Tigrigna trace to the Afro-asiatic language phylum. According to Bender (1976:23), the Semitic language group is one of the best studied of Ethiopia's languages. He further claims that Amharic occupies the first position as to number of studies. Most of the studies on Amharic show that many lexemes of this language have similarities with other Semitic languages particularly Ge'ez. However, Non-Semitic languages, especially from the Cushitic language family, have influenced some of its structures. Edward (1965:8) explains that:

Amharic shows a marked lack of Semitic conservation and many strongly modified linguistic features. The most obvious aspect of this modified appearance is the obtrusive (at least to the eyes of a Semitist) shape of Amharic syntax.

Edward's argument shows that the syntactic system of Amharic differs from the rest of Semitic languages. Bender (1976:77) also fortifies this idea as follows:

Amharic is a very typically Ethiopian language, having six of the eight phonological markers and sixteen of the eighteen grammatical features... characterizing the Ethiopian language area. A few striking features of Amharic phonology gives the language its characteristic sound when one hears it spoken. These are: the weak indeterminate stress; the frequent gemination of consonants; the frequency of central vowels; and the use of an automatic helping vowel.

Similarly, Baye also claims that:

በመልካዓ-ምድራዊ ስርጭቱ ብቻ ሳይሆን፣ ከፍ ሲል እንደተገለፀው በስነ-ልቦናዊ ቅርፁና ይዘቱም ብሔራዊ ባህሪ ያለው ቋንቋ ነው። ሴማዊ ብቻ ሳይሆን፣ ከሌሎች የሴም ቋንቋዎች የበለጠ ኩሹ-አማዊ በመሆኑ፣ የሁሉንም ቋንቋ ዘርፎች ባህሪያት አካቶ ሊይዝ ችሎአል። (ባዩ ይማም፣ 1986:6)

The general idea of this quotation is that not only the geographical distribution of Amharic but also its linguistics shape and content indicate the representative nature of it. Amharic is not only Semitic but also it has more Cusho-Omotiic features when one contrasts it with other Semitic languages. Hence, it contains the linguistic features of the whole language branches of Ethiopia.

Edward, Bender and Baye discuss the representative nature of Amharic based on their observation of Non-Semitic linguistic features in it. This by implication indicates that Amharic has been borrowing and adapting many linguistic features from Non-Semitic languages of Ethiopia.

Nowadays, several foreigners from different ethno-linguistic background come to Ethiopia for varieties of tasks (purposes). During their stay in the country, they are eager to learn local languages- particularly Amharic. In addition, many Ethiopians who were born and grown abroad also have this need. However, the Amharic language education for these groups is at the stage in which the textbooks and other teaching materials need to be developed systematically in order to satisfy their demands.

The deviations of the linguistic features of Amharic and English are more significant than their similarities. Sometimes, similarities between a first language (L_1) and a target language pose the most serious problems for the learners because of over prediction (Whitman, 1972). It is also true that learners do not transfer all of their L_1 systems to the target language but selective in some ways (Richards, 1974).

Learning a second language is far more than learning its grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. To speak a language both accurately and fluently, it is also necessary to learn the cultural context in which that language is used. The more distant the target language is far from L_1 , the more difficult it is to overcome the cross-cultural divide and to learn speaking like a native speaker. There is a significant difference between the English-speaking culture of North America and the Amharic-speaking culture of Ethiopia. This is one of the reasons that make learning Amharic difficult for English-speaking learners. Ethiopian society is hierarchical. Hence, Social positions are defined by age, social standing, sex, family position and so on. Everyone is a vertical position to everyone else. Proper social relationships are extremely important in Ethiopia society. Amharic has honorific or polite forms which require speakers to

show their relationship to the addressee. For instance, Amharic makes distinction among second person masculine, feminine, plural and polite forms, /antə/ ‘you (M)’, /ančči/ ‘you (F)’, /inantə/ ‘you (PL)’ and /irsso/ or /anntu/ ‘you M (F) polite form’, /issačəw/ ‘3SG.M(F) polite form’ forms respectively in place of the second person pronoun ‘you’ in English. Identifying this kind of differences between Amharic and English is challenging task for monolingual American English-speakers.

Furthermore, Amharic and English have markedly different syntactic systems, at least at the surface level. Amharic is an SOV (Subject + Object + Verb) language, whereas English is an SVO (Subject + Verb + Object) language; in Amharic, the verb is always the last constituent of the sentence, since the main verb of a sentence is always located at the end of the sentence; a sentence tends to expand on the left hand side of the verb. On the other hand, English sentence tends to expand on the right side; English is a right-branching language, whereas Amharic is a left-branching language. Therefore, English-speaking learners have difficulties ending a sentence with a verb.

There are other salient features of Amharic contrasted to English: in Amharic subjects or pronouns are frequently omitted when the agents are marked to the verb though this linguistic feature is not observed in English. In English, three consonants can occur together without vowel insertion at word initial position and also four or in atypical cases five consonants can appear together without vowel insertion as codas (Roach, 1993); however, these syllable types are not seen in the Amharic syllable system. For the reason that in Amharic maximally only two consonants may sequentially go together without vowel insertion at word medial and/or final position (Baye, 1994, Getahun, 1997, and Mulugata, 2001).

It is impossible to list here all the linguistic behaviors of Amharic and English. For English-speaking learners, some of these linguistic features are more difficult to learn than others. Hence, in order to gain insight into these problems, learners’ errors should be analyzed.

An adequate explanation for the learners’ errors in second language acquisition (SLA) has long been a central theme for discussion in linguistics, applied linguistics, and education. Some applied linguists (Fries, 1945 and Lado, 1957) tend to assume that the first language is a major factor in second language acquisition and performance. They claim that they can predict those

linguistic structures that will and those that will not cause difficulty in learning L₂ by systematically comparing the structures and cultures of the learners; L₁ and L₂. In other words, L₁ and L₂ differences bring about learning difficulty whereas similarities between the two languages facilitate acquisition. However, the hypothesis was discredited, except at the level of pronunciation (Borden, Gerber and Milsark, 1983). It was found that, contrary to expectations, not all areas of differences between two language systems actually resulted in errors. Dulay and Burt (1973) show that error types are the result of processing strategies a learner uses to recognize and produce a new language, rather than L₁ interference. From their findings they formulated the Creative Construction Theory. In any context, research on the role of L₁ is important for a better understanding of the nature of SLA.

Due to the remarkable difference between Amharic and English in phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics, evidence of L₁ might be easily noticeable. Thus, this study was designed to examine both interlingual (interference) and intralingual (developmental) errors. Furthermore, for pedagogical purpose the acquisition order of seven Amharic grammatical morphemes were identified. The aggregate sum of these analyses helps to see the grammatical competence of the target group of this study.

1.2. The Current Role of Amharic

Amharic is either a mother tongue or a second language of most Ethiopians. So it serves as the official language of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the working language of some governmental tiers such as: Amhara Regional State, South Nations Nationalities and People Regional States (SNNP), Addis Ababa City Administration and Dire Dawa City Administration and so forth. Furthermore, Amharic is utilized as medium of instruction to elementary schools of Amhara, Gambela, Harari and SNNP regional states, and the two administrative cities: Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa (Gebre, 2005:33). In addition, Amharic has been offered as a subject from elementary to secondary schools throughout Ethiopia. Likewise, it is not only studied as field of specialization at first degree level in most government universities (such as Debrebrehan, Axum, Bahirdar, Wello, Jimma, Mizan Tepie universities, etc.), but also it is taught as a second and as a third degree in Addis Ababa University.

On the other hand, English is one of the Indo-European languages. It borrowed most of its lexemes from other languages such as: Greek, Latin, French, and so forth. Due to its spoken coverage, it is serving as an international language nowadays. Therefore, many countries have been giving consideration for English in their language policy. For instance, in Africa countries like Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana, Zambia, and others have treated English as their official language in their language policies. Besides, it is given as a subject from elementary to university levels. Moreover, English is serving as medium of instruction in many countries of Africa like: Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania.

Numerous foreigners from different nations and ethno-linguistic groups come to Ethiopia (particularly Addis Ababa) as researchers, missionaries, tourists, workers, investors, official representatives of their country, and so forth. These people are eager to learn Amharic in order to communicate, work, and share experiences with the local people. To satisfy this need, some local language training schools have been established in Addis Ababa by private and Non-Government Organizations. Some of these schools have prepared their own teaching curriculum and teaching materials for the trainees. As the curriculum, the teaching materials, and the quality of the training differs from one school to the other. Most of the schools also do not design the lesson based on second language research findings and language learning theories.

On the other hand, some local language training schools treat Amharic as a foreign language and others take it as a second language while teaching it for foreigners in Addis Ababa. Here a very clear pedagogical problem is observed. As stated by scholars such as Ellis (1994) and Littlewood (1984) second and foreign language teaching differs in: teaching methodology, material preparation, curriculum designing, teachers training and so forth. Thus, the first important step, to teach Amharic for the above group is defining the status of it either as a second or as foreign language for the learners.

According to UNESCO, as cited in Cook (2001), any number of languages which are learned in addition to the mother tongue can be considered as a second language. On the contrary, scholars such as Wilkins (1972), Yule (1996), and Cook (2001) argue that a second language is a language which is learnt in addition to mother tongue in the area where the target language (second language) is used as a wider means of communication of the local people outside the classroom. Littlewood further explains that:

A second language has social functions within the community where it is learnt (e.g. as *lingua franca* or as the language of another social group) whereas a foreign language is learnt primarily for contact outside one's own community. (1984:2)

Ellis also explains the difference between a second and a foreign language as follows:

A distinction between second and foreign language acquisition is sometimes made. In the case of second language acquisition, the language plays an instructional and social role in the community (i.e. it functions as a recognized means of communication among members who speak some other language as their mother tongue). For example, English as a second language is learnt in the United States, the United Kingdom, and countries in Africa such as Nigeria and Zambia. In contrast, foreign language learning takes place in settings where the language plays no major role in the community and is primarily learnt only in the classroom. Examples of foreign language learning are English learnt in France or Japan. (1994:12)

From the above definitions one can conclude that noteworthy discrepancies are existed between second and foreign languages teaching and learning. Hence, in this research, Wilkins's (1972), Littlewood's (1984), Ellis's (1994), Yule's (1996), and Cook's (2001), definitions of second language were taken as bases of the study. They assert that second language is a language learned in addition to mother tongue in the host area. In the Ethiopian context, if a foreigner learns Amharic in Addis Ababa, on one hand he/she learns it in classroom; on the other hand he/she is exposed to the speaking community outside classroom. Consequently, in this context, Amharic becomes a second language for foreigners.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Although Amharic is taught as a second language to numerous foreigners in more than fourteen language training schools in Addis Ababa, adequate research has not been carried out yet to investigate the problematic areas for the learners in particular and for the training in general.

The dramatic growth of the number of foreigners, who are living in Ethiopia for different purposes, demands a well facilitated environment of learning local languages: particularly Amharic. But the efforts of teaching Amharic to them accompanied by many problems: multi-level classes, lack of quality textbooks and other teaching materials, curriculum, teaching and testing methods, and so on. Most of the existing textbooks are far from satisfactory for

foreigners. There is an urgent need to develop textbooks to meet the need of the learners. In order to create more effective materials, students' weaknesses in learning Amharic have to be identified. The errors' that students commit in the process of learning a second language have always been a cause of much concern to teachers, textbook writers and second language acquisition researchers. Moreover, it is important for understanding the process of second language acquisition too. Therefore, the present study attempted to identify an acquisition order of some grammatical morphemes of Amharic and tried to analyze the phonological and morpho-syntactic errors which were committed by the target group.

1.4. Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was: identifying and showing the grammatical competence of adult monolingual American English-speaking Amharic learners (MLAESALs). Under this, the following were the specific objectives of the study:

- Identifying the typical development of seven grammatical morphemes;
- Identifying, categorizing and describing learners phonological and morpho-syntactic errors;
- Discovering the possible sources of the above errors;
- Suggesting remedies for the errors; and
- Providing information concerning the learners' grammatical competence for pedagogists, teachers, and textbook writers.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The major aspects of language teaching often involve: ordering structures, sequencing lessons, organizing language textbooks, developing reading materials, and selecting item for language tests. If the teachers know the order in which students naturally tend to learn language structures, they can work with the process rather than against it (Ellis, 1994). Hence, the contributions of this study are:

- Facilitates and develops the usage and linguistic coverage of Amharic;
- Clarifies the sources of the errors; because the clearer the understanding of the sources of learners' errors, the better L₂ teachers will be able to distinguish the process of L₂ learning;

- Provides teachers with information regarding what sorts of errors to expect from MLAESALs while learning Amharic as a second language; why they occur and how to correct/ avoid them (including correctly sequencing their teaching);
- Supplies information as to the optimal sequencing of teaching the phonological and morpho-syntactic details of Amharic;
- Serves as a guide to prepare teaching: methodologies, materials, aids and so on;
- Supports the efforts of teaching Amharic for foreigners; and
- Holds up the efforts' of teaching other second languages in Ethiopian schools.

1.6. Scope of the Study

This study was conducted in Joint Language School (see 3.1. of chapter three for further information). This school has prepared its own curriculum to teach Ethiopian languages for foreigners. The target group of this study was adult monolingual American English-speaking Amharic learners.

Accordingly, this study targeted the acquisition order of seven grammatical morphemes of Amharic and the learners' phonological and morpho-syntactic errors. Hence, other linguistic features were not the primary concern of this study.

1.7. Organization of the Study

This thesis is structured in five chapters. The first chapter presents the introduction; the second chapter deals with the literature review and theoretical frameworks; the third, the fourth and the fifth chapters discuss the research methodology, the data presentation and analysis, and the conclusion and recommendation of the study respectively.

1.8. Definition of Terms

- **Error:** Corder (1967) made use of Chomsky's the "Competence versus performance" distinction by associating errors with failures in competence and mistakes with failures in performance. In this view, a mistake occurs as the result of processing limitations rather than lack of competence. In this study, a distinction was made between error and mistake (mistakes were excluded from the analysis). Hence, throughout this study, errors are unacceptable linguistic forms which are committed regularly by the students.

- **Language interference:** This term is used to refer the negative transfer of mother tongue while learning a second language.
- **Language Learning:** A conscious or subconscious process of rule internalization: a distinction is not made between ‘acquisition’ and ‘learning’ in Krashen’s (1982) sense in this thesis.
- **Interlanguage (IL):** IL is a structured and intermingling system which the learner constructs at a given stage in his/her development. An L₂ learner at any particular moment in his/her learning sequence is using a language system which is independent of both the target language and the learner’s mother tongue. It is a third language, with its own grammar, its own lexicon and so on.
- **Second language:** A second language is a language which is learned in addition to mother tongue in the host area.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, some of the studies which focused on the contrastive analysis between Amharic and other languages are reviewed. In addition, the fundamental issues closely related to the objective of this study are surveyed. Finally, the works of prominent scholars in second language learning research have been referred to and cited.

2.1. Literature Review

2.1.1. Related Research

The purpose of this subsection is to review several studies which focus on contrastive analysis between Amharic and other languages and to present some of the grammatical morpheme acquisition order study findings.

2.1.1.1. Review of Contrastive Studies

Several contrastive research works were done between Amharic and other languages. Some of them are evaluated in this section.

Taddese Beyene (1964) tries to contrast the segmental phonemes of Amharic and English based on the strong version of Contrastive Analysis Theory. He just took the phonological charts of the two languages and attempted to show what exists in common and what is not. Afterward, he identified and reported them as the potential interferences with the strong view of Contrastive Analysis. He stated the purpose of his study as follows:

- (1) To make a comparative study on the segmental phonemes of Amharic and English;
- (2) To predict the pronunciation errors Amharic speakers make in the process of learning English; and
- (3) To classify the predicted pronunciation errors into phonemic, phonetic, allophonic and distributional. (Taddese, 1964:93)

Moreover, Taddese explained that the most important and immediate significance of his study is in the area of teaching and learning English.

The current study differs from Taddese's work in the following points. First, the current study uses Contrastive Analysis (CA), Error Analysis (EA) and Interlanguage (IL) theories in combination. However, I placed more emphasis on IL than CA theory because second language research findings indicate that most of the errors committed in second language learning are either developmental or transitional errors than direct mother tongue interference. Thus, the portion of the errors resulted from mother tongue interference are insignificant. Indeed, many research results have shown that the potential errors predicted via a strong form of CA were not found as source of errors while learning the target language (Dulay and Burt: 1974). Another significant point which distinguishes the present study from Taddese's study is the data source and the data gathering tools. Taddese collected his data from previously presented findings of Amharic and English segmental phonemes by Habtemariam Marcos and W. Nelson Francis respectively; because he applied the strong form of Contrastive Analysis. However, for the current study the data was collected through elicitation techniques (see 3.4 of chapter three).

Loren (1965) studied "Amharic Language Interference in Learning Greek." He investigated the interferences and classified them as: graphemic, phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical ones. The researcher identifies the errors based on Contrastive Analysis Theory which shows the potential points of interference between Amharic and Greek. The current study focuses on native English-speaking learners of Amharic, and its foundations are laid not only on Contrastive Analysis but also on Error Analysis and Interlanguage theories.

Loren (1967) also conducted the research entitled "Amharic Interference in 'Afar Translation'." His study focused on some of the interferences from Amharic in the translation of the Amharic version of the Bible to Afar. He classified the interference errors into the following categories: passive construction, series of imperatives, subordinating and coordinating conjunctions, numbers agreement, and class nouns preferred to plurals, person agreement in relatives, verbs and case, and semantic interferences. The basic aim of his research was showing the interferences which were sourced from Amharic in the translation course of action.

Lulseged Erkihun (1984) also presented a paper entitled "Interference of native Gedeo language speakers in leaning Amharic: A contrastive analysis based on the phonologies of the two languages." As he stated the purposes of his study were:

- (1) To test the area of possibilities and illuminations of Contrastive Analysis in the prediction of difficulties for foreign language learners by means of Error Analysis; and
- (2) To find the area of actual phonological difficulties for Gedeo native speakers in learning Amharic by means of an analysis of structural differences between the phonologies of Gedeo and Amharic. (1984:1)

Lulseged tried to predict the errors basically based on the strong form of Contrastive Analysis Theory. This means that he predicted the potential source of errors by contrasting and making inventory on the linguistic elements of the contrasted languages. However, as mentioned earlier, the current study analyzed the errors based on the three most common error analysis theories (CA, EA and IL theories). On the other hand, both his and my studies focus on Amharic as a target language. The difference lays; the present study analyzes the errors committed by MAESALs, while Lulseged studied the interference of Gedeo-speaking learners of Amharic. The current study also identified the acquisition order of seven grammatical morphemes of Amharic, but this research topic was not touched by Lulseged.

2.1.1.2. Review of Acquisition Order Studies

Errors and second language development have been studied by many scholars. The source of errors in learning a second language has been a major concern in the literature of second language acquisition. In the past, errors in learning a second language were believed to be the result of interference from the first language (The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis); in this analysis, L₁ regarded as a main factor causing errors (Lado, 1957).

However, the results of morpheme studies (Brown, 1973 and Dulay and Burt, 1974a, b) in first and second language acquisition indicate that errors are often the result of the processing strategies which learners try to generalize in the new language. (Performance Analysis; Creative Construction Theory); this perspective minimizes the role of L₁ interference, and regards the source of errors simply as a process of creative construction.

As a result, researchers (Richards, 1971b and Bailey, Madden and Krashen, 1974) start to look at the similarities of the learners' errors (Error Analysis), and observe the learner's progress from L₁ to the target language (Interlanguage). Interlanguage is thought to be distinct from both the learner's first language and the target language; in this analysis the source of the errors is

regarded as an indication of the learner's progress (Nemser, 1971; Corder, 1981 and Selinker, 1972).

The aforementioned scholars and others have studied morpheme acquisition order by taking English as a first, a second or a foreign language. For example, Brown (1973) among others undertook large-scale investigations of young children's behaviors as they learned first language. These researchers were looking for evidence of Chomsky's "mental structure": for uniformities in the verbal behavior of language learners. They followed two and three-year-old children and their parents around for several years using tape recorders to catch natural language in all kinds of situations. Thus, psycholinguists found striking evidence that some learning behaviors are common to all children no matter what language they are learning.

Brown (1973) states that when children do learn grammatical morphemes, they learn them in the same order, and that order is not related to how often the children hear the structures nor to whether their parents rewards them for producing correct structures.

Second language research needed to catch up with first language research. Thus, in the late sixties, they began to turn on their tape recorders to catch the imperfect sentences their children or students were producing in a second language.

Brown (1973) and de Villiers and de Villiers (1973) conducted studies on grammatical morpheme acquisition. They concluded that, there is an order in which children, whose L₁ was English, learn certain grammatical morphemes and function words. Brown's study included three children in a longitudinal research; whereas, the de Villiers and de Villiers study included twenty-four children in a cross-sectional study. Brown argues, although children learned the morphemes at different rates and ages, the order in which they learned them was relatively the same. The order of acquisition was very similar in the de Villiers and de Villiers study as well. A simplified list (from the early to lately acquired morphemes) of Brown's (1973) order of acquisition for children learning English as a native language is: present progressive /-ing/, plural /-s/, irregular past tense, possessive /-'s/, copula be, articles a/an and the, third person singular present tense /-s/, and auxiliary be.

On the other hand, a fundamental and significant study of second language acquisition was conducted by Dulay and Burt (1973; 1974). They decided to use Brown's original study and

extrapolate it to children learning English as a second language rather than as a native language. Their first study included 300 native speakers of Spanish and their second study included 250 native speakers of Spanish and Chinese. Their findings indicated that there was evidence of an order of morpheme acquisition for children learning English as an L₂, but it differed from the order for children learning English as an L₁.

The children exhibited similar orders using the Bilingual Syntax Measure (BSM), which Dulay and Burt created for their first study. BSM employs a series of pictures and questions to elicit response from the target group. The errors the children made were categorized into developmental, interference, and unique categories. The majority of the errors fell in the developmental category; this leads the researchers to hypothesize that SLA is similar to L₁ acquisition.

The second study also provided evidence that L₁ made little difference in the acquisition of English grammatical morphemes. Their finding shows that the acquisition orders were relatively the same for both the Spanish-speaking and Chinese-speaking groups of children. Dulay and Burt (1974) identified the acquisition orders of their target groups from early to lately acquired as follows: plural /-s/, present progressive /-ing/, copula be, auxiliary be, articles a/an and the, irregular past tense, regular past tense /-ed/, third person singular present tense /-s/, and possessive /-'s/. In the current study, the acquisition orders of seven grammatical morphemes of Amharic were identified.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

2.2.1. Behaviorists' versus Mentalists' Views of Language Learning

Scholars in the area of second language research have different views concerning the second language learning process. For instance, behaviorists claim that there is no differentiation between learning a language and learning in general. They further argue that learning is not a mental activity rather it is a behavior just like other forms of human behavior. They claim that in order to learn a language there should be a correct and a strong integration of stimulus, response and reinforcement. Behaviorists strongly pronounce that the proper combination of these leads the learner to form habit. Hence, they conclude that language learning as a process of habit formation (Wilkins, 1972 and Littlwood, 1984).

Nevertheless, mentalists claim that human beings have an inborn capacity to learn language. For instance, Wilkins (1972:169) states that, “Everybody learns a language, not because they are subjected to a similar conditioning process, but because they possess an inborn capacity which permits them to acquire a language as a normal maturational process.” From his idea, one can in fact claim that the language learning capacity is the same in all human beings but the actual language learning need not be and as a teacher certainly L₂ learning does not process the same in all adult students; however, the behaviorists don’t accept this idea. Mentalists believe that the underlying system of a language enables the speakers to create and to understand an infinite number of sentences. They further claim that language learning is not the product of conditioning and habit formation rather learners possess some internal capacities for learning a language that other animals do not have.

In the 1950s and 1960s behaviorists view was acceptable in language learning theories but, it was challenged by many scholars such as Corder (1976), Chomsky (1980), Brown (1994), and Ellis (1994). For instance, Chomsky’s linguistic theories and cognitive psychology confront the behaviorists’ views of language learning.

Littlewood puts some of the arguments against the behaviorists view as follows:

Language is not merely verbal behavior. Underlying the actual behavior that we observe, there is a complex system of rules. These enable speakers to create and understand an infinite number of sentences, which they have never encountered before. What children learn, then, is an abstract knowledge of rules (or ‘competences’). However, this is not what they are exposed to: they are exposed only to people’s speech (‘performance’). This process of extracting abstract knowledge from concrete examples cannot be explained by habit formation. Although children are exposed to different actual speech, they arrive at the same underlying rules as other children in their community. The evidence also suggests that they pass through similar sequences in acquiring these rules. From the outset, children seem to be constructing their own rule systems. This means that the child’s language is not simply being shaped by external forces it is being creatively constructed by the child as he interacts with those around him. (1984:176)

In the current study, both Contrastive Analysis and Creative Construction theories were used to analyze the phonological and morpho-syntactic errors. These theories lay their foundation on behaviorists and mentalists views of second language learning respectively. Hence, as stated at

the end of this chapter, some of the features of these theories had taken as working framework of the study. In the subsequent section, three of the most common error analysis theories were discussed in detail.

2.2.2. Theories of Error

In language learning, errors are fundamental parts of the learning process. The phenomenon of error has long attracted SLA researchers (Ellis, 1985). He clarifies that in traditional second language teaching situation, they are regarded as the linguistic phenomena deviant from the language rule and standard usages, reflecting learners' deficiency in language competence and acquisition device. Many teachers simply correct individual errors as they occur, with little attempt to see patterns of errors or to seek causes in anything other than learner ignorance. Presently, however, with the development of linguistics, applied linguistics, psychology and other relevant subjects, people's attitude toward errors has changed greatly. Instead of being problems to be conquered or evils to be eliminated, errors are supposed to be evidence of the learners' stages in their target language growth. It is through analyzing learners' errors that errors are elevated from the status of "undesirability to that of a guide to the inner working of the language process." (Ellis, 1985:53)

Scholars such as: Wilkins (1972), Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982), Littlewood (1984), and Brown (1994), mentioned the three most common theories of error: Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis and Interlanguage theories. The differences and theoretical foundations of these theories discussed in the succeeding subsections.

2.2.2.1. Contrastive Analysis Theory

James (2001:4) affirms that, "in 1950s and 1960s the favored paradigm for studying FL/SL [foreign or second language] learning and organizing its teaching was contrastive analysis." Brown also asserts that "in the middle part of the twentieth century, one of the most popular pursuits for applied linguistics was the study of two languages in contrast." (1994:193). The above discussions show that contrastive analysis was one of the dominant ways of studying L₂ learners' errors in the early 1950s and 1960s.

Contrastive linguistics has been defined as “a sub-discipline of linguistics concerned with the comparison of two or more languages or subsystems of languages in order to determine both the differences and similarities between them.” (Fishiak, 1981:1). Johansen and Hofland (1994:25) held that language comparison is of great interest and can be categorized in a theoretical as well as an applied perspective. Thus, these scholars’ ideas imply that the study may be theoretical or applied. The Applied Contrastive Study or Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis belongs within the scope of applied linguistics (Wardhaugh, 1970). Brown states that this way of analysis was deep-rooted in the behaviorist’s and structuralist’s approaches of 1950s and 1960s. According to Brown the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis:

claimed that the principal barrier to second language acquisition is the interference of the first language system with the a scientific, structural analysis of the two languages in question would yield a taxonomy of linguistic contrast between them which is turn would enable the linguist to predict the difficulties a learner would encounter.” (1994:193)

Contrastive Analysis stresses the interference of the mother tongue in phonological, morphological, lexical and syntactic levels when one learns a second language. It holds that L₂ could be affected by L₁. Hence, language is taken as a set of new habits, and leaning as establishment of new habits, a view spring from behaviorism, under which language is essentially a system of habits. In the course of language learning, L₁ learning habits will be transferred into L₂ learning habits. Thus, in the case of L₁ transfer into L₂, if structures in the mother tongue have their corresponding structure in the target language and L₁ habits can be successfully used in the L₂, learners would transfer certain elements of the mother tongue have no corresponding counterparts in the target language, L₁ habits would cause errors in the L₂, and learners would transfer inappropriate properties of L₁.

Contrastive Analysis has a strong and a weak version. Proponents of the strong version claim that prediction about learner difficulties and development of teaching methods based on a comparison of phonological, grammatical, and syntactic features of the L₁ and target language. The second approach advocates first looks for learners’ recurring errors and attempts to account for those errors by ascribing their L₁ and target language differences (Wilkins, 1972). In 1960s scholars try to formulate the prediction stage of contrastive analysis to make it relatively

objective. Corder (1976) formulates the following six categories of difficulty to capture the essence of grammatical hierarchy:

Level 0) Transfer: no difference or contrast is present between the two languages. The learner can simply transfer (positively) a sound, structure, or lexical items from the native language to the target language. Level 1) Coalescence: two items in the native language become coalesced into essentially one item in the target languages. This requires that learners overlook a distinction they have grown accustomed to. Level 2) Under differentiation: an item in the native language is absent in the target language. The learner must avoid that item. Level 3) Reinterpretation: an item that exists in the native language is given a new shape or distribution. Level 4) Over differentiation: a new item entirely, bearing little if any similarity to the native language item, must be learned. Level 5) Split: one item in the native language becomes two or more in the target language, requiring the learner to make a new distinction. (1976:195)

2.2.2.1.1. Criticisms of Contrastive Analysis in SLA

From 1940s to 1960s, in SLA research, two languages were systematically contrasted to investigate learners' errors. Researchers at that time were motivated by the prospect of being able to identify points of similarity and difference between native language and target language. There was a strong belief that a more effective pedagogy would result when these were taken into consideration. However, although Contrastive Analysis was very dominant and had inspired many productive investigations, its positions about its predictive power and the relationships between L₁ and L₂ learning faced serious challenges in the field of SLA.

The original weakness of Contrastive Analysis was its failure to go beyond a statement of difference to formulate an acceptable theory of difficulty. As Briere (1968) showed, difference by itself does not predict difficulty; often there is more difficulty in practice with similar structures than with different structures. Secondly, by viewing errors simply as a result of L₁ interference, Contrastive Analysis places the environment as the predominant factor in SLA, while learners are believed to play only a passive role in accepting the impositions of the environment. Thirdly, interference of transfer from L₁ is not the sole source of errors in L₂ learning. SLA researchers found such non-interference errors more pervasive in learner performance than contrastive analyses were ready to recognize. For instance, Dually and Burt

(1973) studied the errors made by Spanish-speaking children learning English as an L₂ and claimed that of all the learner errors they had collected 85% were developmental, 12% were unique and only 3% were results of L₁ transfer.

2.2.2.2. Error Analysis Theory

Error Analysis received considerable attention and finally become a recognized part of applied linguistics in the 1970s since the strong version of Contrastive Analysis turned out not to be a productive pedagogical tool. James defined the notion of Error Analysis Theory as “the study of linguistic ignorance, the investigation of what people do not know and how they attempt to cope with their ignorance.” (2001:62). The significance of learners’ errors, which signaled the shift of pedagogical interest from Contrastive Analysis to Error Analysis and provided the movement for many empirical studies.

In order to analyze learners’ errors in a proper perspective, Error Analysis enthusiasts considered it crucial to make a distinction between mistake and error, which are “technically two very different phenomena” (Brown 1994:205). Corder (1967) made use of Chomsky’s the ‘competence versus performance’ distinction by associating errors with failures in competence and mistakes with failures in performance. In this view, a mistake occurs as the result of processing limitations rather than lack of competence. That is, it signifies L₂ learners’ failure of utilizing their knowledge of a target language rule. All people make mistakes in both native and second language situations. As a matter of fact, falling back on some alternative, non-standard language uses like false starts, hesitations, random guesses, confusions of structure or slips of the tongue is a regular feature of native speaker speech. Native speakers are normally capable of recognizing and correcting such mistakes.

Nevertheless, an error, in this technical sense, is the breaking of rules of code; it is the noticeable deviation in grammaticality resulting from a lack of required knowledge. It arises because competent native speakers may also make errors but they are able to correct their own errors, however, L₂ learners cannot by any means always do so. The analysis of error sources has been regarded a central aspect in the study of learner errors. Researchers believe that the clearer the understanding of the sources of learners’ errors, the better second language teachers will be able to distinguish the process of L₂ learning. It has been seen from the above discussion, it is the

competence errors that have been considered to be central to the study of second language learning.

Richards (1971) identified a number of different sources or causes of competence errors: interference, intralingual errors within the target language itself and developmental errors reflecting the learners' attempts to construct hypotheses about their target language from their limited experience. He excluded interference errors, and focused on the intralingual and developmental errors. He further classified them into four categories: (1) Overgeneralization, covering instances where the learners create a deviant structure on the basis of their experience of another structure of the target language; (2) Ignorance of rule restriction, occurring as a result of failure to observe the restriction or existing structures; (3) Incomplete application of rules; arising when the learners fail to fully develop a certain structure required to produce acceptable sentences; (4) False concepts hypothesized, deriving from flatly comprehension of distinctions in the target language.

To sum up this part of the discussion, we can say that Error Analysis is a systematic study and analysis of errors committed by second language learners in an attempt to account for their origin, their regularity, their predictability and variability. It views both first and second language acquisition as a process involving the active participation of the learners. In this approach, errors are seen as natural phenomena that must occur when learning the first, the second or the foreign language before correct language rules can be completely internalized. Errors occur systematically in learners' language behavior and are therefore, to be regarded as manifestations of an inner working system.

2.2.2.2.1 Contributions and Drawbacks of Error Analysis

Scholars such as Corder points out that error analyses can be highly significant to SLA in the following aspects:

- Error Analyses tell the teachers how far towards the goal the learners have progressed and what remains for them to learn. Errors provide feedback. They tell the teacher something about the effectiveness of their teaching materials and teaching techniques and

show them what parts of the syllabus they have been following have been inadequately learned or taught and need future attention.

- They provide to researchers evidence of how language is learned or acquired. Some of the strategies adapted by the learners of a second language are substantially the same as those by which a first language is acquired. By classifying the errors that the learners made, researchers can learn a great deal about the SLA process by inferring the strategies that L₂ learners are adapting.
- They are means whereby learners test alternative hypotheses about the L₂. For learners themselves errors are “indispensable”, since the making of errors can be regarded as a device the learners use in order to learn. They are a way of testing hypotheses about the nature of language they are learning (Corder, 1967).

On the other hand, Selinker (1972) states that, however, Error Analysis has produced a far-reaching impact on SLA in many aspects and proposed as a remediation for the Contrastive Analysis, it has also defects. According to him, Error Analysis had methodological problems. Since it used to be difficult to collect or access large data bases of learner's language, a robust not shed much light on the development route learner take, because it examines language learner language at a particular point in time.

2.2.2.3. Interlanguage Theory

The notion of Interlanguage was recommended by Selinker (1972) in order to draw attention to be possibility that the learner's language can be regarded as a distinct language variety or system with its own particular characteristics and rules. Interlanguage is a structured and intermingling system which the learner constructs at a given stage in his development. An L₂ learner at any particular moment in his learning sequence is using a language system which is independent of both the target language and the learner's mother tongue. It is a third language, with its own grammar, its own lexicon and so on. The rules used by the learner are to be found in neither his own mother tongue, nor in the target language.

The earliest formulation of the notion Interlanguage was that proposed by Corder (1967). One of its crucial contributions was its underlying assumption that the learner's knowledge is to be seen as a unified whole, in which new knowledge is integrated and systematically recognized with previous knowledge of the native language. By a gradual process of trial-and-error or hypothesis testing, learners slowly and tediously succeed in establishing closer approximations to the system used by the native speaker of the language. Various alternative terms have been used by different researchers to refer to the same phenomenon as Interlanguage. Corder (1967), the notions of "idiosyncratic dialects" to identify the idea that the learner's language is peculiar and "transitional competence" to pinpoint the dynamic nature of the learners' developing system in another similar model, a paper by Nemser (1971) referred to this learner language as "approximate system", one of a series of approximate stages through which the learner moves in his acquisition of the target language.

Interlanguage may be viewed as an adaptive strategy by which the learners try to construct the structural properties of the target language. This strategy uses simplification, reduction, over-generalization, transfer; formulate language, omissions, substitutions and restructuring (Selinker, 1972). Learners do not progress from zero knowledge of target language rule to perfect knowledge of the rule. By using the above mentioned devices, they progress through a series of interim of developmental stages on their way of target language proficiency.

The form which Interlanguage takes can be accounted for by reference to a number of cognitive process, five of which Selinker (1972) isolates as central importance in the language acquisition puzzle: language transfer, transfer of training, strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication and overgeneralization of target language linguistics materials. The five processes together continue the ways in which the learner tries to internalize the L₂ system.

The characteristics of Interlanguage are described by many researchers. For instance, Ellis (1982) explains them as follows: (i) permeable, in the sense that rules that constitute the learner's knowledge at any one stage are not fixed, but are open to amendment; (ii) dynamic; in the sense L₂ learners slowly revise their variable temporary systems to accommodate new hypothesis about the target language accommodate new hypothesis about the target language system; (iii)

systematic, in that L₂ learners' IL is rule-governed, that is, the learner bases his performance plans on his existing rule system must the same way as the native speaker bases his plans on his internalized knowledge of the L₁ system.

2.2.2.3.1. Evaluation of Interlanguage Theory

Ellis (1982) declared that IL studies view interlanguage as a constant mental organization of a learner's own version of the language and attempt to understand the systematic features of SLA. Since then Interlanguage has come to characterize a major approach to L₂ research and theory. Close analysis of the interlanguage development of individual learners has led a better understanding of the nature and process of SLA.

The IL theory realizes a complete shift of the focus from teaching perspective to learning perspective in SLA. Embracing less interesting the explanation of language pedagogy as traditional SLA approach did. IL theory concerned primarily the performance of L₂ learners and established this performance as a suitable object of research. L₂ learners were considered to be playing an active role in L₂ learning process. Explanations were sought in the learners' mental processes that the learners used to convert input into knowledge and the knowledge systems which they construct mentally and manifest in output.

Some of the important criticisms about the Interlanguage studies are: first, the concentration on morpho-syntactic development and the failure to deal with semantic development (Ellis, 1982). Interlanguage study is mostly limited to the scope of morpheme and syntax. The important aspect of meaning is rarely dealt with. Second, the failure to define the concept clearly, Spolsky (1989) raises a problem with the notion of Interlanguage which was the tendency to confuse a process with a Competence Model. Last, the failure to develop effective approaches to facilitate empirical studies. The research methods of Interlanguage study such as longitudinal and cross-sectional studies are technically inadequate in themselves. New and complimentary methods are yet to be found to search into the nature and underlying principles of the L₂ learners' interlanguage.

The above three theories of error have their own strong and weak sides to analyze the grammatical errors committed by second language learners. Thus, in this study, on one hand

most of the phonological and some of the morpho-syntactic errors were analyzed based on the weak form of the Contrastive Analyses Theory which is the reflection of Behaviorists' view. On the other hand, most of the developmental errors were analyzed on the base of Creative Construction Theory which is the reflection of mentalists' view of second language learning.

In this chapter, first several of contrastive studies between Amharic and other languages were reviewed; then behaviorists' and mentalists' views of second language learning were presented. Finally, three of the most common error analysis theories (CA, EA and IL) were introduced in order to understand and explain the nature of the errors that MAESALs committed while learning Amharic as an L₂.

The following ideas were taken as working foundations to analyze the data in this study.

- Many studies were conducted to identify the acquisition order of grammatical morphemes of English either as a first or second or foreign language; but, this kind of study is rare in other languages. Hence, the present study tried to analyze the acquisition order of seven grammatical morphemes of Amharic while MAESALs learn it as an L₂;
- Creative Construction Theory of second language learning was taken as fundamental base of this study. This approach claims that the learner produces his/her own internal grammar from the data he/she has gotten from the environment. Additionally, Contrastive Analysis Theory was employed to study mother tongue interference errors.
- This study also took into consideration the contribution of the external environment on how well the learners are able to use the language. Jakobovits (1968) as cited in Wilkins (1972) suggest that 'the external conditions may influence the rate of learning even if they do not affect the learning process itself.'
- There is no one best way of teaching a second language rather both inborn ability(Mentalists view) of learning a language and exposure to the speaking community or classroom learning have their contribution to learn a given language;
- Acquisition and learning are not seen as mutually exclusive entities;

- The best learning also will occur in the environments where anxiety is low and defensiveness absent. Besides, practice has some contribution for learning a second language;
- Error analysis data are treated as subset of IL data. In other words, IL incorporates the assumptions of both Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis. In spite of the criticisms of Contrastive Analysis; it is obvious that a learner's L₁ plays an important role in SLA. Error Analysis recognizes the psycholinguistic type of errors produced by L₂ learners through the learner's performance and target language. The learner's L₁, target language, and the learner's performance can be used to investigate the various processes that contribute to interlanguage development.
- Finally, Corder's (1981) stapes of studying errors was employed to systematically analyze the phonological and morph-syntactic errors which were committed by the subjects of this study. He suggested the following five stapes in Error Analysis research: (i) collect the samples of the learner's language, (ii) identify the errors, (iii) describe the errors, (iv) explain the errors and (v) evaluate the errors. This study will utilize the first four of these stapes.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

The research methodology is discussed in this section. The main topics of the discussion are: research area, sampling technique, research design, data elicitation, and data analysis techniques.

3.1. About Joint Language School

This research was conducted in Joint Language School (JLS) in Addis Ababa. Most of the students of this school are missionaries who come from all over the world but there are also students who belong to one of the following categories: higher officials of international organizations, development agents, researchers and Ethiopians who were born and/or grown abroad.

JLS teaches Ethiopian languages for foreigners. Its general objective is: by teaching these languages introducing and familiarizing foreigners with Ethiopian society and their culture. The school has very long experiences in teaching local languages in an integrated package. In the early years, it was using the grammar and grammar translation methods to teach local languages. In the meantime, after assessing the problems of these methods and its curriculum, it has designed and adapted a new approach of teaching L₂: Growing Participator Approach (GPA).

This approach has six phases' program (Phase 1: Here-and-Now (100 hours), Phase 2: Story Building (150), Phase 3: Shared Stories (250 hours), Phase 4: Life Sharing (500 hours), Phase 5: Native-to-Native Discourse (500 hours), and Phase 6: Self-Sustaining Growth). Each phase puts emphasis for the socio-cultural nature of the language learning. The first four phases are given in JLS and the last two phases are left for the students to learn by their own, using the techniques they have acquired from the program. The method basically planned to help the learners to build relationships with people with the host community. The nurturers (teachers) will help the growing participators (students) to grow into their community and into their world. To facilitate this, JLS's teachers have been getting training to teach an L₂ via GPA. In this approach, the students are expected to learn the languages within a social context.

The school offers the courses through this method in the fall and spring semesters and during the summer it runs an eight weeks summer course. Language learners can choose between a Normal

Track of 4 periods (of 45 minutes) per day and Fast Track of 6 periods per day. It also teaches Normal Plus, of 4 periods plus additional hours according to the learners needs.

To support the teaching learning process in each phase, the nurturers use teaching aids from their well organized and richest pedagogical center. The center equipped with teaching aids such as; pictures, toys, and cartoon films, wordless books, and audio documents. The nurturers most of the time teach their learners using these teaching aids. This helps the learners to visualize the lesson and understand the target topic and develop their language skills within a short period of time and less challenge.

In addition to this, the learners record the daily lessons and the language of the nurturer. Then, they listen and practice it at home. In the next day, they ask the expressions or words which they did not understand while listening the recorded utterances at home. The nurturer also explains the learners' questions using verities of contexts in the target language. This helps the learners to familiarize themselves with the pronunciation of the natives and to learn the cultures of the speaking community via discussion.

In this section, I discussed the teaching learning process of local languages in JLS. This helps the readers and further researchers to see the general picture of the informants and the data which were gathered from the target group to identify the acquisition order of the seven grammatical morphemes and to analyze the grammatical errors in order to check the grammatical competence of the learners.

3.2. Sampling Design

Linguistic and cultural diversifications are two of the typical features of the students of this school. For the purpose of this study, the researcher selected 45 adult monolingual American English-speaking learners of Amharic via purposive sampling technique. Their distributions among the four phases are shown in the table below.

Table 1: Distribution of the Target Group

Phase	No. of Students
1	7
2	20
3	8
4	10
Total	45

For the purpose of the acquisition order analysis, the target samples were selected from phase: 2 through 4; since in these phases the students can write their ideas in Amharic *fedel*. So they were tested both the oral and written tests to gather the data in order to identify the acquisition order of the morphemes. On the other hand, to analyze the grammatical errors, the target groups were selected from phase 1 to 4; because this gave a chance to analyze the students' pronunciation, and morpho-syntactic errors thoroughly.

The ages of the informants range from 21-55 years old. The interview with them revealed that majority of them had not been exposed to Amharic as a subject or medium instruction before they started their lesson in JLS. Thus, the period of their formal exposure for Amharic ranges from one month and half to ten months.

3.3. Research Design

Many second language research methods have been designed by scholars such as Brown (1994) and Dulay and Burt (1974 and 1982). For the purpose of this study, Dulay and Burt's method was employed. Their method assists to investigate the development of second language learners' language at a given point. The sample size taken by this method ranges from 24 to 1200. The data collection time also fluctuates depend on the number of informants and the accessibility of helpers to administer instruments. Most commonly, it ranges from a few days to several weeks (Dulay and Burt, 1982). They further claim that:

A Cross-Sectional Design is one where language data are collected from a relatively large sample of learners at one point in their language development. Such a design stimulates actual development overtime by including many learners who are at different stages of L₂ development. If the sample is adequate and if appropriate analytical requirements are met, then the language data collected may be analyzed to obtain acquisition orders which reflect the characteristics of language systems developing over a period of time. (1982:246)

3.4. Data Elicitation Technique

The researcher collected the data primarily using Structured Natural Communication (SNC). This means the researcher employed natural communication with the subjects. He asked the subjects specific questions designed to elicit target structures naturally but systematically. However, Unstructured Natural Communication (UNC) was also applied as supplementary tool to elicit the data. In this technique, the researcher communicates with the subjects naturally without intention to elicit specific structures (Dulay and Burt, 1982: 249). They explain the advantages of SNC in a cross-sectional study as follows:

In cross-sectional studies, the structured communication task is typically used because it is fairly short and can be administered to a large sample within a reasonable time period. (1982:249)

As mentioned in 3.3. above this study applied a Cross-Sectional Research Design. Therefore, it is reasonable to collect the learners' language using a structured conversation technique. Most scholars have been using Bilingual Syntax Measure (BSM) to gather the target data via Structured Natural Conversation. Dulay and Burt define BSM as follows:

Bilingual Syntax Measure consists of natural conversation between the child and the researcher about concrete things and events, for instance, guided by cartoon picture of a very fat boy and one of a very thin man, the researcher asks, why do you think he's fat? Children spontaneously respond with suggestions such as: He eats to much; He eats all day; He eats junk, He drinks too much beer; and other sundry comments on the proposed eating and drinking habits of the fat boy. (1982:203)

Besides in combination to SNC, I elicited the data from UNC through: picture description, interaction with classmates and school staff, free conversation, storytelling, and classroom speech. The data elicited via SNC and UNC were used to identify the acquisition order of the

grammatical morphemes and to analyze the grammatical errors which were committed by the target group respectively.

3.5. Data Analysis

The collected data analyzed for two purposes: to identify the acquisition order of seven Amharic grammatical morphemes and to analyze the grammatical errors committed by the students. This gives a relatively clear picture of the target group's grammatical competence.

3.5.1. Analysis of the Acquisition Order

To analyze the acquisition order of seven Amharic grammatical morphemes, first the researcher defined precise obligatory occasion(s) for the occurrence of each morpheme. This made the study valid. As Dulay and Burt describe that “the study first provided a precise definition of the structures being studied and the specification of the context in which they occur are critical to the valid investigation of acquisition order.” (1982:217).

The target morphemes were: plural marker /-očč/, progressive marker /ijjə-/, accusative marker /-n/, passive marker /tə-/, definite marker /-u/, copula ‘nəw’, and possessive marker /jə-/. Of the seven grammatical morphemes with this study is concerned, four are functionally similar to their English counterparts and the rest three (/n/, /u/ and /tə-/) do not have direct equivalent in English. The acquisition order of these morphemes was identified using Group Score Method.

3.5.1.1 Steps to Calculate Group Score (GS)

Step 1: Treating each obligatory occasion for a morpheme

- 0 points no morpheme supplied
- 1 point malformed morpheme supplied
- 2 points correct morpheme supplied

Step 2: Calculate the two scores for each structure in each subject's total speech corpus.

- Subject's Actual Score for each structure (AS)
- Expected Score for each structure(ES)

Then, the group scores for a particular morpheme calculated as follows:

- Add the expected scores for the morpheme across all the learners in the group.
- Add the actual scores for each obligatory occasion of the morpheme across all learners.

Step 3: Divide the actual score by using the total expected score.

Step 4: Multiply the result by 100 as follows: $GS = AS/ES \times 100$

Two scoring systems were employed based on the formula above (see section 4.1.2.). This formula gives us the group's percentage of accuracy in producing the target structure. Then using the scores thus obtained, the structures are then ranked according to decreasing group score, from which their acquisition sequence is inferred.

3.5.2. Error Analysis

First the errors were identified from the corpora and then classified under phonological and morpho-syntactic categories. Then the errors were again classified into: interference errors, developmental errors and other errors. Each class contained some or all of the following sub-classifications of errors: substitution, overgeneralization, simplification, addition, omission and others. Finally, description and explanation were given for each error type.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Presentation and Analysis

In the first part of this chapter, the acquisition order of seven grammatical morphemes of Amharic is presented and analyzed based on Dulay and Burt's (1974) Group Scored Method (GSM). In the second part, the general grammatical errors (phonological and morpho-syntactic) were analyzed based on the Creative Construction and Contrastive Analysis theories.

Several regular errors were observed in the data which were elicited from the target group and presented in this chapter. Some of them were: ignorance of geminated sounds, substitution of the ejective sounds with non-ejective counterparts, substitution of the high central unrounded vowel /ɨ/ with the high front unrounded vowel /i/, substitution of the trill /r/ with the flap /ɾ/ and so forth. These kinds of errors were existed in most of the data elicited from the target group for both the acquisition order study in this section (4.1) and the grammatical error analyses in the next section (4.2). Therefore, when one sees these errors while reading this thesis, it is important to notice that the data were students' utterances, and so I wrote these erroneous data throughout this chapter in **bold** to avoid confusion. Hence, I want to remind the readers to notice this fact while looking at the target group's data in the subsequent sections.

4.1. The Acquisition Order of Seven Grammatical Morphemes of Amharic

Several acquisition order studies were conducted by many scholars. For instance, Brown (1973) studied the acquisition order of a few grammatical morphemes by taking English as an L₁ in America. In the same country, Dulay and Burt (1974) studied the acquisition order of some grammatical morphemes by taking English as an L₂. There were also some works on other languages of Asia and Europe. But, these kinds of studies were not found about Ethiopian languages: particularly a study which focuses on adult monolingual American English-speaking Amharic learners (MLAESALs) as an L₂. Thus, in this section of the study, the acquisition order of seven grammatical morphemes of Amharic was analyzed to lay a foundation for the detail analysis of the grammatical errors committed by the target group in the next section (4.2).

The morphemes under the study were: plural marker /-očč/, present progressive marker /ijjə-/, accusative marker /-n/, passive marker /tə-/, definite marker /-u/, copula ‘nəw’, and possessive marker /jə-/. These morphemes were selected because: (i) All of them are basic forms than allomorphs. Most of the morpheme acquisition study findings show that basic form of the morpheme is acquired before its allomorphs (Brown, 1994). (ii) These morphemes have wider distribution in the language. Hence, it is necessary to concenter them while preparing curriculum, textbooks and so forth for foreigners. To investigate the acquisition order of these morphemes, first a specific definition for the obligatory occurrence of each morpheme was given. Then Bilingual Syntax Measure was designed in order to elicit the target morphemes via twenty-one fill-in-the-blank questions: three questions for each morpheme. Each question followed a given cartoon picture that guided the respondents to utter the target morphemes. Based on the picture, the students were tested using the oral test at the end of March and another written test one week later. The results of these tests were discussed below.

4.1.1. Analysis of Each Target Morpheme

4.1.1.1. Plural Marker /-očč/¹

Amharic like English makes a morphological distinction between singular and plural though it is never an /-s/ rather an /-očč/. Getahun states that,

የነጠላ ቁጥር ስሞች ነጠላነታቸውን የሚጠቁም ምልክት የላቸውም። የብዙ ቁጥር ስሞች ግን ብዙነታቸውን የሚገልፅ ምልክት አላቸው የስሞችን ብዙነት በሁለት መንገድ መግለጽ ይቻላል አንደኛው መንገድ ቅጥያ በመጨመር ሲሆን፣ ሁለተኛው መንገድ ስሙን በመድገም ነው። (ጌታሁን፣ 1989:75)

The overall idea of this quotation is that Amharic has no affix to mark singularity but it has two ways of showing plurality of the noun: through affixation and by repeating the noun.

The suffixes: /-očč/ and /-wočč/² are affixed to mark plurality and the prefix /innə-/³ is attached to proper nouns and some pronouns to indicate the collection of them. In this study, the plural marker /-očč/, as in example (1) below, was studied by excluding its variant /-wočč/ and others.

¹Baye has different view concerning the role of /-očč/. For further discussion see his book: *jamarña səwasw* (1994:69-75).

^{2,3} See Getahun (1997:75-77) for further discussion.

hulət bet-očč all-u
two house-PL exist-3PL.SBJ
'There are two houses'

The studies in other languages like English showed that the base morpheme is acquired earlier than its allomorph (Dulay and Burt, 1982). Hence, this is one of the reasons for the above exclusion due to the assumption that all of these linguistic entities cannot be acquired simultaneously. So, I preferred /-očč/ since it is the base morpheme for /-wočč/ and it is also the widely distributed and used morpheme to mark plurality in Amharic.

To assess the abilities of the learners' usage of the plural marker /-očč/, three pictures that contained: thirteen plates, two men, and two women were provided in the BSM⁴ (see pictures: 1.1, 8.1 and 21.1 in appendix i). The respondents' acceptable answers for the plural morpheme test were: /**sahnoč**/ 'plates', /**wəndoč**/ 'men' and /**setoč**/ 'women' as in:

- (2) asrasost **sahn-oč** all-u
thirteen plate-PL exist-3PL.SBJ
'There are thirteen plates.'
- (3) hulət **wənd-oč** all-u
two male-PL exist-3PL.SBJ
'There are two men.'
- (4) hulət **set-oč** all-u
two female-PL exist-3PL.SBJ
'There are two women.'

⁴ See appendix i. In this material, some grammatical morphemes were omitted intentionally to limit the questions from providing clue about the target morphemes for the examinees. For further discussion see Dulay and Burt's book: *Language Two* (1982: 203).

Table 2: Data Summary for Plural Marker /-očč/

Form verses Meaning	Type of Test	
	Oral	Written
	Number	Number
+Form +Vocabulary	32	29
+Form -Vocabulary	3	2
-Form +Vocabulary	3	5
-Form -Vocabulary	-	2
Total	38	38

In the oral test, thirty-two students affixed the correct morpheme to the correct words. Three students wrote incorrect words while describing the picture such as: /šimaglewoč/ ‘old men’ instead of /wəndočč/ ‘males’ and /inatoč/ ‘mothers’ instead of /setočč/ ‘females’; however, they used the plural marker correctly. Three students also did not identify the morpheme but used the correct words.

In the written test, twenty-nine students affixed the correct plural suffix to the correct words. Five students attached the correct marker but to the incorrect words. Two of the remaining four students used the correct words; however, they did not provide the target suffix. There were also two instances where no answers were given.

4.1.1.2. Present Progressive Marker /ijjə-⁵

Both English and Amharic have progressive markers, but these markers are different in their pronunciation, writing/spelling and position of affixation. According to Baye (1994:93) the morpheme /ijjə-/ is prefixed to the verb both in the present progressive and past progressive tenses; however, they take the present and the past form of the auxiliary /nəw/ ‘be’ respectively. For this study, /ijjə-/ was treated in present progressive tense as presented in (5) below due to the assumption that the present progressive is acquired before its past counterpart (Brown, 1994).

⁵For further discussion see Baye (1994:93-94)

(5) *issu inč’ət ijǰə-səbbər-ə nəw*
 He wood PROG-break-3SG.M.SBJ AUX.be.PRS.3SG.M.SBJ
 ‘He is breaking wood.’

Three different pictures were offered in the elicitation to check the learners’ ability to correctly identify /ijǰə-/. Each of these pictures indicated a continuous activity such as writing (see pictures: 7, 13, and 17.1 in appendix i). The suitable answers for progressive morpheme test were: /ijǰəwərədə nəw/, /ijǰəwəta nəw/, /ijǰəsafə nəw/⁶ as seen in (6-8) below.

(6) *samson dərəǰa ijǰə-wərəd-ə nəw*
 Samson step PROG-go down-3SG.M.SBJ AUX.be.PRS.3SG.M.SBJ
 ‘Samson is going down a step.’

(7) *alemu dərəǰa ijǰə-wət-a nəw*
 Alemu step PROG-go up-3SG.M.SBJ AUX.be.PRS.3SG.M.SBJ
 ‘Alemu is going up a step.’

(8) *jon fidəl ijǰə-saf-ə nəw*
 John alphabet PROG-write-3SG.M.SBJ AUX.be.PRS.3SG.M.SBJ
 ‘John is writing an alphabet.’

Table 3: Data Summary for Progressive Marker /ijǰə-/

Form verses Meaning	Type of Test	
	Oral	Written
	Number	Number
+Form +Vocabulary	26	21
+Form -Vocabulary	7	9
-Form +Vocabulary	3	5
-Form -Vocabulary	2	3
Total	38	38

⁶MLAESALs pronounced the progressive marker as /ijǰə-/ instead of /ijǰə-/. For this error, further explanations are given in the error analysis part of this study.

marker to the nouns in the obligatory grammatical environment, and two out of six attached to incorrect words.

4.1.1.4. Passive Marker /tə-/

In English, the passive voice is not marked but constructed using the *verb to be* plus the *past participle* form of the transitive, whereas, in Amharic the morpheme /tə-/ is attached to the verb to mark passive voice construction (Baye, 1994:236-237). This study treated the structures in 13 below.

- (13) bet bə-ginbəñña tə-gənnəb-a
house PP-builder PASS-build.PST-3SG.M.SBJ
'A house was built by the builder.'

The learners' ability to use the passive marker /tə-/ was assessed from the utterances they produced in describing three pictures. The pictures showed: a glass which was broken by a man, a log which was chopped by a man, and a thief who was arrested by a policeman (see pictures: 15.2, 19.2, and 20.3 in appendix i). The acceptable answers obtained from the learners were: /təsəbərə/, /təfələtə/ and /tasərə/⁸ as in (14), (15), and (16) below correspondingly.

- (14) birč'č'iko bə-solomon tə-səbər-ə
glass PP-Solomon PASS-brake.PST-3SG.M.SBJ
'A glass was broken by Solomon.'

- (15) gind bə-ḵon tə-fələt-ə
log PP-John PASS-chop.PST-3SG.M.SBJ
'A log was chopped by John.'

- (16) leba bə-polis t-asər-ə⁹
thief PP-police PASS-arrest.PST-3SG.M.SBJ
'A thief was arrested by the policeman.'

⁸MLAESALS has some difficulties to pronounce the Amharic trill /r/. Further explanations were provided in the error analysis section of this study. ⁹In Amharic two vowels cannot go together so to regularize this rule the weak vowel /ə/ is omitted from the morpheme in this particular case.

Table 5: Data Summary for Passive Marker /tə-/

Form verses Meaning	Type of Test	
	Oral	Written
	Number	Number
+Form +Vocabulary	6	4
+Form -Vocabulary	2	1
-Form +Vocabulary	28	23
-Form -Vocabulary	2	10
Total	38	38

The data from the oral test showed that twenty-eight students did not affix the passive marker to the verbs that they supplied to express the actions shown on the pictures. However, a small minority of the students (six) responded correctly. Two students supplied the passive marker, but with the incorrect word. The first student uttered /təsənətəkə/ ‘PASS-crack’ rather than /təsəbbərə/ ‘PASS-braek’ and the second one also used /təkofərə/ ‘PASS-dig’ instead of /təfəllət’ə/ ‘PASS-chop’. There were two cases where no answers were given.

The written test result for this morpheme indicated that twenty-six students did not use the passive marker but twenty-three of them used the correct words. Five students utilized this morpheme, but one of them affixed it to incorrect words. There were also seven learners who gave no answers.

4.1.1.5. Definite Marker /-u/

In English, the article *the* shows definiteness, and it is not an affix but rather a separate lexeme which precedes the noun; whereas, in Amharic the morphemes /-u/,¹⁰ /-w/¹¹ and /-wa/¹² are suffixed to the nouns to mark definiteness. Hailu (1967:111) stated that “the suffix /-u/ which has two different functions, (i) masculine definite article (also affixed to the plural substantives), (ii) third person singular masculine p.s. [possessive suffix pronoun]”

^{10, 11} Baye (1994: 82) and Getahun (1997: 81-83) explain that /-u/ and /-wa/ are definite markers of masculine and feminine nouns respectively. ¹² /-w/ is the variant form of /-u/ which is attached in the environment where the final sound of the word is vowel. This is just to regularize the sound system of Amharic since in Amharic; two vowels cannot go together consequently.

As observed from the above discussion, the morpheme /-u/ has variants and another grammatical roles in the language. These forms and roles of /-u/ may not be acquired at the same time when one learns Amharic as a second language. Therefore, in this study, the focus is only on the form /-u/ and its role of definite marking as in the example in (17) below.

- (17) bərr-u aroge nəw
 door-DEF old COP.be.PRS.3SL.M.SBJ
 ‘The door is old.’

To discover the definite marker /-u/ some pictures were incorporated in the Bilingual Syntax Measure. The pictures showed: a doctor who takes a note from his patient, a boy who indicates directions to another person, and a snake which seems ready to bite a man (see pictures: 5.3, 9.3 and 12.2 appendix i).

The acceptable answers for the definite morpheme test were: /**hakimu**/ ‘the doctor’, /**lijū**/ ‘the boy’ and /**ibabu**/ ‘the snake’ as in (18), (19), and (20) respectively.

- (18) **hakim-u** mastawəša ji-jiz-all
 doctor-DEF note 3SG.M.SBJ-take.PRS-AUX
 ‘The doctor takes the note.’

- (19) **lij-u** ak’t’ač’č’a ji-t’ək’k’um-all
 boy-DEF location 3SG.M.SBJ-indicate.PRS-AUX
 ‘The boy indicates the location.’

- (20) **ibab-u** jəmm-ji-n-naddəf ji-məsl-all
 snake-DEF REL.3SG.M.SBJ-PASS-PRS.bit 3SG.M.SBJ-seem-AUX
 ‘The snake seems to bit.’

Table 6: Data Summary for Definite Marker /-u/

Form verses Meaning	Type of Test	
	Oral	Written
	Number	Number
+Form +Vocabulary	14	12
+Form -Vocabulary	2	1
-Form +Vocabulary	22	22
-Form -Vocabulary	-	3
Total	38	38

In the oral test, fourteen students affixed the definite marker /-u/ to the correct words. Twenty-two students uttered the correct words but they did not affix the definite marker morpheme to them. Two students uttered /*šimagle*/ ‘old man’ instead of /*hakim*/ but they attached the definite marker /-w/ to it.

On the other hand, the written test data showed that twenty-five students did not affix the definite marker to the specific and obligatory grammatical environments, and twenty-two of them used the correct words. The other twelve students answered the questions by providing the correct morpheme and the correct words. Only one student used the incorrect word and affixed /-w/ in the place where /-u/ was required.

4.1.1.6. Copula ‘nəw’¹³

The copula /*nəw*/ ‘be’ exists both in English and Amharic. In English, it follows the subject and precedes the complement (Bender, 1974); whereas, in Amharic, it comes sentence final position. Getatchew explains that:

¹³ The morpheme /*nəw*/ also serves as an auxiliary in progressive tenses. For further discussions see Baye (1994: 93-94). Here it was studied only when it appeared as a copula. For this case, see Getachew (1974: 139-154).

Amharic (=Amh) and other “modern” Semitic languages of Ethiopia on the other hand, use the copula regularly. In fact an equative sentence in Amh is ungrammatical if the copula is missing. In other words, there does not seem to exist any condition in Amh where the equative main sentence could be introduced without some form of the copula. (1974:139)

The copula was here studied only in the statement form of a present tense with third person singular masculine subject as illustrated in (21) below.

- (21) jĥh ač’č’ir bəg nəw
 this short bəg COP.be.PRS.3SG.M.SBJ
 ‘This is a short sheep.’

The students were asked to identify the copula from the pictures which showed: a small baby with his mother, a man who holds black shoe with his right hand, and a woman who has long hair (see pictures: 10.1, 11.1 and 14.1 in appendix i). /**tinš nəw**/ ‘It is small.’, /**čama nəw**/ ‘It is shoe.’ and /**rəjm nəw**/ ‘It is long.’ were the acceptable answers as shown in (22), (23) and (24) respectively.

- (22) ĥj-wa-mm **tinš nəw**
 child-GEN-FOC small COP.be.PRS.3SG.M.SBJ
 ‘Her child is also small.’

- (23) t’ik’ur **čama nəw**
 black shoe COP.be.PRS.3SG.M.SBJ
 ‘It is black shoes.’

- (24) meri s’əgur-wa **rəjm nəw**
 Mary hair- GEN.3SG.F long COP.be.PRS.3SG.M.SBJ
 ‘Mary’s hair is long.’

Table 7: Data Summary for Copula /nəw/

Form verses Meaning	Type of Test	
	Oral	Written
	Number	Number
+Form +Vocabulary	29	28
+Form -Vocabulary	2	1
-Form +Vocabulary	5	7
-Form -Vocabulary	2	2
Total	38	38

From the total number of the respondents twenty-nine students used the copula with the correct words in the oral test. In addition, two students also utilized the copula but with the incorrect words: /wəfram nəw/ ‘is fat’ instead of /rəžžm nəw/ ‘is long’ and /ačir nəw/ ‘is short’ rather than /tinnš nəw/ ‘is small’. Five students omitted the copula and used only the correct complements, and there were two who gave no answers.

Concerning the written test result, twenty-nine students correctly used the copula; however, one of them used the copula with incorrect words. Seven students did not identify this morpheme, but they used the correct word. There were also two who did not answer.

4.1.1.7. Possessive Marker /jə-/

The morpheme /jə-/ has various grammatical roles without changing its form. Hailu (1967:104) explains that “the [jə-] complex must have a minimum of two substantives....the first type of [jə-] complex expresses possession; the second type of [jə-] complex expresses materiality or the nature of the staff of which the second, the object obtained by the second substantive, is made.” Some of the genitive role of the morpheme /jə-/ are: purposive, causative, instrumental, locative, and possessive. In Amharic, possession can also indicated through different affixes depend on the person in a sentence (Baye, 1994: 80 and Getahun, 1997: 136-137). Here, I focused only on the morpheme /jə-/ and its grammatical role of indicating possession as exemplified in (25) below.

(25) *jə-kəbbədə* *bet*
 POSS-Kebede house
 ‘Kebede’s house’

The pictures presented to elicit the possessive marker were: a man’s suitcase, a beggar’s long right hand and a thief who has stolen a female’s purse and ran away (see pictures: 2.2, 4.1 and 6.1 in appendix i). The correct answers were: /*jəməkoniŋ*/ ‘Mekonnen’s’, /*jələmaŋ*/ ‘beggar’s’ and /*jəset*/ ‘female’s’ as seen in (26-28) below.

(26) *jə-məkoniŋ* *borsa wəddək’-ə*
 POSS-Mekonnen suitcase fall.PST-3SG.M.SBJ
 ‘Mekonnen’s suitcase fell’

(27) *jə-ləmaŋ* *k’əññ ijj rəžžim ji-məs-l*
 POSS-beggar right hand large 3SG.M.SBJ.seem.PRS-AUX
 ‘A beggar’s right hand seems long.’

(28) *leba jə-set borsa nətk-o ji-rot-al*
 robber POSS-set bag snatch-3SG.M 3SG.M.SBJ.run.PRS-AUX
 ‘A robber snatched the female’s bag and runs away.’

Table 8: Data Summary for Possessive Marker /*jə*-/

Form versus Meaning	Type of Test	
	Oral	Written
	Number	Number
+Form +Vocabulary	21	15
+Form -Vocabulary	6	7
-Form +Vocabulary	8	11
-Form -Vocabulary	3	5
Total	38	38

The number of the students who provided the correct answer in the oral test was twenty-one. These students answered the correct words with the possessive marker /jə-/. However, eleven students did not use the possessive marker in their utterances. Among them three students incorrectly uttered the word /**abat**/ ‘father’ instead of /ləmmañ/ ‘beggar’. Six students attached the possessive morpheme to incorrect words.

In the written test, twenty-two students utilized the morpheme in the obligatory grammatical environment; seven of them used incorrect words. And the rest sixteen students did not use the morpheme; however, eleven of them used the correct words.

In this section of the study, I have presented and discussed the data which were gathered to identify the acquisition order of seven grammatical morphemes of Amharic. In the subsequent section, those data presented from section 4.1.1 to 4.1.7 above were summarized and analyzed to infer the acquisition order of the target morphemes based on Group Score Method.

4.1.2. Learning Order of the Morphemes

In this research, to calculate the acquisition order of the seven grammatical morphemes two scoring systems were used: Scoring System 1 and scoring System 2. In Scoring System 1, “no answers” were not included in the data, on the assumption that ignorance of the vocabulary word did not imply ignorance of the morpheme. This particular scoring system is concerned strictly with use of the morphemes; therefore, 2 points were awarded for the correct morpheme and correct word, 1 point was awarded for the malformed morpheme and incorrect word and no points were awarded for the incorrect morpheme, regardless of correct or incorrect word.

On the other hand, I also used to score the results a second time using an alternative system (Scoring System 2) in order to better interpret the results. This system concerned with meaning in language acquisition rather than just form. Grammatical morphemes carry properties of the language’s grammar, but knowledge of the grammar does not imply knowledge of the actual usage of the language. If a student can identify a correct morpheme, but not a correct word, the meaning is lost and communication does not succeed. Therefore, because meaning is desired as much as form, this scoring system awarded 2 points for a correct morpheme and a correct word and no points for an incorrect morpheme and a correct word or for an incorrect morpheme and

an incorrect word or for “no answer.” Based on these calculations, the percentage correctness of the targeted morphemes in the target group’s utterances is shown in the figures below.

Figure 1: Percentage Correct for Oral and Written Data Using Scoring System 1

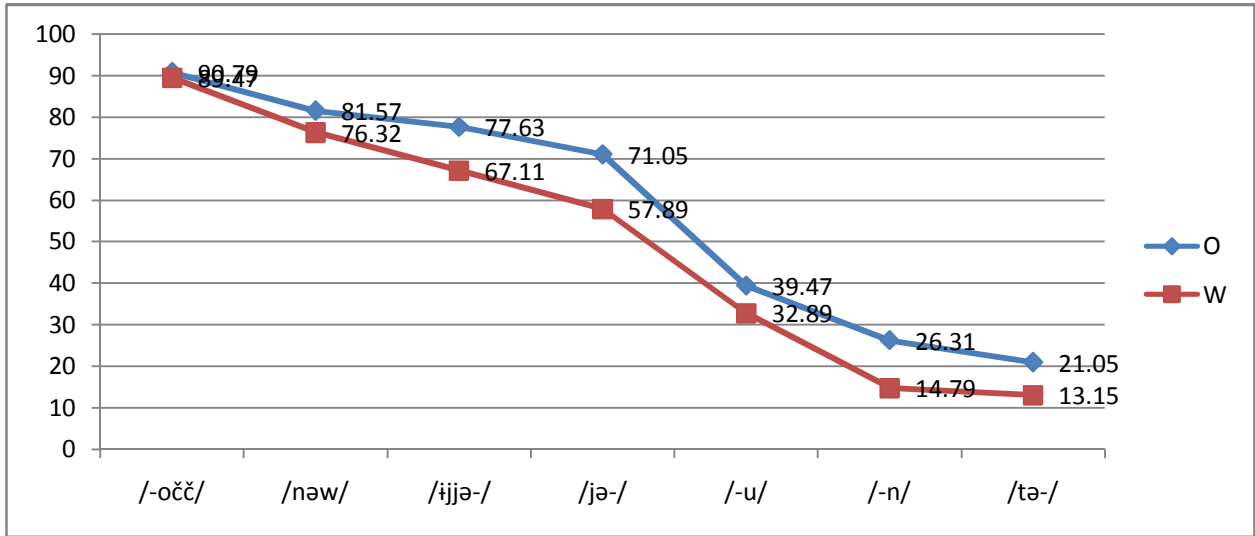
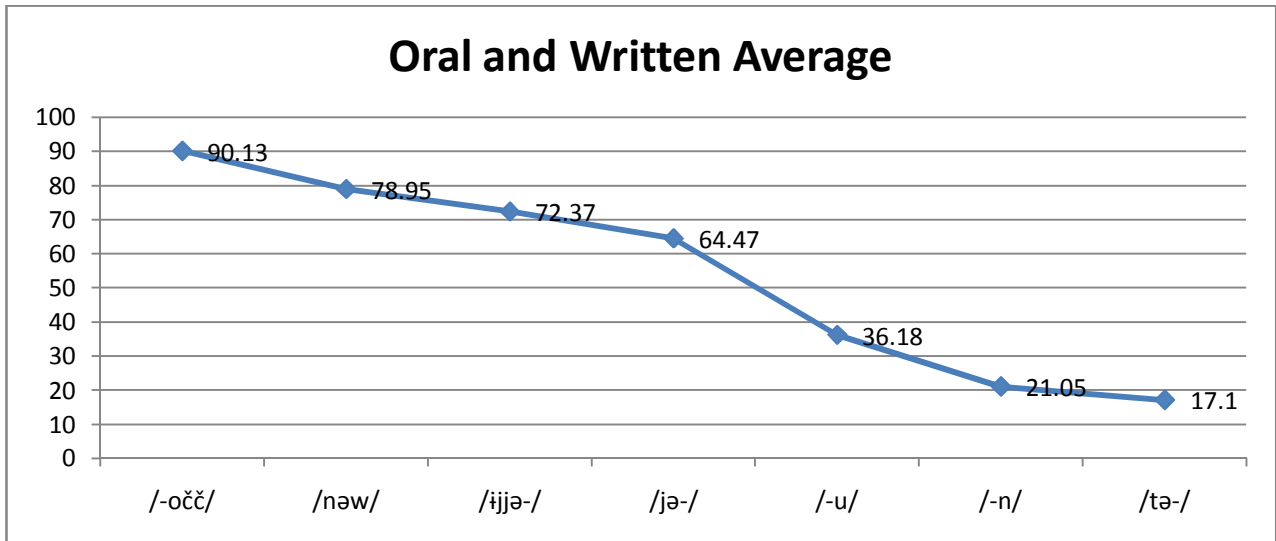


Figure 2: Average Percentage Correct for Oral and Written Data Using Scoring System 1



Key: O= Oral Test Result

W= Written Test Result

Figure 3: Percentage Correct for Oral and Written Data Using Scoring System 2

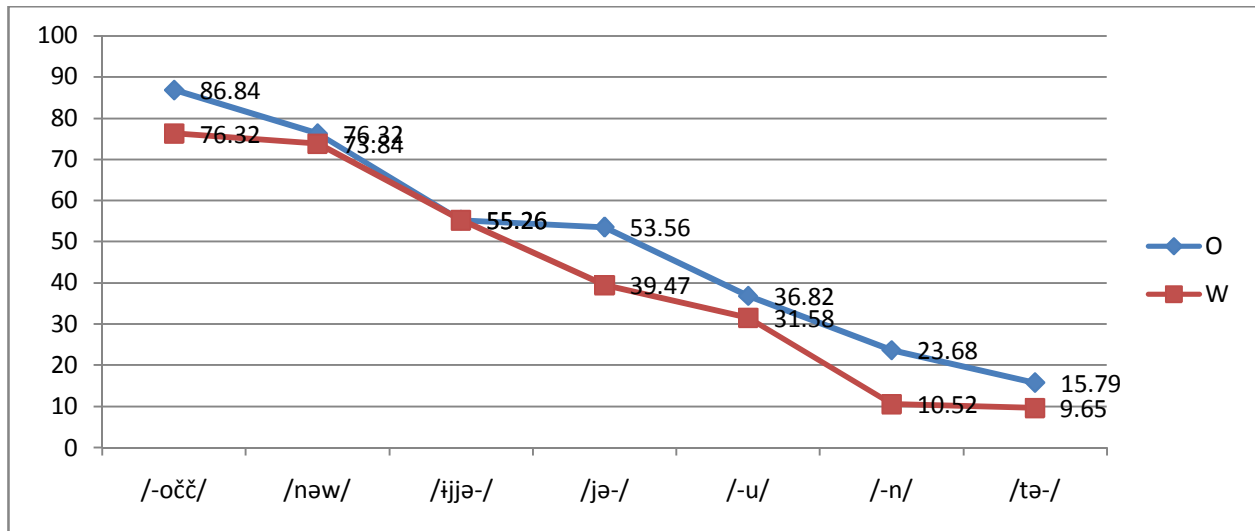
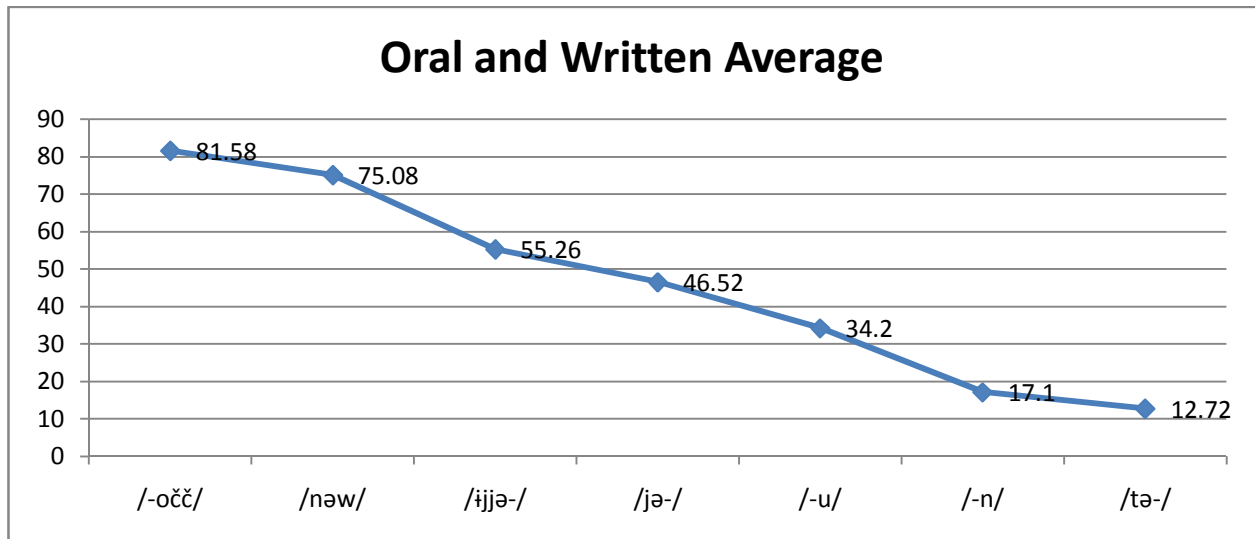


Figure 4: Average Percentage Correct for Oral and Written Data Using Scoring System 2



The figures presented above, help to infer the acquisition order of the targeted grammatical morphemes. As has observed form both Scoring System 1 and Scoring System 2 for the oral and written tests data, most of the students mastered early the plural marker /-očč/, the copula /nəw/ and the progressive marker /ijjə-/, however, the definite marker /-u/, the possessive marker /jə-/

and the passive marker /tə-/ were acquired later. Hence, the rank that shows the earliest to latest acquired target morpheme is presented in table 9 below.

Table 9: The Acquisition Rank of Grammatical Morphemes of Amharic

Rank	Morpheme
1	Plural /-očč/
2	Copula /nəw/
3	Progressive /ijjə-/
4	Possessive /jə-/
5	Definite /-u/
6	Accusative /-n/
7	Passive /tə-/

4.1.3. Form versus Form and Meaning

As seen from the data in table 10 below, the students' performance of identifying the correct morpheme both in the oral and written tests was better than providing the correct vocabulary and form together.

**Table 10: Percentage Difference between
the Two Scoring Systems**

Morpheme	Scoring System 1 (SS1)		Scoring System 2 (SS2)		Average for SS1	Average for SS2
	Oral	Written	Oral	Written	O&W	O&W
/-očč/	90.79	89.47	86.84	76.32	90.13	81.58
/nəw/	81.57	76.32	76.32	73.84	78.95	75.08
/ijjə-/	77.63	67.11	55.26	55.26	72.37	55.26
/jə-/	71.05	57.89	53.56	39.47	64.47	46.52
/-u/	39.47	32.89	36.82	31.58	36.18	34.2
/-n/	26.31	14.79	23.68	10.52	21.05	17.1
/tə-/	21.05	13.15	15.79	9.65	17.1	12.72

4.1.4. Interlanguage Interference

In the data, some interlanguage transfers were observed. Most of the students performed well in the first acquired four morphemes: plural marker /-očč/, copula /nəw/, present progressive marker /ijjə-/ and possessive marker /jə/. This seems a positive transfer because all of these grammatical morphemes have the English equivalent grammatical morphemes: /-s/, /is/, /ing-/ and /-s'/ respectively. However, their forms and pronunciation are different from the Amharic ones; they carry relatively similar grammatical functions and meanings. On the contrary, the last three lately acquired morphemes: definite marker /-u/, accusative marker /-n/ and passive marker /tə-/ seem the reflection of negative transfer since in English definiteness and passive are not marked by affixes; and there is no accusative marker too.

Here, we have identified the acquisition order of seven grammatical morphemes of Amharic while MLAESALs learn Amharic as a second language. In the next section several of the most regular grammatical errors which were observed in the data of the preceding section and others which were collected half a day per two weeks interval for six months were discussed.

4.2. Grammatical Errors

Committing errors is natural in the processes of learning first language, second language and foreign language. However, the proponents of behavioral theory do not accept errors as an indicator of learning progress. Rather, they see errors as unacceptable act of a learner. Therefore, they strongly argue that errors must be avoided (Littlewood, 1984 and Wilkins, 1972). On the other hand, the mentalists believe that errors are implications of the process of language learning in the minds of the learner. So, they treat errors as normal phenomena of learning and also good indicators of the learners' language learning progress (Brown, 1994 and Ellis, 1994). In this section, both Creative Construction (bases its foundation on Mentalists' view) and Contrastive Analysis (bases its foundation on Behaviorists' view) were taken as working framework to analyze the target group's phonological and morpho-syntactic errors.

4.2.1. Phonological Errors

Sounds are the building block of speech languages. Children first learn the simplest and basic sounds while acquiring their first language. Then they acquire the more complicated ones in progress. In the same fashion, second language learners also learn the simplest linguistic elements first and then try to learn the complex ones in the later stage of their learning (Ellis, 1994).

Scholars such as Corder (1976), Dulay and Burt (1982) and Brown (1994) claim that mother tongue interference occurs often in the learning process of the phonological aspects of a second language. If some of the sounds of the target language are not found in the learners' mother tongue, then they become hindrances for correct pronunciation. This was also observed in the data which were collected from MLAESALs. They committed variety of phonological errors, but the most regular ones are identified, classified and analyzed in the subsequent subsections.

4.2.1.1. Interference Errors

Speech sounds have their own place of articulations and manner of articulations. Some sounds are also found only in a particular language but not in another. For instance, most Ethiopian languages have ejective sounds that do not exist in English. In the case of Ethiopian languages, some sounds are common for all but other sounds may be typical features of only a few languages. For instance, sounds produced by exhaling air are common for all Ethiopian languages while implosive sounds (like /d/) are found in few languages like: Oromo and Konso. With regard to Amharic, Bender claims that:

Amharic is a very typically Ethiopian language, having six of the eight phonological markers and sixteen of the eighteen grammatical features... A few striking features of Amharic phonology give the language its characteristic sound when one hears it spoken. These are: the weak, indeterminate stress; the frequent gemination of consonants; the frequency of central vowels; and the use of automatic helping vowel. (1976: 75)

The above quotation shows the most common features of the Amharic sound system. Almost all of these linguistic features are not regularly found in English sound system. For example, gemination is the most common linguistic feature in Amharic but not in English. On the contrary, stress is prominent in English unlike in Amharic. Hence, these kinds of linguistic

deviations between Amharic and English can be potential causes for interference errors. Therefore, some of the most common and regular interference errors of MLAESALs are presented below.

4.2.1.1.1. Substituting Ejective Sounds

Amharic has five ejective sounds: /p'/, /t'/, /k'/, /č'/ and /s'/ (Baye, 1994:18-19 and Getahun, 1997: 8). Bender describes the production of these sounds as follows:

These sounds are produced by closing the glottis (the vocal cords), holding the closure while the lips or tongue articulate the consonant, and then opening the glottis and releasing the air pressure built up below the larynx. The release of the glottis comes either just at the same time or a little after the lips or tongue finishes their part of articulation. (1976:77-78)

Moreover, Ferguson (1976:67) states that ejective sounds are one of the remarkable features of the Amharic sound system. He further explains that ejective sounds are less frequent than their non-ejective counterparts. MLAESALs faced difficulties to produce and to identify ejective sounds. One can simply understand this problem from the data presented (29) through (33) below.

(29) Pronunciation of /p'/

NASs	MLAESALs	Gloss
/p'ap'p'as/	/papas/	'bishop'
/itjop'p'ija/	/itjopja/	'Ethiopia'

(30) Pronunciation of /t'/

NASs	MLAESALs	Gloss
/mæt't'a/	/məta/	'He came.'
/t'əffañ/	/təfañ/	'I have forgotten.'

(31) Pronunciation of /k'/

NASs	MLAESALs	Gloss
/k'ələm/	/kələm/	'ink'
/k'ida/	/kida/	'Fetch!' (2SG.M)

(32) Pronunciation of /č'/

NASs	MLAESALs	Gloss
/ruč'č'a/	/ruča/	'running'
/wanč'a/	/wanča/	'cup'

(33) Pronunciation of /s'/

NASs	MLASALs	Gloss
/hins'a/	/hinsa/	'building'
/gibs'/	/gbis/	'Egypt'

The aforementioned data (29-33) illustrated that the learners could not pronounce the complex ejective sounds of Amharic: /p'/, /t'/, /k'/, /č'/ and /s'/ (see additional data from page 1 of appendix ii). The pattern of the substitution of these sounds by non-ejective ones is as follows:

Substitution of Ejectives	
Ejective	Non-ejective
(34) /p'/	→ /p/
/t'/	→ /t/
/k'/	→ /k/
/č'/	→ č/
/s'/	→ /s/

A contrast between the consonant phonemes of Amharic and English can give an answer for the question why the students substituted the ejective sounds with the non-ejective counterparts.

Table 11: Amharic Consonant Phonemes

Manner of Articulation	Place of Articulation					
	Bilabial	Labiodental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stops						
vls	p		t		k	ʔ
vd	b		d		g	
ej	p'		t'		k'	
Fricative						
vls		f	s	š		h
vd			z	ž		
ej			s'			
Affricatives						
vls				č		
vd				č'		
ej				č'		
Nasals	m		n	ɲ		
Laterals			l, r			
Semivowels	w			j		

Adapted from Baye (1994: 17-18)

As one can see from table (11) above, ejective sounds of Amharic are: /p'/, /t'/, /k'/, /č'/ and /s'/. These sounds have some similarities in their manner of articulation and some differences in place of articulation as seen from the description in (35) below.

- (35) a. /p'/ voiceless, bilabial, stop, ejective
 b. /t'/ voiceless, alveolar, stop, ejective
 c. /k'/ voiceless, velar, stop, ejective
 d. /č'/ voiceless, palatal, affricate, ejective
 e. /s'/ voiceless, alveolar, affricate, ejective

From the descriptions in (35a) to (35e), all ejective sounds are voiceless; however, /p'/, /t'/ and /k'/ are stops and /č'/ and /s'/ are affricates. On the other hand, in their place of articulation, the following differences are observed: /t'/ and /s'/ are alveolar ones, but /p'/, /k'/ and /č'/ are bilabial, velar and palatal respectively. Getahun (1997:8) states that the sounds: /p/, /t/, /k/, /č/ and /s/ are the non-ejective counter parts of them.

The consonant chart below shows the absence of ejectives in English sound system.

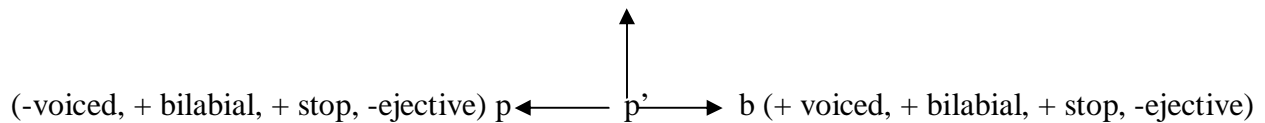
Table 12: English Consonant Phonemes

Manner of Articulation	Place of Articulation							
	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive vls vd	p b			t d			k g	
Fricative vls vd		f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ			h
Affricat-ives vls vd					č ǰ			
Nasals	m			n			ŋ	
Laterals				l				
Semivowels	w				r	j		

Adapted from: Roach (1993: 65)

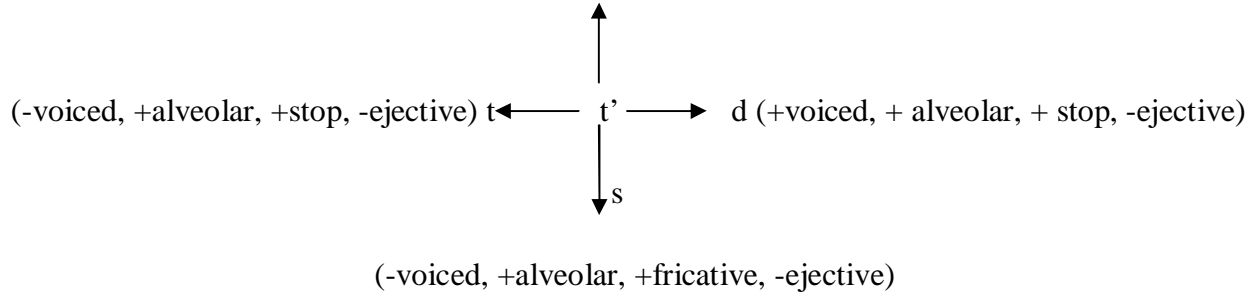
As could be found in the table (12) above English does not have ejective sounds. This seems to cause the substitutions of the ejective sounds with their nearest non-ejective counterparts. These sounds exist both in Amharic and in English; and have some common features with the ejective ones as analyzed from (36) to (40) below.

(36) (-voiced, +bilabial, +stop, +ejective)



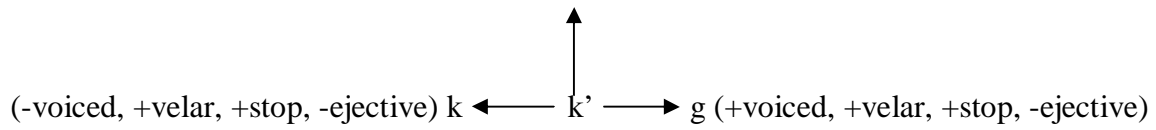
In (36) above, /p'/ and /p/ share more features than /b/. However, /p'/ is [+ejective] but /p/ is not. When we compare /b/ with /p'/, it differs from /p'/ in two features: [+voiced] and [-ejective]. The difference between /p'/ and /b/ is greater than the distinction between /p'/ and /p/. Thus, the students tend to substitute /p/ for /p'/ rather than using /b/.

(37) (-voiced, +alveolar, + stop, + ejective)



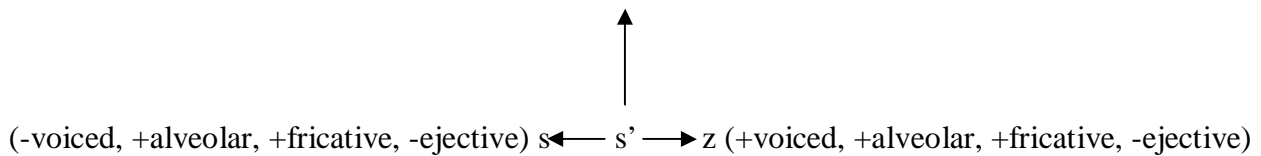
As seen in (37) above, /d/ is the [+voiced] counter part of /t/ and /t'/. But /t'/ is not only [-voiced] but also [+ejective]. The only difference between /t'/ and /t/ is, the former is [+ejective] but the later is not. On the other hand, /s/ differs from /t'/ in two features: [-stop] and [-ejective]. /t/ has three features in common with /t'/: [-voiced], [+alveolar] and [+stop]. So, the students preferred /t/ instead of /d/ and /s/ to substitute /t'/.

(38) (-voiced, +velar, +stop, +ejective)

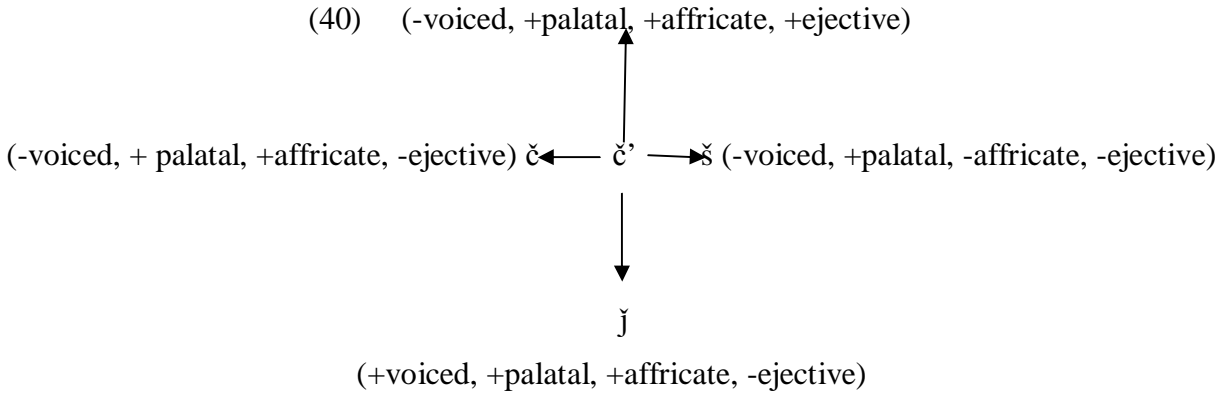


In the case of /k'/, it shares two common features with /g/: [+velar] and [+stop]. On the other hand, /k'/ and /k/ have three features in common: [-voiced], [+velar] and [+stop]. Place of articulation is common across these three sounds. /g/ is different from the rest in phonation; and /k'/ is distinct from /k/ and /g/ in [+ejective]. From this analysis, we can conclude that due to the highest similarity between /k/ and /k'/, the learners used /k/ in place of /k'/ while speaking Amharic.

(39) (-voiced, +alveolar, +fricative, +ejective)



All /s/, /s'/ and /z/ are alveolar fricative sounds. /s/ and /s'/ are similar in phonation because both of them are [-voiced]; however, /s/ is [-ejective]. The sound /z/ differs from /s'/ in two features: [+voiced] and [-ejective]. When one compares the degree of similarity among these three sounds, /s/ is the nearest to /s'/. That is why, the students used /s/ in place of /s'/ in the target language.



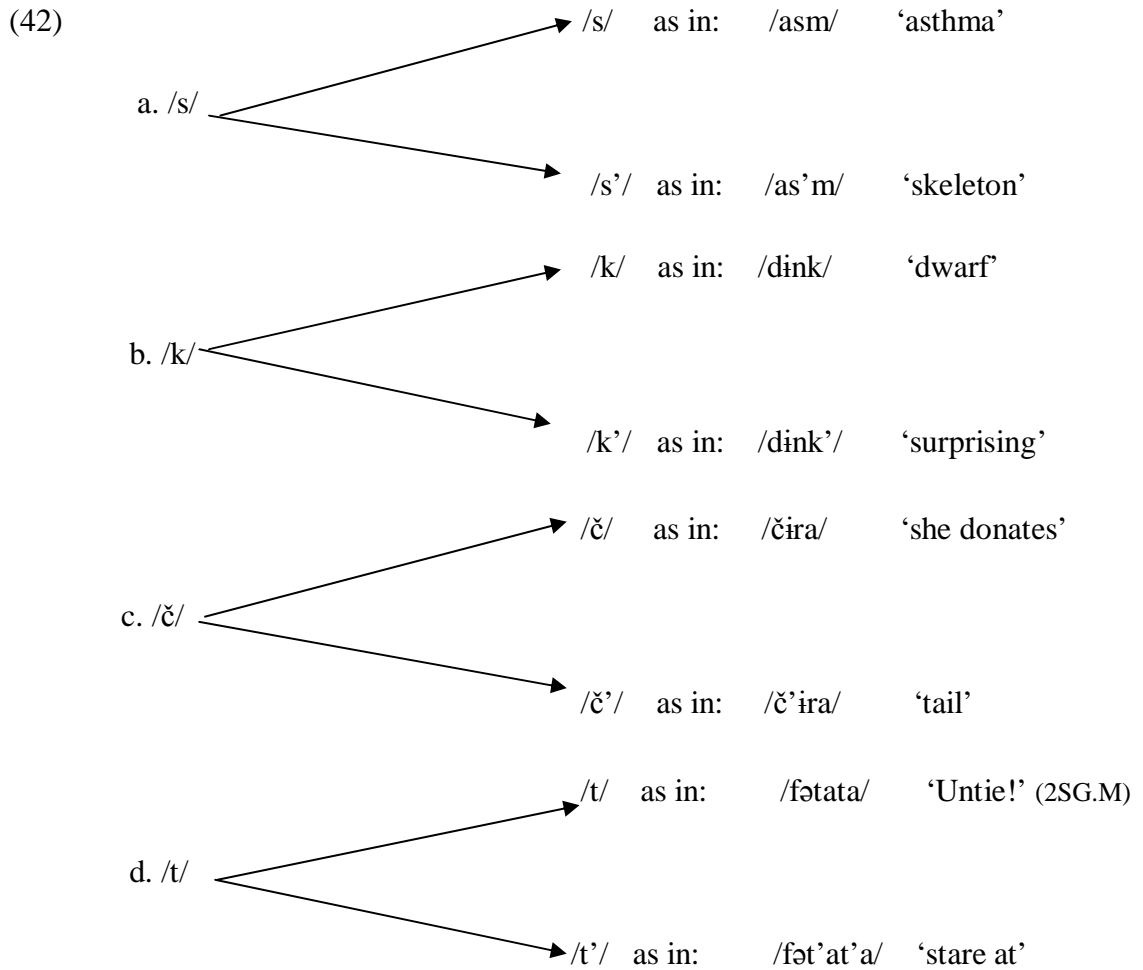
The description (40) above shows the degree of similarity between /č'/ and other three sounds. All /č'/, /č/, /ǰ/ and /š/ are palatal however, the first three are [+affricate] and the fourth one is [-affricate]. Except /ǰ/, all of them are [-voiced] sounds. Another difference among /č'/, /č/, /ǰ/ and /š/ is that /č/, /ǰ/ and /š/ are [-ejective] whereas /č'/ is [+ejective]. Thus, /č/ has three features in common with /č'/: [-voiced], [+palatal] and [+affricate]. As a result the students tend to use /č/ in place of /č'/.

As has been observed from sections (36) to (40) above, the students are inclined to substitute the ejective sounds by the [-voiced] counter parts of them (/p/, /t/, /k/, /s/ and /č/) rather than the [+voiced] ones (/b/, /d/, /g/, /z/ and /ǰ/) since the formers have most common features with their ejective counter parts than the later ones. On the other hand, the learners faced problems not only to produce the ejective sounds but also to identify when they hear them. The ejective sounds and the sounds that were used to replace them by the MLAESALs are phonemic. They often cause meaning differences as has exemplified in (41) below.

(41)

Pronunciation			
NASs		MLAESALs	
a. /as'ım/	'skeleton'	/asm/	'skeleton'
/asm/	'asthma'	/asm/	'asthma'
b. /dɪnk'/	'surprising'	/dɪnk/	'surprising'
/dɪnk/	'dwarf'	/dɪnk/	'dwarf'
c. /č'ıra/	'tail'	/čıra/	'tail'
/čıra/	'she donate'	/čıra/	'she donate'
d. /fət'at'a/	'stair at'	/fətata/	'stair at'
/fətata/	'Untie!' (2SG.M)	/fətata/	'Untie!' (2SG.M)

As observed from the data presented in column 3 of the table in (41) above, MLAESALs pronounced two different phonemes of Amharic as a single phoneme as explained in (42) below.



This shows that MLAESALs not only mispronounced the ejective sounds but they also could not communicate properly due to the semantic problems caused by these mispronunciations. For example, in (42a), NASs pronounce the two lexemes /as'm/ 'skeleton' and /asm/ 'asthma' distinctively. In the first case, the medial sound is /s'/ and in the second case /s/. These two sounds are phonemic. Hence, they could cause meaning difference; however, MLAESALs pronounced them in the same way: /asm/. This causes communication barriers with other people.

4.2.1.1.2. Substituting Trill Sound

In English, /r/ has three variations: (a) null (not pronounced) common in the British pronunciation; for example, as in car /ka/, carpenter /kɑpɪntə/ and chair /tʃeɪ/; (b) /ɾ/ (retroflex) common in American pronunciation as in car /kɑɾ/ and chair /tʃeɪɾ/; and (c) /r/ (flap) common in British as well as American pronunciation as in grade /greɪd/, Britain /brɪtɪn/ (Roach, 1993: 50). On the other hand, Amharic has only the trill /r/. In most cases the learners used the flap /r/ in place of the Amharic trill /r/ as data (43) below (see further data from page ii of appendix ii).

(43) Pronunciation of /r/

NASs	MLAESALs	Gloss
/bərr/	/bər/	‘door’
/rəhab/	/rəhab/	‘hunger’

This substitution of the trill /r/ by the flap /r/ seems the result of mother tongue interference.

4.2.1.1.3. Problem of Gemination

Sounds in a given language may vary in length of time they take for production. If the non-geminated sound takes time ‘i’ then the geminated one may take ‘i+t’ time. This means one requires more time to produce the earlier one. Gemination is one of the distinctive features of Amharic. Ferguson states that:

Length is lexically distinctive in consonants and there is a grammatical process in at least one major word class, such as nouns or verbs, in which a short (‘single’) consonant is replaced by a long (‘double’, ‘geminate’). In some languages such as English, geminate consonants occur only at grammatical boundaries, as in compound words like pen-knife (nn), book-keeper (kk), or at word boundaries such as seem more. ... All the consonants of Amharic except /h/ occur both short and long, although the long consonants are less common than the short ones (ratio of i to ii). (1976:68)

The above quotation indicates that all consonants of Amharic except /h/ can be geminated in word medial and/or word final position(s). In Amharic, the presence or absence of geminated sound in a given word may cause meaning disparity; however, the students regularly uttered both

tongue since gemination is curious in English; (ii) the unpredictable nature of the grammatical conditions of gemination in Amharic. Hence, MLAESALs faced obscurity of differentiating and pronouncing the geminated sounds from the non-geminated ones. They used non-geminated ones to utter the geminated too. The absence of the geminated sound in the place where it is needed brings meaning difference as observed from the above data since gemination is phonemic in Amharic.

4.2.1.1.4. Problems in Syllable Structure

Native Amharic speakers pronounce words such as /fikr/ ‘love’ as it is transcribed here. The syllable structure of this mono-syllabic word is CVCC. It is the most complex syllable structure in Amharic (Getahun (1997:22-24). The target group regularly inserted the high front unrounded vowel /i/ following a consonant cluster at word initial position as exemplified in the data (45) below.

(45)

NASs	MLAESALs	Gloss
/lib/ CVCC	/libis/ CCVC	‘cloth’
/hizb/ CVCC	/hizib/ CCVC	‘people’
/dink/ CVCC	/dnik/ CCVC	‘surprising’
/s’idk’/ CVCC	/sdik/ CCVC	‘blessing’
/gils’/ CVCC	/glis/ CCVC	‘clear’

The syllable structure of Amharic words is more restricted than that of English words. In English, up to three-consonant clusters are possible at word initial as in /stri:m/ ‘stream’. It is also possible to have up to four consonants in word final position as in /stju:dnts/ ‘students’ (Roach 1993: 73). The syllable structure, CCVC is one of the common syllables in English unlike Amharic. Therefore, the students changed the Amharic CVCC type syllable into the English CCVC type syllable structure. This appears to be the result of mother tongue interference.

4.2.1.1.5. Problem of Stress

When MLAESALs began to construct simple sentences, they recurrently stressed the final syllable of the verb. For instance,

(46) a. **isu mäsəhəfkidus anəbə' b-ə**
he bible read.PST-3SG.M.SBJ
'He read a bible.'

b. **ine misa bəla-'ku**
I lunch eat.PST-1SG.SBJ
'I ate lunch.'

In data (46) above, the stressed syllables were more prominent than the unstressed ones. One can feel that these stressed syllables are louder than the unstressed ones. So, Roach (1993) states loudness as one of the components of prominence. If one of the syllables in a given word is longer than the others, there is a tendency for that syllable to be heard as stressed one. This feature was observed in the corpora.

In English stress is phonemic. For instance, there are meaning differences between each pair of words in (47) below due to stress.

(47) Stress in English

<u>Noun</u>	<u>Verb</u>
pe'rmit	permi't
re'cord	reco'rd
pre'sent	prese'nt

Nevertheless, Bender (1976:77) says that Amharic has “the weak indeterminate stress”. And, stress does not bring meaning difference in Amharic. So, all syllables in a given construction are also stressed equally. Thus, MLAESALs imported their experience of stressing a syllable in a word while speaking Amharic as presented in the data in (46a) and (46b) above. This appears to be an interference error.

4.2.1.2. Developmental Errors

4.2.1.2.1. Omission of /r/ and Addition of /l/

The students substitute the trill sound /r/ by lateral /l/ as has seen from the data in (48) below.

(48) Omission of /r/

NASs	MLAESALs	Gloss
a. /wəraʃ/	/wəlaʃ/	‘the person who heir’
b. /wərrədə/	/wələdə/	‘He/it decreased.’
c. /fərəs/	/fələs/	‘horse’

From the data it seems that the substitution was taken place when /r/ is found inter-vocalically. This substitution causes communication difficulty with native speakers. Besides, it sometimes brought meaning difference since /r/ and /l/ are phonemic in Amharic. For instance, the word /wələdə/ (48b) means ‘he gave a birth’ but originally they wanted to convey /wərrədə/ ‘He/it decreased’. This showed that how this substitution causes meaning differences and communication difficulty. The confusion may be because of the trill Amharic /r/ being unfamiliar to American English-speakers sounds a bit like an /l/ and so is harder to remember.

4.2.1.2.2. Omission in Palatalization

Palatalization is one of the phonological processes in Amharic. If a second person singular feminine imperative form (2SG.F.IMP) of the verb which ends with alveolar sound in a verb final position is followed by the front vowel /i/ or /e/, the alveolar sound is changed into palatal sound, and this process is called complete palatalization (Baye 1994: 44-46). Ferguson states that:

Palatalization occurs in verbs and verbal nouns; for example, when the final consonant of the verb stem is one of the dentals /t d t' s z s' n l/, it is palatalized to the corresponding /c j c' š ž c' ñ y/ in the second person feminine singular of the imperative and in the first person singular of the gerund (being doubled in the latter). (1976:66)

Baye also explains that:

በድዳዊና በላንቃዊያን መካከል ያለው ልዩነት [+ላይ]ነት ነው። ይኸውም ላንቃዊያን [+ላይ] ሲሆኑ፣ ድዳዊያን [-ላይ] መሆናቸው ነው። እንግዲህ ድዳዊያን ላንቃዊያን ሆነዋል ካልን፣ ከ[-ላይ]ነት ወደ [+ላይ]ነት ተለውጠዋል ማለታችን ነው። ይህ ለውጥ ደግሞ ሊመጣ የቻለው፣ ቀደም ሲል በመለስተኛ ላንቃዊነት እንደተመለከተው ድዳዊያን [+ላይ] ከሆነ ድምጽ ፊት ሲገኙ ነው። (ባየ፣ 1986:48)

The general idea of this quotation is that the difference between alveolar and palatal sounds is [+high]. This means the palatal sounds are [+high] but the alveolar ones are [-high]. Therefore, if we said the alveolar sounds are changed into palatal sounds, we mean that they are changed from [-high] into [+high]. This change is also comes ...due to the presence of the alveolar proceeding the [+high] sound.

NASs follow this palatalization rule explained by Ferguson and Baye when uttering a word which contains the alveolar sound and is immediately followed by the [+high] sound as presented in column three of table (49) below.

(49)

	Perfective	Pronunciation 2SG.F.IMP		
		NASs	MLAESALs	Gloss
1	/gottətə/	[gottiči]	/gotti/	‘Pull!’
2	/wəssədə/	[wissəji]	/wisədi/	‘Take!’
3	/sət’t’ə/	[sič’č’i]	/siti/	‘Give!’
4	/ləbbəsə/	[libəši]	/libəsi/	‘Wear!’
5	/dəwwələ/	[dəwwiji]	/dəwli/	‘Call!’
6	/fət’t’ənə/	[fit’əni]	/fitəni/	‘Harry up!’
7	/azzəzə/	[izəži]	/izəzi/	‘Order!’
8	/annəs’ə/	[annič’i]	/ansi/	‘Build!’
9	/səbbərə/	[sibər’i]	/sibəri/	‘Break!’

As observed from data (49) above, if the final sound of the verb is alveolar, and if the speaker wants to construct second person feminine singular imperative form, the alveolar sound is completely changed into palatal sound due to the influence of the [+high] vowel /i/ (see additional data from page 2 of appendix ii). The pattern of this change is:

Sound Change

(50)	<u>Alveolar</u>	<u>Palatal</u>
	/t/	→ /č/
	/d/	→ /ǰ/
	/tʰ/	→ /čʰ/
	/s/	→ /š/
	/z/	→ /ž/
	/sʰ/	→ /čʰ/
	/n/	→ /ň/
	/l/	→ /j/
	/r/	→ r ^y

MLAESALs did not apply this palatalization pattern when constructing a second person singular feminine imperative form of the verbs as observed in column four of the above table. They simply uttered the alveolar sounds and the [+high] vowel separately. This seems to be one of the developmental errors.

4.2.1.2.3. Error due to Similarity in Pronunciation

Sometimes different words may have relatively similar sound arrangements as seen from the data in (51) below. This similarity makes it difficult to identify and to use those words properly. As a result, semantic problems arise in the communication of the interlocutors.

(51) Words with Relatively Similar Pronunciation

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| a. /šurruba/ ‘Ethiopian hair style’ | /šorba/ ‘sup’ |
| b. /arba/ ‘forty’ | /arb/ ‘Friday’ |
| c. /isr/ ‘bound’ | /assr/ ‘ten’ |

The pairs of words in (51a) through (51c) have some similarities in pronunciation (see additional data from page 2 of appendix ii). Thus, MLAESALs used the word in the left column in place of

the right one or vice versa. These kinds of words are difficult for them to distinguish one from another. As a result, they make errors by using them interchangeably. This simply seems to be a developmental error.

4.2.1.2.4. Vowel Substitution

MLAESALs faced difficulties in using the high central unrounded vowel /ɨ/ in its obligatory place. They tended to substitute this vowel with the high front unrounded vowel /i/. For instance, they uttered:

(52) Substitution of /ɨ/

NASs	MLAESALs	Gloss
a. inǰəra	inǰəra	‘Ethiopian bread’
b. ine mət’t’ahu	ine mətahu	‘I came.’
c. issu jǰhedall	isu jǰhedal	‘He will go.’

In the case of (52a) to (52c), the high central unrounded vowel /ɨ/ was replaced by the high front unrounded vowel /i/. This substitution does not seem to be the absence of Amharic /ɨ/ vowel in the English vowel system because when we compare the two languages vowel systems, all Amharic vowels are also found in the English vowel system as observed in tables (13) and (14) below.

Table 13: Amharic Vowel Phonemes

	Front Unrounded	Central Unrounded	Back rounded
High	i	ɨ	u
Mid	e	ə	o
Low		a	

Adapted from: Bender et al (1976), Baye (1994:21-22) and Getahun (1997:14)

Table 14: English Vowel Phonemes

	Front Unrounded	Central Unrounded	Back Rounded
High	i	ɨ	u
Mid	e	ə	o
Low	æ	a	ɔ

Adapted from: George, L. and Henry, L. cited in Taddese (1964:107)

Therefore, their tendency to substitute the high central unrounded vowel of Amharic did not seem due to mother tongue interference. This too seems to be a developmental error.

4.2.2. Morpho-syntactic Errors

Morphology is one of the common features of most speech languages. But, some languages are morphologically richer and more conservative than another. Amharic is a good example of a morphologically conservative type of languages (Edward, 1965). On the other hand, English is one of morphologically non-conservative languages. MLAESALs committed several morpho-syntactic errors when they learn Amharic. The most prominent and persistent ones are identified, classified and discussed in the subsequent subsections.

4.2.2.1. Interference Errors

4.2.2.1.1. Difficulties in Usage of Postposition and Preposition

Usage of prepositions is one of the challenges for MLAESALs. They sometimes omitted the preposition and at other times used one preposition incorrectly in place of another preposition. Their most frequent preposition usage errors are discussed below.

4.2.2.1.1.1. Omission of the Postposition /gar/

Amharic has prepositions (e.g. /kə/ ‘from’, /lə/ ‘to, for’ etc.) and postpositions (e.g. /ga/, /gar/ etc.). MLAESALs regularly omitted /gar/ in obligatory places. For instance,

- (53) a. **kə-gadəña-je** **nəbər-'ku**
 PP-friend-GEN.1SG COP.be.PST-1SG.SBJ
 *‘I was my friend’
 ‘I was with my friend.’
- b. **kə-wəndim-e** **bəl'a-n**
 PP-brother-GEN.1SG eat.PST-1PL.SBJ
 ?‘I ate my brother’
 ‘I ate with my brother.’

- c. **kə-wiha məkina ijə-tərag-ə** **nəw**
 PP-water car PROG-clean-3SG.M.SBJ AUX.be.PRS.3SG.M.SBJ
 *‘He is washing car from water’
 ‘He is washing a car by using water.’

The data in (53a) and (53b) above show that MLAESALs used /kə/ and omitted /gar/. As a result, the structure becomes grammatically unacceptable and the meanings of the sentences are also confusing. In the case of (53c), /kə/ was added unnecessarily. If we analyze the semantics of this sentence, the meaning was disturbed due to the incorrect usage of the preposition /kə/. Semantically, the preposition /kə/ indicates source but here the water was not the source of the washing of the car rather it was the means of the washing. This implies the over usage of the preposition /kə/ in place of another prepositions.

4.2.2.1.1.2. Addition of the Preposition /bə/

/bə/ is a preposition which indicates location, instrument, etc in Amharic. In the corpora it was observed that this preposition was over used in the learners’ utterances. For instance, in data (54) below, they prefixed /bə/ to the nouns unnecessarily.

- (54) a. **bə-bet** **nəbər- 'ku**
 PP-home COP.be.PST-1SG.SBJ
 ‘I was at home’
- b. **kəsət bəhwala bə-bet** **arə' f-u**
 afternoon PP-home rest.PST-3PL.SBJ
 ?‘They rested at home afternoon’
 ‘They rested at home in the afternoon.’

Native Amharic speakers did not use the preposition /bə/ as it was used in (54a) and (54b) above. The sentence **/bəbet nəbər' ku/** ‘I was at home.’ is the direct reflection of the English preposition usage because when they want to express the meaning in (54a) in English, they used the sentence ‘I was at home.’ This indicates that the learners in this case use the preposition /bə/ in the Amharic construction due to mother tongue interference.

4.2.2.1.2. Addition of Amharic Suffixes to English Bases

Code-mixing is one of the common features of bilingual or multilingual individuals in particular and society in general (Wardhaugh, 1986 and Hoffmann, 1991). A person whose mother tongue is ‘x’ may take some linguistic elements from his/her mother tongue while using a second or a foreign language ‘y’. Even if this is natural, they are taken as errors in the error analysis literature. So, if one imports non-obligatory word regularly from ones first language or any other language, it is considered as an error. MLAESALs took recurrently some words from English and tried to affix Amharic grammatical morphemes to them as seen from the data (55) below.

- (55) a. **məmhír** **sentəns-oč** **nəgr-o-ñ-al**
teacher sentence-PL tell.PST.3SG.M.SBJ-1SG.OBJ-AUX
‘A teacher told me sentences.’
- b. **isu** **ijə-fiš-ə** **nəw**
he PROG-fish-3SG.M.SBJ AUX.be.PRS.3SG.M.SBJ
‘He is fishing.’
- c. **iswa** **ijə-wətər-əč** **nəbər**
she PROG-water-3SG.F.SBJ AUX.be.PST.3SG.M.SBJ
‘She was watering.’

In (55a) above the noun /**sentəns**/ is an object and they took this word from English unnecessarily since it has an Amharic equivalent /arəftə-nəgər/ ‘sentence’. They also affixed the Amharic plural marker to it. Likewise, the data in (55b) and (55c) show that the learners took English verbs and affixed Amharic morphemes to them.

On the other hand, they also affixed English suffixes on Amharic base as in (56) below.

- (56) **izih** **wənbər-s** **alə**
here chair-PL exist.PRT.3SG.M.SBJ
*‘Here is chairs.’

In the data in (56), the word /**wənbər**/ is an Amharic countable noun. This noun can take the plural marker /-očč/ but MLAESALs attached the English plural marker suffix /-s/ to this noun.

They committed this kind of errors recurrently. This appears to be both a developmental and an interference error.

4.2.2.2. Developmental Errors

4.2.2.2.1. Omission of the Accusative Marker /-n/

In Amharic, however, the subject is understood either from the place where it occurs (the beginning of the sentences) or from the subject pronouns marker to the verb. In other words, the nominative case is not marked. On the other hand, the accusative is marked by the suffix /-n/ as in the examples (57a) and (57b) below.

(57) a. ine bərr-u-n zəgga-hu
I door-DEF-ACC close.PST-1SG.SBJ
'I closed the door.'

b. inñə-issu bota-w-n ji-awk-all-u
PL-he place-DEF-ACC 3PL.SBJ-know.PRS-AUX-3PL.SBJ
'They (will) know the place.'

The data elicited from MLAESALs showed that in most cases, they omitted the accusative marker /-n/ as illustrated in the data (58a) and (58b).

(58) a. **ine məskot-u zəga-'ku**
I window-DEF close.PST-1SG.SBJ
'I closed the window.'

b. **isu bota awk-a'l**
he place know-AUX.3SG.M.SBJ
'He (will) know(s) place.'

The sentences presented in (58a) and (58b) above are ungrammatical, because the accusative marker was omitted. Furthermore, in (58b) the subject pronoun marker was not attached to the verb. This seems simplification of the rule. As mentioned in the literature, language learners prefer to simplify the complex constructions and also first focus on simple constructions and then

acquire the complicated ones through time (Brown, 1994 and Cook, 2001). The correct constructions of the above ungrammatical sentences are:

- (59) a. *ine məskot-u-n zəgga-hu*
 I door-DEF-ACC close.PST-1SG.SBJ
 ‘I closed the door.’
- b. *isu bota-w-n ji-awk’-all*
 he place-DEF-ACC 3SG.M.SBJ-know.PRS-AUX
 ‘He (will) know(s) the place.’

4.2.2.2.2. Simplification of Definite Marker /-u/

Amharic has a definite marker /-u/ and /-wa/. Baye (1994: 97) states that these morphemes are attached to masculine and feminine nouns respectively. On the other hand, /-u/ changes into /-w/ if it is preceded by a vowel because the language does not allow two vowels to go together consecutively. The learners regularly omitted the definite marker /-u/ while constructing a sentence that demands it.

- (60) a. **wiša ijə-rabə nəw**
 dog PROG-hunger AUX.be.PRS.3SG.M.SBJ
 *‘Dog is hungering.’
- b. **lij- ijə-təmar-ə nəbər**
 child PROG-learn-3SG.M.SBJ AUX.be.PRS.3SG.M.SBJ
 *‘Child was learning’

The subjects of the sentence in (60a) and (60b) above need a definite marker but in both cases the MLAESALs omitted it. This is the result of simplification of the complex rules. So, it appears to be a developmental error.

4.2.2.2.3. Omission of Causative Marker /as-/

The Amharic suffix /as-/ attaches to the verb to mark causative (Baye, 1994:121-122). If the verb takes this affix, the subject and the object of the sentence should be marked on the verb otherwise the structure becomes ungrammatical and meaningless. If so, the subject and object

marked to the verb and the causative marker is omitted, then the sentence again becomes ungrammatical. The data below showed omission of the causative marker /as-/ from the verb.

- (61) a. * **huneta fənədək-ə-ñ**
 situation smile.PST-3SG.M.SBJ-1SG.OBJ
- b. ***isu dəsət-ə-ñ**
 He entertaine.PST-3SG.M.SBJ-1SG.OBJ
- c. * **tom hed-ə-ñ**
 Tom go.PST-3SG.M.SBJ-1SG.OBJ

In the data (61a) to (61c) above, the subjects and the objects of the sentences are marked by /-ə/ and /-ñ/ respectively. The forms of the verbs require the causative marker /as-/. However, the learners regularly omitted it. This is another developmental error.

4.2.2.2.4. Overgeneralization of /-əčč/

In Amharic, /-əčč/ is a third person singular feminine subject marker. If the subject of the sentence is /isswa/ 'she', the native speaker will affix this morpheme to the verb in order to mark the subject pronoun as presented in (62) below.

- (62) **isswa bīrič'č'ik'k'o səbbər-əčč**
 she glass break.PST-3SG.F.SBJ
 'She broke a glass.'

As seen from the data in (63a) to (63c), the learners generalized that the affix /-əčč/ is the marker of a feminine subject in any person.

- (63) a. **anti wəsəd-əč**
 you (2SG.F) take.PST-3SG.F.SBJ
- b. **anti anəbəb-əč**
 you (2SG.F) read.PST-3SG.F.SBJ
- c. **ine kəfəl-əč**
 I pay.PST-3SG.F.SBJ

From the data in (63a) and (63b) /**anti**/ ‘you (2SG.F.SBJ)’ is a second person feminine subject form. So it demands its own person marker suffix /-ši/ as in (64) below. But, the learners most of the time used the suffix /-əčč/ instead of /-ši/. In (63c), /**ine**/ ‘I’ is a first person subject pronoun which is neuter for gender but the learners’ affixed /-əčč/ to the verb in order to mark feminine gender.

(64) aničči anəbbəb-ši
 you (2SG.F.SBJ) read.PST-2SG.F.SBJ
 ‘You read.’

The data in (63) shows that the learners generalized /-əčč/ to mark feminine subjects of the sentences to the verb without respect to a person. This is simply the result of over generalization of this rule. Hence, it appears to be a developmental error.

4.2.2.2.5. Overgeneralization of /-ku/

When MLAESALs constructed a sentence with present perfect tense and first person singular subject, they affixed /-ku/ (first person subject marker) on all verbs. For instance,

(65) a. **ine təñä-'ku** instead of ine təñña-hu
 I sleep.PST-1SG.SBJ I sleep.PST.1SG.SBJ
 ‘I slept.’ ‘I slept.’

b. **ine gəfa-'ku** instead of ine gəffa-hu
 I push.PST-1SG.SBJ I push.PST.1SG.SBJ
 ‘I pushed.’ ‘I pushed.’

c. **ine bəla-'ku** instead of ine bəlla-hu
 I eat.PST-1SG.SBJ I eat.PST-1SG.SBJ
 ‘I ate.’ ‘I ate.’

As seen from data (65a) to (65c) the learners affixed /-'**ku**/ to the verbs. In this case the native speakers of Amharic affix /-hu/ rather than /-ku/ to indicate the subject pronoun of the sentence is

first person singular. However, the suffix /-ku/ can be also attached to several other verbs to mark a first person singular subject. For instance,

- (66) a. ine mäs'həf-u-n anəbbəb-ku
 I book-DEF-ACC read.PST-1SG.SBJ
 'I read the book.'
- b. ine wədə bet hed-ku
 I PP house go.PST-1SG.SBJ
 'I went to home.'

Here in (66a) and (66b), the affixation of /-ku/ is correct and acceptable in the language. So, the learners, by ignoring the exceptional ones like in (65) above, over-generalized /-ku/ and tried to attach it to all verbs. This appears to be a developmental error.

4.2.2.2.6. Overgeneralization of /-ə/

The morpheme /-ə/ is affixed on the verb to indicate a third person masculine subject as (67a).

- (67) a. sələmon astəmar-ə
 Solomon teach.PST-3SG.M.SBJ
 'Solomon taught.'

The learners extended the use of /-ə/ to mark first and second person subjects as well. This can be seen from the data below.

- (68) a. **ine** **kəfəl-ə**
 I pay.PST-3SG.SBJ
- b. **antə** **anəbbəb-ə**
 you (2SG.M) read.PST-3SG.M.SBJ

As one can see from the data (68a) and (68b) above, the subjects are /**ine**/ 'I' (in this case 'I' was uttered by male respondents) and /**antə**/ 'you (2SG.M)' respectively. But these subjects are ungrammatically marked by /-ə/ to the verbs. This seems due to their overgeneralization of the third person singular subject affix /-ə/ as singular masculine subject marker for any person.

4.2.2.2.7. Overgeneralization of the Verb Form /itəññalləhu/

In (69) below, column one contains the expressions which show Amharic commands for third person singular masculine. Column three of the table below illustrates the positive responses for the command. For instance, if the speaker utters /təñña/ ‘Sleep!’ the listener may reply, /itəññalləhu/ ‘I will sleep.’ if he agrees with it.

(69)

Command	Gloss	Response	Gloss
/təñña/	‘Sleep!’	/itəññalləhu/	‘I will sleep.’
/tənəs/	‘Stand up!’	/inəssalləhu/	‘I will stand up.’
/billa/	‘Eat!’	/ibəllalləhu/	‘I will eat.’

As seen in (70) below, MLAESALs, after acquiring the pattern in (69) column three above, tended to apply this pattern on another verbs which do not allow it. For example, for the command /k’uč’ bəl/ ‘Sit down!’ they replied /ikočaləhu/. Even though, this utterance seemed logically correct to MLAESALs actually it is ungrammatical and semantically null in the language. This error was the result of overgeneralization of the pattern in column three of the data (69) above.

(70)

Command	Gloss	Response	Gloss
k’uč’ bəl	‘Sit down!’	*ikočaləhu
bik’k’ bəl	‘Come out!’	*ibəkaləhu
zik’k’ bəl	‘Go down!’	*izəkaləhu

4.2.2.2.8. Overgeneralization of /-oññall/

Amharic native speakers use the morphemes /-o-ññ-all/ to the verb in (71) column ‘A’ below, to show the subject, object and auxiliary of the sentence respectively. For example, in the utterance /wəsd-o-ññ-all/ ‘He took me.’, the suffixes /-o-/, /-ññ-/ and /-all/ mark a third person singular masculine subject, a first person singular object and an auxiliary respectively.

(71)	A	Gloss for 'A'	B
	wəsd-o-ññ-all	'It/he took me.'	dino-ñ-al
	mətt-o-ññ-all	'It/he bit me'	k'uč'biło-ñ-al
	wəgt-o-ññ-all	'It/he injected me.'	təmro-ñ-al
	godt-o-ññ-all	'It/he hurt me.'	t'ət'to-ñ-al

The MLAESALs by generalizing the rule in column 'A', applied it to other verbs which do not fit this pattern as observed in data (71) column 'B'. For instance, they uttered /**dino-ñ-al**/. This expression is not only grammatically unacceptable but also semantically null in the language. Thus it appears to be a developmental error.

4.2.2.3. Other Morpho-syntactic Errors

4.2.2.3.1. Subject Verb Disagreement

Agreement of the verb with the subject of the sentence is very important to communicate effectively in Amharic. Most MLAESALs committed several errors of subject verb disagreement while trying to utter or construct a sentence. The recurrent ones are presented below.

4.2.2.3.1.1. Number Disagreement

Number agreement is one of the basic linguistic features between the subject and the verb of Amharic. But this feature is difficult for MLAESALs as seen in data (72a) to (72d) below.

- (72) a. **lij-oč məsəlal laj wət-a**
 child-PL ladder PP go up.PST-3SG.M.SBJ
- b. **wəf zəmər-u**
 bird sing.PST-3PL.SBJ
- c. **jə-gət'ər lij fijəl amət-a-ačəw**
 POSS-rural child goat bring.PST-3SG.M.SBJ-3PL.OBJ
- d. **izh sost inkulal alə**
 here three egg exist.3SG.SBJ

From data (72) above, one can observe several errors, but to be systematic in the analysis of this section, I focused only on the number disagreement errors. In (72a), the subject is a third person plural, so it needs the same person and number marker morpheme /-u/ to the verb, however, in

reality, the learners marked the subject incorrectly by /-a/ which is a third person singular male subject marker. In (72b), the subject is singular but it was marked to the verb by the morpheme /-u/ which indicates a third person plural subject. In the case of (72c), the adjective /sost/ ‘three’ and the noun /inkulal/ ‘egg’ do not agree in number. The quantifier /sost/ is plural but the noun that it modifies lost the plural marker /-očč/. Therefore, the sentence became ungrammatical. Furthermore, in (72d), /jəgətər lij/ ‘rural child’ is the subject of the sentence and was marked by the affix /-a-/ to the verb, however, the object /fijəle/ ‘goat’ is singular, but was marked by the third person plural object marker /-aččəw/ to the verb. Hence, from this discussion, one can put the general pattern of MLAESALs’ errors on number agreement as follows:

- | | | | | |
|------|-------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| i. | Plural subject | but | singular subject marker on the verb | as in: (72.a) |
| ii. | Singular subject | but | plural subject marker on the verb | as in: (72.b) |
| iii. | Singular object | but | plural object marker on the verb | as in: (72.c) |
| iv. | plural quantifier | but | singular noun | as in: (72.d) |

4.2.2.3.1.2. Gender Disagreement

In Amharic, the subject and the verb of a sentence should agree in gender. For example; if a subject of a sentence is a third person singular male, then /-ə/ is affixed to the verb to mark it. In this case, the subject agrees with the verb in gender so there may not be communication barrier too. However, the learners recurrently misused the subject markers and constructed ungrammatical sentences as follows:

(73) a. **iswa dəwəl-ə**

she call.PST-3SG.M.SBJ

b. **antə dəbtər aməta-š**

you (2SG.M) exercise book bring.PST-2SG.F.SBJ

c. **isu bəl-ač**

he eat.PST-3SG.M.SBJ

In sentence (73a) above, the subject of the sentence is /iswa/ ‘she’ but the verb contains the suffix /-ə/ a third person singular masculine subject marker. This disagreement between the subject and the verb makes the sentence ungrammatical. In (73b) and (73c) the subjects are

masculine but the affixes: /-š/ and /-ačč/ marked second person singular and third person singular feminine subjects respectively. Especially, MLAESALs generalized the morpheme /-ačč/ as feminine marker for all persons. For instance,

- (74) a. **ine mət-ač**
 I come. PST-3SG.F.SBJ
- b. **anti mət-ač**
 you(2SG.F) come.PST-3SG.F.SBJ

From their erroneous utterances, one can generalize that MLAESALs recurrently committed gender disagreement errors as follows:

- i. 1SG.F.SBJ marked by 3SG.F.SBJ marker /-ačč/ as in: (74.a)
- ii. 2SG.F.SBJ marked by 3SG.F.SBJ marker /-ačč/ as in: (74.b)

4.2.2.3.1.3. Person Disagreement

Personal pronoun affixes are attached to the verb to mark the subject or the object of a sentence in Amharic. The subject and its counterpart affixes on a verb should agree in person. But this was the most difficult task for MLAESALs. They uttered several flawed constructions as follows:

- (75) a. **iña kə gumuz-oč ij kuwas təčawə't-u**
 we PP gumuz-PL volleyball play.PST-3PL.SBJ
- b. **antə misa bəla-'n**
 you (2SG.M.SBJ) lunch eat.PST-1PL.SBJ
- c. **ine ina baləbet-e təčwaət-'ku**
 I and husband-GEN.1SG talk.PST-1SG.SBJ

In the case of (75a), the subject of the sentence is first person plural and it needs the subject marker /-n/. But, the students affixed /-u/ which marks third person plural subject. In the same fashion, in (75b), the subject is second person singular masculine which demands the person marker /-h/ as an affix on the verb. However, they affixed /-n/ the first person plural subject marker. Finally, in (75c), the subject is first person plural but the affix on the verb indicates first person singular subject. Generally, in all these cases the sentences became ungrammatical due to person disagreement between the subject and the verb.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1. Conclusion

The first section of this study shows that there is indeed an acquisition order when learning Amharic grammatical morphemes by adult monolingual American English-speaking Amharic learners. Out of the seven grammatical morphemes investigated, plural marker /-očč/ and passive marker /tə-/ were acquired first and last respectively. The learners also showed extreme difficulty with some grammatical features that were absent in their native language; for instance, accusative case marker /-n/ and passive marker /tə-/.

This study supports the proposition that interlanguage interference plays a role in grammatical morpheme acquisition. On the other hand, the students in this study seemed to have a grasp of the morphemes more so than on vocabulary. Knowledge and use of grammatical morphemes does not imply competence in the language. If the goal of language learning includes more grammar and form, then the students by extension, the teaching methods used have succeeded. However, if the goal of language learning is communicative ability, then the students still have many obstacles to overcome in their acquisition of the language.

The second part of this study also revealed that most the phonological errors were caused by mother tongue interference; and most of the morpho-syntactic errors were caused by overgeneralization of the target language rules. The later one seems the result of developmental errors which reflects the learners' attempts to construct hypothesizes about the target language from their limited experience. Some ambiguous errors also observed in the learners' language.

In the phonology part, the students committed interference errors in the form of substituting ejective sounds with their non-ejective counterparts, replacing the trill sound by flap one, problem of identifying geminated sounds in a word, using consonant cluster word initially, and stressing a syllable and so on.

On the other hand, some of the regular developmental errors in the phonological part were: of omission of the palatalization process in the construction of a second person imperative form of a verb which ends with an alveolar sound followed by the front vowel /i/, substitution of the vowel /i/ by the vowel /i/. Most of the persistent morpho-syntactic errors were developmental errors. However, there were several errors which appear to be caused by interference of mother tongue such as: difficulties in usage of preposition, affixation of the Amharic suffixes on English bases and affixation of the English morpheme in Amharic bases.

Omission of the accusative marker /-n/, simplification of the definite marker /-u/, omission of the causative marker /as-/, overgeneralization of the third person masculine singular subject marker /-əčč/, overgeneralization of the first person singular subject marker /-ku/, and overgeneralization of the morphemes /-o-ññ-all/ were some of the developmental morpho-syntactic errors observed in the target group's utterances. Most of the developmental errors were committed by the upper phases' students.

Some of the phonological errors such as: substituting the ejective sounds by the non-ejective counter parts; substitution of the vowel /i/ by /i/; problem of gemination; and substitution of the trill /r/ by the flap /r/ were focalized by the learners. So, these errors were regularly observed in almost all of the informants throughout the four phases.

5.2. Recommendation

The local language training schools, teachers, and textbook writers and curriculum designers should give consideration while presenting the seven morphemes under this study according to their rank. It is very important for teaching to be done systematically and in order of complexity. This is one of the effective ways of teaching and learning. Akanda (2001: 44) stated that “morphological processes be introduced and taught at different stages in line with the learners’ acquaintance with them as revealed in our database.”

To solve the problems of substitution of the ejective sounds by the non-ejective counterparts, one of the solutions is teaching and drilling them in minimal pairs in different positions. For instance,

	Gloss		Gloss
/dɪnk’/	‘surprising’	/dɪnk/	‘dwarf’
/k’ida/	Record!	/kida/	‘Break promise!’
/bək’k’ələ/	grown	/bəkkələ/	‘He/it spoiled.’

To minimize and to solve the phonological interference errors, it is important to prepare audio materials which contain the expressions and utterances that include the targeted sounds in a systematic way. For example to teach geminated sounds, first preparing a large list of the minimal pairs which contain geminated and non-geminated sounds by classifying in to groups and then recording them with glossing for each word of a single pair subsequently. This gives the chance for the students to practice better.

Developmental errors are normal in language learning. So the teacher should not consider them as failure of the learners for a given grammatical competency rather they should treat these errors as indicators of the learners language learning progress.

In the teaching of Amharic as a second language for foreigners, morphology should be given its right place. This means that the present imbalance in the students’ demand of Amharic and Amharic

teaching materials should be balanced. Teachers should also consider the distinction between the errors which reflect the learners linguistic competence and those called performance errors, and accordingly, tell their students in advance which errors will be considered competence ones. Consequently teacher's correction will be based on that classification of errors.

This study has a shed light on the manner in which students internalize the rules of the target language. It further shows that Error Analysis can help the teachers to identify in a systematic manner the specific and common language problems students have, so that they can focus more attention on these types of errors. Such an insight into language learning problems is useful to teachers because it provides information on common trouble-spots in language learning which can be used in preparation of effective teaching materials.

Adult students have to be helped not to over generalize the rule of grammar which they have already acquired. The correction of one global error in a sentence does more to make clear the speaker's intended message than the correction of several local errors in the same sentence. Adults do not like to be corrected too much. Over-correction causes embarrassment to most adults and it causes learners to lose confidence so selective error correction seems to be a more effective and enjoyable instructional technique. Teachers also should be well-equipped to help students minimize or overcome their language problem. They should employ contrastive and an error analysis technique in the teaching of Amharic since it is apparent that the target groups mother tongue (English) interferences with their use of the Amharic.

In this study only 45 students from different level of competence of Amharic involved for cross-sectional study. However, a longitudinal study on more subjects is feasible and necessary. Hence, further research using a larger population sample and focusing on a longer duration of the study might find a more precise measure of when and perhaps how acquisition occurs, as well as a clearer picture of the growth experienced by the native Amharic students. Furthermore, it is important to study the target group sociolinguistic competence too.