The Role of L2 Input in the Acquisition of English Non-Pleonastic Constructions to Reset L1 Parameters by Saudi Arabic Speakers

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Abstract

This study examines the acquisition of non-pleonastic English constructions by first-language (L1) Saudi Arabic speakers in second language (L2) English comprising two types of pleonasm: acronym pleonasms and semantics pleonasms. It is known that Arabic speakers tend to use redundant expressions in their native language to emphasize their ideas or clarify foreign terms. This study focuses on whether advanced Saudi Arabic speakers can reset their L1 parameters in the final state of English non-pleonastic construction acquisition. The acceptability judgment task was devised to elicit participants' judgments on these two types of pleonasms. Two groups joined the study: advanced Saudi Arabic speakers as the experiment group (n=40) and native English speakers as the control group (n=32). The experiment's results suggested that the advanced Saudi Arabic speakers failed to reset the L1 parameters in their judgments on acronym pleonasms. However, the findings showed the Saudi Arabic speakers' performance resembled that of the native English speakers with respect to semantics pleonasms. This study reveals that Saudi native speakers transfer their L1 properties in their L2 acquisition and fail to access UG to restructure their grammar because they lack extensive exposure to the L2 input of these constructions. The study supports the full transfer hypothesis in the acquisition of L2 constructions. In conclusion, this study provides valuable recommendations to the educational system in Saudi Arabia for implementing these constructions in curricula to enhance L2 input.

Keywords: acronym pleonasm, semantics pleonasm, Universal Grammar (UG), L2 input, transfer hypothesis, the parameter resetting hypothesis

1. Introduction

Pleonasms are used widely in languages that accept the repetition of words by adding modifiers that convey the same meaning within them. Examples of this include the Spanish phrase *aniversario annual* "annual anniversary", the German phrase *mündliches gespräch* "oral conversation", the Italian phrase *ma però* "(literally) but but" (Epoge, 2014, p. 107), and the Arabic phrase *jedn mubaligh* "very exaggerating." There are many definitions of pleonasms. According to Madu (2018, p. 162), "Pleonasm is the use of too many words to express a meaning within the same context," and the "unnecessary repetition of words having the same meaning in a sentence". Łyda and Warchał (2013, p. 85) stated that a "form of redundancy in language, pleonasm consists in the use of more words than is strictly necessary to convey a particular sense (Crystal, 2011, p. 296)". The word *pleonasm* is derived from the Greek word pleonasmos, which means "excess" (Muhammed & Meftin, 2016). It can be defined as using a word with another word that has a complete meaning by itself and can be used alone. The addition of such words is usually unnecessary, though in some instances they are intentionally used to attain a literary, linguistic, or poetic effect. Because these words often represent rhetorical repetition, they are often used to emphasize or strengthen an idea, a question, or a point of view (Fitriansyah & Rosmaidar, 2018).

Lack of understanding of the differences between pleonasm and redundancy has resulted in more common use of pleonasm (Chiari, 2007). Fitriansyah and Rosmaidar (2018) examined the type of and extent to which pleonasm is used in the TV series *The Walking Dead*. Nearly 165 pleonastic expressions were used across seven seasons, including both semantic and syntactic pleonasms. Most pleonastic functions were employed to intensify or emphasize the expressions. In semantics pleonasm, such words are used to provide additional information not provided in the semantic head. Fitriansyah and Rosmaidar (2018) stated that semantics pleonasm must provide new information rather than a single piece of information in the combined form.

Similarly, altered meanings in pleonastic phrases are held by adding information through semantics dependence, which could be insignificant. In such cases, the phrase is not considered to be wrong. Consequently, it can be assumed that there are different degrees of pleonasms, where some pleonastic characters are regarded as being more pleonastic than others. For instance, words such as "free gift" and "old custom" are pleonastic. However, "free gift" is considered to be more pleonastic than "old custom", given that the word "old" in the latter phrase provides new information. It is probable to think of customs as being either old or not so old.

Some examples of this phenomenon are "past memories," "final conclusion" and "new inventions." None of the adjectives provide additional information, and all are superfluous. In the phrase "new invention," "new" cannot be used as a modifier because "invention"

represents something original and unique. Maienborn et al. (2011), Murphy and Koskela (2010), and Cruse (2006) asserted that pleonasms are semantically odd or strange. One such example is a sentence such as "I kicked it with my foot," where the word "kick" already means to strike something with the foot. Thus, it adds no considerable new information to the sentence (Maienborn et al., 2011). In contrast, a sentence such as "I kicked it with my left foot" is not pleonastic. The adjective "left" modifies the expression "with my foot" (Cruse, 2006).

Łyda and Warchał (2013) investigated the problem of pleonastic developments in Polish–English interpretations. More specifically, their study examined how redundancy affects the target language in the output phase. The survey findings indicated certain factors are responsible for the Polish–English interpretation's pleonastic developments. These include the experience of the interpreter and the mode of understanding. The study further suggested that at early stages, the interpreters rely largely on the source language's syntactic patterns to transfer the pleonastic structures to the target language. Zovko Dinković and Ilc (2017), on the other hand, in their discussion of pleonastic negation, treated it as an instance of a lexically present but semantically vacuous negation resulting in its placement to negative polarity. Their final analysis revealed that differences in the negation scope between pleonastic negation and sentential negation are directly reflected in their syntactic characteristics, as the latter provides license to the words. However, both types of negations are significant in triggering the genitive of negation in the negative clauses.

Following this above discussion, the present study aims to identify the performance and preference of Saudi advanced Arabic native and English native speakers in acronym pleonasm and semantics pleonasm. The study offers valuable insights to linguists, academicians, students, and researchers and help them assess Saudi Arabic- and English- language-natives' towards to use pleonasms. Most Saudi students learn English as a foreign language. Their exposure to the English language is limited to classroom instruction, in state or private schools, and to social media. Therefore, the objective of this research is to investigate whether advanced Saudi Arabic speakers can acquire a new parameter that is unavailable in their L1. If the acquisition takes place, it leads to the assumption that Universal Grammar (UG) still operates for adult learners. However, failure to acquire the specified constructions will provide important insights for the educational system in Saudi Arabia to consider these constructions by implementing them in school curricula. It is possible to assume that UG is inaccessible for adult Saudi learners given their lack of exposure to L2 input which, is responsible for triggering the appropriate settings. To the author's knowledge, acronym pleonasms and semantics pleonasms have never been investigated in the literature with Saudi Arabic native speakers.

1.1 Parameter Resetting

Over the years, numerous debates have addressed the questions of UG availability, parameter resetting in acquiring a second language (L2), and the ultimate attainment of native-like competence in the final state of acquisition. Under the umbrella of the generative framework of language acquisition, the Full Transfer/Full Access approach proposes that adult second language learners have *full access* to UG (White, 1985; White, 1986; Schwartz & Sprouse, 1996; Tomaselli & Schwartz, 1990). Proponents of *full access* believe that UG is available for L2 learners, and it includes L1 parameter settings and other parameters that are not chosen by L1. According to White (1985, 1986), L2 learners initially take the value of L1 parameters [full transfer]. When they cannot accommodate the input of L2, they begin to access all possible options provided by UG [full access], such as new parameter settings and functional categories. Finally, they modify their grammar accordingly (Reglero, 2003, p.157–158). According to Watanabe et al., (2008, p. 263), if access to the UG is possible for L2 learners, there are two possible hypotheses: the transfer hypothesis and the parameter resetting hypothesis. The transfer hypothesis was proposed by Cook (1991) and Cook and Newson (1996), among others, and they claim that L2 learners have access to UG, but the parameter values belong to their native language. L2 learners thus use these values in the acquisition of L2. However, the parameter resetting hypothesis proposed by Finer (1990), Hirakawa (1990), MacLaughlin (1996, 1998), and others suggests that UG constrains the interlanguage grammar of L2 learners, and they can use these parameter values in L2 acquisition to subsequently reset L1 values to L2 ones (White, 2003). According to White (2003, p. 157), "Since different languages exhibit different parameter settings, it must be the case that the input plays a crucial role in determining which option or setting is chosen."

White (1986) conducted a study investigated two groups of intermediate L2 English learners with different pronoun-drop settings in their L1s. These were French, a non-pronoun-drop language, and Spanish, a pronoun-drop language group. The mixed groups consisted of French speakers (non-pronoun-drop settings L1, e.g., English) and Italian and Spanish speakers (pronoun-drop L1, which was different from the situation in English). She used a task based on grammatical judgment; the task consisted of English-language sentences without subjects. The study found that the Spanish–Italian pronoun-drop group performance was not up to the mark compared with the French non-pronoun-drop group. Therefore, White concluded that the L1 pronoun-drop parameter influenced the achievement of the L2 non-pro-drop parameter.

Al-Utbi and Aljubory (2018) conducted a study to examine whether Iraqi EFL college students could reset the parameter values of their native Arabic into ones suited to English. The study aimed to increase Iraqi students' knowledge about the parametric values of English through the following three parameters: null subject parameter, head-parameter, and serial parameter. The study undertook a grammaticality judgment that was given to 60 fourth-year students task at the Department of English, University of Baghdad, in the 2016–2017 academic year. The study found that Iraqi EFL students' abilities to reset parameters differed for the head parameter but that the serial-parameter, and null-parameters were partially reset. The study also found that the Iraqi EFL students' inability to reset the parameters was due to negative transfer from Arabic to English. Therefore, the EFL students needed extensive exposure to the input data to motivate and encourage the resetting of parameters.

Regalo (2003) carried out a study on adult native English speakers who learned Spanish as a second language and vice versa. She examined wh-islands and that-trance effects, which are absent in Spanish. Three groups were involved in her study: beginner, intermediate, and advanced. The study employed a grammatical judgment task based on Johnson (1988) and Martohardjono (1993). However, Regalo (2003) used a written form, reduced the number of sentences, and used a different presentation of the sentences. The results of the wh-islands revealed that the differences between native speakers and L2 learners cannot be attributed to the absence of UG. However, substantial exposure to L2 would make the performance of L2 learners resemble the performance of native speakers. With respect to that-trace effects, the researcher concluded that L2 learners required language-specific learning more than parameter resetting. She assumed that L2 learners failed to produce correct judgments because they needed greater exposure to L2 to speed up that-trance effects acquisition.

2. Acronym Pleonasm and Semantics Pleonasm in English and Arabic

2.1 Acronym and Semantics Pleonasms in English

2.1.1 Acronym in English

In acronym, pleonasm is considered the repetition of a word that is already present in the acronym used in that sentence (Madu 2018, 184). For instance, in the sentence "He is infected with HIV disease," the "V" in HIV itself means "virus." In this case, adding a virus in the sentence is a different word and thus would be termed an acronym pleonasm (Madu 2018, p. 164). Pleonasms are often incorporated in literary pieces to achieve an academic, poetic, or linguistic effect. They are often used as rhetorical repetitions helping reinforce an idea, contention, or question to provide a clear expression and understanding of the concept. They further serve as essential parts of professional, idiomatic language or scholarly writing. However, pleonasms can also be errors when not used in a poetic or other literary form. Hughes (1984) provided a similar instance and indicated that not all expressions are considered true pleonasms; they are only associated with expressions where both elements and words give a similar meaning.

2.1.2 Semantics Pleonasm in English

According to Muhammed and Meftin (2016), pleonasm refers to the inclusion of a superfluous expression that is already present in the sentence that in which it is used (Bussmann, 1996). In contrast, redundancy is the idea of overabundance, superfluity, and surplus, and it is generally perceived as unfavorable.

In recent linguistic theories, semantics pleonasm (placed about negative polarity) is treated as an instance of lexical presentation. However, it presents semantically vacuous negation instead (Zovko Dinković, 2013). There is a chance of parametric variation to the level of the optionality of pleonastic negation and its use, although syntactic environments with pleonastic negation are highly comparable (Zovko Dinković, 2013). Pleonasm is generally a semantic and rhetorical concept, but it could have different aspects and be formed using different layers of language, including morphemic and syntactic ones (Lehmann, 2005). Pointing and correcting morphemic and syntactic pleonasms fall under the scope of general education curriculum (GEC) research, specifically when they lead to errors. On the other hand, semantics pleonasm is a question of style or taste, not grammar (Elster, 2012). They are complex linguistic phenomena; to establish a valuable corpus, design decisions must be made in the context of trade-offs between the breadth and depth of coverage (Kashefi et al., 2018).

Semantics pleonasm is usually found in everyday language, where it is used in two different forms. Linguists often use the word "redundant" to prevent confusion between it and syntactic pleonasm. For example, Horberry (2010) stated that semantics pleonasm represents a large dollop of redundancy. In line with this, Crystal (2011) asserted that a grammar feature is redundant if its presence is unnecessary to identify a linguistic unit.

The first form of semantics pleonasm is known as overlap, where a semantics component of a single word is subsumed into another word. Stevens (2007) further defined it as the implication of one word by another word. Consider the following sentences: i) "We were provided with a free gift with every purchase" and ii) "Mickey Norton is often regarded as a famous superstar." In the former sentence, the word "free" is represented as a pleonasm, as one does not pay for "the gift," so the use of the word itself implies that it is for "free." In the last sentence, "famous" is a pleonasm because a superstar is already famous. Vizental (2009), on the other hand, described overlap semantics pleonasm as an instance in which one word serves as the hyponym of the other word. This type of pleonasm occurs when one uses a specific word that implies a general term with another word. For instance, the word "color" is generally used with a hyponym, such as "green" (i.e., "the bag is green in color"). The word "green" here implies the standard category of color. Other examples include "small in size," "large in size," and "aggressive by nature" (Muhammed & Meftin, 2016). The second type of pleonasm has prolixity often referred to as words that mention things not worth mentioning. Prolixity is the use of words that provide excessive detail about unimportant things (Fitriansyah & Rosmaidar, 2018). For instance, in the sentence "He has nine separate books" the word "separate" here provides no logical addition to the meaning. In another example from Elster (2012), "Their home is still in the process of being renovated after the hurricane," the words "in the process" are superfluous.

Kasperavičienė (2012) conducted a critical study to identify the development of semantics pleonasm, specifically in European Union (EU) documents. One of the major assumptions was that most institutional translators are influenced by the actual structure of pleonastic phrases, which are then found in the target language. A specific concern was granted to analyze the semantics pleonasm found in the Lithuanian and English versions of EU documents. Findings of the study indicated that semantics pleonasms are commonly found in EU

documents, specifically in the institutional register.

2.2 Acronym Pleonasm and Semantics Pleonasm in Arabic

Acronym pleonasms are widely used in written and spoken languages such as Arabic. They are used to add more clarification or define acronym terms.

2.2.1 Acronym Pleonasm in Arabic

Foreign words represent words borrowed from other languages. Pleonasms are often observed in foreign words. In other words, redundancies, a continuous repetition under a similar context, can be found in foreign words. Therefore, pleonasm can be defined as a word already present in the given sentence. An example is "The school principal employed an expert chauffeur driver for the school bus." In the given sentence, the word "chauffeur," a foreign word used for "driver" is used twice in the sentence. The concept of pleonasm may help in providing the following function.

Clarity. In most acronyms, pleonasms are often used for clarity. In this context, a pleonasm is created by adding a word to an acronym (Sharma, 2014). Some examples include "the HIV virus," "PIN number," and "ATM machine," where each acronym already includes the second word in its full definition "human immuno-deficiency virus," "personal identification number," and "automated teller machine." Therefore, it is evident from the examples that the addition of words "virus," "machine," and "number" create acronym pleonasms. Clarity can also be seen in written and spoken Arabic news broadcast on TV and published in newspapers and on websites. For example, an article on Euronews Arabia's online site, reads:

a) "aktaʃft ɪ:darat alʈyaran wa alfđaʔ alamrıkyah NASA kawkabn"
Discovered Administration Aeronautics and Space American NASA a planet.
ʕmlaqn shabıhn bı: alarđ
giant similar to earth.
"The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) discovered a giant planet similar to earth."

Another example from the Saudi Ministry of Health website states,

b) "aʕrađ fayros naqs almanaʕa albaʃaryah (HIV) txtalıf ɪ:ʕtemadan ʕla
Symptoms of virus deficiency immune human (HIV) differ depending on
marħlat alʕdwah
stage infection
"The symptoms of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) vary depending on the stage of infection."

In an article on the Arabic Wikipedia website ("Jens Stoltenberg," 2022), the following appears,

c) tawala [Jens Stoltenberg] mansıb ameen ʕam ħılf ʃmal alaʈlasi (alNATO)
Assumed position secretary-general Treaty North Atlantic (the NATO)"
"Jens Stoltenberg assumed the position of Secretary-General in NATO."

One of the most interesting expressions used in the Saudi Arabic language is related to bank transactions. It is typical to hear the following expression, especially among young Saudi people:

d) ʒehaz alATM ʕʈlan
machine the ATM out of service.
"The ATM is out of service."

Or

alATM machine ʕʈlan
the ATM machine out of service
"The ATM machine is out of service."

The above expressions demonstrate that speakers of the Arabic language add the definite article *al* "the" to the acronym. It is as if they tend to Arabize the term and apply the grammatical features to foreign words.

2.2.2 Semantics Pleonasm in Arabic

Previous investigations and observations about neoplasm have made clear that the word duplication is intended to emphasize the idea being transferred. This is done specifically to increase the degree of the opinion being expressed. Pleonasm in this regard is unnecessarily considered a mistake, as it is effective in providing certain semantic functions. These include creating a poetic effect or emphasizing an expression. In a sentence such as "I saw it with my own eyes," the phrase "with my own eyes" provides information that has already been illustrated through the word "saw." Sepora and Mahadi (2019) investigated the phenomenon of repeated words in the translations of speeches delivered by Jamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt. Their findings indicated that the repetition of words is more common in Arabic than in any other language, such as English. The study further added that any such repeated word or expression in the source language must be handled with the utmost care, as each word has a specific meaning and role in the target language. Hassan (2015) examined verb repetition in translating from Arabic to English. He stated that the verb's repetition in Arabic indicates specific situations, assertions, or highlights of previous events. The study concluded that deleting repetitive Arabic verbs is the best approach in English.

It is common in Arabic to use semantics pleonasm in spoken language. For example, Saudi Arabic uses the following constructions to put on emphases on the idea or evoke the idea of truth to the listeners' mind:

a) ana ʃoft alħadɪθ bi ʕɪni:
I saw the accident with my eye

"I saw the accident with my own eye."

What is noticeable about the above construction is that sometimes the speakers intensify the narration of the story by adding extra redundant expressions as follows:

b) ana ʃoft alħadɪθ bi ʕuni: ali:tnɪn
I saw the accident with my eyes two

"I saw the accident with my own two eyes"

These expressions exceed the spoken language of the written one. For example, Wikipedia "*The Middle East*," 2022 introduces *The Middle East* newspaper as follows:

a) Jarɪdat alʃarq alaʔwsaṭ, saħifa ʕrabia dowaliah
newspaper the East the Middle, newspaper Arabian international
"The Middle East is an Arabian and international newspaper."

It is noticeable that Wikipedia uses two Arabic synonyms, "Jarɪdat" and "saħifa" to refer to a single noun which is "newspaper."

In light of the above observations, two questions arise in investigating Saudi Arabic speakers' acquisition of these constructions:

1. What are the preferences of advanced Saudi Arabic native and English native speakers in acronym pleonasm and semantics pleonasm?
2. Are there any differences in the judgements of advanced Saudi Arabic native and English native speakers regarding acronym and semantics pleonasms as in (a) and (b)?

(a) She is infected with the HIV virus disease.

(b) We arrived at 6 o'clock p.m. in the evening.

These research questions address whether L1 advanced Saudi Arabic speakers can reset Arabic parameters in acquiring English-specified properties through access to UG despite lack of L2 input. For English native speakers, an anonymous reviewer states that "English L1 speakers will be less likely to favor these kinds of sentences than are L1 Saudi Arabic learners of English since some cases of these redundant expressions are acceptable in English like "My daughter walks to school on foot every morning." However, Arabic speakers exposed to the English language as a foreign language in classrooms. Therefore, the question that remains open to discussion is, "Can Saudi Arabic native speakers reset their L1 pleonasm parameters, or do these constructions remain persistent in acquisition due to missing L2 input?" If it is the first claim, then it possible to assume that UG is accessible to adult learners to select the appropriate L2 parameters, and proficiency helps in acquisition. If it is the second situation, it is plausible to argue that UG is unavailable for adult L2 learners because the L2 input was weak to the extent that acquisition cannot take place. Consequently, the educational system in Saudi Arabia should implement these constructions in its curricula to enhance L2 input.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Design

This study adopted a quantitative statistical design to shed light on the significant differences in the performance between the control group, represented as English native speakers, and the experimental group, embodied in Saudi Arabic speakers, to provide comprehensible analyses of the results. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to determine the reliability of the task items. In addition, the normality distribution of the data was analyzed to determine the parametric test suitable for the data using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test.

3.2 Study Participants

A total of 72 participants served as subjects in this study. They comprised two groups: English native speakers as a control group and Saudi Arabic speakers as an experiment group. The 32 English native speakers who were paid for their responses were recruited via the Zoho Survey website. There were 17 male and 15 female participants, and the mean range of age was 3.56 which is between 31–35. The second group included 40 Saudi Arabic nationals, and it consisted of three male and 37 female participants. The mean range of age for the Saudi Arabic speakers was 2.25 which is range between 26–30 years. Table (1) reflects the mean range of the participants in this study.

Table 1. Mean Range of Study Participants

	Saudi Arabic Speakers	**English Native Speakers**
1= 20–25		
2= 26–30	2.25	3.56
3= 31–35	The mean range of age of the native Saudi	The mean range of age of the native
4= 36–40	Arabic-speaking participants is 26–30	English-speaking participants is 31–35
5= 41 and above		

The Saudi Arabic-speaking groups were MA students in the first or last year of their degrees in different academic fields in Saudi

universities. The minimum acceptance scores to enroll in the MA programs in these universities are 5.5 in ILTS for humanities and 6.5 in ILTS for scientific fields. Participants were unpaid and recruited via sending the survey link to the universities' MA advisors to share with their students in science and humanities faculties. The mean range of exposure to English was 2.35 (=7–12 years), which demonstrated that they were formally instructed and expose to the language in primary schools at age 7 (private schools) or in secondary schools at age 12 (state schools). They learned the language as a foreign language. This was also confirmed by the mean years of attending English classes, which were 2.4 (=7–12 years). The mean months of living in an English community were 2.25 (=7–12 months) after graduating from the universities. The researcher selected advanced English learners is based on her experience teaching English to Saudi students in their preparatory year at university. She observed that students employed pleonasm expressions in their writings. Furthermore, when students who registered for a semantics course in the BA program in the English department, were taught about pleonasms, they considered these expressions to be non-pleonastic. In addition, Madu (2018) conducted a study to evaluate the ability of senior secondary school students to identify different forms of pleonasm found in written English. The results indicated students' lack of apprehension regarding the concept and recommended teaching students the correct usage of acronyms borrowed from other languages to avoid using pleonasms in figures of speech. Moreover, educational institutions should ensure that students are provided with various dictionaries that prepare them to make the proper use of the word.

3.3 Data Collection

Data in this study were collected through a practical task, the acceptability judgment task. The first task focused on acronym pleonasms and included eight items. The second task focused on semantics pleonasms and also consisted of eight items. Both were designed as multiple-choice questions where participants were required to select acceptable responses from a 5-point Likert scale: (5) *Strongly Acceptable*, (4) *Acceptable*, (3) *Not Sure*, (2) *Unacceptable*, and (1) *Strongly Unacceptable*. Examples of items for each type are as follows:

Acronym Pleonasm

She is infected with HIV virus disease	Strongly Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Sure	Unacceptable	Strongly Unacceptable

Semantics Pleonasm

My daughter walks on foot to school every morning	Strongly Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Sure	Unacceptable	Strongly Unacceptable

Participants were asked to provide relevant information about themselves on the first page of the survey in tandem with the consent statement. Three acronym pleonasm items were adopted from the study of Madu (2018, p.171). The only adjustment made was to change the person's name from *Kamsi* to *Sara*, as in "Kamsi forgot her PIN number at home." The semantics pleonasm was selected from the survey of Epoge (2014, p.111–112). Two sentences were modified to suit Saudi participants' cultural background. First, "The Operation Sparrow Hawk is a new innovation in fighting embezzlement" was adjusted to "The Nano technology is a new innovation in fighting disease and prevent health issues." The second item was "The SAWA people meet for annual festival every year" was replaced by "Many people celebrate annual festivals around the world every year." Eight items in the survey were excluded from study analyses because they served as distractors.

3.4 Study Procedure

The task was uploaded on the Zoho survey website (https://www.zoho.com) after selecting the required criteria of English native speakers who participated in the study: Age (20–50), native language (English/UK), and educational level (university degree). The Saudi Arabic speakers were recruited by creating a Google form, and a link to this form was shared with the MA academic advisors to distribute to their students.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0. The mean descriptive statistics of acronym and semantics pleonasms responses were computed according to Table (2).

Table 2. Mean of Responses to Study Items

Mean	Responses
1.00–1.80	Strongly Unacceptable
1.81–2.60	Unacceptable
2.61–3.40	Not sure
3.41–4.20	Acceptable
4.21–5.00	Strongly Acceptable

Similarly, the mean range of participants' age, the mean range of exposure to the English language, the mean range of years attending English classes, and the mean range of months living in an English-speaking community were calculated as in Table (3).

Table 3. Mean ranges of Participants' Age, Exposure to the English Language, Years of Attending English Classes, and Months Living in an English-speaking Community

Mean	Range
Mean range of participants' ages	1= 20–25 2= 26–30 3= 31–35 4= 36–40 5= 41 and above
Mean range of exposure to English language	1 = 3–6 2 = 7–12 3 = After 13
Mean range of years attending English classes	1 = 3–6 2 = 7–12 3 = After 13 years
Mean range of months living in English community	1 = 3–6 2 = 7–12 3 = 13 months and more

Based on the statistical analysis, the test of item reliability showed that Cronbach's alpha value was 0.80. The test of normal distribution for the means of both constructions showed that $p < 0.05$. Therefore, to investigate for any significant difference between the judgments of the two groups on the task items, a non-parametric test was used to analyze the means of acronym pleonasm and semantics pleonasm. The Mann–Whitney test was applied to both types of data.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Before commencing the data collection process, informed consent was obtained from the participants by having them tick the consent box.

4. Results

The frequencies of responses were calculated in means for both groups to shed light on the preliminary results before running the statistical analyses. Table (4) shows the acceptable judgments supplied by both groups on the acronym and semantics pleonasms.

Table 4. Means of Responses by Saudi Arabic and English Native Speakers on Both Types of Pleonasm

Means of Acronym Pleonasm Responses	
Saudi Arabic native speakers	4.47
English native speakers	3.18
Means of Semantics Pleonasm Responses	
Saudi Arabic native speakers	5.00
English native speakers	4.46

The results showed that the mean range of acronym pleonasm for Saudi Arabic speakers was 4.47, which fell under the "Strongly Acceptable." However, the means of English native speakers' judgments was 3.18. This showed that the mean of their decisions was in the "Not Sure" range.

For semantics pleonasm, the means of judgments for Saudi Arabic speakers was 5.00, within the range of "Strongly Acceptable" judgments (4.21–5.00). Similarly, the means of English native speakers was 4.46, within the scope of "Strongly Acceptable" judgments.

4.1 Results of Acronyms Pleonasm

This section explores the performance of English native speakers and Saudi Arabic native speakers in constructions related to acronym types, such as "She is infected with the HIV virus disease." The Mann–Whitney test was employed to determine the difference between the two groups. The results revealed that a significant difference between Saudi Arabic speakers and English native speakers, where the p-value <.05 was as follows: ($U = 423.500$, $N_1 = 40$, $N_2 = 32$, $p = .013$, two-tailed).

4.2 Results of Semantics Pleonasm

This part reports on the analysis of semantics pleonasm of the following type*: "*My daughter walks on foot to school every morning." The Mann–Whitney test was conducted to verify whether there was a significant difference between the performances of English native speakers and Saudi Arabic native speakers. The statistics revealed no significant difference, as follows: ($U = 520.500$, $N_1 = 40$, $N_2 = 32$, $p = .17$, two-tailed).

5. Discussion

The present study examined the existing knowledge and ability of advanced Saudi Arabic speakers to reset L1 Arabic parameters, especially in the context of aiming to acquire the specified property of the English language. Two research questions were presented at the onset of the study. The first focused on the preferences of advanced Saudi Arabic native and English native speakers in acronym and semantics pleonasms. The second focused on the differences in the judgements of advanced Saudi Arabic native and English native

speakers in acronym and semantics pleonasms.

Saudi Arabic participants preferred acronym pleonasm, which reflects the typical realization of their L1. In contrast, native English speakers were more likely to be unsure whether acronym constructions are appropriate English constructions. The Saudi Arabic speakers transferred their L1 property because they had not been exposed to this construction in the school curricula, classroom, or natural settings. Therefore, the acquisition was delayed because the cues to L2 input were missing. In return, participants could not resort to UG to check other settings. This finding goes in line with those of Al-Utbi and Aljubory (2018), where Iraqi EFL students needed extensive exposure to L2 input to encourage parameter resetting. Similarly, Reglero (2003) mentioned that the differences between L2 learners and native speakers could not be attributed to a lack of access to UG in their judgments. However, although UG is available, the differences can be attributed to a better command of the second language, along with extensive exposure to L2.

Saudi speakers preferred semantics pleonasm constructions, as these are part of their L1. Similarly, native English speakers favored this construction, which is odd. However, as the anonymous reviewer mentioned earlier, some constructions of semantics pleonasms are acceptable in English. Kasperavičienė (2012) mentioned that semantics pleonasms are commonly found in EU documents. It is possible that the reason for English native speakers' performance in semantics pleonasm is as mentioned by Bozorova (2021). He provides a classification of pleonastic units, such as "young teenager," or "secret spy," in the Uzbek language, concluding that this "phenomenon is traditionally considered in linguistics as a departure from the literary norm and is understood as "the overuse of expressive means used to express lexical or grammatical meaning in speech' (Yartseva 1990)"" (Bozorova, 2021, p.124). However, it is challenging to justify these results, especially when comparing the performance of both groups, for two reasons. First, the statistical analysis showed insignificant differences between the two native speakers. Second, English native speakers preferred these constructions and produced high acceptable judgments. For example, the mean of the item, "The angry man kicked the bucket with his foot" was "Strongly Acceptable" (4.06). Therefore, it is possible to assume that this construction is less problematic for Saudi Arabic speakers and causes no learnability problem as the input matches their L1. This also accelerates the acquisition of sematic pleonastic constructions. These results show that absence of the L2 input in both constructions inhibits the function of UG to trigger suitable cues. Thus, second language learners have no option except the value of their L1, which confirms the transfer hypothesis but not the resetting parameter hypothesis.

The present study identified that Saudi Arabic participants favor acronym pleonasm and semantics pleonasm use, which shows evidence of L1 transfer. Despite their proficiency level and the fact that they started learning English as a foreign language in primary or secondary schools, Saudi participants failed to reset L1 parameters and resort to UG to select other choices because L2 input was absent. The main contribution to this study is the pedagogical perspective, where Saudi speakers need intensive exposure to non-pleonasm constructions in the school curricula, especially the acronym pleonasm, to overcome the barrier of their L1 settings.

A few limitations of this study have been noted. One is gender differences between Saudi males and females were not examined because of difficulties accessing the male section in Saudi universities. Another limitation is the scope of Saudi participants in this research. This study examines postgraduate students exposed to the language through classroom instructions in state and private schools. Participants exposed to the English language in international schools are missing from the data. The concept of pleonasm and its usage in different fields still have not been explored in depth in Arabic. Therefore, significantly broader research is required to explore the use of students' pleonasms during everyday classroom lectures by examining students' narration mode for telling stories and examining their writing. In addition, a study is needed to examine students' performances before and after formal instruction on pleonasms to investigate whether class-based instruction may speed up L2 acquisition. Furthermore, another study is required to examine Saudi speakers' performances after exposure to the language in a naturalistic setting, such as that of students who studying abroad for a higher degree. Moreover, it is recommended for future investigations to examine and compare the performance of international and state- and private-educated students.

Consent to participate

All subjects provided written informed consent in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki.

Consent for publication

Not applicable.

Availability of data and materials

The datasets used and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Competing Interest

The author declares no competing interest.

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Appendix A. Transliteration Arabic Symbols

Arabic	IPA[i]	EALL[ii]	Description
ب	b	b	Voiced bilabial stop
ت	t	t	Voiceless alveolar stop
ج	ʒ	j	Voiced palatal affricate
ح	ħ	ḥ	Voiceless pharyngeal fricative
خ	x	x	Voiceless velar fricative
د	d	d	Voiced alveolar stop
ذ	ð	ḏ	Voiced interdental fricative
ر	r	r	Alveolar flap
ز	z	z	Voiced alveolar fricative
س	s	s	Voiceless alveolar fricative
ش	ʃ	š	Voiceless palatal fricative
ص	sˤ	ṣ	Voiceless emphatic fricative
ض	đ	ḍ	Voiced emphatic stop
ط	tˤ	ṭ	Voiceless emphatic stop
ظ	D	ẓ	Voiced (emphatic) interdental stop
ع	ʕ	ʿ	Voiced pharyngeal fricative
غ	ɣ	ġ	Voiced velar fricative
ف	f	f	Voiceless labiodentals fricative
ق	q	q	Voiceless pharyngeal stop
ك	k	k	Voiceless uvular stop
ل	l	l	Alveolar laterals
م	m	m	Labial nasal
ن	n	n	Interdental nasal
ه	h	h	Voiceless glottal fricative
ء	ʔ	ʾ	Voiceless glottal stop
و	w	w	Labial approximant
ي	j	y	Palatal approximant

- *a*, *u*, and *i* are short vowels
- *ā*, *ū*, and *ī* are long vowels
- Gemination is indicated by doubling the consonant
- IPA symbols are used throughout this study

[i] IPA = *International Phonetic Alphabet.*

[ii] EALL = *Encyclopaedia of Arabic Language and Linguistic.*