

The Acquisition of Past Temporality by Two ESL Learners at Different Levels of Proficiency

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Abstract

The acquisition of English past temporality has been a topic of discussion in the second language acquisition field. Most of the studies have looked at a case study or a group of learners of the same level of proficiency. The findings indicated that learners with low proficiency level keep relying on using the lexical means as their verbal morphology begin established. No study has compared between two case studies or two group of different level of proficiency to find whether this phenomenon can be true with learners of different level of proficiency. This study sought to find this by examining the development of English past temporality with two case studies of learners of English as a second language. Each learner was interviewed for 20 minutes. The results indicated that there is a difference between the two learners in terms of the level of English past temporality mastery. However, it was found that even the second learner has reached a level of mastery of English past temporality; he still relies on using the lexical means.

Key words: ESL; Acquisition; Morphological features; Past temporality

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INTRODUCTION

Describing the process of second language acquisition has attracted the attention of academics for a long time. The

theory of behaviorism emerged in the 1930s to describe language learning; its focus was on imitation as the source of learning new habits (Lado, 1957). Subsequently, the Contrastive Analysis (CA) approach was dominant in describing the SLA process from 1940s until 1950 (Huebner, 1983). The shortcomings of this approach are that it constrains the attribution of any SLA feature to L1 transfer and overlooks any other aspect that could have an effect on the process of acquisition. In 1972, the term of interlanguage was introduced by Selinker, who focused on analyzing different errors by L2 learners. Since then, different approaches have emerged that exclusively focus on describing the acquisition of temporality, as temporality plays a significant role in facilitating communication. Bardovi-Harlig (1992) mentioned a shift in focus in the 1980s from the acquisition of morphology as a form to a focus on morphology as “the surface realization of an underlying semantic system”(1992, p.345). Bardovi –Harlig talked about two recently emerged approaches. The first one is the form-to-function approach, in which researchers focus initially on verbal morphology, from which they can follow the underlying semantic system of the learner. The second approach is the function-to-form approach, in which the researchers focus on investigating semantic concepts through the identification of linguistic markers, e.g. third s singular. It should be taken into account that both approaches claim to have an “interlanguage “ perspective (Selinker, 1972) which means that these approaches explain independently the system of the target language.

Based on the function to form approach and in accord with the various studies that have used it to investigate the acquisition of temporality, this study aims to investigate the acquisition of past temporality by two ESL learners whose first language is Arabic. The two learners are at different levels of proficiency in English. One of them is at the intermediate level, whereas the other is an advanced learner of English. Based on the analysis of data, the

results will be discussed with regard to the acquisition of past temporality by the two learners.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Acquisition of Temporality

Acquiring the morphological features of any target language is essential for learners in moving towards proficiency in that language. Investigating the attempts at mastery of those features has attracted the attention of many researchers in SLA. The first studies that investigated temporality were form only, and focused on the verbal morphology when describing temporality. Without considering any semantic concepts, these studies focused on how learners used the correct forms and were ranked based on that use. Two different approaches have emerged afterwards. The first one is the form-to-function approach in which researchers focus initially on the verbal morphology, from which they can follow the underlying semantic system of the learner. The problem of the form-to-function approach is that the researchers may be in danger of “closeness fallacy” (Dietrich et al. 1995 p.56). Researchers may attribute other semantics meanings which the learner may not have produced owing to their accurate use of forms. The second approach is the function-to-form approach, in which the researchers focus on investigating the semantic concepts through the identification of the linguistic markers; the morphemes that indicate the grammatical function of the marked word.

The function to form or meaning oriented approach has considered other means to express temporality such as pragmatics and lexical means. The studies that have adopted this approach are known by a variety of names including the concept-oriented approach (Von Stutterheim and Klein, 1987), the semantically oriented approach (Giacalone Ramat, 1992), the functional-grammatical perspective (Skiba and Dittmar, 1992), the notional perspective (Berretta, 1995) and function-to-form studies (Long and Sato, 1984). According to this approach, second or foreign language learners have access to a variety of semantic meanings based on their past cognitive and linguistic experiences. Von Stutterheim and Klein argued that “a second language learner-in contrast to child learning his first language-does not have to acquire the underlying concepts. What he has to acquire is a specific way and a specific means of expressing them” (1987, p.194). The meaning oriented approach has significantly contributed to broadening the concept of temporality in SLA research, from just focusing on the morphological features, which Dietrich et al (1995) attributed to the “inflexional paradigm bias”, 1995, p.18), to considering other means such as pragmatic and lexical means, which can result in a broader description of acquiring morphology by investigating the role of adverbials of

time, discourse organization and morphology (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000).

Several studies have employed the meaning-oriented approach to investigate temporality. Although most of the studies were longitudinal, some of them were cross-sectional. Many longitudinal studies have used this approach to investigate the acquisition of temporality in different languages. For example, the study by Noyall, Dorrots, Sjoström and Voionmaa (1995) investigated temporality of four learners, two Spanish and two Finnish. The four were learning Swedish. The data were collected from Swedish classes and trade courses through personal narratives, film retelling tasks and guided conversation, over a period of three years. A study by Dittmar and Terborg (1991) investigated the acquisition of modality by a Polish learner who was learning German. This took two and a half years to collect the data which were elicited through narratives, reports and instruction-giving tools. There were also some studies that investigated the acquisition of English temporality. For example, the study by Schumann (1987), who investigated the acquisition of temporality by three learners whose first language, respectively, was Japanese, Spanish and Chinese. They were living in U.S for 10 years and data were elicited through interviews with learners in the form of conversations. There are also many other longitudinal studies that have investigated the acquisition of temporality in other different languages such as French (Noyou, 1984, Trevis, 1987) and Dutch (Klein, Conen, Helvert and Henricks, 1995). A number of Cross-sectional studies were also conducted to investigate the acquisition of temporality of learners learning different languages (e.g. Moses (1997), Giacalone Ramat, 1995, Meisel, 1987).

The conclusion reached by most of the longitudinal studies is that verb morphology appears late in the varieties of learners' interlanguage. This is supported by the conclusion reached by the European Science Foundation (ESF) project that “the acquisition of temporal referentiality proceeds from implicit to lexical and from there to grammatical devices” (that is ‘finite verbs’) (Bhardwas, Dietrich and Noyau, 1988). The input processing studies, which are mainly quantitative studies, in contrast to the qualitative function to form studies, also found that a) learners process for meaning before form and b) learners prefer to process lexical items for semantic information (Vanpatten, 1996). For example, the studies by (J. Lee, Cadierno, Glass, & Van Patten, 1997, J. Lees, 1999) found that L2 learners employed adverbials, rather than the verb forms to, construct temporality in comprehension tests.

There are different interpretations for the late acquisition of verb morphology. First, morphology is marked by the opacity of morphemes, both on the semantic and morphotactic level (Dressler et al 1987). Second, the difficulty for SLA learners in noticing verb morphology when learning the target language. Ellis

and Collins (2009) explained this issue from a cognitive perspective: Verbal inflections are not as pronounced as the lexical means and hence the use of the lexical means to describe temporality is adopted. (Ellis and Collins, 2009)

1.2 The Acquisition of Past

The appropriate use of verbs is a complicated process in the acquisition of L2. As McCarthy (1991) noted, tenses are a “traditional stumbling-block for learners”(p.62). The appropriate use of past tense, in particular, can be difficult to acquire. Many studies investigated the causes of, and solutions to, the misuse of past tense by NNSs. For example, Ravem (1968/1984) and Richards (1984) found that learners formulate inaccurate hypotheses with regard to the use and meaning of the past tense. DeCarrico (1986) asserted that there may be great confusion between time and tense. Chappel&Rodby(1983) argued that using the past tense constitutes a large obstacle for NNSs.

The meaning – oriented studies when investigating the process of acquiring the past tense, found that learners pass through certain stages. Lee et al (1997) asserted that L2 learners in their early stages of acquisition rely heavily on using the lexical items e.g ‘yesterday’. ‘last week’. ‘ago’, etc in marking past time, whereas in their late stages of acquisition, they begin using verb markings.

Peterson also (1998) stated that L2 learners pass through different stages when referring to the past. In their initial stages, they use pragmatic means more frequently when expressing past temporality, by using time frames that have been mastered in the preceding discourse. Therefore, the learner may reuse past form of verbs or past temporal adverbials that were used in the preceding discourse, or they may use the present form instead, but without using any reference to the past, which Peterson has referred to as “nail frame” p.33. The L2 learner may, alternatively rely on semantics before mastering verb inflection or calendaric references (for example, on Saturday) when expressing the past. This is supported by many studies, One example is the longitudinal study by Sato(1990), who studied past temporality as expressed by two Vietnamese children who were living in the US, over a period of ten years, but did not receive any education. He found that although the two children were able to produce the irregular past, only lexical and pragmatics means were used when expressing past temporality. The study of past temporality for other three learners whose L1 were, respectively, Japanese, Chinese and Spanish, was also investigated by Schumann (1987). The three learners were also living in the US for ten years and did not receive any formal education there. Schumann found that the three learners expressed the past by employing different lexical means including adverbials and chronological order. Schumann (1987) stated that the lexical means are used when expressing the past temporality, even with advanced learners who have established the use of the past form (Schumann,1987). Another study by Kumpf

(1983) who investigated the past temporality of adults learning English and found that they did not supply any verbal morphology, but, rather, relied on pragmatic means to express the past.

Although most of the studies investigated the past temporality of learners in naturalistic settings, other studies, however, investigated it with instructed learners. An example of this is the study conducted by Bardovi-Harlig (2000) who investigated the use of the past verbal morphology and lexical means by adult ESL learners. She found that, as the learners become capable in establishing the verbal morphology, the use of lexical means decrease in their discourse.

1.3 Research Question

How can two ESL learners of different proficiency levels, one of them is at the intermediate level and the other at the advanced level, describe past temporality, based on the function-to-form studies?

Rationale: Previous function to form studies found that learners at the lower levels rely more on the lexical means when describing the past temporality, whereas, when the verbal morphology has been established as at the advanced level, learners’ reliance on the lexical means decreases.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Participants

The participants in this study were two ESL learners, whose first language is Arabic. They are at different levels of proficiency. The first learner, Abdullah, has proficiency in English at the intermediate level. He is currently taking an English course at RMIT University in Melbourne. He arrived in Australia four months prior to the research to earn Mater’s in Automotive Engineering in RMIT. Since his English level was low, he placed test in his arrival to the English institute and was placed at the low -intermediate level. After the completion of that level, he was upgraded to level 4 (A), which is considered to be for intermediate- level students. Hassan, the second participant in this study is a doctoral candidate at the University of Victoria, and has been in Melbourne for three years. His doctoral major is business studies. He is considered to be an advanced English learner. He received his Master’s degree in Business studies from an American university in 2005. Both learners started learning English as a foreign language back in Saudi Arabia when they were in grade 7; the first year in the intermediate school, which is the first grade at which students in Saudi Arabia start learning English.

2.2 Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected from the two participants through conducting interviews. Each interview lasted for 12 minutes. The interviews were based on prompting questions that would elicit use of the past form. It was

attempted to make the two interviews almost identical in their question format, in order to underline the differences between the two participants in expressing the past temporality.

In the results section, the incidence of regular and irregular past forms was calculated by dividing the number of correct forms by the number of the obligatory contexts.

2.3 Results

Table 1
The Incidence Percentage of the Simple Past by the Two Learners

Incidence of the simple regular past form	
Participant	incidence
Abdullah	29
Hassan	84

Table 2
The Incidence Percentage of the Irregular Past by the Two Learners

Incidence of the irregular past form	
Participant	incidence
Abdullah	24
Hassan	92

The findings indicate that the incidence of supplying the regular past form by Abdullah is small (29%)(table1). He supplied it accurately in 7 out of 24 obligatory contexts. The incidence for supplying the irregular past form(table 2) is also low (24%). He used it accurately in 11 out of 46 obligatory contexts. Abdullah did not supply any other aspects of the past tense, such as the past continuous or the pluperfect (past perfect), except the past passive voice, but did this inaccurately. It can be seen that Abdullah, however, supplied a pragmatic mean in line 37 and also supplied many lexical means of expressing past temporality. The most frequently employed lexical means were connectives, such as “and, so, because. etc”. He used 12 connectives once or more in lines (20, 25, 29, 35, 41, 45, 47, 55). He also used 4 calenderic adverbials, such as “in 2003”, “in the morning”, in lines (4, 14, 18, 57). Concerning chronological order, he used this once, with the aid of connectives: “and” in line (55). Abdullah also supplied three temporal clauses such as “when I arrived...” in lines (14, 29, 41). Abdullah also used different kinds of temporal adverbials. He used locative adverbials such as “here, in Melbourne”, five times, in lines (6,27,29,43,55). He also used adverbials of duration (TAD), which specify the duration of time, once, in line (55) “may be 3 hours”. The adverbials most frequently used were temporal adverbials of position (TAP), which specify the position of a time span on the time axis, such as “yesterday”, “before 5 months”, “ago”, “last night”, “then”, “after that”. He used them once or more nine times in lines (20, 33, 41, 45, 55, 57). He did not use any frequentative adverbials (TAQ). Finally, he used the epistemic modality “I think” in line (49).

The findings for Hassan’s data indicate that he supplied both regular and irregular past form accurately in most of the obligatory contexts. The incidence of supplying the regular past is (84%). He used it in 22 out of 26 obligatory contexts. The incidence of supplying the irregular past form is (92%) in which he used it in 29 out of 35 obligatory contexts. He also used other aspects of the past tense. He used the past continuous three times, in lines (12,32,36) and the past perfect in line (24) and he also used the present perfect once in line(40) but inaccurately. He did not use any pragmatic means, however. The most frequently used lexical means were connectives in which he used them 12 times once or more in lines (12,18,28,32,36,42,44). He also used the calenderic adverbials seven times in lines(4,8,18,28,32,42,44). He used the chronological order twice with the aid of connectives and anaphoric adverbials in lines (32 and 42).He used different temporal adverbials. He used the locative adverbials such as” in Tanoomah”, “in Abha”, “there” three times in lines (4,24,28). He used a TAD adverbials once in line “for two years” in line (28). The other sixadverbials he used were TAP, such as “yesterday”, “then”, “after that”, in lines (12,24,32,34,42,44). He also used the epistemic modality once, in line (40). Finally, he used RORs in line (24)”we were forced to study the medical science but before we had taken course of English”.

DISCUSSION

It can be seen from the findings that there is a variance in the use of the verbal morphology between the two learners; Abdullah and Hassan. Abdullah, on the one hand, supplied few correct past forms, either regular or irregular and even some of the correct past forms he used were also not systematic. For example, although the verb “found” was inflected in some instances, it was used in the base form in other contexts. However, Abdullah used lexical means more extensively when describing past temporality. One factor behind the extensive use of lexical means can be attributed to the difficulty in grasping verbal morphology (Brindley, 1987; J. Lee, 1998, 1999). This suggests, according to the function-to – form analysis that Abdullah is still in the lexical stage in acquiring verbal morphology. The extensive use of lexical means is also in line with the input processing studies, e. g (Vanpatten,1996).

The second learner, Hassan, on the other hand showed greater mastery of verbal morphology and also a more systematic use than Abdullah. He also used lexical means but did so in fewer instances than Abdullah. Hassan used the base forms in some obligatory contexts. However, this finding is similar to the finding of Klein et al (1995), who found that their participant, Mohammad, though an advanced learner used the base form when expressing the past temporality. Klein et al concluded that the use of

the base form can also be persistent in advanced learners' interlanguage when expressing past temporality.

The lexical means most frequently used by Abdullah and Hassan were connectives. This finding is in accordance with previous findings, which found that connectives were the most used lexical means in learners' speech (Bardovi, 2000).

The temporal adverbials are the second-most common lexical means used by both learners. However, Abdullah used them more often (16 times) than Hassan (10) times. This is similar to the findings of Bardovi (2000) who observed that low level learners used temporal adverbials more than advanced learners. Also, both learners employed different chronological order means. The inclusion of them in Hassan's speech production, though he is advanced, is also confirmed by what Schumann (1987) described; namely, that chronological order continues "necessarily" in narrative regardless of the speaker's proficiency level and even among native speakers.

Another lexical mean noted is the use of epistemic modality. While Abdullah used the expression "I think", Hassan used the conditional statement, "I would have to go". This finding is similar to that by Giacalone Ramat (1995), who found that learners at beginner's levels used "I believe", "I think" or verbs that express uncertainty. In high proficiency speakers, the use of subjective or conditional structures can be perceived in the learners' interlanguage when expressing epistemic modality. The reverse -order- reports (RORs) were used only once by Hassan. This supports the assumption by Bardovi-Harlig (2000), that "RORs are used after the past tense has been stabilized". Overall, the use of lexical means by the two learners seems almost similar. For Abdullah, the total use was 33, whereas the total for Hassan was 31. This finding is in contrast with previous studies that concluded that the use of lexical means is significantly decreased as use of verbal morphology is established (Bardovi, 2000). However, it is in line with the claim by Schumann (1987) that, even with a mastery of verbal morphology, the lexical means are still to be used extensively, even with native speakers.

Other aspects of past tense had not been used by Abdullah, except for the passive voice, though not in the correct form. Hassan, however, used other aspects which were the past progressive and the past passive voice and he also used the past perfect twice, but only one of them was correct. In terms of the past tense, Hassan, on the other hand, used the past irregular form more accurately than the simple past. This order of the acquisition is compatible with the acquisition sequence proposed in (Cook, 2008, Pienemann, M., & Johnston, M., 1987). Abdullah on the other hand, used the regular past form more accurately than the irregular form. Although this is in contrast to the acquisition order found in previous studies, the cross-sectional study by Larsen-Freeman

(1975) which had different L1 background, including Japanese, Arabic, Persian, found that the regular past was acquired in stage 6 whereas the irregular past was acquired in stage 8. It seems that the reason behind this unlike order is the nonexistence of irregular verbs in Arabic; Arabic also lacks the verb (Be), which made it difficult to be acquired.

It is also noteworthy that both Abdullah and Hassan had gone through explicit-declarative knowledge when acquiring the past tense. That is, these both learners started learning English in their early stages, consciously which was based on direct and deductive learning from classroom. It was also noticed that both are independent learners. Although this conclusion was not based on a certain test, it was noticed through our conversation which was apart from the interviews in which they showed their preference for learning English only from a classroom setting where they can get the accurate rules of language. They also were against the idea seeing movies or learning from the daily life interaction. Instead, they preferred to learn from regular classes, as seeing this as the best source of learning the language. Another external factor noticed in Abdullah's speech was that he seemed to be highly motivated in learning English. This conclusion came from different perspectives. First, he demonstrated use of complex clauses such as the temporal clauses (3 times) in different contexts. Second, when we observed another learner in the same level of study with Abdullah whose L1 was Arabic, it was noticed that his friend's level of spoken English was lower than that of Abdullah which can indicate that the progress in Abdullah's spoken English can be attributed to his goal to pursue his P.H.D; (a type of instrumental motivation), which is unlike the other learner whose aim was just to complete his M.A.

Overall, Hassan's verbal morphology seems to have been automatized whereas Abdullah's still has not yet been acquired.

CONCLUSION

This paper attempted to investigate the acquisition of past temporality by two learners at different levels of proficiency in English as a second language. The approach used to do that was the function-to- form. The data gathered from the two learners yielded different findings with regard to the acquisition of past temporality. By investigating the spoken narrative of the learner with the intermediate proficiency level, Abdullah, the conclusion reached that he was still at the lexical stage, since he supplied few accurate past forms, on the one hand and many lexical means on the other, which is similar to the conclusions reached to in previous studies with intermediate level of proficiency learners (Bardovi, 2000). The conclusion reached with regard to Hassan's acquisition of the past indicates that the verbal morphology has emerged in his language, since

he supplied it accurately in the majority of the obligatory contexts. His extensive use of lexical means at this stage, however, is in contrast to previous findings that found that lexical means decrease as the verbal morphology is established. However, this confirms the conclusion reached by Shumann, 1987 that lexical means are still to be heavily used even with native speakers of the target language.

The findings in this study may not be generalized as there were some limitations. First, the time for collecting the data was rather limited and they were collected in just one setting. It was better to observe the development of the past temporality of the two learners over different intervals. Second, these findings are based on just one modality. It would have been better to compare the narrative speech with different modalities such as storytelling or written essay. Third, the number of participants in this study is small and in order to be generalized, a larger number is needed.

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APPENDIX (A)

Transcript 1 (Abdullah)

1-Hi Abdullah, So I am going to ask you some questions about your personal life when you were in Saudi Arabia and then I will ask you some questions about your new experience here in Melbourne

2- Hello, AbdulAziz. O.k I am ready.

3- First, Which city were you born in?

4- First, I am interesting with you. I am happy with you. ...uh .I am born in 1985 in Abha..uh..south of Saudi Arabia.

5-I want to ask about your experience in life, When did you, for the first time, drive a car?

6-In my country.

7- Yes.

8-the first day when I drive a car when I am study in the middle school. This day is interesting for me. I face some problems but that is interesting for me.

9-Whose car was it?

10-the car first I drive is Corrella.

11-Was it for your father or your brother?

12-No, it is for my brother...this car was for my brother.

13-When did you buy your first car?

14-I buy...bought my car when I study in college...in 2003

15- how much did it cost you to buy?

16- It is may be..8,000 riyals Saudi.

17-O.k um..let's talk about your studies.....when did you finish your high school?

18-I was...I finished high school in 1999.

19-After you finished your high school , what did you decide to do?

20 Yes, I finished my school... then I asked my teacher what is good for me and he told me I study in university before three years.

21-Which college did you study at?

I was study in technical college....in Riyadh technical college.

22-Which subjects did you study in the college?

23-yeah...my major was mechanical engineering.eee automotive engineering.

24-Who was the best teacher in the college?

25-The best teacher is called Ahmad...he encourage me ...and. .I search many information...about my subject. He make me interesting in this subject.

26- After you finished college, in which city did you get your job in?

27-yeah... this city in my country is Najran.

28-Could you please,..tell me what did you do in your first day when you arrived to najran?

29-when I arrived in najran I have some trouble and difficult thing for me....when I want to find a place or apartment....also, I don't have many friends but the people in this city is friendly and helpfully. All the people in my college help me and found apartment and make all thing is good for me.

30-let's talk about your experience here in Melbourne

31- yes

32-first, before you came to Australia, when did you leave Saudi Arabia?

33-yes, I came to Australia may be before 5 months .

34- Did you rent an apartment before you arrived to Melbourne?

35-I have a partment here because my friend help me and find a good place for me and for my family.

36-Which airlines did you travel with when you came to Australia?

37-Malaysian Airlines

38-What did you eat in the plane?

39-I eat rice and meat

40-Did you find it difficult when you arrived at Melbourne airport?

41-When I arrived I find people is friendly and is smiling and is good people...when I arrived ...and when I arrived in the city....in the university...people is friendly and good place for spend time like Victoria park and many places.

42-How did you feel in your first day in Melbourne?

43-I feel comfortable and exciting in Melbourne.

44- Why did you choose Australia, why didn't you choose U.S.A or England for example to study in?

45-Yes..I spend a lot of time research about good country for my life and for my family and then make many research about this point.....uh....after that my friend told me the good place for everything is Australia....people is friendly and is a good place.

46-Bfore you came to Australia, how did you apply for an admission?

47-yeah , my friend ..uh ...he was study in RMITI was call him and he recommend I study in RMIT .So I told him to give me offer from the university.

48-What would you do if you had not got an offer to RMIT university?

49- you mean...if they not accept me

50-yes

51-I think I apply again to another university.

52-Let's talk about your daily routine. I want to tell me about your routine yesterday from morning till night?

53-Yes...my daily routine is good here....

54-I want you just to tell what did you do yesterday?

55-O.K ..I feel exciting when I spend my time in Melbourne....so yesterday..I woke up early and go to the shopping and spend may be 3 hours in the shop and sometimes I need to do some window shopping. After that ,I take my family and go to Northland and spend a lot of time there so I do some play...uh..play game with my family until night and eat dinner...after that I come back to my apartment.

56- Let's finish here. I want to ask you about your sleeping habits. For example last night. When did you sleep?

57- Yes...last night..... I sleep in my room at 12 a.m. until 8.a.m. in the morning

APPENDIX (B)

Hassan Transcript

1-Hi Hassan. Nice to meet you..Actually I want to ask you some questions about your personal life back to Saudi Arabia and also about your experience here in Melbourne.

2-Hi AbdulAziz. Nice to meet you too....I will be happy to give you my answers with regard to my experiences here and in Saudi Arabia

3- let's talk about your home city ...When were you borne?

4-Actually I was born in Tanoomah,a small village in Assir region in 1977 and I finished my studies there until high school.

5-O.k I want to ask you about your high schoolWhen did you finish it?

6- high school in Tanoomah

7- yes in Tanoomah

8-Yes, I finished it in about 1995

9-Let's talk about your experience in driving car...When did you drive it for the first time?

10- yeah.....It was in high school, in a village, up in the mountain in Tanoomah. I learned it by myself, no one taught me to drive. So, it was a good experience,....um ..what do you call it., a dangerous experience.

11-and whose car was it?

12- yeah.. it was my brother car..he was studying in Abha that time.. and I used it that time...Actually we had transportation in our village, but I want to depend on myself..so I decided to drive a car. It was a nice experience but the road was very dangerous....ummm and I was wondering how I did it. After that I used my own car and drove in Abha.

13-And your first car how much did it cost you?

14-My first car cost me about 5000 Australian dollar.

15-I want to ask you about your previous studies....Where did you study for your bachelor degree?

16-In U.S.A in 2003 after I got a scholarship from King Khalid University in Abha.

17-So,the scholarship was for your bachelors degree?

18-No no sorry...it was for my master's degree...you mean when I started my bachelor..!I finished my high school in 1995 and started my bachelor's degree in 1996.

19-and where did you study it?

20-At king Khalid University.

21- And what was your major?

22-Business Administration.

23-Why did you choose it?

24-Actually , I started my study in Medical college,then after one year, I get trouble with the English language, we were directly.....u..we were forced to study the medical science before we took course of English,so it was a shock for

us. Then I got a chance in king Fahad University in engineering but because of family issues , I chose to stay in Abha and start my studies.

25-What was the first foreign country did you travel to?

26-U.S.A .

27 and why did you travel there?

28-Actually I travelled there in 2003 because I got a scholarship from king Khalid university to study master in business Administration and I studied in Indiana state university and I stayed there for two years.

29-How did find the city?

30-Actually it was a village not a city ..very small.

31-How did you book a hotel in your first day when you arrived?

32-Well..that's good..good...good. When I got off the airplane, I asked about the luggage and one of the secretary was talking in Arabic and show me the luggage..it was myself ..nobody met me in the airport..and I was depending on myself.. I was speaking English but not that strong. After that, I went outside and ordered a taxi and he took me to the city. I arrived on Saturday then after that I went to the university on Monday.

33-Let's move to Melbourne here. First could you tell me briefly how did you get an admission for P.H.D here.

34-First,I applied to Victoria university from u.s.a and I got an admission also in England..then I got an admission from an American universitywhat do they call it ..a conditional admission. After I finished my masters , I came back to Saudi Arabia and got married. I teach in the university for two years and then I reapplied for Victoria university.

35-why did you choose Australia, not England or America?

36-o.k I was googling it and looking for beautiful places for me.

37-for weather?

38-I was not concerned about weather but I was concerned about the nature. So when I saw that it was good for me I applied for it.

39-What would you do if you had not got an offer to study at Victoria University?

40-If I have not got that offer, I would have to choose to study in a university in England.

41-What did you do in your first day when arriving to Melbourne?

42-I arrived in the morning, ..that was before three years ...may be.. and someone from our friends met us and took us with my family to a motel in flinders street close to the university. First thing I did I went to the school and then I applied and then I went to the student center and completed my registration because that was the first week for registration so I had to it quickly.

43-O.k let's finish here ..tell me what did you do yesterday?

44-Yesterday was Friday. I woke up in the morning . I went to the kitchen and then hit the heater and prepared a cup of coffee and went to my office and then I start opening computer, reading news and I had to do something about my research because I had to submit it to my supervisor and after that we went for prayer after that we went for shopping and after Assr(time from 4:00p.m till sunset) . I got an invitation from my friend at 9:00 .a., so I went to him and stayed until 12:00 I came back home and then I slept at 12:30

45-thank you for your time

46-no worries