# Dual Language Learning / Duale Spracherlernung. Learning German through English

## Dual Language Learning / Duale Spracherlernung. Aprendiendo Alemán a través del Inglés

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**Abstract**: In this article we examine the impact of English in the learning process of the German language exemplified with the example of the second language acquisition process of the German language in the programs of German in the *Department of Foreign Languages* of the *University of Nizwa* in Oman. This study focuses on the distinct features of students in Oman learning German as a second language in an institution of higher education in Oman. The contrastive rhetoric of a German – Oman Arabic language contact situation is challenging and a unique field of research, which allows us to study the process of foreign language learning (L2) and the implementation of the culture of the native language L1 (Arabic). The reflection of the L1 culture, the Arab Oman culture, in the language learning process of the L2 language (German) will be described, analyzed and discussed aiming the improvement of the L2 learning process. This article investigates into the process of learning German in an Arabic country of native speakers of Arabic from the perspective of the cultural differences of both cultures in terms of their linguistic prepositions.

**Key words**: dual language learning; German; English; Arabic.

**Resumen**: En este artículo se reflexiona sobre el impacto del Inglés en el proceso de aprendizaje de la lengua alemana, con el ejemplo del proceso de adquisición de la lengua alemana como segunda lengua en programas de alemán en el Departamento de Lenguas Extranjeras de la Universidad de Nizwa, en Omán. Este estudio se centra en las características distintivas de los estudiantes de Omán en el aprendizaje de Alemán como segunda lengua en una institución de educación superior en Omán. La retórica contrastiva de la situación de contacto de alemán–lengua árabe de Omán es un reto y un campo único de investigación, lo que nos permite estudiar el proceso de aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera (L2) y la implantación de la cultura de la lengua materna L1 (Árabe). El reflejo de la cultura L1, la cultura árabe de Omán, en el proceso de la lengua L2 (Alemán), será descrito analizado y discutido con el objeto de mejorar el proceso de aprendizaje de L2. Este artículo indaga en el proceso de aprendizaje del alemán en un país árabe de hablantes nativos de la lengua árabe desde la perspectiva de las diferencias de ambas culturas en términos de sus preposiciones lingüísticas.

**Palabras clave**: aprendizaje en dos idiomas; Alemán; Inglés; Árabe.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. *Statement of the Research Interest and Research Methodology, Research Situation, and Discussion of the Status Quo in 'Contrastive Rhetoric'*

The term 'contrastive rhetoric' as a sub-discipline of rhetoric is the ambrella term for the study of culturally different ways to speak and write. The special field of our study is the learning process of writing German in an academic setting of a university in Oman that offers a diploma and a BA degree in German. The article describes the de facto existing contrasts between rhetoric in the Arabic language and the German language as historically given cultural settings, describes details of the political and socio-cultural settings of the countries Germany and Oman, faces examples of problems arising in the practical work, and presents a model of contrastive rhetoric as an approach to practical methods bringing the obstacles of learning. Second language learning cannot be understood, when ignoring the impact of cultural differences between the culture of the L1 student and the culture of the L2. The differences affect the students' learning. We will demonstrate this examining the language learning process of the L2 German for native speakers of Arabic analyzing contrastive cultural elements of both cultures affecting the learning process. Traditionally this young discipline refers to language learning processes and developed especially from the background of English language learning. Even though be discuss here the fundamentals of this discipline, we consider contrastive rhetoric as a field of study not limited to a special languages and referring to the process of comparison of structures describable with rhetorical means. While the traditional idea of contrastive rhetoric is interested in writing and developed from the background of rhetoric as composition training in US American universities, the idea is actually broader and focuses on more aspects. We are here interested in the genuine aspect of speech as representation of rhetoric. Different speech types can be compared and refer so to our understanding of 'contrastive rhetoric'. Such a contrastive rhetoric of cultures can be understood as a part of language contact studies. The early beginnings of contrastive rhetoric focus not on speaking, but on writing; in our study we will also use written material for the description of the German – Arabic writing situation of students from Oman.

## 1.2. *Research Situation: German and English Language Learning for Arabic Native Speakers*

Due to the unique situation, no research exists concerning L2 language learning in Oman focusing on German. The literature and research evaluation will focus on research for EFL learning and its findings put in critical contrastive

analysis with the findings and observations for German language learners. Besides this, general basic research regarding the state of contrastive rhetoric and language contact studies will be consulted. Besides singular studies, the process of language learning of the German language for native speakers of Arabic, and especially for learners in Oman, has never been described. Thus, we use for the research situation also here the results of another Germanic language, the English language. Arabic is the official language in many countries including Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Saudi Arabia and Morocco spoken here in various dialects. Arabic is a language of the Semitic language family. Very few German/Arabic cognates exist. Its grammar is very different from English, which belongs to the Indo-European languages. Shoebottom wrote in *The Differences Between Arabic and English*: «The elision (or swallowing) of sounds that is so common in spoken English is problematic for Arab speakers, and they will often resist it. (Consider, for example, how the questions What did you do? or Do you know her? are said in conversational English: Whatcha do? / Jew know her?) This aversion to elision and the use of glottal stops before initial vowels are the primary reasons for the typical staccato quality of the spoken English of Arab learners» (Shoebottom). Mahmoud from *Sultan Qaboos University* (Sultanate of Oman) wrote in the article *Interlingual Transfer of Idioms by Arab Learners of English*: «Interlingual transfer (i.e. transfer from the mother tongue or any other previously learned language) in foreign language learning is a major cognitive strategy that learners fall back on when their linguistic means falls short of achieving their communicative ends. Needless to say, the mother tongue is an additional source for hypothesis formation that the first language learner does not have» (Mahmoud, 2002). Crompton (2011) wrote in the article *Article Errors in the English Writing of Advanced L1 Arabic*: «The problems encountered by English learners whose mother tongue does not have an article system have been researched extensively. The problems encountered by learners whose mother tongue does have an article system, such as Arabic, have been studied less. This article describes an enquiry into article system errors in a corpus of English writing by tertiary-level L1 Arabic speakers».

### 1.3. *Contrastive Rhetoric: State of Research in Contrastive Rhetoric as Part of Cultural Comparative Rhetoric*

Robert Kaplan's ground laying works in the 60ies about contrastive rhetoric had a high impact of foreign language learning studies. Especially *English as a Second Language* (*ESL*) and *English as a Foreign Language* (*EFL*) are fields of applied linguistics that rely on the results of studies in contrastive rhetoric. All studies in contrastive rhetoric observe that the way English is written by a non-native is influence by the culture of his/her first language. Kennedy wrote

*Comparative Rhetoric: An Historical and Crosscultural Introduction* as one of the fundamental works in cultural comparative rhetoric. Connor published the book *Contrastive Rhetoric: Cross-cultural Aspects of Second-language Writing* in 1996 and *Contrastive Rhetoric: Development and Challenges* in *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia: International Review of English Studies* using the term 'contrastive rhetoric' (1998: 105). As a case study in TESOL Connor published *New Directions in Contrastive Rhetoric* in *TESOL Quarterly* (2002: 493-503) and *Intercultural Rhetoric Research: Beyond Texts* in *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* (2004: 291-304). In *New Directions in Contrastive Rhetoric* Connor write: «Contrastive rhetoric examines differences and similarities in ESL and EFL writing across languages and cultures as well as across such different contexts as education and commerce. Hence, it considers texts not merely as static products but as functional parts of dynamic cultural contexts» (Connor 2002: 494). Chan, Huen, Kacanas, and Taft wrote *An Empirical Demonstration of Contrastive Rhetoric: Preference for Rhetorical Structure Depends on One's First Language*» in *Intercultural Pragmatics* also using the term 'contrastive rhetoric' (2011: 503). Bazerman and Prior edited *What Writing Does and How it Does It: An Introduction to Analyzing Texts and Textual Practices* in 2004. Kubota and Lehner wrote in *Toward Critical Contrastive Rhetoric*: «A traditional approach to contrastive rhetoric has emphasized cultural difference in rhetorical patterns among various languages. Despite its laudable pedagogical intentions to raise teachers' and students' cultural and rhetorical awareness in second language writing, traditional contrastive rhetoric has perpetuated static binaries between English and other languages and viewed students as culturally lacking. Various criticisms that have challenged assumptions behind traditional contrastive rhetoric as well as a critical scrutiny of pedagogical issues, including the politics of explicit teaching of linguistic forms, indicate a need for establishing alternative conceptual frameworks. Such frameworks seek to critically understand politics of cultural difference and explore situated pedagogy that challenges essentialism» (Kubota; Lehner 2004: 7). Yunxia (2003-2004) wrote in *Revisiting Relevant Approaches for the Study of Language and Intercultural Communication*: «In sum, we need an all-round approach to study language and intercultural communication. Therefore we should always be aware of the limitations of our research findings and evaluate them in the light of appropriate models such as employed by the current study. Furthermore, other perspectives such as intercultural persuasion and sociocultural cognition can also be incorporated into the approach in future language and intercultural studies». (Yunxia) In German research the term 'kontrastive Rhetorik' ('contrastive rhetoric') is used following the major works of Kaplan and Austin. This term 'kontrastive Rhetorik' is related to cultural comparative rhetorical analysis. In

the edition of *Begegnung mit dem «Fremden»: Grenzen - Traditionen – Vergleiche. Akten des VIII. Internationalen Germanisten-Kongresses, Tokyo 1990* edited by Eijirō Iwasaki (Teil 5. Sektion 7) *German as a Foreign Language* (*Deutsch als Fremdsprache*) was discussed in Sektion 9 *Kontrastive Rhetorik, Poetik, Stilistik, Textlinguistik*. Connor published *Contrastive Rhetoric: Cross-cultural Aspects of Second-language Writing* in Stuttgart in 2002. Robling published as a historical German approach to cultural rhetorical studies *Rhetorische Kulturtheorie nach Ernst Cassirer* in *Rhetorik als kulturelle Praxis* (Robling: 2008, S. 45–62). Kammhuber discussed ‚interkulturelle Rhetorik' in the *Handbuch interkulturelle Kommunikation und Kooperation* (2005: 274–286). Kalverkämper published the hermeneutic approach *Die Wiederentdeckung des kommunikativen Körpers: Rhetorik, Theatralik und interkulturelle Wirtschaftskommunikation* (1999: 115-152). Hess-Lüttich and Ernest published «Interkulturelle Kommunikation und angewandte Rhetorik» in *Sprache, Onomatopöie, Rhetorik, Namen, Idiomatik, Grammatik* (1994: 87-96). Greene wrote in *Rhetoric in Cultural Studies*: «To promote the conceptual life of rhetoric in cultural studies will require a more conjunctural research protocol than that provided by a recognition of the textual methods circulating within the history of cultural studies. To do the work of cultural studies, as opposed to the work of communication studies or literary studies, rhetoric might best describe a mode of articulation linking different contexts to a conjuncture» (Green 2008: 969).

## 2. Discussion of the *Status Quo* in Research and Research Methodology of this Study

### 2.1. *Discussion of the Status Quo in Research. The Situation of Foreign Language Learning in Oman and the Arab World*

In *Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Oman: An Exploration of English Language Teaching Pedagogy in Tertiary Education* Al-Jadidi (2009) writes: «Oman is not self-sufficient in the field of higher education. The number of graduating postgraduates is limited and does not supply the teaching needs of the higher colleges. There is big demand for local teachers to work in the public higher education sector and hence the Ministry hires both Arabic speaking bilingual, and non-Arabic-speaking monolingual teachers in order to meet the growing number of higher educational institutions across the country. Oman will take many years before it becomes self-sufficient in its production of English teachers. The table also indicates that the native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) represent one third of the total number of teachers, while the bilingual and non-native monolingual teachers represent two thirds. As already stated, the total number shown in the table includes bilingual teachers (Omani and other

Arabic-speaking teachers from neighboring countries) whereas the non-native English-speaking teachers include teachers from Indian subcontinent such as Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis and European non-English speaking countries. Unfortunately there is no breakdown of statistics for the bilingual Arabic-speaking teachers showing their countries of origin» (Al-Jadidi, 2009). Abi Samra in *An Analysis of Errors in Arabic Speakers' English Writings* listed the following five sources of errors: Language transfer, transfer of training, strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication, and overgeneralization of TL linguistic material (Abi Samra). Learning strategy-based errors are according to Abi Samra false analogy, misanalysis, incomplete rule application, exploiting redundancy, overlooking co-occurrence restrictions, hypercorrection (monitor overuse), and overgeneralization or system simplification. Communication strategy-based errors are according to Abi Samra holistic strategies and analytic strategies (Abi Samra).

## 2.2. *The Difficulties of Learning German for Native Speaker of the Arabic Langauge. A Contrastive Analysis of the Language Acquisition Process in German and Arabic*

### 2.2.1. *General Differences between the German and the Arabic Language*

This study is both inductively and theoretically operating, since it is a study of experiences in classroom concerning the phenomenon 'contrastive rhetoric' in courses delivered in the German section of the *University of Nizwa.* Based upon the findings, the language contact situation will be described within a model of contrastive elements affecting the writing process. The procedures are based upon studies of L2 learners in Courses taught during the research period in the German Section of the *University of Nizwa.* Historically, the English and the German language belong to the same language family, the Germanic languages within the branch of the Indo-Germanic languages. This relationship is an essential tool for the success in language acquisition in a language learning situation with native speakers without any previous contacts with the German language, but school curricula that entail the learning of the English language. Here the English language serves as a bridge for the understanding of Western culture, the linguistic settings of a Germanic language, and the acquisition of the German language with a thesaurus closely related to the thesaurus of the English language.

(1) *General Differences of the Arabic and German Language*

The German and the Arabic language belong to different language families with different linguistic features. They also use different writing systems and are written in different directions.

(2) *Arabic Dialect vs. Standard German*

The Arabic language is itself a very conservative language, which has since hundreds of years not changed; the dialects of the language are deviant forms of the standard Arabic language, which have simplified grammatical forms and lack endings that serve as grammatical indicators. Also like any dialect, the vocabulary and the syntactic arrangement are different from the standard language. The Arabic spoken in Oman is a dialect and variation of the standard language. In such a vernacular language the cases are often not indicated and the endings for the cases are missing in the language. This is a contrast to the language learning process of a language, which indicates all the grammatical functions by the use of prefixes and suffixes.

(3) *Langauge Progression of the German Language*

The learners of the German language are required to learn the German language at an early state of learning with many complex features of the grammar of this language. So the German language requires the knowledge of the regular and irregular construction of singular and plural, the syntactical constructions of syntactical patterns, the knowledge of the articles of nouns, and the irregular forms of verbs.

(4) *Grammaticality of Standard German vs. Orality of Arabic Dialects with Defective Grammar*

Arabic native speakers experience their native language within a dialect, which lacks the standard grammatical markers of the standard language. Their standard language is similar like a second language a language learned at school or in another educational institution, if learned at all. So concepts of grammar are not known to an Arabic language speaker, if he/she has not been educated in a classical school curriculum with Arabic. In Arabic, the omission of short vowel within the writing system is typical as a feature of the Semitic languages. On the contrary, in the English language we have vowels indicated, but the reading is not standardized and rules for the pronunciation must be learned. In German, the pronunciation of the vowels is standardized and simpler compared to the English pronunciation of words. The L2 learners of German are can easier learn the pronunciation of the German language, since here written and spoken language are only slightly differentiated, while the English language pronunciation rules are much more complex. Also it is very hard for an Arabic L2 learner of English to learn the pronunciation of the English language coming from a background of the omission of the short vowels, which serve as grammatical indicators and are elementary carriers of the word root.

## 2.2.2. *The Advantages of the Language Learning Process of the German Language: the Use of the English Language Acquisation Process for Contrasive Rhetorical Performance*

The advantages of the language learning process of the German language through the use of the English language acquisition process are numerous. First of all, the progression of the learning process of the German language can be accelerated using the linguistic relationships between the German and the English language. This acceleration is based upon the similarities between the German and the English language in all aspects of basic linguistic features such as lexicality, the morphological structure, the syntax, and the semantics at basic levels. At more advanced levels, it is necessary to teach the specific German linguistic features. But the advantage for the learning process is the security and the knowledge the students have already archived in the English language acquisition process. The process of contrastive performance within the framework of contrastive rhetorical writing is accelerated by the use of the English language; the writing process within the L2 (German) is enhanced through the already archived writing skills within the acquisition process of the English language learned previously as a L2 using the common features of both the German and the English language. A side effect of such a learning process is the implemented feature of translation activities and contrastive analytical access to a foreign language, which is a contrast to the traditional cultural pattern of language learning consisting of memorization and rote learning.

## 2.2.3. *Arabic as a 'Static Language' vs. German and English as 'Dynamic and Developing Languages': General Difficulties of the German Language Reflected in Arabic Mother tongue Learners in Oman*

General difficulties of the German language for learners are reflected in the learning process of Arabic mother tongue learners in Oman are the efforts if the grammar and the learning of genders of nouns, articles, declensions and plurals. So in the German language learning process, many grammatical features have to be mastered at the very beginning. It is a fast progression of the grammatical features. German shares a great amount of vocabulary with English. German has many grammatical rules compared to English. The verbs require conjugations including irregular forms. In terms of the vocabulary, German and English share many cognates. English and German both belong to the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family. Because they are so closely related, they share many features. The German of the 21st century implements many words of its thesaurus from the international English language; thus, it is a very adaptable and incorporating language. It builds loanwords and cognates derived from the English language and also implements complete English words into the spoken and written language. On the contrary, the thesaurus of Arabic hasn't had

changed over centuries, while the orally spoken Arabic language was divided into many different dialects, which are partly not mutually understandable by their speakers. Arabic is a language from the Semitic language family with a three consonant root as its basis. All parts of speech are combinations of the three-root consonants with fixed vowel patterns and prefixes. Regarding the syntactical patterns are differences between Semitic and Germanic languages: Arabic is a VSO language and German and English are SVO languages. *Effective Language Learning* wrote that «The Arabic language has had a strict grammatical form for over a thousand years, although the language has obviously been subject to various social and historical influences. One can separate the study of the Arabic language into five areas: al-luga, at-tasrif, an-nahw, al-istiqaq, al-balaga. In this order, this translates to lexicon, morphology, syntax, derivation, and rhetoric. These are the traditional areas of the study of Arabic, but there is a lot more contention over the modern varieties of Arabic, as there are simply so many (*Effective Language Learning*).

## 3. The Description of the Unique Situation for Language Learning and the Qualities of the Arising Contrastive Rhetoric between L1 and L2 in Oman: Contrastive Cultural Elements affecting Writing

In 1978 *The Herder-Institut* at the University of Leipzig became the oldest department of *German as a Foreign Language* (*GFL*) in the entire German-speaking world. (Welle) Welle states in *The History of German as a Foreign Language. Quo vadis GFL? «German as a Foreign Language» at German Universities from 1978 to the Present*: «In the 1970s, the social and cultural challenges facing West Germany gave rise to the establishment of this academic discipline. It should be construed above all as a response to the problem of assimilating immigrant workers, which had just come to a head at that time» (Welle). Contrastive rhetoric is the study of how a person's first language and culture influence the writing process in a second language. The basic observations in English can also be transferred to the language learning process of another second language. In our case it is the German language. The Arabic language is at a linguistic state, the German language had before the use of the 'weak verbs'. The use of 'weak verbs' is a means of economization of language use. Prior to this state, the 'Umlaut'-change of vowels was used to mark grammatical changes such as plurals and the conjugation of verbs. This retarded state is still dominant in the Arabic language. According to Whorf, Indo-European type of language is a carrier of scientific thought: «What we call «scientific thought» is a specialization of the western Indo-European type of language, which has developed not only a set of different dialectics, but actually a set of different dialects. These dialects are now becoming mutually unintelligible» (Whorf). Young (1931) wrote in *Language,*

*Thought and Social Reality* about the different between Eastern mystical thinking and Western science: «The man who knows primitive peoples is struck by the power of magical forms of thinking on the entire culture of a people. So, also, an Oriental mystic is amazed at the effects of science and materialistic, mechanistic concepts upon the thinking and acting of Western peoples» (Young, 1931).

The mitation of the syntax of L1 is in most cases grammatically incorrect, since both languages (L1 and L2) have different syntactical structures. The teacher Al-Mahrooqi (2011: 243) from Oman wrote: «The role of the teacher in all formal educational settings is a vital one. Therefore, it is important to adequately prepare the teacher for the challenging task of teaching» (Al-Mahrooqi, 2011). A writing culture in Oman is a relatively new concept in this country. In Oman, education made a step from the 'oral culture' to the 'visual culture' bypassing the state of a 'reading culture'. So the concept and the application of writing, even within familiar situations like writing birthday cards, is new to a society, which was oral. A writing culture in Oman is a relatively new concept in this country. In Oman, education made a step from the 'oral culture' to the 'visual culture' bypassing the state of a reading culture.The German writing style is a product of cognitive work, thinking. Smith wrote in *German Philosophy: Language and Style*: «Many German and German-inspired philosophers, at least since Hegel, have in addition taken the expressionistic values of 'authenticity' and 'immediacy' more seriously than the properly academic values of self-criticism and sobriety. For this reason, too, their writings may be untranslatable in the sense that the result of translating them may not look like 'philosophy' in the standardly accepted Anglo-Saxon sense. (…) It is indeed common in Germany (and not only among philosophers) to hold that it is a positive advantage if a philosophical text is marked by special difficulties of understanding. A genuinely philosophical language should call forth in its readers a special attitude of intellectual exertion (called *'Denken'*), and not just anyone is in a position to hear this call» (Smith, 1991). Biswas (2012) in *Bridging the Gap - The Potential of Contrastive Rhetoric in Teaching L2 Writing* wrote: «Kaplan and Ostler (cited in Connor, 1996) have claimed that Arabic writing has a series of parallel constructions which often interferes with ESL writing. It has been suggested that this style is influenced by the forms of classical Arabic, as found in the Koran. In Arabic, coordination is preferred to subordination. In stead of developing paragraphs in the manner of English (a general statement followed by a series of specific examples), Arabic develops paragraph through a series of negative and positive parallel constructions. Ostler also finds a significantly higher number of coordinated sentences and more discourse units; often begun with a superordinate, universal statement, and ended with some type of formulaic or proverbial statement» (Biswas, 2012). Biswas (2012) in *Bridging the Gap - The Potential of Contrastive Rhetoric in Teaching L2*

*Writing* wrote: «In the German- English contrast, Clyne (1983) found that the German writers were more digressive and were less likely than the English writers to place topic sentences early in a paragraph or to define terms» (Biswas, 2012). Siepmann wrote that «the focus in German academic writing is on subject-matter knowledge and content rather than form or style, and there is a greater tolerance of digression. (…) Finally, it is important to note that German-educated scholars tend to employ 'Germanic' discourse patterns when writing in English. In fact, these patterns become even more marked in their English texts, probably because much processing capacity is used up at the linguistic level in second language writing» (Siepmann, 2006). Luke wrote in *The Nature of the Semitic Root* that «we see that the Semitic and Indo-European roots are quite alike ,in structure, and in both the families word-formation takes place through the addition of affixes. As for tfle first state of the Indo-European root, it has its counterpart in the strong roots of the Semitic family which have a third consonant corresponding to the suffix in Indo-European» (Luke). The Germanic languages are a specific group of languages within the Indo-European family of languages. These languages have specific linguistic features that distinguish them from other Indo-European languages. The Germanic language have unique roots for meanings related to the concept 'speech', which can be considered the basement for the distinct forms of linguistic communication within this group of languages.

## 4. The Case Study of Students of the University of Nizwa

### 4.1. *Analysis of the Contrastive Rhetorical Situation and Contrastive Cultural Elements Affecting Writing: A Case Course*

4.1.1. *Contrastive Rhetoric at the University of Nizwa. Learning German through English*

In *A Message from the Dean* of the Callege of Arts and Sciences of the *University of Nizwa* is written: «Recognizing the high demand in Oman and abroad for highly qualified graduates and the vital role graduate students play in enriching the life of academic institutions, the College began offering the Master programs in education and Arabic language and literature in the academic year 2006-2007. These programs have attracted some of the best young talent of Oman» (Ismail). The German Language Section of the *University of Nizwa* wrote in *Why study German?*: «Germany occupies a central place in European life, and is the driving force behind many of its political, economic, artistic and intellectual developments. Within Europe German is an official language in Austria, Switzerland, Luxembourg and Liechtenstein, while it is also a common minority language in other nations, contributing to approximately 120 million native speakers. (…) The growth in tourism from German-speaking countries

will also provide significant employment opportunities. In the Gulf Region the University of Nizwa is the first university to offer such a specific degree» (*German Language Section*). The *University of Nizwa* offeres a Diploma and a BA Program for students. Their proficiency level at the beginnings of their studies is zero. The students have a background in English and the affinity of English and German as two neighboring Germanic languages is used in the curriculum for the learning process of the German language. In many courses the students learn German based upon the linguistic similarities and the similarities within the vocabulary of both languages in the form of cognates, internationalisms, loanwords and English words in the contemporary German language. Usually the students entering the German program with a background in the English language refrain from the use of the English pronunciation of cognates existing in English and German after the first semester and change completely to the German pronunciation. The programs of the German Section of the *University of Nizwa* support such a language acquisition process with contrastive linguistic features for the approach of the new second language L2 (German) through the previous language learning process of the related language learned as L2 (English) with various courses implemented into the German curricula. Among the basic courses of the curricula of the BA and the Diploma programs are courses covering the basic abilities 'writing', 'speaking', 'understanding/listening', and 'hearing' are supported by the bilingual vocabulary explanations of cognates, loanwords, and internationalism in English and German. The courses for introductory phonetics and advanced phonetics assist the students in learning the correct German pronunciation. The introductory grammar course and the advanced grammar course are supportive for the acquisition and application of German grammar as an additional feature of a Germanic language supplementary to the common features of the German and the English common grammatical structures. Among the theoretical courses, the courses 'Introduction to Linguistics' and 'Comparative Linguistics' introduce into the methodology of language research and the structures of languages from the last and recent research standpoint. The course 'Practice in Translation' introduces into the basic skills and methods of applied linguistics. The course 'Communication and Intercultural Skills 1' aims to be an introductory course of the German language focusing on the oral communication skills of the students based upon vocabulary, which consists of loanwords and cognates at the language Level A1 of the CERF (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) for the awareness of the semantic and syntactic relationships between the German and the English language.

### 4.1.2. *Error Analyses - A Case Study of a Writing Course at the University of Nizwa*

In this part of the book we will look at the unique Germanic language features of speech and specific forms of speech in the Germanic cultures arising from them. The affinity of German to the Arabic language can be described as follows:

(1) Compared to the problematic discrepancy between speech and written English, German is a 'default'-language with s higher equivalence of phonetic signs and sounds compared to the discrepancy of the English language.

(2) German verbs are conjugated like Arabic verbs.

(3) German is to a lesser degree a conglomerate-language compared to English, which implements the words of foreign languages into its vocabulary.

(4) German since the second half of the 20th century implements English word, which are known to Arabic language learners, who had English as their first foreign language already in school.

The error analysis of a writing course given at the *University of Nizwa* shows thet under the aspect of the linguistic application of rules of the German language the students lack the ability to apply linguistic patterns flawless. The writing lacks consistency in the use of linguistic patterns unique to the German language. This is grounded on several factors within the educational system before the beginnings of the studies of German: The students are used to memorization as the predominant method of learning; thus , text production and any approach to creative writing is a difficult enterprise. Another aspect causing this deficiency is the general absence of a writing culture in Oman; the country has basically a oral culture of communication; writing in daily life was uncommon to the majority of the population; the first application of writing in the younger generation is the writing of e-mails, which are actually a literal version of an oral speech communication. The writing proficiency in German is continuous without any interference from another second language L2 , e.g. English, and errors that occur are based upon the linguistic structures of the L1 Arabic. The quality of the writing depends also on individual factors like the proficiency of the student in his/her mother tongue in writing; we already mentioned the proficiency to express oneself in the standard Arabic language highly depends on the educational background of the student. This background factor is also important in the process of English language acquisition in schools. The study is based upon the writing assignments in the course GERM240 Grammar 2 for BA students in the 3rd year in Fall 2011. It shows typical errors concerning various grammatical aspect in sentences the students were ask to write as examples for typical grammatical phenomena. The students wrote the sentences. We gibe here examples of the most common errors.

**(1) 'Errors of Orthography and Spelling' as Derivations from Standard German**

(1) Ich sehe eine Kätze.

(2) Ich habe ein Problem, meine Uhr ist Kaputt.

(3) Ich mache einen Grammatik Fehler.

**(2) 'Errors of False Idioms / Errors of ‚trennbare Verben' ('Separable Verbs') as Derivations from Standard German**

(1) Der Bus kommt immer pünktlich um 7 Uhr ab, aber heute hatte er Verspätung.

(2) Fahren Sie mit dem Wagen zur Universität? Nein, ich brauche ihn nicht, ich gehe gern mit dem Bus.

**(3) 'Errors of Cases' (*case - genus - numerus -* congruence) as Derivations from Standard German**

(1) Ich kaufe ein Geschenk für meiner Tochter.

(2) Ich rufe meiner Schwester an.

(3) Suaad holt mir um 8 Uhr ab.

(4) Um 8 Uhr hat Suaad mir abgeholt.

**(4) 'Wrong Transcription of Arabic Proper Names and German Proper Names'**

**as Derivations from Standard German**

(1) Herr Al.Kindi ist ein netter Chef. Alle lieben ihn.

(2) Wie finden Sie Volks Wagen? Ich finde ihn sehr gut.

(3) Mein Bruder hat große Probleme und ich helfe ihm.

**(5) Wrong Use of Words, Idioms, or Foreign Words from Different Languages entering German as Derivations from Standard German**

(1) Ich komme nach Hause, wenn ich vertigo bin.

**(6) 'Errors of Interpunction' as Derivations from Standard German**

(1) Fragn Sie mich was, Sie wollen.

**(7) 'Ignorance of Capital Letters and Small Letters' as Derivations from Standard German**

(1) personalpronomen

(2) Iss nicht so veil. Imperativ (du-Form)

(3) Ahmed ist der chef./ Relativpronomen

**(8) 'Wrong Verb Conjugation' as Derivations from Standard German**

(1) Isst nicht so viel./ Imperativ

(2) Badur esst nicht, weil er dich ist.

(3) Er war gute studentin. Heute ist schlecht.

**(9) 'Wrong Genus Attribution' as Derivations from Standard German**

(1) Ich muss zum Ärztin.

(10) 'Semantic Errors' as Derivations from Standard German

(1) Badur esst nicht, weil er dich ist.

**(11) 'Lack of a Correct Preposition' as Derivations from Standard German**

(1) Ich bin nicht sicher, ob ich Abend ins kino kommen kann.

(2) Ich lebe an einem Dorf.

(3) Wenn ich nach komme, muss jeder Hausaufgaben machen.

**(12) 'Wrong compounds' as Derivations from Standard German**

(1) WechselPräpositionen

### 4.1.3. *Errors as Derivations from Standard German in A German Writing Course*

This error analysis reflects that the typical specific features of the German language (Compound verbs and compound words, the genus of the nouns, the conjugation of irregular verbs, specific cases for specific verbs) are sources of the errors. The comprehension of these features requires a previous learning process of the grammalical features as a consequent study process; such learning cannot be covered by the culturally transmitted form of rote learning. Instead of this, it requires the ability of have a meta-cognitive approach to language as an a analytical approach to language and also the ability to apply these analytical features within the production of text in a writing process. On the contrary, English is a less challenging language with a lesser amount of synthetically word forms and a lesser amount of grammatical markers.

### 4.2. *An Analysis of Contrastive Cultural Elements in Writing with Impact on Writing Skills. A Model Scale for Contrastive Elements Contrastive Elements of the German and the Oman Culture. Key Concepts and Values of Communication in Oman*

The term 'Arab World' is used in Western research. The concept of the 'Arab Nation' is a concept created in the Arab countries. Arab Gulf States have been influenced by the cultures of India, Persia, and East Africa. This is their distinct feature that distinguished them from the North-African and Mediterranean Arab cultures. The dominant culture is the Arab culture and various dialects of

Arabic besides Persian and English. According to *Communicaid*, «the countries of the Middle East each have their own unique identity and culture, but share many fundamental beliefs and traditions. Understanding not only the shared cultural values and attitudes but each country's unique business and social culture is imperative for any organization wishing to do business in the region». (Foss) Key concepts and values of the Middle Eastern culture are according to *Communicaid*:

- Religion
- Indirect Communication
- Hospitality
- Personal Relationships (Foss)

In the section *Doing Business in the Arab World* of the *Encyclopedia of Business* the following is written about the diversity of political systems: «The political systems in force in the various Arab states also differ markedly. The governments range from monarchies to military dictatorships and from one-party democracies to nascent actual representative governments. Even the monarchies are highly diverse in how they are ruled». (*Encyclopedia of Business*) Two factors contribute to the establishment of the cognitive metaphor 'Arab world': On the one hand the relative discrepancy between the Western culture and the Arab culture, which is expressed in the cognitive metaphor used by the West and on the other hand the common features that connect Arabs with each other and distinguish them from other cultures. So the popularity of this metaphor can be explained by the acceptance of both societies. (*Encyclopedia of Business*) Nelson, Al Batal, and El Bakary stated that English represents a low context culture in which 'words represent truth'. On the contrary, in Arabic, directness is avoided. Arabic communication style can be described in their words as 'Sweet Talk'. Nelson, Al Batal, and El Bakary stated critically regarding the limits of communication typology, that «such descriptions present Arabic and English linguistic and cultural patterns as neatly homogeneous, overlooking the differences that exist among the various communities in terms of status, gender, and context» (Nelson, Al Batal, and El Bakary, 2002). Wippel (2010) described the economy of Oman. In *International Business Wiki* is written in *Communication Patterns in Oman*: «Business is greatly affected by communication because communications affects business deals, contracts, and many other aspects of business. Having knowledge of Oman's Islamic, conservative background as well as knowing the language and norms of greetings and dress will greatly help international businesses entering Oman. Oman only recently opened its doors to international business. Although wanting to diversify in business, Oman wants to maintain its strict culture heritage and not adopt many traits of the Western world» (*International Business*

*Wiki*). Malinak wrote in *Doing Business in Oman* published by the *Communicaid Group* that «most Omani companies have a strong vertical hierarchy. Decisions tend to be made from the top-down by the most senior member. Status is an important part of Omani society and is determined by factors such as age, wealth and family or tribal relations».

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