

UNIVERSITY OF BABYLON

**Investigating the Performance
of Iraqi EFL University Students
in Using Irregular Sentences**

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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TO
MY FAMILY
WITH DEEP LOVE

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Abstract

This study is mainly concerned with Iraqi EFL university students' performance in using irregular sentences as a kind of sentences which do not correspond to the regular patterns of sentence structures or to the variation of these structures in the major sentence types.

The problem arises from the state that most of Iraqi EFL university students do not have mastery of irregular sentences and it is not so possible to make precise distinction of the nature of such sentences. Therefore, this study aims at investigating the ability of Iraqi EFL university students to recognize and use irregular sentences with their different types .It is hypothesized that:

1. Most of Iraqi EFL university students do not often distinguish irregular sentences and their different types.
2. Students' achievement at the recognition level is expected to be better than their achievement at the production one.
3. Students who receive more explanation and concentration on irregular sentences are expected to be better in their performance than those who do not receive the same thing on the same topic.
4. Mastery of the use of irregular sentences is not achieved by learners over a four-year period of EFL learning at the university level.

On the basis of these hypotheses, a diagnostic test has been formulated and applied to a representative sample of (240) Iraqi EFL university students of the first-year and fourth-year in the Department

of English/College of Education/Universities of Babylon and Al-Qadisiya to measure their performance at both recognition and production levels.

Data analysis has revealed that students' acquisition of irregular sentences over a four-year period increased by (12%) since the rate of the first year is (9%) and that of the fourth year is (21%). In terms of the scores' mean, the increase over a four year-period is (5.89%). The low acquisition rates yielded above are somehow unsatisfactory. Data analysis has also provided evidence that students' performance at the recognition level(42.62%)is better than their performance at the production one (27.12%), and that teaching affects the learners' performance as the more explanation they receive on the topic, the better performance they have. These results validate the hypotheses of the study.

As for sources of errors, intralingual transfer constitutes the highest cause as it accounts for (36%) of the total errors. Next is the negative effect of context of learning (31%). The students' use of communicative strategies comes next (24%), finally interlingual transfer is the least-frequent error source (9%).

This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter introduces the problem, aims, hypotheses, procedures, limits and value of the study. Chapter Two is a theoretical survey of irregular sentences and their various types including their forms, functions and uses. Chapters Three and Four present a description of the test, and its results. Chapter Five is devoted to the conclusions arrived at.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 The Problem

It is obvious that English has its own regular sentence patterns and types which are commonly used in everyday situations. However, sentences which do not correspond to the regular patterns of sentence structures or to the variations of those structures in the major sentence types are called ***Irregular Sentences*** (Greenbaum and Quirk ,1990 :244).

Irregular sentences are found in many different types and accordingly having various forms, functions and uses .They diverge from the regular syntactic forms, and thus they consist of forms that are not found in regular sentences, for example the subjunctive form:

1 Long live the Queen.

Or they are marked as subordinate, for example by the subordinator *if* :

2 If only I had listened to my teacher!

And they are fragmentary, lacking constituents that are normally obligatory where ellipses are recoverable either from the linguistic form of the sentence:

3 *Sorry to hear about your father.* (I am sorry to hear.....)

Or from the preceding linguistic context:

4 A.When can I see you?

B.*This night.*(You can see me this night.)(Quirk et al.1985:838)

Although the above are several ways in which sentences are regarded as irregular ones, yet it is not possible to make precise distinctions of the nature of these sentences in English. Therefore, this study presents an explanation of how irregular sentences differ from the regular ones and how their variation can be realized. Precisely, the problem arises from the state that most of Iraqi EFL university students do not have mastery of irregular sentences because they lack knowledge about this kind of sentences and because these sentences have not been paid due attention. Therefore, the present study is devoted to investigating the performance of Iraqi EFL university students in using irregular sentences.

1.2 Aims of the Study

The study basically aims at :

1. Presenting material about irregular sentences with their various types, functions and uses which can be used to distinguish these sentences and their diversity from the regular ones .

2. Identifying Iraqi EFL university students' performance in using irregular sentences at both recognition and production levels.
3. Accounting for students' errors and their sources which can be of help to provide some solutions that enable the learners to overcome the problems and difficulties they encounter in using such sentences .

1.3 Hypotheses

In view of the preceding aims, it is hypothesized that :

1. Most of Iraqi EFL university students do not often distinguish irregular sentences and their different types .
2. Students' achievement at the recognition level is expected to be better than their achievement at the production level .
3. Students who receive more explanation and concentration on irregular sentences are expected to be better in their performance than those who do not receive the same thing on the topic under discussion .
4. Mastery of the uses of irregular sentences is not achieved by learners over a four-year period of EFL learning at the university level .

1.4 Procedures

The following steps will be followed in the course of fulfilling the aims of this study :

1. Presenting, as far as possible, a comprehensive material about irregular sentences including their different types, functions and uses showing how these sentences diverge from the regular ones.
2. Selecting a sample of Iraqi EFL university students as subjects for conducting a test to investigate their performance in using irregular sentences at both recognition and production levels and to point out the difficulties they may encounter in using this kind of sentences.
3. Identifying learners' errors and making an analysis to classify these errors according to their sources .

1.5 Limits

The sample of the present study is confined to university students of the first-year and fourth-year in the Departments of English/Colleges of Education/Universities of Babylon and Al-Qadisiya during the academic year (2005-2006). These two levels of learning have been selected to apply the test as the first-year is

the start-level of learning at the university level and fourth-year is the end-level at the university in order to see the extent to which such students acquire irregular sentences through their university period .

1.6 Value

The findings of the present study are hoped to be useful in :

- a. The theoretical aspect since the study is useful for the researchers to pave the way for further investigation on this topic .

- b. The practical aspect due to the pedagogical value it will have to teachers besides the identification of the errors made by learners in using irregular sentences which can be of use to teachers in their efforts to help learners perform more effectively. The study can also be of some help to syllabus designers in the preparation of remedial teaching programme .

Chapter Two

Irregular Sentences

2.1 Introduction

Some sentences are irregular as they do not correspond to the regular patterns of sentence or to the variations of the structures in the major sentence types. Irregular sentences diverge from the regular grammatical forms in that they consist of structures which are not found in regular sentences, or they are marked as subordinate and they are fragmentary, lacking constituents that are normally obligatory. Irregular sentences are of different types having various forms, functions and uses. This chapter presents a survey of these irregular sentence types shedding light on their different forms ,how they deviate from the regular sentences and how such a diversity and variation can be realized.

2.2 The Term “Sentence”

A large part of our life is spent in transferring our thoughts to others by means of many ways, one of which is the use of groups

of words called sentences which convey utterances. (Humphreys,1973:5).The question concerning the definition of a sentence has been answered by different grammarians and in different ways as it is the highest –ranking unit of grammar (Sledd,1959:166).

Gowers (1986:1)states that it is not easy to define a sentence and many learned grammarians have tried but their definitions have been torn to pieces by other grammarians .

More than two hundred different definitions of the sentence confront those workers who deal with English structures (Todd:1985:9). Sledd (1959:166) mentions the most familiar definition which is that a sentence is a group of words that expresses a complete thought. But this does not tell us what a complete thought is and what signals in our speech indicate the completeness of a thought. So this definition does not furnish workable criteria which recognize sentences.

Palmer(1971:71)points out that the normal mark of the sentence is that it lies between two marks of end punctuation, but this does not, however, help us to understand what a sentence is since it does not give us a definition. So we must depend on other foundation than the familiar definitions.

Bloomfield(1933:170)defines a sentence as "a construction which, in the given utterance, is not part of any larger construction". Thus, each sentence is an independent linguistic form in that it is not included by virtue of any grammatical construction in any larger linguistic form. In any utterance, a linguistic form appears either as a part of some larger form , as does the word *John* in *John ran away*, or as an independent form which is free from the inclusion in any larger linguistic form, as in the exclamation *John!*. In the former example the word *John* is said to be in *included position* and thus does not constitute a sentence whereas in the latter one it is in *absolute position* and constitutes a sentence.

Quirk et al.(1985:47)mention that "the sentence is an indeterminate unit in that it is often not easy to determine, specially in spoken language, where a sentence ends and another begins", the definition which is adopted in the present study.

2.2.1 Regular Patterns of Structure

Most sentences are connected in meaning and form with other sentences that go before or come after. We sometimes think of sentences as being complete thoughts. They are complete in a way but in another way they are not complete. A sentence is

usually not complete in meaning but it is complete when it consists of one of a number of word patterns and the pattern has been completed (Roberts,1956:58).

Quirk et al.(1985:53) present a set of regular patterns of structures which seems the most comprehensive classification of the essential core of each clause structure. This classification is called “clause types” which can be applied to the whole range of English clauses. The following examples represent the seven clause types where S is (subject), V is (verb), O is (object), C is (complement) and A is (adverbial):

Type S V

5 The child laughed.

Type S V O

6 Somebody caught the ball.

Type S V C

7 The country became totally independent.

Type S V A

8 Marry is in the house.

Type S V O O

9 She gives me expensive presents.

Type S V O C

10 We proved him wrong.

Type S V O A

11 I put the plate on the table.

Put it another way, these seven patterns fall into three types:

a two-element pattern: S V

three three-element patterns: S V+ { O,C,A }

three four-element patterns: S V O+ { O,C,A }

The form of the main verb usually determines the form of the structure. Due to this classification, there appear to be three main verb classes:

1. Intransitive verbs which occur in type S V and are followed by no obligatory element[e.g: *laughed* in (5)]
2. Transitive verbs which occur in types S V O, S V O O, S V O C and S V O A and are followed by an object [e.g: *caught* in (6), *gives* in(9), *proved* in (10) and *put* in (11)].
3. Intensive verbs which occur in types S V C and S V A and are followed by a subject complement or an adverbial [e.g: *became* in (7) and *be* in (8)] (Ibid .54).

2.2.2 *Major Sentence Types*

Four major syntactic types are to be pondered over as far as regular sentence types are concerned. These types are the major syntactic classes in English sentence differentiated by their form (Ibid. 304):

1. Declaratives are sentences the subject of which is present and generally precedes the verb. These sentences make a statement or an assertion:

12 I like you.

13 They must not come here.

2. Interrogatives are sentences which can be formed in one of two ways:

A. Yes-no interrogatives: The operator precedes the subject.

These questions expect a 'yes' or 'no' answer:

14 Are you the oldest man here?

B. Wh-interrogatives: The interrogative wh- element is placed initially. These questions expect an answer other than 'yes' or 'no':

15 How can I get to the station? (Todd, 1985: 52)

3. Directives are sentences which normally have no overt grammatical subject and whose verb has the base form:

16 Switch off the light.

4. Exclamatives are sentences which have an initial phrase introduced by *what* or *how* with subject-verb order:

17 What a din you are making! (Humphreys,1973:15)

Semanticall, there are four classes of discourse functions which are associated with these sentence types .The differences among them are seen in the different effects they have on hearers:

- A. Statements are used to convey information as they tend not to make us say something but simply to keep on listening.
- B. Questions are primarily used to seek information on a specific point as such sentences tend to make people say something in answer to sentences.
- C. Directives are primarily used to instruct somebody to do something.
- D. Exclamatives are primarily used to express the extent to which the speaker is affected by something (Roberts, 1956: 58; Azar, 1992: 186).

2.3 *The Term “Irregular Sentence”*

Bloomfield (1933:176) refers to irregular sentences as minor, stating that a sentence which does not consist of a favourite sentence-form is a minor sentence. Some forms occur predominantly as minor sentences entering into no construction or have often peculiar construction. In general, minor sentences are classified into either completive or exclamatory. The completive type is of a form that supplements a situation:

18 With whom?

19 Mr. Brown: Mr. Smith. (in introducing people)

Exclamatory minor sentences consist of interjections or of that which do not belong to favourite sentence-types:

20 Ouch, damn it!

21 This way, please!

A substantive form naming a hearer is used in English as a demand for his presence or attention:

22 Hello, John!

23 You with the glasses!

Greenbaum and Quirk (1990: 244) state that irregular sentences are those sentences which do not correspond to the regular patterns of sentence (of. 2.2.1) or to the variations of the structures in the major sentence types (of. 2.2.2).

2.3.1 *Irregularity of Sentences*

It is not possible to have precise distinctions of the nature of irregular sentences in English, but we can mention several ways in which sentences are irregular:

1. These sentences have the forms which are not found in regular sentences, for example the *subjunctive* form:

24 Long live the Prime Minister!

25 Heaven help us all! (Thakur,1998:129)

2. They are marked as subordinate, for example by the *conditional if* :

26 If only we had a rope!

27 If we all lived underground! (Thomson and Martinet,1990: 271)

3. They are fragmentary ,having no obligatory constituents. Elements of the sentences are ellipted, for example the omission of the subject and verb in:

28 Sorry to hear about your father.(I am sorry to hear about your father) (Quirk et al.1985:838)

Or it may be elicited from the preceding context, as in B's answer in the following exchange:

29 A. Which one do you want?

B. This one. (I want this one.) (Bloomfield,1933:176)

2.3.2 *Types of Irregular Sentences*

2.3.2.1 *Sentences with Optative Subjunctive*

The subjunctive is related to one of the three kinds of mood used to denote the form of the verb to show what work it is doing and the manner in which the action is thought of by the speaker (Eckersley and Eckersley, 1980:225). The first type of mood is the indicative which is used to express statements or questions. The second kind is the imperative mood which is used to express commands or requests. The third one is the subjunctive mood which is used to express a wish, a supposition, a proposal or an action or state of being contrary to fact (Conlin, 1961:199).

The subjunctive is rare and little used in present -day English (Hasselgard et al.1999:1). Filipovic (1984: 110) comments that popular usage is in favour of the indicative mood and the subjunctive one is very often replaced by the indicative.

Subjunctives are those sentences in which the concord of the number, person and tense between the subject and the verb is not considered obligatory(Thakur,1998:129).They represent something not as an actual reality but as a desire, plan, demand, thought, hope,

possibility or unreality(Filipovic,1984:110). So, the reason for the existence of the subjunctive is to convey ideas which are not facts (Bywater, 1969: 53).

The subjunctive is used in certain fixed phrases and expressions to express a wish. It is used with or without subject-verb inversion:

30 Long live the bride and groom! (Eckersley, 1963: 541)

31 God save the king! (Thomson and Martinet, 1990: 216)

This type of subjunctive is called a *formulaic subjunctive* which consists of the base form of the verb when the subject is in the third person singular.

Another type of subjunctive occurs in certain type of that-clause operating as the object of verbs like *insist, recommend, suggest*, etc:

32 She insists that he leave immediately. (Leech and Svartvik, 1994: 379)

33 They recommend that this student sign up for a counselor. (Murcia and Freeman, 1999: 632)

34 She suggested that I be the cook. (Stageberg, 1965: 279)

The second verb is in the subjunctive form which is the uninflected base form. This type is called the *mandative subjunctive*.

The mandative subjunctive is used in formal American English to express regulation or obligation but in British English, *should* plus infinitive is generally used instead :

35 Susan insisted that he speak to a psychiatrist.

36 Susan insisted that he should speak to a psychiatrist .

(Hasselgard et al.1999: 1)

The past subjunctive is used after *wish* to indicate an unreal situation in the present :

37 I wish he knew the answer. (He doesn't know) (Krohn, 1971: 258)

38 I wish you had time. (You haven't time) (Thomson and Martinet, 1969: 172)

Wishes, usually blessings, are expressed by a less archaic formula with a subject-verb inversion having the form *may +subject + predication*:

39 May you always be happy!

40 May the best man win! (Greenbaum and Quirk, 1990: 245)

Another archaic formula is *would (to God)* followed by a that-clause with past forms of verbs:

41 Would (to God)that I'd never heard of him! (Quirk et al. 1985: 839)

One of the few constructions in English is the type of subjunctive in which the verb *were* is used instead of *was* to present an action or state that is impossible (Shepherd et al. 1984: 129). Many of these subjunctive expressions begin with *if*, *as if* or *as though* to express unreal conditions:

42 If I were you, I could accept their offer.(Alexander,1988:278)

43 Betty looks as if she were exhausted. (Hornby, 1975: 228)

44 She looked as though she were fainting.(Zandvoort ,1972: 87)

2.3.2.2. Subordinate Clauses as Irregular Sentences

Quirk et al.(1985: 841) state that there are several kinds of clauses in form used as irregular sentences having the illocutionary force of exclamation with the omission of the main clause. These clauses are of several kinds:

1.That-clauses generally have the putative (should) with the expressions of surprise to convey regret or disapproval:

45 That I should live to see such ingratitude!

46 That it should come to this!

And they may occur to convey approval:

47 That all your friends should be so sympathetic!

2. To-infinitive clauses have similar kinds of illocutionary force

of that-clauses though less formal. A common type begins with *To think(that)*:

48 To think that I was once a millionaire!

49 To think that he should be so mean!

The subject in such clauses is the implied first person pronoun which may be interpreted as something like ‘It surprises me/one to think...’, though this form will not be exclamatory. Furthermore, when some other verb than *think* appears with the infinitive clause, its subject is understood from an introductory subject or vocative or it may be obvious from the preceding context:

50 That brother of yours ,to be so uncouth!

51 You fool, to forget your wedding anniversary!

52 You are going to be in trouble. To say something like that!

3. Infinitive-clauses introduced by *Oh* in poetic or archaic style express an exclamatory wish:

53 Oh to be free! (I wish I were free)

54 Oh to be in England! (I wish I were in England)

4. The form *if only* is used to intensify unreal conditionals expressing *surprise, regret* or *wishes* occurring without a main clause:

55 A. Yesterday was Bill's birthday.

B. **Ah, if only I had known earlier!**

56 A. We were looking for volunteers.

B. **If only you'd told me soon** (Yule,1998:143)

57 **If only I understood what you are saying.**(Palmer,1976:45)

Eastwood (1999:356) points out that we can use *wish* or *if only* to express a wish, but *if only* is stronger and more emphatic.

It is possible to have a similar construction with *only*, *just* or *but* when they occur before the main verb:

58 **If I'd only listened to my parents!**

59 **If I could just make them understand my point of view!**

60 **If I could but explain!**

5. Negative if-clauses are used to express surprise when preceded by *well* or *why*:

61 **Well, if it isn't the manager himself!** (It is indeed the manager himself.)

62 **Why, if it isn't Susan!** (It is indeed Susan.)

6. Subordinate clauses which begin with *supposing* may have the same force as *what if* or imperative *suppose*:

63 **Supposing I don't see her ?** (inquiry: What would happen if I.....?)

64 Supposing you come with us.(invitation)

65 Supposing they are poor?(What does it matter if they..?)

(Quirk et al.1985:842)

2.3.2.3 *The Notion of Fragmentary Irregular Sentences*

Irregular sentences are fragmentary, lacking constituents that are normally obligatory in regular sentences. The word *fragmentary* refers to ellipsis in which the actual word(s) whose meaning can be understood must be recoverable(Quirk et al. 1985: 838). Chalker (1984: 264) states that ellipsis means omission and it can be described as “substitution by zero”. Ellipsis may be elicited from the linguistic form of the sentence or from the preceding linguistic context. Greenbaum and Quirk(1990: 247) mention three types of ellipsis:

1. Textual ellipsis in which the form is recoverable from a neighbouring part of the text:

66 If you want (me to buy the car), I'll buy the car.

2. Situational ellipsis in which some types of ellipsis do not depend on the linguistic context, for their interpretation, but rather on knowledge of precise extralinguistic context:

67 Told you so. (I/we told you so)

3. Structural ellipsis which rests upon the listener's ability to recover the omitted word(s) from the sentence and the form is recoverable not through knowledge of context but simply through knowledge of grammatical structure:

68 It is strange (that) nobody heard the noise.

2.3.2.3.1 Types of Fragmentary Irregular Sentences

Fragmentary irregular sentences in English are of different types. Below is a discussion of the most common ones.

2.3.2.3.1.1 Abbreviated Sentences in Instructional Writing

Abbreviated structures are found in instructional writing such as technical manuals, consumer leaflets on assembling or using products, instructional labels on products and recipes. Articles are often omitted in such structures. Furthermore, direct objects which can be understood from the context are omitted in using this style of writing. On some occasions, the subject can be omitted:

69 Keep away from heat.

70 Beat egg lightly with fork.

71 Just heat and serve.

72 Keep out of reach of children.

73 Makes four servings, 1 cupful each.

74 Contains whiteners and brighteners. (Quirk et al.1985: 847)

Swan (1995:1) states that styles of instructional writing and small advertisements have their own special rules often to save space or time. Therefore, articles, subject or object pronouns, forms of *Be* and prepositions are often left out:

75 Can be assembled in ten minutes. Easy to clean. Simple controls. Batteries not included.

76 Single man looking for flat Oxford area. Phone 806127 weekends.

2.3.2.3.1.2 Abbreviated Sentences in Informal Conversation

The omission of initial words in a sentence is usual in informal conversation in which the omitted pronouns and auxiliaries are partially cued by the words that initiate the sentence:

77 Lost something? (Have you lost something?)

78 Want another cup? (Do you want another cup?)

79 Anything wrong? (Is anything wrong?)

In case of ambiguity, these omitted pronouns and auxiliaries depend on the situational context:

80 Hot ?

This could be interpreted as either *Is it hot?* or *Are you hot?*(Quirk et al.1985: 848).

Some types of ellipsis in abbreviated sentences in informal conversation may depend on knowledge of a precise extralinguistic context:

81 Get it?

This sentence might be interpreted in one situation as *Did you get it?* (i.e. the letter/book/shopping etc), and in another situation *Do you get it?* (i.e. Do you understand?) (Ibid. 895).

2.3.2.3.1.3 Abbreviated Sentences in Broadcast Commentaries

Abbreviated sentences are often found in commentaries on radio and television. Forms such as *there is, it is*, or a form of the verb *Be* are usually omitted:

82 Two players wounded. (Two players are wounded)

83 And now a band of the marines. (Ibid. 848)

2.3.2.3.1.4 Elliptical Sentences in Dialogue

Elliptical sentences are normally found in conversation and in written dialogue as answers, comments, or questions to previous sentences uttered by another speaker. The ellipsis can be interpreted from a preceding sentence and the fragmentary

sentences can be analyzed for clause functions through a reconstruction of the full forms depending on preceding sentences:

84 A: I am leaving .

B: Why? (Why are you leaving?)

85 A: Nobody's here.

B: Obviously.(Obviously, nobody's here.) (Ibid.)

Bloomfield (1933:176) describes elliptical sentences as completive sentences which are one of the two types of minor sentences. This type consists of a form which supplements a situation occurring as an answer to a question:

86 A: When can I see you?

B: Tomorrow morning. (You can see me tomorrow morning .)

2.3.2.3.1.5 Elliptical Sentences without Change of Speaker

Fragmentary elliptical sentences may also occur without change of speaker or writer when they are spoken by the same speaker or writer instead of being spoken by another:

87 Two strange figures approached. **Martians!**

88 It has a very distinctive taste. **Crisp and fresh.** (Quirk et al. 1985: 849)

2.3.2.4 Irregular Wh-Questions

Wh-questions are irregular when they do not correspond to the regular forms that are usually found in regular wh-questions. Quirk et al.(Ibid.839-40) mention some types of irregular wh-question which occur mainly in conversation:

1. ***How about*** and ***What about*** are generally followed by noun phrases or-ing clauses. They are mainly used as directives to instruct someone to do something and sometimes are used as inquiries:

90 How about your parents? Are they well?

91 What about following us in your car?

2. ***How come*** is used informally specially in American English to ask about the reason in a form of a question. It is followed by a clause which consists of the normal subject-verb order:

92 How come you're so late ?(How does it come about (that) you're so late?)

3. ***Why(+not)+predication*** as an irregular wh-question is formed without subject or auxiliary with a verb in the base form:

93 Why (not) listen to him?(Why should(n't) /do(n't)/did(n't) you listen to him?)

The abbreviated form with a bare infinitive is always a directive

when it has a negative orientation which accompanies the force of directive:

94 Why bother to reply?(Why do you bother to reply?i.e You are replying but shouldn't bother to reply.)

95 Why make so much fuss?(Why do you make so much fuss? i.e You shouldn't make so much fuss)

4. A verbless why-question is used as an inquiry in which the question corresponds to existential sentence :

96 Why no classes today? ~Why are there no classes today?

97 Why all the noise? ~ Why is there all the noise?

5. Wh-questions (except for why –questions)without a subject and with the verb(to-infinitive)can be occasionally found as inquiries:

98 Which way to go? (Which way should I /we go?)

99 Who to see?

6. Dependent finite wh-interrogetive clauses are found as directive headings in written English for suggestions :

100 Where you should eat in Los Angeles

In addition, a dependent why-clause is used as a statement heading:

101 Why you should have a medical examination once a year

- 7 Dependent infinitive wh-clauses without a subject and with the verb (to-infinitive) are used as directive headings:

102 What to do in an emergency (What one should do in an emergency.)

103 How to mend a puncture

8. Questions introduced by *What if* and *How if* are used as inquiries and directives:

104 What if it rains?(inquiry)

105 What if you join us for lunch?(directive- invitation)

106 What if you don't join us for lunch just this once?

(directive- suggestion)

2.3.2.5 *Adverbials as Directives*

Leech (1989: 514) states that adverbials as directives are mainly found in informal speech. They may be found in the form of a noun phrase subject and an adverbial:

107 Everybody out!

Adverbials as directives may be constructed with an adverb followed by a *with-phrase*:

108 Out with it!

109 On with your show! (Greenbaum and Quirk, 1990: 245)

Quirk et al.(1985: 842) denote that the illocutionary force of commands may be found in adverbials in which a verb of motion is implied:

110 Forward!

111 Inside!

It is possible to find a combination of two adverbials :

112 Full speed ahead!

113 Back to work!

But constructions with *up* and *down* are used to express approval and disapproval respectively:

114 Up with democracy!

115 Down with racism!

The verb of motion which is implied in adverbials as directives may be causative and the noun phrase is a direct object:

116 Hands on heads! (Put your hands on your Heads)

117 Hands up!

Noun phrases that may be accompanied by an adverbial such as *please* will have the force of commands or requests:

118 The door, please!

119 My hat, please!

2.3.2.6 *Aphoristic Sentences*

Aphoristic sentence structures are found in many proverbs in which the common structural feature is the parallelism of two balanced and equivalent constitutions (Greenbaum and Quirk, 1990:245). The stock of proverbs that go from one generation to another are instances of “ready made utterances” (Lyons, 1968: 177). Proverbs are still alive in every-day English to such extent that our daily conversation would be seen rather dull without them. For the learner, some proverbs are easier to grasp than others which have a metaphorical quality and thus are not easy to the foreign ear. Easier to understand are those proverbs which say directly what they mean in a straightforward language (Seidl and McMordie, 1978:241). Students who study English as a foreign language find that a knowledge of these proverbs is helpful to them in their understanding of idiomatic English (Hey, 1984: 99):

120 No gain without pain.

This example appears to be elliptical for something like “Nothing can be gained without a certain amount of pain”(Seidl and McMordie, 1978:245).

121 Well begun, half done.

Here, the verb is nonfinite and the first part is semantically subordinate. It can be interpreted as “When something is started

right it saves you so much time later on that it is almost half done. One might spend more than double the time correcting something which has not been started right”(Nasr,1972:94). In this regard, Quirk et al.(1985:844) mention that many expressions appear to have a conditional relationship between their parts:

122 Waste not, want not.

In this aphoristic sentence, the verb may be considered as directive and a conditional relationship is between the two clauses for something like “If you don’t waste things, you won’t be poor.”

123 Out of sight, out of mind.

Both parts of this example are verbless to be interpreted as “Absent friends are soon forgotten, as one tends to forget about people if there is no direct contact with them”(Seidl and McMordie, 1978:246).

2.3.2.7 Subject-Plus Complement Construction

Quirk et al.(1985: 844-5) state that different types of verbless sentences or clauses, most of which are existential, have the structure of subject and subject complement or of complement alone. These kinds of constructions are called *subject-plus*

complement constructions. In this regard, the following types are mentioned:

1. In one colloquial type, the subject may be informally added after the complement of a clause structure like a noun-phrase tag:

124 Not Bad, that SALmon.

125 ODD sort, those NEIGHbours of yours.

2. A verbless clause consisting of subject and subject complement may be linked to a preceding regular clause structure by *and*:

126 How could you be so spiteful, and **her your best friend?**

(...seeing that she is your best friend?)

But less commonly, the subjective case is used for a subject pronoun:

127 They left without a word, and **he so sensitive** (.....though he was so sensitive.)

3. A verbless clause may contain a summary comment on what has gone before. In this case, it consists only of a complement which is linked to the preceding clause by *and*:

128 She left him, and **a good thing too**.(She left him, and it is a good thing too.)

129 They are thick as thieves, and **no mistake**.(They are thick as thieves, and that is no mistake.)

4. A verbless rhetorical wh-question is followed by *but* in the second clause. The wh-clause has a subject followed by subject complement or a subject complement alone expressing a comparative relationship:

130 What belief so foolish but some will embrace it?(There is no belief so foolish but that there will be some who will embrace it.)

131 Who so honest but some will doubt his integrity? (There is none so honest but that there will be some who will doubt his integrity.)

5. Another version of the rhetorical wh-question, but less formal, contains a comparative:

132 What better than a hot shower?

133 Who more fitting than you?

2.3.2.8 *Block Language*

Quirk et al.(1972:414) point out that there is a whole realm of usage in which language is structured in terms of single words and phrases, rather than in terms of the more highly organized units of the clause. Language so used is termed *block language*.

Block language is characterized by its rudimentary communicative role occurring in such functions as labels, titles,

headings, notices and advertisements. Simple block-language messages have noun phrases or nominal clauses in isolation since no verbs are needed because the context of the situation itself gives all that is necessary to the understanding of the message:

134 Entrance

135 English Department

These structures differ from the regular clause structures in the absence of closed-class items such as determiners, prepositions, pronouns, etc, and sometimes lexical verbs of opened-class items which have low information value and the purpose of their omission is to reduce the length of the message so as to have smallest number of words. A special block-language form consists of a noun phrase introduced by *No* for the prohibitions on notice boards:

136 No smoking

137 No entry (Ibid. 415)

2.3.2.8.1 Functions of Block Language

Block language is used for many functions which will be mentioned in the following sections.

2.3.2.8.1.1 *Newspaper Headlines*

Newspaper headlines have their own special form and vocabulary in which block language is commonly used:

138 NEW FLYOVER SPEEDS TRAFFIC FLOW

139 MINERS BAN OVERTIME (Graver, 1966: 255)

Quirk et al. (1985:845-6) show that block language is frequently used in newspaper headlines which can be analyzed in terms of clause structure:

140 THREE JOCKEYS HURT (S .V, Three jockeys are hurt)

141 ELECTION A LANDSLIDE FOR SOCIALISTS

(S. C_s, The election is a landslide for the socialists.)

142 CAMP HELPS ADULTS REDISCOVER WILDS

(S. V. O_d . C_o, The camp helps adults rediscover the wilds.)

There are many grammatical features which characterize newspaper headlines:

1. The use of simple present tense instead of present perfect form which is used normally for recent events:

143 MEAT PRICES RISE AGAIN (Meat prices have risen again.)

2. The use of *to* in expressing futurity:

144 OIL POLLUTION MEASURES TO BE TESTED (Oil

pollution measures are to be tested.)

3. The use of a syndeton is more common:

145 WOMAN CLAIMS DRUG CAUSED CANCER,SUES

(A woman has claimed that a drug had caused her cancer,
and she has sued somebody.)

4. The use of transitive verbs intransitively:

146 BRITISH VICTORY SURPRISES (The victory has
surprised experts.)

2.3.2.8.1.2 Personal Letters, Cables and Diaries

It is common to find block language on postcards where the space is naturally restricted and also often in informal personal notes. In such cases, the first person pronoun and an obvious auxiliary are often left out. The omissions of words can be inferred from the context:

147 Wish you were here. (I wish you were here.)

148 Having wonderful time. (I'm having a wonderful time.)
(Greenbaum and Quirk, 1990: 246)

Swan(1995:1)mentions that in informal letters ,postcards and diaries some words such as articles ,subject or object pronouns,

forms of *Be* and prepositions are often omitted because of the need to save the restricted space:

149 Gone to hairdresser. Back 12.30

150 Dear Gran

Watching tennis on TV. A good book. Three meals aday. No washing-up. Clean sheets every day. Every thing done for me. Yes, you've guessed –in hospital. Only went to doctor for cold-landed up in hospital with pneumonia.If you have time please tell the others-would love some letters to cheer me up. Hope to see you.

Love, Pam.

In cables, the language used tends to be more abbreviated because the sender omits all that can be understood by the receiver from his knowledge of the situation:

151 ARRIVE SEVEN THIRTY. (We shall arrive at seven thirty.) (Watt, 1978: 148)

From the researcher's point of view, nowadays, because of the novel inventions of the highly technical means of communication, this form of abbreviated language is to be frequently found and highly used in messages sent by mobile-phones and E-Mails.

2.3.2.8.1.3 *Titles, Headings, Notices and Slogans*

Swan (1995: 1) mentions that the very abbreviated forms are usually found in titles, headings, notices and slogans. Articles are often omitted especially in the names of buildings and institutions:

152 ROYAL HOTEL

153 SUPER CINEMA

154 INFORMATION OFFICE

155 BUS STOP

156 POLICE OUT!

157 MORE MONEY FOR TEACHERS!

2.3.2.9 *Nonsentences*

It is certainly true that many of the English expressions that we call sentences have the criteria of the definition of a sentence, but difficulties arise when we state the definition of a sentence assuming that its terms give adequate criteria for identifying and separating sentences from *nonsentences* word-groups (Fries, 1964: 15). Nonsentences are frequently found in speech, mostly in informal conversation. They occur usually but not exclusively as noun phrases. In this regard, Quirk et al. (1985:849) list some types of nonsentences with their illocutionary forces:

1. Exclamatory noun phrases modified by a restrictive relative clause (with the zero relative in most instances, i.e. an option of having no relative pronoun) generally express disapproval:

158 The things they get up to! (What things they get up to!)

159 The way he complained about the food!

2. Exclamatory phrases consisting of noun phrases, generally a pronoun, followed by *and* with another noun phrase and a possessive pronoun to express scornful disapproval:

160 You and your statistics! (I deplore the way you so frequently resort to statistics.)

161 Him and his malicious gossip!

The subjective case is less commonly used for the first pronoun.

3. Exclamatory prepositional phrases which begin with *Of all* to express strong disapproval:

162 Of all the stupid things to say!

4. Exclamatory noun or adjective phrases are used to express approval or disapproval:

163 Charming people!

164 Dirty place!

Articles are often omitted. In addition, the phrases may be prefaced by *You* when it is directed at the person addressed:

165 You poor thing!(You are a poor thing!)

And *My* is used to express a more familiar relationship:

166 My silly boy!

5. Noun phrases may have the force of commands or requests:

167 The door!

168 Another coffee, please.

The situational context influences the interpretation. To illustrate, *The door* might be interpreted as *Shut/Open/Watch the door* or even *Leave the room*.

6. When spoken with rising intonation ,noun phrases may have the force of offers or invitations :

169 Cigarette ?

170 Another round?

Alternative questions may have the same force :

171 My place or yours?

7. Noun and adjective phrases may have the force of inquiries when spoken with rising intonation and they may function as yes-no questions:

172 Your book?

173 Good flight?

It is possible to use a noun phrase followed by a tag question instead of these questions:

174 Good flight, was it?

They may also function as alternative questions:

175 Your book or your friend's?

Or as an inquiry which has the force of wh-question:

176 Your name? (What is your name?)

8. Noun phrases may convey information and make assertions:

177 That way. (They went that way.)

178 No news.

9. Exclamatory noun phrases are used to convey a warning:

179 Timber!

180 The police!

10. Noun phrases (with possible expansion) may merely have socio-ability:

181 Lovely evening.

182 Good weather we're having.

11. To express the hearer's frustration or alarm after a period of forgetfulness, exclamatory noun phrases may be self-addressed:

183 My wife's birthday! (I have forgotten my wife's birthday)

184 My interview!

12. Names or noun phrases referring to persons are used in verbless introductions, generally with a vocative:

185 Ladies and gentlemen, the next President of the United States of America!(I present the next president of the U.S.A)

186 My mother and father, Susan. (These are my ...)

2.3.2.10 *Formulae*

Lyons (1968: 177) refers to formulae as further categories of parts of utterances that do not correspond to sentences generated by the grammar but differ from them in that the rules established to account for the normal utterances are not applied to formulae. These are the so-called *ready-made utterances* which are unanalysable expressions employed on particular occasions by native speakers. For instance, the English expression *Rest in peace* as a tombstone inscription cannot be regarded as the same in *Rest here quietly for a moment* which is an instruction or a suggestion

made to a certain person, but it is a situationally-bound expression which is not to be analyzed with reference to grammatical structure of contemporary English.

Nasr (1963 :69) states that the formulae of greetings and farewells must be learned in proper contexts and the contexts may involve time of day, time of year, arrival, departure, formality and informality of situations, etc. In this regard, Quirk et al. (1985 :852) present the following list of examples with the major types of formulae:

GREETINGS:

187 Good morning, Good afternoon, Good evening (all formal)

Hello, Hi (familiar)

FAREWELLS:

188 Goodbye, Good night, All the best (informal)

Cheers, Cheerio (Br E, familiar)

See you, Bye-bye, So long (familiar)

INTRODUCTIONS:

189 How do you do?(formal)

How are you?, Glad to meet you, Hi (familiar)

REACTION SIGNALS:

190 A. Assent, Agreement: Yes, Yeah/je, All right, Ok(informal)

Certainly, Absolutely, Right, Exactly, Quite (BrE)

Sure (esp Am E)

B. Denial, Disagreement: No, Certainly not, Definitely not,

Not at all, Not likely

THANKS :

191 Thank you(very much), Thanks(very much), Many thanks

(BrE slang).

Thanks a lot, Cheers (familiar Br E)

TOASTS :

192 Good health, Your good health (formal), Cheers, Here's

to you, Here's to the future, Here's to your new

job(familiar)

SEASONAL GREETINGS:

193 Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, Happy Birthday,

Many Happy Returns (of your birthday), Happy

Anniversary

ALARM CALLS :

194 Help!, Fire!

WARNINGS :

195 Mind, (Be) careful!, Watch out!, Watch it(familiar)

APOLOGIES :

196 (I'm) sorry, (I beg your)pardon (formal), My mistake

RESPONSES TO APOLOGIES:

197 That's Ok, Never mind, No hard feelings(informal).

Don't mention it, No matter(formal)

CONGRATULATIONS :

198 Congratulations, Well done, Right on (AmE slang)

EXPRESSIONS OF ANGER OR DISMISSAL(familiar ;

Graded in order from expressions of dismissal to taboo curses):

199 Beat it (esp AmE),Get lost, Blast you, Damn you, Go to hell, Bugger off(BrE)

EXPLETIVES(familiar; likewise graded in order of increasing strength):

200 My Gosh, (By) Golly, (Good) Heavens, Doggone (it) (AmE)

Darn (it), Heck, Blast (it), Good Lord, (Good) God, Christ Almighty, Oh hell, Damn (it) Bugger (it) (esp BrE)

MISCELLANEOUS EXCLAMATIONS :

201 Shame, Encore, Hear; hear, Over my dead body (familiar)

Nothing doing (informal)

2.3.2.11 Interjections

Aarts and Aarts (1998 :59) describe an interjection as a word class which consists of items having no referring function and are only used to express emotions such as pleasure, pain, disgust, Surprise, etc.

An interjection is sometimes made up of two or more words expressing feeling or emotion. It has no syntactic relation to another sentence (Miller,1954:13).

An interjection is not a true part of speech. It represents the most primitive type of sentence. Therefore, it is a sentence in the form of an exclamatory sound uttered to express some strong emotion (Ibid.241).

Strumpf and Douglas (1999:275) state that the word *interjection* comes from the two Latin words *inter* and *jecere*

which together mean *to throw between*. Interjections are words which are thrown between sentences or words to create interest, attract attention or highlight the speaker's strong feelings. Interjections may have many forms since they may come as nonsense words or as real words, often nouns or adjectives. Moreover, an interjection is an independent element as it lacks a syntactic relation to any part of the sentence since it creates a complete thought by itself.

Bloomfield (1933:177) talks about the exclamatory minor sentences stating that they consist of interjections or of normal forms that do not belong to favourite sentence-types and interjections are sometimes used to initiate utterances.

Aarts and Aarts (1998:59) present a list of common interjections:

- 202 **Ah** (satisfaction, recognition, etc)
- 203 **Aha** (jubilant satisfaction, recognition)
- 204 **Eh?** (impolite request for repetition)
- 205 **Hey** (call for attention)
- 206 **Oh** (surprise)
- 207 **Oho** (jubilant surprise)
- 208 **Ouch** (pain)
- 209 **Sh** (request for silence or moderation of noise)

210 Tut-tut (mild regret, disapproval)

211 Ugh (disgust)

212 Wow (great surprise)

Chapter Three

Data Collection: The Test

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a general idea about testing and description of the present test including its objectives, materials' selection, design, validity, reliability, sample, pilot test, main test and the scoring scheme adopted.

3.2 Testing

Language testing is central to language teaching because it provides goals for language teaching and monitors success in reaching those goals for both teachers and learners. The test has an impact on teaching in that it provides a methodology for experiment and investigation in both language teaching and learning(Alan,1990:1).Both testing and teaching are so interrelated that it is impossible to work in one field without being concerned with the other (Heaton, 1988:5). For a language teacher, the test includes any means of checking what students can do with the language and what they can not do with it. Therefore, language

testing is used to test hypotheses in relation to our understanding of language and language learning (Alan, 1990:30). Moreover, we test a learner's language skill in order to establish what he can do with the language and to assess how successful our teaching is in adding to his linguistic achievement (Wilkins ,1983:81).

3.3 Test Objectives

Heaton (1988:5) states that a test may be constructed primarily as a means of assessing students' performance in language. Hence, the construction of the present test is primarily meant to investigate the performance of Iraqi EFL university students in using irregular sentences and the extent to which they master this kind of sentences. This test is a diagnostic one. It aims to find out the strong and weak points of the performance of the students and to measure the areas of difficulty faced by them by identifying the reasons behind their errors so that appropriate remedial suggestions and recommendations can be proposed depending on the findings of the test.

In addition, the test is designed to look back over a four-year period of EFL learning as far as the acquisition of irregular sentences is concerned. The present test is constructed to test both the students' recognition and production levels in using irregular sentences.

3.4 The Material

Most of the sentences of the test are taken from the grammar sources referred to in chapter two especially “A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language”, 1985, by R. Quirk et al. as well as “A University Grammar of English-Workbook”, 1974, by R.A. Close. The test is constructed to cover, as far as possible, the various types of irregular sentences with their different forms and functions.

3.5 Test Design

Generally, tests are influential and they require planning and administration (Alan, 1990:1).

The test adopted in this study consists of seventy five items distributed over three questions. The first one consists of thirty sentences. Some of them (10) are regular and the others (20) are irregular. This question is designed to test the students' recognition level in using irregular sentences and their ability to distinguish regular sentences from irregular ones by filling the blanks with the appropriate letters stating whether the sentences are regular (R) or irregular (I).

The second question consists of twenty irregular sentences designed to test the students' recognition level. Students are given some types of irregular sentences and they are required to select

from these types the one that could be related to the sentence concerned.

The third question consists of twenty five items ,all of which are irregular sentences devoted to test the students' production level in using irregular sentences. Students are required to paraphrase these irregular sentences into their own words so as to make their meaning clearer.

The present test is designed to cover, as far as possible, the different types of irregular sentences and their forms .Some of these types have been taught to the students through their courses of study and some of them are not included in the syllabus; yet, students are, to some extent, familiar with these types because they are used in dialogues and daily conversations. Therefore, the test gi focuses on those items which are included in the syllabus. Hereunder is a table which explains the distribution of the items according to the types of irregular sentences:

Table (1) The Distribution of Items According to the Types of Irregular Sentences

The types	Recognition		Total	Production	Total
	Q1	Q2	Q1-Q2	Q3	Q1-Q2-Q3
Subjunctive	3	6	9	3	12
Wh-question	2	2	4	3	7
Aphoristic sentence	3	1	4	5	9
Formula	2	3	5	-	5
Fragmentary sentence	3	-	3	4	7
Subordinate clause	2	1	3	2	5
Block language	4	1	5	4	9
Adverbial as directive	1	4	5	1	6
Nonsentence	-	2	2	3	5
Regular sentence	10	-	10	-	10
				Total	75

3.6 *Validity and Reliability*

Alderson et al. (1995: 170) define validity as the appropriateness of a given test or any of its component parts as a measure of what it is supposed to measure .In order to have a valid test ,it should possess two criteria: content validity and face validity .

Content validity, on the one hand, refers to the extent to which a test adequately covers the topic to be tested and this, in fact, should be based upon a careful analysis of the subject

(Heaton,1988:160). The present test is designed to cover as far as possible the various types of the topic under investigation with their different forms and functions as mentioned in sections (3.4 and 3.5).

Face validity, on the other hand ,refers to the way the test looks to the specialists or in general to educators (Alan,1990:23). In this regard, the test has been approved by a jury of specialists and experienced university instructors including:

Prof. Salih M. Hameed (Ph.D. in Literature), College of Education,
University of Babylon.

Asst. Prof. Abbas D. Derweesh (Ph.D in Linguistics and
Translation) College of Education, University of
Babylon.

Asst. Prof. Kadhim Khalaf Ali (Ph.D. in Linguistics and
Translation), College of Arts, University of Basrah.

Asst. Prof. Hameed H Begiya (Ph.D. in Linguistics and
Translation), College of Education, University of
Babylon .

Asst. Prof. Adil M. Khanfar (Ph.D.in General Linguistics), College of Arts, University of Basrah .

Asst. Prof. Alaa Oda (Ph.D. in General Linguistics), College of Education, University of Basrah.

Asst. Prof. Adil Al-Akkam (M.A. in English Language and Linguistics), College of Basic Education, University of Babylon.

Asst. Prof. Razzaq N. Mukheef (M.A. in English Language and Linguistics), College of Education, University of Babylon .

Lecturer Fareed H. Al-Hindawi (Ph.D. in English Language and Linguistics),College of Education, University of Babylon .

Lecturer Maysaa K. Hussein (Ph.D. in English Language and Linguistics),College of Education, University of Al-Qadisiya.

Lecturer Selman D. Selman (Ph.D. in Methods of Teaching English as a Foreign Language), College of Arts, University of Basrah .

When we obtain similar scores in all our administrations, then we feel comfortable of having reliability of the test because the consistency of results is the basic concept of reliability of a test. A test is reliable if its scores remain relatively stable from one administration to another (Harris, 1969: 144). In other words, reliability means the consistency with which a test measures the same thing all the time (Harrison, 1983: 11).

There are different methods for estimating the reliability of a test .The method adopted to estimate the reliability of the present test is Kurder-Richardson Method which uses the following formula :

$$r = \frac{N}{N-1} \left(1 - \frac{m (N-m)}{NX^2} \right)$$

Where:

r = reliability

N = the number of items in the test

m = the mean of the test scores

X= the standard deviation of the test scores

The computation of this formula has yielded that the reliability of the present test is (0.82) which is considered to be a positive correlation.

3.7 The Sample

The random sample selected to take the test consists of four groups of EFL university students, two at the Department of English of the College of Education in the University of Babylon and two at the same department and college in the University of Al-Qadisiya. The two groups selected from each department are from the first year and fourth year students of the academic year (2005-2006). In order to have easy reference, the four groups of testees are named as follows:

G1B: First Group, First Year, University of Babylon.

G2B: Second Group, Fourth Year, University of Babylon.

G3Q: Third Group, First Year, University of Al-Qadisiya.

G4Q: Fourth Group, Fourth Year, University of Al-Qadisiya.

Below is a table that shows the representative rate for the four groups:

Table (2) Sample Representative Rate

Group No	No of Subjects	Representative Rate
G1B	60	60 %
G2B	60	60 %
G3Q	60	65 %
G4Q	60	65 %

The random sample above encompasses students of almost the same age, nationality, language and linguistic background. Gender homogenization is not possible because the number of males and females is quite different from one group to another.

The samples of the test have been selected from the first and fourth year students because the first year students are the elementary learners of English at the university level and the fourth year students are the advanced learners of English at the university level. Moreover, most of the types of irregular sentences have been taught to fourth year students in their courses according to the textbook adopted in their study “A University Grammar of English”,1973, by Quirk and Greenbaum. It is of importance to note that irregular sentences have been explained indirectly to the fourth –year students at University of Babylon (G2B) through a number of lectures by the supervisor Asst.Prof Dr. Riyadh Tariq Al-Ameedi while teaching them grammar in the academic year 2005 – 2006. The students at University of Al-Qadisiya (G4Q) have not received such an explanation. This enables the researcher

to measure the extent to which teaching affects students' performance.

3.8 Pilot Test

Before applying the main test, a pilot test was conducted on January 21st, 2006. The test was administrated to a random sample of forty students, twenty from the first year and twenty from the fourth year of the Department of English, College of Education, University of Babylon. The aims of the pilot test are to specify the time required for answering the test, to find out whether the items of the test and the directions are clear to the testees and to specify the items which need modification.

The pilot test shows that the time of one hour is enough for all the students to answer all of the items of the test, and the instructions given to them are adequate.

3.9 Main Test Administration

The main test was applied to the four groups in four separate sessions during the first half of the academic year 2005-2006. One hour was allocated for the test. The students were given the instructions concerning the test and they were asked not to write down their names on the test paper because the test was purely for study and research purposes and had no concern with their names.

The learners were asked to write the answers on the same test paper for ease. Appreciation and thanks were given to the learners in advance for their participation in the test to encourage them to respond seriously since they were informed that their serious answers would help the researcher to objectively attain his purpose.

3.10 Scoring Scheme

The whole test was scored out of 100 marks. Scores were equally allocated to both recognition and production levels. One mark was assigned for each correct response of test item in both Questions one and two (50 items) .On the other hand, two marks were assigned for each correct response of test item in Question three (25 items). Zero score was given for all incorrect responses and items left by the testees with no answer.

The scoring scheme adopted for the present test can be illustrated in the following table:

Table (3) Distribution of the Scores of the Test

No. of Question	No. of Items	Scores	Percentage
I	30	30	30%
II	20	20	20%
III	25	50	50%
Total	75	100	100%

Chapter Four

Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with data analysis by the description of test items through presenting their discrimination indices, and facility values with the aid of statistical tables. Then, the discussion offers the specific and general results of the students by describing the four groups' test means, pass-rates and their interpretation in terms of contrastive acquisition values. The analyses above test the validity of the hypotheses of the study proposed in (1.3). In addition, this chapter presents error analysis and determines the plausible sources of errors made by the learners.

4.2 Item Analysis

Baker (1989:51) states that there are several types of item analysis but the two most widely used are the discrimination index and the facility value which reveal, respectively, to what extent the

high-scorers on the test as a whole do better on that item than the low-scorers and which proportion of the candidates responds correctly to the item. These two types of item analysis are presented in the following subsections:

4.2.1 Item Discrimination Index

Due to the main testing concept, the most difficult items are expected to be answered by the good learners rather than the reverse. Accordingly, the correct responses to the most difficult items are related to those learners with highest scorers while the incorrect responses to the same items are related to those learners with lower scorers.

Discrimination index (DI) can be calculated by the following formula:

$$DI = \frac{X-Y}{\frac{1}{2} N}$$

where:

X= the item's particular number of correct responses scored by the upper half of learners

Y= the number of correct responses scored by the lower half of learners

N= the number of all learners

The following tables show the DI of the test items in the four groups:

Table (4) Discrimination Index for Question I, G1B

Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	
1	0.13	7	0.03	13	0.10	19	0.43	25	0.16	
2	0.13	8	0.26	14	0.16	20	0.30	26	0.46	
3	0.20	9	0.16	15	0.13	21	0.20	27	0.06	
4	0.36	10	0.20	16	0.30	22	0.16	28	0.20	
5	0.10	11	0.20	17	0.03	23	0.03	29	0.33	
6	0.30	12	0.16	18	0.20	24	0.10	30	0.23	
									Mean	0.19

Table (5) Discrimination Index for Question II, G1B

Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	
1	0.03	5	0.06	9	0.10	13	0.16	17	0.03	
2	0.23	6	0.13	10	0.20	14	0.06	18	0.06	
3	0.03	7	0.06	11	0.03	15	0.06	19	0.10	
4	0.03	8	0.06	12	0.03	16	0.03	20	0.13	
									Mean	0.08

Table (6) Discrimination Index for Question III, G1B

Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	
1	0.03	6	0.40	11	0.16	16	0.40	21	0.06	
2	0.10	7	0.06	12	0.03	17	0.10	22	0.00	
3	0.26	8	0.26	13	0.10	18	0.06	23	0.33	
4	0.20	9	0.26	14	0.03	19	0.13	24	0.30	
5	0.03	10	0.23	15	0.10	20	0.23	25	0.03	
									Mean	0.15

Table (7) Discrimination Index for Question I, G2B

Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	
1	0.40	7	0.10	13	0.16	19	0.30	25	0.03	
2	0.13	8	0.30	14	0.30	20	0.26	26	0.20	
3	0.03	9	0.03	15	0.20	21	0.06	27	0.13	
4	0.03	10	0.06	16	0.06	22	0.33	28	0.06	
5	0.40	11	0.13	17	0.23	23	0.10	29	0.03	
6	0.26	12	0.10	18	0.13	24	0.10	30	0.30	
									Mean	0.16

Table (8) Discrimination Index for Question II, G2B

Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	
1	0.13	5	0.13	9	0.23	13	0.23	17	0.10	
2	0.26	6	0.03	10	0.20	14	0.13	18	0.03	
3	0.06	7	0.13	11	0.26	15	0.10	19	0.20	
4	0.33	8	0.26	12	0.10	16	0.03	20	0.10	
									Mean	0.15

Table (9) Discrimination Index for Question III, G2B

Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	
1	0.40	6	0.20	11	0.16	16	0.16	21	0.33	
2	0.33	7	0.16	12	0.06	17	0.13	22	0.00	
3	0.16	8	0.23	13	0.16	18	0.23	23	0.26	
4	0.16	9	0.40	14	0.20	19	0.26	24	0.10	
5	0.10	10	0.10	15	0.16	20	0.03	25	0.23	
									Mean	0.18

Table (10) Discrimination Index for Question I, G3Q

Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	
1	0.20	7	0.16	13	0.16	19	0.26	25	0.30	
2	0.36	8	0.33	14	0.20	20	0.23	26	0.20	
3	0.10	9	0.16	15	0.16	21	0.06	27	0.26	
4	0.10	10	0.23	16	0.23	22	0.13	28	0.23	
5	0.13	11	0.36	17	0.16	23	0.10	29	0.10	
6	0.06	12	0.33	18	0.13	24	0.06	30	0.23	
									Mean	0.15

Table (11) Discrimination Index for Question II, G3Q

Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	
1	0.03	5	0.10	9	0.06	13	0.10	17	0.03	
2	0.03	6	0.13	10	0.03	14	0.13	18	0.20	
3	0.06	7	0.06	11	0.06	15	0.03	19	0.13	
4	0.06	8	0.06	12	0.20	16	0.23	20	0.26	
									Mean	0.09

Table (12) Discrimination Index for Question III, G3Q

Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	
1	0.20	6	0.56	11	0.13	16	0.50	21	0.23	
2	0.20	7	0.03	12	0.03	17	0.06	22	0.00	
3	0.13	8	0.53	13	0.06	18	0.23	23	0.20	
4	0.46	9	0.43	14	0.03	19	0.33	24	0.16	
5	0.23	10	0.30	15	0.16	20	0.40	25	0.26	
									Mean	0.25

Table (13) Discrimination Index for Question I, G4Q

tem	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	
1	0.03	7	0.40	13	0.06	19	0.06	25	0.40	
2	0.20	8	0.13	14	0.06	20	0.13	26	0.16	
3	0.06	9	0.20	15	0.20	21	0.13	27	0.23	
4	0.40	10	0.23	16	0.03	22	0.13	28	0.06	
5	0.13	11	0.43	17	0.10	23	0.16	29	0.26	
6	0.33	12	0.10	18	0.06	24	0.06	30	0.36	
									Mean	0.17

Table (14) Discrimination Index for Question II, G4Q

Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	
1	0.10	5	0.10	9	0.10	13	0.10	17	0.03	
2	0.20	6	0.03	10	0.06	14	0.30	18	0.13	
3	0.10	7	0.06	11	0.26	15	0.13	19	0.16	
4	0.16	8	0.36	12	0.23	16	0.06	20	0.06	
									Mean	0.13

Table (15) Discrimination Index for Question III, G4Q

Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	Item	DI	
1	0.30	6	0.46	11	0.30	16	0.53	21	0.33	
2	0.46	7	0.33	12	0.13	17	0.13	22	0.00	
3	0.33	8	0.30	13	0.10	18	0.33	23	0.50	
4	0.33	9	0.46	14	0.23	19	0.30	24	0.43	
5	0.33	10	0.20	15	0.23	20	0.46	25	0.16	
									Mean	0.30

The tables (4-15) and their components indicate the following consequences:

1. All test items in the whole sample have positively valued discrimination indices since no negative discrimination index is mentioned for any test item.
2. Each test item has a certain discrimination index which ranges from the lowest rate of (0.3) to the highest rate of (0.56), except the test item 22 in Question III which has a zero discrimination index in all the four groups because all the students have responded to it incorrectly.
3. Items of Question III have the highest discriminatory mean (0.30 by G4 Q). On the other hand, items of question II have the lowest one (0.08 by G1B). This indicates that there are lesser individual differences among the students in the acquisition level at the first stage of the College of Education, University of Babylon ,and that these differences increase to the maximum degree among the students of the fourth stage of the College of Education, University of Al-Qadisiya.
4. In general, the collective mean of DI for the whole test stands at (0.16) which is quite satisfactory. In addition, the collective

mean of the two groups (G1-2B) and (G3-4Q) are (0.15) and (0.18), respectively, which almost indicates no differences between these two groups as illustrated in the following table:

Table (16) Collective Mean of DI for G1-2B and G3-4Q

Group	Question	Mean of DI	Group	Question	Mean of DI
G1B	I	0.19	G3Q	I	0.15
	II	0.08		II	0.9
	III	0.15		III	0.25
G2B	I	0.16	G4Q	I	0.17
	II	0.15		II	0.13
	III	0.18		III	0.30
Mean of mean		0.15	Mean of mean		0.18

4.2.2 *Item Facility Value*

Heaton (1988:178-9) and Richards et al. (1992:192) mention that the facility value (FV) of a test item is the percentage of students who respond to the test item correctly and it shows how easy or difficult that a particular item proves to be in the learners' answers. This index can be calculated by using the following formula:

$$FV = \frac{R}{N}$$

where :

R= the number of correct answers

N= the number of the students who undergo the test

The following tables present the facility values for all test items depending on the responses of the four groups G1B, G2B, G3Q and G4Q:

Table (17) Facility Value for Question I, G1B

Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	
1	0.26	7	0.61	13	0.38	19	0.58	25	0.81	
2	0.83	8	0.60	14	0.45	20	0.75	26	0.63	
3	0.20	9	0.71	15	0.73	21	0.43	27	0.53	
4	0.65	10	0.60	16	0.28	22	0.85	28	0.53	
5	0.41	11	0.76	17	0.50	23	0.45	29	0.70	
6	0.75	12	0.61	18	0.76	24	0.21	30	0.65	
									Mean	0.57

Table (18) Facility Value for Question II, G1B

Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	
1	0.25	5	0.13	9	0.11	13	0.11	17	0.11	
2	0.61	6	0.20	10	0.26	14	0.13	18	0.13	
3	0.25	7	0.13	11	0.18	15	0.10	19	0.15	
4	0.08	8	0.16	12	0.68	16	0.15	20	0.20	
									Mean	0.20

Table (19) Facility Value for Question III, G1B

Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	
1	0.05	6	0.53	11	0.08	16	0.26	21	0.10	
2	0.03	7	0.01	12	0.01	17	0.05	22	0.00	
3	0.03	8	0.36	13	0.05	18	0.10	23	0.46	
4	0.16	9	0.30	14	0.05	19	0.16	24	0.45	
5	0.15	10	0.81	15	0.08	20	0.38	25	0.08	
									Mean	0.18

Table (20) Facility Value for Question I, G2B

Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	
1	0.60	7	0.61	13	0.45	19	0.61	25	0.71	
2	0.93	8	0.51	14	0.48	20	0.76	26	0.53	
3	0.35	9	0.71	15	0.76	21	0.30	27	0.40	
4	0.68	10	0.50	16	0.33	22	0.76	28	0.43	
5	0.53	11	0.76	17	0.65	23	0.48	29	0.68	
6	0.66	12	0.68	18	0.60	24	0.38	30	0.58	
									Mean	0.58

Table (21) Facility Value for Question II, G2B

Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	
1	0.30	5	0.16	9	0.21	13	0.21	17	0.18	
2	0.53	6	0.15	10	0.18	14	0.26	18	0.25	
3	0.20	7	0.16	11	0.33	15	0.18	19	0.23	
4	0.26	8	0.30	12	0.65	16	0.21	20	0.21	
									Mean	0.25

Table (22) Facility Value for Question III, G2B

Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	Fv	Item	FV	Item	FV	
1	0.20	6	0.70	11	0.08	16	0.55	21	0.16	
2	0.30	7	0.18	12	0.10	17	0.10	22	0.00	
3	0.28	8	0.58	13	0.15	18	0.31	23	0.56	
4	0.55	9	0.53	14	0.16	19	0.33	24	0.38	
5	0.08	10	0.95	15	0.35	20	0.43	25	0.28	
									Mean	0.33

Table (23) Facility Value for Question I, G3Q

Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	
1	0.40	7	0.55	13	0.31	19	0.53	25	0.58	
2	0.71	8	0.33	14	0.23	20	0.71	26	0.23	
3	0.31	9	0.51	15	0.65	21	0.26	27	0.43	
4	0.58	10	0.51	16	0.31	22	0.70	28	0.51	
5	0.40	11	0.48	17	0.58	23	0.48	29	0.65	
6	0.43	12	0.46	18	0.66	24	0.33	30	0.48	
									Mean	0.47

Table (24) Facility Value for Question II, G3Q

Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	
1	0.21	5	0.11	9	0.10	13	0.21	17	0.01	
2	0.45	6	0.10	10	0.30	14	0.16	18	0.16	
3	0.16	7	0.30	11	0.26	15	0.15	19	0.20	
4	0.13	8	0.10	12	0.66	16	0.15	20	0.26	
									Mean	0.20

Table (25) Facility Value for Question III, G3Q

Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	
1	0.13	6	0.58	11	0.10	16	0.35	21	0.21	
2	0.10	7	0.05	12	0.01	17	0.03	22	0.00	
3	0.23	8	0.40	13	0.03	18	0.13	23	0.43	
4	0.26	9	0.41	14	0.01	19	0.20	24	0.25	
5	0.15	10	0.81	15	0.11	20	0.36	25	0.23	
									Mean	0.22

Table (26) Facility Value for Question I, G4Q

Item	Fv	Item	FV	Item	Fv	Item	FV	Item	FV	
1	0.45	7	0.60	13	0.46	19	0.60	25	0.70	
2	0.76	8	0.53	14	0.36	20	0.73	26	0.48	
3	0.36	9	0.73	15	0.60	21	0.33	27	0.35	
4	0.60	10	0.48	16	0.25	22	0.60	28	0.60	
5	0.43	11	0.60	17	0.58	23	0.38	29	0.63	
6	0.66	12	0.75	18	0.60	24	0.43	30	0.55	
									Mean	0.53

Table (27) Facility Value for Question II, G4Q

Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	
1	0.18	5	0.21	9	0.11	13	0.21	17	0.18	
2	0.50	6	0.05	10	0.13	14	0.21	18	0.20	
3	0.08	7	0.20	11	0.23	15	0.10	19	0.31	
4	0.21	8	0.48	12	0.65	16	0.26	20	0.26	
									Mean	0.23

Table (28) Facility Value for Question III, G4Q

Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	Item	FV	
1	0.25	6	0.50	11	0.21	16	0.46	21	0.23	
2	0.26	7	0.16	12	0.13	17	0.06	22	0.00	
3	0.30	8	0.68	13	0.21	18	0.30	23	0.45	
4	0.36	9	0.56	14	0.15	19	0.25	24	0.41	
5	0.20	10	0.90	15	0.35	20	0.50	25	0.18	
									Mean	0.32

The facility values of the test items presented in the statistical percentages mentioned in the tables above range between (0.00) and (0.95) which are, in fact, very apart. The reasons behind this wide distribution of facility values can be attributed to three main points: (1)the large number of learners and groups involved, (2) their different levels and (3) the infamiliarity of some types of the topic under investigation to the learners.

4.3 Acquisition Results

The following subsections present and discuss the rates of students' acquisition for each of the four groups, group-to-group differentials and the general acquisition rates (all groups).

4.3.1 G1B-G2B-G3Q-G4Q Recognition and Production

The general results of the four groups G1B-G2B-G3Q-G4Q concerning both recognition and production levels are presented in the following four tables (29-32):

Table(29)Students' Performance at the Recognition and Production Levels (G1B)

Level	Correct Responses No	%	Incorrect Responses No	%
Recognition	1290	43	1710	57
Production	300	20	1200	80
Total	1590	31.5	2910	68.5

Table(30)Students' Performance at the Recognition and Production Levels (G2B)

Level	Correct Responses No	%	Incorrect Responses No	%
Recognition	1433	47.7	1567	52.3
Production	501	33.4	999	66.6
Total	1934	40.55	2566	59.45

Table(31)Students' Performance at the Recognition and Production Levels (G3Q)

Level	Correct Responses No	%	Incorrect Responses No	%
Recognition	1140	38	1860	62
Production	339	22.6	1161	77.4
Total	1479	30.3	3021	69.7

Table(32)Students' Performance at the Recognition and Production Levels (G4Q)

Level	Correct Responses No	%	Incorrect Responses No	%
Recognition	1254	41.8	1746	58.2
Production	488	32.5	1012	67.5
Total	1742	37.15	2758	62.85

The tables above present statistical evidence that the students' rates at the production level are less than those at the recognition one. The rates of the four groups are as follows:

G1B 20 - 43 %

G2B 33.4 - 47.7 %

G3Q 22.6 - 38 %

G4Q 32.5 - 41.8 %

These rates validate the second hypothesis of the study which reads:

Students' achievement at the recognition level is expected to be better than their achievement at the production level.

4.3.2 General Acquisition Rates and Level-to-Level Differentials G1B-G2B

The general findings of the test papers for the two groups G1B and G2B as well as their level –to-level differentials are presented in the following table:

Table(33) G1B-G2B General Acquisition Rates and Level-to Level Differentials

Group	Score Mean %	Pass Rate (50% out of 100 %)
G1B	35.33	10
G2B	42.97	25
Group-to-Group Differential	7.24	15

As far as G1B is concerned ,the table shows that its mean of correct responses and students' pass rates are (35.33%) and (10%) , respectively, which indicate a low performance and a poor acquisition rate at both the recognition and production levels.

On the other hand ,the mean of G2B's correct responses and its students' pass rates are (42.97 %) and (25 %) which show unsatisfactory rate though they are considerably higher than those of G1B.

The comparison between G1B and G2B in the scoring and pass rate has a differential of (7.24) in scores' mean and(15%) in pass rates. These rates indicate a poor performance in using irregular sentences over a four –year period of studying English as a foreign language at the university level. These results(as well as those of 4.3.3 and 4.3.6 below) verify the fourth hypothesis of the study which reads:

Mastery of the uses of irregular sentences is not achieved by learners over a four-year period of EFL learning at the university level.

4.3.3 *General Acquisition Rates and Level-to-Level Differentials G3Q-G4Q*

The table below shows the general results of the test papers for the two groups G3Q and G4Q in addition to their level-to-level differentials:

Table(34)G3Q-G4Q General Acquisition Rates and Level-to-Level Differentials

Group	Score Mean %	Pass Rate (50% out of 100%)
G3Q	32.86	8
G4Q	38.71	17
Group-to-Group Differential	5.85	9

The table above reveals that the mean of G3Q's correct responses is (32.86 %) and its students' pass-rate (8%). These rates are lower than those of G1B and, therefore, reflect a poorer performance at the first year.

As for G4Q, the scores' mean and pass-rate are (38.71 %) and (17 %), respectively. These rates are in turn lower than those of G2B and indicate a very low performance estimate.

The differential in scoring and pass rate between G3Q and G4Q is (5.85%) in scores' mean and (9%) in pass-rates. These rates show a very low level of acquisition for the topic under investigation which in turn provide further verification to the fourth hypothesis of the study quoted in 4.3.2 above.

4.3.4 General Acquisition Rates and Level-to-Level Differentials G2B-G4Q

The general results of the test for the two groups G2B-G4Q (fourth year students) with their level-to-level differentials are presented in the following table:

Table(35)G2B-G4Q General Acquisition Rates and Level-to-Level Differentials

Group	Score Mean%	Pass Rate (50% out of 100%)
G2B	42.97	25
G4Q	38.71	17
Group-to-Group Differentials	4.26	8

As previously mentioned in tables (33) and (34), the table (35) above also shows the means of correct responses and students' pass rates for the two groups G2B and G4Q (fourth level) which are (42.97 %), (25 %) and (38.71 %), (17 %), respectively. These rates, on the other hand, have a differential of (4.26%) in scores' mean and (8%) in pass-rate. These rates, in fact, provide evidence that G2B has higher rates than those of G4Q, though both of them are unsatisfactory rates. The reason behind the difference in their rates is that the former group (G2B) has received indirectly more explanation and concentration on irregular sentences through a number of lectures by the supervisor (their lecturer) Asst. Prof. Dr. Riyadh Tariq Al-Ameedi during the course of study (grammar), while the latter group (G4Q) has not received such explanation and concentration on the topic under discussion. This in turn validates the third hypothesis of the study which reads:

Students who receive more explanation and concentration on irregular sentences (Fourth Year/ Babylon) are expected to be better in their performance than those who do not receive the same thing on the topic under discussion (Fourth Year/ Al-Qadisiya).

4.3.5 *General Results of QI, QII and QIII for all Groups*

The following table shows the general results of each question of the test for all groups:

Table(36) General Results of Students' Performance in QI, QII and QIII for all Groups

Question No	No of Correct Responses	%
QI	3956	54.94
QII	1161	24.18
QIII	1626	27.12

This table shows that the general results of students' performance in QI, QII and QIII for all groups are (54.94 % ,24.18 % ,27.12 %) respectively. This indicates that the general result of correct responses of QII is less than that of QI and QIII which provides evidence that the students are not able to distinguish the types of irregular sentences properly. These results (along with those mentioned in 4.3.6 below) in turn verify the first hypothesis of the study which reads:

Most of Iraqi EFL university students do not often distinguish irregular sentences and their different types.

4.3.6 *General Acquisition Rates of all Groups*

The following table presents the collective findings of the acquisition rates achieved by all groups in terms of the two levels of EFL learning (first and fourth-year levels at the Department of English /College of Education/Universities of Babylon and Al-Qadisiya) as well as level-to-level differentials:

Table (37) Level-to-Level Results for the First and Fourth-Year Levels

Group	Score Mean No	Mean	Pass Rate (50% out of 100%)	Mean %
G1B	35.33	34.95	10	9
G3Q	32.86		8	
G2B	42.97	40.84	25	21
G4Q	38.71		17	
Level-to-Level Differentials		5.89	Level-to-Level Differentials	12

The table above shows that the pass rate of students' first-year level is (9%) and that of the fourth-year level is (21%) which indicates that the students' acquisition of irregular sentences over a four-year period has increased by (12%) only. In addition, the score mean has been increased by (5.89 %) over this period .

Both of these rates show a very low level of acquisition for the topic under discussion for both the two levels (first and fourth-

Chapter Five

Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the main conclusions arrived at through the theoretical work of this study and the findings of the test. These conclusions are meant to serve as a basis for the pedagogical recommendations and suggestions for further research in the area of irregular sentences.

5.2 Conclusions

5.2.1 Theoretical Conclusions

The theoretical part of this study has come up with the following conclusions:

1. Irregular sentences are those sentences which do not conform to the regular patterns of sentence structures or to their major sentence types.

2. These sentences have their own peculiar language constructions and a variety of structures that diverge from the regular rules of grammar in that they consist of structures which are not found in regular sentences, or they are marked as subordinates and they are fragmentary, lacking constituents that are obligatory in normal sentences. Irregular sentences have different forms. They might be subjunctive, subordinate clause, fragmentary, wh-question ,adverbial as directive, aphoristic, subject plus complement, block language, nonsentence, formula and interjection.
3. Though peculiar in their structures, irregular sentences should not be underestimated because they are heavily used in daily conversations of special language structures and in the phenomenon of grammatical ellipsis. Thus, this kind of sentences gives the speakers and listeners the opportunity to communicate much more easily and freely because they contribute to ease of communication and brevity.

5.2.2 Practical Conclusions

The empirical part of the present study has yielded the following conclusions:

1. The low acquisition rates yielded above are quite unsatisfactory and disappointing for both the start-level (first-year) and the end-level (fourth-year) because the acquisition at the first level is quite low and students' achievements at the fourth level throughout a four-year period are not satisfactory enough to make them attain the advanced level they are supposed to. This verifies the first and fourth hypotheses of the study.
2. Student's rates at the production level are less than those of the recognition one. The rates of the four groups are (G1B 20 - 43 %), (G2B 33.4 - 47.7 %), (G3Q 22.6 - 38 %) and (G4Q 32.5 - 41.8 %) which validate the second hypothesis of the study.
3. In spite of the low acquisition rates of all groups, there appears to be clear evidence that teaching affects the learners' performance, as the more teaching and concentration they receive on the topic, the better performance they have. This validates the third hypothesis of the study.
4. Students' acquisition of irregular sentences over a four-year period has increased by (12%) since the rate of the first year is (9%) and of the fourth-year is (21%). In terms of the scores'

mean, the increase over a four-year period is (5.89%). This validates the fourth hypothesis of the study.

5. Students' poor performance is caused by the following factors arranged according to the frequency of errors ascribed to each:
 - a. Intralingual transfer constitutes the majority of students' errors since it accounts for (36%) of their total errors. These errors are related to different grammatical errors committed by the learners.
 - b. The second highest rate of error is the negative effects of context of learning in which grammar books in general and students' textbooks in particular do not give due attention to irregular sentences. Errors attributed to this factor constitute (31%) of all the students' errors.
 - c. The learners' use of communicative strategies is the third rate of error to which the learners resort in their attempt to structure what they mean. The rate of errors ascribed to this factor is (24%).
 - d. Errors attributed to interlingual interference constitute (9%) of all students' errors in which the learners use the rules of their native language in the production of irregular sentences. The

use of literal translation is the most common phenomenon in this domain.

5.3 *Recommendations*

Due to the findings obtained by this study, the following recommendations can be posited:

1. The learners failed to distinguish irregular sentences and their various types at the recognition and production levels. The problem with the present syllabus in the Department of English is that some types of irregular sentences are presented to the students in the fourth stage only with no indication that those types are under the title of *Irregular Sentences*. Rather some of them are presented as minor sentence types of the simple sentence. On the other hand, some of these types have not been taught to the students either. Therefore, it is of importance for syllabus designers to include a topic under the title of *Irregular Sentences* to encompass all types of those sentences with all their details and examples to eliminate students' unfamiliarity with such a topic. Furthermore, it is possible to distribute this topic to be presented, step by step, over more than one stage to give the students an opportunity to be familiar with it.

2. It is recommended that teachers and syllabus designers present the material in plain language with enough examples from real situations and sufficient exercises. It is preferable to use, as far as possible, audio-visual aids to motivate the learners in both early and advanced stages.
3. The findings of the present study are of importance for both teachers and syllabus designers in providing the necessary and useful information for the preparation of remedial teaching programmes that play a great role in the reinforcement of students' competence in using irregular sentences ,and helping to reduce the difficulties they face in this topic.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The following points are suggested for further research in this area:

1. A contrastive study between English and Arabic can be carried out to investigate the impact of the mother tongue on Iraqi EFL university students in facilitating their acquisition of irregular sentences.
2. A study can be conducted to investigate the role of irregular sentences as a means of brevity and ease of communication in daily conversation.

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Appendix I

The Letter Given to the Jury Members

Dear sir,

It is intended to test the performance of Iraqi EFL first and fourth year students of the Department of English/College of Education/Universities of Babylon and Al-Qadisiya in using irregular sentences. The whole test consists of seventy five items falling into three questions .The first two questions are devoted to test students' recognition level and the third one to testing their production level in using irregular sentences as follows:

Q: 1 consists of thirty sentences (some of them are regular and the others are irregular) designed to test the students' recognition level by filling the blanks with the appropriate letters to state whether the sentences are regular or irregular.

Q: 2 consists of twenty irregular sentences designed to test the students' recognition level by indicating the types of these sentences in writing the letters referring to these types in the suitable blanks.

Q: 3 consists of twenty five irregular sentences designed to test the students' production level in using irregular sentences. Students are required to paraphrase these irregular sentences so as to make their meaning clear.

You are kindly requested to indicate:

1. Whether each item is suitable or not.
2. Whether you disapprove of the techniques used in the test.
3. Any amendment you find necessary.

I shall be so grateful to you

Thank you in advance

Muneer Ali Khudhayer
M.ED Student
Department of Educational
and Psychological Sciences
College of Education
University of Babylon

18. Where the plane crashed, the snow is still falling heavily.
19. Sorry to hear about your illness.
20. He strongly disapproved of what I had been doing.
21. How are you?
22. Up with democracy!
23. Do be careful of my broken leg.
24. Hardly anyone came.
25. Here today, gone tomorrow.
26. Why all the noise?
27. Two players wounded.
28. That you could do it I always knew.
29. Haven't you got anything to do either?
30. Having wonderful time.

Q:2/Below are some types of irregular sentences. Indicate the types of the following sentences by writing the letters of the suitable types in the blanks:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| A. Subjunctive | B. Irregular wh-question |
| C. Adverbial as directive | D. Aphoristic sentence |
| E. Block language | F. Formula |
| G. Subordinate clause | H. Nonsense |

1. Forward!
2. How come you missed the train?

3. God bless you!	.....
4. No entry	.....
5. To think I was once a millionaire!	.....
6. You and your statistics!	.....
7. (I beg your) pardon.	.....
8. Easy come, easy go.	.....
9. Off with your coat!	.....
10. We recommended that the thesis be accepted.	.....
11. Good morning.	.....
12. What about your homeland?	.....
13. Everybody out!	.....
14. Merry Christmas.	.....
15. May you always be happy!	.....
16. If we have to fight for our freedom, then so be it.	.....
17. Thumbs up!	.....
18. The police!	.....
19. She looks as if she were exhausted.	.....
20. Taxi!	.....

Q:3/Paraphrase the following irregular sentences so as to make their meaning clear:

Example: Why no classes today?

Why are there no classes today?

- 1.If only I had listened to my parents!
- 2.out of sight ,out of mind.
- 3.What if it rains?
- 4.Hands up!
- 5.Far be it from me to tempt you against your will.
- 6.Anything wrong?
- 7.Long live the republic!
- 8.What about having some dinner with me?
- 9.Keep away from heat.
- 10.Your name?
- 11.First come, first served.
- 12.ROAD WORKS AHEAD
- 13.waste not, want not.
- 14.Charming people!
- 15.The teacher insists that each student work hard.
- 16.Good to see you again.
- 17.More haste, less speed.
- 18.Back to the wall!
- 19.Oh to be free!
- 20.A. When can I see you ?
 B. This night.
- 21.The sooner, the better.
- 22.HOLIDAYS PRICE WAR SRARTS

23.What to do next?

24.Lost something?

25.THREE JOCKEYS HURT

Appendix III

The Test's Possible Answers

Q 1

1. I

2. R

3. R

4. I

5. I

6. I

7. R

8. I

9. I

10. I

11. I

12. R

13. I

المستخلص

تهتم هذه الدراسة باستقصاء أداء الطلبة الجامعيين العراقيين دارسي اللغة الانجليزية لغة أجنبية في استعمال الجمل الشاذة في اللغة الانجليزية بأنواعها المختلفة، والتي تمتاز بتراكيبها الخاصة التي لا تتطابق والصيغ القياسية للتراكيب الأولية للجمل، وذلك بابتعادها عن القواعد النموذجية أو القياسية للنحو والصرف في بناء الجمل.

إنَّ للجملِ الشاذةِ تراكيبها الفريدة، وعليه فمن غير الممكن القيام بتمييز دقيق لطبيعة هذه الجمل في اللغة الانجليزية، مما يخلق مشكلةً من نوع خاص، إذ إنَّ أغلب الطلبة الجامعيين العراقيين الذين يدرسون اللغة الانجليزية لغة أجنبية، لا يُتقنون استخدام هذا النوع من الجمل، لذا تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء أداء هؤلاء الطلبة في تمييز الجمل الشاذة بأنواعها المختلفة واستعمالاتها.

وعلى هذا افترضت الدراسة ما يأتي:

١- لا يميّز الطلبة الجامعيون العراقيون الذين يدرسون اللغة الانجليزية لغة أجنبية الجمل الشاذة بأنواعها المختلفة.

٢- يكون انجاز الطلبة على مستوى التمييز أفضل منه على مستوى الانتاج.

٣- يكون أداء الطلبة ممن يتلقون تركيزاً وتوضيحاً أكثر للمادة الدراسية أفضل من أداء الطلبة الذين لا يتلقون نفس التركيز والتوضيح.

٤- لا يُتقن الطلبة استخدام الجمل الشاذة خلال مدة دراستهم الجامعية اتقاناً كافياً.

واستناداً إلى هذه الفرضيات أعدَّ الباحثُ اختباراً تشخيصياً لعينةٍ تشمل على (٢٤٠) من الطلبة الجامعيين العراقيين دارسي اللغة الانجليزية لغة أجنبية، لكل من المرحلة الأولى والرابعة، في قسم اللغة الانجليزية - كلية التربية - في جامعتي بابل والقادسية، وشملت مفردات الاختبار المستويين الادراكي والانتاجي.

وقد أشار تحليل نتائج الاختبار إلى أنَّ مستوى اكتساب الطلبة للجمل الشاذة قد تحسَّن بنسبة (١٢ %) في غضون أربع سنواتٍ دراسية، إذ كان معدّل طلبة المرحلة الأولى (٩ %)، والمرحلة الرابعة (٢١ %)، أمّا معدّل الدرجات فقد ازداد بنسبة (٥٨٩ %)،

خلال المدّة نفسها التي تبلغ أربع سنواتٍ. وتعكسُ نسبةُ الاكتسابِ المنخفضةُ المذكورةُ آنفًا مستوىً متدنّيًا من التعلّم للمرحلتين الأولى والرابعة.

كما بيّن تحليلُ نتائج الاختبار أنّ تحصيلَ الطلبةِ على مستوى التمييز (٤٢.٦٢%) أفضلُ منه على مستوى الأنتاج (٢٧.١٢%)، وكذلك أثبتَ أنّ التعلّم يؤثّر في أداءِ الطلبةِ، فتزدادُ نسبةُ تحصيلهم بازديادِ ما يتلقّونه من تركيزٍ على المادةِ الدراسيةِ، وجاءت هذه النتائجُ مؤيدةً صحةَ الفرضياتِ المذكورةِ آنفًا.

و بالنسبةِ لأسباب الأخطاءِ، فإن استخدام الطلبةِ التعميم الخاطيءِ في إطار اللغةِ الأجنبيةِ نفسها يشكل أعلى نسبة (٣٦%) من مجموع الأخطاءِ، يأتي بعدها التأثير السلبي لسياقات التعلّم (٣١%) ، و من ثم استخدام ستراتيجيات الاتصال (٢٤%) ، و أخيرا يأتي تأثير اللغة الأمّ في نقل القواعدِ من اللغةِ العربيةِ إلى اللغةِ الانجليزيةِ بأقل نسبة وهي (٩%).

وتقع الدراسةُ في خمسةِ فصولٍ، يستعرض الفصل الأول منها مشكلةَ الدراسةِ، والأهدافَ والفرضياتِ وحدودَ البحثِ، والإجراءاتِ ، والفوائدَ المرجوةَ منها، ويقدم الفصل الثاني عرضًا مفصّلًا للجملِ الشاذةِ بأنواعها المختلفةِ، وتراكيبها ووظائفها واستخداماتها، في حين يتضمن الفصلان الثالث و الرابع وصفًا للاختبار ونتائجه، أمّا الفصل الخامسُ فقد كُرسَ للنتائج العامة التي توصلت إليها.

جامعة بابل

إستقصاء أداء الطلبة الجامعيين العراقيين

دارسي اللغة الانجليزية لغةً أجنبية

في استعمال الجمل الشاذة

رسالة تقدم بها

منير علي خضير

الى مجلس كلية التربية في جامعة بابل

جزءاً من متطلبات نيل درجة ماجستير تربية

في طرائق تدريس اللغة الانجليزية لغة اجنبية

بأشرفه

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