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**Iraqi EFL College Students'
Performance in the Area of Perfectness:
Problems and Remedial Work**

A Thesis
*Submitted to the Council of the College of Education/
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English as a Foreign Language.*

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 The Problem And Its Significance

Individuals growing and living in given societies require , to varying degrees, a new language (e.g. , EFL) after they have learnt their first language . Helping people acquire English as a foreign language more effectively at schools and universities is an important task for the twenty-first century. However, learning another language means learning its grammar which means learning its tenses.

From this reality, grammar gains its importance as an important field or scope to learn English as a foreign language . It is the branch or field which enables the students to master all the rules that govern the structure of language and also enables them to speak and write English very well. Perfectness in turn gains its importance as one tense of others which form English tenses.

Nevertheless ,perfectness is that tense which changes its form to show the time of an action it expresses . There are six types of perfectness : present perfect simple , present perfect continuous , past perfect simple , past perfect continuous , future perfect simple and future perfect continuous . Changing in verb forms may confuse the students and make them unable to differentiate between a verb form and another. Although

perfectness has been taught at intermediate and preparatory schools, students are not likely to master it when they become college students . This opinion can be seen from the perspective of most of the people who are concerned.

For college students, anyway perfectness may be a very difficult area to be mastered . It holds out the most maximum persistent problem of college students . So the researcher proposes to argue that perfectness needs to be learnt through context . Such context may give the reader background information about it. Not providing the students with right context is like letting someone stumble through a dark room without knowing the light switch location . However we will eventually come up against problems like the problem in the following dialogue:

Native speaker : I have seen wolves in that forest.

Foreign learner :There is no problem , if you saw wolves
in that forest once that does not mean they
are still there.

Native speaker : No, I have seen wolves in that forest !!

Foreign learner : Yes , I understand that you have seen wolves
in that forest . What's your problem ?!

Native speaker : No , I mean , wolves are still there .

This happened because the foreign learner was not proficient enough in grammar . He could not understand what the native speaker means . He could not understand that the present perfect simple used to express an action that took place in the past and continues to the present time , which means "wolves are still there" . If the wolves have been killed , the native speaker would say "I saw wolves in that forest once".

The researcher concluded from the above example that , the main reason behind teaching English grammar is to enable students to obtain competence and performance in using it . Through grammar, students can make words effective . Not to be proficient enough in grammar , means not to be able to understand the intended meanings or hidden messages which sentences convey.

College students need to learn not only what forms are possible in perfectness , but what particular forms will express their particular meanings . It can be seen from this perspective that perfectness is an important tool for communication.

For that , we need to focus on the aspects of perfectness that may confuse college students and which kind of difficulties they face in identifying and producing perfectness by form and function

To the best knowledge of the researcher, no remedial work has yet been carried out to investigate this area. Consequently , this task is the concern of the present study .

1.2 Aims of the study

This study aims at :

- 1- investigating the difficulties faced by Iraqi EFL college students to identify and produce perfectness by form and function and finding out areas of difficulty in this respect, and
- 2- suggesting remedial work for the alleviation of these difficulties.

1-3 Hypothesis of the study

It is hypothesized that Iraqi EFL college students fail to master the full use of perfectness by form and function .

1- 4 Limits of the study

The study is limited to :

- 1-first year students of the Department of English, College of Education / AL-Asma'ee, University of Diyala, for the academic year 2007-2008 ,and
- 2-difficulties they face in dealing with perfectenss in their academic curriculum .

1-5 Value of the study

- 1-It is hoped that the findings of this study will be of great importance to the professors who teach grammar at the department of English especially for the first year students.
- 2- It provides knowledge about learning perfectness. Such knowledge may be beneficial in planning prognostic programmers for EFL learners.
- 3-It may enable the teacher of English to find out the reasons behind the students' failure in comprising and making examples about perfectness .
- 4-The remedial work is hoped to be of value to English textbook designers , teachers and students of English .

1-6 Procedures

In carrying out this study , the following procedures are followed :

- 1-selecting a sample of college students to represent the population of the present study,
- 2-setting up elicitation tools employing various techniques that elicit as a full picture of our subjects' interlanguage in this area as possible,
- 3-constructing a test which consists of two basic parts (recognition and production test), each part in turn consists of two sections used to test the hypothesis of the present study,

- 4-conducting a pilot study to investigate the applicability and practicality of the study tool,
- 5-using suitable statistical methods for processing data analysis, and
- 6-suggesting remedial work following the most recent trends in teaching English as a foreign language .

1-7 Definition Of Basic Terms

The following basic terms are defined as they are used in the present study .

1-7-1 First Year College Students

Students who are graduated from the sixth class secondary school, and they are studying in the. Department of English, College of Education, University of Diyala .

1-7-2 English As a Foreign Language (EFL)

AL-Mutawa and Kailani (1989:3) define it as "one which has no internal function in the learner's country . It is learned in order to communicate with native speakers or interlanguage users of the foreign language". English is not used as an official language in Iraq . It is taught as one of the subjects included in the schooling programme .

1-7-3 Performance

Fromkin and Rodman (1998:532) define it as "The use of linguistic competence in the production and comprehension of language ". While Cook(2003:130) defines it as "Chomsky's term for actual language behavior as distinct from the knowledge that underlies it".

1-7-4 Perfectness

Perfect forms are those made with 'have/had' + past participle or 'have/had been' + the '- ing' form of the verb or 'will have' + past participle or 'will have been' + the '-ing' form of the verb , e.g:

(Harmer , 1998:40)

(1-1) I have lived here for six years.

(1-2) He's been jogging .

(1-3) They had just arrived .

(1-4) He hadn't been listening .

(1-5) I will have cleaned the house from top to bottom .

(1-6) I will have been working in the company for 30 years.

1-7-5 Remedial Work

Sesnan (1997:168) defines it as "The work which you have to do with the pupils to 'repair' their language" . Davies and Parse (2000-209) agree with Sesnan in defining remedial work

as "work designed to help learners overcome gaps and errors in their English , especially fossilized errors " . Nevertheless , we must remember the warning about working on the roof before the walls are ready . So , if we find that some parts of the language are not well learned , we will have to spend time on those parts . In other words , the test may show that it is all right to continue with the syllabus planned , or it may show you that you need to repeat some parts of the teaching that is , to do remedial teaching.

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الخلاصة

الفعل التام هو عبارة عن فعل يغير في شكله ليظهر زمن الفكرة أو الحدث الذي يعبر عنه ويتكون من (has/ have / had + p.p) . هذا ومن الجدير بالذكر ان الدراسات السابقة بينت بعض من الصعوبات التي يواجهها الطلبة العراقيين الجامعيين متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية في مجال الفعل التام أو حتى في مجال أزمنة الفعل في اللغة الانكليزية بصورة عامة ولكنها لم تتناول العمل العلاجي ولم تشر إليه .

تهدف الدراسة الحالية الى تحري الصعوبات التي يواجهها الطلبة العراقيين الجامعيين متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية في الاستخدام الكامل للفعل التام شكلاً ووظيفة والكشف عن حالات الصعوبة في هذا المجال وبعدها اقتراح برنامج علاجي تعليمي لتخفيف هذه الصعوبات . ولتحقيق هذه الاهداف ، وضعت الفرضية التالية التي تنص على أن الطلبة العراقيين الجامعيين متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية يفشلون في الاستخدام الكامل للفعل التام شكلاً ووظيفة .

على أية حال ، تتمحور الدراسة الحالية على جانبين نظري وتطبيقي . يتناول الجانب النظري مسح موضوع الدراسة حيث يبدأ بتقديم أشكال الفعل التام ، استخداماته وإعطاء مقارنة بين أشكاله المختلفة . بالاضافة الى ذلك ، عمدت الباحثة الى تناول 'Have' من وجهة نظرين : نحوية وطرائق تدريس اللغة الانكليزية ، بالاعتماد على القاعدة التي تقول أن 'have' هي الاساس المكون للفعل التام ومن دونها لا وجود للفعل التام . أما في الجانب التطبيقي أختير عشوائياً (100) مئة طالب وطالبة من المرحلة الاولى قسم اللغة الانكليزية ، كلية التربية الاصمعي ، جامعة ديالى لتكوين عينة الدراسة . كما وضع اختبار تحصيلي يغطي الجانبين التمييزي والادائي وتم عرضه على مجموعة من الخبراء ذوي الاختصاص للتأكد من صدق الاختبار .

وقد تم استخدام أربعة أساليب إحصائية لقياس البيانات التي حصلت عليها الباحثة وهي : مربع كاي ومعامل الارتباط بيرسن ومعادلة سبيرمان براون التصحيحية والاختبار التائي . أظهر تحليل النتائج إن أفراد العينة فشلوا في الاستخدام الكامل للفعل التام شكلاً ووظيفة في الاختبار كله . وهذا يشير الى أن أفراد العينة غير قادرين على تمييز الفعل التام من الانواع الاخرى من أزمنة الفعل في اللغة الانكليزية ، فضلاً عن أنهم غير قادرين على أداء الفعل التام بشكل صحيح وبالنتيجة قبلت فرضية الرسالة كما نصت أعلاه .

في ضوء هذه النتائج ، استخلصت مجموعة من الاستنتاجات وعدد من التوصيات وأقتراح برنامج علاجي للتخفيف من الصعوبات التي يواجهها الطلبة ، بجانب ذلك وضعت مقترحات لدراسات أخرى .