- An Analysis of Iraqi EFL Learners' Errors in Paragraph Writing
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1. The Problem

The problem of this paper is that most EFL learners have difficulty in paragraph writing and thus they commit different kinds of errors in writing it.

2. The Aim

This paper aims at identifying the errors most commonly committed by EFL learners in writing one paragraph at three levels of difficulty (simple, intermediate, and advanced) in three parts respectively.

3. The Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that most of EFL learners have difficulty in paragraph writing especially in the use of coherent sentences and certain grammatical structures.

4. Introduction

To improve one's ability in paragraph writing, one must first understand possible problems with sentence structure so that one can not only recognize but write effective sentences in a paragraph. In addition, to understand sentences, one must first understand clauses which make sentences. Richards & et al(1992:52-3) define a clause as a closely related group of words that includes both a subject and a verb. Clauses serve a variety of functions in a sentence, they can act as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs, e.g.,

1. I harried home.
2. Because I was late, they went without me.

Moreover, clauses can be independent and dependent. The former contains both a subject and a verb and can stand alone as a complete sentence whereas the latter consists of a subject and a verb but cannot stand alone as a full sentence ;thus, it depends on another clause and it is preceded by subordinating conjunctions as when, that …etc, or by a relative pronoun such as who, whose,…etc, e.g.,
(ibid:102)
3.She told me that she was going abroad.

Accordingly, a sentence is the largest grammatical unit that is syntactically independent. Most grammarians notice that the sentence can be classified according to form into simple, compound, & complex and according to function into statement, question, command, and exclamatory(Crystal,2003:414-5). The former classification can be briefly elucidated in the following forms:

1. *Simple Sentence*: It consists of one independent clause, it has a subject and a predicate, e.g.,

4. She has slept.

2. *Compound Sentence*: It has two independent clauses connected by a semi-colon, a semi-colon which is followed by a connecting adverb, or a co-ordinating conjunction (e.g. and, but...etc) as in the following examples respectively:

5. We fished all day; we didn't catch a thing.
6. We fished all day; however, we didn't catch a thing.
7. We fished all day, but we didn't catch a thing.

3. *Complex Sentence*: It contains one independent clause and one or more dependent ones, e.g.

8. If you're not good at figures, it is pointless to apply for a job in a bank. (Alexander,1988:4ff).

It is worth indicating that Razzak & Al-Hassan(2000:9-10) mention another type of a sentence in addition to the three mentioned ones, this one is a *compound-*

complex which includes two or more independent clauses connected by a co-ordinator and at least one dependent clause, e.g.

9. Since the day was unpleasant, we stayed indoors, Ali studied and I watched television.

Furthermore, sentences can also function as:
1. *Statements* that include a subject occurring before the verb, e.g.

10. I 'll speak to the manager today.

2. *Questions* which ask questions and end with a question mark. The modal comes before the subject in such sentences, e.g.

11. Will you see him today?

3. *Commands* that give a command and end with a full stop. The verb takes a base form and sometimes the subject is understood(you) in these sentences, e.g.

12. (You) speak to the manager today.

4. *Exclamations* that reflect constructions which start with (what) or (how) without inserting the subject and end with an exclamatory mark (!), e.g,
13. What a noise they are making in that band! (Leech & Svartvik, 1994:372-3).

5. The Paragraph

The paragraph is the fundamental unit in a composition. An English essay, in general, consists of a group of paragraphs in which each paragraph contains one main idea which is developed by a group of sentences. The paragraph starts with an indentation which means a blank space at the beginning indicating that a new subject or a different point of the same subject is being considered with. However, there is no limited length for the paragraph, it can have more than three sentences and the usual number of the words in it is between 100-200 ones(Arnaudet & Barrett,1990:1-2).
Owl(2009:40) clarifies a paragraph as a group of closely-related sentences which deal with and develop one idea. According to him, it is like a family in which all members are related; likewise, all sentences in the paragraph are related. Almost every piece of writing that is longer than a few sentences should be

organized into paragraphs. Besides, Baker(1962:16)describes this unit as a collection of connected sentences which show building blocks of solid ideas that are organized smoothly around one single idea in the paragraph.

5.1 Paragraph Structure

Meyers(2006a:25) & Khoury(2007:29) point out that the structure of a paragraph consists of three important elements, they are as follows:
1. *The introduction* contains a topic sentence which outlines the main idea of the paragraph to which the rest of the paragraph should be focused. It must clarify one's precise attitude towards the subject. The usual position of the topic sentence is at the beginning of the paragraph but it can sometimes occur anywhere in such unit.
2. *The body* contains supporting sentences which support, explain, and develop the main idea expressed in the topic sentence by giving details, explanations, and examples. The body must be unified via relating the whole sentences to the topic sentence and to each other as well.
3. *The conclusion* occurs at the end of the paragraph leaving the reader with important points to remember. It summarizes the main point of the paragraph and gives the sense of finality.

Accordingly, Khoury (ibid) gives the following model paragraph which includes the above three mentioned elements:

Gold

Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics. First of all, gold has a lustrous beauty that is resistant to corrosion. Therefore, it is suitable for jewelry, coins, and ornamental purposes. Gold never needs to be polished and will remain beautiful forever. For example, a Macedonian coin remains as untarnished today as the day it was minted twenty three centuries ago. Another important characteristic of gold is its usefulness to industry and science. For many years, it has been used in hundreds of industrial applications. The most recent use of gold is in astronauts' suits. Astronauts were gold-plated heat shields for protection outside the spaceship. In conclusion, gold is treasured not only for its beauty but also for its utility.

The three elements in such a paragraph are clarified as follows:

-*The Introduction(Topic Sentence)*: Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics.
-*The Body*: *First of all, gold has a lustrous beauty that is resistant to corrosion. *For example, a Macedonian coin remains as untarnished today as the day it was minted twenty three centuries ago. *Another important characteristic of gold is its usefulness to industry and science. * The most recent use of gold is in astronauts' suits.
-*The Conclusion*: In conclusion, gold is treasured not only for its beauty   but also for its utility.

5.2 The Characteristics of a Good Paragraph
5.2.1 Paragraph Unity

Cargill & et al(1955:820) point out that paragraph unity means oneness, i.e., all the sentences in the paragraph should centre around one main topic. This strengthens the topic and unifies the whole paragraph; besides, all the sentences in such unit must lead to this topic and to each other as well. The subordinate ideas should contribute in a way or another to this topic otherwise they should be omitted.

Bailey &et al(1983:29) & Arnaudet & Barrett(1990:8-9) make clear that a unified paragraph is that one in which all the sentences, facts, supporting details, and examples lead directly to the topic sentence without going off it. Lefcowitz(1976:76-8) also adds that irrelevant or indirect ideas can weaken the whole paragraph, a unified paragraph must follow the idea mentioned in the topic sentence and must not deviate from it ,i.e., it should concern itself with a single focus; thus, if it begins with one clear focus or major point of discussion, it should not end with another or wander with a different idea.

As the topic sentence provides the unifying idea, it should be clear and concise. Once one knows what point one wants to introduce in one's topic sentence, one can create a unified paragraph by making sure that the rest of the sentences are clearly related to the first one(McCloud-Bondoc, 2009:31).

5.2.2 Paragraph Coherence

Coherence reflects the concrete and logical structure of the paragraph. A coherent paragraph is a complete unit in which there is a logical arrangement among the sentences inside it. It has sentences that all flow together and are not

isolated from each other. It highlights the ties among these sentences to make the structure of ideas and arguments clear to the reader. The ideas move smoothly from one line to the next and each sentence takes a logical step forward; therefore, the sentences are tied together creating a persuasive point(Lefcowitz, 1976:81-2).

McCloud-Bondoc(2009:33) indicates that a coherent paragraph flows because it is arranged in a definite plan; as a result, all the sentences are not only about the same point but they also stick together and lead readers smoothly from the topic sentence to the concluding one. This stickness results from sentences that cohere with each other in a way that makes sense. Paragraph coherence can be achieved through using a number of techniques which help in making bridges among the sentences inside the paragraph.

5.2.2.1 Paragraph Coherence Techniques

Lefcowitz(1976:83-6) and Meyers (2006a:75-84) reveal a number of techniques which help in connecting the sentences together and moving them one after another leading the reader to a coherent paragraph, the most salient ones are as follows:

1. *Precise Reference*: The most common reference markers are pronouns which take the place of nouns in the antecedent sentences. As a result, all these references tie sentences together keeping the reader's mind on the idea being discussed. It is important to make sure what noun(antecedent) the pronoun is pointing to or one can cause confusion instead of coherence in the paragraph, Lefcowitz(1976:83) explains such a confusion in the following paragraph:

People today yearn to unload their problems on "experts" and let *them* tell *them* what to do. Experts can help. But what *they* really need is a good dose of reason and common sense…………………

It is ambiguous whether (them) and (they) refer to people or experts in this paragraph but this confusion can be solved by either replacing people or experts for pronouns or by changing one of them to a singular noun.

2. *Parallelism*: It means using similar parallel constructions in a series of consecutive sentences in the paragraph so that one can notice parallel relationships among these sentences more easily and clearly with necessary details. Moreover, Meyers(2006a:75-6) states that such kind of technique captures one's attention to the ideas that support the topic sentence as it adds a pleasing rhythm to them, e.g,

The original designers of the American flag were quite casual in their attitude toward it. *Some stars came with five points. Some stars came with six. Some stars came in white. Some came in silver.*

3. *Repetition*: It involves the repeated use of key words and phrases in a number of times in a paragraph. Repetition helps in making a connection between sentences and maintains continuity among these sentences holding the readers' attention at the idea being dealt with as presented by Lefcowitz(1976:84) in the following paragraph:

………..*Every president* has to inspire the confidence of the people. *Every president* must become a leader, and to be a leader he must attract people who are willing to follow him. *Every president* has to develop a moral underpinning to his power, or he soon discovers that he has no power at all.

4. *Transitions*: Transitional words and phrases are used to link parts of a paragraph to help one sentence glides into another as well as shift the ideas from one to the next. These transitions show the logical relationships among the sentences in the paragraph. An accurate use of transitions leads to a coherent paragraph, on the contrary, inaccurate use of them leads to a doubtful one. However, Meyers(2006a:83-4) gives the following list of common transitions which is arranged according to meaning:

a. *Enumeration(or counting)*: first, second, third, next, then, after that, finally.
b. *Space*: above, around, behind, below, beneath, beyond, close by, farther away, in front of, in the front(back, near), in the middle(centre), inside, on the inside(outside), nearby, next to, to the left(right), to the north(south),on the right(left, bottom, top), outside, over, under, underneath.
c. *Time*:
   - in sequence: after, after awhile, afterward, and then, an hour(a day, a week) later, eventually, finally, first(second, third), later(on), next, soon, still later, the next day(week, year), tomorrow.
   - simultaneous or close in time: as, as soon as, at that moment, during, immediately, meanwhile, suddenly, when, while.
   - previous time: before, earlier, last night(month, year), yesterday.
   - at a stated time: in March, in 1983, only July 8.
d. *Addition*: additionally, also, and, furthermore, in addition, moreover, too.
e. *Comparison*: in the same way(manner), likewise, similarly.

f. *Concession*: as you probably know, certainly, naturally, no doubt, of course.

g. *Contrast*: although, but, despite, even though, however, nevertheless, nonetheless, on the contrary, on the other hand, yet.

h. *Emphasis*: above all, especially, indeed, in fact, in particular, most important.

i: *Illustrations*: as an example(illustration), for example, for instance, in particular, such as.

j. *Qualification*: maybe, perhaps, possibly.

k. *Reasons*: as, because, because of, for, one reason for this is, since.

l. *Summary and conclusion*: and so, in other words, in short, in summary, to summarize, to sum up, thus, therefore(see also Meyers,2006b:35 and Nadell & et al,2007:51-2).

5.2.3 Paragraph Development & Completeness

A perfect paragraph is described as a unified, coherent, developed, and complete one. Solid and specific illustration plays an important role in supporting and developing the central idea of the paragraph; besides, such an idea is discussed and supported with evidences. Details and particulars can also support and develop the topic sentence since a paragraph with little and general information may not be adequately developed(Cargill &et al, 1955:821-2).

Moreover, a well organized paragraph should be a complete one. Clearness and precision are important aspects of a paragraph which reflect the writer's concern in such unit. Ambiguity and generalization should be supported with detail, analysis, and example to clarify the intended central idea otherwise this idea will become unsatisfactory to the reader. Moreover, sufficient concrete reasons, data, and evidences help to support a claim raised in the topic sentence which should be discussed honestly and adequately guiding the reader to a complete and persuasive point in the paragraph(Lefcowitz,1976: 78-81).

Accordingly, Owl(2009:49) presents the following methods of a well-developed paragraph:

1. use examples and illustrations.
2. cite data (facts, statistics, evidences, details, and others).
3. examine testimony (what other people say such as quotes and paraphrases).
4. define terms in the paragraph.
5. compare and contrast.
6. evaluate causes and reasons.
7. examine effects and consequences.
8. analyze the topic.

9. describe the topic.
10. offer a chronology of an event(time segments).

5.3 Kinds of Paragraphs

Paragraphs can be divided into three kinds, they are as follows: (Alexander, 1965:15ff)

1. *Narrative*: A paragraph of such kind is most distinctively used in fiction. It usually describes a series of events one after another in a chronological order and relates events connected by time. It has a definite plan which includes a beginning, middle, and conclusion.

2. *Descriptive*: This kind of paragraph gives a detailed descriptive and interesting picture about persons and objects. It is more difficult than the first kind because one does not know where to begin and where to finish the descriptive details in the paragraph. Descriptive paragraph should be written according to a plan that has an introduction, development and conclusion.

3. *Argumentative*: It is concerned with an abstract and a general idea. It aims at persuading the readers into the writer's point of view and it needs time to gather the ideas related to the intended argumentative topic. It is much more difficult than the first two kinds for there is neither an event to talk about nor an object to be described; however, it should be written according to a logical plan containing introduction, development and conclusion (ibid & Enchanted Learning Company, 2009:26-7).

6. Methodology
6.1 Description of the Test and Sample Selected

A test is prepared to show the errors made by the learners in paragraph writing at three levels of difficulty (simple, intermediate, and advanced). The test is divided into three parts. Part no.(1)is concerned with five simple topics, part no.(2) is concerned with five intermediate topics, and part no.(3) is concerned with five advanced ones. Each part contains five topics and the learners are asked to write only one paragraph about only one topic chosen by them optionally from each part. Accordingly, the total required number of paragraphs is three only in the three parts and each one must be written in a specific number of words which is of about (100) (see appendix(1)).

The sample in this study is thirty four Iraqi 2nd year college students in Department of English/ College of Arts/ University of Baghdad for the academic year 2009. Ten learners have been derived from this sample for the pilot study.

Therefore, the residual number is twenty four and they are selected to represent the sample of this study.

6.2 Test Validity

Validity refers to the degree of success with which a technique or any other instrument is measuring what it claims to measure (Verma & Bread, 1981:81). There are different types of validity, the most prominent of which is face validity which refers to the way the test looks right to test administrators and educators (Brown, 1987:222). Wragg (1994:7) adds that the answer to any query may be obtained from an expert in the field who takes a look at each item of the test and inspects them for relevance, adequacy and coverage. If the experts satisfy after critically inspecting the items of the test then the test is to have been face validated and processes face validity. To ensure the validity of the test, the researcher has consulted twelve jurors in ELT, Applied Linguistics, and Linguistics. The test is judged valid by all the jurors with 98% of agreement. In the light of the jurors opinions the test has gained its face validity.

The jurors are as follows:
1. Lonny Gold (Communication and Language Expert, Suggestopedic Master Trainer, Accelerative Learning Master Consultant/ Sweden).
2. Professor Dr. Nidham Sheet Hameed (Linguistics/ University of Baghdad/ College of Arts).
3. Assistant Professor Aadil Amen (Syntax, Computational Linguistics, Language Teaching/University of Kashmeer/ College of Arts/ India).
4. Assistant Professor Dr. Biadaa' Faisal Noori (Applied Linguistics/ University of Baghdad/ College of Arts).
5. Assistant Professor Dr. Shatha Alsa'ady (Applied Linguistics and ELT/ University of Baghdad/ College of Education for Women).
6. Assistant Professor Dr. Muslih Shwish (Linguistics/ University of Alanbar/ College of Education)
7. Assistant Professor Dr. Warya Ameen(Linguistics/ University of Baghdad/ College of Education/ Ibn Rushd).
8. The Instructor Saleema Abdulzahra (Linguistics/ University of Alqadisiya/ College of Education)
9. The Instructor Zayneb Abboodi (Linguistics/ University of Tikrit/ College of Arts)

10. Assistant Instructor Adhwaa' Mohammad Salman (Methods of Teaching English/ Ministry of Education).
11. Assistant Instructor Wassan Khalid (Linguistics/ University y of Alanbar).
12. Assistant Instructor Mohammad Yahya (Linguistics/ University of Alanbar).

6.3 Pilot Study

The pilot study is carried out in April, 2009. A sample of ten Iraqi 2nd year college students is chosen for the pilot study. The sample is from Department of English/ College of Arts/ University of Baghdad. The purpose of the pilot study is to:

1. ensure the clarity of the test instruction.
2. state the test reliability.
3. assess the time required by the testees to work out the test items and
4. determine the effectiveness of the test items in their difficulty level and discrimination power in the light of the testees' responses.

After clarifying the test to the learners, it is found out that all the instructions are clear and familiar to them and the average time required for working out all the test items is an hour. The learners have put down their responses on their sheets of papers and then their responses have been corrected in order to determine the reliability of the test, difficulty level and discrimination power of its items. It is necessary to indicate that the identifying of errors and correction of items have been done by both Assistant professor Dr. Baidaa' Faisal Noori/ Department of English / College of Arts/ University of Baghdad and by the researcher, herself .

6.3.1 Test Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of the test results. Lado(1961:330) indicates that the same sample must have the stable scores in order to indicate the reliability of the test.

There are different ways for estimating reliability, one of which is Cronbach's Alpha (Eble,1972:418). For this purpose ten Iraqi 2nd year college students from Department of English/ College of Arts/ University of Baghdad are chosen randomly and tested in the items of the test. The learners' papers are corrected and the formula of Cronbach's Alpha is applied to the scores. It is found to be 0.86

which means a high positive reliability. Table (1) below shows the reliability of the test.

Table(1)
Test Reliability

No.	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Total
1	25	25	24	74
2	25	25	17	67
3	22	20	20	62
4	21	20	15	56
5	15	20	20	55
6	17	18	8	43
7	16	10	10	36
8	12	8	10	30
9	10	8	7	25
10	9	6	7	22

The formula of Cronbach's Alpha is as follows:

K= The

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1}\left[1 - \frac{\sum s^2_i}{s^2_i}\right]$$

number of test items

K-1= The number of test items -1

$(\sum s^2_i)$= The variance of the marks of each item

s^2_i = The total variance of the total of test items (ibid).

6.3.2. Test Difficulty Level

The difficulty level of the test items indicates the proportion of the testees who pass the test. The total scores of the ten learners have been ranked from the highest to the lowest one, then they are divided into two groups. The total scores of the learners who answer the test items correctly at both the upper and the lower groups are divided by the total number of the learners of the both groups. Brown (1983:37) confirms that the acceptable level of difficulty ranges from 20% - 80%. The level of difficulty of the three parts is 0.71, 0.35, & 0.73 respectively and thus it is considered acceptable as shown in table(2).

Table(2)
Test Difficulty

Group		N	Difficulty Level
Part I	U	5	0.71
	D	5	
Part II	U	5	0.35
	D	5	
Part III	U	5	0.73
	D	5	

The following formula is used to indicate the level of difficulty:

$$\text{Test Difficulty Level} = \frac{H + L}{N}$$

H = Number of correct answers in the high group.
L= Number of correct answers in the low group.
N= Total number of learners in both groups (Fergusen,1981:97).

6.3.3 Test Discrimination Power

The discrimination power of the test refers to the degree to which the item discriminates between the learners with high and low degree. However, the test item is good if it has a discrimination power of 0.20 or more (Brown, 1981:104).

The discrimination power of the three parts is 5.97, 6.40, & 3.68 respectively. The mean score of part no.1 is 24.00 & 14.67 and the standard deviation is 1.00 & 2.52 for the upper and lower groups respectively. The mean score of part no. 2 is 24.67 & 17.00 and the standard deviation is 0.58 & 2.00 for the upper and lower groups respectively. Besides, the mean score of part no. 3 is 24.33 & 14.67 and the standard deviation is 0.58 & 4.51 for the upper and lower groups respectively as

shown in table (3). The tabulated t. value is 2.23 at 0.05 level of significance and 8 degree of freedom

-Table (3)-
Test Discrimination Power, Mean, & St. Deviation

Group		N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Discrimination Power
Part I	U	5	24.00	1.00	5.97
	D	5	14.67	2.52	
Part II	U	5	24.67	0.58	6.40
	D	5	17.00	2.00	
Part III	U	5	24.33	0.58	3.68
	D	5	14.67	4.51	

The following formula is used to indicate test discrimination power:

$$ t = \frac{\overline{X_1} - \overline{X_2}}{\sqrt{\frac{S_1^2 (n_1 - 1) + (n_2 - 1) S_2^2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2} \times \frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}}} $$

(Glass & Stanly,1970:362)

6.4 Final Administration of the Test

After ensuring the validity, reliability, difficulty level, and discrimination power of the test, it is applied on twenty four Iraqi 2nd year college students in Department of English/ College of Arts/ University of Baghdad. The test is scored depending on the errors committed by the learners in writing only one paragraph in each part. The responses are also scored by both assistant professor Dr. Baidaa' Faisal Noori and by the researcher as well.

7. Data Analysis

A percentage is used to show the frequency rates of errors which are committed by the learners in each part as shown in table (4) .

Table (4)
The Frequency Rates of Errors in Paragraph Writing
in the Three parts

No.	Content Area	Errors in part I	%	Errors in part II	%	Errors in Part III	%
	tenses	33	97	27	79.4	34	100
2	adverbs	11	32.3	12	35.2	14	41.1
3	auxiliary verbs	18	52.9	18	52.9	13	38.2
4	prepositions	14	41.1	13	38.2	19	55.8
5	conjunctions	17	50	13	38.2	13	38.2
6	articles	19	55.8	21	61.7	19	55.8
7	inflectional 'S'	13	38.2	14	41.1	10	29.4
8	singular nouns	10	29.4	11	32.3	13	38.2
9	pronouns	19	55.8	12	35.2	15	44.1
10	infinitive	12	35.2	13	38.2	14	41.1
11	sentence structure	22	64.7	17	50	25	73.5
12	punctuation marks	26	76.4		79.4	27	79.4
13	spelling	25	73.5	28	82.3	24	70.5
14	lexical items	24	70.5	25	73.5	29	85.2
	consistency in tense, pronoun,	16	47	10	29.4	26	76.4

	& vocabulary						
	omission of unnecessary words	12	35.2	11	32.3	11	32.3
17	topic sentence	14	41.1	16	47	21	61.7
18	Body	25	73.5		70.5	24	70.5
19	concluding sentence	15	44.1	23	67.6	22	64.7
20	unity	11	32.3	14	41.1	17	50
21	coherence	31	91.1	34	100	34	100
22	development & completeness	15	44.1	25	73.5	22	64.7

It is obvious from table (4) that the highest frequency rates of errors committed by the learners in writing a paragraph in parts no.(1), (2),&(3) which are concerned with simple, intermediate, and advanced topics respectively are as follows:

1. The first highest frequency rates are manipulated in parts no.(2) and no.(3): in the use of coherence (100%) and the use of tenses and coherence (100%) respectively. These rates show that learners have no ability to use such aspects in paragraph writing. Learners do not have a good deal of knowledge in the use of coherence since they write incoherent paragraphs. Their ideas do not move from one to the next; hence, there is no logical transition among their sentences which are not sticked together and are isolated from each other as well. Besides, these learners completely neglect the use of the techniques of coherence in their paragraphs. Their sentences do not glide one after another and this has weakened the ties among the sentences creating an incoherent unit. It is worth noting that the rate of errors in coherence has been increased in both parts no.(2) and no.(3) more than that in part no.(1)since the topics in the last two parts have become more difficult to cohere than those in the first one. Besides, the errors have been committed in tenses (whether in past, present, and future) instinctively without depending on the basic rules of using such an aspect in paragraph writing.

2. The second highest rates of frequency can be noticed in part no.(1): in tenses (97%) and coherence (91.1%) successively. Such rates indicate that most of the learners have no control over using these aspects in paragraph writing for the same above mentioned reasons.

3. The third highest frequency rates are in parts no.(2) and no.(3) i.e. in spelling (82.3%) and the use of lexical items (85.2%) respectively. The former rate reveals that most of the learners have committed errors in spelling in which the words are written incorrectly. In addition, the latter rate shows that most of the learners' choice of lexical items doesn't suit the meaning of their sentences as well as they

have felt that they are unable to express the ideas of the given topics since these topics have become much more complex to illustrate than those in parts no.(1) and no.(2). Moreover, eleven learners have expressed the ideas of the topics incorrectly in their paragraphs in part no.(3) although the researcher has manifested the meaning of these topics before the beginning of the test.

Accordingly, it has consecutively clarified the following:

1. Concerning part no.(1) (simple topics), the first highest rate is in the use of tenses(97%) whereas the second one is in the use of coherence (91.1%).

2. The highest frequency rates in part no.(2) (intermediate topics) can be observed in the use of coherence (100%) and then in spelling (82.3%).

3. The highest rates of frequency in part no.(3) (advanced topics) are in the use of tenses and coherence (100%) and then in the use of lexical items (85.2%).

Furthermore, in the three parts, the use of singular nouns, consistency in tense, pronoun, and vocabulary, and inflectional 'S' have the same frequency rate which is (29.4%). This affirms that most of the learners have control over the use of these aspects in paragraph writing.

8. Conclusions

It has been concluded that Iraqi EFL learners commit a great deal of errors when they write a paragraph. The most prominent errors are the following:

1. The highest frequency rates in the three parts are consecutively as follows:

a. in the use of coherence and the use of tenses and coherence in parts no.(2) and no.(3) respectively.

b. in the use of tenses and coherence in part no.(1)&

c. in spelling and the use of lexical items in parts no.(2) and no.(3) respectively

2. The highest frequency rates in each of the three parts are in the use of :

a. tenses and then coherence in part no.(1).

b. coherence and then spelling in part no.(2)&

c. tenses, coherence, and then lexical items in part no.(3).

3. The lowest frequency rates can be noticed in the use of singular nouns, consistency in tense, pronoun, & vocabulary, and inflectional 'S' in parts no.(1), (2), &(3) respectively.

Thus, the researcher has suggested the following:

1. Tests are put forward to investigate EFL learners' weak points in paragraph writing to get them rid of such points in writing such unit accordingly.

2. English papers play an important role in showing the correct way of paragraph writing accordingly each learner should write a paper about an interesting English

topic. This helps the learners to practise and develop themselves in writing powerful paragraphs by such kind of papers.

3. Coherence is an important aspect which must be illustrated clearly regarding its techniques since a large number of learners do not completely comprehend its use in paragraph writing. Besides, the techniques of such an aspect should be concentrated on because they make the sentences glide from one line to the next in a logical order in the paragraph.

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-Appendix (1)-
The Test

Q1:Write a paragraph of about 100 words on the following topics.
     Note: (Choose only one topic from each part).

Part I:
     1: My Parents
     2: An Imaginary Journey.
     3: The Magazine You Like Best.
     4: An Exciting Football Match.
     5: Our English Teacher.

Part II:
     1:The Importance of Money in One's Life.
     2: How do you personally find peace in your life?

3: What role do different colours play in your life?
4: Do you like waterfalls and why?
5: How important is romanticism to you?

Part III:
1: The Conquest of Space.
2: A Typical Day in 2070.
3: A (Dramatic)Thunderstorm.
4: A Story called "The Terrible Twins".
5: A Story entitled "Trapped in a Mine".

تحليل اخطاء المتعلمين العراقيين الدارسين للغة الانجليزية لغة أجنبية في كتابة الفقرة

الفقرة هي الوحدة الأساسية أو القطعة الرصينة البناء للقطع المطولة للكتابة . أنها سلسلة من جمل منظمة فأي (   ) يجب أن تكتب على شكل . فقرات تساعد على تقطيع نص كبير الى وحدات اصغر كي تسهل قراءته وفهمه. فبدون الفقرات لا يمكن لقطعة من الكتابة أن تزود القارئ بوقفات قصيرة ليفهم النقاط المعدة فيها. فهي تبين للقارئ أين وأين تبدأ تنتهي الأجزاء الصغيرة لأي قطعة من الكتابة ولذلك فهي تساعده على رؤية تنظيمها وفهم أفكارها الرئيسية . يجب على المتعلمين أن تكون لديهم المقدرة على توصيل أفكارهم بوضوح في الكتابة من خلال مهنهم الأكاديمية وحياتهم العملية ومن اجل ذلك فهم بحاجة الى الممارسة والسيطرة على الجوانب الضرورية للكتابة بفعالية وبشمولية في الأغراض . فمعرفة كيفية تشكيل الكلمات على الورق لنقل أفكار بأسلوب متماسك المتعلمين بأداة قوية وفعالة تجعلهم متعلمين لمدى الحياة .   المتعلمين رائعة ولكن أن لم تقدم بطريقة منظمة فأن هؤلا المتعلمين سيخففون بتحقيق أهدافهم بالكتابة . ولهذا فأن الدراسة الحالية تتحرى اخطاء المتعلمين العراقيين الدارسين للغة الانجليزية لغة أجنبية في كتابة الفقرة المقطعية وذلك لان معظمهم لا يعرف الطريقة الفعالة لكتابة فقرة بأسلوب قوي ومتماسك ولهذا فقد تم أعداد وعشرين   عراقيا دارسين للغة الانجليزية لغة أجنبية لكتابة فقرة مقطعية واحدة

An Analysis of Iraqi EFL Learners' Errors in Paragraph Writing

فقط على ثلاثة مستويات من الصعوبة (السهل والمتوسط والمتقدم)   .
المتعلمين وبينت النتائج أنهم يرتكبون أخطاء مختلفة في
النسب الأعلى والمتكررة في الأخطاء في استخدام الأزمنة والترابط في الجزأين الثاني والثالث.
من ذلك فأن اقل نسب سجلت في استخدام الأسماء بصيغة المفرد والثبات في استخدام الزمن والضمير
يفية   (S)   .
الأسباب التي كانت وراء نسب كهذه وأعطيت اقتراحات مختلفة لتعود بالفائدة على الأساتذة والطلبة أيضا.

Abstract

A paragraph is the basic unit or building block of extended pieces of writing. It is a series of sentences that are organized and related to a single topic. Any piece of writing(whether a composition, an essay, or a paper) should be written into paragraphs which help to break a large body of text into smaller units so that it is easier to read and understand. Without paragraphs, a piece of writing does not provide pauses for the reader to take in the points being made. They show a reader where the subdivisions of any piece of writing begin and end; thus, they help him see the organization of it and understand its main idea. EFL learners must have the ability to communicate their thoughts clearly in writing throughout their academic careers and their practical life, and to do so, they need to practise and master the aspects necessary to write effectively for many different purposes. Knowing how to shape words on paper and how to convey ideas in a coherent and compelling manner provides students with a powerful tool towards becoming lifelong learners. Learners can have fantastic ideas but if those ideas are not presented in an organized fashion, they will fail to achieve their goals in writing.

The present study investigates the errors of Iraqi EFL learners in paragraph writing since most of them do not know the effective way of writing a powerful and coherent paragraph. Therefore, a test has been prepared to examine twenty four Iraqi EFL learners in writing only one paragraph at three levels of difficulty (simple , intermediate, and advanced) in three parts respectively. The learners' responses have been analysed and the results have shown that they commit different errors in writing paragraphs in the three parts, the highest frequency rates of errors committed have been found in the use of tenses and coherence in parts no.(2) and no.(3); conversely, the lowest rates are in the use of singular nouns, consistency in tense, pronoun, and vocabulary, and in the use of inflectional 'S' in parts no. (1),(2),&(3) respectively. Reasons behind such rates have been illustrated and different suggestions have been given to be useful for both teachers and students as well.