EFL University Students in Manipulating English Gender Classes

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at testing the performance of the Iraqi EFL learners' in manipulating English gender classes. This study has aimed to shed light upon: i) the performance of the Iraqi EFL learners' in manipulating English gender classes ii) the acquisition rate of English gender, and iii) drawing its acquisition hierarchy. Two hypotheses have been put forward for verification. These are:

١ – Iraqi EFL learners do not often distinguish gender classes.

٢ – The students are following the following hierarchy in their acquisition of *gender* classes:

male > dual > female > common> collective> higher male animal> higher female animal>high organisms> lower animal>inanimate.

Data collection consisted in a twenty   item proficiency test administered to the Fourth Year Iraqi EFL learners at the Department of Psychology, College of Education, University of Babylon. The sample that were selected to test administration consisted of (١٠٠) fourth-year subjects and has a representative rate of (١٠٠٪) of all the admissible population.

Looking at the results from statistical angle, the resultant performance rate of (٤٥,٧)shows that the subjects at their final semester before graduation still unable to distinguish various classes of English gender. This proves the validity of the first hypothesis.

As for the second hypothesis, on the basis of the relative weight of the correct-response frequencies, the following hierarchy can be drawn for the acquisition route by Iraqi EFL learners at the fourth-year level:

male > dual > female > common> higher male animal> higher female animal>high organisms>collective> lower animal>inanimate.

The result above provides empirical evidence that proves the validity of the second hypothesis above.

Chapter One

Introduction

١,١The problem

Gender is a grammatical category used for the analysis of word-class displaying such contrasts as masculine, feminine and neuter, animate and non animate. In linguistics there a is need to distinguish *natural gender* which refers to real-world entities and *grammatical gender* which signals the relationships between words in a sentence(adjectives, agreeing with nouns, etc.) (Crystal, ٢٠٠٣: ١٩٧.)

In English, unlike many other related languages, nouns, determiners, and adjectives have no inflectionally-marked gender distinctions. Some 3rd person pronouns and *wh*-pronouns express natural gender distinctions:

it, which, etc   [nonpersonal] contrasts with the following:

who, whom, etc [personal]

he, himself, etc   [masculine, chiefly personal]

she, herself, etc   [feminine,   chiefly personal]

(Quirk et al.,١٩٨٥:٣١٤)

One of the problems in acquiring gender structures is that the connection between the biological category '*sex*' and the grammatical category '*gender*' is very close. Nouns are classified not inflectionally, but semantically, according to their coreferential relations with personal, reflexive, and *wh*-pronouns. The terms male and female are used in reference to *covert gender* of nouns, as distinct from the *overt gender* of pronouns (ibid).

Special suffixes are not generally used to mark gender distinction nor are gender distinctions made in the article. Some pronouns are *gender* – sensitive (the personal *he – she – it* ,and the relative *who which*), but other are not (*they ,some ,those ,etc*) (Quirk & Greenboum, ١٩٧٣: ١٠٣).

This poses a problem to the Iraqi EFL learners when acquiring gender classes.

The present study attempts to investigate the acquisition of various English gender classes by Iraqi EFL learners.

١،٢   **The Hypotheses**

١ – Iraqi EFL learners university students do not often distinguish the   different *gender* classes.

٢ – The students are following the following hierarchy in their acquisition to *gender* classes:

male > dual > female > common> collective> higher male animal> higher female animal>high organisms> lower animal>inanimate.

where " > " means "has acquisition priority over" (Dik, ١٩٩٧: ٣٠f).

١،٣ **Aims of the Study**

This study aims basically at:

١. Identifying Iraqi EFL College Students' performance in mastering the   various classes of English gender.

٢. The acquisition rate of English gender.

٣. Drawing acquisition hierarchy.

٤. Presenting a theoretical background about the subject under investigation

١ . ٤ **The Procedures**

The study consists of two parts: theoretical and practical. The theoretical part will include surveying some relevant literature concerning the topic under investigation. The practical involves the

following:

١. Selecting the sample of the research.

٢. Conducting a test to achieve the aims of the study by designing recognition and production tasks.

٣. Analyzing the results.

٤. Making pedagogical recommendations.

١ . ٥ Limits of the study

The sample of the study is limited to students from the ٤[th]. year classes in the Department of Psychology, College of Education, University of Babylon, during the academic year ٢٠١٢-٢٠١٣.

١ . ٦ The Value of the Study

It is hoped that the student, teachers and syllabus designers will make use of this study .

Chapter Two

Theoretical Background

٢ . ١ Introduction

The modern English word *gender* comes from the Middle English *gendre*, a loanword from Norman-conquest-era Old French. This, in turn, came from Latin *genus*. Both words mean "kind", "type", or "sort" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender).

Richards et al.,١٩٩٢ :١٥٣ defines gender as a grammatical distinction in which words such as nouns, articles, adjectives, and pronouns are marked according to a distinction between *masculine, feminine*, and sometimes *neuter*. For example, in French, nouns are either *masculine or feminine. Masculine* nouns are used with the article *un* "a"*,* and *le* "the"*,* and *feminine* nouns are used with *une* and *la* :

une/la table "a/ the table" (feminine)

un/le cheval "a/the horse" (masculine)

٢ .٢ The definition of gender

Gender means a grammatical classification of nouns, pronouns, or other words in the noun phrase, according to certain meaning-related distinctions, especially a distinction related to sex of the referent (Quirk et al.,١٩٨٥:٣١٤).

٢،٢ Sex and gender distinction

Sex marks the distinction between women and men as a result of their biological, physical and genetic difference. Gender roles are set by convention and other social, economic, political and cultural forces.

(One World Action Glossary: http://owa.netxtra.net/indepth/project.jsp?project=٢٠٦)

 The distinction between sex and gender differentiates sex, the biological makeup of an individual's reproductive anatomy or secondary sex characteristics, from gender, an individual's lifestyle (often culturally learned) or personal identification of one's own gender (gender identity).This distinction is not universal. In ordinary speech, sex and gender are often used interchangeably. Some

dictionaries and academic disciplines give them different definitions while others do not. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sex_and_gender_distinction)

٢,٣ Gender classes

Gender classes can be divided into two types : animate and inanimate (Quirk . ١٩٧٣ : ١٠٣)

٢ .٣ .١ Animate gender

Animate gender includes all the nouns for persons and animals (Palmer,١٩٧١:٨٧).Animate gender can be further subdivided into two types : *personal* and *non- personal* . Also, *personal* can be divided into: masculine, feminine, dual, common, and collective, while *non- personal* can be divided into: common, collective, masculine higher animals, feminine higher animals, higher organism, and lower animal. (Quirk & Greenboum, ١٩٧٣ :١٠٣).Palmer (١٩٧١:١٨٩), show disagreement to such kinds of gender, he states that pairs of words like *uncle: aunt, brother: sister, stallion: mare* , have a lexical feature rather than grammatical one, i.e. related to sex, not gender. This also applies to words with the suffix (-ess) e.g. princess, and duchess since they are irregular, and there are no words as doctoress or kingess (ibid.).

٢,٣,١,١ Personal masculine/feminine nouns

Personal animate nouns refer to males and females, and pattern with he/she/who: boy/ girl/, host/hostess (Crystal, ١٩٨٨:١٠٧). Here nouns denote specifically male persons (or animals) are normally of masculine gender; those that denote specifically female persons (or animals) are normally of feminine gender; and nouns that denote something that does not have any sex, or do not specify the sex of their referent, have come to belong to one or other of the genders, in a way that may appear arbitrary (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammatical_gender).

These nouns are of two types : -

(i) Morphologically unmarked for gender : has no clear marking that suggests morphological relationship between masculine and feminine .

  For example : - gentleman – lady

                            uncle – aunt

                                    (Quirk and Greenboum, ١٩٧٣: ١٠٤)

(ii) Morphologically marked for gender : The gender forms have a derivational relationship, for example :

                waiter – waitress

              hero – heroine (ibid).

Jespersen (١٩٧٦:١٩٠-٩١) states that there is gender for one sex that is derived from words for the other such as, launderer: laundress, traitor: traitress, and a more clear ending is seen in prosecutor: prosecutrix, testator: testatrix.

٢.٣.١.٢ Personal dual gender

Many lexical items for animate beings do not indicate sex such as, cousin, friend, enemy, fool, or for animals, cat, rabbit, fish, frog, worm (Jespersen,١٩٧٦:١٩١). Quirk et al.(١٩٨٥:٣١٥-١٦) states that this class of gender has a number of nouns such as *enemy, criminal, person, professor, librarian, writer, student ….etc*

It is desirable to add a "gender marker" to give information about the person such as male student/ female student. (ibid).

٢.٣.١.٣ Common gender

Trask, ١٩٩٣: ٥٠, defines common gender as the property of a noun which can be assigned to more than gender, with an appropriate and predictable difference in meaning. Here distinction between masculine and feminine genders has been lost (they have merged into what is called common gender). Thus nouns denoting people are usually of common gender, whereas other nouns may be of either gender. The gender of those nouns in English that are not limited to either sex, such as cousin or spouse for example. Many occupations are treated as having common gender, representing both males and females. (http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/american_english/common gender). Common gender includes words like: child, servant, enemy, neighbour, cousin, pupil, friend, worker, employee, teacher, minister, walker, doctor..etc.

٢.٣.١.٤ Collective nouns

A noun whose meaning is a group of individuals i.e.: *committee, government, and class* . Collective nouns in British English are notable for their ability when singular to take other singular or plural verb agreement: *the committee has made a decision or the committee have made a decision.* (Trask, ١٩٩٣:٤٨).

We may distinguish three subclasses of collective nouns : -

a – Specific   : army , family

b - Generic   : the public , the aristocracy .

c – Unique   : the United Nations , the Arab League .

(Quirk & Greenboum, ١٩٧٣ : ١٠٦)

٢.٣.٢ Non – Personal animate

This group include the following:

٢.٣.٢.١ Higher Animals

People sometimes call animals *he* or *she*, especially when they are thought of as having personality, intelligence, or feelings (Swan, ٢٠٠٥: ١٩٦).This is common with pets and domestic animals like cats, dogs and horses.

Once upon a time there was a rabbit called Joe. He lived…

Go and find the cat and put her out.

In these cases, *who* is used instead of *which*.

She had an old dog who always slept in her bed. (ibid).

٢.٣.٢.٢ Higher Organisms

Also ,we can use *she* for countries but "it " is more common in modern English .

e.g. *France has decided to increase its trade with Romania* .(or..….her trade…)

(Swan, ٢٠٠٥:١٩٧).

Quirk et al, ١٩٨٥: ٣١٨, states that names of countries have different gender depending on their use .

a – As geographical units they are treated as " inanimate " for example:

Here is a map of France. It's one of the largest countries of Europe.

b – As political / economic units the names of countries are often "   feminine " for example :

England is proud of her poets .

c – Sports Teams representing countries can be referred to as " personal collective nouns ", for

example : *France have improved their chance of winning the cup.*

٢.٣.٢.٣ Lower animals and inanimate nouns

Inanimate is denoting a noun or noun phrase which is other than animate, such as one denoting a lifeless object , a plant, an abstraction or a nominalization (Trask, ١٩٩٣: ١٣٧). Lower animals do not differ from in animate nouns in terms of present linguistic criteria , for example, inanimate nouns or lower animals both are related to the class of inanimate gender (Quirk and Greenbaum, ١٩٧٣:١٠٧); for example, both *snake* and *box* have 'which' and 'it' as pronouns. Lower animals may also be viewed as higher animals. Sex differences can be indicated by a range of gender markers, for any animate noun when they are felt to be relevant:

e.g. *she-goat, he-goat, male-female frog*, and *cock-pheasant, hen-pheasant*   (Quirk et al, ١٩٨٥: ٣١٧).

Jespersen (١٩٧٦:١٨٨) refers, under the heading of gender, to

words denoting inanimate thing e.g. *it, what, something* which are related to pronouns.

٢.٤ The relationship between language and gender

For a long time feminists and sociolinguists have shown interest in describing

the differences in language use between women and men, and studies of the cultural roles ascribed to gender. However, interest in language usage differences between the two sexes has a very long tradition in attempting to explain the distinction between language and gender and how language supports, enforces, and maintains attitudes about gender in general and women in particular (http://gas.hoasen.edu.vn/en/gas-page/understanding-relationship-between-language-and-gender).

٢.٥ Gender as a Traditional Category

As a traditional category, gender helps to describe the agreement between *boy* and *his* in the sentence:

The boy like his dog. (Youle, ١٩٩٦: ٨٩). In English, the relationship between *boy* and *his* is described in terms of *natural gender* . The agreement between *boy* and *his* is based on a distinction English makes between reference to male entities (*he , his*) , female entities (*she , her*) and sexless

entities , or animals . When the sex of the animal is irrelevant (*it , its*) (ibid).This type of biological distinction is quite different from the more common distinction found in languages which use *grammatical gender* . Here nouns are classified according to their *gender class* and typically , articles and adjectives take different forms to " agree with " the gender of the noun (ibid: ٩٠)Variation according to the *gender* of the speaker has been the subject of a lot of recent research. One general conclusion from dialect surveys is that female speakers tend to use more prestigious forms than male speakers with the same general social background. Forms such as *I done it* , *it growed* and *he ain't* can be found more often in speech of males , and *I did it , it grew* and *he isn't* in the speech of females (ibid : ٢٤٢).

٢ . ٦ Gender references

٢ . ٦ . ١ cars and ships

Some people use *she* for cars and ships (Swan, ٢٠٠٥: ١٩٧)

e.g. *How's your new car* ?~ Terrific, *She's running beautifully.*

The ship's struck a rock . She's sinking ! (ibid).

٢ . ٦ . ٢ *he* or *she*

English has used *he / him /his* when the sex of a person is not known , or in references that can apply to either men or women , especially in a formal style .

Ex: *If a student is ill ,he must send his medical certificate to the college office.*   (ibid).

٢ . ٦ . ٣ Unisex *they*

This type is used in an informal style ,we often use *they* to mean "he or she " ,especially after indefinite words like somebody ,anybody , nobody and person . This type is sometimes considered "incorrect " ,but it has been common in educated speech for centuries,

 for example :

If *anybody* wants my ticket , *they* can have it. (ibid)

٢ . ٦ . ٤ actor and actress

A few jobs and positions have different words for men and   women as in:

man	woman
actor	actress
hero	heroine
policeman	policewoman

 (ibid).

٢ . ٦ . ٥ Words ending in – man

Some words ending in – *man* do not have a common feminine equivalent, for example , "chairman " or "spokesman ", these words are now often avoided in references to women or in general references to people . (ibid : ١٩٨).

٢ . ٦ . ٦ Man

Man and *mankind* have traditionally been used for the human race, for example : Why does *man* have more diseases than animals ? (ibid).

Chapter Three

The test

٣ . ١ Introduction

This chapter presents the empirical part of the study that leads to testing the validity of the hypotheses proposed in ١،٢. It describes both data collection and analysis. Data collection is conducted by defining the population of the study and the representative ratio of the selected sample first, then by describing the design of the achievement test and its administration to the subjects of the study. Data analysis includes the calculation of test reliability and validity. Item analysis is carried out with the help of statistical means, formulas, and tables. It includes the calculation of both test items: facility and discrimination indices.

٣،٢ Data Collection

٣،٢،١ Population and Sample

The total population of this study constitutes a group of (١٠٠) Iraqi EFL learners of the fourth year in the Department of Psychology at the College of Education for Human Sciences during the academic year ٢٠١٢ – ٢٠١٣ to investigate their performance in manipulating English gender classes.

The group has a representative rate of (١٠٠٪) of all the admissible population. Such a complete representative rate has been aimed at in order to rule out the disadvantages that are inherent in the random sample method such as the absence of exhaustiveness. This group was studying English as a foreign language for four academic years.Relative sample homogeneity was taken care of through the selection of only those subjects who share the same mother tongue, age, and the number of years of studying English as a foreign language.

٣،٢،٢ Test Design

The designed test comprises (٢٠) items that fall into two parts, each part has (١٠) items. Part one is dedicated to test comprehension in (١٠) items, while part two tests production in (١٠) completion items, to save time and effort, the subjects were asked to put down their responses on the same test paper in both parts.

٣،٢،٣ Test Administration

The test was administered in one sitting during the second semester of the academic year ٢٠١٢/٢٠١٣. The testees were asked to write down their names and section numbers in order to make the subjects take the test seriously since the researcher has noticed that some testees tend to be careless in working down their responses to anonymous test answers since they know that they are unaccountable to it.

٣٬٣ *Test Virtues*

The two most important characteristics of a good test are its reliability and its validity in such measuring (Mehrens & Lehmann. ١٩٨٤: ٨٤). In Ingram's words, "tests are only worth having if they measure accurately what you want them to measure" (Ingram, ١٩٦٨: ٧٠). These two important features are explored in the next sections.

٣.٣.١ Validity

Validity has been defined by "the extent to which [a test] measures what measure" (Gregory, ١٩٩٢: ١١٧). Two vital types of validity are required to obtain efficient tests: Face validity and Content validity.

٣.٣.١.١ Face validity

Face validity is making a decision about the appropriateness of use of some particular measuring instrument in a given assessment situation through the process of simple inspection of that instrument (Roberts, ٢٠٠٠: ٦).This simply means the way the test to the examines , supervisors or in general to the people who are concerned with the education of the students ; however , its importance should not be underestimated.

٣.٣.١.٢ Content validity

Polit and Beck (٢٠٠٦) understand content validity as the extent to which an evaluation instrument contains an adequate sample of items for the construct assessed. In this test, content validity has been obtained through the inclusion of only those items that are strictly related to the comprehension and production of the English *gender* classes.

٣.٣.٢ Reliability

Test reliability refers to the consistency of scores students would receive on alternate forms of the same test. Due to differences in the exact content being assessed on the alternate forms, environmental variables such as fatigue or lighting, or student error in responding, no two tests will consistently produce identical results (Wells & Wollack:٢٠٠٣:٢)

One widely used estimate of Test Reliability is that of Kuder- Richardson Formula ٢١:

$$R = 1 - \frac{M(n-M)}{ns^2}$$

where **M** is the mean, **n** is the number of items in the test, and **s** is the Standard Deviation.

The application of this formula to the test sample yields the following figures:

$$١- \frac{٤٤٬٧٥ (٢٠ - ٤٤٬٧٥)}{(٢٠ X ١٤٬١٢)^٢}$$

$$= ١ - ٠٫٠١٣٨٨٧٩٧$$

$$= ٠٫٩٨٦١١$$

which is an ideal reliability test value.

Chapter Four
Data Analysis

٤،١ Introduction

This chapter is concerned with data analysis. The discussion in this chapter moves to item analysis and the presentation of the general test results using statistical tables, means and formula. This chapter aims at getting statistical evidence that verifies the validity of the hypotheses put forward in chapter one.

٤،٢ Item Analysis

Item analysis refers to a statistical technique that helps instructors identify the effectiveness of their test items. In developing quality assessment and specifically effective multiple-choice test items, item analysis plays an important role in contributing to the fairness of the test along with identifying content areas that maybe problematic for students(http://carleton.ca/edc/wp-content/uploads/Item-Analysis.pdf).

Two types of item analysis are discussed below: Item Facility and Discrimination Level. These two reflect: i) how difficult the test items are, and ii) how well they sort out the better students from the poorer ones.

٤،٢،١ Item Facility (IF)

Item facility refers to an index of how easy an item is for the test takers (Baily, ١٩٩٨). The difficulty of an item, known as its Item Facility or Index (henceforth, IF) is simply the percentage of students who give the right answers. It is simply the percentage of the subjects who give the correct answer, calculated according to the following formula:

High Correct+Low Correct

I F = --

Total Number in Sample

(Madsen,١٩٨٣:١٨١)

The most usual facility value for a whole test ranges from about ٤٠٪ to about ٦٠٪ (Harrison, ١٩٨٣: ١٢٨). ***In this test, the means of facility values for recognition part is ٤٤٪ and for production part is ٤٢٪.***

This makes mean of IFs fall within the most usual range above; and as such confirm the fact that test items have the fairly and middling facility indices, which, as whole, satisfy one of the requirements of good tests.

Table (١)

Item Facility, Recognition

Item No	IF%	Item No.	IF%
١	٥٩,٥	٧	٤٠,٧
٢	٣٣,٩	٨	٥١,٢
٣	٣١,٧	٩	٤٦,٣
٤	٤٩,٩	١٠	٢٩,٨
٥	٥٥,٧	Total	٤٣٦,٣
٦	٣٧,٦	Mean	٤٤٪

Table (٢)

Item Facility, Production

Item No	IF%	Item No.	IF%
١	٤٠,٥	٧	٤٢,٥
٢	٣٠,١	٨	٣٧,٩
٣	٤١,٣	٩	٤٩,٧
٤	٥٥,٣	١٠	٤٠,٣
٥	٣٣,١	Total	٤١٥,٣
٦	٤٤,٦	Mean	٤١,٥٣٪

٤.٢.٢ Discrimination Level (DL)

students on   Discrimination Level refers to the ability of an item to differentiate among

the basis of how well they know the material being tested

(http://www.washington.edu/oea/pdfs/resources/item_analysis.pdf)

In other words, good tests are required not only to discriminate between the high-versus-low

performance students as a whole, but also to ascertain that each test item also does so (Harrison, ١٩٨٣:

١٢٨). This condition is satisfied when no test item that is incorrectly answered by the majority of the

upper-half of the testees is correctly answered by the majority of the lower-performance testees. The

formula for the Discrimination Level would be:

        High Correct-Low Correct

DL=   -------------------------------

        Total Number in Sample   (Madsen,١٩٨٣: ١٨٣)

        The application of the of the above formula to recognition and production scores show

the following statistical means and rates:

١. There are no negative discrimination indices. The inference in this respect is that all

the test items are positively discriminative.

٢. There are no null-discrimination indices.

٣. *The mean of the discrimination value of all the test items is* ٢٬٧٦٥ *%, which is a satisfactory* index, given that the optimal rate in this respect is ٣٪ (Harrison, ١٩٨٣: ١٢٩).

Table (٣)

Discrimination Level, Recognition

Item No	Discrimination Level %	Item No	Discrimination Value %
١	٠٬٢٩	٦	٠٬٢٩
٢	٠٬٣١	٧	٠٬٢٣
٣	٠٬٣٩	٨	٠٬٢٨
٤	٠٬٢	٩	٠٬٤١
٥	٠٬٢٦	١٠	٠٬٢٨
		Total	٢٬٩٤
		Mean	٠٬٢٩٤

Table (٤)

Discrimination Value, Production

Item No	Discrimination Level %	Item No	Discrimination Level %
١	٠٬٢٩	٦	٠٬٣١
٢	٠٬٢٥	٧	٠٬١٨
٣	٠٬٣٨	٨	٠٬٢٣
٤	٠٬٢٦	٩	٠٬٢٩
٥	٠٬٢	١٠	٠٬٢
		Total	٢٬٥٩
		Mean	٠٬٢٥٩

٤٬٣ Statistical Means and Acquisition Rate

The mean of test scores for the total subjects stands at (٤٥٬٧), which is a quite low performance mean, being less than (٥٠٪). Only (٤٩) of the total subjects of (١٠٠) managed to get at the pass mark of (٥٠) out of (١٠٠), with a low pass-rate of (٤٩٪).

The resultant performance rate of (٤٥٬٧) shows that the subjects at their final semester before the final examinations are indeed far away from being able to distinguish gender classes.

This proves the validity of the first hypothesis which reads:

Iraqi EFL learners university students do not often distinguish gender classes.

Table (٥)

Subjects' Scores (out of ١٠٠) and Test's Mean

Subject No	Out of ١٠٠	Subject No	Out of ١٠٠	Subject No	Out of ١٠٠	Subject No	Out of ١٠٠	Subject No	Out of ١٠٠
١	٩٠	٢١	٦٥	٤١	٥٥	٦١	٤٥	٨١	٤٠
٢	٩٠	٢٢	٦٥	٤٢	٥٥	٦٢	٤٥	٨٢	٤٠
٣	٩٠	٢٣	٦٥	٤٣	٥٠	٦٣	٤٥	٨٣	٤٠
٤	٨٠	٢٤	٦٥	٤٤	٥٠	٦٤	٤٥	٨٤	٤٠
٥	٨٠	٢٥	٦٥	٤٥	٥٠	٦٥	٤٥	٨٥	٤٠
٦	٨٠	٢٦	٦٥	٤٦	٥٠	٦٦	٤٥	٨٦	٤٠
٧	٧٥	٢٧	٦٥	٤٧	٥٠	٦٧	٤٥	٨٧	٤٠
٨	٧٥	٢٨	٦٥	٤٨	٥٠	٦٨	٤٥	٨٨	٤٠
٩	٧٥	٢٩	٦٠	٤٩	٥٠	٦٩	٤٥	٨٩	٤٠
١٠	٧٥	٣٠	٦٠	٥٠	٤٥	٧٠	٤٥	٩٠	٤٠
١١	٧٥	٣١	٦٠	٥١	٤٥	٧١	٤٥	٩١	٤٠
١٢	٧٠	٣٢	٦٠	٥٢	٤٥	٧٢	٤٥	٩٢	٤٠
١٣	٧٠	٣٣	٦٠	٥٣	٤٥	٧٣	٤٥	٩٣	٤٠
١٤	٧٠	٣٤	٦٠	٥٤	٤٥	٧٤	٤٥	٩٤	٣٥
١٥	٧٠	٣٥	٥٥	٥٥	٤٥	٧٥	٤٥	٩٥	٣٥
١٦	٧٠	٣٦	٥٥	٥٦	٤٥	٧٦	٤٥	٩٦	٣٥
١٧	٧٠	٣٧	٥٥	٥٧	٤٥	٧٧	٤٥	٩٧	٣٥
١٨	٧٠	٣٨	٥٥	٥٨	٤٥	٧٨	٤٥	٩٨	٣٠
١٩	٦٥	٣٩	٥٥	٥٩	٤٥	٧٩	٤٥	٩٩	٣٠
٢٠	٦٥	٤٠	٥٥	٦٠	٤٥	٨٠	٤٥	١٠٠	٢٥

Total   ٤٥٧٠

Mean   ٤٥,٧

٤,٤ *Acquisition Route*

Hereunder is a table showing the acquisition rates achieved by the subjects on the levels of production and recognition, all-together.

Table (٦)

Rates of Acquisition of English Gender

Gender Class	Rate of Acquisition
male	٦٦٪
female	٥٢٪

dual	٥٧٪
common	٥٠٪
collective	٣٩٪
higher male animal	٣٧٪
higher female animal	٣٣٪
higher organisms	٣٣٪
lower animal	٣٠٪
inanimate	٢٨٪

On the basis of the relative weight of correct-response frequencies whose percentages are shown in the table (٦), the following hierarchy can be drawn for the acquisition route by Iraqi EFL learners at the university level:

male > dual > female > common> collective> higher male animal> higher female animal>high organisms> lower animal>inanimate.

One relevant observation is that the hierarchy above, based upon statistical evidence of markedness expressed by means of frequency, seems to reflect a general tendency in the acquisition of the categories of English genders by Iraqi EFL learners. More studies are required to verify this general tendency in Iraqi ESL acquisition.

The result above provides empirical evidence that proves the validity of the second hypothesis presented in ١،٢ which reads:

The students are following the following hierarchy in their acquisition to *gender* classes:
male > dual > female > common> collective> higher male animal> higher female animal>high organisms> lower animal>inanimate.

Chapter Five
Conclusions

٥،١ Theoretical conclusion

Gender means a grammatical classification of nouns, pronouns, or other words in the noun phrase, according to certain meaning-related distinctions, especially a distinction related to sex of the referent. Gender classes can be divided into two types : animate and inanimate. Animate gender includes all the nouns for persons and animals. Animate gender can be further subdivided into two types : *personal*

and *non- personal.* Also, *personal* can be divided into: masculine, feminine, dual, common, and collective, while *non- personal* can be divided into: common, collective, masculine higher animals, feminine higher animals, higher organism, and lower animal.

Personal animate nouns refer to males and females, and pattern with he/she/who: boy/ girl/, host/hostess. These nouns are of two types : -

(i) Morphologically unmarked for gender : has no clear marking that suggests morphological relationship between masculine and feminine i.e. gentleman – lady

(ii) Morphologically marked for gender : The gender forms have a derivational relationship i.e. waiter – waitress.

Personal dual gender has a number of nouns such as *enemy, criminal, person, professor, librarian, writer, student ....etc.* Personal collective nouns are those nouns whose meaning is a group of individuals i.e.: *committee, government, and class.*

Non–Personal animate includes higher animals, higher organisms, lower animals and inanimate nouns. Gender in higher animals is chiefly observed by people with a special concern with pets and domestic animals like cats, dogs and horses.

Names of countries have different gender depending on their use

 (i)   As geographical units they are treated as inanimate.

 (ii)   As political/economic units the name of countries are often feminine.

Inanimate is denoting a noun or noun phrase which is other than animate, such as one denoting a lifeless object , a plant, an abstraction or a nominalization. Lower animals do not differ from inanimate both are related to the class of inanimate gender for example, both *snake* and *box* have 'which' and 'it' as pronouns.

٥,٢ Practical conclusions

I – As for as the acquisition of gender classes is concerned . Iraqi EFL learners at the end of four – year study of English as a second language at the university level are unable to master the various structures of gender classes .The mean of test scores for the total subjects stands at (٤٥,٧), which is a quite low performance mean, being less than (٥٠٪). Only (٤٩) of the total subjects of (١٠٠) managed to get at the pass mark of (٥٠) out of (١٠٠), with a low pass-rate of (٤٩٪).

   The resultant performance rate of (٤٥,٧) shows that the subjects at their final semester before the
        final examinations are indeed far away from being able to distinguish English gender classes.

This validates the first hypothesis of the present study which
reads :

Iraqi EFL learners university students do not often distinguish gender classes.

٢ – As for the second hypothesis, on the basis of the relative weight of the correct-response frequencies, the following hierarchy can be drawn for the acquisition route by Iraqi EFL learners at

the fourth-year level:

male > dual > female > common> higher male animal> higher female animal>high organisms>collective> lower animal>inanimate.

The result above provides empirical evidence that proves the validity of the second hypothesis mentioned in ١.٢.

٥.٣ Recommendations

١. Taking into consideration the hierarchy of acquisition as formulated in this study can facilitate gender acquisition. This can be achieved by introducing first categories first in the students' grammar books, then enhancing the instructional work in those categories that have a lesser accessibility of acquisition through adequate revisions.

٢. The poor test results obtained by the subjects of this study show that teachers of English should pay more attention to teaching of English gender since teachers in most cases are the only input available to the students other than text books.

٣. Teachers should refer to the difference between Arabic and English gender classes to avoid the negative ca

Appendix

The Test

Q١ / Determine gender class for each of the underlined words below:

١ – Go and find the cat and put her out.

٢ – He is full of new ideas.

٣ – She had an old dog who always slept in her bed.

٤ – My nephew is called John .

٥ – Snakes are very dangerous animals.

٦ – Jane's aunt is a nurse.

٧ – A child learns to speak the language of its environment.

٨ – The committee have met and they have rejected the proposal.

٩ – Teachers used to sensitive feelings .

١٠ – France has improved its chances of winning the cup.

Q٢ / Apply a suitable noun as required:

١ – I know a……………….who can help you. (personal male)

٢ – The…………………..meets every Wednesday . (personal collective)

٣ –……………..used to fly in the gardens every morning. (non-personal   lower animal)

٤ – The…………….who had fallen out of its perambulator , continued to

scream as loudly as he could. (personal common)

٥ – I have an a ……………could tell you, but she is right now. (personal dual)

٦ – Here is a map of………. . It's one the largest countries in Europe.   (higher organism)

٧ – The poor…………with its five puppies , lay shivering in the corner. (personal higher female animal)

٨ – My……………..is an expert on such matters. (personal female)

٩ – A …….. is roaring in the jungle. (personal higher male animal)

١٠ – The **……….**struck a rock. She is sinking. (inanimate)

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