



The Ability of Iraqi EFL Pupils of Clitics Recognition: A Phonological Study

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Abstract

This study investigates the ability of Iraqi EFL pupils' recognition of clitics in English. 'Clitics' are a specific type of morphemes which behave like a word in some ways, and like an affix in others. They are intermediate between free morphemes and bound morphemes. The problem of this study lies in the various pronunciations of clitics in each word which result in confusion while identifying them. This study aims at checking the ability of Iraqi intermediate and preparatory EFL pupils' ability in recognizing and determining clitics and check out the difference between the test results of the intermediate and the preparatory pupils. This study hypothesizes that the pupils might have difficulty in recognizing and determining clitics and attribute them to other syntactic elements. It also hypothesizes that there is no statistically significant different between the result of the intermediate and preparatory pupils in the test. The model adopted for analysis is Hudson (1984). Forty pupils have been randomly chosen from intermediate and preparatory stages to be the subjects of this study. They are submitted to a test which includes ten declarative sentences. The percentage of success of the preparatory stage is 80% while the intermediate stage achieves 65%. This study concludes that the ability of the pupils of preparatory stage is better than the intermediate stage.

Keywords: clitics, reduced forms, host word, adjacency, functional element.

قدرة التلاميذ العراقيين في اللغة الانكليزية كلغة أجنبية على التعرف على السياسيين: دراسة صوتية
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وزارة التربية، المديرية العامة لتربية صلاح الدين، مديرية تربية تكريت

المستخلص

تستقصي هذه الدراسة قابلية الطلاب العراقيين متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية لغة اجنبية في تمييز الملحقات في اللغة الانكليزية. والملحقات هي نوع مميز من المورفيمات والتي تسلك ككلمة في بعض الأحيان و كملحق بالكلمة تارة اخرى. حيث تتوسط بين الكلمة او تابعة للكلمة. تتمحور مشكلة هذه الدراسة حول اختلاف نطق الملحقات في كل كلمة وهذا ما يؤدي الى ارتباك الطلاب في تحديدها. تهدف هذه الدراسة الى استقصاء قابلية طالبات المرحلة المتوسطة والأعدادية متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية لغة اجنبية في تمييز وتحديد الملحقات ولأجراء التحقق حول اختلاف نتائج الاختبار الذي خضعت له طالبات المرحلة المتوسطة والأعدادية. وتفترض هذه الدراسة بأن من المحتمل ان تكون هناك صعوبة في تمييز وتحديد الملحقات ولربما تنسب الى عناصر نحوية اخرى. ومن فرضيات الدراسة ايضا ان لا يكون هناك فرقا جوهريا ذو دلالة احصائية في نتائج الاختبار بين طالبات المرحلتين. اما النموذج المعتمد لهذه الدراسة فهو هودسون 1984. تم انتقاء اربعين طالبة من المرحلة المتوسطة والأعدادية وبشكل عشوائي ليكونوا



محاور موضوع هذه الدراسة. وقد تم اخضاعهم للأختبار الذي يتضمن عشر جمل خبرية. حيث حققن طالبات المرحلة الأعدادية نسبة نجاح 80%. بينما حققن طالبات المرحلة المتوسطة نسبة نجاح 65%. تستنتج الدراسة الحالية بأن قابلية طالبات المرحلة الأعدادية أفضل من المرحلة المتوسطة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الملحقات، الأشكال المصغرة، الكلمة المضيف، التجاور، العناصر الوظيفية

1. Introduction

‘Clitics’ are considered as a type of bound morphemes which behave like a word but unable to stand as independent units. They are linked to other words, often phonologically or syntactically and constitute a single prosodic unit with the host word. Clitics often exhibit phonological processes which make them closely connected to the preceding or following word. They do not have primary stress in a sentence. The problem of this study lies in the fact that clitics can cause ambiguity in a sentence because they are attached to other words, besides that their position within a sentence can affect the meaning, and they undergo phonological changes when linked to other words. So, their various pronunciations in each word leads to confusion in determining them by the pupils. They differ according to the contracted form. The current study aims at checking out the ability of Iraqi EFL pupils in recognition clitics. It also aims at studying and identifying the phonological and morphological features of clitics in English. A third aim is to compare the different results of preparatory and intermediate stages in determining clitics. Accordingly, this paper hypothesizes that the pupils have difficulty in recognizing the syntactic element because they don’t have the ability to recognize and determine clitics. The procedures followed in this paper are that the topic of clitics is explained for the pupils; assigning randomly 20 pupils from the intermediate stage and 20 pupils from the preparatory stage; applying a written test to the two stages. Each stage has been examined separately; analyzing the data by using suitable statistical means and then stating results, conclusions, suggestions and recommendations.

2. Literature Review

This study tackles the topic of clitics in English. It exhibits its definitions, features, its dependency and types to show the role and functions of this elements in a sentence.

2.1 Definitions of Clitics

Marantz (1988:253) points out that a ‘clitic’ is an autonomous syntactic element which exhibits phonologically as a part of derived word. A clitic is a unit which is discriminating word for syntax, but just a morpheme for morphology and phonology, for example,

1- You're clever.



(re) is an isolated word because it is a verb in a reduced form. It is a part of You 're. The basic clue for this is phonological. The pronunciation of (you're) must be kept ready- made as a single word.

Sag and Godard (1994: 543) and Miller and Sag (1997:578) claim that clitics are isolated words that depend on other words. Halpern (1997:101) claims that clitics are neither inflectional nor derivational affix. They indicate any prosodically weak unaccented item.

Crystal (2008:80) defines clitic as a form used in grammar similar to a word, but which cannot stand as a normal item. In a construction, this item phonologically depends upon its adjacent host. The examples of cliticized items are the reduced forms of verb to be such as (she's and I'm). The articles of English and French, etc., are sometimes referred to as clitics.

Anderson (2010: 2-3) states that a 'clitic' is a special element that does not bear an autonomous accent but accentually clings to a neighboring word. It does not bear stress.

2.2 Features of Clitics

The appearance of clitics is not random, but according to specific principles and properties as follows:

a. Clitic auxiliaries can join to words of different classes which appear at the right edge of the preceding element; (n't) can only be added to finite forms of auxiliary and modal verbs.

b. The possibilities of syntax limit the appearance of a group of clitic auxiliaries with the prior material; some combinations of modal plus the contracted form (n't) do not exist, for example (*mayn't, amn't).

c. The orderly phonology of English governs combinations of host plus clitic auxiliary, for instance, in regular plural and the forms of past tense with ending of /z/ and / d/ .

d. The following forms like (won't, can't, don't and shan't) carry distinctive relations to their non- negative counterparts.

e. The degree of chosen affixes with respect to their stems is high, for example, the plural form attaches to noun stems, (chair, chairs), the superlative only to adjective stems (long, longest), the past only to verb stem (jump, jumped), while the degree of chosen clitics to their hosts is low as shown in the following examples,

2- The person I was talking to's going to be polite with me (preposition).

3- The ball you hit's just broken my home windows (verb).

4- Any reply not completely right's going to be signed as an error (an adjective).

5-The film tonight's been really interesting (adverb) (Zwicky and Pullum, 1983:504-507).

f. Clitic is related to linguistic units (word and phoneme). In prose, a word may be a verb or a noun, an adjective, an adverb and it may also be a 'clitic'; for example, the reduced form of (is) can be both a verb and a 'clitic', while the possessive (S) is both a noun and a clitic (Hudson, 1984:55).



g. The organization of clitics and non-clitics must be to phonological phrases (P phrases) and may be higher level of prosodic structure (Hudson, 1984:253) and (Anderson, 2010: 5-8)

h. There is not absolute state for clitics to have a non-clitic isotope, it can be treated as a whole part of the lexicon of language. Clitics usually represent defective forms of functional elements like pronouns, determiners, auxiliaries, negation and question particles (Gerlach, 2002:3).

i. The feature of clitics is not necessarily a feature of lexical item, but instead of that the phonological form can identify that lexical item.

j. The same form may include both clitic and non-clitic form. The auxiliary verbs have both full forms, non-clitic (is, has, had, will, would, etc.) and the clitic forms are ('s, 'd, 'll). These items are essentially free variants.

k. Clitic auxiliaries have the identical syntactic and semantic participation to a sentence as non-clitic full forms, for example the auxiliaries in (n't) can include peculiar semantics as in the following example,

6- She mustn't go late. The negative form of this item is within the domain of modal, while in the next example,

7- (She can't go) The modal is in the domain of negation.

l. Clitic auxiliaries do not have the property of moving together with their host,

8-(thus a question coincides to I think Steven's on the farm. → is (who do you think 's on the farm? and not ↓

9-*Who's do you think on the farm?

While the negated auxiliaries move as a unit (the question coincides to) →

10-I haven't any more apples. This sentence is →Haven't you any more apples? and not ↓

11-*Have youn't any more apples? (Anderson, 2010:4).

m. 'Clitics' are dissimilar and they include important variation from one to one (Halpern, 2010:117).

n. The syntactic clitics occupy a distinctive position no obtainable for free forms of the language (Devilin and Sevdali, 2015:111).

o. Clitics can be added to other clitics as in (I'd 've done better if I could've), while (n't) cannot (thus, I wouldn't do that if I were you) cannot be expressed as (*I'dn't do that if I were you).

p. In spite of description of clitics as prosodically imperfect grammatical items appear to capture the phonological dimension of their conductance, they are not adopted uniquely in grammatical structure.

q. Clitic is like an affix instead of a word-form, which would consist of at least a single syllable and stressed vowel. A word is a form and a 'clitic' is just an affix.

Since clitics have allomorphs, they have no influence on their hosts and that matches the morphological and phonological features of their hosts (Al-Janabi, 2019:64).

2.3 Simple and Special Clitics

Halpern (1997:101- 103) Kaisse (1985:39) confirm that there are simple and special clitics. An unstressed word is a simple clitic. An example of simple clitic is a preposition which is ahead of a prepositional phrase and includes its complement. In language, the distribution of this phrase is (PP). Special clitics refer to elements with other functions and distribution. Simple clitics include non-syntactic nature. Syntactic irrelevance is a clue of recognizing cliticization from affixation. This point became a standard set of distinctive signs. This can be made sharper by antithetic reduced auxiliaries with inverted commas, the reduced form of not that does not behave as a part of the prior auxiliary. It may accompany the auxiliary in subject – auxiliary inversion contexts.

12-Isn't /*Is not Linda going to come to the park this evening?

13-Is Linda not /*n't going to come to the park this evening?

Hudson (1984: 182) points out that simple clitic has similarity to affix more than word, but has ordinary syntax. Possessive (S) is an example of simple clitic which has no full version.

14-The man in the hat's name is John.

15-The man's car is new. See Fig (1) simple clitic

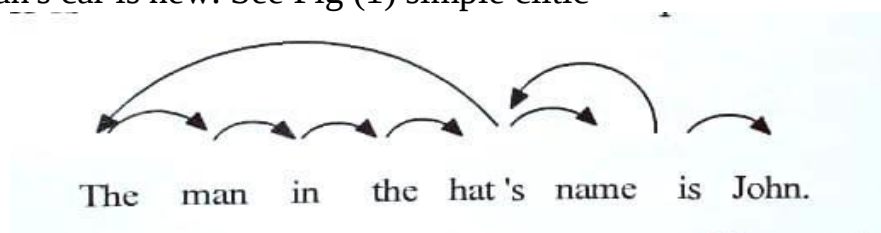


Fig (1) Simple Clitic (Hudson, 1984: 182)

Hudson (Ibid.: 183) says that according to preceding examples, he refers to possessive [S] as the pronoun. The idea that possessive [S] has the identical syntax as the possessive pronoun (His) which also requires a mandatory prior dependent, which is the head of the possessor noun phrase.

Halpern (1997:102) states that in English, simple clitics are represented in reduced auxiliaries and pronouns. They have no stress and pronounced as a single unit with the previous word, while the full form words occupy the distribution and the clitics are subset of them. For example,

16-She will have to find a new business soon.

[ʃiwl], [ʃi,l], [ʃ,l].

Simple clitics lack the complete range of distribution of an independent accented word of the same category because there are restrictions of the structure permitted by the syntax, instead of some specific syntactic status. For example, the fully reduced form (vowel– stressed) forms of auxiliary other than (is- are) which are usually of the subject pronoun and not after a non-pronominal subject, non- subject, or even after a pronoun if the subject is part of a coordinated subject.



17- He 'll have to attend now. [hl]

18- Mary 'll have to study now. [mærl, l] . [*mærl]

19- Mary and he'll have to attend now. [hI, l], [*hl]

The appearance of reduced auxiliaries includes restrictions to the following context. They are ungrammatical before the site of different omission, though they are phonetically enclitics.

20- John's tired, and Mary is too . *Mary's---- too.

21- John's as tall as you are. / *you're----- wide/ .

Hudson (1984:276-82) and Al-Buhayri (2013: 2) confirm that technically, possessive(S) is a simple clitic for its syntactic structure. The connection between clitic and prior word surpasses precedence. Special clitics take up various syntactic positions and play distinct roles in syntax.

Anderson (2010:8) and Al-Janabi (2019: 63) say that clitics are the reduced forms of verbs to be, as in (she's) verbs to have (they've). Simple clitics include the reduced forms of their (non-clitic) full forms. The two forms occupy the same syntactic position of their full forms. Special clitics have no corresponding non- clitic pronouns.

2.4 Dependency of Clitics

‘Clitics’ are morphs on the limits between free and bound morphs. They cannot appear as individual prosodic word. They usually indicate meaning reserved for free morphs (Klavans, 1985:105 and Anderson, 1980:232).

Zwicky and Pullum (1983: 504-507) declare that there are multi reasons for the dependency of clitic on its host. The clitic within the host is phonologically treated as an affix. Possessive (S) behaves phonologically like the suffix (Z) in plural nouns and singular verbs. There are matters of interaction of form between the ‘clitic’ and its host. For example, the possessive (S) interacts with a preceding plural suffix: my father’s uncle but my parents' fathers. Shortly, when the host formerly contains [Z], the [Z] of the possession combines with it. There are irregular examples of interaction [s] and must be stored. The irregularity is more peculiar of patterns found between words, and truly is more special feature of inflections than of clitics. In English, the reduced auxiliaries are used after definite pronouns such as you're, he's.

Hudson (1984:255) points out that in the following example, (my father's opinion) indicates that the host is the full word to which the clitic is attached. The clitic morphologically integrates with the host. In the previous example, the possessive (S) is part of the whole word. It is a clitic whose whole is an example of the suffix [Z]. According to the previous example, the word [father] is not just [father] , but includes the word father and(s). The relation between the clitic and the host is just adjacency to the full word. See figure (2) clitic and its host.

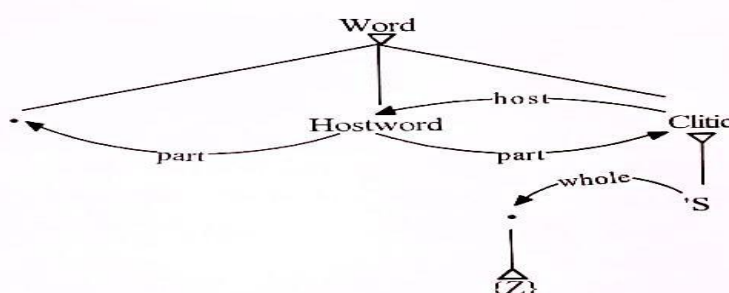


Figure (2) Clitic and its Host (Hudson, 1984: 255)

Halpern (1997:117) assures that the association of clitic to the host means the association of clitic to whole of the phrase in the syntax to phonology. Hudson (1984:260-261) confirms that possessive (S) may have a homophonous of reduced auxiliary verb ('s) as in,

- 22-The guardian in the next seat's drowsy. The full form of (is) which is
23-The guardian in the next seat is drowsy, which is unlike the possessive (S).

In the previous example, the auxiliary (is) has an unreduced equivalent, a clitic which includes a host and it is a tensed auxiliary. It needs obligatory complement not volitional numbering. It has a 'source' which is some tensed auxiliary from which it inherits all its features except for the deviance of its whole. The reduced form of verb to be is allowed if the verb's complement follows it.

Halpern (1997: 101-103) states that the phonological interactions between independent words do not occur, while this matter is found between a 'clitic' and its host. However, in general, morphology and phonology cliticization are not fully of that of an affix. The dependency of clitics leads to one of the prevalent insignia used to recognize clitics from autonomous words.

Radford (2009: 126) assures that in English, some auxiliaries can be cliticized to other words in connected speech like the auxiliary verb (have) can cliticize to the preceding subject pronouns and cannot be detached from it.

2.5 Types of Clitics

Halpern (1997: 101 and 117) points out that clitics which constitute a prosodic unit with a host on their right are proclitics, while those form units on the left are enclitics.

Proclitics are simple clitics which attach to the beginning of their domain. They include the determiners as in

- 24- This picture is expensive.

Prepositions, such as -At home.

Relative pronouns like (whom, whose, where, when, etc.).

Subordinate conjunctions such as (once, while, when, whenever,

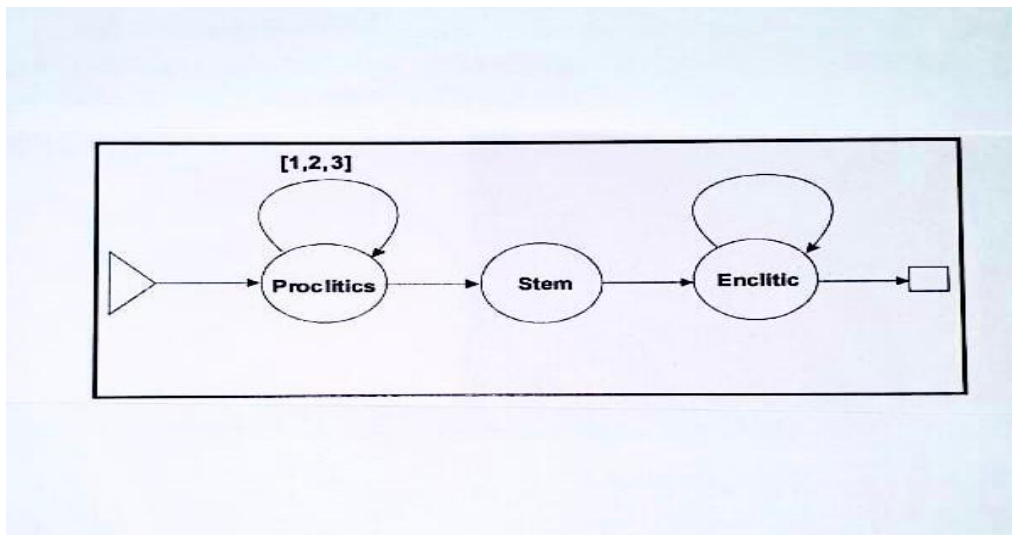


Figure (3) The Positions of Proclitics and Enclitics (Al-Otaiby et al, 2010 :596)

Crystal (2008:80) clarifies that clitics can be divided into two types which are proclitics and enclitics. Proclitics depend on the following words like the articles. Enclitics depend upon the preceding words.

3-Previous Studies

The goal of presenting previous studies is to show what has been done by different researchers about this topic. This literature review will include some important aspects like: aims, hypotheses, model, and important results.

3.1 Zwicky (1977)

This study entitled as *Clitics and Particles* aims at describing clitics systems in various languages and examining the status of clitics in a general theory of language structure and recognizing clitics from affixes and independent words. It hypothesizes that clitics are not particles and particles are independent words. It depends on theoretical knowledge in presenting knowledge. The model of this study is (Zwicky and Pullum 1983).

It concludes that clitics recognize speakers' state of mind with respect to the content or form of what is said, their respect of the speaker/ addressee relationship. Clitics can express different meanings and indicate specific arguments of a verb, modality, type, negation etc.



3.2 Benjamins (1994)

The study entitled *What is Clitics* aims at identifying the properties of independent words, some characteristic of affixes and inflectional affixes within words. It supposes that clitic is an umbrella not a genuine category in grammatical theory. The model of this study is Zwicky (1990) This study is presented by comparing the properties of clitics with different languages.

It concludes that every language has a number of elements which are 'dependent' (syntactically, morphologically) on a neighboring element. These elements are words and their special features are marked options in the grammar of languages. These dependent elements turn out not to be words at all, instead of that they are inflectional affixes.

3.3 Joan Mascaró- Gemma Rigou (2002)

The study entitled *The Grammar of Clitics* aims at recognition simple clitics / special clitics, their features, behaviour and types.

This study hypothesizes that it is not clear whether the notion of clitic corresponds to some linguistic primitive or several categories. The researcher compares clitics in different languages, such as English, French and Latin. The models of this study are (Cardinaletti 1999 and Zwicky 1977).

This study concludes that the general features of clitics vary according to the language and the particular clitics analyzed.

3.4 Anastasii Ionova (2019)

This study *The Unbearable Lightness of Clitics* seeks to investigate the manner of phonologically weak elements (clitics) in elliptical sentences, the nature of cliticization and the timing of ellipsis. It hypothesizes that ellipsis also exists in other components of the grammar. It is used to avoid repetition and it can affect the phonological form of an utterance. The model of this study is (Merchant, 2001).

This study concludes that ellipsis is a particularly challenging topic for investigation because elided material is unpronounced and therefore invisible.

3. Methodology

This section presents the explanation of the steps and procedures of the test followed to fulfill the objectives of this study. Ten declarative sentence are selected from everyday language because they are more familiar and appropriate for their age. They can be recognized from other elements of the sentence.

4.1 Model of Analysis

The model of analysis is Halpern's study entitled (Clitics) (1997). He focuses on the behaviour of special clitics and examines simple clitics. He presents the distinction between independent words on one hand and affixes on the other hand.

4.2 Procedures of Analysis

- 1- Twenty pupils of intermediate and twenty pupils of preparatory stage from Al-Mutafwikat secondary school are submitted to this test.
- 2- Ten declarative sentences are selected for the test.
- 3- The types of the topic are explained for the pupils.
- 4- The pupils are asked to underline the enclitics and proclitics.

Table (1) The selected test words with their correct and incorrect answers by the pupils of second intermediate stage.

No.	Word	Correct answer	Incorrect answer
1	My	16	4
2	Can't	14	6
3	Won't	14	6
4	Whose	11	9
5	They're	9	11
6	Haven't	15	5
7	Aren't	16	4
8	Isn't	14	6
9	Your	13	7
10	These	9	11

Table (2) The selected test words with their correct and incorrect answers by the pupils of the fifth preparatory stage.

No.	Word	Correct answer	Incorrect answer
1	My	18	2
2	Can't	18	2
3	Won't	18	2
4	Whose	18	2
5	They're	17	3
6	Haven't	16	4
7	Aren't	15	5
8	Isn't	18	2



9	Your	16	4
10	These	13	7

4. Results of Analysis and Discussion

The current study attempts to measure the ability of Iraqi EFL in recognizing and determining clitics in the two groups of the second intermediate and fourth preparatory pupils as shown in the table below:

Table (3) The Percentages of Success and Failure

Type	Preparatory	Intermediate
Success Rate	80%	65%
Failure Rate	20%	35%

The obtained results show that the pupils of preparatory stage get higher success rate than the intermediate does. This indicates the effect of their accumulated knowledge.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that the pupils of preparatory stage can recognize and determine clitics quicker and better than the intermediate though it was the first time of submitting them to this test. In both stages, most of the pupils can identify the enclitics types more than the proclitics. In some sentences, they can determine the types correctly, but they muddle in other sentences. Most of the pupils of preparatory stage answer easily and quickly while the pupils of intermediate need more explanation.

According to the test, the current study concludes that the pupils of preparatory stage gets higher rate of success than the pupils of intermediate stage. This reflects their ages in recognition quicker and better than the intermediate stages.

6. Pedagogical Implications

In the light of conclusions of the current study, some recommendations can be drawn to consider:

1-Iraqi pupils should be taught clitics to help them grasp the concept of word boundaries in a language. Since clitics are linked to other words, they clarify that words composed of multiple morphemes.

2- By studying clitics, learners can get a deeper understanding of how words are combined to constitute meaningful sentences and how different words orders influence meaning.



3- Clitics submit phonological processes such as assimilation or elision. So studying these processes can help learners grasp the phonetic and phonological aspects of a language to develop their communicative competence and become more proficient in using the language in real-world situation.

4-Teaching clitics can help students understand how languages users employ these markers to convey meaning and express their intensions in communicative contexts.

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