

An Analytic Study of Difficulties Faced by Intermediate School Pupils in Feminine Gender Formation

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Abstract

The research has been looked at from two levels: the theoretical level and the practical level; the theoretical level includes the definitions of gender , types of gender , feminine gender and ways of forming the feminine gender . At the practical level, the test, validity of the test and analysis of results have been dealt with. In this study we have to deal with the errors that are committed by Intermediate school pupils in use feminine gender There are many reasons behind the difficulties pupils may face in feminine gender because of difference in ability motivation or effort There are many problems in schools today that make learning and teaching processes difficult and many of the pupils do not talk or converse in class just because they are unable to express themselves in English The role of the teacher is to lessen these difficulties because learning the English language becomes one of the most important things for the educated people.

ملخص

تم النظر إلى البحث من مستويين: المستوى النظري والمستوى العملي؛ يتضمن المستوى النظري تعريفات الجنس وأنواع الجنس والجنس المؤنث وطرق تكوين الجنس المؤنث. على المستوى العملي، تم التعامل مع الاختبار وصلاحيته الاختبار وتحليل النتائج. في هذه الدراسة، يتعين علينا التعامل مع الأخطاء التي يرتكبها تلاميذ المدارس المتوسطة في استخدام الجنس المؤنث. هناك العديد من الأسباب وراء الصعوبات التي قد يواجهها التلاميذ في الجنس المؤنث بسبب الاختلاف في القدرة أو الدافع أو الجهد. هناك العديد من المشكلات في المدارس اليوم التي تجعل عمليات التعلم والتدريس صعبة والعديد من التلاميذ لا يتحدثون أو يتواصلون في الفصل لمجرد أنهم غير قادرين على التعبير عن أنفسهم باللغة الإنجليزية.. يتمثل دور المعلم في تقليل هذه الصعوبات لأن تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية يصبح أحد أهم الأشياء للأشخاص المتعلمين

Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that the second Intermediate School Pupils face difficulties in using feminine gender .

General Aim To highlight the problems faced by intermediate school pupils in feminine gender formation and investigating the students ability in using feminine gender .

Section One

1.What Gender Is

Gender “ is a range of characteristics used to distinguish between male and female , particularly in the cases of men and women and the masculine and feminine attributes assigned to them”.(WWW.en. Wikipedia .Org .) It is important to understand gender as a difference between males and females (WWW.answers . com)Gender indicates the sex of objects in nature . A noun that refers to a male is said to be of masculine gender . The noun that refers to a female is said to be of the feminine gender . (V . , 1988 : 29)

Examples : Masculine

Feminine

- | | |
|-----------|--------|
| 1.Man | woman |
| 2.Boy | girl |
| 3.Brother | sister |

1.1 . Types of Gender

There are four genders in the English language :

1. Masculine gender : Nouns which are the names of males .

Examples :

Tiger , husband , gentleman , boy , he , his .

2. Feminine gender : Nouns which are the names of females .

Examples :

Tigress , wife , lady , girl , she , her .

(Stageberg , 1981 : 101)

3. Neuter gender : Nouns which are neither male nor female .

Examples :

Box , book , desk , it .

4. Common gender : Nouns which the gender of an object is not known .

([WWW.Linkd](#) in. Beverly Schmitt , 1997)

Examples :

Neighbor , parent , friend , bird , people , cousin , them , they , we , us . (V . , 1988 : 29)

١ . ١ . ١ . personal Masculine – Feminine nouns

There are two types of these nouns :

1. Unmarked : Without any addition .

Examples :

Brother – sister

Boy _ girl

2. Marked : There is a suffix or change in the word .

Examples :

Duke _ duchess

Waiter _ waitress

(Quirk and Greenbaum , 1973 : 90)

١ . ١ . ٢ . Personal Dual Gender

Certain expression that can be added to either masculine or feminine .

Examples :

Boy _ girl

Boyfriend _ girlfriend

To show whether we mean male or female .

Examples :

Man doctor _ woman doctor

Male servant _ female servant

He teacher _ she teacher

1. I met he teacher .

2. I met she teacher .

(Quirk and Greenbaum , 1973 : 91

١ . ٢ . What is Feminine Gender ?

Is a grammatical gender that marks nouns that have human or animal female referents and often marks noun that have referents that do not carry distinction of sex .

Examples :

Woman , hen . (WWW.Sil . Org.)

Ways of Forming the Feminine Gender

There are three ways of forming the feminine gender .

1. By using an entirely different word .

Examples :

Boy _ girl

Man _ woman

Father _ mother

Brother _ sister

King _ queen

2. By adding a syllable (-ess , -ine , -trix , -a) to the masculine gender .

• (-ess)

Examples :

The feminine gender of 'author' is 'authoress' .

Count _ countess

Lion _ lioness

Poet _ poetess

(Alexander , 1994 : 75)

_ In the following (-ess) is added after dropping the vowel of the masculine ending .

Examples : Actor _ actress

Prince _ princess

Waiter _ waitress

Master _ mistress

• (-ine)

Examples :

The feminine gender of 'hero' is 'heroine' .

Viceroy _ vicereine ([WWW.Linkedin](http://WWW.Linkedin.com) in.Beverly Schmitt , 1997)

• (-trix)

Examples :

The feminine gender of testator _ testatrix .

Executor _ executrix . (Swan , 2005 : 181)

• (-a)

Examples : The feminine gender of 'Sultan' is 'Sultana' .

3.By placing a word before or after :

Examples:

Grandfather _ grandmother

Salesman _ saleswoman

Manservant _ maidservant (English . com)

١ . 4 . Identifying Masculine and Feminine through Pronouns

We have a distinction between 'he' (applied to males) and 'she' (applied to females) (Trask , 1999 : 45)

Examples :

3. She is astudent .

4. He is astudent . (Azar and Hagen , 2006 : 101)

It is the pronouns , not the nouns , that tell us whether the reference is to male or female .

Exampels :

5. He is the person you spoke to .

6. She is the person you spoke to .

But with most nouns that refer to people , we do not know whether the reference is to male or female until we hear the pronoun .

Examples :

7. My neighbor has just bought anew shed for his garden .

8. My neighbor is always telling us about her famous son . (Alexander , 1990 : 39)

When they are used with specific reference , they must of course be either masculine or feminine and the context may clearly imply the gender in a given case Examples :

9. I met a (hand some) student . (he refer to masculine) .

10. I met a (beautiful)student . (she refer to feminine) (Quirk and Greenbaum , 1973 : 91)

١ . 5 . Use Feminine Gender with Animals, Cars, Ships and Countries

People sometimes call animals 'he' or 'she' especially when they are thought of as having personality intelligence or feelings . This is common with pets and domestic animals like cats ,dogs and horses .

Examples :

11. There was a rabbit called Joe . He lived in the garden .

12. Go and find the cat and put her out . (Biber , etal. , 1999 : 318)Some people use 'she' for cars and motorbikes . Sailors often use 'she' for boat and ships .

Examples :

13. How's your new car ? ~ Terrific . She's running beautifully .

14. The ship's struck a rock . She's sinking !

We can use 'she' for countries . Examples :

15. France has decided to increase her trade with Romania .

(Swan , 2005 : 196)

Section Two

٢ . The Test

The sample of the test consists of forty pupils . And the number of the items is twenty . The test is carried out to measure the pupils knowledge of feminine gender . In the test , the pupils are supposed to give the feminine forms for the masculine ones given to them in the test

The testees are Iraqi pupils of the second year intermediate of Althuraya school / Karbala .

2 . 1 . Validity of the Test " Validity is the degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure, or can be used successfully for the purposes which it is intended" . (Ahmed , 2000 : 22) Prior to this the researcher wrote twenty masculine forms together with their feminine forms and requested some intermediate school teachers to tell him whether these forms were taught to their pupils or not . After that the researcher chose the forms which were agreed upon by the teachers The test was built afterwards and was handed in to the four experts mentioned above .

2 . 2 . Analysis of Results The sample consists of forty pupils . Thirty-nine pupils constituting (97.5%) of the pupils answered (brother –sister), (papa _ mama) correctly (see the Table below) . This means that the majority of the pupils answered these items correctly and this consequently means that such items do not constitute any difficulty for the pupils Thirty-five of the pupils (i.e 87.5%) answered (grandfather- grandmother), (actor _ actress), (husband _ wife), (prince _ princess), (boy _ girl), (policeman _ policewoman) correctly . The minority of the pupils find some difficulty in these items , may be attributed to ignorance from the part of the pupils . Thirty of the pupils (i.e 75%) answered correctly (sir – madam), (son _ daughter), (lion _ lioness), and ten of them answered incorrectly Nearly the same percentages have been noticed when looking at (poet _ poetess), (fox _ vixen), (gentleman _ lady), (uncle _ aunt), (master _ mistress), (king _ queen), (waiter _ waitress), (i.e 60-65%) . The wrong answered of the pupils may be due to the interference of the mother tongue There are twenty right answers which are equal to the wrong ones (i.e 50%) in (author _ authoress), (singer _ songstress) . That means that half of the pupils suffer difficulty in these items . One of the obvious cases of mother tongue interference is in the area of pronunciation pupils tend to transfer the pronunciation features of their native language to the sound system of the target language .

Section Three

3.1. Conclusions :

In the light of the pupils responses the researcher has come out with the following conclusions :

1. One of the main reasons for errors the pupils did was the interference of the mother tongue: this makes the pupils mix between their mother-tongue and the foreign (target) language.

2. Another reason was that many pupils might not read and understand English textbooks.

3. A third reason might be that the pupils did not pay much attention to the complexities of the foreign language.

4. There are some problems which can be solved by practice.

5. The pupils do not like English ; this is due to the way of their teacher in teaching this language through using punishment for those who did not do homework and for those who did not prepare the lesson . They also deal with them in a very bad manner through shouting at them and using bad utterances.

6. This topic requires more attention from both teachers and pupils .

3.2. Recommendations and Suggestions

1. Feminine gender should be given more attention by teachers and in textbooks at the school .

2. The teacher should help students to use a dictionary to know the difficult words in order to enrich their vocabulary .

3. Teachers should deal with the pupils in a good way and this is a positive thing and make them much better .

4. Teacher should give learners more examples about feminine gender and also to distinguish between Male and Female .

5. We should encourage pupils to read this language aloud in the class without being shy to pronounce English words correctly .

- 6.The teacher should encourage the pupils who are clever in order to motivate others in learning and how to use feminine gender.
- 7.The teacher should make some activities in the class, such as dividing the class into two groups :one of them male and the other female for interaction while solving a problem .
8. A comparison of gender in English and Arabic may be carried out .
- 9.The same topic may be carried out on another sample .
- 10.An Analytic study of difficulties faced by intermediate school Pupils in Masculine gender formation .

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The Table : Number and Percentage of Correct and Incorrect answers

NO.	Masculine	Feminine	Correct answer	Percentages	Incorrect answer	Percentages
1.	Brother	Sister	39	97.5%	1	2.5%
2.	Papa	Mama	39	97.5%	1	2.5%
3.	Grandfather	Grandmother	35	87.5%	5	12.5%
4.	Actor	Actress	35	87.5%	5	12.5 %
5.	Husband	Wife	35	87.5%	5	12.5%
6.	Prince	Princess	35	87.5 %	5	12.5 %
7.	Boy	Girl	35	87.5%	5	12.5%
8.	Policeman	Policewoman	35	87.5%	5	12.5%
9.	Sir	Madam	30	75%	10	25%
10.	Son	Daughter	30	75%	10	25%
11.	Lion	Lioness	30	75%	10	25%
12.	Poet	Poetess	26	65%	14	35%
13.	Fox	Vixen	26	65 %	14	35%
14.	Gentleman	Lady	26	65%	14	35%
15.	Uncle	Aunt	26	65%	14	35%
16.	Master	Mistress	26	65 %	14	35%
17.	King	Queen	26	65%	14	35 %
18.	Waiter	Waitress	26	65%	14	35%
19.	Author	authoress	20	50%	20	50%
20.	Singer	Songstress	20	50%	20	50%

Appendix : Provide the “Feminine” forms for the following “Masculine” forms

NO.	Masculine	Feminine	
1.	Actor	Actress	4
2.	Policeman	Policewoman	4

مجلة الجامعة العراقية المجلد (٧٤) العدد (١) آب (٣١-٨-٢٠٢٥)

3.	Boy	Girl	4
4.	Brother	Sister	4
5.	Husband	Wife	4
6.	King	Queen	4
7.	Uncle	Aunt	4
8.	Son	Daughter	4
9.	Sir	Madam	4
10.	Grandfather	Grandmother	4
11.	Author	Authoress	4
12.	Singer	Songstress	4
13.	Prince	Princess	3
14.	Waiter	Waitress	3
15.	Papa	Mama	3
16.	Gentleman	Lady	3
17.	Fox	Vixen	3
18.	Poet	Poetess	3
19.	Master	Mistress	3
20.	Lion	Lioness	3