

The Effect of CLA on Teaching Grammar of Iraqi Intermediate School Students

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Abstract

Much has been written about the role of grammar in TEFL with no clear method of how to teach it perfectly. Methods of teaching English in general and grammar in particular are always changeable due to development in research of applied linguistics, the current study deals with grammar in terms of cognitive linguistics; a newly emerged movement. It is an attempt to investigate the effect of using cognitive linguistic approaches (CLA) on teaching grammar in *English for Iraq* of Intermediate schools students. It aims to testify the applicability of cognitive linguistics to teaching English grammar by introducing new cognitive linguistic-based methods and activities.

The analysis of data has shown that there is a significant difference between the formal approach and cognitive linguistic one in teaching grammar in Intermediate school students.

Keywords: (Cognitive linguistics, grammar, teaching).

أثر طريقة CLA في تدريس القواعد النحوية لطلاب المرحلة المتوسطة العراقية

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المخلص:

قد كتب الكثير عن دور القواعد في اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية ولكن بدون طريقة واضحة لكيفية تدريسها بشكل مثالي. طرق تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية بشكل عام والقواعد بشكل خاص قابلة للتغيير دائماً بسبب التطور في البحث في علم اللغة التطبيقي ، وتتناول الدراسة الحالية القواعد من حيث اللغويات المعرفية وهي حركة ظهرت حديثاً. إنها محاولة لاستقصاء تأثير استخدام طريقة اللغوية المعرفية (CLA) على تدريس قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية لطلاب المدارس المتوسطة في العراق. ويهدف إلى إثبات قابلية تطبيق اللغويات المعرفية لتدريس قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية من خلال إدخال أساليب وأنشطة لغوية معرفية جديدة.

أظهر تحليل البيانات أن هناك فرقا معنوياً بين طريقة التدريس التقليدية وطريقة التدريس التي تعتمد على النهج اللغوي المعرفي في تدريس القواعد النحوية لدى طلاب المرحلة المتوسطة. الكلمات المفتاحية: (اللغويات المعرفية ، القواعد ، التدريس).

1. Introduction:

Cognitive Linguistic approach (henceforth CLA) offers techniques that facilitate teaching; it helps in pointing out the motivation behind every aspect of language. In the newly prescribed text book entitled *English for Iraq* for the second Intermediate stage, the grammatical area is one of the four major domains in which English is presented (Holme, 2009:18). A general survey of the series of *English for Iraq* textbooks shows that grammar tends to be taught in formal ways. It means that grammar is taught in terms of form rather than meaning where the teacher presents and explains grammar to students. Specifying grammatical forms as objectives identified by the textbook also means separating grammar from other aspects of communication. This suggests that the principle of communicative grammar claimed to facilitate the learning of grammar in the FL has no application in methodology. It follows, then, that there is a need for a coherent pedagogical theory which supports the development of the students' grammar under the premise of the theoretical concept "communicative competence". That is why the current study considers the need for designing textbook activities and classroom materials which encourage communicative grammar, in particular, as part of the communicative competence, in general 1970s (Evans and Green, 2006: 3).

The present study aims at applying three CLA in teaching English grammar which are cognitive grammar, construction grammar and word grammar. While the research question is to what extent can the cognitive linguistic approach develop the process of teaching and learning grammar in Intermediate schools?

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Applied Cognitive Linguistics

Cognitive linguistics (CL) can be defined as "the study of language in its cognitive function, where cognitive refers to the crucial role of intermediate informational structures in our encounters with the world." (Geeraerts and Cuyckens, 2007: 5).

Evans and Green (2006: 3) indicate that like other linguists, cognitive linguists study language in terms of its systematicity, its structure and its functions. This direction makes CL differ from other approaches to the study of language whereby language is assumed to reflect certain fundamental properties and design features of the human mind. On the one hand, language "offers a window into cognitive function, providing insights into the nature, structure and organization of thoughts and ideas". On the other hand, CL sees language as a product of embodied cognitive processes.

According to Evans and Green (2006: 48), CL is not a single theoretical framework but it consists of two major principles: Generalization Commitment and Cognitive Commitment. These two commitments were first introduced by Gorege Lakoff's - one of the pioneering figures in CL - paper in 1990. Lakoff (1991: 53) indicates that the generalization commitment is sought by the empirical side of linguistics in syntax, semantics pragmatics, etc. Evans (2007: 88) defines the Generalization commitment as "a commitment to the characterization of general principles that are responsible for all aspects of human language". This conclusion is based on the assumption that "language reflects general cognitive mechanisms and processes". That is why; some sort of a relationship between the various elements of language must be inferred throughout the empirical analysis of linguistics. On the contrary, generative linguistics sees syntax as an autonomous system with no place of priority is to be given to semantics, communication function, etc., to state syntactic generalization. The Chomskyan commitment describes language in terms of mathematical symbols which belong to systems of rewriting rules without consideration to the meaning of the symbols or anything outside this system (Lakoff, 1991: 54).

Applied CL is highly appreciated to have an impact on such areas as language in society, language in psychology, ideology, language acquisition, FL learning, and language pedagogy. More specifically, it "is concerned with the acquisitional and

pedagogical implications of CL in SL/FL teaching/ learning." (Putz, 2007: 1139).

However, Putz (2007: 117) refers to Tylor's study (1993) as the first systematic one which made use of the application of CL insights in the teaching and learning of grammar emphasizing the process of "consciousness raising".

2.2 The EFL Textbooks and the Adopted Approaches in Iraq

A textbook is a teaching tool for the teacher and learning tool for the learner. Tomlinson (1998: xi) defines a textbook as a book" which provides the core materials for a course". It is "the visible heart of any ELT Programme" (Sheldon: 1988: 237). Whatever the syllabus is, the purpose of activities available within textbooks is to increase the learners' opportunities of acquiring the target language. Ur (1996: 21) states that practice can be achieved by means of procedures which are called "exercises" or "activities". The goal of such activities is the "consolidation of the learning of grammatical structures, for example, or the improvement of listening, speaking, reading, and writing".

As a reaction to continuous development in EFL, the ministry of Education has replaced the course books with a new series, namely *Iraq Opportunities* in 2007. This series did not last along and had been replaced by *English for Iraq* during the year 2010.

3. Methodology:

A total of 60 Iraqi students participated in this study. All the participants are at the second Intermediate class in Baghdad Al-Rusfa 3rd. logically, the study has to choose a specific stage in order to do the instruction because of several factors such as the period of time available for the lessons of instruction, the type of population, the materials of instruction, etc. It justifiable to choose the second class for the grammatical limits of the current study is available in the textbook of the second class.

However, the students of the second class are from two classes, A and B, namely the control group and the experimental

group to represent two equal groups not only in number but also in their academic level. In order to gain such homogeneity, the addresses four variables which could affect the validity of the experiment, these variables include the following: The chronological age of the students, Levels of Parents' Education, Parents' social class, The Students' Knowledge of English.

By signaling equality between subject of the experimental group and those of the control one, the procedure of instruction is decided. The control group receives a school curriculum-based instruction designed for English for Iraq syllabus. The same thing is true with the experimental group except that they received additional instruction with CL. Although the syllabus design of the course of *English for Iraq* involves five lessons a week, only three lessons are decided to cover the intended materials of the current study. It is, simply, because there are other elements of English which have to be taught and learned. Basically, each grammatical aspect is extended to cover a period of three lessons.

However, the period of instruction of the specified materials of the current study covers the first course of the school year 2019, although there are materials of instruction which are part of the second course. This is due to the restriction of the Iraqi educational system.

3.1 Models of the Study

As it has been mentioned before, the current study is limited to cover specific grammatical aspects in the second class of the Intermediate stage. In this regard, four aspects are to be the subject matter of instructions and the second one which is the category of the phrasal verbs was ignored. This is because of the design English for Iraq textbook. The brief description of the textbooks of English for Iraq shows a limitation for dealing with phrasal verbs to the degree that makes the instruction useless in this regard.

The lessons of instruction involve two methods of teaching. The first method represents the one which enhances the objectives of the syllabus design of English for Iraq. The second method is

the one that follows the cognitive linguistic approach for the purpose of the current study. Following key principles of CL, these methods of instruction complement each other to cover both the formal orientation and the cognitive linguistic one. The following figure shows the design of the instructional side of this study:

Table (1): Design of the Instructional Procedure of the Study

Group	Pre-test	Dependent variable	Independent variable	Post-test result
Control	Shows Equality	traditional methods of grammar teaching	cognitive linguistic methods	comparing the achievement of the test of both groups
Experimental				

However, defining the key criteria agreed upon by theorists in CL to TEFL makes the instructional format intended for this study more rigorous and retrievable. These criteria are reflections of basic principles that construe grammar as structure which emerges from our interaction with the physical world. Therefore, some of those principles are adopted in the classroom lessons as models of the current study. They are restricted to the grammatical units specified in *English for Iraq* as follows:

1. The Force Dynamics Model

This model emphasizes the basic meanings of the modal auxiliaries which provide cognitive insight to the formal rules of English modality. In this regard "Force dynamics the semantic category that uniquely characterizes the grammatical category of modals, in both their basic and epistemic usages" (Talmy, 1988).

2. The Mental Space Model

According to this model, an *if-clause* sets up a mental space which affects the consequence of the *then-clause*. This model is intended to add extra understanding of modal verbs in *English for Iraq* from the perspective of CL.

3. The Construction Grammar Model

Under the framework of Construction Grammar, this model views the direct and indirect reported speech as constructions of form meaning correlates. The purpose of adopting this model is to provide usage-based activities in addition to the formal ones already exist in *English For Iraq* textbooks.

4. The Reference Point Model

Originated in Cognitive Grammar, the reference point model offers a cognitive linguistic point of view in dealing with grammar. According to this view, the grammatical aspect of the active and passive voices can be understood in terms of the motivation of cognitive structure. Langacker (2008: 83) refers to the reference point dominion which is a range of knowledge associated with the reference point which can be accessed when the reference point is conceptualized.

5. The Systematic Motivation Model

This model is highly applicable to the grammatical aspect of phrasal verbs with the focus on the role of the semantic motivation. The main purpose of adopting this model is to making Iraqi students in the Intermediate school aware of the underlying principles of particles in terms of a CL-based approach.

3.2 Methods of Teaching

Accordingly, the following indication of the methods of instruction are meant to deal with the experimental group only and leave the control group to the already made methods of the syllabus design of *English for Iraq*. In this regard, one of the basic purposes of the intended instructions is to build awareness of the specific areas of grammar depending on insights of CL.

1. Modal Verbs Lessons

Modal verbs are to be presented to students of the experimental group in some sort of intervention based on the

notion of force dynamics. Before that, the researcher teaches modal verbs depending on what are designed to cover the objectives of the syllabus design of English for Iraq. Governed by the course materials and based on the textbook which students use in the Intermediate school, the presented modal verbs are limited to *must/ mustn't*, *should / shouldn't*, *can/can't*, *have to/don't have to* and *might*. They are designed to satisfy objectives of deduction, prohibition, obligation and necessity to express both the root and epistemic senses of the modal verbs. In this regard, the following lessons have been adopted:

• Lesson One

Within the techniques suggested to teach modal verbs in terms of the syllabus design, the researcher revises the various functions English modal verbs can achieve. Following the traditional orientation, he discusses with the students functions such as ability, obligation, prohibition, permission, volition, necessity, probability, etc. For example, lesson ten of unit two introduces the functions of *must*, *can't* and *might + have + the past participle form of the verb to make deductions of the past*. According to the objective of the lesson three functions are to be represented in the Grammar and Functions reference of the textbook as follows:

1. Use ***must have*** when you are almost certain that something happened.
2. Use ***might have*** when you think that perhaps something happened.
3. Use ***can't have*** when you are certain that something didn't happen.

Next, students are asked to do activities of the Activity Book. The activities are formally oriented in which a change of the verbs form is required.

• Lesson Two

In this lesson, the CL perspective is intervened and a short discussion of the meaning of modal verbs is involved. Thus, a distinction between *root* and *epistemic* senses of modals has been identified. The researcher leads a discussion of the kind of

meaning involved within the determined lesson. Because of the students' level on one hand and the seemingly complex orientation of the CL approach, on the other hand, their native language, Arabic, is highly applied in the discussion. By the end of the lesson, the students are supposed to distinguish two types of meanings for each modal verb which are the root meaning and the epistemic one.

- Lesson Three

The next lesson which is the third one was also CL-based instruction in it the notion of force dynamics was presented to students. To simplify things, the researcher explains the perspective of CL which views modals in terms of physical forces and metaphorical extensions from the root sense to the epistemic one. In this regard, worksheets are given to each student in which simple diagrams are illustrated. The diagrams are similar to the ones which Tyler (2012: 111) adopts in translating the theory of CL into pedagogical materials in treating modal verbs. However, certain adaptation of the diagrams is done to satisfy the aims of the current study, the syllabus design of *English for Iraq* and the students' level.

However, the researcher, leading a teacher-fronted instruction, explains to the students the role of the external force in conceptualizing our understanding of the distinctive meanings of the modal verbs. To do so, some explanation is needed in order to interpret the diagrams which include the presentation of the specified modal verbs. Referring to the diagram which represents *must*, he describes *must* as having irresistible force derived from the external physical world. The idea gains support from examples of *English for Iraq* textbook as the following:

- *Everything is fresh and green outside.*
- *It must have rained in the night.*

In the first sentence, the data and premises force the speaker to the conclusion of the past in the second sentence. No choice is left to ignore the state of raining. The same thing is true for the other modal verbs using the worksheet as a basis for discussion

for each modal. For the purpose of engaging the students with the lesson, a variety of activities are used including the ones which are presented in *English for Iraq Activity Book*. For further revision of the figures and activities suggested for teaching modal verbs in *English for Iraq*.

2. If-Conditionals Lessons

In this part of the grammatical areas, *English for Iraq* presents if-conditional clauses in terms of the traditional approaches which focus on form rather than meaning. Following Fouconneir's Mental Space Theory, through his book *Mental Space: Aspects of Meaning Construction in Natural Language*, Dancygier and Sweetser's (2005) provide considerable point of view for material creation in classroom instruction. They view the conditional construction as a unique syntactic construction comprised of elements which make up the complete form. These elements contribute together to constitute the ultimate meaning of the conditional sentences. Accordingly, the verb tenses are the core of the meaning presentation between the if-clause and the main clause.

The main general view which cognitive linguists adhere is that the different types of *if-conditional* are used to represent the predictive function of language. Dancygier and Sweetser's indicate that English uses present tense, for example, to express future in the if-clause when the grammatical future is presented in the main clause. This phenomenon is called back shifting when one tense is in a process of backward to express a hypothetical temporal scenario. Traditionally, these are seen in terms of what is known as hypothetical and counterfactual sentences. In such an example as *If you got me a cup of coffee, I would be very grateful*, Dancygier and Sweetser (2005: 60) state that the if-clause refers to the present time in spite of the using of the past tense. In the same regard, the main clause includes *would* which is the past form of *will*. In the CL point of view, this using of the past tenses implies base space (speaker's background knowledge) that the listener (you) does not have chance to get a cup of coffee for the speaker. Dancygier and Sweetser (2005.) suggest that the uses of past

tenses reflect the lack of immediate control from the present. However, the main challenge for specialists and teachers of EFL is to make these cognitive linguistic insights applicable in the EFL instruction.

In order to make these insights meaningful to learners of *English for Iraq*, the following systematic procedures are adopted:

1. Highlighting the formal steps followed in teaching if-conditionals that learners had already been exposed to, that is the formal side of TEFL;
2. Simplifying all terms used in cognitive terminology to be more understandable by learners;
3. Emphasizing the CL point of view by means of classroom visual aids and power point presentation with the aid of the learners' native language;
4. Using the textbook activities as techniques for practicing the thoroughly emphasized cognitive insights.

Accordingly, three lessons are planned to cover the process of adding the CL insights for teaching if-conditionals as follows:

- Lesson one

During this lesson, the researcher revises the main types of if-conditionals. The student had already learned four types of if-conditionals which are traditionally called zero, first, second and third if-conditionals. Although they already know that if-conditional sentences involve two parts which are the if-clause and the main clause, the same direction has been emphasized in dealing with if-conditionals in *English for Iraq*. Thus, this first lesson followed the instructions suggested. Starting with Lesson Two of unit three, the lesson of instruction for teaching if conditional, the researcher explained to students the two parts of if-conditional (i.e., the if-clause and the main clause). Following an example of the textbook, the researcher divided the following sentence on the board according to its parts:

'if-clause' 'main clause'

If she is late, we will go without her.

The researcher asks the student about the type of if-conditional and they answered that it is first conditional sentence. Then, he refers to the function of the first conditional in language according to the Grammar and Function Reference found in the textbook. The students are informed that we use the first conditional when we talk about possible events in future. We use it when we want to make predictions about what will happen if something else happens.

Leading a discussion of this type, the researcher found that the students have difficulty in conceptualizing the function of the first conditionals. This is basically because of the syllabus design of *English for Iraq* which focuses on form rather than meaning in dealing with grammar. The researcher pays attention to certain factors which contribute to the difficulty of if-conditionals for students. The factors may include the syntactic and grammatical complexity and the variety of contexts in which such constructions can appear. Research in the field of CL reports that adding explicit instructions of the CL insights can be suitable methods. That is why the presentation of the following two lessons is an attempt to bridge the gap of difficulty that students encounter.

- Lesson Two

One of the techniques used to facilitate the CL insights to EFL learners is to simplify all terms used in cognitive terminology to be more understandable. In the context of the current study, specific terms represented a necessity to start with in teaching if-conditionals cognitively. Logically, the level of the students and the syllabus design of *English for Iraq* formed a difficulty for the researcher to deal with grammar in terms of CL insights. It is not so easy to give instructions, referring to the cognitive set up that native speakers adopt when they process the language, to non-natives who are pedagogically equipped with formal insights of English grammar. Accordingly, a form of power point presentation is introduced to students. The researcher designed the presentation slides on the basis of cognitive linguistic terms relevant to if – conditional mental set up. According to the

cognitive linguistic view, three domains are central in teaching if-conditionals which are mental spaces, tenses, and contexts.

Mental Space Theory provides a framework "for talking about cognitive structures and the connections between them". An "if-clause sets up a mental space which is the background of the construal of the then-clause". Following this CL point of view, the researcher explained to students that making any if-conditional sentence requires:

1. Thinking about the background knowledge of the situation;
2. Thinking about the possible time for if-clause;
3. Thinking about the possible time of the main clause;
4. Selecting the tenses;
5. Checking the appropriateness of the selection to the context.

(Adapted from Jacobsen, 2016: 11)

• Lesson Three

During this lesson, the researcher asked the students to submit their answers in order to be discussed. He explained that the if-conditional clauses trigger thinking of the main clause by following the steps distributed over the slides of the cognitive chart. He indicates that a unique syntactic form is created by the aid of these mental steps which reflect a structure of mental set up.

However, a note of worth is that the purpose of this lesson is to incorporate views of Mental Space Theory to the process of teaching and learning English if-conditionals. In this trend, students are led through the discussion towards a better understanding of a base space (background knowledge) of the context in the selected scenarios of the clauses. In addition, the discussion is extended to cover the time reflected by identifying the tenses used in the representation of the sentences. The meaning of tenses is highly emphasized in the discussion in order to engage student with the fundamental principle of CL which treats the learning of FL in terms of meaning rather than form. A key function of conditionals which is prediction about the future is emphasized, indicating it as a general human cognitive activity which helps us in making decisions, discussing cause and effect aspects, or projecting future actions.

The main idea behind such a discussion is to inform students that speakers of English have many choices to use conditionals and this would ultimately be related to the meaning they try to convey by the aid of specific types of tenses. Accordingly, the student in the experimental group received paper sheets which include further emphasis on the cognitive linguistic point of view.

3. Reported Speech Lessons

One of the main ideas that the researcher, as a teacher-fronted classroom, tries to convey to students is the conceptual point of view of Time. A simplified explanation can help in getting better understanding of the temporal distinctions reflected by grammatical tenses. The cognitive linguistic view looks at the origin of time as a physical phenomenon rooted in perceptual experience. The difference between the present and the past is something related to our experience as between the current experience and the remembered experience retained in memory. In the case of the indirect speech, everything said is said by an observer who experienced the saying of other person and retained it in the memory. However, this feature of back-shifting from present to past can also be operated in predictions using the modal verb *will*, for example. The verb is normally back-shifted into what is termed as the *Future - in - the Past*. For the following example:

Jack told me he would call her.

The form *would* is the past form of *will*, which is treated in the distinguished form by the effect of the distant time of the observed experience.

• Lesson One

EFL textbooks are equipped with activities which support traditional approaches in teaching reported speech. The same thing is true with *English for Iraq*. In the 2nd Intermediate Student's Book, Grammar and Function reference, the focus is only on the form. Thus, all the mentioned types are dealt with under the term Form, following specific rules such as the

changing of the verb tenses and the pronouns. The following example is supplemented in textbook:

Tariq: 'I know all about it'

Tariq said (that) he knew all about it

This treatment, without referring to the semantic motivation, is affected by the application of traditional approaches in EFL:

If the tense of the verb of reporting is non-past, then the tense of the original utterance is retained; if the tense of the verb of reporting is past, then the tense of the original utterance is backshifted into the past, except that if the content of the indirect speech has continuing applicability, the backshifting is optional. (Comrie 1986: 284)

English for Iraq retains the above orientation of dealing with direct and indirect speech. Thus, it presents the following grammatical rules:

Present simple ~ simple past

present continuous ~ past continuous

present perfect ~ past perfect

present perfect continuous ~ past perfect continuous

past simple ~ past perfect

past continuous ~ past perfect continuous

in addition, there is a chart presenting pronoun changes as follows:

I ~ he or she

me ~ him/her

we ~ they

us ~ them

you ~ I or we

All these rules are introduced and explained to students and are practiced throughout activities distributed over *English for Iraq* Activity book.

• Lesson Two

Because the current study is concerned with the cognitive linguistic approach, the researcher referred to certain examples in which traditional approaches can be seen insufficient in

achieving progress in the target grammatical element. During the instruction the students are presented to texts in which people naturally report in spoken English. The purpose is to show how the process is very different from what traditional grammar has presented about reporting speech and tense.

Although EFL students produce the clause in reported speech in an adequate grammar following the rules in their textbooks, the researcher indicates that their performance is not natural. He argues that in certain cases native speakers of English produce the same tense in the direct speech to be retained in the indirect speech. It is not the verb form as such which determines the reporting clause, but rather the reporter cognitive process reflected in his recalling event of past experience. The researcher explains to the students that when we recall a previous discourse from our memory we trigger a distance of time in our knowledge and thus we employ back shifted tenses in the reported (indirect) speech.

• Lesson Three

It is a CL fact that grammar is conceptualization. Thus, rules of grammar have to be understood according to this principle. However, teaching the rules of grammar by the researcher in a step by a step according to the traditional methods is also necessary. Students are already familiar with the way in which tenses and pronouns are changed between direct and indirect speech.

Following the cognitive linguistic view, a specific activity is adopted and adapted. The students are asked to tell the story in the indirect speech. All that happens is that the students mostly forget about the monotonous rules of grammar and they give work to their mind as they are the active participants. Mostly, they succeeds in converting the direct speech into indirect one.

3.3 The Tests

According to Brown (2001: 3) testing, as a method, measures a language learner's ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain. Following the determined grammatical materials of instruction, two test types are conducted. Those are pre-test and post-test. Because of the restriction of the study aims, they are different from each other in both design and content.

3.3.1 The Pre-Test

The pre-test is a proficiency test which is given at the beginning of the course to ensure the equality of the students' level in terms of grammar in *English for Iraq*. The test is designed in the form of multiple-choice items. In fact, all items are ready-made ones distributed over activities in the Activity Book of the previous school year, namely the fourth Intermediate stage, which the students have already passed. In other words, all items of the test are taken from materials of the fourth Intermediate class.

3.3.2 The Post Test

The post-test represents the cornerstone of the current study by which the researcher could:

1. Determine the impact of the cognitive linguistics approaches on the students' achievement of grammar.
2. Measure the significant difference between the control group and the experimental one in achieving the specified grammatical elements throughout their scores in the test.

At the end of the first course of the academic year 2018-2019, the researcher conducts the post-test to evaluate any possible development in the students' performance of the two groups after the specified period of lessons of instruction. For specific purposes such as the ones that are referred to below, the researcher administered a pilot study. By doing the pilot study, certain advantages are gained as follows:

1. Controlling the time required to finish the test by the examinees.
2. Testifying the test instructions.
3. Analyzing items difficulty.
4. Enhancing the test reliability.

The pilot administration of the test is given to a number of 30 students other than the sample of the study. The researcher found out that the lessons of instruction are clear and the time required is between 40 to 50 minutes. In fact, the time distinguished is in harmony with the academic time of the lesson in the Iraqi schools. In order to enhance the test reliability, the researcher also analyzed the test in terms of the item difficulty. Each item is given one mark to constitute a totality of twenty five marks for the test. Table (1) shows how difficult or easy an item is.

Table (1): Difficulty Level of the Post-Test Items

Number of Question	Number of Items	Degree of Difficulty in percentage
1	1	33
	2	39
	3	39
	4	24
	5	26
2	6	33
	7	28
	8	26
	9	33
	10	38
3	11	28
	12	33
	13	28
	14	41
	15	26

4	16	33
	17	44
	18	35
	19	39
	20	42
5	21	33
	22	44
	23	45
	24	39
	25	40

Statistically, an item is regarded as difficult one when the difficulty index value is less than 20% and it is easy when the index value is greater than 80%. According to the theory of item analysis, an item is assessed as follows:

1. It is poor to be revised if the value index is between 0.0 - 0.19;
2. It is acceptable if the value index is between 0.2 - 0.29;
3. It is good if the value index is between 0.3 - 0.39;
4. It is excellent if the value index is > 0.4 .

The results obtained after the application of the formula of the item DP range between 0.30 and 0.50. All items proved to have satisfactory DP and of acceptable level of difficulty.

The conclusion remarks above reveal a fine-grained test in terms of its validity and reliability. That is why, a final copy of the test is agreed upon to have the access of being the post-test version. What is worth mentioning is that the post - test is designed depending on the following facts:

1. The objectives of the syllabus design of *English for Iraq* and;
2. The aims of the current study which emphasize incorporating the CL insights into TEFL.

These two facts have their impact on the content type of the post-test. However, the final copy of the post-test consists of five questions with each having five items to gain response by

the students. The following table shows how these questions are purposefully distributed:

Table (2): Distribution of the Post-Test Content

No.	Aspect of Grammar	Item No.	Objective of the item
1	Modal verbs	A-1	Cognitive orientation
		A-2	Cognitive orientation
		A-3	Cognitive orientation
		B-1	Formal Orientation
		B-2	Formal orientation
2	If-conditionals	1	Cognitive orientation
		2	Cognitive orientation
		3	Cognitive orientation
		4	Formal orientation
		5	Cognitive orientation
3	Reported speech	A-1	Cognitive orientation
		A-2	Cognitive orientation
		A-3	Cognitive orientation
		B-1	Formal orientation
		B-2	Formal orientation
4	Passive voice	A-1	Cognitive orientation
		A-2	Cognitive orientation
		A-3	Cognitive orientation
		B-1	formal orientation
		B-2	formal orientation
5	General	1	Cognitive orientation
		2	Cognitive orientation
		3	Cognitive orientation
		4	Cognitive orientation
		5	Cognitive orientation

By the end of the first course and during the last month of it, the test papers are distributed to the involved students. All the students are to finish their answers within the determined period of time at the same day. Later on, the test papers are collected to

be scored. After scoring the test, the Microsoft Excel for the two independent groups is used to count the students' scores of the test.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

Specific steps are taken into consideration when analyzing the data. Relying on the data collected, this part describes what results are gained. In turn, it discusses how these results help in reaching the findings of the current study.

4.1 The Post-Test

Following the results gained by students of the experimental and control groups, the mean scores of the two groups on the post-test are compared according to the following table.

Table (3) Group Statistics of Grammar Achievement

Students	No.	Mean	SD	SD. Error Mean
Ex.	30	33.700	8.51	1.55
Co.	30	25.76	9.24	1.68

The mean of the experimental group is higher than the one of the control group. This shows positive achievement of the test on the part of students of the treatment group. However, the following table reveals more confidence of the significance level between the two groups:

Table (4): The Independent Samples T-Test

Leven's Test for Equality of Variance		t-test for Equality of Means						
F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
.404	.528	3.456	58	.001	7.93333	2.29534	3.33871	12.52795
		3.456	57.614	.001	7.93333	2.29534	3.33806	12.52861

In the table (4) above, it can be seen that $t(58) = 3.456$ $P < 0.001$. Following the purpose of the current study triggered by the

hypothesis of 1-tailed significance, the P value is statistically have to be reduced to half (Hinton et al, 2004: 113). Thus, P value = $0.001/2 = 0.0005$ leads to significant result at the significance level.

This means that the experimental group is better than the control one in their grammar achievement. In this case, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significance of the cognitive linguistic approach which can assist FL learners to acquire grammar in an effective manner and achieve long term retention in memory is rejected. Accordingly, the following figure shows how students of the control group have appeared to get passive percentage in contrast to the positive percentage of students of the treatment group regarding the achievement of the grammatical elements in question.

5. Conclusions

As answers to the three questions raised by current study to highlight the achievement of aims of the study and to testify its hypothesis, a number of conclusions arrived at through the theoretical and practical procedures of the study. These conclusions are shown below:

1. The results of analysis clearly indicate that *English for Iraq* textbooks are poor in respect to the adequate employment of the activities of grammar to enhance communication.
2. The statistical analysis of the post-test reveals a significant difference between the control group and the experimental one in terms of the students' scores. The difference is that students of the experimental group obtained higher marks than those of the control group. A close examination of such significance gives a positive attitude towards the role that the cognitive linguistic approach can achieve when teaching grammar.
3. One of the essential principles that the syllabus designers of *English for Iraq* claim is the achievement of the communicative approach. On the contrary, the investigation of the overall design of the selected textbooks leads to the

conclusion that the designers do not really put those methods of treating grammar as they claim into consideration.

4. According to the current study findings, teaching grammar in *English for Iraq* requires paying attention to principles of CL which are advocated as results of research in the field of EFL, including the current study. Such a requirement creates powerful learning opportunities. The current study provides a form of instructional procedure derived from cognitive linguistic approaches which could be beneficial in this concern.

6. Recommendations

In the light of the conclusions arrived at in the current study, the researcher has recommended the following, for learners, teachers and textbooks designers:

1. EFL textbooks should employ a variety of activities to expose the learners to situations of contextual learning when learning the EFL grammar.
2. EFL textbooks should present authentic material in practicing grammar.
3. Iraqi schools should be equipped with appropriate English laboratories for the purpose of good learning of grammar.
4. Teachers of English in Iraq understand the basic requirements for learning grammar. They have to gain knowledge of the recent research in EFL in general and in English grammar in particular.
5. Departments of English in Iraqi Universities, especially colleges of education should take over the task of developing teacher-graduates' knowledge of the abovementioned issues related to grammar.
6. The syllabus of English at the departments concerned should contain subjects of the application of CL in ELT. Similarly, the Ministry of Education in Iraq is required to hold certain training courses with the goals of increasing EFL teachers' familiarity with recent methods of teaching grammar including the cognitive approach.

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