

Investigating the Cognitive Application of Noun Phrases Usage by the Iraqi EFL Students at the Formal Operation Age Stage

Prof . Dr Hatem Jassim Khudhair

Prof . Dr Mahmoud Arif Edan

Iraqiya University / College Of Arts / English Department

ABSTRACT:

One of the many problems that learners face in treating English grammar is the usage of nouns especially noun phrases in descriptive writing. The objectives of this study are to investigate learners' abilities to use noun phrases in descriptive writing, to identify the types of errors they make to examine the frequency of errors for each type, and to test the age factor of full mental abilities concerning their efficiency at using noun phrases. The population of this study was the fourth-year students of Al-Iraqia University, College of Arts in the academic year 2022-2023. The total population was 150 students. From the total population, forty students were chosen randomly as the samples. The research adopted a descriptive-analytical method followed by a quantitative analysis. The instrument which the researchers used is a written test and the students were free to choose any topic they want. The Students' errors were identified and calculated to discover the dominant errors. The students' errors were divided into three categories. They were as follows: head errors at 20.6%, premodifier errors at 14.7%, and postmodifier errors at 20.5%. It is concluded that several students have incorrect answers with percent (%55.8). Thus, the majority of them are unable to use the noun phrases correctly in the written texts despite their mental maturity when the issue is compared to the age factor. In addition, the study provides some recommendations to remedy the problems and improve the process of teaching and learning in Iraq. These recommendations focus on paying attention to the use of the head and the post mistakes modifier through the practice of a lot of words and structures to decrease the mistakes that may occur in texts.

دراسة التطبيق المعرفي لاستخدام العبارات الاسمية من قبل طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية العراقيين في المرحلة العمرية الرسمية

أ.م.د. حاتم جاسم خضير

أ.م.د. محمود عارف عيدان

الجامعة العراقية / كلية الآداب / قسم اللغة الانجليزية

الملخص:

واحدة من المشاكل العديدة التي يواجهها المتعلمون في التعامل مع قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية هي استخدام الأسماء وخاصة الجمل الاسمية في الكتابات الوصفية. أهداف هذه الدراسة هي التحقيق في قدرات المتعلمين على استخدام العبارات الاسمية في الكتابة الوصفية ، وتحديد أنواع الأخطاء التي يرتكبونها ، وفحص تكرار الأخطاء لكل نوع ، واختبار عامل العمر للقدرات العقلية الكاملة في فيما يتعلق بكفاءتها في استخدام العبارات الاسمية. كان مجتمع هذه الدراسة من طلاب السنة الرابعة في الجامعة العراقية ، كلية الآداب في العام الدراسي ٢٠٢٢-٢٠٢٣ ، وبلغ عدد السكان ١٥٠ طالباً. من إجمالي عدد السكان تم اختيار أربعين طالباً بشكل عشوائي كعينات. اعتمد البحث المنهج الوصفي التحليلي المتبع في التحليل الكمي. الأداة التي استخدمها البحث هي اختبار كتابي وكان للطلاب الحرية في اختيار أي موضوع يريدونه. تم تحديد أخطاء الطلاب وحسابها لاكتشاف الأخطاء السائدة. تم تقسيم أخطاء الطلاب إلى ثلاث فئات. وكانت على النحو التالي: أخطاء الرأس ٢٠.٦٪ وأخطاء الجهاز الأولي ١٤.٧٪ وأخطاء المعدلات اللاحقة ٢٠.٥٪. وخلص إلى أن عدد الطلاب الذين لديهم إجابات غير صحيحة بنسبة مئوية (٥٥.٨٪). وبالتالي ، فإن غالبيتهم غير قادرين على استخدام العبارات الاسمية بشكل صحيح في النصوص المكتوبة على الرغم من نضجهم العقلي عند مقارنة المسألة بعامل العمر. إضافة إلى ذلك ، تقدم الدراسة بعض التوصيات لمعالجة المشاكل وتحسين عملية التعليم والتعلم في العراق. تركز هذه التوصيات على الانتباه إلى استخدام الرأس ويستغرق المنشور المعدل من خلال ممارسة الكثير من الكلمات والتراكيب لتقليل الأخطاء التي قد تحدث في النصوص.

Chapter One

1.0 Introduction

There are many different kinds of errors and mistakes occur when EFL learners attempt to learn a second language or a foreign language because they are unable to control the structure accurately. This is because the operations involved in learning a second language differ from those involved in learning a primary language. One of the problems that EFL learners have is dealing with grammar when using nouns, especially noun phrases, in written text. This is because they are unable to recognize the correct form and the interference of their native language, which can be described as the negative and positive transfer between the first and the second language. Another element that influences how well pupils can use noun phrases in written language is

Piaget's Four Stages of Cognitive Development

One hypothesis, among many others, that relies heavily on human cognition to help us understand the world around us is that of Jean Piaget. The current work is concerned with addressing this notion concerning language in the area of language learning because language is one of the human mental processes.

According to Piaget's theory on cognitive development, all healthy children go through four distinct mental phases of learning. The theory focuses on understanding the nature of children's intellect as well as how effectively children learn knowledge. The stages identified by Piaget are as follows:

Sensorimotor stage: This begins from birth to 2 years

Preoperational stage: This begins from ages 2 to 7

Concrete operational stage: This begins from ages 7 to 11

Formal operational stage: This begins from ages 12 and up

Everyday interactions with the world expose children to new information, which they add to their existing knowledge and even change to create new information.

Children are expected to understand the majority of cognitive processes, including language, by the time they reach the stage of formal operation, which, as was previously indicated, starts at age 12 and up. If the theory of Piaget is extrapolated to the language comprehension domain when the difficulty is related to the employment of noun phrases, then children are more likely to be effective at this level. The effectiveness of employing noun phrases in the target language is thus covered by one of the study's questions.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Being lecturers for many years, the researchers have noticed that the majority of EFL students at Al-Iraqia University face some problems with using nouns, particularly noun phrases in descriptive texts. Those students often write "All both friends" instead of "Both friends" or write "Four my brothers" instead of "My four brothers". The examples above indicate that most Iraqi students often find problems with using determiners in noun phrases. Most of the errors that the Iraqi student makes result from poor mastery of the language skills. Thus, producing noun phrases is not easy enough for students of universities to handle. Hence, the researchers intend to investigate the students' ability to use noun phrases in the description text so as to suggest solution to improve EFL learners' achievement in written text.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- 1- To investigate EFL learners' ability to use noun phrases in descriptive writing.
- 2- To identify the types of errors of noun phrases in descriptive writing.
- 3- To show which types of errors of noun phrases are less frequent in descriptive writing.
- 4- To show which types of errors of noun phrases are more frequently used in descriptive writing.
- 5- To show the effect of the age factor on the noun phrases performance by EFL students.

1.3 Question of the Study

- 1- To what extent are Iraqi EFL learners able to use noun phrases in descriptive writing?
- 2- What are the types of errors of noun phrases in descriptive writing made by Iraqi EFL learners?
- 3- Which type of error of noun phrase is less frequently used in descriptive writing?
- 4- Which type of error of noun phrase is more frequently used in descriptive writing?
- 5- What is the effect of the age factor on the noun phrases performance by EFL students.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study will help the researchers to understand the types of errors in noun phrases analysis and the causes of their errors. Therefore, the findings of this study will be expected to be useful for other researchers in this field. Furthermore, this study will help English teachers to analyze students' errors and identify factors that may influence the second language learning process. Finally, This study can be used as a reference for students to investigate abilities and improve what needs to be mastered.

1.5 Limits of the study

This study is limited to the investigation of noun phrases in descriptive writing, The sample is limited to fourth-year university students at the Department of English, College of Arts, Iraqiya University (2022-2023).

1.6 Methodology of the Study

The researcher will adopt the analytical descriptive method to conduct this study. The sample consists of 40 university students from the Fourth stage using the sample randomly technique in which the researchers will randomly choose the students from the department of English College of Arts, Iraqiya University (2022-2023).

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

Corder (1976:73), the significance of learner's errors, it is surprising to learn how briefly the authors address the subject of learner's errors and their repair in the major works on the teaching of modern language. They appear to have been disregarded as unimportant but necessary byproducts of the

learning process, language that the instructor should make as most of as possible. It is undeniably true that the study of language learning has benefited from the application of linguistic and psychological theory. This has given the discussion of errors a fresh perspective on how errors are caused by interference from the first language's habits during the learning of a second language. The primary contribution of linguists to language education was thought to be an exhaustive comparative analysis of the systems of the learner's mother tongue and second language. The benefit of this inventory would be to highlight the areas of difficulty for the student so that the teacher may focus extra attention on overcoming those challenges in his instruction. They saw, for instance, that many of the errors they were familiar with were not anticipated by the linguist in any case. The teacher has been worried about how to handle these problem areas.

According to Chomsky (1966:36), there have been two schools of thinking about learner errors in the methodology field. First, the school contends that if we could perfect our methods of instruction, errors would never occur in the first place. As a result, errors are just a sign of how inadequate our methods of instruction are at the moment. The second school's guiding principle is that mistakes will always happen despite our best efforts since we live in an imperfect environment. Both of these points of view, which are psychologically behaviorist and linguistically taxonomic, are compatible with the same theoretical position about language and language teaching. The audiolingual or essential skills method is the name of their approach to language instruction. Chomsky (1965) said that it will be easy to identify errors and blunders, and that "we thus make a fundamental distinction between competence and performance." To put it another way, mistakes are seen as signs of insufficient learning and that the speaker or hearer has not yet gathered sufficient language knowledge to enable them to avoid linguistic misuse. However, performance, which is the actual use of language, does not represent the language knowledge that the speaker hears.

It is significant enough to suggest that the competence of the speaker is assessed by employing errors that relate to the amount of linguistic data they have been exposed to.

2.1 Concept of Error Analysis:

According to Richard et al. (2002), a mistake in linguistics is the usage of a word, speech act, or grammatical item in a way that appears faulty and indicates a knowledge gap. When a student repeatedly gets something wrong despite not having learned it, it is regarded as Noorish(1983;7) as a systemic deviation. However, attempts to contextualize errors have always been performed in conjunction with either the second language acquisition process or the process of learning a new language. Errors, according to Hendrickson (1987:357), are evidence that learning is actually occurring and that the learner has not yet developed or displayed a well-structured in the target language. According to Corder (1976), errors represent three things: first, to the teacher, in that the learner tells them how far towards that goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for them to learn; second, they give the learner evidence of how language is learned or acquired, and what strategies or procedures that learner is employing in their discovery of the language; and third, they are essential. Error analysis is closely related to the study of error treatment in language teaching. Today, the study of errors is relevant to focus on form teaching methodology. In second language acquisition, error analysis studies the types and causes of language errors. Error are classified according to:

- 1- Modality, (i.e., level of proficiency in speaking, writing, reading, listening).
- 2- Linguistic level (i.e., pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, style).
- 3- Form (i.e., omission, insertion, substitution).

- 4- Type (systematic errors, errors in competence vs. occasional errors in performance).
- 5- Cause (i.e., interference, interlanguage).
- 6- Norm vs. System.

2.3 Types of Errors

Errors have been classified by Richard et al (2002:26) into four categories:

- 1- Developmental mistakes: This form of mistake is connected in some way to overgeneralization. This indicates that the student has begun acquiring linguistic knowledge and has failed to apply the most recent target language learning norms.
- 2- Misleading teaching examples that attempt to explain a rule without highlighting the exceptions or the intended message can lead to induced errors. When teaching prepositions, Richard et al. (2002) gave an example where the teacher might hold up a box and say, "I'm looking at the books," the students might understand that at means under, so they might later say, "The cat is at the table," rather than, "The cat is under the table."
- 3- Errors of avoidance; these errors occur: When the learner fails to apply certain target language rules just because they are thought of to be too difficult.
- 4- Errors of overproduction: In the early stages of language learning, learners are supposed have not acquired and accumulated satisfied linguistic knowledge which can enable them to use the finite rules of the target language to produce infinite structures.

2.4 Concept of the Noun phrase

- According to Chomsky (1995:73), a noun phrase, also known as a nominal phrase, is any phrase that includes a noun or pronoun as its head or that has the same grammatical purpose as a noun. Noun phrases are among the most frequent types of phrases and are quite prevalent across linguistic boundaries. Noun phrases frequently serve as a verb, subject, and object, as well as a predicative expression and a preposition's partner. The shorter noun phrase "His constituents" is contained within the longer noun phrase "some of his constituents," for example. Determiner-containing noun phrases are examined as having the determiner as the phrase's head in certain more contemporary theories of grammar. The list below includes some instances of noun phrases.
- This election year's politics are annoying for many people.
- Every sentence contains at least one noun phrase.
- Current economic weakness may be a result of high energy prices.

Noun phrases can be identified by the possibility of pronoun substitution, as illustrated in the examples below:

- a. The sentence contains two noun phrases.
- b. It contains them.
- c. The subject noun phrase that is present in this sentence is long.
- d. It is long.
- e. Noun phrases can be embedded in other noun phrases.
- f. They can be embedded in them.

- According to Hudson (1990: 57), a phrase is typically thought to have two or more words. One word (each functioning as a noun or pronoun) would not be referred to as a phrase under the typical progression in the size of syntactic units of word, phrase, and clause. Many contemporary

schools of syntax, particularly those that have been influenced by the X-bar theory, do not, however. Here, a quest for theory-internal consistency led to numerous single words being classified as phrases. A phrase is defined as a word or group of words that appear in a predetermined syntactic place, such as in the subject

- He saw someone
- Milk is good.
- They spoke about Corruption.

The underlined words are called phrases since they appear in the syntactic positions where multiple-word phrases can appear. This practice takes the constellation to be primitive rather than the words themselves. The word he, for instance, functions as a pronoun, but Within the sentence, it also functions as a noun phrase. The phrase structure grammar Of the Chomskian tradition (government and binding theory and the minimalist program) are primary examples of theories that apply this understanding of phrases. Other grammars such as dependency grammars are likely to reject this approach to phrases since they take the words themselves to be primitive.

2.5 Elements of the noun phrase

Matthews (1981:42) shows that a typical noun phrase consists of a noun (the head of the phrase) together with zero or more dependents of various types (these dependents are called adnominal). The chief types of these dependents are:

- Determiners, such as the this, my, some.
- Attributive adjectives, such as large, beautiful, and sweeter.

- Adjective phrases and participle phrases, such as extremely, large, hard as nails, mack of wood, sitting on the step.
- Noun adjuncts, such as “college” in the noun phrase “a College student”.
- Prepositional phrases, such as “In the drawing room, of his friend”.
- Nominal adverbs and adverbials, such as (over) there in the noun phrase the man (over) there.
- Relative clause, such as which we noticed.
- Other clauses serve as complements to the noun, Such as that God exists In the Noun phrase the belief that God exists.
- Infinitive phrases, such as to sing well and To beat in the noun phrases a desire to Sing well and the man to beat

The structure of noun phrase:

Radford (1988: 229) shows that the structure of NPs is very diverse but the chief elements are there:

a. The head of an NP may be:

(I) a noun (the book), (dear Ali), etc.

(II) a pronoun: (he), (himself), (everyone), etc.

(III) an adjective (the fallacious), (the absurd), etc.

(IV) An enumerator (all fourteen), etc.

(V) a genitive phrase (Ali's).

b. premodifier of an NP may be:

- (I) Determiners: (this evening), (What a boy), etc.
- (II) Enumerators: (two books), (the second boy)
- (III) Adjectives: (blue bike), (longer tube), etc.
- (IV) Nouns (a school fence), (a gold pen), etc.
- (V) Genitive phrases; (Ali's bike), (someone else's errors), etc.
- (VI) Adverbs: quiet speech), etc.

The postmodifier of an NP may be:

- (I) prepositional phrases: (the best month of my life)
- (II) Relative Clauses: (a quality which I like)

Chapter Three

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter is assigned for the discussion of the procedures followed to conduct this study. The description of study population and sampling used for data collection are first described, followed by the tools for data collection. A complete description of the other procedures and data analysis process will also be given.

3.1 Population and Sampling of the Study

The researcher used a mixed method to investigate EFL learners' ability to use noun phrases in their descriptive text. The sample was took 25% randomly from several the population so that there were (40) students that were as a sample of the study. All the students were studying in the

fourth-grade classes, they ranged in age (from from 21-23). All of them are Arab speakers who speak Arabic as their first language and study English as a foreign language. They were full-time students enrolled in undergraduate courses at the Department of English College of Arts, Al-Iraqia University in Baghdad. The researchers chose them to be the population of the study because they have already learned the noun phrase usage, and have been taught descriptive text. Based on this consideration, the researchers concluded that they have basic knowledge of noun phrase usage.

3.2 Tools for Data Collection

The main aim of this study is to investigate EFL learners' ability to use noun phrases in descriptive texts. The first step is that the researchers collected the data to allow the study goals to be achieved by quality and quantitative means. Then, the instrument of this study was a writing test. The researchers used 40 pieces of student's paper consisting of outlines to write the description text to treat the same theme of the students writing in April 2023. The students were asked to write a descriptive text of around 120 words. They were given 70 minutes to finish it and they were free to choose any topic they want. The descriptive texts are used as the source of the data. Finally, the answer sheets were submitted to the researchers. This test enabled the researchers to identify and classify the types of noun phrases.

3.3 Validity and Reliability

The writing test was checked by three staff members at the Department of English, College of Arts. All modification and suggestions agreed by the specialist had been taken into consideration. Finally, the staff members judge the test to be valid. To check the reliability of the test, pilot sample of (10) students chosen randomly from College of Arts Iraqia University. The pilot study was carried out during the first week of April 2023. The results of the pilot test showed that the test was applicable and the

time (70) minutes was quite enough for the students to provide answer to the main writing test.

A week later, it was administered again to a group of 40 university students in College of Arts, University of Al-Iraqiya. The spearman formula was used to make co-efficient of reliability for the test. The reliability obtained was (0.82). This means that the test is perfectly reliable.

3.4 Data Analysis

This study deals with the purpose of knowing the noun phrase problems faced by the students in descriptive texts. In analyzing the students written texts, the researchers started with reading all of the texts. Some discussion will be carried out to show why some noun phrases are widely used and some of them are not. There the researchers will focus on the frequencies of students using of the types of noun phrase in their descriptive texts. Pearson correlation formula was used to compute the correlation coefficient. With respect to the number of noun phrases were counted in the form of percentage. In this case, all types of noun phrase were identified and classified and then got percentage to each classification. After completing the percentage of each error, the researchers then find out which type of errors of noun phrase is more frequently used and which one is less frequently used. Furthermore, the researchers traced the causes and sources of the erros.

Chapter Four

Result and Discussion

4.0 Introduction

The results were analyzed based on the questions of the study. These were head errors, pre modifier errors and post modifier errors. Head errors are errors which related to wrong placement of head of noun phrases and

Wrong form of noun. Pre modifier errors are related to determiner, enumerator and adjective errors. Post modifier errors are related to prepositional phrase and relative clause errors. The results can be divided into two sections:

4.1 Results of the test:

checking the results of the test, it is clear that the students' knowledge of noun phrase and its categories is very poor and that they face certain problems in using them. Tables will be used for summarizing the data collected from the descriptive texts.

Table (1): Frequency of Head, Pre modifier and Post modifier

No	Head	%	Pre modifier	%	post modifier	%
	Frequency		Frequency		Frequency	
1	13	1.3%	7	0.7%	7	0.7%
2	11	1.1%	3	0.3%	8	0.8%
3	12	1.2%	5	0.5%	11	1.1%
4	12	1.2%	6	0.6%	12	1.2%
5	10	1.0%	3	0.3%	6	0.6%
6	11	1.1%	8	0.8%	7	0.7%
7	12	1.2%	5	0.5%	7	0.7%
8	6	0.6%	5	0.5%	8	0.8%
9	6	0.6%	6	0.6%	9	0.9%
10	7	0.7%	7	0.7%	6	0.6%
11	8	0.8%	6	0.6%	8	0.8%
12	9	0.9%	7	0.7%	9	0.9%
13	11	1.1%	8	0.8%	6	0.6%
14	12	1.2%	9	0.9%	6	0.6%
15	6	0.6%	3	0.3%	7	0.7%
16	6	0.6%	5	0.5%	9	0.9%
17	7	0.7%	6	0.6%	11	1.1%
18	11	1.1%	8	0.8%	11	1.1%
19	10	1.0%	8	0.8%	10	1.0%
20	10	1.0%	6	0.6%	10	1.0%

21	9	0.9%	7	0.7%	9	0.9%
22	8	0.8%	7	0.7%	8	0.8%
23	6	0.6%	4	0.4%	8	0.8%
24	8	0.8%	5	0.5%	8	0.8%
25	11	1.1%	6	0.6%	13	1.3%
26	12	1.2%	7	0.7%	11	1.1%
27	13	1.3%	8	0.8%	12	1.2%
28	8	0.8%	10	1.0%	13	1.3%
29	9	0.9%	11	1.1%	9	0.9%
30	9	0.9%	3	0.3%	7	0.7%
31	6	0.6%	4	0.4%	7	0.7%
32	10	1.0%	6	0.6%	7	0.7%
33	11	1.1%	7	0.7%	9	0.9%
34	12	1.2%	8	0.8%	11	1.1%
35	12	1.2%	8	0.8%	12	1.2%
36	13	1.3%	6	0.6%	13	1.3%
37	9	0.9%	5	0.5%	13	1.3%
38	7	0.7%	6	0.6%	11	1.1%
39	8	0.8%	6	0.6%	12	1.2%
40	9	0.9%	6	0.6%	7	0.7%
	380	38%	257	25.7%	363	36.3%

From the table (1), it showed the Frequency of head, pre modifier and post modifier. Then, the table below showed the number of students who used head pre modifier and post modifier correctly and incorrectly in students description texts.

Table (2) frequency and percentage of using the head Correctly and incorrectly

No	Frequency	Head	%	Head	%
		Correct		Incorrect	
1	13	6	0.6%	7	0.7%
2	11	4	0.4%	7	0.7%
3	12	6	0.6%	6	0.6%

4	12	8	0.8%	4	0.4%
5	10	4	0.4%	6	0.6%
6	11	5	0.5%	6	0.6%
7	12	6	0.6%	6	0.6%
8	6	3	0.3%	3	0.3%
9	6	3	0.3%	3	0.3%
10	7	4	0.4%	5	0.5%
11	8	3	0.3%	5	0.5%
12	9	5	0.5%	4	0.4%
13	11	5	0.5%	6	0.6%
14	12	5	0.5%	7	0.7%
15	6	3	0.3%	3	0.3%
16	6	4	0.4%	2	0.2%
17	7	4	0.4%	3	0.3%
18	11	5	0.5%	6	0.6%
19	10	4	0.4%	6	0.6%
20	10	4	0.4%	6	0.6%
21	9	3	0.3%	6	0.6%
22	8	4	0.4%	4	0.4%
23	6	3	0.3%	3	0.3%
24	8	4	0.4%	4	0.4%
25	11	4	0.4%	7	0.7%
26	12	5	0.5%	6	0.6%
27	13	5	0.5%	7	0.7%
28	8	3	0.3%	5	0.5%
29	9	4	0.4%	5	0.5%
30	9	4	0.4%	5	0.5%
31	6	3	0.3%	3	0.3%
32	10	4	0.4%	6	0.6%
33	11	5	0.5%	6	0.6%
34	12	6	0.6%	6	0.6%
35	12	5	0.5%	6	0.6%
36	13	5	0.5%	7	0.7%
37	9	4	0.4%	5	0.5%
38	7	3	0.3%	4	0.4%

39	8	4	0.4%	4	0.4%
40	9	5	0.5%	4	0.4%
	380	174	17.4%	206	20.6%

from the table (2), then there were 206. errors (20.6%) incorrect use of the head of noun phrase in students descriptive writing. After calculating the total number of errors, the researchers also classified the types of errors of the head in terms of placement of noun and wrong form of noun.

Table (3): Types of errors, with regard to placement of noun and wrong form of noun.

No	Placement of noun		Wrong form of noun	
	Frequency of errors	%	Frequency of errors	%
1	3	0.3%	2	0.2%
2	2	0.2%	2	0.2%
3	5	0.5%	1	0.1%
4	3	0.3%	2	0.2%
5	4	0.4%	2	0.2%
6	3	0.3%	2	0.2%
7	4	0.4%	2	0.2%
8	2	0.2%	2	0.2%
9	4	0.4%	4	0.4%
10	4	0.4%	4	0.4%
11	6	0.6%	1	0.1%
12	2	0.2%	2	0.2%
13	4	0.4%	2	0.2%
14	3	0.3%	2	0.2%
15	6	0.6%	3	0.3%
16	2	0.2%	2	0.2%
17	4	0.4%	2	0.2%
18	2	0.2%	2	0.2%
19	2	0.2%	3	0.3%
20	1	0.1%	3	0.3%
21	3	0.3%	1	0.1%

22	5	0.5%	2	0.2%
23	3	0.3%	3	0.3%
24	2	0.2%	4	0.4%
25	2	0.2%	2	0.2%
26	1	0.1%	2	0.2%
27	3	0.3%	1	0.1%
28	4	0.4%	2	0.2%
29	2	0.2%	2	0.2%
30	3	0.3%	2	0.2%
31	1	0.1%	2	0.2%
32	2	0.2%	2	0.2%
33	5	0.5%	5	0.5%
34	3	0.3%	3	0.3%
35	5	0.5%	3	0.3%
36	3	0.3%	4	0.4%
37	2	0.2%	3	0.3%
38	3	0.3%	3	0.3%
39	3	0.3%	3	0.3%
40	2	0.2%	2	0.2%
	114	11.4 %	92	9.2 %

from the table (3), there were two types of head errors made by the students: wrong placement of noun and wrong form of noun. According to table (3), the researchers showed that the biggest proportion of errors was placement of noun with 114 (11.4%) errors. Meanwhile, the category of wrong form of noun reached 92 (9.2%) errors. In this case, the frequency of the two types of head errors committed by the student showed 206 errors in total.

For example:

- (1) Last Friday, I bought a belt rubber (test item number 4).
- (2) I have a bike beautiful. (test item number 5).

(3) All of my book is lost. (test item number 10).

In sentence (1), the noun phrase consisted of two words so that noun should be written after the modifier. In sentence (2), noun should be written in the last. This type of error is related to wrong place of nouns. In sentence (3), student should use plural form instead of singular.

(4) There are clever woman in the party.

(5) They go to Baghdad by two bus.

In sentence (4), the student should use plural form instead of singular. While in sentence (5), the student should use the right form of plural. This type of error is related to wrong form of noun.

Table 4: The Frequency of using pre modifier correctly or incorrectly.

The researcher divided pre modifier into three groups of errors: determiner errors, enumerator errors and adjective errors. The table below showed the number of students who used pre modifier correctly or incorrectly in descriptive texts.

Table 4: The Frequency of using pre modifier Correctly or incorrectly

Pre modifier					
	Frequency	Correct	%	Incorrect	%
1	7	3	0.3%	3	0.3%
2	3	2	0.2%	1	0.1%
3	5	2	0.2%	3	0.3%
4	6	2	0.2%	4	0.4%
5	3	1	0.1%	2	0.2%
6	8	5	0.5%	3	0.3%
7	5	2	0.2%	3	0.3%

8	5	3	0.3%	2	0.2%
9	6	2	0.2%	4	0.4%
10	7	3	0.3%	4	0.4%
11	6	2	0.2%	4	0.4%
12	4	1	0.1%	3	0.3%
13	8	3	0.3%	5	0.5%
14	9	2	0.2%	7	0.7%
15	3	2	0.2%	1	0.1%
16	5	3	0.3%	2	0.2%
17	6	2	0.2%	4	0.4%
18	8	5	0.5%	3	0.3%
19	8	4	0.4%	4	0.4%
20	6	2	0.2%	4	0.4%
21	7	4	0.4%	3	0.3%
22	7	4	0.4%	3	0.3%
23	4	2	0.2%	2	0.2%
24	5	2	0.2%	3	0.3%
25	6	2	0.2%	4	0.4%
26	7	3	0.3%	4	0.4%
27	8	4	0.4%	4	0.4%
28	10	4	0.4%	6	0.6%
29	11	4	0.4%	7	0.7%
30	3	1	0.1%	2	0.2%
31	4	2	0.2%	2	0.2%
32	6	3	0.3%	3	0.3%
33	7	3	0.3%	4	0.4%
34	8	4	0.4%	4	0.4%
35	8	3	0.3%	5	0.5%
36	6	2	0.2%	4	0.4%
37	5	3	0.3%	2	0.2%
38	6	4	0.4%	2	0.2%
39	6	3	0.3%	1	0.1%
40	6	2	0.2%	4	0.4%
Total	257	110	11.0%	147	14.7%

From the table (4), it showed that the incorrect use of pre modifier indicated 147 (14.7%) errors in students' texts. In this case, the correct use of pre modifier indicated 110 (11.0%) correct answers. This means most of Students were still confused about how to form the structure of English noun phrase with the use of determiners, enumerators and adjectives. This can be shown in the following table.

Table 5: Types of Errors with regard to Determiner, Enumerators and Adjectives.

Pre modifier Error						
	Determiner Errors	%	Enumerator Errors	%	Adjective Errors	%
1	3	0.3%	1	0.1%	2	0.2%
2	2	0.2%	-	-	2	0.2%
3	4	0.4%	-	-	3	0.3%
4	2	0.2%	-	-	1	0.1%
5	3	0.3%	1	0.1%	2	0.2%
6	4	0.4%	1	0.1%	2	0.2%
7	2	0.2%	-	-	-	-
8	2	0.2%	-	-	-	-
9	3	0.3%	-	-	1	0.1%
10	1	0.1%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%
11	2	0.2%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%

12	3	0.3%	-	-	1	0.1%
13	4	0.4%	1	0.1%	2	0.2%
14	3	0.3%	-	-	-	-
15	2	0.2%	1	0.1%	-	-
16	3	0.3%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%
17	1	0.1%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%
18	3	0.3%	-	-	1	0.1%
19	2	0.2%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%
20	1	0.1%	-	-	-	-
21	3	0.3%	-	-	1	0.1%
22	2	0.2%	-	-	1	0.1%
23	3	0.3%	-	-	1	0.1%
24	4	0.4%	2	0.2%	1	0.1%
25	3	0.3%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%
26	2	0.2%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%
27	3	0.3%	2	0.2%	1	0.1%
28	2	0.2%	2	0.2%	-	-
29	1	0.1%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%
30	2	0.2%	-	-	1	0.1%

31	2	0.2%	-	-	1	0.1%
32	1	0.1%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%
33	2	0.2%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%
34	3	0.3%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%
35	1	0.1%	-	-	2	0.2%
36	2	0.2%	-	-	1	0.1%
37	2	0.2%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%
38	2	0.2%	-	-	1	0.1%
39	1	0.1%	-	-	1	0.1%
40	2	0.2%	2	0.2%	1	0.1%
Total	80	8.0%	25	2.5%	42	4.2%

From the table (5), it showed that there were 80 errors (8.0%) of the use of determiners. The data above showed that enumerator has 25 (2.5%) errors found in the students' texts. Furthermore, the data above showed that adjective has 42 (4.2%) errors found in the students' texts. The examples of these types of errors are presented below:

(6) along black hair (test item number 3).

(7) I lost the my bag in the market (test item number 40).

(8) The lion eats his prey.

In sentence (6), the singular determiner (a) should be deleted so as to form correct determiner as in long black hair. Furthermore, the head noun

hair was an uncountable noun. So, the determiner (a) should be deleted by students.

In sentence (7), the is the only error made by the student by using double articles. The student should omit the from the sentence as in I lost my bag in the market. In sentence (8), the student found difficulty In choosing personal pronoun. The student should use its instead of his as in “the lion eats its prey”.

According to table (5), there were 25 errors (2.5%) of the use of enumerator. The examples of this type of errors are presented below:

(9) I go home for the 2 times (test item number 20).

(10) It is the four times I go home (test item number 10).

In sentence (9), the student should use second or 2nd instead of two or 2. In sentence (10), the student should also use fourth instead of four or 4.

According to table (5), there were 42 errors (4.2%) of the use of adjectives. The examples of this type are presented below:

(11) I see very beauty castles in London (lest item number 3).

(12) Khalifa tower is the most tallest tower in the world (test item number 36).

(13) Group of Iraq teachers (test item number 36).

(14) Baghdad is the culture center for the world (test item number 11).

In sentence (11), the student found difficulty in distinguishing between nouns and adjectives. Sentence (11) “should be I see very beautiful castles in London”. In sentence (12), the student made error in using superlative adjectives. The student found difficulty in distinguishing

between adjectives of one syllable and adjectives of more than one syllables. Sentence number (12) should be Khalifa tower Is the tallest tower in the world. In sentence (13), the student failed In choosing adjective for the sentence so that sentence should be group of Iraqi teachers. In sentence (14), the student also failed In choosing adjective for the sentence. So, the sentence should be Baghdad is the cultural Center for the world.

The last type of error occurred in students' descriptive texts was post modifier with total number of occurrence 363(36.3%) (See table I). The table below showed the number of students who used post modifier correctly or incorrectly.

Table 6: The Frequency of using post modifier correctly or incorrectly.

Pre modifier					
	Frequency	Correct	%	Incorrect	%
1	8	3	0.3%	4	0.4%
2	8	3	0.3%	5	0.5%
3	11	4	0.4%	7	0.7%
4	12	6	0.6%	6	0.6%
5	6	3	0.3%	3	0.3%
6	7	3	0.3%	4	0.4%
7	7	4	0.4%	3	0.3%
8	8	4	0.4%	4	0.4%
9	9	3	0.3%	6	0.6%
10	6	2	0.2%	4	0.4%
11	8	3	0.3%	5	0.5%
12	9	4	0.4%	5	0.5%
13	6	3	0.3%	3	0.3%
14	6	4	0.4%	2	0.2%
15	7	3	0.3%	4	0.4%
16	9	4	0.4%	5	0.5%
17	11	5	0.5%	6	0.6%
18	11	4	0.4%	8	0.8%

19	10	4	0.4%	6	0.6%
20	10	2	0.3%	8	0.8%
21	9	4	0.4%	5	0.5%
22	8	3	0.3%	5	0.5%
23	8	4	0.4%	4	0.4%
24	8	3	0.3%	5	0.5%
25	13	5	0.5%	8	0.8%
26	11	4	0.4%	8	0.8%
27	12	6	0.6%	6	0.6%
28	13	5	0.5%	8	0.8%
29	9	4	0.4%	5	0.5%
30	7	3	0.3%	4	0.4%
31	7	5	0.5%	2	0.2%
32	7	3	0.3%	4	0.4%
33	9	4	0.4%	5	0.5%
34	11	5	0.5%	6	0.6%
35	12	5	0.5%	7	0.7%
36	13	5	0.5%	8	0.8%
37	13	4	0.4%	9	0.9%
38	11	6	0.6%	5	0.5%
39	12	5	0.5%	7	0.7%
40	7	4	0.4%	3	0.3%
Total	363	158	15.8%	205	20.5%

Based on table (6), it showed that the incorrect use of post modifier indicated 205 errors, followed by the correct use of post modifier with 158 correct answer. This means most of students were still confused about how to form the structure of English noun phrase with use of prepositional phrase and relative clause. This can be shown in the following table:

Table 7: Types of Errors With Regard to Prepositional Phrase and Relative Clause.

Post modifier				
No	Prepositional phrase error	%	Relative clause error	%
1	3	0.3%	3	0.3%
2	2	0.2%	2	0.2%
3	2	0.2%	-	-
4	3	0.3%	2	0.2%
5	5	0.5%	3	0.3%
6	3	0.3%	-	-
7	2	0.2%	3	0.3%
8	2	0.2%	4	0.4%
9	3	0.3%	3	0.3%
10	3	0.3%	2	0.2%
11	2	0.2%	-	-
12	2	0.2%	2	0.2%
13	3	0.3%	2	0.2%
14	4	0.4%	3	0.3%
15	3	0.3%	3	0.3%
16	4	0.4%	2	0.2%
17	4	0.4%	3	0.3%
18	2	0.2%	3	0.3%
19	3	0.3%	2	0.2%
20	4	0.4%	3	0.3%
21	4	0.4%	2	0.2%
22	2	0.2%	3	0.3%
23	3	0.3%	3	0.3%
24	3	0.3%	3	0.3%
25	1	0.1%	2	0.2%
26	2	0.2%	3	0.3%
27	4	0.4%	3	0.3%
28	3	0.3%	3	0.3%

29	2	0.2%	2	0.2%
30	3	0.3%	-	-
31	4	0.4%	2	0.2%
32	3	0.3%	3	0.3%
33	2	0.2%	2	0.2%
34	3	0.3%	2	0.2%
35	2	0.2%	3	0.3%
36	3	0.3%	2	0.2%
37	2	0.2%	2	0.2%
38	3	0.3%	2	0.2%
39	2	0.2%	2	0.2%
40	4	0.4%	2	0.2%
Total	114	11.4%	91	9.1%

From the table (7), it showed that there were 114 errors (11.4%) of the prepositional phrase. The highest error made by the students was prepositional phrase. The data above showed that the relative clause has 91 (9.1%) errors found in the student's texts. The examples of these types of errors are presented below:

(15) It is a good place for me to see sunset on the evening. (test item number 32)

(16) April is the best month my life. (test item number 34)

(17) My teacher calls me with mistake. (test item number 19)

In sentence (15), the student fails to use the correct form of post modifier (prepositional phrase). So, the preposition should be in instead of on. According to this, the sentence (15) should be "it is a good place for me to see sunset in the evening". In sentence (16), the student fails to use the prepositional phrase correctly. The student omits of preposition. The sentence should be "April is the best month of my life". In sentence (17), it

is obvious that the prepositional phrase is incorrect. The preposition should be by instead of with. The sentence should be “my teacher call me by mistake”.

Furthermore, the table above showed that relative clean has 91(9.1%) error found in the students ‘texts .The example of this type of errors are presented below:

(18) I can see some images who describe the historical events. (test item 21)

(19) This is the girl which I admire. (test item number 11)

(20) A beautiful boat who is on the edge of the river. (test item number 33)

In sentences (18) and (19) and (20), the students fail to identify the correct relative pronouns. With regard to sentence (18), it should be which for the relative clause. With regard to sentence (19), it should be who for the relative clause. With regard to sentence (20), it should be which for the relative clause.

Based on the results of the study, the highest error made by the students was head error 206, post modifier error 205 and pre modifier 147 errors respectively (see tables 2,6, and 4). The following table below shows the number of students who used head, pre modifier and post modifier correctly and incorrectly.

Table 8: The total number of use head, pre modifier and post modifier correctly and incorrectly.

Heading	Correct		Incorrect	
	Number	%	Number	%
Head	174	17.4	206	20.6
Pre modifier	110	11.0	147	14.7
Post modifier	158	15.8	205	20.5
Total	442	44.2	558	55.8

After computing the total number, the researchers divided the three headings into seven types of errors. Below is the table of types of errors.

Table (9): the number of each type of errors

Heading	Types of errors	Total errors
Head	Placement of noun	114
	Wrong form of noun	92
Pre modifier	Determiner error	80
	Enumerator error	25
	Adjective error	42
Post modifier	Prepositional phrase error	114
	Relative clause error	91

4.2. Discussion of the Results

After collecting the data from students' descriptive texts, the errors were identified and established on the structure of noun phrase in linguistic category classification. It can be seen from table (8), that most students are unable to use noun phrases correctly in their writings. So, data in table (8) deals with first study question: 1. **To what extent are Iraqi EFL learners able to use noun phrases in descriptive writing?**

Based on table (8), it showed that there were 558 errors (55.8%) incorrect use of noun phrase in students followed by 442 (44.2%) correctly use of noun phrase in students texts. This means that most students were poor about how to form the structures of English noun phrases with the use of heads, pre modifier and post modifier.

Furthermore, the results in table (8) showed that most students were unable to use the suitable items in noun phrases in their texts. In this study, it was found that the highest frequency of errors was the head error with 206 errors. In addition, it was found that the lowest frequency of errors was the pre modifier errors with 147 errors. Meanwhile, the frequency of errors for post modifier was 205 errors (see table 8). Based on the results of the study above, the students were puzzled and did not comprehend the structure of noun phrases. It seems clear that most students seldom practice how to make good texts with noun phrases. The data in table (9) deal with the second study question : 2. **What are the types of errors of noun phrases in descriptive writing made by Iraqi EFL learners?** Table (9) showed that that there were seven types of errors made by students with regard to the incorrect use of head, it was found that there were 114 errors found in placement of noun and 92 errors found in wrong form of noun. Based on table (9), it showed that the incorrect use of pre modifier indicated three types of errors, namely determiners with 80 errors, enumerators with 25 errors and adjectives with 42 errors Furthermore, the incorrect use of post modifier indicated two types of errors, namely prepositional phrase with 91 errors Data in tables (8) and (9) can answer the third study question : 3. **Which type of errors of noun phrase is less frequently used in descriptive writing?** This can be explained in the light of the less frequent errors made by the students. It seems obvious that pre modifier is less frequently used in descriptive writing. According to table (8), it showed that pre modifier was the lowest frequency of errors made by the students. In this case, pre modifier has 147 errors. Based on table (9) it showed that the

incorrect use of pre modifier indicated determiner with 80 errors enumerator with 25 error and adjective with 42 error. This means that enumerator is a type of error of pre modifier which is less frequently used in descriptive writing.

Data in tables (8) and (9) can answer the fourth study question : 4 **which type of errors of noun phrase is more frequently used in descriptive writing?** This can be explained in the light of high frequent by the students .It is clear that the head error is more frequently used in descriptive writing. It can be concluded from the results presented in table (8) that head has the high frequency of errors made by the students. So, head has 206 errors made by the students was apparent from the results presented in table (9) that the Incorrect use of head indicated placement of noun with 114 errors. Furthermore, the incorrect use of post modifier indicated prepositional phrase with 114 errors. In this case the placement of noun and prepositional phrase are the types of errors of noun phrase which are more frequently used in descriptive errors. When it comes to the research question number five: 5- What is the effect of the age factor on the noun phrases performance by EFL students?’ then, as mentioned in table 8, several students have incorrect answers with percent (%55.8). Thus, the majority of them are unable to use the noun phrases correctly in the written texts despite their mental maturity. In other word, age factor does not affect the students’ noun phrases performance.

4.3 Source of errors

From all the discussion above, it could be summarized that the context of learning is the possible source which underlines the students’ erroneous responses. Context here refers to the classroom with its teacher and material taught. Errors, which are due to the context of learning mean that the teacher or the textbook can lead the learner to make faulty hypotheses or produce deviant form of the language

(Richard's, 1971: 203). Thus, it is necessary to realize that students often make errors because of misleading explanation from the teacher, faulty presentation of a structure or word in a textbook. Moreover , the seven typ of errors are considered as a result of insufficient teaching model whose improper presentation in flueuces the student's performance. So, student's bad performance is related to the notion of teaching-induced errors. It seems quite reasonable to relate errors to the proper mode. Thus, a large number of the student's errors is attributed to the context of learning.

Chapter Five

Conclusion and suggestions

5.1 Conclusion

The results of the analysis of the data in the previous chapter had led to the following Conclusion:

- 1- It can be clearly seen from the tables above that all categories of noun phrases (head pre modifier and post modifier) were used by the students in their texts. However, the frequencies of using are different . According to table (1) , the highest frequent category is head that has 380 occurances while post modifier has 363 occurances in descriptive text. The lowest frequent category is pre modifier that has 257 occurances in students' descriptive texts. It is clear that the number of students who have the incorrect answer is greater than the number of students who have the correct answers with percent (55.8%). So, most students are unable to use noun phrases in written texts correctly.
- 2- The majority of Iraqi EFL learners are unable to use the appropriate items of noun phrases . It can be seen from the tables above that the

highest frequency of errors is head errors with 206 errors. In this respect, most students committed many errors not only in head errors , but also post modifier with 205 errors and pre modifier with 147 errors . In this case , most students did not master the use of the categories of noun phrase correctly.

- 3- It has been shown from the results that there are some types of errors. It was found that the highest frequency of errors made by students is the wrong placement of noun with 114 errors and prepositional phrases with 114 errors. In this case, most students found difficulty in placing noun in noun phrases. Furthermore, most students did not know what prepositions to use in prepositional phrases.
- 4- It has been found out that context of learning is the possible cause behind the students' poor performance.
- 5- The age factor does not have an effect on the noun phrases usage and the issue of proficiency is related more on the target language exposure than on being mentally mature.

5.2 Recommendations

The researcher recommends the following recommendations.

- 1- Special attention must be paid to the descriptive writing to detect the exact meaning of the text. For the sake of comprehension of the text, categories of noun phrases must present in each text .
- 2- Special attention should be paid to distinguish the use and function of head, pre modifier and post modifier . This can be done through practice alot of words and structures to decrease the mistakes that may occur in texts.

- 3- Teacher should introduce students to different types of errors particularly wrong placement of noun and prepositional phrases errors through giving them more exercise.
- 4- The students may have different capacity levels such as manners . The teacher should give suitable attention to the students and their special difficulties. The teacher should also conduct student's needs analysis regarding students' grammatical errors.

References:

- Chomsky, N. (1966). Explanatory models in linguistics. In *Studies in Logic and the Foundations of Mathematics* (Vol. 44, pp. 528-550). Elsevier.
- Corder, S. P. (1975). Error analysis, interlanguage and second language acquisition. *Language teaching*, 8(4), 201-218.
- Hendrickson, J. (1987). *Introduction to English Grammar*: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hudson, L. (1990). *A University Courses in English Grammar*. London: Prentice Hall International Ltd.
- Matthews, K. (1981). *Understanding and using English Grammar*. United States of America Prentice Hall
- Noorish, T. (1983). *Language learners and their errors*. London. Macmillan Press.
- Ojose, B. (2008). Applying Piaget's theory of cognitive development to mathematics instruction. *The mathematics educator*, 18(1).

Piaget, J. (2000). Piaget's theory of cognitive development. *Childhood cognitive development: The essential readings*, 2, 33-47.

Richard, D. (2003). Cognitive underpainting of focus on form. In *cognition and second language instructions*, ed. P. Robinson (pp. 206-56). Cambridge University Press.

Sanghvi, P. (2020). Piaget's theory of cognitive development: a review. *Indian Journal of Mental Health*, 7(2), 90-96.

