Imperatives as Syntactically Used by Iraqi EFL University Students

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Abstract

This study tries to investigate the use of imperative sentences as one of the major types of English simple sentence on the one hand and as a problematic topic area for Iraqi university students of English on the other hand. It tends to identify the students’ achievement in recognizing and producing such sentences and account for their errors and their sources. To gain these aims, a diagnostic test is formulated on a sample of (50) fourth-year English students at the college of Education of Babylon University during the academic year (2015-2016). The results obtained from analyzing the students' responses suggest that the students face difficulty in this subject. This is obvious from the general evaluation of the recognition and the production levels.

Key words: Imperatives, Declaratives, Diagnostic, Syntactic.

الخلاصة

تحاول هذه الدراسة تقصي استخدام الجمل الأمرية كواحدة من الأنواع الرئيسية للجمل البسيطة هذا من ناحية وبيان كونها أحد التراكيب التي يواجه الطلبة صعوبة في تعلمها من جهة أخرى. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقويم أداء هؤلاء الطلبة على استعمال هذه التراكيب علاوة على اكتشاف أخطائهم وإسبابها على مستوى التمييز والانتقاء. ولتحقيق الأهداف أعلاه، صمم البحث اختباراً تخصصياً ونفذ على عينه من (50) طالباً وطالبة من طلبة المرحلة الرابعة/قسم اللغة الإنجليزية/كلية التربية/جامعة بابل. ثم جمعت الاستجابات وحللت تطور النتائج صاروخية في استخدام هذا النوع من الجمل. وهذه الصعوبة توضحت في ضوء نسبة الإجابات الخاطئة مقارنة مع نسبة الإجابات الصحيحة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأمرية، الخبرية، تشخيصي، تركيبي.
1. Introduction

1.1 The problem

As a core of any language, the sentence may be a word or a group of words used to communicate with each other. It is either simple or multiple. A simple sentence is divided into four major syntactic types. This division is based on the purpose for which they are used: declarative, interrogative, exclamative and imperative sentences. An imperative sentence, in its typical form, contains no subject or operator. It consists simply of a prediction with an imperative verb i.e., a verb in its base form. It is supposed that most of Iraqi EFL university students may be incapable to use the different forms of imperative clauses and may not know what they are. Besides, it may be difficult for them to make a clear distinction between the structural types of imperatives.

1.2 Aims of the Study

The study aims at:

1- Presenting a theoretical part about imperative clauses and their syntactic forms.
2- Measuring the students’ performance in recognizing and producing such clauses.
3- Diagnosing the types of the students’ errors and making an analysis to them according to their sources.

1.3 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are to be considered:

1- Most of Iraqi university students face difficulty in using imperative constructions.
2- Iraqi EFL students may fail to produce the various forms of imperative.
1.4 Procedures

The following steps are followed to fulfill the aims of the study:

1- Presenting literature on imperative clauses and their types.
2- Carrying out a test to find out the difficulties the students may face in using the forms of imperative sentences.
3- Analyzing the results obtained to point out the errors the students commit and their erroneous sources.

1.5 Limits

The following are the restrictions of the study:

1- The sample is limited to Iraqi university students of Fourth Year, Department of English, College of Education, University of Babylon, for the academic year (2015-2016) as the most proficient and suitable stage for this study.

2- Introducing only one type of simple sentences, i.e. imperative sentences.

1.6 Value

It is hoped that the findings of the study are to be significant for syllabus designers and teachers to help the students perform well.

2. Imperatives in English
2.1 Definitions:
Gucker (1966 : 6) and Eastwood (1994:19) conceive that an imperative sentence is a kind of sentence which brings about purposes such as commands, requests or desires. Its subject is nearly always the word you, even though it is not expressed. It is called you understood.

1- (You) Please mail this letter for me.
2- Teacher (to pupils) : Get out your books, please.

According to Leech et al. (1982:82) an imperative sentence is one which has a non-finite predicator and no subject. They (ibid.) think of imperative as being derived from a declarative by the deletion of the subject (you) and of the verb phrase operator will:

3- You will write thousand lines.

4- Write thousand lines.
Consequently, the first verb in the verb phrase is an infinitive.

For Biber et al. (2002:249) most imperative forms are clauses characterized by the lack of a subject, use of the base form of the verb. Besides, there is no need for tense, aspect or modality in the imperative phrase. It typically drives the addressee to do something (or not to do something).

5- Get off the table.

Moreover, Leech and Svartvick (2002:191) observe that an imperative sentence is usually command with an imperative verb form without endings of number or tense. Such type of sentences tend to sound abrupt unless they are toned by signal of politeness such as please:

6- Shut the door, please.

They have no subject and no auxiliary verbs except do which must occur in negative and may also occur in positive:

7- Do not stay too late. (Negative)
8- Do sit down. (Emphatic or persuasive command)
Furthermore, Kroger (2005:199) remarks that an imperative verb always has a second person actor that will be the subject. Thus, any overt reference to the subject is likely to be redundant. With most English verbs the lack of agreement marking is not obvious, since the imperative form is the same as the second person present. But it can be seen with the verb to be as in:

9-You be good! Although the normal second person form would be are.

And finally, Noonan (2006:262) recognizes that imperative forms are sentences found both with and without an overt subject. When there is no overt subject, the subject is usually understood as a second person.

10- Slap yourself.

When an overt subject appears with an imperative, it must be either second or third person respectively:

11-You be early!
12- Everybody be early! (ibid.)

2.2 Structural Types of Imperative

2.2.1 Imperatives with a subject

Greenbaum and Nelson (2002:123) point out that imperative sentences do not have a subject but the pronoun you may be added as a second person subject:

13-You make an offer.

In addition to the second person subject, third person subject is occasionally used:

14- Those in the front row sit down.

Leech and Svartvik (2002:192) clarify that a stressed subject you is sometimes added and positioned before the imperative:
15- 'You just listen to me.

In this respect, Quirk et al. (1985: 828) stress that you can occur as vocative as opposed to imperative subject you but it is very impolite:

16- You come here.

However, Downing and Locke (1992: 193) show that it is easy to confuse the subject you with a vocative you since both of them precede the verb and both are optional and refer to the addressee. Hence, they could be either subject or vocative or merge. Thus, the distinction between them can be made when the vocative element is placed in final and medial positions in the sentence:

17- Shut up, you two!
18- Sit down with the feet, you!  

( ibid. )

Additionally, third person subjects (i.e.) indefinite subjects such as someone / somebody / no one / nobody / everyone / everybody may also occur, especially in informal spoken language:

19- Someone call an ambulance!
20- Help yourselves, everyone!  

( ibid. )

What is more, Carter and McCarthy (2006: 541) propose that imperative forms may occasionally occur with an emphatic subject pronoun you. This may be for contrastive emphatic, or simply to make the imperative stronger:

[speakers are cleaning things from the table after a meal]

21- A: Shall I take those out?

B: You take those two out on the tray. And I'll just put this milk away.

2.2.1.1 Negative Imperative with a subject

Carter and McCarthy (2006: 543) believe that negative imperative forms are constructed with auxiliary do. Contracted don't is the most common form in spoken language. Hence, to negate the first class of imperative with emphatic subject you, it simply adds an initial Don't or Do not:
22 - Don’t you worry.

Or with an indefinite subject (e.g. nobody), negative imperative may also occur especially in an informal spoken language:

23 - Nobody say a word, okay.

Or as Quirk et al. (1985:830) announce that don’t is placed before the base form of the verb but it is less common:

24 - You don’t open the door.

2.2.2 Imperatives without a subject

At this point, an imperative sentence has no subject and it has a main verb in the base form or an auxiliary in the base form followed by a suitable form of the main verb:

25 - Be reasonable.
26 - Consider yourself lucky. (Quirk et al., 1985:826)

The progress form is rare and the perfective is rarer:

27 - Be listening to this situation the same time tomorrow night.
28 - Start the book and have finished it before you go to bed.

And the passive with be and get can occur:

29 - Don't be deceived by his look.
30 - Get washed. (ibid.: 827)

Supporting this view, Downing and Locke (1992:193) state that the most striking feature of an imperative clause is that requires no overt subject in English, but a 2nd person subject that is pragmatically understood to be the
hearer or the addressee. In this sense, it differs sharply from other clause type:

31 - Hurry up!

Besides, conditional imperative forms are also possible:

32 - Give them a pound and they'll steal them from you. [If you give them a pound, they'll steal them from you.] (ibid.)

Leech and Svartvik (2002:192) argue that although imperative sentences have no subject, it can be said that, when the subject is absent, there is an implied subject you. This is evident when a reflexive pronoun or a tag is used:

33 - Behave yourself.
34 - Be quiet, will you?

On the other hand, Carter and McCarthy (2006:542) state that imperative sentences with emphatic do- auxiliary are perceived more polite than bare infinitives, as in:

35 - Do take your coat off.

2. 2. 2. 1 Negative Imperative without a subject

As it is well known that the second class of imperative has no overt subject, its negation is made by placing don't before the imperative verb:

36 - Don't make so much fuss. (Eastwood 1994: 19)

He (ibid.) adds that there are other negative words which can be used with the imperative sentences such as never / no as in:

37 - Never touch electrical equipment with wet hands.

38 - Leave no litter.
Carter and McCarthy (2006:543) remark that short negative imperative answers or reactions may consist don't without a lexical verb as in:

39 - A: Should I tell her, do you think?

B: No, don't. It'll only upset her.

2.2.3 **Imperatives with let**

Another feature of imperative is mentioned by Quirk et al. (1985: 829) who emphasize that first person imperative forms can be formed by using the verb let followed by a subject in the objective case:

40 - Let me think what to do next.

41 - Let us work hard.

They (ibid.) add that the same thing can be applied to third person subjects:

42 - If anyone shrinks from this action, let him speak now.

It is worth noting that there is no second person imperative with let:

43 - *Let you have a look. (ibid.)

A special type of imperative clause contains the verb let followed by us (usually contracted to ’s) to express suggestion involving both the speaker and the addressee as observe by (Biber et al., 2002:249).

44 - Let’s catch up with Louis.

Dixon (2005:29) comments that a variety of imperative is introduced by let, for example:

45 - Let John do it!

This could be regarded as prototypical imperative with understood 2nd person subject, as in:
46 - (You) let John do it!

However, a subject reference is often more general, so that *let* is best regarded as an imperative with 3rd person subject (here, John). *Let* imperative forms are also encountered with 1st person subject, either 1st singular, as in:

47 - Let me do it! Or 1st plural, as in:

48 - Let's go home!

This could hardly be regarded as having underlying structure (*You* let us go home!). Notice that the *us* in *Let's go home* be inclusive, referring to 'you and me' (rather than exclusive, referring to 'you and someone else').

Downing and Locke (2006:194) distinguish between *let's* which is the imperative particle from the lexical verb *let* meaning permit or allow. The following examples are illustrations of such differences:

49 - Let's go and see that new film! (particle *let*)
50 - Let us go and see that new film. (lexical *let*)

The difference between them is that *Let us* in the sense ‘*Permit /Allow us*’ cannot be abbreviated to *Let’s*.

Carter and McCarthy (2006:542) maintain that emphatic *do* may be used with *let's*:

51 - *Do* let's hurry up or we'll be late again.

They (ibid.) add that *let's* may occur alone in short responses:

52 - A: Shall we go for a walk?

B: Yes, *let's*.

2.2.3.1 *Negative Imperative with let*
It is again Carter and McCarthy (2006:543) view that the negative of let's is typically let's not. In other words, first person imperative forms are generally negated by the insertion of the particle not after the pronoun following let. Less frequent, don't let's may occur:

53 - Let's not be silly about it.

54 - Don't let's confuse the issue.

With Quirk et al. (1985:830) the third person imperative forms with let are negated by not after let or more informally by an initial don't:

55 - Let not anyone fool himself that he can get away with it.

56 - Don't let anyone fool himself that he can get away with it.

3. Imperative forms with tag questions

According to Biber et al. (2002:255) imperative clauses can be elaborated by the addition of question tags:

57 - Pick your plates up from down there, will you?

However, the question tag with you does little to soften the order.

In contrast, (Noonan (2006-263) exclaims that tag questions are possible with imperative forms and have the effect of softening the force of the imperative, making it more polite:

58 - Stay there, will you?

For (Quirk et al., 1985 :829) , the tag questions with third person subject are also occurred and take either 2nd or 3rd person pronoun:

59 - Somebody open this door, will you?/will they?

The familiar wh-question why don't you? is sometimes appended:

60 - Take a rest, why don't you?
Also tag questions can be joined to imperative forms with *let*. The tag is a persuasive softener of the imperative:

61 - Let's not discuss it, *shall we*? (ibid.)

**4. Imperative forms vs. Declarative forms**

Declarative forms are sentences in which the subject is present and precedes the verb, whereas imperative forms are those which normally acquire with no overt grammatical subject. Traditionally, it is said that a *you* subject is understood or elliptical (Downing and Locke, 2006:190).

As it was mentioned above, imperative forms usually have no subject, but there is an implied subject *you* and a subject *you* does sometimes occur. Here *you* is always stressed, whereas in declarative is not stressed:

62 - *You put it down.* (Imperative)

63 - *You put it down.* (Declarative)

(Leech and Svartvik, 2002:191)

In contrast with the declarative forms, imperative forms cannot occur with a modal or auxiliary *have* in the subject structure. It is also obvious that imperative forms are not inflected and this seems natural because an imperative always refers to a future event or to mean immediate future events (Brinton, 2000:209).

As a matter of fact, the basic use of the imperative is to give orders, i.e., commands to get someone to do something, whereas the basic use of the declarative is to tell information (Eastwood 1994:19).

Another difference is that the use of *Let's* to form a first person plural imperative with an implicit subject and the use of the lexical *let* in declarative which means *allow*. This distinction is shown by the fact that "*Let us go*" in the sense "*Permit us to go*" cannot be abbreviated to "*Let's go*" (Downing and Locke, 2006:192).
There is, however, a further distinction is made between declaratives and imperatives when the verb is be as in role-taking. This is because be has retained different forms for person and tense (am, is, are). Compare:

64 - You be the doctor and I’ll be the nurse.                           (Imperative)
65 - You are the doctor and I’ll be the nurse.                         (Declarative)

(Thibid.:194)

Regarding the imperative sentences with tag questions will / won’t / would / wouldn’t / can / can’t / could / couldn’t can be used with either 2nd or 3rd person pronouns whereas all the auxiliary / modal verbs can be used with the declarative ones (Alexander, 1990:140).

For the negative do not (don’t) is placed before the imperative verb but with let’s, not is placed before the infinitive:

66 - Let’s not be alarmed by rumours.

However, it is possible to put don’t before let’s in colloquial English.

67 - Don’t let’s be alarmed by rumours.

(Thomson and Martinet, 1986:431)

In case of declarative forms, negative declarative clauses negate a proposition. They have the word order subject-auxiliary / modal-negative particle-verb- object / complement (Carter and McCarthy, 2006:533).

5. Test and Data Analysis

5.1 The Test Design

Bussmann (1998:654) refers to the test as a measurement of linguistic achievement according different types of proficiency through less or more standardized procedures which should be sufficient for the usual quantitative
criteria of the test, above all, objectivity, validity and reliability. Similarly, Mousavi (1999, 349) proposes that a test is a measurement instrument designed to elicit a specific sample of individuals' behaviour.

Considering the information above, a diagnostic test is constructed to discover the students' ability to master imperative sentences. The sample of the study involves (50) undergraduate students who have been randomly selected from the Fourth Year students of the English Department, at the College of Education for Human Science, University of Babylon. The test is of two questions. Starting with the first one, it concerns with the recognition part which comprises (10) items where in the students are required to mark the correct item with a tick and the incorrect one with a cross (See Q1 in the Appendix 1). Moving to the second question, it deals with the production part which consists of (10) items where in the students are asked to make imperative sentences to match the written clues given for them (See Q2 in the Appendix 1).

5.2 **Test Validity and Reliability**

Traditionally, the qualities of a good test are seen to validity and reliability. Heaton (1988:159) expresses that the notion validity refers to the extent to which a test measures what it is planned to do. For him, validity goes with two criteria: face validity and content validity. The former is insured by exposing the test to a jury so as to assess its validity. The latter is the most important type which involves testing the skills that the tester wishes to measure. Reliability, on the other hand, is the one in which a test provides consistently accurate scores in order to be valid (Harris, 1969:19).

To estimate the reliability of the present study, a Kurder- Richardson method is adopted whose formula is here under:

\[ R = \frac{N}{N-1} \left( \frac{m (N-m)}{NX^2} \right), \]

where **R** represents reliability, **N** represents the number of items in the test, **m** represents the means of the test scores and **X** represents the standard deviation of the test scores.
5.3 Test Results

This subsection is dedicated to discuss the results of the test which give a particular impression of the students' proficiency in using imperatives. These results are important to verify or refute the hypotheses of the subject.

5.3.1 Students' Performance of the First Question

The first question is devoted to testing students' performance at the recognition level. The following table offers the results obtained on each item in the question:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Items</th>
<th>No. of Correct Items</th>
<th>Correct Items %</th>
<th>No. of Incorrect Items</th>
<th>Incorrect Items %</th>
<th>No. of Avoided Items</th>
<th>Avoided Items %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As it is shown in table (1) above, the total number and the percentage of correct items are (184, 36.8), whereas the total number and the percentage of the incorrect items (including the avoided ones) are (316, 63.2). The highest rate of the students' incorrect responses indicates their incompetence in recognizing imperative sentences. Concerning this part of acquisition, it seems that item (1) whose percentage is (68%) is the easiest item which tests the recognition use of imperative forms. This rate reflects the students' familiarity with this item. On the other hand, the most difficult item has been item (7) whose percentage is (10%). This result provides evidence confirming the students' inability of using such item.

5.3.2 Students' Performance of the Second Question

Question two assesses the students' acquisition at the production level. The students' responses on each item are listed in the following table:

*Table (2): Percentage of Items in Question (2)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Items</th>
<th>No. of Correct Items</th>
<th>Correct Items %</th>
<th>No. of Incorrect Items</th>
<th>Incorrect Items %</th>
<th>No. of Avoided Items</th>
<th>Avoided Items %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>179</strong></td>
<td><strong>35.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>227</strong></td>
<td><strong>45.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>94</strong></td>
<td><strong>18.8</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table above illustrates that the total number and the percentage of the correct items are \((179, 35.8\%\)) whereas the total number and the percentage of the incorrect items (including the avoided items) are \((321, 64.2\%\)). This result gives a proof that the students are incompetent in producing imperative forms since the total number of their incorrect responses is higher than that of their correct ones. In regard to the production part, it is clear that the easiest items have been items (3 and 5) whose their rate is (82%). This percentage reveals the students' exposure to these items. But on the other aspect, the most difficult item has been item (8) whose percentage is (0%) which totally asserts the students' incapability in dealing with this item.

5.3.3 Students' Total Performance of Imperative Forms in the Whole Test

The results of the whole test are displayed in following table below which contains both the recognition and production levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>No. of Correct Items</th>
<th>Correct Items %</th>
<th>No. of Incorrect Items</th>
<th>Incorrect Items %</th>
<th>No. of Avoided items</th>
<th>Avoided Items %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From these results, it is noticeable that the total number of the students’ incorrect responses (including the avoided items) is \((316)\), i.e., \((63.2\%\)) at the recognition part, whereas the total number of their incorrect ones (including the avoided items) is \((321)\), i.e., \((64.2\%\)) at the production one. This means that most of Iraqi EFL students face difficulty in mastering imperative forms on both levels which supports the first hypothesis of the study. At the production level, the students’ failure performance is clearly seen since the total number of their correct responses \((179)\) which stands at
(35.8%) is lower than that of their correct ones (321) which adds up to (64.2%). Thus, the second hypothesis is also verified.

On the basis of the data previously analyzed it can be said that types of errors which are committed by the largest number of the students can be demonstrated as follows:

Incorrect arrangement of sentences, no use of punctuation marks, wrong choice of imperative sentences, failure to answer in grammatical sentences, giving no responses and lack of agreement between the subject and the verb.

5.4 Error Analysis

Johnson and Johnson (1988:110) point out that error analysis is a significant approach which deals with the errors produced by the second language learners and how those errors are classified into types. For Brown (2000:223), errors can be ascribed into four sources: interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, context of learning and communication strategies.

1- *Interlingual interference*: many errors can be traced back to the negative interference of the rules of the first language (i.e. Arabic) on the target language acquisition (i.e. English) (Lado, 1961:211). Such errors can be noticed in the students’ responses to items (1) and (6) in question (2), as in:

Item (1), the possible answer: *You go home and go to sleep.*

* Ali, close the door.

Item (6), the possible answer: *Let me do it.*

* Noor read the exam.

2. *Intralingual transfer*: some errors refers to the negative transfer that may occur through *overgeneralization* (i.e. misuse of grammatical rules), *incomplete rules application* (i.e. under generalization) and *ignorance*
rules application (i.e. wrong applying rules) (Brown, 1987:82-3). Errors which may relate to overgeneralization can also be seen in the responses to items (7) and (8) in question (2), as in:

Item (7), the possible answer: *Do sit down.*

* did Ali go to the zoo ?

Item (8), the possible answer: *Everyone shut their eyes.*

* She write the lesson.

3- **Context of learning** : errors of this type may be attributed to the influence of certain factors: such as the classroom with its teacher and curriculum which may lead the learners to make faulty hypotheses about the second language (Brown, 2000:226), as in:

Item (7), Question (1), the possible answer: *Go and buy a new shirt.*

* Go to buy a new shirt.

Item (3), Question (1), the possible answer: *Run to the shop.*

* Ran to the shop.

4. **Communication strategies** : this error source refers to communication devices used by the learners to overcome the gap of their knowledge. One strategy is avoidance; another is guessing (Littlewood, 1998: 83). Most of the errors at the recognition level (Question 1) shows signs of guessing. Avoidance strategy is used for the items which are left by the students with no responses on both levels.
6 - Conclusions

The present work has come up with the following:

1. It is found that most of Iraqi EFL students at the fourth year encounter difficulties in recognizing and producing imperative sentences. This issue is obvious from the low rate of their correct responses at both levels in the whole test, (363, 36.3%), which is lower than their incorrect ones, (637, 63.7%). The students' inability at both levels supports the first hypothesis of the current work.

2. At the production level in Question 2, the high difference in the rate of the correct responses, (197, 35.8%), and the incorrect one, (321, 46.2%), agrees with the second hypothesis which suggests that Iraqi EFL students may fail to produce the various forms of imperatives.

3. The following error sources may be after the plausible causes of the students' poor performance at both levels:
   i. Interlingual interference whereby the students' use the rules of their mother tongue in the production of the imperatives.
   ii. Intralingual transfer whereby the students rely on their earlier knowledge of the second language to recognize and produce imperatives through overgeneralization, ignorance of rules restrictions and incomplete application of rules.
   iii. Context of learning wherein the students produce "induced errors" happened as a result of course design or the way in which the topic has been taught.
   iv. Communicative strategies by which the students resort to guessing, avoidance and paraphrasing to bridge the gap between their knowledge and the linguistic forms of the target language.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX (1)
The Questions of the Test

Q1: Which of the following sentences are imperatives? Put a tick (√) or a cross (×) in the brackets.

1. Everyone whose surname begins with ´A´ stand up. (     )
2. ' You change it.                                                                  (     )
3. Ran to the shop.                                                                 (     )
4. Why don’t you just be quiet?                                                   (     )
5. Don’t tell me you are lost!                                                     (     )
6. Let you have a look.                                                           (     )
7. Go to buy a new shirt.                                                          (     )
8. Work hard and I’ll pay you the money.                             (     )
9. Let us go.                                                                           (     )
10. Let’s eat, shall we?                                                          (     )

Q2: Make an English sentence for each of the following types of imperative, try to use your own sentences.

1. Imperative with subject.
2. Imperative with let.
3. Imperative without subject.
4. Imperative tag question.
5. Negative imperative.
6. First person imperative.
7. Emphatic imperative.
8. Third person imperative.
10. Vocative imperative.
APPENDIX (2)
The Test's Possible Answers

Q1:
1. Everyone whose surname begins with ´A´ stand up. ( √ )
2. ' You change it.                                                                  ( √ )
3. Ran to the shop.                                                              ( × )
4. Why don’t you just be quiet?                                                  ( √ )
5. Don’t tell me you are lost!                                                   ( √ )
6. Let you have a look.                                                           ( × )
7. Go to buy a new shirt.                                                        ( × )
8. Work hard and I’ll pay you the money.                                          ( √ )
9. Let us go.                                                                      ( × )
10. Let’s eat, shall we?                                                          ( √ )

Q2:
1. You go home and go to sleep.                                               
2. Let them see now.                                                            
3. Read the instructions carefully.                                            
4. Pick your plates up from down there, will you?                             
5. Don’t be noisy.                                                              
6. Let me do it.                                                                 
7. Do sit down.                                                                  
8. Everybody shut their eyes.                                                  
9. Give them a pound and they will steal three from you.                     