

## **Investigating the Role of Iraqi EFL Learners in Writing Short Forms of Mobile Messages**

**Submitted by**

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### **1-Introduction**

One can say without hesitation that Globalization enters into every aspect of our life and leaves no stone unturned. As current globalization seems to demand comprehensive transformation of a society, its impact on language and culture can be detected easily in every facet of life. Thus a people's culture includes their beliefs, rules of behavior, language, rituals, art, technology, styles of dress, ways of producing and cooking food, religion, and political and economic systems. All these aspects of culture have been effected by the emergence of globalization. On the other hand languages have also been effected by the global change of the world. Therefore, people tend to use Language and other forms of symbolic communication to create, explain, and record new ideas and information to cope with the new development of the world.

Language, which possesses all the features of culture, belongs to institutional culture. Like all other aspects of culture, language is not inherited but acquired and shared by a whole society; like all other aspects of institutional culture, language is conventional and governed by rules which are acknowledged and observed by all members of society. Language mirrors other parts of culture, supports them, spreads them and helps to develop others. This special feature of language distinguishes it from all other facets of culture and makes it crucially important for the transfer of culture. But language is also changeable by the time in order to cover all new means of communication among nations. Language change is a global phenomenon owing to the changing nature of the circumstances and contexts in which a language may be used It is no exaggeration to say that language is the life-blood of culture and that culture is the track along which language forms and develops.

When one views various changes and new phenomena observed in language learning and teaching, it becomes clear how fast and how deeply the globalization and the explosion of mass-communication processes have allowed creation of new ways of communication, symbols,vocabularies,etc .Thus, To convey new ideas, or write a short economic message, people constantly invent new symbols, such as for mathematical formulas. In addition, people may use one symbol, such as a single word, to represent many different ideas, feelings, or

values. Thus, symbols provide a flexible way for people to communicate even very complex thoughts with each other.

This paper illustrates that teaching English as a second language following proper informative methods can be used to improve human creativity of new forms of saying or writing any verbal message. Thus, most languages are equipped with different processes of word formation that make them active means of expression. Such processes are used for enriching languages with new lexical items that are necessary for filling linguistic gaps and to be suitable for the new generation and the rapid development in mass communication. One of these ways is the creation of the Short message Service (SMS) language. The purpose of the study was to investigate the use of SMS language in Short Messages Service (SMS) and its function in language teaching and learning.

It has been seen and observed that Arab learners in general and Iraqi EFL learners are too much affected by this phenomenon, i.e., short forms of words in writing messages. Iraqi EFL learners are able whether to write or understand this short forms of language they has been starting using. Accordingly, the present study aims at investigating the role of Iraqi EFL learners in using short forms in writing mobile messages.

### **1-2 Research Hypotheses**

To achieve the before mentioned aim the present study hypothesizes that :

1- Iraqi EFL learners are too much affected by the phenomenon of using short forms in writing mobile messages.

### **1-3 Methodology and Data**

The hypothesis has been verified through adopting a diagnostic test of two questions. The test has been applied to a sample of fourth year Iraqi EFL learners at the fourth year from department of English- College of Education- University of Wasit during the academic year 2011-2012. The researchers intend to choose this sample of students for two reasons:

- 1- They are advanced enough to understand the instructions they will respond to.
- 2- They are more experienced and sophisticated than other stages.

The sample was exposed to a test of two following questions:

Q1- The learners are given messages with underlined short forms of messages and required to write these messages in full.

Q2- The learners are required to choose the correct short forms according to different contexts,

## **2- Language Varieties**

Everyone knows that language is variable as Sapir (1921: 147) said. Furthermore, variation allows us to differentiate individuals, groups, communities, states and nations. Variability thus is everywhere in language, from the unique details in each production of a sound or sign to the auditory or visual processing of the linguistic signal. In fact, one of the amazing facts about human communication is the ability of speakers to normalize the inherent variation

within every spoken or signed message in processing the linguistic signal. Hence, the study of language variation is now one of the most rapidly expanding subfields of linguistics and it can provide researchers with some solutions to many fundamental problems in linguistic theory.

Sometimes in many verbal situations, speakers of a language are forced to adapt or choose specific or variable language to suit the other person; if they do not do so, they will soon feel the consequences. Thus, they may fail to communicate well or fail to send a message appropriately or may be facing a negative reaction from their listeners. To achieve a given purpose; therefore, one should choose an appropriate language variety in any situation that a speaker finds himself in (Kukulska-Hulme, 1999:42). Accordingly, speakers may use different variations of a language such as formal and informal or slang that can be used on special occasions of the formality/or informality of the setting. Thus, one can say that language is the direct reflection of subject matter. Halliday (1978: 195), on the other hand, regarded language variation as a set of meanings that is appropriate to a particular function of language, together with the words and structures which express these meanings.

In every language, change is everywhere and variation is widespread. The rapid growth of human society has a great influence on the most important tool of the communication - language. Thus many language varieties have emerged and added to the language dictionaries. In addition to that, new inventions and changes among human society require from every language to create, borrow, or form new words simply because new things need new words. If a new word is used by many speakers of a language, it will probably survive and may become an everyday word and entered our dictionaries. Especially in the last centuries, many word creations are spread amongst the language community. For example, if someone takes a look at the vast amount of new inventions, such as the internet (chat rooms and e-mail) and the cell phone, made in the 20th and 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is obvious that the words we knew before were not enough to cover all these things (Finegan 2007:321). The modern way of living goes faster and new trends are also reflected in the development of language in a form of various new words and expressions as well as the improvement and facilitation of grammar structure. Comparison of those two linguistic areas shows that vocabulary grows so rapidly that the communicative function of language claims more novel and concise expressions in the language terminology in order to keep pace with modern trends in human life (Weinreich et al., 1968).

One of these varieties that are used nowadays in informal cases is the use of short forms and/or what is called SMS language (Short Messages Service) which includes many aspects such as abbreviations, phonemic symbols, acronyms, clipping and blending. Such a variety is another face of the slang variety since it is used by a wide range of population. Slang seems to be one of the most important language formation having a great influence on the development of language.

Slang speech is characterized by various linguistic features reflecting the users' way of living and using the language with emphasis on belonging to a particular group of language users. Leech and Svartvik (1981:26) point out that the slang is a language variety which is very familiar in style, and is usually restricted to the members of a particular social group, for example 'teenage slang', 'army slang', 'theatre slang'. Slang words are expressed by many acronyms, lingos or symbols, called emoticons, used to display one's emotions and feelings.

## **2-1 What is Short Forms?**

It is well-known that language is defined by many linguists and all these definitions are alike. For example, one of these most acceptable definitions is that "language is a means of Communication". Using the indefinite article 'a' declares that there are other means of communication. Al-Hamash and Younis (1985:26) mention that language is just one kind of tool used for communication among people. Other tools include sign language, facial expressions, the use of flags, gestures, waves, etc.'

Language can be considered the most important tool of communication, but nevertheless, it is only one tool amongst many. Since language is a tool of communication used by speakers to express their needs and since such needs change with the passage of time, language changes to match the changing social needs. Such a change is clearly manifested in lexical, or, vocabulary, change. New vocabulary items added and others die away when their referents are no longer needed. Words may change their meanings by losing some of their semantic areas or by developing new areas. Languages also change in phonology and grammar. Such changes are often ascribed to a variety of factors such as economy of effort or contact with other languages (ibid).

Recently, the change is not only confined to spoken language but also extended to the written one. There have been many changes which are extremely available in the language of teenagers than adults. 'Today's electronic means of communication and the changing attitudes of some scholars have moved slang from the realm of spoken word to the written word with a greater degree of acceptance.

New technological communication media like the mobile phone and SMS has brought with it a different form of language use, which breaks away from the norm or standard language and has led to a form of new orthography of using a variety of slang which is invading everyday English. Thus the use of slang language, especially by the young people, is increasing day-by-day. Concerning student slang, writing SMS focuses on student slang realization in a form of short messages sent via mobile. Crystal (2008:164) believes that writing messages through cell phones as "just another variety of language, which has arisen as a result of a particular technology. It takes its place alongside the other mediums of electronic communication which have resulted from the internet revolution.". Since such a variety is related to the slang, there are no standard rules, no

grammar, or correct spelling for writing SMS languages and , and thus a lot of words can also be shortened, such as "text" being shortened into "txt.

The present study tries to shed light on one of this phenomenon that takes place in English language i.e., 'English has been reduced to a code of accepted abbreviations mysterious combination of number and letters and even symbols masquerading as facial expressions.

The above mentioned phenomenon not only affects the community in which it is used but also cause a radical change in the written English language used by its users. The main factor of such habits is ascribed to chatting, whether person to person or electronically. Such short forms of language, often in all lower case letter, is an important of teenage life. Sometimes letter represents words or the sound of the letter represents the words ,other times letters and numbers represent words.

Certain numbers, '2' and '4' in particular, play starring roles – replacing, respectively, 'to' and 'for' – but the far more intriguing development is the embrace at number '3' for the letter 'e' ('b3' and 'th3'), and the number '8' for the sound it makes ('gr8' and '18r' for 'great' and 'later') while some of these brave new acronyms can actually be self-explanatory ('u' for 'you' and 'ur' for 'your') or fairly logical ('bu' for 'before'), or can highlight the sounds the letter makes ('at' for 'cutie' and 'cu' for 'see you') or act as abbreviations ('cuz' for 'because'), or can be just straight forward acronyms ('bff' for 'best friend forever' 'some do border on strange ('peeps' for 'people'))(Friedman,2007:13-15).There are also many other like the above mentioned which are used by both native language and the learners of that language.

The abbreviation "SMS" formally stands for "short messaging system", though it is generally interpreted as meaning "short text messaging" or "short messaging service". SMS language is a new variety or dialect of English that uses letters and numbers to produce brief and economic words and message. The invention of mobile phone messages may be considered as its source. The writers of SMS messages are similar to the one-time telegraph operators who were reported as using abbreviations similar to those used in modern text to chat amongst themselves between sending official messages.However, usage seems to be higher among teens and young adults than in other age buddies. Nowadays, SMS is extensively used on mobile telephones throughout much of the world (Romero 2002:8; Wikipedia,2011).

Words can also be combined with numbers to make them shorter, such as "wait" which changes into "w8", using the numeral "8" for its phonetic pronunciation. Writers of cell phones messages seek to use the fewest number of letters, and so helps in dealing with the space constraints of text messaging, as well as permitting the sender to type less and to communicate more quickly than one could manage without such shortcuts (Wikipedia,2011).In addition to that, it can be claimed that a linguistic theory is a type of scientific theory which prefers

using an economical code. Thus, in writing an SMS message, we are using codes, and the most efficient codes do not use unnecessary symbols in order to be stated as economically as possible (Roach, 1983:122).

## **2-1-1 Aspects of Short Forms**

### **2-1-1-1 Clipping**

Clipping refers to all forms of shortening by which some parts, initially, medially or finally, of a longer word are deleted to give a shorter word with the same meaning (Fromkin et al, 2003:577). This means that clipping here is thus not only the deletion of letters at the end of a word but includes forms that show letter deletion at the front, i.e. initial clipping, letter deletion in the middle, i.e. medial clipping, and letter deletion in different places in the same word (Cannon, 1989: 108). Clipping usually reduces a polysyllabic word to a monosyllabic one; however, this may be accomplished by removing the initial syllables as in , *phone from telephone*, the initial and final syllables as in ,( *quiz from inquisitive*) and *flu from influenza* .

Booij (2005:20) stated that clipping is one aspect of word creation (or word manufacturing). He (ibid:21) added that instead of the term clipping, linguists also use the term truncation, especially in relation to the formation of personal names which have an affective load and function as hypocoristic (names of endearment). On the other hand, the full form of clipped words is not recoverable on the basis of the clipping, and so its meaning is also unpredictable, although it is sometimes possible to guess or known according to the context (ibid).

Beard ( 2007:9-10) mentions that clipping, produces a redundant base, but a new one all the same. With rare exceptions (e.g. *caravan: van*), the input and output of clipping rules are semantically identical, and both remain active in the lexicon.

### **2-1-1-2 Initialisms**

Crystal (2003:1) states that initialisms or alphabetisms reflect the separate pronunciation of the initial letters of the constituent words (*TV* for television, *TNT* for trinitrotoluene) .Stockwell and Minkova (2001:8) differentiate between initialism and acronym by stating that if the letters which make up the acronyms are individually pronounced ,like TNT, such acronyms are called initialisms. Thus **initialisms** should be pronounced as a sequence of letters rather than single words as in (*DNA, USA, SMS, CD*). Some initialisms even become words of our everyday language and the most famous word based on a shortening is the initialism **OK** (Finegan 2007, 48).

### **2-1-1-3 Contractions**

According to Kukulska-Hulme (1999; 106), contractions are one of the strategies that might be used for file name creation and they are combinations of two words that lead to a smaller number of characters than the spelling of the two words individually. Crystal (2003:106) has mentioned that contraction is a

linguistic term which refers "to the process or result of phonologically reducing a linguistic form so that it comes to be attached to an adjacent linguistic form, or fusing a sequence of forms so that they appear as a single form". Hudson (2000:475) believes that many languages have some contracted forms as the result of grammaticization of fast-speech deletions of phones. In English these are the contractions of auxiliary verbs including *I'm*, *I've* and *they're*, and of *not* as in *don't* and *isn't*.

A contraction of a word is made by omitting certain letters or syllables and bringing together the first and last letters or elements; A contraction is a reduction of size by the drawing together of the parts. Thus, one can state that a contraction is an abbreviation, but an abbreviation is not necessarily a contraction(Wikipedia, 2011).

#### **2-1-1-4 Weak Forms**

English language has certain well-known words that can be pronounced in two different ways, in the context of connected speech; these are called strong forms and weak forms. Crystal (2003:498) points out that the weak form is that which is the result of a word being unstressed in most of grammatical words which include (auxiliary verbs, prepositions, pronouns, possessives, conjunctions and articles). They are called so because they are not their lexical content that primarily matters, but the role they have in the sentence. Roach(1983:112) asserts that it is important to study how to use these weak forms for two reasons. The first reason is that most native speakers of English regard the pronunciation of strong forms as unnatural and foreign –sounding. The second reason is that speakers who are not familiar with the use of weak forms may find difficulty understanding native speakers when using these weak forms. Thus, when they hear native speaker saying or writing such a following sentence, he may misunderstand him: e.g./ let ð KΛm ðn si: / means (let her come and see).

#### **2-1-1-5 Abbreviations**

Crystal (2003:1) states that such a term has been refined by the linguists to be as part of the study of word formation and another aspect of shortening. Fromkin et al (2003:97) claim that abbreviation is one of word creation processes and similar to the process of clipping through which abbreviations of longer words or phrases may become lexicalized, that is, words in their own right.

An **abbreviation** (from Latin *brevis*, meaning *short*) is a shortened form of a word or phrase. Usually, but not always, it consists of a letter or group of letters taken from the word or phrase. For example, the word *abbreviation* can itself be represented by the abbreviation *abbr.*, *abbrv.* or *abbrev.*; an abbreviation may be made either by omitting certain portions from the interior or by cutting off a part. Abbreviations can also be used to give a different context to the word itself. A period (full stop) is sometimes written after an abbreviated word, but there are exceptions and a general lack of consensus about when this should happen. The widespread use of electronic communication through mobile phones and the

internet during the 1990s allowed for a marked rise in colloquial abbreviation. This was due largely to increasing popularity of textual communication services such as instant- and text messaging (Wikipedia, 2011). Nonnative speakers have extra difficulties with abbreviations for reasons of pronunciation and because abbreviations tend to be part of informal usage or very specific settings .

### **2-1-1-6 Blending**

Crystal (2003:1) states that blending is a process of shortening in which parts of two or more words are combined to create a new one, usually by taking the beginning of the other word and the end of the other one. So new words like *spork* (spoon + fork), *fanzine* (fan + magazine), *bromance* (brother + romance), *smog* (smoke + fog), *motel* (motor + hotel), *heliport* (helicopter + airport), *brunch* (breakfast + lunch) are created. Stockwell and Minkova (2001:6-7) regard it as an area of word formation and such creations by blending are also called portmanteau words. Blending tends to be conscious operation and, therefore; such the above examples are created intentionally by a logical rather than grammatical process. Fromkin et al (2003:98) mention that blends are similar to compounds but parts of the words that are combined are deleted, so they are less than compounds.

### **2-1-1-7 Acronyms**

Acronyms are shortenings or abbreviations, build from the initial letters in a phrase or name and are pronounced as single words (*NASA*, *AIDS* (Finegan 2007, 48). Hence, In everyday language, the most favored form of abbreviation are acronyms—pronounceable names formed of initial letters or of parts of words (e.g., *NATO* or *radar*). They are popular precisely because they can be treated and spoken like words (Kukulska-Hulme, 1999; 106-7; Crystal, 2003:1). However, normally acronyms are sometimes regarded as a subgroup of abbreviations. Fromkin et al (2003:96) add that acronyms are being added to the vocabulary daily with the creation of computers and the extensive use of the internet.

### **2- 1-2 Advantages of Using Short Forms**

The objective of using short forms in writing messages in any language is to use the least number of characters needed to convey a comprehensible message and thus it is cheaper than the voice call. The other point is that as many telecommunication companies have an SMS character limit, another benefit of SMS language is to reduce the character count of a message, hence, punctuation, grammar, and capitalization are largely ignored. Text messaging also allows you to communicate with others in situations where a face-to-face or phone conversation is no possible or appropriate (Wikipedia, 2011). The other advantages of using short forms in writing messages, given by Barasa & Mous (2011:236), include the following:

1- It is less intrusive, i.e. nobody hears you sending the message nor can one interpret what the incoming message is all about.

2- It enables direct conveyance of the message without interruption from the recipient.

3- It can be saved for future reference unlike the spontaneous spoken word.

4- It offers a choice e.g. to reply, forward, or delete them.

### ***2- 1-3 Disadvantages of Using Short Forms***

Barasa & Mous (2011:236) mention that the main disadvantages of text messages are that they can be cumbersome to type, are only accessible to literate people, and one has to abide by the limitation which will be described in the next section. The other point according to the researchers' point of view is that such a use of this variety of language will advocate the using of the slang in every widespread positions and in return it will break all the rules of standard language. The other disadvantage is that there is no tone or mood in the conversation that using short forms. This can lead to confusion and misinterpretation by the readers.

### ***3-The Test***

#### ***3-1 Procedures of the Study***

This section attempts to explain the procedures that have been used in this study and describe the following topics: Objectives of the test, material selection, test design, and the sample of the study. It is also concerned with the discussion of the test virtues in term of reliability and validity through the use of the statistical means. Finally, this section describes the pilot and the main administration of the test along with the scoring scheme which has been adopted.

#### ***3-2 Objectives of the Test***

Language testing represents a measured concentration on language and knowledge (Davis, 1999:9). Testing in language provides a balance between the practical and technical aspects of language testing that is neither too complex nor too simple (Bach man, 1990: 20). The test is useful to compare the performance of students to each other. The present test has been constructed primarily to investigate the role of EFL university learners in writing and distinguishing short forms of mobile messages. It is a diagnostic test aiming at measuring the role of Iraqi EFL university learners in writing and distinguishing short forms of mobile messages just like that written by native speaker (foreigners).

#### ***3-3 Material***

The whole sample has been exposed to the same test in "short forms of mobile messages" whose material is taken from native speaks' languages and from chatting in addition to the other sources like journal USA volume 12, No.8.

Moreover, the selection of the items of the test and its questions have been approved by a jury of experienced university lectures. List of the names of the jury members arranged according to their academic ranks:

- 1-Asst. Prof. Dr. Adil S.Abid. Dept. of English language-College of Education- Wasit Univ.**
- 2-Asst.Prof. Dr.Ali M. Gharab.Dept. of English language-College of Education- Wasit Univ.**
- 3-Asst. Prof. Fida'a M. Mutar. Dept. of Oriental studies -College of Art- Wasit Univ.**

**4-Inst. Mazin J. Muhammed. Dept. of English language-College of Education- Wasit Univ.**

**5-Inst. Ikhlas M. Na'ti . Dept. of English language-College of Education- Wasit Univ.**

**6-Instr. Azhaar H. Mankhi. Dept. of English language-College of Education- Wasit Univ.**

**7-Inst. Mohammed N. Abid .Dept. of English language-College of Education- Wasit Univ.**

### ***3-4 Test Design***

The test has been designed in away that tests the subject at both recognition and production level. It consists of two questions: the first one is designed to measure the subjects' responses at the productive level, while the second question is formed to measures the subjects responses at the recognition level. Each question has 15 items. In the first question, the students are required to produce the full form of the given short messages. The second question is a gap filling exercise. In this respect, Van Else (1984: 323) claims that "gap filling items are more reliable, more valid, and preferred by teacher". This question includes 15 items, the testees are required to fill in the blank spaces with choices given between brackets.

Finally, a good test should meet different criteria: validity, reliability, economy, scorability, and administrability (Harrison, 1993: 10). These are going to be discussed in some detail in the following sections.

### ***3-5 Discussion of the Results***

#### ***3-5-1 Validity and Reliability***

Validity is the appropriateness at a given test or any of its components parts as a measure of what it is supposed to measure (Alderson et al., 1995: 170). For Bell (1981:192) and Davis (1999:21), validity is concerned with the truth of the test and its relations to what it is intended to test. To achieve the test surface credibility or public acceptability, the present test has been exposed to some administrators who have shown their approval of the test as a whole .

Content validity depends on the analysis of the language being tested and the objectives of a particular course (Heaton, 1988: 160). Thus, the items of the present test are assumed to be valid as they are constructed to satisfy the items of the test .

Furthermore, the test has been submitted to a jury of experts in order to assess its face and content validity. The jury has judged the test as being valid to measure the purpose for which it is designed and offered some suggestions which have been taken into consideration and, accordingly, certain instructors have modified whereas some items have been replaced by others.

On the other hand, reliability is the means which seeks for the accuracy of scoring and accuracy of administration procedures of the test (Gronlud. 1976: 102). Stiggins (1999: 23) states that "reliability refers to the consistency of assessment scores and it shows the statistical methods used to establish

consistency of students' performance within a given test or a cross more than one test".

A test is reliable if its scores remain relatively stable from one administration to another (Harris, 1969:144). To ensure that, a definite scoring scheme has been used. In addition, the instruction of the test were clearly explained and the subjects were encouraging to answer the question of the test.

Heaton (1988: 163-4) mentions that there are different methods for estimating the reliability of a test such as : test- retest, two equivalent forms, split-half and Kurder –Richardson method. The method adopted to estimate the reliability of the present test is Kurder- Richardson of which the following formula can be considered:

$$R = \frac{N}{N-1} \left( 1 - \frac{(N-m) N x^2}{N^2} \right)$$

R: stands for reliability

N: stands for "the number of the items in the test"

M: stands for "the mean of the test scores"

X: stands for "the standard deviation of the test scores"

The computation of this formula has yield that the reliability coefficient of the present testis is (0.9) which is a highly positive correlation.

### ***3-5-2 The Sample***

The sample of this study consists of 100 of 4<sup>th</sup> year Iraqi EFL university learners of the department of English in the college of education at university of Wasit during the academic year (2011-2012). The fourth year students are chosen to apply the test because they are most advanced, qualified learners and well-sophisticated. The total number is only 100 subjects, 50 subjects from each section. The subjects represent (100%) of the total number of the students.

### ***3-5-3 Pilot Administration***

The pilot test was carried out immediately after the construction of the test. The aim behind the administrations of the pilot test was to specify the time required for the main test, to see whether the items of the test are clear to subjects, to check which of them needs modification, and to analyze the items to determine their effectiveness in terms of item difficulty and discrimination power of the item

A pilot test was applied to twenty subjects chosen randomly from the fourth year students in the department of English/College of Education/ Wasit University. Those subjects were excluded from the main test.

The results of the pilot test has indicated that the time required to answer the whole items of the test was 40 minutes. All the results obtained from the pilot administration of this test had been incorporated to the final version of the test.

### ***3-5-4 Item Analysis***

According to Davis (1968:192), item analysis is "a means of estimating how much information each single item in a test contributed to the

information provided by the test as a whole". Item analysis is the systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of the individual items of a test. The aim of such analysis is to examine the test items of ease of difficulty and to discriminate between good and weak students (Brown, 1996:50).

The difficulty level or (facility value) of each item is indicated by the percentage of students who get the item right (Groulund, 1976:211). The following formula is used to find out the level of difficulty for each item in the test:

$FV = \frac{N \text{ correct}}{N \text{ total}}$ , this formula can be illustrated as follows:

FV: stands for "facility value"

N correct : stands for "number of student answering correctly"

N total: stands for "the total number of the students taking the test". (Brown, 1996: 65)

After applying this formula to the results of the test, it has appeared that the item difficulty ranges between (0.12) to (0.80). In this respect, Bloom, et al (1981: 95) point out that a good spread of results can be obtained if the items vary in difficulty from (0.20) to (0.80). Therefore, the item difficulty of the present test is satisfactory.

On the other hand, the following formula has been used to find out the item discrimination power:

$DP = \frac{RU - RL}{1/2N}$

This formula can be illustrated as follows:

Dp: stands for "discrimination power"

RU: stands for "the number of the students in the upper group who got the item correct.

RL: stands for "the number of the students in the lower group who got the item correct.

N: stands for 'the total number of the items included in the item analysis (Brown,1996:65).

After calculation, it has been found the discrimination power is between (0.20) and (0.80).In this respect,Ahmad and Glock (1975:139)assert that a good result can be obtained if the items vary in their discrimination power (0.20 and above). Accordingly,Ebel (1972:359) admits that a good classroom test items has items of discrimination of (0.30 or more). For further details see also Ferguson (1966: 167) and Larson (1982:221).

The following table shows the facility value and discrimination power of the test item:

Table (1)

The Facility Value and the Discrimination Power of the Test

No.of	No.of	FV.	DP.	No.of	No.of	FV	DP.
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Question	Item			Question	Item		
Q(1)	1	0.24	0.38	Q(2)	1	0.33	0.72
	2	0.49	0.34		2	0.66	0.24
	3	0.65	0.23		3	0.50	0.45
	4	0.67	0.75		4	0.73	0.64
	5	0.56	0.53		5	0.62	0.56
	6	0.34	0.70		6	0.66	0.73
	7	0.54	0.65		7	0.50	0.86
	8	0.43	0.35		8	0.78	0.53
	9	0.40	0.61		9	0.56	0.43
	10	0.45	0.74		10	0.54	0.44
	11	0.25	0.65		11	0.44	0.75
	12	0.31	0.53		12	0.35	0.43
	13	0.52	0.36		13	0.60	0.67
	14	0.49	0.38		14	0.54	0.25
	15	0.76	0.40		15	0.78	0.58

### ***3-5-5 Final Administration***

The main test was administered during the academic year 2011. The time allowed for answering the test was 30 minutes. The instructions for each question were given to the subjects. They were instructed to answer on the same sheets to save time and effort. They were asked not to write their names on the test sheets so as to avoid embarrassment. The process of marking the test has been done by the researchers using the scoring scheme presented in the following section.

### ***3-5-6 Scoring Scheme***

The scoring scheme is an important device to test the objectivity and reliability of the test. The test has been scored out of 30. It contains two questions including 30 items. Each question includes 15 items. The scores have been distributed in such a way to give one score (mark) for each correct answer and zero score for the incorrect answer. The items that are left by the subjects with no answer are considered to be incorrect responses and have also been given a zero score, since they predicted that the subjects have failed to give any answer.

### ***4- Concluding Remarks***

This section attempts to describe the set of the procedures followed in analyzing and discussing the data in the present study to arrive at conclusion. Thus, it starts with the analysis of the selected data to find out the role of Iraqi EFL University learners in writing short forms of mobile messages. Finally, this section attempts to provide a presentation and discussion of the results with reference to the aims and hypothesis of the study.

### ***4-1 Data Analysis***

This section presents the general results of the main test with the tables and statistical means. It also analyzes the performance of the subjects at the

recognition and the production levels. The analysis of data is of great importance since it will be the basis upon which the researchers' hypothesis mentioned above will either be verified or refuted.

**4-1-1 Frequency and percentage of the subjects' performance in the first question.**

The first question is used to measure the subjects' performance at the production level. The following table shows the frequency and percentage of the subjects' performance on each items in this question.

**Table( 2 )**  
**Frequency and Percentage of the Subjects' Performance at the Production Level in Question ( 1 )**

No. of item	No of CRs.	%	No. of IRs.	%
1-	90	90	10	10
2-	86	86	14	14
3-	88	88	12	12
4-	95	95	5	5
5-	98	98	2	2
6-	54	54	46	46
7-	75	75	25	25
8-	51	51	49	49
9-	81	81	19	19
10-	78	78	22	22
11-	89	89	11	11
12-	65	65	35	35
13-	96	96	4	4
14-	94	94	6	6
15-	90	90	10	10

<b>Total</b>	<b>1230</b>	<b>0,82</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>0,18</b>
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It is concluded from Table (2 ) the following:

1-The total number and percentage of the correct responses are (1230,0,82) respectively.

2- The total number and the incorrect responses (including avoided items) are (270,0,18) respectively .

It can be concluded from the results presented in the table above that most of the subjects are competent since the learners are able to write short forms of mobile messages.

#### **4-1-2 Frequency and percentage of the subjects' performance in the second question.**

The question is designed to measure the subjects' ability to recognize short forms of mobile messages so it tests the subjects at recognition level (see table below).

**Table(3)**  
**Frequency and Percentage of the Subjects' Performance at the Recognition Level in Question ( 2 )**

<b>No. of item</b>	<b>No of CRs.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No. of IRs.</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1-</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>2-</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>3-</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>4-</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>5-</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>6-</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>7-</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>8-</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>9-</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>10-</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>11-</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>12-</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>

13-	55	55	45	45
14-	82	82	18	18
15-	86	86	14	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>1096</b>	<b>0,73</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>0,27</b>

Table ( 3 ) sums the results as follows:

1- The total number and the percentage of correct responses are ( 1096,0,73) respectively .

2- The total number and the percentage of incorrect responses (including avoided items) are (404,0,27 ) , respectively.

From the results obtained from Q1 and Q2,the researchers conclude that the subjects are able to write and recognize short forms of mobile messages which is obvious from the high number of their correct responses (1230,0,82,1096,0,73)see table (2)&(3). These results verify the hypothesis of the present study which stated above.

#### **4-2 Conclusions**

This section summarizes a number of conclusions based on the general findings of the present study. This section also ends some suggestions for future studies related to the subject under discussion.

##### **4-2-1 Practical Conclusions**

In the light of the of the preceding survey and discussion related to the findings, aims, and hypothesis of the study, the following conclusions have been drawn:

- 1-Iraqi EFL university learners at fourth stage are able to play a big role in writing and recognizing short forms of mobile messages. This is indicated by their high performance in the main test as the role of their correct responses which is higher significantly than their incorrect ones which is lower significantly than that of their correct ones . This validates the hypothesis of the study which states that Iraqi EFL university learners are able to recognize and write short forms of mobile messages.
- 2- In both questions, i.e., Q1 and Q2, which are intended to test the students at recognition and production level, the rate of their correct responses outweigh that of their incorrect ones and this in turn also validates the hypothesis of the study.

##### **4-3 Suggestion for Further Studies**

The following topics are suggested for further research in this area:

- 1-A similar study can be conducted for investigating the role of Iraqi EFL learners in writing short forms of mobile messages in other stages and classes.
- 2- A contrastive study can be dedicated to show the short forms of mobile messages in Arabic and English.

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## Appendices

University of Wasit  
College of Education  
Department of English

Dear Mr./Madam

The researchers intend to conduct an empirical study entitled "Investigating the role of Iraqi EFL learners in writing short forms of mobile messages".

The aim of the study is to investigate the role of Iraqi EFL fourth year learners at the department of English/ College of Education/ University of Wasit in distinguishing and writing short mobile messages just like that messages written by English native speakers.

The test consists of (30) items of two questions, you are kindly requested to check the written test items and state if they are suitable for this study or not. Any addition or modification will be highly regarded and your cooperation in this matter will be greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

### **The researchers**

Q1 Re-write the following sentences by replacing the underlined short forms of mobile messages with full form (words) )

- 1- I miss u a lot
- 2- Thanks 4 ur help
- 3- That's gr8
- 4- How ru
- 5- Cu at 7 o'clock
- 6- He comes bu me
- 7- **I luv u 2**
- 8- **btw**, I like it
- 9- she is **2L8**
- 10- **CU L8r**

- 11- Ur gr8 man  
12- He sends it 2 me n 2 im  
13- I h8 him

- 14- I w8u in the bus  
15- I will talk 2UL8r

**Q2: Fill in the blank spaces of the mobile messages below with the choices from the list below:**

(1- sum1, 2-RU, 3- Ni8, 4-U, 5-Y, 6-cr8, 7- sis, 8-4gt, 9- b4, 10- BTW, 11-GR8, 12-I, 13-4u, 14-2DAY, 15-ðr, 16-2 17-L8 18-4)

- A- I will ----- a new machine next year. cr8  
B- He has---- brothers and ----. 2 sis  
C- Is -----coming ----? I L8  
D- let --- eat something. ðr  
E- How -----? Fine thanks RU  
F- I ---- the answer of the question 4gt  
G- Wait ----- me if ---- don't mind. 4  
H- He is sitting ----- me and ----- else. sum1 BTW  
I- They should attend the lecture ----- their teacher. b4  
J- You have done a----- job. GR8  
K- This gift is ----- . 4u  
L- ----- do --- come at -----? Y U Ni8