Iraqi EFL Learners Production and Recognition of Tense in English: A Cross-Sectional Study

إستيعاب وإنتاج متعلمي اللغة الإنكليزية العراقيين للزَمن النَحوي في اللُغة الإنكليزية: دراسة مُستَعرِضة

م.د محمد حسن محي   م.د صلاح عبدالحسين زميط

الجامعة المستنصرية\ كلية الآداب\قسم اللغة الإنكليزية   الجامعة المستنصرية\ كلية الآداب\قسم اللغة الإنكليزية

Instructor Mohammad H. Muhi (Ph.D)   **Instructor Salah A. Zmait (Ph.D)**

E-mail: mohammadh.1980@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq   salahaz@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq

Abstract

This study aims at showing the Iraqi male-female undergraduate EFL learners` recognition, production of tense in English. The centrality of this topic stems from the fact that unless tense is not mastered by the learners of English, they can hardly produce acceptable sentences in the L2/FL. Towards this aim an elicitation test is designed to identify the errors of Iraqi male-female undergraduate students distributed over the 1st, 3rd and 4th academic levels of the Department of English language in Mustansiriyah University / Iraq, in the production and recognit ion of tense reflecting their proficiency level using one-way ANOVA

The study is motivated by (Corder, 1976, p. 1) argument that eradicating any error requires a good understanding of the nature of that error. Hence, developing and improving language teaching techniques requires full and systematic knowledge of

learner`s errors. The study revealed tense-aspect related significant differences with respect to gender and academic level. The findings provide a systematic understanding of the challenges faced by the Iraqi EFL learners and propose pedagogical implications in order to enhance their proficiency in the English language.

Key words: Tense, EFL learners` errors, Second language learning, Error analysis, Grammatical transference.

المستخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إظهار قدرة إنتاج واستيعاب بالاضافة الى صيغة الاستمرارية للزمن النحوي في اللغة الانكليزية لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL) من العراقيين الذكور. تتأتّى أهمية هذا الموضوع من حقيقة أنه ما لم يتقن متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية الأزمنة النحوية، فلن يتمكنوا من إنتاج جمل مقبولة في اللغة الثانية (الإنكليزية). لتحقيق هذا الهدف ، تم تصميم اختبار إنتاج واستيعاب الزمن النحوي لتحديد مستوى الطلاب الجامعيين العراقيين من الذكور والإناث الموزعين على المستويات الأكاديمية الأولى والثالثة والرابعة لقسم اللغة الإنجليزية في الجامعة المستنصرية / العراق والذي يعكس مستوى كفاءتهم باستخدام البرنامج الإحصائي SPSS. إن المبرر وراء هذه الدراسة هو محاجة (كوردر 1976) التي تقول أن التخلص من أي خطأ يتطلب فهمًا جيدًا لطبيعة هذا الخطأ ، علاوة على ذلك فإن دراسة أخطاء المتعلمين تشكل جزءًا من الدراسة المنهجية للغة المتعلمين والتي هي في حد ذاتها ضرورية لفهم عملية اكتساب اللغة الثانية. يتطلب تطوير تقنيات تدريس اللغة وتحسينها معرفة كاملة ومنهجية بأخطاء المتعلم. كشفت الدراسة عن فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بجنس المتعلم ومستواه الأكاديمي فيما يتعلق بإنتاج واستيعاب الزمن النحوي. توفر النتائج فهمًا منهجيًا للتحديات التي يواجهها متعلموا اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق وتعطي اقتراحات ذات طابع تدريسي من أجل تعزيز إتقانهم للغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الزمن النحوي، أخطاء متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، تعلم اللغة الثانية، تحليل الأخطاء، النقل النحوي

1. Introduction

The contemporary and noticeable trending motivation for English teaching and learning has widely spread due to the common use of English both academically and universally. Within the modern advances in technology which facilitated the universal multi-cultural contact, English has become a global bridge for communication among people. (Alzeebaree , Y; Zebari, I;, 2021, p. 170). In Iraq, English language has dominated the context of foreign language learning and teaching. This accord wells with (Crystal, 2003) observation that English language is considered globally as an international language, hence if it is one`s tongue, it guarantees the availability of employment, higher education, travelling. These facts gave rise to a very interesting issue in applied linguistics especially within the paradigm of language teaching, language learning and error analysis, more specifically of L2 difficulties faced by EFL learners. All L2 learners vary with respect to their level of competency in the target language to be learned. Ellis cited in (Davies & Elder, 2004, p. 525) points out that with respect to the success in language learning, there is an enormous variance among learners both in the speed of acquisition and in the ultimate level of achievement.

The mastery of tense in English poses a very important problem for learners of English worldwide. Moreover, the syntactic competency of EFL learners is among the most significant L2 levels which received much attention within the applied linguistics literature.

The learner`s gendered differences have always been a subject for theoretical and practical debates. Brown (Brown, 2000, p. 259) maintains that in any language, among the most significant pragmatic factors that affect acquiring our communicative competence is that of one`s sex. It has received a considerable attention as it has an impact on the production and reception of language. It has been proved that in any culture, men and women use many syntactic variants.

Within the encyclopedia of applied linguistics, (Menard-Warwick, 2013, p. 1) states that within the past decades, gender and language learning research has followed the gender theory trend in applied linguistics, such a trend is as (Cameron, 2005) labels the *difference paradigm* seeking linguistic differences. This paradigm is in contrast to the feminist and diversity paradigms, the former seeks to tackle dominance and the latter aims to identify men-women differences in particular contexts. He concludes that future research in gender and SLA is hoped to be more ambitious to include different linguistic contexts like foreign language classrooms worldwide. He adds that "It would be helpful if, as in (Teutsch-Dwyer, 2001)

study, more of this research balanced detailed descriptions of learners' gendered social contexts with close analysis of their specific trajectories of linguistic development (lexical, grammatical, pragmatic, etc.)"

Tense is among the most widespread misconceptions among EFL learners due to the L1 and L2 conflict as well as the time\tense overlap. With respect to the latter, (Carnie, 2011, pp. 81-82) shows that tense denotes the time when a sentence is spoken or written. The sentence *John left* means that the act of John's departure took place before the sentence is produced. Moreover, as indicated by (Jabbari, 2013, p. 243) "tense is a linguistic phenomenon, whereas "time" is an extra-linguistic concept. Tense is the grammatical category which correlates with distinctions of time". The progressive aspect in English presents a significant problem in the context of the Iraqi EFL learners as it projects a conflicting L1\L2 common error. Thus the study attempts to sort out the Iraqi EFL proficiency of tense and progressive aspect from a gender-based and cross-sectional perspective. Such an attempt is hoped to fill such a practical gap within the related literature and helps to put forward some pedagogical solutions.

The study hypothesizes that:

1. Male and female Iraqi undergraduate students in general posit different recognition and production proficiency levels of tense throughout their academic undergraduate years.
2. Male and female Iraqi undergraduate students posit the same levels of proficiency in progressive aspect of tense.
3. As far as the developmental progress is concerned, female participants show greater developmental patterns of tense mastery than male participants do.

2. Literature review

The significance of EFL learners' errors has received much theoretical and practical attention within the applied linguistics literature. It can be said that that the principal significance of errors is that they are the only window available to know what takes place in the speaker's head. Language learning hypotheses rely heavily on linguistic production since direct observation to the human mind is impossible, (Els, 1984, p. 8) According to Davies (2005, p.84) "an error is a gap (filled or unfilled) in a learner's knowledge of the target language". (Corder, 1976) shows that the concept of syntactic errors within the context of second language teaching and learning has had very significant implications in that EFL learner's errors are reflections of the nature of the learner's developmental stage and competency which in turn helps to reach pedagogical implications.

Many attempts have been made to investigate the nature of EFL learners` grammatical errors with various aims and data elicitation types and techniques. For instance, Al- (Al-Shammery & Shahriari, 2022, p. 1) attempted to study the grammatical errors which are common in the written discourse of the Iraqi EFL learners. The study also took gender as a principal variable in the selection of participants. The study is meant to include various grammatical concepts like active-passive voice, articles, prepositions and morphological errors. The participants in this study were asked to write a descriptive composition which is the instrument of this study. The study found that most of the errors were the result of L1 conflicting with L2.

(Majeed, 2022) investigated the misuse of indirect questions made by Iraqi EFL 4th year students at the University of Babylon \ College of Basic Education \ Department of English within the academic year 2021–2022. The study found that many students made some errors when they are asked indirect questions.

(Naser, 2020) carried out error analysis to investigate a hundred 1st year non-native students of English Language who aim to be EFL teachers at Iraqi Ministry of Education. The study was conducted at the College of Arts, Mustansiriyah University, Iraq, for the academic year (2018-2019). The study adopted Corder (1983) error analysis as a model to study errors related to selection, omission, mis-ordering and addition in simple tenses. The study found that students made many mistakes with respect to using simple tenses in variable contexts.

(Huda & Wuda, 2019) investigated the errors which are recurrent in the EFL learners at Junior High Islamic Boarding School in Jember. The study was intended to discover the factors behind errors such as low motivation and environment. The errors under analysis were mis-formation, mis-ordering, omission of preposition and simple addition. The study found that within the process of language learning, the mother tongue can stand as a strong delay to learn the target language.

(Jasim, 2019) Attempted to have insight into the source of interlingual errors made by the Iraqi EFL learners. The data of analysis of this study was the writings of 52 students of the Translation department \ College of Arts \ University of Basrah. The findings of this study revealed that students found it difficult to use tense with the context. The study also revealed that the some structures of English are the source of interlingual errors.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The participants are all Iraqi 1st, 3rd and 4th stage undergraduate students in the department of English language at Mustansiriyah University / Iraq, whose mother tongue is Iraqi Arabic. The sample totally consisted of 120 participants equally distributed over academic levels, 40 participants (20 males-20 females) represent each stage. The extent to which those participants are exposed to English is the course of primary, intermediate, secondary English curricula books and academic lectures they have been attending throughout the undergraduate stage. For the purpose of balance of informants, other ethnic backgrounds like Kurdish are also excluded; thus the study is limited to undergraduate Arab Iraqi students of English in the department of English language at Mustansiriyah University / Iraq whose mother tongue is Arabic.

3.2 The Instrument

The instrument in this study encompasses three elicitation techniques namely: optional choices, recognition and correction, as well as exemplification. The grammatical term tense is adopted here following (Brown & Miller, 1980) encompassing the two categories namely, past and non-past. It should also be mentioned that half of each question is also dedicated to elicit the participants' proficiency in progressive aspect. As far as the general design of the test is concerned, in each of the techniques data are elicited out of sixteen questions. These questions are distributed randomly with respect to the tense they carry, enabling the researcher to go stealthy into the student`s inter-language. Each test paper includes information about the respondents: Name, Gender and Study year. The tenses adopted in the test are:

1. Present perfect tense

2. Simple past tense

3. Past perfect continuous

4. Present continuous

5. Past perfect

6. Past continuous

7. Present perfect continuous

8. Simple present tense

One final worth mentioning remark to be made is that of (Gas & Mackey, 2007, p. 4) who mention that there is no wrong or right method for elicitation, nor there is "a single prescribed elicitation". They state that "rather, the choice of one method over another is highly dependent on the research question being asked". Gender and academic level are the main variables upon which the study is based. The purpose of the results is to track inter and intra significant gender-based cross-sectional differences with respect to both academic year and gender.

3.2.1 Multi-option recognition test

The multi-option test is a useful tool for accessing the respondent`s knowledge as indicated by Little (Little, 2018, p. 520) "Answering multiple-choice questions improves access to otherwise difficult-to-retrieve knowledge tested by those questions". The multi-option test includes sentences, for each of which four options are available. The participants are required to do all the questions. In each of the 16 sentences the participants are required to choose only one option. The sentences along with the options are supposed to control the participants` outcome; hence the data elicited are supposed to reflect the participants` acquired competence by using their implicit and explicit rule knowledge.

All the sentences are represented in a form to identify whether the participants can do target language options (in our case English) as well as to discover the subject`s inter-language rules under which the participants operate to cope with the structure of the target language. In this sense, the researcher limits the participants` response rather than give them the freedom to use their own rules. The researcher`s overall purpose is to reach a comprehensive account of the students` proficiency of tense and progressive aspect. Towards this purpose the sentences are presented with full diversity of meaning and vocabulary to make them invisible as tools of the researcher to elicit information.

The multi-option questions are preceded by clarifying directing statement to the participants concerning the technique procedures nevertheless participants received the entire necessary guide by the examiner to comprehend the procedures of the test.

3.2.2 Sentence Recognition and Production

This kind of technique involves to a high extent both the learners` production as well as comprehension therefore it is very important as a source for eliciting the type of data required by the researcher. What is required by this task evokes the subject`s inter-language; hence they engage with freedom using their own rules in their attempt to

produce correct structures. The significance of such testing technique is proved within the related literature. Pejman & (Pejman & Gorjian, 2020, p. 423) point out that "Recognition test-type enhances the listening comprehension skill of learners and maybe a suitable alternative for traditional methods of teaching listening comprehension"

As learners of English, participants are supposed to be acquainted with the concept of tense and aspect throughout the course of their school and academic learning. However this is not what the researcher noticed in the students` performance; thus the researcher is interested in describing and explaining such errors and consequently suggesting available tangible pedagogical solutions.

The test is composed of sixteen sentences. They are all presented in a target-like form or in a form similar to the learners` stages of development. The participants are required to read every sentence and judge whether it is grammatical or not. In the latter case he\she should provide the correct form of the sentence using the rules of his inter-language.

3.2.3 Exemplification Test (Production)

This is a very significant technique as it enables the researcher to elicit the students` highest inter-language potentials, in this case English. The test is out of 16 marks where students are asked to exemplify two sentences representing each tense 8 of which elicit the participant`s proficiency of progressive aspect..

4. Statistical Analysis

In order for the study to be reliable, replicable, valid and generizable, it is set to be quantitative in nature which is at the quantitative continuum end of applied linguistics research. (Brown J. D., 2004, p. 492) maintains that the concepts of reliability, replicability, validity, and generalizability are valued by the proponents of the quantitative-experimental end of the continuum.

For the statistical part, a one-way ANOVA is used to determine whether there is a significant difference among the groups or not. In case there is a significant difference a post hoc TUKEY test is used where that significant different is, followed by TUKEY HSDa to classify the groups into subsets. The analysis is conducted first for male students across the academic levels 1st, 3rd, and 4th and then for female students likewise. Finally both male and female students are contrasted based on the statistics. Each point in all questions feeds either 1 or 0 (correct or incorrect) to the statistical program. Descriptive statistics as well as inferential analysis are used to identify any cross-sectional and cross-gender significant differences in the scores.

4.1 Results and Discussion

4.1.1 Male participants

This section is limited to male participants across the academic levels. The groups are compared with respect to the three questions: A. Recognition, B. Recognition\production, C. Production.

Table (1) the ANOVA analysis of male cross-sectional proficiency of tense

The test		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Recognition	Between Groups	355.033	2	177.517	29.835	.000
	Within Groups	339.150	57	5.950		
	Total	694.183	59			
Recognition - Production	Between Groups	376.133	2	188.067	28.356	.000
	Within Groups	378.050	57	6.632		
	Total	754.183	59			
Production	Between Groups	237.100	2	118.550	13.665	.000
	Within Groups	494.500	57	8.675		
	Total	731.600	59			

As the analysis of variance in table (1) shows, there is a significant difference 0.000 among the male academic levels.
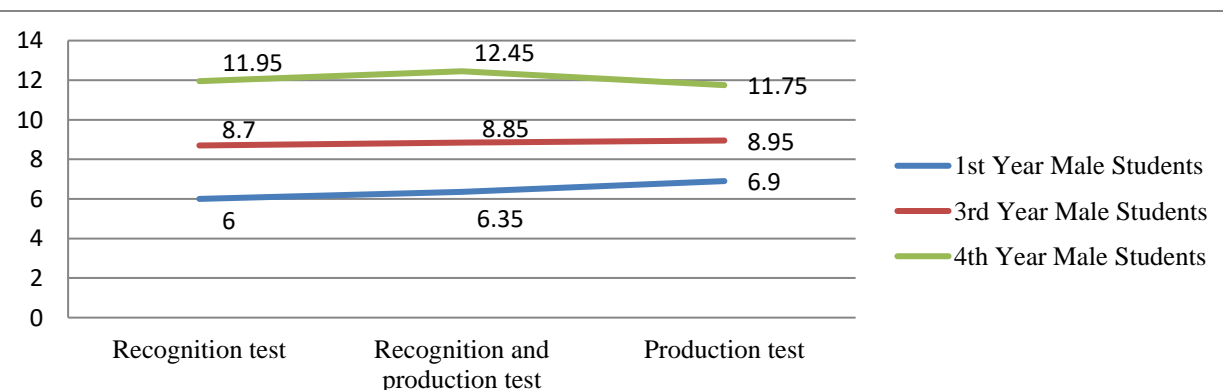
**Figure (1) the male cross-sectional mean percentage in recognition, recognition\production and production.**

As figure (1) illustrates, groups vary with respect their performance in:

A. Recognition: As the analysis shows, 4th year participants outperformed the 1st and 2nd year participants with a mean of 11.95.

B- As for recognition and production, 4th year participants score the highest mean 12.45.

C- From production perspective, 4th year participants scored 11.75 mean which is higher than the 1st and the second year participants.

Figure (2) the overall male cross-sectional tense proficiency
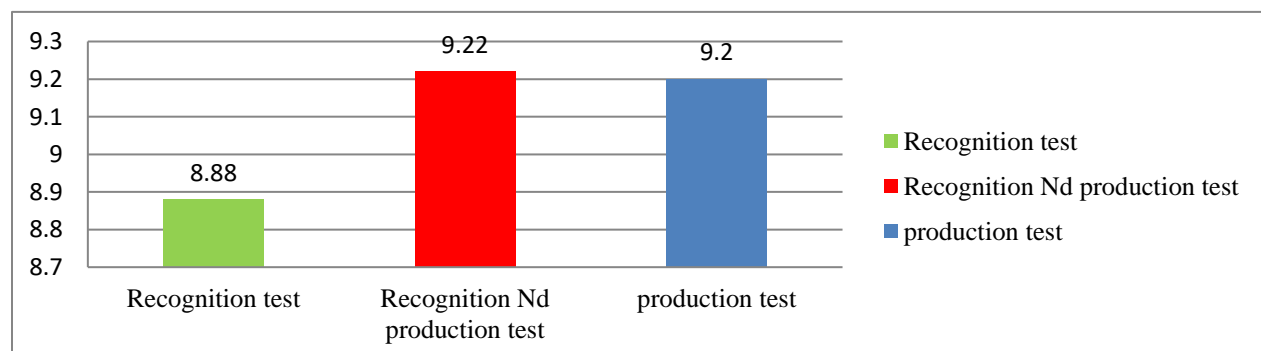
In total terms, figure (2) shows the total performance of all groups with respect to the whole test. The highest total mean score 9.22 is for recognition\production.

Turning to the Tukey HSD post-hoc test, table (2) shows that many significant differences (marked with red color) exist as follows:

- Recognition: in all study years.
- Production\recognition: First to third year – second to third year – Third to first year – third to second year.
- Production: First to third year – third to first year.

Table (2) cross-sectional TUKEY HSD post-hoc test of male participants -

Dependent Variable	(I) Subjects	(J) Subjects	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Recognition	First-Year Male	Third-Year Male	-2.700*	.771	.003
		Fourth-Year Male	-5.950*	.771	.000
	Third-Year Male	First-Year Male	2.700*	.771	.003
		Fourth-Year Male	-3.250*	.771	.000
	Fourth-Year Male	First-Year Male	5.950*	.771	.000
		Third-Year Male	3.250*	.771	.000
Recognition_production	First-Year Male	Third-Year Male	-2.500*	.814	.009
		Fourth-Year Male	-6.100*	.814	.000
	Third-Year Male	First-Year Male	2.500*	.814	.009
		Fourth-Year Male	-3.600*	.814	.000
	Fourth-Year Male	First-Year Male	6.100*	.814	.000
		Third-Year Male	3.600*	.814	.000
Production	First-Year Male	Third-Year Male	-2.050	.931	.080
		Fourth-Year Male	-4.850*	.931	.000
	Third-Year Male	First-Year Male	2.050	.931	.080
		Fourth-Year Male	-2.800*	.931	.011
	Fourth-Year Male	First-Year Male	4.850*	.931	.000
		Third-Year Male	2.800*	.931	.011

As for progressive aspect, the TUKEY HSD post hoc test in table (3) shows that there are significant differences 0.000 Sig. between and within male academic levels in recognition, recognition\production and production.

Table (3) Male participants` significant differences with respect to progressive aspect

Progressive aspect		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Recognition	Between Groups	69.733	2	34.867	12.085	.000
	Within Groups	164.450	57	2.885		
	Total	234.183	59			
Recognition_production	Between Groups	123.700	2	61.850	26.974	.000
	Within Groups	130.700	57	2.293		
	Total	254.400	59			
Production	Between Groups	119.700	2	59.850	14.560	.000
	Within Groups	234.300	57	4.111		
	Total	354.000	59			

In figure (3) the 4th year participants top ranked all other academic levels as it scored 6.15 in recognition, 6.05 in recognition\production and 6.8 in production. It should also be noticed that the 3rd year participants outperformed the 1st year participants in the whole test. Generally, the figure shows a cross-sectional improvement in the progressive aspect.
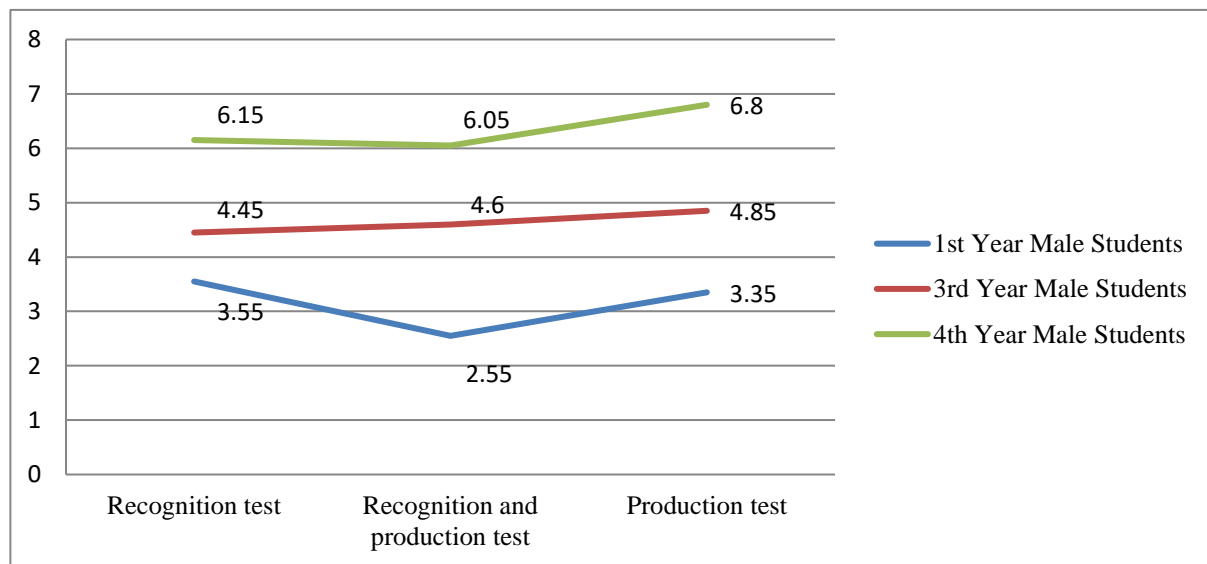
Figure (3) the male cross-sectional mean percentage in progressive aspect.

As figure (4) indicates, the male participants` high score in progressive aspect is 5.00 with production followed by recognition 4.72 and recognition\production 4.4.
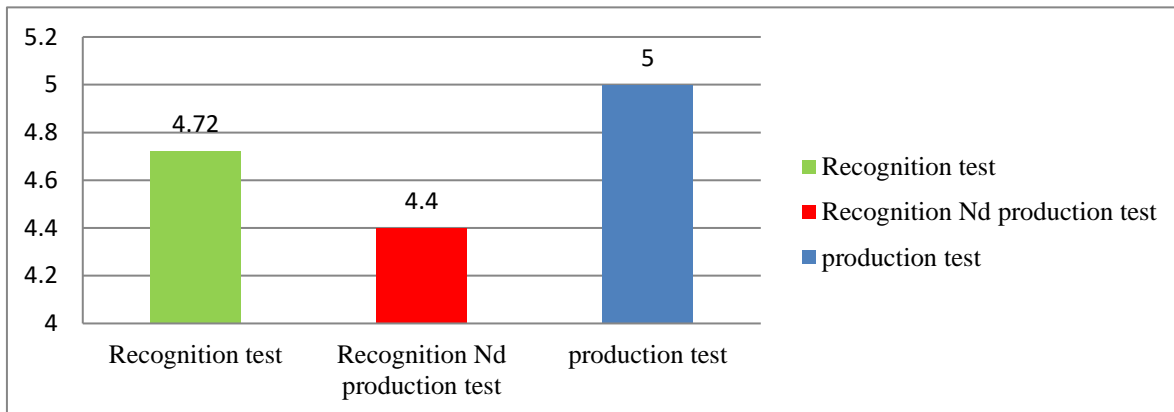
Figure (4) the overall male proficiency of progressive aspect

4.1.2 Female participants

This section is limited to female participants across the academic levels. The groups are compared with respect to the three questions: A. Recognition, B. recognition\production, C. production.

Table (4) female cross-sectional significant differences with respect to

The test		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Recognition	Between Groups	152.233	2	76.117	9.669	.000
	Within Groups	448.700	57	7.872		
	Total	600.933	59			
Recognition - production	Between Groups	193.433	2	96.717	7.209	.002
	Within Groups	764.750	57	13.417		
	Total	958.183	59			
Production	Between Groups	356.133	2	178.067	13.926	.000
	Within Groups	728.850	57	12.787		
	Total	1084.983	59			

As the analysis of variance in table (4) shows, there is a significant difference 0.000 Sig. between groups and with respect to A. Recognition and B. Production while the significant difference with Recognition\production is 0.02.

As figure (3) illustrates, groups vary with respect their performance in:

A. Recognition: As the analysis shows, 4th year participants outperformed the 1st and 2nd year participants with a mean of 11.45.

B- As for recognition and production, 4th year participants score the highest mean 11.65.

C- From production perspective, 4th year participants scored 13.75 mean which is higher than the 1st and the second year participants.
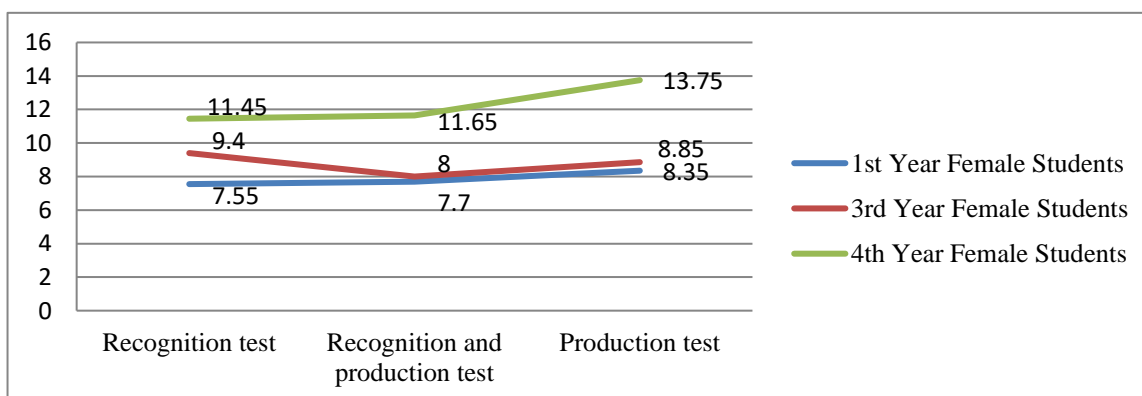
Figure (5) the female cross-sectional mean percentage in recognition, recognition\production and production.

In total terms, figure (6) shows the total performance of all groups with respect to recognition, recognition\production and production. The highest total mean score 10.32 is for production.
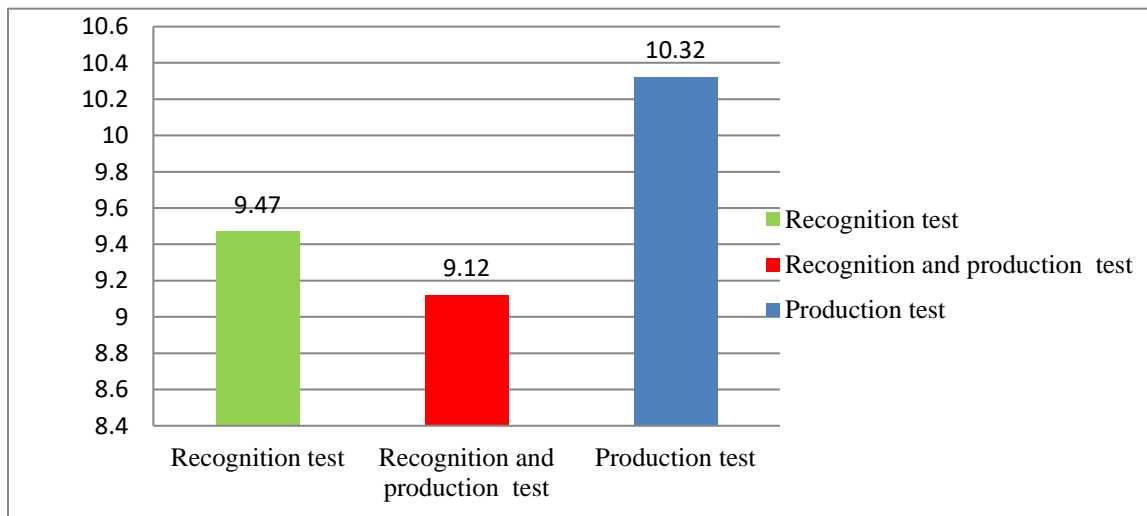

Figure (6) the overall female cross-sectional tense proficiency

significant differences (marked with red color) exist as follows

- Recognition: First to third year – fourth to first year.
- Production\recognition: First to fourth year – fourth to first year.
- Production: first to fourth year – third to fourth year – fourth to first year – fourth to third year.

Table (5) cross-sectional TUKEY HSD post-hoc test of female participants

Dependent Variable	(I) Subjects	(J) Subjects	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Recognition	First-Year Female	Third-Year Female	-1.850	.887	.102
		Fourth-Year Female	-3.900*	.887	.000
	Third-Year Female	First-Year Female	1.850	.887	.102
		Fourth-Year Female	-2.050	.887	.062
	Fourth-Year Female	First-Year Female	3.900*	.887	.000
		Third-Year Female	2.050	.887	.062
Recognition_production	First-Year Female	Third-Year Female	-.300	1.158	.964
		Fourth-Year Female	-3.950*	1.158	.003
	Third-Year Female	First-Year Female	.300	1.158	.964
		Fourth-Year Female	-3.650*	1.158	.007
	Fourth-Year Female	First-Year Female	3.950*	1.158	.003
		Third-Year Female	3.650*	1.158	.007
Production	First-Year Female	Third-Year Female	-.500	1.131	.898
		Fourth-Year Female	-5.400*	1.131	.000
	Third-Year Female	First-Year Female	.500	1.131	.898
		Fourth-Year Female	-4.900*	1.131	.000
	Fourth-Year Female	First-Year Female	5.400*	1.131	.000
		Third-Year Female	4.900*	1.131	.000

As for progressive aspect, the TUKEY HSD post hoc test in table (6) shows that there are significant differences between and within female academic levels in recognition 0.00 and production 0.001.

Table (6) female participants` significant differences with respect to progressive

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Progressive aspect						
Recognition	Between Groups	34.233	2	17.117	7.372	.001
	Within Groups	132.350	57	2.322		
	Total	166.583	59			
Recognition \production	Between Groups	16.933	2	8.467	1.341	.270
	Within Groups	360.000	57	6.316		
	Total	376.933	59			
Production	Between Groups	60.033	2	30.017	7.473	.001
	Within Groups	228.950	57	4.017		
	Total	288.983	59			

In figure (3) the 4ᵗʰ year participants top ranked all other academic levels as it scored 7.7 in production, 6.85 in recognition and 6.2 in recognition\production. It should also be noticed that the 3ʳᵈ year participants outperformed the 1ˢᵗ year participants in recognition 5.9 to 5 and in production 6.5 to 5.25 while in recognition\production, 1ˢᵗ year participants outperformed the 4ᵗʰ year counterpart 5.5 to 4.9. Generally, the figure shows a cross-sectional improvement in the progressive aspect.
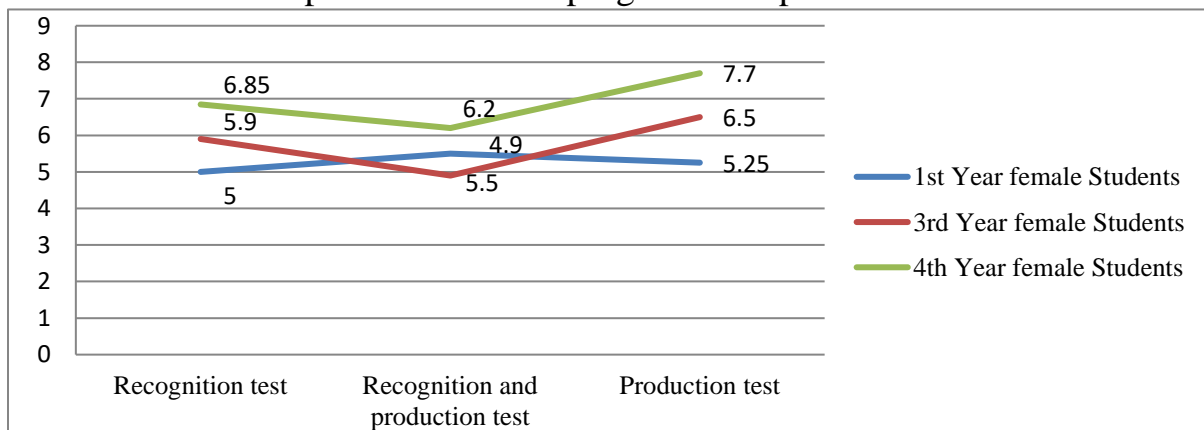
Figure (7) female cross-sectional mean percentage in progressive aspect.

As figure (8) indicates, the female participants` high score in progressive aspect is 6.48 with production followed by recognition 5.92 and recognition\production 5.53.

4.1.3 Male-Female contrastive analysis

In this section the male-female groups are contrasted following the previous two sections. The statistical outcome of each gender group is contrasted in a cross-sectional fashion so that outperformance is clearly presented

As far as recognition, figure (5) shows that 1st and 3nd year female participants outperformed their male counterparts while the 4th year male participants slightly exceeded their female counterparts.

Figure (8) overall female proficiency of progressive aspect
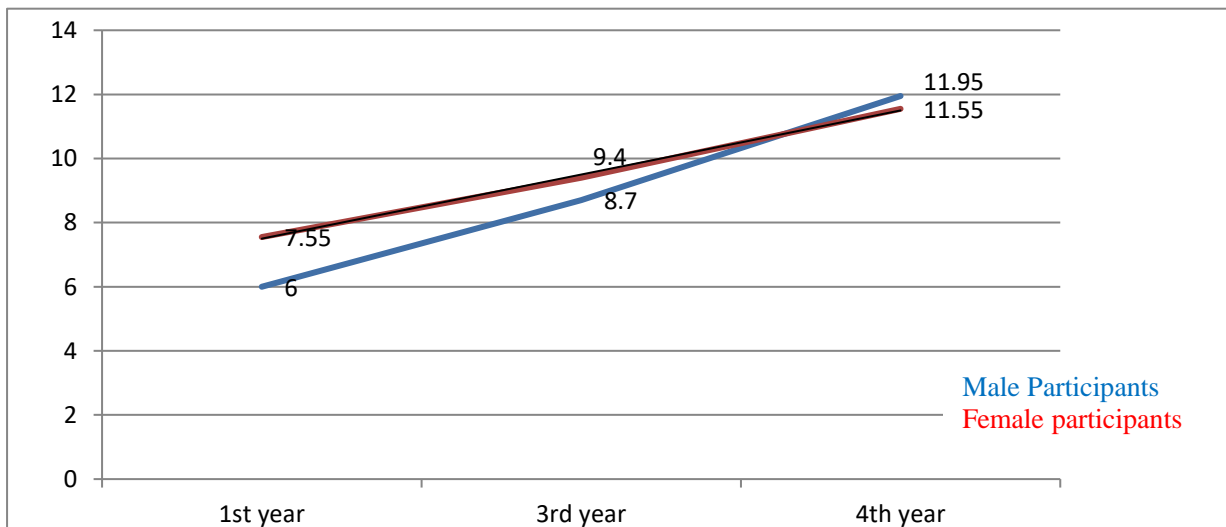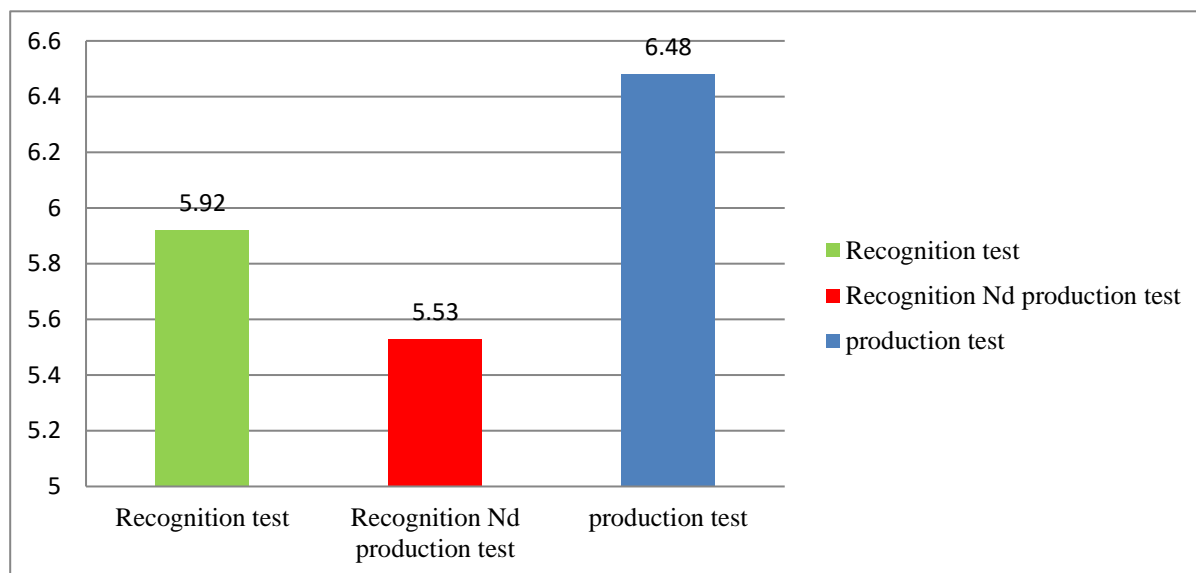
Figure (5) cross sectional mean percentages of recognition in male-female

As far as production is concerned, figure (7) shows that 1ˢᵗ year female participants outperformed their male counterparts while the 3ʳᵈ year male participants hardly exceeded their female counterparts. 4ᵗʰ year female participants highly outperformed their male counterparts.
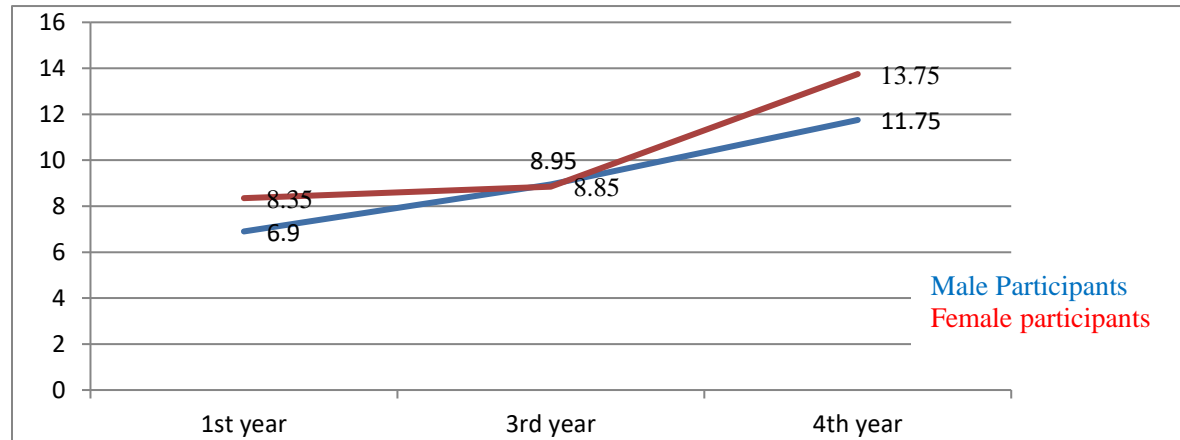

Figure (7) cross-sectional mean percentages of production in male-female

4.1.3.4 Overall cross-sectional tense proficiency

With respect to overall performance in tense, figure (8) shows that female participants across all the academic levels noticeably outperformed the 1ˢᵗ year male participants in recognition. Male participants, on the other hand, moderately exceeded the female participants in production recognition. Finally, there is a very high significant outperformance of female participants over the male ones with respect to production.
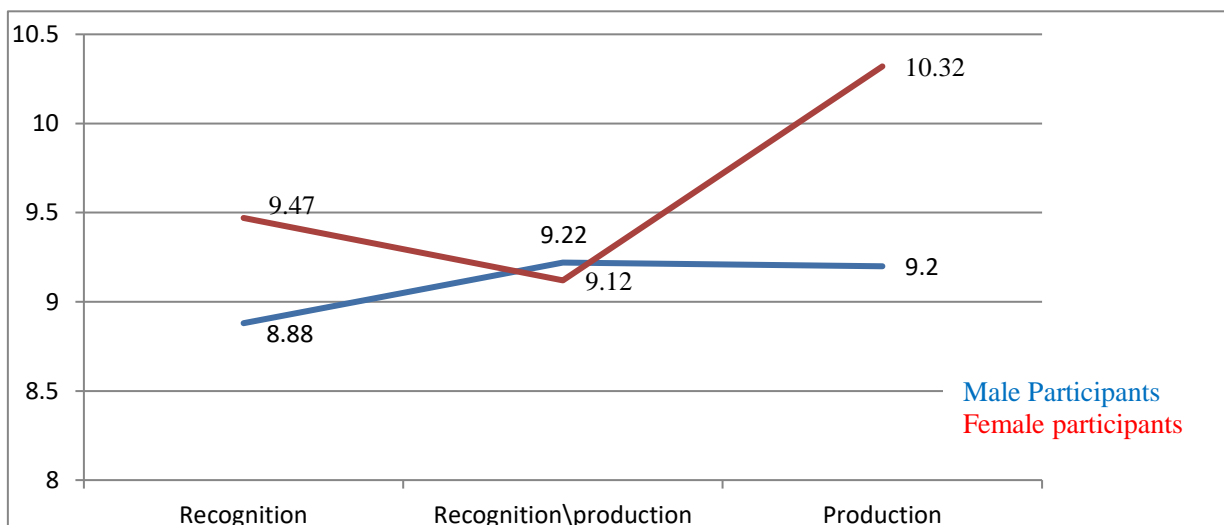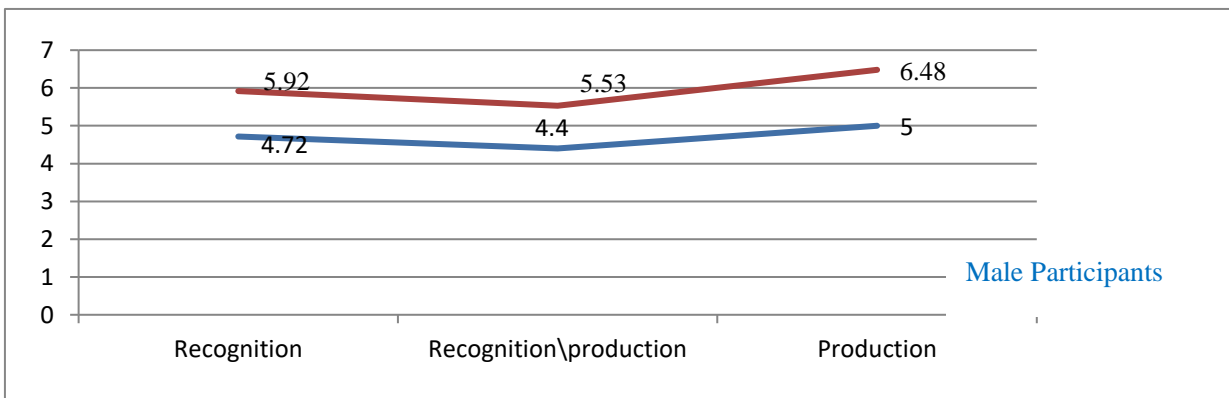
Figure (8) total mean percentages of male-female performance in Recognition, Recognition\production and production

Concerning progressive aspect, figure (9) shows that female participants highly outperformed the male participants within recognition, recognition\production and production.

Figure (9) total mean percentages of male-female proficiency in progressive aspect

Conclusions:

As far as hypothesis number one is concerned and based on the statistical inferential analysis, it can be concluded that there are female-outperforming across gender

significant differences. There are also cross-sectional significant differences showing proficiency progress over the academic levels. In many cases, female participants highly outperformed the male participants with respect to both: overall performance and in recognition, recognition\production and production of tense. This means that female participants possess a potential for more accuracy in the identification and construction of tense in English. Although Arabic has no identifiable progressive aspect, female participants show a higher proficiency in manipulating English progressive aspect which means that female participants exhibit less L1 conflict than male participants across all academic levels; hence hypothesis number two is invalidated.

Pedagogical implications:

Based on the study conclusion that (tense proficiency progresses over time with increased exposure to the English) the design of the curricula should include a systematic and progressive sequencing of tense instructions. Beginning with simple tenses in the 1st and\or the 2nd year and moving gradually to more complex tenses in the 3rd and 4th academic years so that the learners' developmental needs are met. The statistically based across gender differences in tense proficiency may be the result of various factors. These can be: motivation, language learning strategies, and learning preferences which should always be taken into consideration by instructors within the classroom.

Bibliography

Els, T. v. (1984). *Applied linguistics and the learning and teaching of foreign languages.* . Edward Arnold.

Al-Shammery, D. H., & Shahriari, H. (2022). Common Grammatical Errors in Written Discourse of Iraqi EFL Learners. *Revista Eletronica em Gestao Educao e tecnologia Ambiental*, 1-13.

Alzeebaree , Y; Zebari, I;. (2021). What makes an effective EFL teacher: High school students` perceptions. *The Asian ESP Journal*.

Brown, E. K., & Miller, J. E. (1980). *A Linguistic Introduction to Sentence Structure.* London: Hutchison.

Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching.* New York: Longman.

Brown, J. D. (2004). Research methods for Applied Linguistics: Scope characteristics and standards. In A. a. Davies, *The handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 476-500).

Cameron, D. (2005). Language, gender, and sexuality: Current issues and new directions. *Applied Linguistics, ,* 482–502.

Carnie, A. (2011). *Modern syntax.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Corder, S. P. (1976). *Error Analysis and Interlanguage.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Crystal, D. (2003). *English as global language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Davies, A., & Elder, C. (2004). *General Introduction: Subject to discipline.*

Gas, S. M., & Mackey, A. (2007). *Data elicitation for second and foreign language research.* Psychology Press.

Huda, T., & Wuda, R. W. (2019). GRAMMATICAL ERRORS ANALYSIS ON EFL LEARNERS WRITING journey. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 113-117.

Jabbari, M. J. (2013). Time and tense in language. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 243-252.

Jasim, M. J. (2019). Interlingual Errors in Iraqi EFL Learners Writings. *Thematic journal of English Language Teaching.*, 33-40.

Little, J. L. (2018). The role of multiple-choice in increasing access to difficult-to-retrieve information. *Journal of Cognitive Psychology.*, 520-531.

Majeed, A. J. (2022). Analysis of Errors Made by Iraqi EFL University Students in Using Indirect Questions. *Journal of University of Babylon.*, 14-19.

Menard-Warwick, J. (2013). Gender and Second Language Acquisition. In C. Chapelle, *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics* (pp. 1-6).

Naser, H. S. (2020). Analyzing Errors commited by Iraqi EFLUniversity Learners in using English Simple Tense. *Mustansiriyah Journal of Arts.*, 813-823.

Pejman, S., & Gorjian, B. (2020). The Effect of Recognition and Comprehension Test-types on Listening Comprehension at Junior High School. . *Journal of new advances in English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics.*, 423-456.

Teutsch-Dwyer, M. (2001). (Re)constructing masculinity in a new linguistic reality. *Multilingualism, second language learning, and gender*, 175–98.