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Reduced and Citation Forms as Produced by Iraqi EFL University Students at Duhok University An Error Analytic Study

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Abstract

English is spoken by its native speakers in two different forms. Reduced form which marks the colloquial and rapid speech so that it is easily produced and a citation or unreduced form which is a characteristic of careful, emphasized and slow speech.

This paper investigates Iraqi EFL university students' production of the two forms mentioned above. The sample chosen includes twenty fourth year students, of which ten are males and the other ten are females from the Department of English of the College of Languages of the University of Duhok in Kurdistan Region of Iraq in the academic year 2020-2021. The material tested is six connective words which represent the commonest ones in every-day conversation. A pronunciation test is designed to measure the production

Keywords: Reduced form, Citation form, Intelligibility, Accuracy, Production

1. Introduction

Since the last quarter of the previous century, foreign language study and teaching has undergone considerable developments and changes. Emphasis is laid on successful communication and the communicative language teaching has emerged. In such a context of situation, pronunciation is a vital component as it is the medium through which all verbal communication is carried out. (Al-Zubaidi, 2019, p. 1).

As a result, accurate and correct pronunciation has become a must and it is still one of the troublesome issues that the overwhelming majority of non-native speakers continually suffer from. Reduced and citations forms are so difficult that very few foreign learners are able to use them correctly.

During a visit made by Ajwad T. Abood to the Department of English of College of Languages of the University of Duhok in the academic year 2020-2021, it has been found out that although the students speak somehow intelligibly; their inter-language phonology is characterized by a poor accuracy. As a result, this study is thought of and carried out empirically.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Reduced and Citation Forms

Roach (1983: 86) state that speakers who do not have a good mastery of the reduced forms are likely to face a difficulty understanding other speakers who are able to use them.

O'Conner (1973: 92) refers that the style of English spoken with only the citation (strong) form sounds wrong. Ladefoged (1975: 93) maintains that misuse of both reduced and full forms results in giving undue prominence to unimportant words and vice versa.

Goodwin (2001: 119) argues that there is only one emphasized syllable (made prominent) within each thought group. Emphasis is usually made by lengthening the syllable and moving the pitch of the voice up and down.

A syllable is made prominent in order to introduce new important information, to introduce information that contradicts a previously mentioned one, to introduce the most important word in the phrase, or to make the

listener keep that word well sounding in his ear for a moment. (Goodwin, 2001, p. 119).

Gimson (1980: 284) mentions that words said in isolation are normally accented (having a full form) while the words said within connected speech are unaccented).

Hassan and El-Shayib (1987: 161) state that reduced forms include function words such as articles, auxiliary verbs, pronouns, possessives as well as some prepositions and some conjunctions.

It is important to have a good command over the pronunciation of these function words because they appear from the very beginning of any syllabus. (Hassan and El-Shayib, 1987, p. 161).

Goodwin (2001: 121) refers that many function words in English are usually unstressed while some others are stressed. Therefore, they have both citation (full or strong) form which characterizes the stressed ones and a reduced (weak) form which appears in unstressed words.

Connectives. Reduced and Citation Forms¹

Connectives	Citation Forms		Reduced Forms		
	Normal	Before Vowels	Normal	Before Vowels	Rapid
and	/ænd/			/ənd/	/n/, /nd/ /
than	/ðæn/		/ðən/		/ðn/
who	/hu:/		/hʊ/		/u/
or	/o:/	/o:r/	/ə/	/ər/	
nor	/no:/	/no:r/	/nə/	/nər/	
that	/ðæt/		/ðət/		

2.2. Production

Language is made up of a number of systems and subsystems that all work together while speech is produced. Halliday (2003: 2) assumes that language involves three systems: physical, biological and social. A physical systems is the physical apparatus, a biological system is the life of the

¹. Table of connectives is cited from Khalil I. Hamash, 1989, p. 35.

physical system while the social system is the value of the subsequent two systems.

Bloomfield (1976: 1-8) states that human language is the result of a number of linguistic processing. Language is oral and is made up of speech sounds.

In order to produce speech, air must be set in motion. Without air moving into and out of the speech apparatus, no speech is produced at all. (Wells and Colson, 1981, p. 1).

2.3. Error Analysis (EA)

All language speakers, whether native speakers or not, are liable to make mistakes. Consequently, a foreign learner's knowledge of the language he speaks is measured by the number of errors he makes. (Corder, 1973, p. 256).

Errors made by the foreign learner are the result of his native language transfer. Therefore, two types of errors need to be distinguished: Pro-active and retro-active transfer errors. The former refers to the influence of the previously existing skills onto the new skills (native language) and the latter is quite the other way round. (Els et al, 1977, p. 49).

Errors are classified by Corder (1967) into systematic and non-systematic. Non-systematic errors are the result of chance circumstances such as physical states like tiredness, and psychological conditions such as strong feelings and emotions and these are called lapses and are usually made by the native speaker who knows the rules of his code and he is able to correct them. The systematic errors are made by the non-native speaker (foreign learner). These errors indicate his competence and he is unable to correct them as he does not know the rules of the foreign code. These errors are called breaches. (Cited in Al-Jumaili, 1990, p. 16).

Errors are significant. They tell the teacher about the amount of effectiveness of his teaching. Errors also tell the teacher what part of the syllabus is taught effectively and what other parts are still in need of more attention. (Corder, 1973, p. 265).

3. Research Questions

The present study tries to find answers to such questions as:

- a. Do Iraqi EFL University students of the University of Duhok have a good command over the tested subject-matter?
- b. Is their inter-language phonology characterized by a reduced or a citation form?
- c. Do gender differences result in production differences?

4. Data Collection Tools

4.1. Participants

The study involves twenty fourth-year students from the Department of English of College of Languages of the University of Duhok in the academic year 2020-2021. The students are chosen randomly and of both genders (10 males and 10 females). All the students speak Kurdish as their native language and all belong to the same social background. Therefore, the sample is homogenous in its nature.

4.2. The Test

In order to collect the data, the researcher has designed a production test. The production test involves six connectives which represent the commonest ones in every-day conversation. They are put in sentences to be read aloud by the participant. Participants' aloud reading is recorded for analysis. The scoring scheme is based on right / wrong criterion. Each connective is given two marks. The minimum pass mark is 6. The maximum pass mark is 12.

Distribution of Marks

Connectives	Marks Allotted
and	2
than	2
who	2
or	2
nor	2
that	2
Total Marks Allotted	12
Minimum Pass Mark	6

5. Results

Results are tabulated as below:

Quantitative Results (Male & Female)

Participant's No.	Connectives (6 Marks)
1	0
2	0
3	2
4	1
5	2
6	0
7	1
8	2
9	0
10	1
11	1
12	0
13	1
14	0
15	1
16	2
17	1
18	1
19	1
20	1
Pass percentage	0 %
Failure Percentage	100 %

The quantitative test is carried out to involve twenty participants from the University of Duhoke.

The test is carried out at the language laboratory where quiet environment is possible for good tape-recording.

The test carry out is supervised by Dr. Asma'a Bamerni - Head of the Department of English who is a phonologist.

**Qualitative Results
(Females)**

**Qualitative Results
(Males)**

Participant's No.	Connectives (6 Marks)	Participant's No.	Connectives (6 Marks)
1	1	1	0
2	0	2	0
3	1	3	2
4	0	4	1
5	1	5	2
6	2	6	0
7	1	7	1
8	1	8	2
9	1	9	0
10	1	10	1
Pass percentage	0 %	Pass percentage	0 %
Failure Percentage	100 %	Failure Percentage	100 %

6. Findings

It is found out that students fail miserably in the production of the reduced form of the connective words tested. The success that is achieved is partial, e.g. some students succeed to produce a single connective but fail in the overall production of the rest.

The Iraqi EFL University students' inter-language phonology at the University of Duhok is characterized by the citation forms, The findings also reveal that there is no gender differences in the production of the subject-matter.

7. Recommendations

The study recommends the following:

- a. More attention is to be directed towards the oral performance, e.g. there should be extensive listening and continuous repetition and practice.
- b. Pronunciation rules are a means to an end. They should be learned inductively.
- c. Fluency and intelligibility are important but they should not be achieved at the expense of accuracy.
- d. Activating the language lab.

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Appendix No. 1. Production Test

Date:

Material Tested: Connectives (Reduced & Citation Forms).

Participants' Description: 4th year students.

Participant's Name:

University of Duhok, College of Languages.

Gender: a. M b. F

Examiner: Ajwad Thamir Abood

Connectives

Read the following sentences aloud.

1. Great developments and changes took place in the city where I live. Come and see.
2. She loves me more than you do.
3. I wonder who that letter is from.
4. Six or seven thieves broke into my house last night.
5. She seemed neither surprised nor worried.
6. She was so tired that she couldn't think straight.

About the authors

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نطق طلبة جامعة دهوك الدارسين للغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية للصيغ المختزلة والغير مختزلة دراسة تحليل اخطاء

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المستخلص

ينطق متحدثو اللغة الانجليزية لغتهم الام بطريقتين. الطريقة الاولى باستخدام الصيغ المختزلة او المخففة التي يتميز بها الكلام الدارج والسريع والطريقة الثانية هي الصيغ الغير مختزلة او المشددة وهي ميزة من ميز الحديث الدقيق والغير سريع. تهدف هذه الدراسة الى استقصاء الصيغتين في نطق طلبة الجامعات العراقية. وقد اختيرت العينة لتشمل عشرون طالبا وطالبة في المرحلة الرابعة من قسم اللغة الانجليزية في كلية اللغات - جامعة دهوك في إقليم كردستان العراق للعام الدراسي ٢٠٢٠-٢٠٢١. ولاتمام هذه الدراسة، انشئ اختبار اصدار الحديث او النطق واقد اختيرت مادة الاختبار لتشمل ست روابط جمل من بين الاكثر شيوعا وتداولوا في الحديث اليومي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الصيغ المختزلة، الصيغ الغير مختزلة، وضوح النطق، دقة النطق، النطق.