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The Use of Dangling Modifier by Iraqi EFL University Students

A Paper

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسُ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ
السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

صدق الله العلي العظيم

سورة يونس- الآية 5



To My Family

Acknowledgments

Thanks, are first due to Almighty Allah for giving me the strength and ability to reach this stage. I am grateful to my supervisor Dr. Wafaa Faisal for her effort and help to achieve this research. I am very thankful to my family.

تعليق عليه [RA1]: It is good that you wrote an abstract.

Abstract

In English sentences, many dangling modifiers occur at the beginning of sentences - often as introductory clauses or phrases, but can also appear at the end. A dangling modifier is a phrase or clause that modifies a word not clearly stated in the sentence, or that does not connect grammatically with what it is intended to modify. In this paper, the meaning of dangling modifiers is being discussed. As well as we will test a random sample of students regarding using dangling modifier to show the difficulty faced by Iraqi EFL university students.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 The Problem

A dangling modifier is a specific case of which the dangling participle is an error in sentence structure whereby a grammatical modifier is associated with a wrong word or modifier no word in the sentence.

The problem arises from the state that most EFL university students often find difficulty in using dangling modifier.

1.2 Aims

This paper aims at finding out the difficulty faced by Iraqi EFL university students in using dangling modifier.

1.3 Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that Iraqi EFL university students often find difficulty in using dangling modifier.

1.4 Procedures

The following steps will be followed in this paper:

1-Presenting a comprehensive theoretical study about the use of dangling modifier.

2-Testing a random sample of students regarding using dangling modifier to show whether the Iraqi EFL university students have difficulty in the acquisition of

3- Analyzing the results of the test to point out the difficulty faced by the students.

تعليق [RA2]: You should include a statement that you have observed that your classmates encounter a problem in the acquisition of dangling modifiers.

1.5 Limits

This paper is limited to the study of the use of dangling modifier. As well as testing a random sample of students regarding using dangling modifier to show the difficulty faced by Iraqi EFL university students.

1.6 Value

This paper is hoped to be of value for English learners and to pave the way for further research in this area.

تعليق عليه [RA3]: To shed light on probable problems in the acquisition of this structure by Iraqi EFL learners.

Chapter Two

Dangling Modifier

2.1 What are dangling modifiers?

According to McArthur, Tom (1992:352-353), a dangling modifier is a specific case of which the dangling participle is an error in sentence structure whereby a grammatical modifier is associated with a wrong word or modifier no word in the sentence.

Hooper and Foote (2000: 79) define dangling modifiers as a dependent structure which refers to the wrong word in the sentence. This occurs because the writer starts a construction and forgets where he or she is going. As a result, the sentence will be ambiguous.

Dangling modifier is one of the problems that cause ambiguity in the English language. This due to the fact that dangling modifiers usually occur when a group of words is not clearly connected to the word it modifies. For example, when the modifier occurs at the beginning of the sentence, in most cases readers will expect that this modifier modifies the subject, but the writer intended to modify the object. This confusion will lead to a lot of ambiguity and difficulty in understanding of the sentences. The reader should slow down in reading in order to understand the exact meaning because the dangling modifier can change the intended meaning.

(Azar, 1999:87)

Quirk **et al.** (1972: 757) state that such constructions are related to “fault of style” and they were called “unattached or unrelated participles”. In their opinion, the main reason behind dangling modifiers arises when the noun phrase with which the understood subject of the

non-finite clause should be identified does not appear as subject of the main clause , and perhaps does not occur in the main clause at all,e.g;

1-Flying through the air at speed of sound , a sudden thought struck me

. 2-Since leaving her , the whole of life has seemed pointless.

2.2 Characteristics of Dangling Modifiers

2.2.1 -Dangling modifier most frequently occur at the beginning of sentences. As well as the may also occur at the end of the sentence.

Example:

2.2.2-They may be awkward , confusing , or even unintentionally funny .

2.2.3-They often have an –ing word or to + infinitive phrase near the start of the sentence.

2.2.4 -They usually introduce sentences which contain a verb form and imply but do not call a subject.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337208712_English_Dangling_Modifiers_and_Arabic_Descriptive_Clauses_Any_Relationship

2.3 Types of Dangling Modifiers

There are four types of dangling modifiers

a) Dangling modifiers involving verbals.

Leech and Svartvik (1975:150) state that participial and verbal clauses are non-finite clauses because their verb element is a non-finite(-ing/-ed) verb phrase .Non finite clauses can be constructed without a subject and they usually are . Dangling modifiers ;For example;

incorrect :

3-Looking through his field glasses , the bird flew away.

Correct:

4-Looking through his field glasses , he saw the bird fly .

A participial phrase which does not refer clearly to the noun or pronoun that it modifies is called a dangling participle .

b)Dangling Modifiers Involving Participial Phrases

Sometimes an introductory participial phrase cannot be corrected by the foregoing method . Such phrases may be expanded into adverbial clauses ;For example Incorrect :

5-Having been taught many tricks , Mike enjoyed playing with the dog .

Correct :

6-Since the dog had been taught

c)Dangling Modifiers Involving Prepositional Phrases

Verbals embedded inside Prepositional phrases can sometimes relate to the wrong structure. When verbal is transformed into a finite verb ,the prepositional phrase becomes an adverbial clause modifying a verb as in Incorrect

7-After beating the eggs , it is time to add butter.

Correct

8-After beating eggs , you should add butter.

e)Dangling Modifiers Involving Elliptical Clauses

Aziz (1989 : 219) states that the subject of elliptical clauses is omitted and is normally identified with the subject of the main clause . If the subject is to be identified explicitly , it is introduced by ‘ for’ :For example

Incorrect:

9-To reach the castle , they had to cross the river .

Correct

10-For them to reach the castle , they had to cross the river.

. Aziz (1989 : 219-223) and

Quirk et al. (1972 : 757-760)

2.4 Differences Between Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers

Dangling Modifiers are phrases that begin sentence and simply dangle there with no clear subject .For example;

11-While hiking along with our camping gear, a bear crossed our path. The subject is not clear in this sentence. 'the bear' seems to be the subject, but bears are not known for hiking along anyone's camping gear.

Correct :

12-While hiking along with our camping gear, we saw a bear cross our path.

While Misplaced modifiers are phrases that are out of place,So they are modifying the wrong subject (Carillo, 2003:70).For example;

13-She left the 19th century bench to be sold at auction with the antique dealer.

In this sentence, it sounds as if the bench and the dealer are going to be sold together.

Correct

14-She left the 19th century bench with the antique dealer to be sold at auction.

They also differ in the way of correction

For dangling modifier we should follow the following points

1. Leave the modifier as it is.
2. Change the main part of the sentence so that it begins with the term actually modified.
3. This change will put the modifier next to the term it modifies.(Martin and McChesney, 1977:190)

For Misplaced modifier can be corrected by the following points

1-Find the modifier.

2-Identify what word that the modifier was intended to modify.

3-Place the modifier as close as possible to the word, phrase, or clause it is supposed to modify.

(Sara, B., Young ,1982:160-161)

Chapter Three

The Test

3.1 Testing

A test can be defined as any means of checking what the students can do with the language and what they cannot do with it. (Al-Juboury, 1999:1)

3.2 The Characteristics of a Good Test

The most important features of a good test are:

3.2.1 Validity

Kumar (2011:113) denotes that validity is a test which helps predict whether a person will be successful in a given job. A test that has been validated can be helpful in differentiating between prospective and employees who will be able to perform the job well and those who will not.

The most important types of validity are:

3.2.1.1 Content Validity

It is the extent to which the test related to the features of the material to be tested. (Armstrong, 2006:463)

3.2.1.2 Face Validity

It refers to the way in which the test looks to the examinees, supervisors or to the people concerned with students' education, in order to have its face validity. (Al-Juboury, 1999:26)

The present test has been approved by the following supervisors:

- Prof. Salih M. Addie (Ph.D)
- Prof. Donya Ajam (M. A.)
- Asst. Prof. Nasaem Mahdi (Ph.D)

3.2.2 Reliability

It refers to the standardization of the result of the test. A person who takes a certain score in a certain test ,he should be able to take the same score if the test is given to him another time.(Kumar ,2011:113)

3.3 Test Design

The test consists of two questions, the first question includes (10) sentences and the second question includes(5) questions to measure the recognition level and the production level of the student's performance in using dangling modifier.

3.4 Test Material

Most items of the test are taken from grammar books mentioned in chapter two.

3.5 The Sample of the test

The sample of the test consists of (30) students taken randomly from the fourth year level in the Dept. of English, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Babylon during the academic year 2021-2022.

Chapter Four

The Result of the Test

4.1 The Result of the Test

Table (1) the results of the recognition level :.

Items	Number of Correct Responses	Percentage%	Number of Incorrect Responses	Percentage%
1	5	17%	25	83%
2	13	43%	17	57%
3	18	60%	12	40%
4	8	27%	22	73%
5	12	40%	18	60%
6	11	36%	19	64%
7	19	63%	11	37%
8	8	27%	22	73%
9	4	13%	26	87%
10	11	37%	19	63%
Total	109	36%	191	64%

4.2.1 Test Analysis for Question (1)

According to the results shown in the table above. It is noticed that the number and the percentage of incorrect responses (191) with a percentage of (64%) are more than those of the correct responses (109,36%) .

Item(1) the number and percentage of incorrect responses(25,83%) are more than those of correct responses(5,17 %) because the students are unfamiliar with these items.The same thing with item (2) the number and

percentage of incorrect responses(17,57%) are more than those of correct responses(13,43%) because the students are unfamiliar with these items.

Item(3) the number and percentage of correct responses(18,60%) are more than those of incorrect responses(12,40%) because the students are familiar with these items.In contrast Items(4) the number and percentage of incorrect responses. (22,73%) are more than of correct responses (8,27%)

Item(5) the number and percentage of incorrect responses(18,60%) are more than those of correct responses(12,40%) because the students are unfamiliar with these items.Also with Item(6) we notice the number and percentage of incorrect responses(19,64%) are more than those of correct responses(11,36%) because the students are unfamiliar with these items.

Item(8) the number and percentage of incorrect responses(22,73%) are more than those of correct responses(8,27 %) because the students are unfamiliar with these items.Also with the item(9) the number and percentage of incorrect responses(26,87%) are more than those of correct responses(4,13%) because the students are unfamiliar with these items.

Item(10) the number and percentage of incorrect responses(19,63%) are more than those of correct responses(11,37%) because the students are unfamiliar with these items.

The following table (2)shows the result of the production level:

Items	Number of Correct Responses	Percentage%	Number of Incorrect Responses	Percentage%
1	7	27%	23	73%

2	12	40%	18	60%
3	7	24%	23	76%
4	8	27%	22	73%
5	9	30%	21	70%
Total	44	30%	106	70%

4.2.2 Test Analysis for QuestionTwo

According to the results shown in the table above. It is noticed that the number and the percentage of incorrect responses (109,62%) are more than those of the correct responses (66,48%) .

Items(1 and 3) the number and percentage of incorrect (7,27%) are more than those of correct responses(23,73%) .

because the students don't have enough information about these items

Items(2) the number and percentage of incorrect (18,60%) are more than those of correct responses(12,40%) because the item doesn't introduced clearly for them

Items(4) the number and percentage of incorrect(22,73) are more than those of correct responses(8,27%)) because they lack information about this items.Also we have with Items(5) the number and percentage of incorrect (21,70%) are more than those of correct responses(9,30%) because because they donot have this items in their textbook

Chapter Five

Conclusion

A dangling modifier is a specific case of which the dangling participle is an error in sentence structure whereby a grammatical modifier is associated with a wrong word or modifier no word in the sentence.

A random sample of (30) students was taken from the fourth year classes in the Dept. of English, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Babylon to apply a diagnostic test to them in using dangling modifier during the academic year(2021-2022).According to the result of the whole test ,the number and the percentage of incorrect responses (149,67%) are more than those of correct responses(77, 33%).The results indicate that Iraqi EFL university learners face difficulty in using dangling modifier and this confirms the hypothesis of the study.

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Appendix(1) The Test

Q1)Are the modifiers in these sentences correct or not?

1-Though only in Grade 3,the school librarian realized that Kristen could read as well as many junior high student

2-Listening attentively to even the most long-winded guests,our host managed to make everyone feel welcome.

3-Within three minutes of meeting Grigor in the lineup at Starbucks,Sandra had fallen hopelessly in love with him.

4-Dotting the skies over Gatineau,the spectators gaped at the brightly coloured hot-air balloons.

5-While driving along the narrow Scottish roads in his beat-up Land Rover,a great idea struck him.

6-Although eighty years old,most household chores were still easy for Minnie to perform.

7-Skipping stones and throwing sticks into the waves, the children were oblivious to the approaching tornado.

8-After beating the eggs,it is time to add butter.

9-To reach the castle,they had to cross the river.

10-Looking through his field glasses,the bird flew away.

Q2) Give meaningful sentences for each of the following:

1-Dangling modifiers involving verbals.

2-Dangling modifiers Involving participle phrases.

3-Dangling modifier involving prepositional Phrases

4-Dangling modifier Involving elliptical Clauses

5-Dangling modifier involving non finite clauses constructed without a subject

Appendix(2) The Answer of the Test

Q1)

- 1-incorrect
- 2-correct
- 3-correct
- 4-incorrect
- 5-incorrect
- 6-incorrect
- 7-correct
- 8-incorrect
- 9-incorrect
- 10-incorrect

Q2)

- 1-Looking through his field glasses , the bird flew away.
- 2-Having been taught many tricks , Mike enjoyed playing with the dog .
- 3-After beating the eggs , it is time to add butter.
- 4-To reach the castle , they had to cross the river .
- 5-Flying through the air at speed of sound , a sudden thought struck me.