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*Assessing the Performance of Iraqi EFL University Students  
in Using Interjections*

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَإِنَّمَا آتَيْنَاكَ كِتَابًا وَعِلْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هَذَا نَسْيَانٌ كَثِيرٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِكُمْ

الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (١٥)

(سورة النمل آية ١٥)

## Dedication

*First of all, praise be to God, who bestowed his gifts on me. He is the one who gave me the two parents that without them, I would not have arrived, as if they were a crutch and a torch that anchor and to see by. His gifts continued until He brought me to the crown of mankind with which He favoured all the children of Adam, knowledge with which I benefit my soul, and a light from the light of His knowledge, and He is the All-Knowing above all knowing. So that , I do not own anything, it is all from God and to Him.*

## *Table of Contains*

<u>Subjects</u>	<u>Pages</u>
1. Chapter One : Introduction.....	1-2
1.1 The Problem.....	1
1.2 Aims.....	1
1.3 Hypothesis.....	1
1.4 Procedures.....	1
1.5 Limits.....	2
1.6 Value.....	2
2. Chapter Two: Interjections.....	3-9
2.1 Definition.....	3
2.2 Features of Interjections .....	4
2.3 Types and Functions of Interjections.....	4
2.3.1 Types of Interjections.....	5
2.3.1.1 Primary Interjection.....	5
2.3.1.2 Secondary Interjections.....	5
2.3.2 Functions of Interjections.....	5
2.4 Punctuation of Interjections.....	8
2.4.1 Exclamation point.....	9
2.4.2 Period or Comma.....	9
2.4.3 Question mark.....	9
3. Chapter Three: The Test .....	10-13
3.1 Testing .....	10
3.2 The Characteristics of a Good Test .....	10
3.2.1 Validity .....	10
3.2.1.1 Content Validity.....	10

3.2.1.2 Face Validity.....	10
3.2.2 Reliability .....	11
3.3 Test Design .....	11
3.4 The sample of the Test .....	11
3.5 The Results of the Test .....	12
4. Chapter Four The Conclusion .....	14
5. Bibliography .....	15
6. Appendix I the Test.....	17
7. Appendix II the Results of the Test .....	19

## Chapter One

### Introduction

#### **1.1 The problem**

Interjections briefly are the words or phrases forcefully convey meaning like ( wow , Um , Uh , oops ,..... etc.). But these words or expressions ,which may sometimes be shorthand for a complete emotional expression. (<https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-an-interjection>).

The problem arise from the state that most Iraqi EFL learners face difficulty in using interjection in English language. That's because English language has different Interjections with different functions. Also students often lack knowledge about the use of the topic under investigation.

#### **1.2 Aims**

To find out the difficulty faced by Iraqi EFL learners in using English interjections.

#### **1.3 Hypothesis**

It is hypothesized that Iraqi EFL university students often find difficulty in using English interjections.

#### **1.4 Procedures**

The following steps will be followed :

1. Presenting a theoretical study about interjections in English interjections
2. Applying a diagnostic tests on a random sample of students to check their performance in using English interjections.
3. Analysing the findings of the test .

**1.5 Limits**

The study limits itself to the area of English interjections and the test will be applied to a random sample of the fourth year level in the Department of English , College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Babylon.

**1.6 Value**

It is hoped that this work will be of value for EFL learners and it will pave the way for further research in this regard ( English interjections).

## Chapter Two

### Interjections

#### 1.7 – Definition

There are many definitions for Interjection which are firstly “ *An Interjection is a word used to express some strong or sudden emotions of the mind* . “(Bullions, Peter. ( N.D.,148). These are an utterance that could be a word , phrase or sounds . All of them may seem simple or short , but they contain full meaning like surprise, joyful, happiness, sadness or furious.

The word "interjection" comes from the Latin word " injectors," which means "thrown between," as in "between the sections of the phrase." However, it is frequently used at the start or end of a statement. Then it had the lexical definition which is “*An interjection is a word or phrase that is grammatically independent from the words around it, and mainly expresses feeling rather than meaning.*”(Merriam-Webster. Com)

"*An interjection also known as an ejaculation exclamation* “( thoughtco . Com ). Furthermore, these Interjections may stand alone as a response within the context or to have a please into a sentences. These positions to be taken to convey the effected deep meaning by the speaker just like facial expressions.

To summarizing the definitions in two points . Firstly interjections are ejaculation or exclamation that expresses emotion. Secondly a natural ejaculation that expresses a sentiment or emotion and is utilized or regarded as a part of speech.(Jovanovich, Z. Vladimir. 2004,18 )

These are the common Interjections in the English language “*Ah ! alas ! O ! oh ! ha! fudge ! tush pshaw ! poh ! pugh !fie ! avault ! ho ! holla ! aha ! hurrah ! huzza ! bravo ! hist !hush ! heigho! heyday ! hail ! lo ! welcome ! halloo ! adieu !etc.*”( Bullions, Peter. ( N.D.,148)



## 2.2 –Features of Interjections

Interjections have some criteria. And as a part of language these characterizations to be tackled from linguistic point of view like Semantic , pragmatic or generally from a formal use of language.

- “n interjection is parsed by stating the part of speech, why, and the emotion expressed ;as, “ Oh ! what a sight is here.” (Bullions, Peter. ( N.D.,148) ).
- As interjection utterance, it hasn’t comparative degrees. That they as words to express human emotions which may be considered as adjectives. This is to say they are ( *Interjections or nonelliptical* ).(*Google scholar.com*)
- Interjections are words to have meaning yet they’re not a suitable environment for affixes. So, they’re not to go under the inflectional relations .( *ibid* )
- Because of its unexceptness to comparative or affixes defies it from other words class and to put itself in a new linguistic column. ( *Ibid* ).
- Interjections are also words from other areas of speech that are uttered in an unrelated and forcible manner to indicate passion; for example, nonsense! unusual, fantastic, and startling! What is this? Take a look! away! away with it! Listen up! Please come! Congratulations! Greetings!(*ibid*).

## 2.3 –Types and Functions of Interjections

Like any language formation, we need types and meanings or functions. About typology of it, Noble Butler in his book practical and critical grammar and Warren B. Brown in his practical grammar ( 1990) they write about two types. The first is the Principle Interjections which are words meant to be Interjections. While the second are words used as Interjections ,but they belongs to other language classes. In a study made by Felix Ameka about why the universal neglects Interjections as a part of the language , he adopted two types which are Primary and secondary Interjections.

### 2.3.1.1 Primary Interjections

Ouch!, Wow!, Gee!, Oho!, Oops!, and other principal interjections are small words or non-words that, depending on their distribution, can represent an expression by themselves and do not normally enter into construction with other word classes. They could be combined with other units as co-utterances. For example: Oops! Sorry, I dropped the salt. ( Ameka, Felix .1992,105)

We note that these words are unfamiliar in sound and form. We find it unique so that nothing else in the language resembles it, especially in the aspects that are concerned with morphology.

Furthermore for the sake of a comprehensive and general understanding of this type of expression, in any language, it must be completely separated from any other because they are not used elsewhere (interjections).

### 2.3.1.2 Secondary Interjections

This type consist of words with independent semantic features that can be employed as expressions on their own to communicate a feeling or state in a customary manner. As a result, they also refer to mental acts. Help!, Fire!, Careful!, and swear and taboo words such as damn!, hell!, heavens!, Christ!, and other expressively used words such as Shame!, Bother!, Drats!, and others fall under secondary interjections. For example: Damm ! I forgot my keys ! (ibid)

Independent semantic features means that , they don't exist by itself like the expressions above ( primary ones) . But it does mean that they have lexical definition or meaning, but departed from other their main functions for the purpose of interject. These Interjections are of three kinds which are adjectives ( nice , sweet , terrific , etc ..) , nouns or noun phrases ( congratulations, fire , holy cow, etc...) and short clauses ( oh my God , ...etc).

### 2.3.2 Functions of Interjections

Interjections used in the spoken colloquial languages in most cases. And we find it written only when there's a dialogue. That means , Interjections are used in everyday language not formally use as news and formal papers of government. Because they just to express feelings not a full thoughts .

( Bullions, Peter. ( N.D.,148)

However it's used in Ads and head lines of press articles, especially entertainment and artistic in order to make them familiar, close and arouse people attention. That's we already said it mostly used by people in their daily communication. Specifically speaking because Interjections are to express sudden bursts of feelings making sentences either spoken or written more active and joyable.

Now we shall move to some examples to see how these expressions function according to ([www.wordtype.org](http://www.wordtype.org))

1. Phew / strong reaction of (a) relief ,(b) disgust at smell
  - a. Phew! I'm so glad I didn't have to give that speech.
  - b. Phew! It stinks in here .
2. Wow / expresses admiration or surprise.  
Wow!It's a girl , that's really lovely.
3. Oh / I think- I see  
Oh ! He will not come tomorrow.
4. Uh oh / showing fear or be scared .  
Uh oh ! The dog chased me.
5. Aah / showing sudden fear .  
Aah ! That's was scary.
6. Ouch / expresses hurtness .  
Ouch , turn of the fire ! I got burnt.
7. Whew / showing completion of tasks successfully.  
Whew ! Finally I won.
8. Oops / making mistake.  
Oops ! Sorry, I dropped the salt.
9. Eww / showing disgustness.  
Eww, the food is rotten.
10. Aww / expresses cuteness.  
Aww , your daughter looks so beautiful.
11. Ahh / realizing something.  
Ahh, then this what he means.
12. Yeah / informal yes.

- Yeah, I'd like to go by car.
13. Yay / informal yes showing celebration.  
Yay, I did it.
14. Nah / informal No .  
Nah, I don't need new shoes.
15. Hmm / thinking about something or to be not sure about something.  
Hmm , I don't know if she'll take it.
16. Um / doubting or pusing.  
Your , Um, shirt has a stain on the back .
17. Uh / pause indicates that you need more time.  
Who is Davinci ? He's the one who drew thee...Um.. drew the Monalisa.
18. Ah / expresses pleasure, realization and surprise ( that's because in each expiration there's a different tone or way to pronounce).  
a. Ah , the food test good.  
b. Ah, now I got it  
c. Ah! The baby starts walking.
19. Ahem / get attention politely.  
Ahem, I'd like to announce something.
20. Argh / expresses fury or anguish ( damn ) .  
“ I was like ,argh, I can't get away from it “ ( mirriam-webster.com)
21. Boo / disapproval  
Boo , unpleasant show.
22. Bah / whatever  
“ My website is much better than yours! –Let me check...bah ! “  
( word type.org).
23. Mhm / agreement or saying yes .  
The wooden chair is better right ? Mhm.

24. Hah / funny  
Hah , smart.
25. Ooh, la, la / proficiency or showing admiration.  
Ooh, la ,la! What a wonderful dress.
26. Nice / to say a god job .  
  
Nice ! You finished the homework early.
27. Sweet / to express awesomeness.  
Sweet ! My favourite dish and nice movie !
28. Good / satisfaction or relief.  
Good ! I hand my exam just on time .
29. Congratulations / blessings  
Congratulations, for your business.
30. Hello / greeting .  
Hello ! Is this where I pay the bills ?
31. Holy cow / spontaneous regret.  
Holy cow ! I didn't turn of the oven!
32. Oh, my God / surprise or amusement.  
Oh, my God ! That was amazing.

## 2.4 Punctuation of Interjections

To talk about the punctuation, we will mention the shortcut of interjections. Its location most of this is at the beginning of this sentence, according to Samuel S. Greene A.M. . I think this is because Interjections are instead of an exclamation of exclamation of Why or Who is its location. It is located at the end or middle of a sentence when the expression as a question is to confirm the answer by the other end. In the middle of the sentence if the speaker wants enough time to answer the question, such as He's The One Who Drew Thee .... Um .... Drew The Monalisa.).Then the Punctuation is according how to use them depending on what feelings If it is steep and strong we use the exclamation mark. Either if the question of the sure we use the question mark as shown previously. As if he is stopping, the authorization or other emotions are simple to be comma or period.

### 2.4.1 Exclamation mark

This is the most associated with interjections . If there's an active and strong sudden response or obvious emotions like:

- Wow! It's a girl , that's really lovely.
- Holy cow ! I didn't turn of the oven!

### 2.4.2 Period or Comma

When smooth response happens like :

- Ahh, then this what he means.
- “ My website is much better than yours! – Let me check...bah ! “  
([www. word type.org](http://www.wordtype.org)).

### 2.4.3 Question Mark

When there's uncertainty or to have the other attention. Also when acting surprise using one of the question words or tools like :

- What he did ! Why!
- Huh ? What did you said ?

([www.ginersoftware.com](http://www.ginersoftware.com) , [www.Englishreservoir.com](http://www.Englishreservoir.com) )

## Chapter Three

### The Test

#### 3.1 Testing

To give Testing process an appropriate definition “*The act or practice of giving tests to measure someone's knowledge or ability . Or it is “the process of using or trying something to see if it works, is suitable, obeys the rules, etc”*” .(<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/testing>)

In addition, tests are for knowledge and evaluation, and I focus on evaluating the performance of the test performer. This is to find out their strengths and weaknesses, or to test the effectiveness of their performance in the direction of something specific. This is the aim of the test in general and the study covered in these papers in particular.( Al-Juboury. 1999,1).

#### 3.2 The Characteristics of a Good Test

The test should have the following characteristics :

##### 3.2.1 Validity

The term validity relates that whether or not a particular test evaluates what it intends to. The elements on a validated test will be closely related to the exam intended topic. A test is useless unless it is valid. ( <http://elttguide.com>)

There are four types of Validity which are Content Validity, Face Validity, Empirical and Construct. However the most important ones are :

##### 3.2.1.1 Content Validity

It refers to how well a test covers the material being assessed. If we have five chapters to test, for example, the test should cover them all as thoroughly as feasible.( Al-Juboury. 1999,25)

##### 3.2.1.2 Face Validity

It refers to how the test seems to supervisors or experts. When they approve the test, it does have its face validity .(Ibid )

□ \ □ The Test has been approved by the following supervisors:

1. Prof. Riyadh Tariq Al-Ameedi ( Ph. D.)
2. Prof. Salih Mahdi Addie ( Ph. D. )
3. Asst. Prof. Firas Abdul-Munim Jawad

### **3.2.2 Reliability**

Consistency, dependability, and trust are all aspects of reliability. This implies that the outcomes of a trustworthy test should be trustworthy. When the test is used on different days, they should be steady and consistent). A dependable test produces similar findings when administered to a same set of students under the same conditions.

Thus, there are three components to dependability: test reliability, test marking reliability, and test administration reliability. ( <http://elttguide.com>)

### **3.3 Test Design**

This test is to see how well students can correctly identify the use of interjections. The sentences used in the test are taken from the examples above. It consists of two questions on the recognition level , of twenty sentences divided to two questions. The first question contains a set of sentences with an interjection and several choices for the functions of the interjection (Underline the most appropriate function for the interjection in the following sentences) . While the second is to choose an appropriate interjection from among the choices under each sentence that fits to have a complete meaning. ( Choose the correct interjection to complete each of the following sentences).

### **3.4 The Sample of the Test**

A random sample of( 30 students) was taken from the fourth stage of the Department of English , College of Education for human sciences, University of Babylon during the academic year 2021-2022 to undergo a diagnostic test in using interjections in English.



### 1.5 The Results of the Test

The results and scoring of the first question :

Items	No. of Correct Answers	Percentage %	No. of Incorrect Answers	Personage %
1.	17	54%	13	46%
2.	18	57%	12	43%
3.	19	60%	11	40%
4.	22	65%	8	35%
5.	16	51%	14	49%
6.	22	65%	8	35%
7.	3	10%	27	90%
8.	24	70%	6	30%
9.	18	57%	12	43%
10.	18	57%	12	43%
Total	177	54.6%	123	45.4%

The results and scoring of question number two :

Items	No. of Correct Answers	Percentage %	No.of Incorrect Answers	Percentage %
1.	3	10%	27	90%
2.	11	29%	19	71%
3.	16	51%	14	49%
4.	9	25%	21	75%
5.	4	15%	26	85%
6.	17	54%	13	46%
7.	14	48%	16	52%
8.	14	48%	16	52%
9.	6	20%	24	80%
10.	12	32%	18	68%
Total	106	33.2%	194	66.8%

According to the results of the test, the number and percentage of the correct responses of Q1, ( 177 , 54.6%) are more than those of incorrect responses (123 , 45.4%).

As for Q2, the number and percentage of the incorrect responses (194 ,66.8%), are more than those of correct responses (106, 33.2%).

According to the results of the whole test , the number and percentage of incorrect responses (317 , 56.1%) are more than those correct ones (283 , 43.9%) . These results indicate that the students face difficulty in using interjections in English. Because the students do not have the mastery of English interjections with their different types and functions.

## Chapter Four Conclusion

*“ An Interjection is a word used to express some strong or sudden emotions of the mind . “(Bullions, Peter. ( N.D.,148).*

A random sample of( 30 students) was taken from the fourth stage of the Department of English , College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Babylon during the academic year 2021-2022 to undergo a diagnostic test in using interjection in English.

According to the results of the whole test , the number and percentage of the incorrect responses (317 , 56.1%) are more than those of correct ones (283 , 43.9%) . These results indicate that the students face difficulty in using interjections in English, and this ,in turn , confirms the hypothesis of the study proposed in ( 1.3 )

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## - Appendix I / The Test

Q1/ Underline the most appropriate function for the interjection in the following sentences:

1. Phew! I'm so glad I didn't have to give that speech.
  - a. Relief      b. Disgusting at small      c. Surprise      d. Fear
2. Oh ! That's why he'll not come tomorrow.
  - a. Celebration      b. Realising something      c. Fear      d. Hurtness
3. Wow ! What is that .
  - a. Surprise      b. Showing admiration      c. Relief      d. Realising something
4. Uh oh ! The dog chased me .
  - a. Discussed      b. Fear      c. Angry      d . Relief
5. Ouch , tern of the fire ! I got burnt .
  - a. Making mistake      b. Disgusted      c. Fear      d. Hurtness
6. Eww, this food is rotten .
  - a. Cuteness      b. Disgustness      c. Sudden fear      d. Making mistake
7. Ahh, then that's what he means.
  - a. Fear      b. Cuteness      c. Not sure      d. Realising something
8. Whew ! Finally I won .
  - a. Surprise      b. Successfulness      c. Sadness      d. Sadden fear
9. Oops! Sorry, I dropped the salt .
  - a. Pleasure      b. Making mistake      c. Fury      d. Realisation
10. Yay , I did it .
  - a. Cuteness      b. Relief      c. Hurtness      d. Celebration

Q 2 / Choose the correct interjection to complete each of the following sentences.

1. .... , the food test good .
  - a. Ah      b. Argh      c. Hmm      d. Yay
2. Your , ..... , shirt has a stain on the back .
  - a. Bah      b. Mhm      c. Um      d. Oops
3. ...., I don't know if she'll like it .
  - a. Oh ,la,la      b. Hmm      c. Boo      d. Yeah
4. Who is Davinci ? He's the one who drew thee..... drew the Monalisa.
  - a. Ahem      b.Nah      c. Ouch      d. Uh

5. I was like , ....., I can't get away from it .  
a. Argh b. Eww c. Wow d. Ah
6. .... I'd like to announce something.  
a. Oh, la, la b. Uh c. Ahem d. Mhm
7. .... ! What a wonderful dress .  
a. Oops b. Yeah c. Oh ,la, la d. Huh
8. ...., look at the baby.  
a. Eww b. Aww c. Argh d. Wow
9. ...., put him down the stage .  
a. Boo b. Mhm c. Phew d. Yeah
10. The wooden chair is more beautiful right ? .....  
a. Oh b. Nah c. Mhm d. Wow

- **Appendix II / The answers of the Test**

Q 1 /

1. A
2. B
3. A
4. B
5. D
6. B
7. D
8. B
9. B
10. D

Q2 /

1. A
2. C
3. B
4. D
5. A
6. D
7. C
8. B
9. A
10. C