Iraqi EFL Learners Use Pluralization

A paper

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By

Shahad waheed fleifel

Supervised By

Asst. Prof . Lihadh Mubarak

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II

Dedication

To my great father ….

To my generous mother …

To my supportive brothers and sister ….

To my lovely husband ….

To whom is a piece of my heart, my son Abbas……

I appreciate all the praise, the number of rain drops, the colors of cast, and the fragrance of fragrance, for your precious efforts and value, in achieving this research.

Thank you all for giving a helping hand and supporting me.

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Abstract

Each language has its own unique syntactic structure; therefore, the foreign language learners should be fully aware of the way of dealing with the new language since it is totally different from their mother tongues. A plural noun indicates that there is more than one of that noun (while a singular noun indicates that there is just one of the noun). Most plural forms are created by simply adding an -s or –es to the end of the singular word. For example, there's one dog (singular), but three dogs (plural). This paper contains five chapter . The first about the problem , aim, hypotheses , procedure , limit and value . The second chapter about the plural with their types. The third chapter about the test. The fourth chapter about the analysis of the test while the last chapter about the conclusion of the study .

Chapter One

Introduction

١.١ Problem of the study

In everyday life, we meet tons of interesting people, travel to a variety of unique places, and discover many fascinating things. In grammar, the type of word we use to refer to all of this great *stuff* is called a noun. Often, we have different amounts of stuff that we need to talk about. For example, you might have one *brother* or three *sisters*. You might own ١٢ *cats* or just a single dog. Your roommate might leave you with three *slices* of pizza or just one half-eaten *slice* probably the one with anchovies! In all of these situations, we use two different types of nouns to refer to different amounts of stuff: *singular nouns* and *plural nouns*.

This paper tries to answer the following questions :

١.What is meant by plural ?

٢. What are the types of plural ?

٣. What are the difficulties faced by Iraqi EFL Learners regarding the using of plural ?

١.٢ Aims of the study

This study aims at :

١. Shedding light about the mean of plural .

٢. Explain the types of plural .

٣. Investigating difficulties faced by Iraqi EFL Learners in using plural .

١.٣ Hypothesis of the study

١.There are many types of plural used by Iraqi EFL Learners.

٢.Iraqi learners EFL face difficulties in using plural .

٣. Learners are face difficulties in change the word from singular to plural.

١.٤ Procedure of The Study

١. Presenting a theoretical background knowledge about plural .
٢. Testing   students to show the difficulties they face in using plural .
٣. Make a conclusions of the study .

١.٥ Limit of The Study

The study is limited find out the meaning of plural to tests   Iraqi students of fourth stage of Department of English/ College of Education for Human Sciences/ University of Babylon during the academic year (٢٠٢٢-٢٠٢١).

١.٦ Value of the study

It is hoped that this study will pave the way for further research .

Chapter Two

Literature Review

٢.١ Definition

Learning the English language is not an easy process for Arabic earners. They face many problems with different structure, such as forming the plural of some irregular plural nouns. Various aspects of language have widely become the interest of many studies either in syntax, phonology and others. These aspects focus on the difficulties EFL students from different backgrounds face during their learning process. Chalker, S. (١٩٨٤:٩٠)

A very important part of speech which is noun NP. The study attempts to figure out the difficulties EFL students face when trying to make pluralism. In English there are hundreds of nouns that do not follow the standard rules for pluralization. A noun in English is a word used to name a person, animal, place and even abstract idea. A thing includes a quality (fear) a material (gold), a collection (herd, army), a state (adherence) and an action (cheat, mock, movement). A noun is a member of a large, open part of speech whose members can occur as the main word in the subject of a clause, the object of a verb, or the object of a preposition. Noun can be classified as a singular or plural. When a word refers to one person or thing it is said to be singular when it refers to more than one it is plural .

(Melchert, ٢٠٠٢:٤٥).

In several languages, the plural is one of the values of the grammatical category of number. The plural form of a noun usually suggests a quantity bigger than the word's default amount. The most common default quantity is one (a form that represents this default quantity of one is said to be of singular number). Plurals usually refer to two or more of something, but they can also refer to fractional, zero, or negative numbers. The English word cats, which corresponds to the singular cat, is an example of a plural. Hobi, E. A. R. (٢٠١١:٧٦)

Other type of words, including as verbs, adjectives, and pronouns, have unique plural forms that are employed in accordance with the number of linked nouns.(Ibid)

Some languages also have a dual or other systems of number categories. However, in English and many other languages, singular and plural are the only grammatical numbers, except for possible remnants of dual number in pronouns such as both and either.(Ibid)

A given language may make plural forms of nouns by various types of inflection, including the addition of affixes, like the English - (e)s ending, or ablaut, as in the derivation of the plural geese from goose, or a combination of the two. Some languages may also form plurals by reduplication, but not as productive. It may be that some nouns are not marked for plural, like sheep and series in English. (Ibid)

In languages which also have a case system, such as Latin and Russian, nouns can have not just one plural form but several, corresponding to the various cases. The inflection might affect multiple words, not just the noun; and the noun itself need not become plural as such, other parts of the expression indicate the plurality. Tallerman, M. (٢٠١٣:٩٨).

In English, the most common formation of plural nouns is by adding an -s suffix to the singular noun. Just like in English, noun plurals in French, Spanish and Portuguese are also typically formed by adding an -s suffix to the lemma form, sometimes combining it with an additional vowel (in French, however, this plural suffix is often not pronounced). This construction is also found in German and Dutch, but only in some nouns. Suffixing is cross-linguistically the most common method of forming plurals. (Ibid)

٢.٢ Classification Of Types

٢.٢.١ Regular Plural Nouns

According to Alexiadou, A. (٢٠١١:٣٣). Nouns have two forms: singular and plural. Singular form nouns refer to a single person, place, or thing and are easy to understand. For example:

Where is the piano?

In this sentence, the noun is the word 'piano' and it is singular because there is only one. If there were more than one piano, the sentence would be:

Where are the pianos?

In this case, to change the noun from singular to plural, we just add an **'s'**. However, that isn't the rule for every noun. There are many rules to change the noun from singular to plural :

S and es suffixes

The first rule is just add the suffix '**s**' to the noun. For example:

orange – oranges

pen – pens

Or, if the word ends with –**ss, -x, -**ch, or –sh, add the suffix '**es**'. For example:

dress – dresses

fox – foxes

bench – benches

dish – dishes

Crystal, D. (٢٠١١:٧٦).

y and ie suffixes

The second plural rule is that if the noun ends with '**y**' and is preceded by a consonant, we add '**es**' suffix and change the '**y**' to an '**i**'. For example:

cherry – cherries

puppy – puppies

However, if there is a vowel before the letter '**y**' (ey, ay, oy), simply add '**s**' without changing anything else. For example:

monkey – monkeys

toy – toys

day – days (Ibid)

O endings

The third rule is when a noun ends with a vowel, then an 'o', we only add an '**s**'. For example:

pistachio – pistachios

stereo – stereos

However, if there is a consonant before the 'o', in general, we add 'es'. For example:

hero – heroes

veto – vetoes

There are some cases where just an '**s**' is added, for example:

piano – pianos

(Ibid)

F and -fe endings

A noun ending in 'f' or 'fe' has its own rule. we have to replace 'f' or 'fe' with 'v' and add 'es'. For example:

wife – wives

knife – knives

loaf – loaves

but there are words that end in 'f' stay without any change . For example:

chef – chefs

Nouns that end 'ff', just add 's'.. For example:

cliff – cliffs

puff – puffs

'S' and 'z' endings

Some nouns that end in 's' or 'z', we have to double the 's' or 'z' and add 'es'. For example:

fez – fezzes

gas – gasses

(Kharma, ١٩٨٧:٤٣)

٢.٢.٢ Irregular plural nouns

Irregular nouns are nouns that don't follow regular rules for forming plurals. These are called 'irregular plurals'. Unfortunately, because they don't follow any pattern, they just need to be learned and memorized.

For example :

child – children

person – people

man – men

woman – women

tooth – teeth

foot – feet

mouse – mice

goose – geese

ox – oxen

There are also many words in the English language that are of Latin, French or Greek origin. These also have irregular plural forms.

For example:

basis – bases

radius – radii

syllabus – syllabi

Quirk and Greenbaum's (١٩٧٣:٩٨)

٢.٢.٣Singular and plural nouns that are the same

Finally, the most straightforward nouns are those that don't change. They are the same in both the singular and plural form.

For example

sheep

fish

means

species

series

ice

deer

Zughoul (٢٠٠٢:٩٨)

Chapter Three

Testing and Date Collection

٣.١ Introduction

In this chapter a general idea has been given about what a test is and what are the most important features of a good test. In addition to how a test is designed, what material it includes and to what it has been applied.

٣.٢ Definition of Test

According to **Al-Juboury (١٩٩٩:١).**The test includes any means of checking what students can do and what they can't do with a language.

٣.٣ Features of A good Test

٣.٣.١ Validity

According to **Al-Juboury (١٩٩٩:٨٤)**, validity is the degree to which a test measures what is supposed to measure or can be used successfully for the intended purpose.

The valid test should have the following criteria:

٣.٣.١.١ Content Validity

It is the extent to which a test covers the syllabus to be tested. A valid test must be used upon careful analysis of the subject or skill we are testing. **(Al-Juboury, ١٩٩٩:٢٥)**

٣.٣.١.٢ Face Validity

It is the way the test looks to the examinees, supervisors or in general to the people concerned with student's education. **(Ibid: ٢٦)**

٣.٣.٢ Reliability

It means the stability of the test scores. If the same test is given twice to the same group of students, under the same conditions, it would give the same results**. (Ibid: ٢٧)**

٣.٣.٣ Practicality

It is also known as usability. A test which is valid and reliable but difficult to administer or score or which is expensive, may fail to gain acceptance**. (Ibid: ٢٧)**

٣.٤ Test Design and Material

The test is designed in such a way that it consists of two questions intended to measure the student's performance at the recognition and the production levels.

Chapter Four

Data analysis

In this chapter , the researcher analysis the results of the test after testing fourth year university students at the Department of English for the academic year ٢٠٢٢-٢٠٢١. The test consists of two questions: question one consists of ten items which are designed to the students' performance at the recognition level. While the second question consists of ten items   which are designed to measure the students' performance at the production level . The researcher collects the correct/ incorrect responses . The researcher , also provides the percentage of each correct/incorrect response by using the following formula: the number of the total correct / incorrect responses mutilated by١٠٠ and divided on the total number of the students which ٢٠ students.

Table (١) shows the performance of the students at the recognition level. (Question ١)

Item . No	Correct Students	percentage	Incorrect Students	percentage
١.	٨	٤٠٪	١٢	٦٠٪
٢.	٥	٢٥٪	١٥	٧٥٪
٣.	٦	٣٠٪	١٥	٧٥٪
٤.	٦	٣٠٪	١٤	٧٠٪
٥.	٨	٤٠٪	١٢	٦٠٪
٦.	١٢	٦٠٪	٨	٤٠٪
٧.	٩	٤٥٪	١١	٥٥٪
٨.	١٠	٥٠٪	١٠	٥٠٪
٩.	٨	٤٠٪	١٢	٦٠٪
١٠.	٨	٤٠٪	١٢	٦٠

Relying on the results of the previous table, we can see that some of the students are unable to distinguish between the correct and incorrect sentences in respect to tenses . The number percentage of the correct answers is (١٢) making about (٦٠٪) of the whole percentage while the incorrect is (١٥) making about (٧٥٪). Item (٢,٣) are the least correctly answered one. Because the students don't have many information about the topic . The number of incorrect responses for this item is (١٥) making about (٧٥٪) of the whole percentage. Students could have based their responses on guessing.

Table (٢) shows the performance of the students at the recognition level. (Question ٢)

Item. No	Correct Students	percentage	Incorrect Students	Percentage
١	٥	٢٥٪	١٥	٧٥٪
٢	١٥	٧٥٪	٥	٢٥٪
٣	٨	٤٠٪	١٢	٦٠٪
٤	٣	١٠٪	١٧	٨٥٪
٥	٦	٣٠٪	١٤	٧٠٪
٦	٩	٤٥٪	١١	٥٥٪
٧	٨	٤٠٪	١٢	٦٠٪
٨	١٤	٧٠٪	٦	٣٠٪
٩	٦	٣٠٪	١٤	٧٠٪
١٠	٦	٣٠	١٤	٧٠٪

According to the results of the table above, the number and percentage of correct answers (١٥) making about (٧٥٪) are more than those of incorrect answers (١٧) making about (٨٥٪) this leads us to conclude that Iraqi EFL Learners find difficulty in using plural in sentence .

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Irregular plural nouns are considered problematic for Arab learners as a result of the different syntactic structure between English and Arabic languages. Because of this difference, Arab learners rely on their mother tongue to fit with the English language. Making plural of some nouns in English seems confusing for Arab learners, simply because there is no equivalent in Arabic. To be free from mother tongue interference, learners should give serious practice with making irregular plural nouns. In some types of making plural nouns participants do not have difficulties such as nouns changing their central vowels in item. The most troublesome area was when participants make plural by adding different ending in term since Arabic plural nouns differ from English, consequently, the influence of mother tongue will affect learners while making plural nouns.

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Test

Q١/ Choose the correct answer :

١.What's the plural of child?

A.Children

B.Childs

C. Childrens

٢. What's the plural of sheep?

A. Sheep

B. Sheeps

C. Ship

٣. What's the plural of dog?

A. Dig

B. Dogs

C. Dogues

٤. What's the plural of lady?

A. Ladys

B. Ladyes

C. Ladies

٥. What's the plural of boy?

A. Boys

B. Boyes

C. Boies

٦.If a noun ends in -a, make it plural by adding -s.

 true

false

٧.To form the plural of nouns that end in a vowel, add -s.

true

false

٨.If a noun ends in a consonant, make it plural by adding -es.

true

false

٩.If a noun ends in -z, make it plural by changing the z to c, and adding -es.

true

False

١٠. The plural of person _ people

true

False

Q٢/ Give the plural form for each of the following words :

(box/ woman/ goose / fez/ loaf/ hero/ cherry/ bench/ toy/ pistachio)