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Difficulties Face by EFL University Students in Using Modifiers

A paper

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

*In the name of Allah The most Gracious the Most
Merciful, the*

وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ
الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

سوره ال عمران الآية 85

And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam. It will never be accepted of him and in the thereafter he will be one of the losers.

DR. Muhammed Taqi-ud-din. Madina, K.S.A, 2012

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I offer you the most beautiful expressions of thanks and gratitude from a heart for all the M.A. staff members in Department of English .

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DEDICATION

To My Family

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Table (2) shows the performance of the students at the producing level (14).

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 The Problem

Modifiers are words, phrases, and clauses that affect and often enhance the meaning of a sentence. Modifiers offer detail that can make a sentence more engaging, clearer, or specific. The simplest form of a modifier would be an adjective or adverb. But again, modifiers can come in the form of phrases and clauses that act like adjectives and adverbs.

This study tries to answer the following questions:

1. What is meant by modifiers in English ?
2. What are the difficulties faced by Iraqi EFL Learners in using modifiers ?

1.2 Aims

This study aims at:

1. Pinpointing the types of Modifiers .
- 2- Iraqi EFL learners may face difficulty in recognizing and producing modifiers.

1.3 Hypothesis

The study hypothesizes that :

1. Post- Modifiers is the most common type students may common it mistakes in using it by Iraqi EFL.

1.4 Procedures

To answer the questions of the study, accomplish its aims, and test the validity of its hypotheses, the following procedures are adopted:

- 1- Presenting a theoretical background about using modifiers
- 2- Forming a test to be applied to a random sample of students.
3. Analyzing data.
- 4-Drawing some conclusions

1.5 Limits

This study is limited to the investigation of students in the fourth stage in Department of English/ College of Education for Human Sciences/ University of Babylon in their recognition and production in using modifier .

1.6 Value

It is hoped that this study will be benefit to anyone interested in linguistics and grammar. Also , the findings will help the students.

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

A **modifier** is a word/phrase/clause which modifies other words in a sentence. To be specific, a modifier is either an adjective or an adverb. The adjectives modify the nouns, and the adverbs modify the verbs or the adjectives or the other adverbs. (Green, K. 2006:89), for example

1-Alex bought a chocolate cake yesterday.

(Here, 'a' is an article which modifies the word 'cake' and the word 'chocolate' is the direct adjective of the word 'cake'. So both the words 'a' and 'chocolate' are adjectives which modify the noun 'cake'. The word 'yesterday' announces the time of the action, i.e., the verb 'bought'. So it is an adverb which modifies the verb.)

2.2 The Definition of Modifiers

Modifiers may come either before or after the modified element (the head), depending on the type of modifier and the rules of syntax for the language in question. A modifier placed before the head is called a premodifier; one placed after the head is called a postmodifier. For example, in land mines, the word land is a premodifier of mines, whereas in the phrase mines in wartime, the phrase in wartime is a postmodifier of mines. A head may have a number of modifiers, and these may include both premodifiers and postmodifiers. (McArthur,1992:750).

Pre-modifiers are the modifiers which modify the words that follow them in the sentence. Conventionally the adjectives are usually placed before the nouns. So, most of the adjectives are pre-modifiers. Adverbs are often placed before the words they modify.

Articles, determiners, demonstratives, proper adjectives, descriptive adjectives, compound adjectives, participles, etc. are the adjectives which come before the nouns and modify them.

Conjunctive adverbs, sentence adverbs, and some other adverbs can work being placed before the verbs/adjectives/other adverbs.

Example:

- Generally^(adverb) the^(article) brown^(descriptive adjective) dogs are nice.
- Apparently^(adverb), that^(demonstrative) bank has a lot of^(determiners) security^(adjective) porcess.

Post-modifiers

Post-modifiers are the modifiers which come after the words they modify. Customarily, the adverbs come after the verbs and modify them. However, some adjectives also come after the nouns and modify them. Most of the adverbs of time, adverbs of manner, adverbs of place/direction usually come after the verbs they modify.

Example:

2-Jack Bell, a cricketer,^(appositive) has been selected in the squad^(adverb).

3-Sami, our teacher,^(appositive) gives us tasks to do^(infinitive - adjective) in the class^(adverb of place).

4-Ali, the captain of Iraqi team,^(appositive) plays exceptionally^(adverb of manner) well.

Dowing and Locke(2006:447) states the post-modifier is realized by a wide range of units, including clauses, phrases and groups. They also add that most of the various units that occur as post modifier or as complements can be either restrictive or non-restrictive.

2-3 Types of modifiers

2.3.1 Relative Clause

Relative Clause is known as an adjective clause. It uses a relative pronoun as the connector, like as (which, that, who, whom and whose) and also a relative adverb like as (where, why, when). The function of relative clause is to give important information to identify the thing or person.

2-3.2 Prepositional phrase

Radford,(2004:177) defines A prepositional phrase is used to modify a noun or a pronoun . she also adds that a single sentence can contain several prepositional phrases tied together, one after the other.

The function of prepositional is not only as modifiers, but also as complement of noun phrase, verb phrase, and adjective phrase. An example of a sentence is: *her small eye with a strong statement smile.*

2-3.3 To Infinitive clause

To infinitive clause is used to express the purpose of something or someone's opinion about something. Usually , it is also added before the verb. An infinitive is the " to" form of the verb which usually acts as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

5-Ex: it is actually led me to discover a handful of great products.

Quirk, et. al (1985:471) admits that there are two types of modifiers in the English language: the adjective and the adverb. They have distinctly different roles, and we will examine each, in turn. First, let's look at the definition of each word. An adjective describes, or modifies a noun, which is a person, place, thing, or idea. Adjectives may be single words, or they may be whole phrases. The adverb is different from an adjective in that it primarily modifies verbs, but it may also modify adjectives or other adverbs. Again, adverbs may be single words or whole phrases.

The two principal types of modifiers are adjectives (and adjectival phrases and adjectival clauses), which modify nouns; and adverbs (and adverbial phrases and adverbial clauses), which modify other parts of speech, particularly verbs, adjectives and other adverbs, as well as whole phrases or clauses. (Not all adjectives and adverbs are necessary modifiers, however; an adjective will normally be considered a modifier when used attributively, but not when used predicatively compare the examples with the adjective red at the start of this article.

Haegeman (1999:215) says that another type of modifier in some languages, including English, is the noun adjunct, which is a noun modifying another noun (or occasionally another part of speech). An example is land in the phrase land mines given above. Examples of the above types of modifiers, in English, are given below.

6. It was a nice house. (adjective modifying a noun, in a noun phrase)
7. The swiftly flowing waters carried it away. (adjectival phrase)
8. She's the woman with the hat. (adjectival phrase, in this case a prepositional phrase, modifying a noun in a noun phrase)

9. I saw the man whom we met yesterday. (adjectival clause, in this case a relative clause, modifying a noun in a noun phrase)

10. His desk was in the faculty office. (noun adjunct modifying a noun in a noun phrase)

11. Put it gently in the drawer. (adverb in verb phrase)

12. He was [very gentle]. (adverb in adjective phrase)

13. She set it down very gently. (adverb in adverb phrase)

14. Even more people were there. (adverb modifying a determiner)

15. It ran right up the tree. (adverb modifying a prepositional phrase)

16. Only the dog was saved. (adverb modifying a noun phrase)

In some cases, noun phrases or quantifiers can act as modifiers:

17. A few more workers are needed. (quantifier modifying a determiner)

18. She's two inches taller than her sister. (noun phrase modifying an adjective).

Leech, (2002:232) states A noun can be modified by a following word, phrase or clause, and the word, phrase, or clause is called post-modifier.

Post-modifiers are of different types:

1. Adjectives as post-modifiers: There is nothing new about these techniques. They found her mother sick.

2. Adverbs as post-modifiers: Can someone tell me a way out of it? The authority here are very strict. Can you find the road back? We visited the house where Shakespeare lived.

3. Prepositional phrases as post-modifiers: A white woman in jeans was watching me. A ferryman with colourful toys was waiting in the station. There must be a better way of doing it. The little boy is tired of hard work.

4. Relative clauses as post-modifiers: I saw the boy who was going to the market. They cleaned the room which was filled with dirt.

5. –ing participles clauses as post-modifiers: A man wearing a grey suit left the office. The people working in the IT business are often young. Do you know any of those people sitting behind us?

6. –ed participle clauses as post-modifiers: The question debated in the parliament yesterday was about the new tax. The subject discussed in the book is difficult to understand.

7. –to infinitive clauses as post-modifiers: I have got something to say to you. I have nothing to share with him.

8. Appositive clauses as post-modifiers: We were delighted at the news that our team had own. Everybody will agree the fact that inflation is causing hardship

2-3.4 Compound Modifier

McArthur(1992:757) states that a compound modifier is “a compound of two or more attributive words: That is, more than one word that together modify a noun.” Compound modifiers are grammatically equivalent to single-word modifiers, and can be used in combination with other modifiers. In the preceding sentence, "single-word" is itself a compound modifier.

The constituent words of compound modifiers need not be adjectives; combinations of nouns, determiners, and other parts of speech are also common: man-eating (shark) and one-way (street). The punctuation of compound modifiers in English depends on their grammatical role.

Attributive compounds modifiers within the noun phrase are typically hyphenated, whereas the same compounds used as predicates will typically not be (if they are temporary compounds), unless they are permanent compounds attested as dictionary headwords (McArthur,1992:757)

The Test

3.1 Testing

According to Skehan (1999:203), a language test is a systematic method and a means of checking the student's performance through the elicitation of a certain behaviour to make inferences about certain characteristics of an individual. According to Brown (1987 : 219) " A test is a method of measuring a person's ability or knowledge in a given test ". The test is used as means of checking what student can do with the language (Aljuboury ,1999 :1)

3.2 The Features of a Good Test

A good test should have the following features:

3.2.1 Validity

According to Al-Juboury (1999:84), validity is the degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure and it can be used successfully for the purpose for which it is intended (Ibid:24).

The most important types of validity are:

A . Content Validity

This type of validity refers to the extent to which a test adequately covers the syllabus to be tested.(Ibid:25).

B. Face Validity

It means the way the test looks to the examines, supervisors or in general to the people concerned with the education of the students.

*The test is approved by the jury numbers :

Asst. Prof . Salih Mahdi AL-Mamoory.

Asst. Prof . Dunya M.M. Ijam

Asst . Lec. Farah A. Jebur

3.2.2 Reliability

Reliability is the stability of the test scores . If the same test is given twice to the same group of students under the same condition , it will give the same results . (Ibid.)

3.3 The Sample of the Test

The test is applied to (30 students) as a sample of fourth year students of Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Babylon during the academic year 2022-2021.

3.4 Test Design

The test consists of two questions .Question one represents the recognition level and has 10 items , while question two represents the production level. and has 10 items .

3.5 Test Material

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

4.1 Data analysis

The test used in the study as shown in the table below

Table (1) shows the Students' performance at the Recognition Level of Question One

Items	No. of correct responses	Percentage %	No. of incorrect responses	Percentage %
1	10	34%	20	66%
2	12	40%	18	60%
3	11	36%	19	64%
4	7	24%	23	76%
5	13	44%	17	56%
6	18	60%	12	40%
7	14	46%	16	54%
8	10	34%	20	66%
9	7	24%	23	76%
10	7	24%	23	76%
Total	109	36%	191	64%

Item (1) The total number correct responses is (10) while the percentage of incorrect responses is (20) because they don't have enough information

Item (2) has the lowest percentage of the correct responses (40%) while the percentage of the incorrect responses are (60%) because they use a guess .

Item (3) have the percentage of the correct responses (36%)while the percentage of the incorrect responses are(64%) because some of them leave point without answer

Item (4)The total number correct answer is (7) while the percentage of incorrect answer is (23) because the point is very easy .

Item (5) has correct responses and the percentage is (44%)while the incorrect answers are of percentage (56%) leave the question without answer .

Item (6) The total percentage of the correct responses are(60%) while the incorrect ones are(40%) because they know point in their book .

Item (7)The total number correct answer is (14) while the percentage of incorrect answer is (16) because some of them leave the point without answer

Item (8,)The total number correct responses is (30%) while the percentage of incorrect responses is (70%) this point no more familiar

Item (9)The total number correct answer is (7) while the percentage of incorrect answer is (23) because some of them leave the point without answer

Item (10)The total number correct responses is (24%) while the percentage of incorrect responses is (76%) because they don't have enough information .

The following table shows the results of the test at the production Level.

Table (2) Students' performance of Question Two

Items	No. of correct responses	Percentage %	No. of incorrect responses	Percentage %
1	10	34%	20	66%
2	12	40%	18	60%
3	5	16%	25	84%
4	11	36%	19	64%
5	15	50%	15	50%
6	9	30%	21	70%
7	14	46%	16	54%
8	8	26%	22	74%
9	4	14%	26	86%
10	6	20%	24	80%
Total	94	31.6%	206	68.4%

Item (1)The total number correct responses is (10) while the percentage of incorrect responses is (20) because they don't have enough information

Item (2) has the lowest percentage of the correct responses (40%) while the percentage of the incorrect responses are (60%) because they use a guess .

Item (3) have the percentage of the correct responses (16%)while the percentage of the incorrect responses are(84%) because some of them leave point without answer

Item (4)The total number correct answer is (11) while the percentage of incorrect answer is (19) because the point is very easy .

Item (5) has correct responses and the percentage is (50%)while the incorrect answers are of percentage (50%) the same reason

Item (6) The total percentage of the correct responses are(30%) while the incorrect ones are(70%) because they don't know the meaning.

Item (7)The total number correct answer is (14) while the percentage of incorrect answer is (16) because some of them leave the point without answer

Item (8,)The total number correct responses is (26%) while the percentage of incorrect responses is (74%) this point no more familiar

Item (9)The total number correct answer is (4) while the percentage of incorrect answer is (26) because some of them leave the point without answer

Item (10)The total number correct responses is (20%) while the percentage of incorrect responses is (80%) because they don't have enough information .

4.2 Discussion of the test result

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 . According to the results of the test at both levels , the number and percentage of incorrect responses for the whole test are more than those of correct responses. These results of the whole test indicate , that the students face difficulty in using modifiers .

Conclusions

A modifier is a word/phrase/clause which modifies other words in a sentence. To be specific, a modifier is either an adjective or an adverb. The adjectives modify the nouns, and the adverbs modify the verbs or the adjectives or the other adverbs . post-modifiers is one of the most important subjects in the English language: This study Investigation that post-modifiers are the modifiers which come after the words they modify. Customarily, the adverbs come after the verbs and modify them. However, some adjectives also come after the nouns and modify them.Pre-modifiers are the modifiers which modify the words that follow them in the sentence. Conventionally the adjectives are usually placed before the nouns. So, most of the adjectives are pre-modifiers. Adverbs are often placed before the words they modify.

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Appendix I

The Test

Q1/ Indicate whether the adjectives highlighted in the sentences below are pre-modifier or post –modifier :

- 1.The found her sister **died** .
- 2-Considering the circumstances, he has lucky to escape **alive**.
- 3- The little boy is **tired** from work .
- 4-The mail man, **exuberantly happy**, whistled merrily.
- 5--The **mail** man, weary and wet, trudged along in the rain.
- 6-Tom is **a afraid of** spiders.
- 7-Mary is **fond** of children.
- 8-I am **aware**. That he is abroad.
- 9-he was a **tall** man.
- 10-The photograph were **quite professional**.

Q2/ A/Exemplify the following adjectives in post-modifiers

(Sick / hard/ poor/ lazy / adorable)

B/ Exemplify the following adjectives in Premodifiers

(Fantastic/Gentle/Huge/ Perfect/ died)

Appendix II

The answer of the test

Q1/

1.post -modifier

2.pre-modifier

3.post-modifier

4.pre-modifier

5.pre-modifier

6.post-modifier

7.post-modifier

8.pre _ modifier

9.post -modifier

10.pre -modifier