

**UNIVERSITY OF BABYLON**

***THE ACQUISITION OF NOMINAL CLAUSES  
BY IRAQI EFL LEARNERS AT THE  
UNIVERSITY LEVEL***

**A THESIS**

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OF EDUCATION IN METHODS OF TEACHING  
ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

***By***

***RA' ID ABDUL-ILAH MOHAMMED HUSSEIN***

***CO-SUPERVISED by***

***ASST.PROF.  
HAMEED HASSOON [Ph.D.]***

***ASST.PROF.  
ADIL AL-AKKAM [M.A.]***

***March***

***Safar***

***٢٠١٥***

***١٤٢٦***

## بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

صدق الله العظيم

سورة النور / الآية ( ٣٥ )

We certify that this thesis, entitled **“The Acquisition of the Nominal Clauses by Iraqi EFL Learners at the University Level”** was prepared by **“Ra’id Abdul-Ilah Mohammed Hussein”** under our supervision at the College of Basic Education, University of Babylon, as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Methods of Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Signature:

Signature:

**Name: Asst. Prof. Hameed Hassoon (Ph.D.) (Supervisor)**      **Name: Asst. Prof. Adil Al-Akkam (Supervisor)**

**Date:**     /     / ٢٠٠٥

**Date:**     /     / ٢٠٠٥

In view of the available recommendations, I forward this thesis for debate by the Examining Committee.

**Signature:**

**Name: Asst. Prof. Dr. Abdul Sattar Mehdi Ali**

Head of the Department of Higher Studies,  
College of Basic Education, University of Babylon

**Date:**     /     / ٢٠٠٥

We certify that we have read this thesis, entitled” **The Acquisition of the Nominal Clauses by Iraqi EFL Learners at the University Level**” and as examining committee, examined the student **“Ra’id Abdul-Ilah Mohammed Hussein”** in its contents, and that in our opinion it is adequate as a thesis for the degree of Master of Education in Methods of Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

**Signature:**

**Name:**

**(Member)**

**Signature:**

**Name:**

**(Member)**

Date: / /٢٠٠٥

Date: / /٢٠٠٥

Signature:

Name:

(Chairman)

Date: / /٢٠٠٥

Approved by the Council of the College of Basic Education

Signature:

Name: **Asst. Prof. Dr. Abbas Ubeid Hammadi**

Dean of the College of Basic Education

University of Babylon

Date: / /٢٠٠٥

TO:

# *MY PATIENT FAMILY*

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims at testing the problems that Iraqi EFL learners at the university level encounter in the acquisition of the English nominal clause. One special problem lies in the fact that nominal subordinators are used in both adverbial and adjectival clauses, making the distinction between the subordinate nominal clause and other types of clauses a very fine and problematic issue. Another problem arises from the special word order in nominal clauses (which allows no subject-verb inversion) compared with that of *wh*-questions (which requires such an inversion), though both are introduced by the same words.

This study also aims at shedding light upon: i) the types of errors committed by the EFL learners in the acquisitions of nominal clause and their possible causes, ii) the acquisition rate, iii) the order of such an acquisition. Three hypotheses have been put forward for verification.

First, the order of acquisition is:

***that*-clause > nominal relative > *yes-no* and alternative > *wh*-clause.**

where “>” means "has acquisition priority over".

Secondly, the level of acquisition is higher in comprehension than in production. Thirdly, a good mastery of all types of the nominal clause under study is not achieved by Iraqi EFL learners during their four-year study of English as a second language.

Data collection consists of a thirty-item proficiency test administered to both the First and Fourth Year Iraqi EFL learners at the Department of English, College of Education, University of Babylon. Two samples are selected to test administration. Group 1 consisted of (109) first-year subjects, the second Group 2 consists of (90) fourth-year subjects. Both groups have a representative rate of (100%) of all the admissible population.

The results show that the differential performance rate achieved by Group 2 is 30.7%, which is quite poor. This rate shows that the subjects at their final semester before graduation are indeed far away from drawing close to achieving a complete mastery of the nominal clause.

On the basis of the relative weight of correct-response frequencies for both groups, the following hierarchy can be drawn for their acquisition route by Iraqi EFL learners at the university level:

***yes-no* and alternative > *that*-clause > nominal relative > *wh*-clause.**

As far as the causes of errors are concerned, , Intralingual Transfer has

been found to account for about 38% of all errors, Interlingual Transfer for 22%, Context of Learning for 22%, while Communication Strategies account for 14%.

The study comprises five chapters; Chapter One is concerned with the discussion of the problem, aims, hypothesis, procedures, limits, and the value of the study. The Second Chapter presents a theoretical survey describing the structure and the function of all kinds of nominal clauses in English together with the different syntactic approaches to such a description.

Chapter Three is dedicated to data collection. Data collection is conducted by defining the population of the study and the representative ratio of the selected sample first. The chapter is also concerned with describing the design of the achievement test and its administration to the subjects of the study. Chapter Four is dedicated to data analysis in terms of specifying the rate of acquisition, its route and types of errors made together with their possible causes. The validity of each of the three hypotheses above is then tested on the basis of the error analysis conducted in this chapter.

Chapter Five summarizes the results, conclusions, recommendations and presents some suggestions for further research.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>EFL</b>	English as a Foreign Language
<b>NC</b>	Nominal Clause
<b>SC</b>	Subordinate Clause
<b>NP</b>	Noun Phrase
<b>COMP</b>	Complementizer
<b>EC</b>	Empty Category
<b>I-to-C</b>	Inflection-to-complementizer
<b>SAI</b>	Subject-Auxiliary-Inversion
<b>SD</b>	Standard Deviation
<b>VP</b>	Verb Phrase
<b>PP</b>	Prepositional Phrase
<b>AP</b>	Adjectival Phrase
<b>Adv. P</b>	Adverbial Phrase
<b>CP</b>	Clausal Phrase
<b>C</b>	Clause
<b>IP</b>	Inflectional Phrase

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## الخلاصة

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى معالجة المشاكل و الصعوبات التي يواجهها الطلبة العراقيون دارسوا أ اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية عند اكتسابهم للعبارة الاسمية الإنجليزية. تتأتى إحدى هذه المشاكل من كون ان أدوات الربط المستعملة في العبارة الاسمية تستعمل أيضا في العبارات الظرفية و الوصفية مما يجعل التمييز بين العبارات الاسمية و الأنواع الأخرى من العبارات مسألة دقيقة و عسيرة. كما أن مشكلة أخرى تتأتى من الترتيب الكلامي الخاص للعبارة الاسمية.

تهدف الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على: (١) أنواع الأخطاء التي يرتكبها الطلبة عند اكتساب العبارة الاسمية و الأسباب المحتملة للأخطاء (٢) نسبة الاكتساب (٣) الترتيب لهذا الاكتساب. وضعت ثلاث فرضيات للبرهنة وهي:

١. للأنواع الأربع الرئيسة من العبارات الاسمية، يكون ترتيب الاكتساب على

النحو الآتي:

*that-clause* > nominal relative > *yes-no* and alternative > *wh-*

clause.

٢. إن مستوى الاكتساب في الجانب الاستيعابي هو اكبر مما هو عليه الحال في

الجانب الإنتاجي.

٣. لا يتحقق الإتقان الكامل لأنواع العبارات الاسمية لدى الطلبة العراقيين

الدارسين للغة الإنكليزية لغة أجنبية خلال أربع سنوات جامعية من دراستهم لهذه اللغة.

تضمن جمع البيانات اختبارا من ثلاثين فقرة، قدم إلى عينة من طلبة السنوات

الأولى (١٠٩) طالبا و الرابعة (٥٠) طالبا من قسم اللغة الإنكليزية، كلية التربية، جامعة

بابل.

وفي نظرة إحصائية للنتائج ا تضح الآتي:

١. بالنسبة للفرضية الأولى واعتمادا على توزيع الأجوبة لإفراد المجموعة

الثانية فإن الترتيب التالي يمكن أن يرسم لمسار الاكتساب لدى الطلبة

***Yes-no & alt > that-cl > nom rel > wh-cl***

إن النتائج أعلاه تعطي إثباتا ميدانيا يدحض صحة الفرضية الأولى.

٢. إن معدل الأداء التفاضلي المتحقق لطلبة المرحلة الرابعة هو %٣٥.٧ وهي

نسبة

فقيرة وقد تم حساب هذا المعدل عن طريق طرح نسبة ناتج الأداء النهائي (%٦٠.٥٦) من نسبة ناتج الأداء الابتدائي (%٤٤.٦٠) ثم قسمة الناتج (%١٥.٩٥) على نسبة ناتج الأداء الابتدائي. تظهر النسبة المتحققة للأداء إن الدارسين وهم في الفصل الأخير من الدراسة لا يزالون بعيدين عن إتقان العبارات الاسمية. وعليه فإن النتائج تعطي إثباتا إحصائيا لصحة الفرضيتين الثانية والثالثة.

أما فيما يخص الأسباب التي أدت إلى الأخطاء، فقد وجد أن التحويل السلبي للعبارات ضمن اللغة الواحدة (المبالغة في التعميم) قد شكل نسبة %٣٨ من مجموع الأخطاء، فيما شكل التحويل السلبي للعبارات بين اللغتين (التداخل) ما نسبته %٢٣ من مجموع الأخطاء، بينما شكل السياق التعليمي نسبة %٢٢ من مجموع الأخطاء، وأخيرا فقد شكلت استراتيجيات التواصل نسبة %١٧ من مجموع الأخطاء.

تشتمل الدراسة على خمسة فصول، يتناول الفصل الأول مناقشة للمشكلة و الأهداف و الفرضيات و الإجراءات و حدود البحث و فائدة الدراسة. يقدم الفصل الثاني عرضا نظريا لأنواع العبارات الاسمية و أنواعها و وظائفها. كما يعرض الفصل طرائق مختلفة للبنى النحوية و بضمنها أحدث الطرق اللغوية المعاصرة. يختص الفصل الثالث بجمع البيانات و يقدم وصفا للاختبار، بينما يختص الفصل الرابع بتحليل البيانات و استخلاص النتائج الإحصائية و تشخيص أسباب ارتكاب الطلبة للأخطاء. يقدم الفصل الأخير عرضا للنتائج النظرية و العملية كما يقدم بعض التوصيات المتعلقة بالجانب التعليمي مع تقديم بعض المقترحات لدراسات قادمة.



# *Appendix*

## *The Main Test*

الاسم لثلاثي:

العمر:

الشعبة:

المرحلة:

عدد سنوات تعلم اللغة الإنكليزية:

القومية:

اسم المحافظة التي يسكن فيها الطالب:

## “Recognition Task”

### Question I

Write the letter of the appropriate answer in the blank as shown in the following example:

#### Example:

I like -----.

- a. to help them
- b. them help
- c. help them
- d. to them help

#### Answer:

I like-----a-----.

١. You can take -----.

- a. you whichever like
- b. whichever you like
- c. whichever like you
- d. you like whichever

٢. He wanted to know -----.

- a. that why you said
- b. why said you that

- c. that you said why
- d. why you said that

ϣ. They didn't tell us whether----- or be sunny?

- a. will it rain
- b. it will rain
- c. will rain it
- d. it rain

Ϙ. -----, steals trash.

- a. Who steals my purse
- b. My purse who steals
- c. Who my purse steals
- d. My purse steals who

ο. We must face the fact ----- lose our deposits.

- a. that we may
- b. may that we
- c. that may we
- d. may we that

ϓ. May is when -----.

- a. takes she her last exam
- b. her last exam she takes
- c. she takes her last exam
- d. does she take her last exam

ϙ. Take whatever -----.

- a. do you want

- b. want you
- c. you want
- d. do want you

14. Whenever -----to come is fine with me.

- a. want you
- b. do you want
- c. do want you
- d. you want

15. You may marry whom -----.

- a. do you like
- b. like you
- c. you like
- d. do like you

16. I send them what -----.

- a. do they need
- b. they need
- c. need they
- d. do need they

17. It depends on how -----.

- a. far has he gone
- b. he has gone far
- c. has he gone far
- d. far he has gone

18. Here is where -----.

- a. did I buy the food
- b. I bought the food
- c. bought I the food
- d. the food did I buy

۱۳. I've forgotten what -----.

- a. his book is called
- b. is called his book
- c. is his book called
- d. called his book

۱۴. -----, I don't know.

- a. This book whose is
- b. Whose is this book
- c. This book is whose
- d. Whose book is this

۱۵. Send it to whoever -----.

- a. do the bills pay
- b. the bills do pay
- c. pay the bills
- d. the bills pay

## **“Production Task”**

### **Question II**

Complete the following sentences using the prompts given between brackets as shown in the example below and make

necessary changes.

**Question:**

a. I like ----- . (help, her )

**Answer:**

b. I like to help her.

١. You should vote for whichever ----- best.

(think, candidate, you)

٢. That's why ----- . (not go, I, there)

٣. The question is whether ----- .

(sign, he, the contract or not)

٤. He wanted to know who ----- . (be, she)

٥. That's what ----- . (call, she, her sister)

٦. When ----- is a mystery. (do, it, he)

٧. Whatever ----- is yours. (see, you, books)

٨. I suppose that ----- . (I, use, your phone)

٩. I asked them if ----- . (want, they, meat or fish)

١٠. Quality is what ----- . (count, most)

١١. How ----- depends on the publisher. (sell, book)

۱۲. I often think about where ----- . (meet, I, you)

۱۳. The worst thing is that ----- . (not answer, he, our letters)

۱۴. You can call me whatever ----- . (like, you)

۱۵. Whoever ----- was very polite. (phone, just now)

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# CHAPTER ONE

## *INTRODUCTION*

### 1.1 The Problem

In English, nominal subordinate clauses have a special status which is different from that of the other major kinds of subordinate clauses. This special status is brought about by the fact that the nominal subordinators are used in both the adverbial and adjectival clauses. Such a distinction between the subordinate nominal clause and other types of clause is very fine and problematic, for example,

1. I know the man *who is ill*. (Adjectival clause)

2. I know *who is ill*. (Nominal clause)

In example a, the clause '*who is ill*' modifies a noun (the man), therefore, it is considered an 'adjectival clause'. In example b, the clause '*who is ill*' functions as 'object', therefore, it is considered a 'nominal clause'.

Another problem arises from the special word order in nominal clauses compared with that of *wh*-questions. Both are introduced by the

same subordinators. The word order in **wh**-questions can well cause the transfer of this knowledge to that of the nominal clauses introduced by **wh**-articles causing negative intralingual interference. For example, it has been observed that many students form the nominal order with an operator subject inversion: \**“I know what did he”* instead of *“what he did”*. These and other peculiarities are liable to cause problems to Iraqi EFL learners. However, there is no study that undertakes to investigate the magnitude and the order of the acquisition of the nominal subordinate clauses over and above the specification of all types of errors committed in this area. This study undertakes the task of filling such a gap.

## **١.٢ Aims of the Study**

This study aims at specifying:

١. The types of errors committed by the EFL learners in the acquisition of nominal clause and the possible causes behind these.
٢. The acquisition rate of Iraqi EFL learners at the university level of the nominal clause.
٣. The order of the acquisition of the nominal clause.

## ١.٣ The Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that:

١. Of the four types of nominal clauses, those introduced by *that* complementizer, nominal relativizers, *yes-no* & alternative interrogative, and *WH*-words, it is hypothesized that the order of acquisition is:-

**that-clause > nominal relative > yes-no and alternative > *wh*-clause.**

٢. the level of acquisition is higher in comprehension than in production.

٣. A good mastery of all types of the nominal clause under study is not achieved by Iraqi EFL learners during their four-year study of English as a second language.

## ١.٤ The Procedures

١. Presenting a theoretical overview for the definition of the Nominal Clause in English, its types, and its functions and the various different approaches to the description of this syntactic construction, including those of the most recent linguistic approaches to come up with an overall view of this structure that can be useful in designing and analyzing its acquisition by Iraqi EFL learners at the college level in Chapters Three and Four.

٢. A performance test is organized and presented to the Iraqi EFL

learners in the first and the fourth stages at the Department of English, College of Education, University of Babylon. The test includes items that measure the comprehension and the production of the four types of the nominal clauses under study. On the basis of the results of this test, the researcher will identify all types of errors made, while their frequencies will determine their magnitude and order of acquisition. Then the results of the analysis of test papers at both stages are contrasted to get the rate of acquisition achieved in this area and the possible cause of the subjects' errors.

## **١.٥ Limits of the Study**

The study is limited to studying the errors committed by the EFL learners and investigating the acquisition of the finite nominal clauses i.e. *that- nominal clause, wh-nominal clause, nominal relative clause, and yes-no and alternative nominal clause.*

The sample of the study is limited to students from the ١<sup>st</sup> and ٤<sup>th</sup> year classes in the Department of English, College of Education, University of Babylon, during the academic year ٢٠٠٣-٢٠٠٤.

## **١.٦ The Value of the Study**

The results of this study can prove to be valuable for grammar syllabus designing and the preparation of remedial programs for the students of Departments of English, at Iraqi colleges of Education. This is because its statistics-based results highlight the route and level of learners' acquisition of the nominal clause, the magnitude of the errors

committed, and the possible causes behind the learners' errors.

### **Note to Chapter One:**

The terms 'acquisition' and 'learning' will be used interchangeably in this study. In this respect, the researcher will adopt Ellis', 1994: 14 views.



# CHAPTER TWO

## *THEORETICAL BACKGROUND*

### **۲.۱ Introduction**

This section presents a theoretical overview for the definition of the Nominal Clause (Henceforth: NC) in English, its types, and functions. The discussion will tackle the various different approaches to the description of this syntactic construction, including those of the most recent linguistic approaches. The aim of this chapter is to come up with an overall view of this structure that can be useful in designing and analyzing its acquisition by Iraqi EFL learners at the college level in Chapters Three and Four.

### **۲.۲ NC: Definition**

According to Kies (۲۰۰۵: ۱۲۶), a NC is that type of subordinate clause (Henceforth: SC) that assumes the grammatical function of a noun phrase. By SC is meant a clause that is embedded as a dependent constituent of the larger matrix sentence. NC can be introduced by a set

of many subordinators such as *how*, *that*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *whether*, *which*, *who*, and *why*.

(1)

- a. *How you did it* is not my concern.
- b. *That I wanted a dog* was irrelevant in the argument.
- c. I did not know *what I wanted*.
- d. I don't know *when he will be there*.
- e. I know *where he had gone*.
- f. *Whether he intended to burn the house down* is irrelevant.
- g. I wondered *which it was*.
- h. I guessed *who had done it*.
- i. Did you understand *why he said that?* (ibid.)

## ۲.۳ NC: Function

Assuming the role of a noun phrase (Henceforth: NP), a NC can serve as subject, object, complement, appositive, prepositional complement. In addition, it can function as adjectival complement (Quirk et al. ۱۹۸۵: ۱۰۴۷). Because of its numerous functions, one way of classifying the NC is by reference to such functions:

(۲)

- a. *That we need a larger computer* has become obvious. (subject)
- b. He does not know *whether to send a gift*. (direct object)
- c. He can tell *whoever is waiting* that I'll be back in ten minutes.  
(indirect object)

- d. I know her to be reliable. (object complement)
- e. One likely result of the postponement is *that the cost of constructing the college will be very much higher*. (subject complement)
- f. It depends on *what we decide*. (prepositional complement)
- g. I'm not sure *that I can remember the exact details*. (adjectival complement) (ibid.)

In casual spoken English, it is unusual to find NC in the subject position. In such a position, NCs are more formal and appear in writing rather than in speaking. In contrast, they are common in object position (Crown, 1996: 4).

Because the NC always functions as a noun, the simplest way of differentiating it is to replace it with the proform *something*, and then check whether the sentence makes sense or not (Tipping, 1993: 292):

(3)

- a. He said *that he was ready*.
- b. He said *something*.

(4)

- a. *That we shall win* is certain.
- b. *Something* is certain.

(5)

- a. His excuse was *that he did not know*.
- c. His excuse was *something*.

Given that sentences (3b, 4b, and 5b) make sense, then one can conclude that the clauses in question are all nominal ones; otherwise not, as in (6b):

(6)

- a. That is the man who did it.
- b. \*That is the man *something*.

It is worth mentioning here that, with the exception of the nominal relative clause, the occurrence of the NC in the sentential roles of the noun is limited by the fact that these clauses are normally abstract: referring to events, facts, states, ideas, etc. (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973: 304).

## 2.4 NC: Types

Like all other SCs in English, one method of classifying the NC is by the form of the verbal element used in them. According to this criterion, the NC is subdivided into **finite** clauses, **non-finite** (gerundial and infinitival), and **verbless** clauses (Quirk et al. 1980: 992). Since the last type falls out of the scope of this study, only the first two subtypes are described in the following sections.

### 2.4.1 Finite NCs

This type of NCs incorporates a finite verb showing tense. They fall into four categories: *that*-clause, *wh*-clause, nominal relative clause, and alternative *yes/no* interrogative NC as shown hereunder (Leech and Svartvik, 1994: 311).

#### 2.4.1.1 *That*-NC

The term *that*-clause refers to those dependent, declarative, NCs

beginning with the subordinator *that* (Crystal, 1997: 300). However, this term is also applied to those NCs where *that* is not present as in:

(N) I believe *he is ill*. (Jespersen, 1927: III. 24)

This type of NC is derived from statements. Thus, the simple statement ( $\wedge$ a):

( $\wedge$ )

- a. Money doesn't grow on trees.
- b. This should be obvious.

can be turned into a subordinate nominal clause by putting *that* in front of it, and then joining it with ( $\wedge$ b):

(c) *That money doesn't grow on trees* should be obvious (Alexander, 1988: 14).

In ( $\wedge$ c) above, *that*-clause contains a statement of fact, and is called *a dependent statement* (Onions, 1971: 47).

*That*-clauses can function as subjects ( $\textsuperscript{9}$ a), direct objects ( $\textsuperscript{9}$ .b), subject complements ( $\textsuperscript{9}$ .c), adjectival complements ( $\textsuperscript{9}$ .d), and appositives ( $\textsuperscript{9}$ .e) (Quirk et al. 1980: 1049)

( $\textsuperscript{9}$ )

- a. *That the invading troops have been withdrawn* has not affected our government's trade sanctions.
- b. I noticed *that he spoke English with Australian accent*.
- c. My assumption is *that interest rates will soon fall*.
- d. We are glad *that you are able to join us on our wedding anniversary*.
- e. Your criticism, *that no account has been taken of psychological factors*, is fully justified. (ibid.)

However, *that*-clause cannot follow a preposition. This is why the sentence (1 • b) is a well-formed one, while (1 • c) is not.

(1 •)

- a. He boasted about *his success*.
- b. He boasted *that he was successful*.
- c. \* He boasted about *that he was successful*.

(Alexander, 1988: 14)

This type of NC is often used in connection with verbs of ‘saying’, ‘thinking’, ‘believing’, ‘perceiving’, ‘knowing’, ‘feeling’, ‘hoping’, ‘fearing’, ‘happening’, ‘seeming’, ‘showing’, and with adjectives showing ‘certainty’, ‘doubt’, ‘probability’, and ‘likelihood’ (Onions, 1971: 48-52):

(1 1)

- a. I'm afraid *that we sold out our tickets*.
- b. I confess (*that*) *I am wrong*.
- c. He was afraid (*that*) *he would be ill*.
- d. It happened (so occurred) *that he had just come*.
- e. We ordered (decreed, stipulated) *that he should be released*.
- f. We fear *lest worse may be in store for us*.
- g. I tell you (*that*) *you are mistaken*.
- h. He denied (pointed out, declared, confessed) (*that*) *he had done it*.
- i. She says (confirms, reports, tells, ascertains) *that he is on his way*.
- j. Do you think (believe, see, know) *that they could manage it?*

k. *That such an event could happen* cannot be disputed.

l. It is clear (unclear, certain, obvious) *that she has no chance*.

m. The thought (idea, doubt, belief) *that he might have died* was galling.

n. These were proofs (doubts, rumours) *that he had been there*.

Except in formal use, the complementizer *that* in this type of clause is frequently omitted when functioning as direct object, or complement leaving a **zero** *that* clause (Quirk *et al.* 1980:1049)

(12)

It's a pity *you don't know Russian*.

Example (12) lacks an overt complementizer. At least three analyses of this example are possible, all of which have been advocated on occasion. The first approach is to consider the sentence as having no complementizer node. This approach avoids the use of null elements at the price of postulating an additional syntactic structure. The second approach considers the sentence as containing a complementizer node which is empty. This analysis requires only one structure, but posits a syntactic null-element or an empty node. The third approach considers the sentence to contain a complementizer node which is filled by a complementizer that happens to have the phonetic shape  $\varnothing$  (Trask, 1993: 191).

From the historical point of view, Jespersen (1927: III. 32) is of the opinion that it is wrong to say that the subordinator *that* which is present in (13a) is omitted in (13b):

(13)

a. I think *that he is dead*.

b. I think *he is dead*.

Jespersen's argument is that though both of these sentences have evolved out of the original parataxis of two independent sentences, the subordination in (13a) is expressly indicated, whereas it is only contextually inferred in (13b). He adds that *that* is necessary in those cases in which the mutual relation of the two sentences is not perfectly evident from the material contents of each, or from their position. The subordinator *that* is often desirable to avoid doubt as to their mutual relation or as to the belonging to some word or word group (ibid. 33). In addition, *that* is indispensable when the subordinate clause is placed first, when it occurs after such nouns as *belief* and *conviction*, and when the preparatory *it* is placed at sentence-initial position (Jespersen, 1933: 301):

(14)

- a. *That time is money* has never been realized in the East.
- b. My suggestion, *that he was mad*, was not accepted by everybody.
- c. It is to be regretted *that he should have come just now*.

### 2.4.1.1.1 Mandative Subjunctive with *that*-Clause

That-clauses follow certain mandative verbs (*order, command, decree, urge, propose, move, etc.*) showing obligation or command and adjectives implying acts of will (obligatory, necessary, required, requested, etc.) can be formed either with the subjunctive base form of the verb or with a modal (shall, would, should, might) plus the base form of the main verb (Onions, 1971: 52) to indicate obligation:

(15)

- a. It is requested *that this part of the ticket **be** retained during the evening.*
- b. Blair put the motion *that the House **go** into Committee in the Education Bill.*
- c. Christian love requires *that we **overlook** our neighbors' wrongs to us.*
- d. We argue *that he **be** allowed a free hand.*
- e. He commanded (gave orders, decreed, moved) *that no one **should** move.*
- f. It is proposed *that the Parliament **shall** allow a company to be formed.*

In all the cases above, the speaker may opt to the indicative mood if no obligation is involved:

(16)

- a. It is vital that the crime **be** reported. (Verb-base-form subjunctive)
- b. It is vital that the crime **is** reported. (Present indicative) (Kruger and Bayne, 2001: 4)

With wishes, the past subjunctive mood is obligatorily used (Eckersley and Eckersley, 1969: 178):

(17)

I wish (that) he **were** here. (ibid.)

## 2.4.1.2 **Wh-interrogative Clause**

In this type of NC, a question word is used as a subordinator to a

following clause by observing proper SVO word-order in the SC, and without the use of interrogative operators (verb *to do*, verb *to be*, verb *to have* and modal verbs).

(18)

- a. What does he eat? (*Wh-question*)
- b. I want to know *what he eats*. (*Wh-nominal clause*) (Jespersen, 1927:III. 39)

In (18b) above, the NC '*what he eats*' is a dependent question that takes the indirect form (Tipping, 1933: 293).

Like interrogative clauses, *Wh-nominal* clauses leave a gap of some left-out information which is represented by such *wh*-elements as *how*, *who*, *what*, *why*, *which*, and *whose* (Quirk *et al*, 1980: 1051).

This type of clause can function as subject, direct object, subject complement, appositive, adjectival complement, and prepositional complement.

(19)

- a. *How he got hold of the money* was the problem. (Subject)
- b. I can't imagine *what they want with your address*. (Object)  
(*ibid*, 1050)
- c. They did not consult us on *whose names should be put forward*.  
(Prepositional complement)
- d. Your original question, *why he did not report it to the police earlier*, has not been answered. (Appositive)
- e. I'm not sure *which she prefers*. (Adjectival complementation)

f. The problem is who will water my plants when I'm away.  
(subject complement) (ibid, 1051).

g. It is not *who rules us* that is important, but *how he rules us*. (Subject complement) (Jespersen, 1927: 41-9).

The subordinate clause usually does not allow subject-operator inversion, but such an inversion may occur particularly when the clause functions as complement and the subordinate verb is **be** or when it functions as appositive:

(20)

- a. The problem is *who can we get to replace her*. (subject complement)
- b. Your original question, *why did he not report it to the police earlier*, has not been answered. (appositive)(ibid).

The syntactic fact that NCs are dependent clauses which correspond to questions has induced many grammarians to call them **interrogative nominal clauses** (Jespersen, 1933: 301), or **indirect question-word questions** (Alexander, 1988: 290).

### 2.4.1.3 Nominal Relative Clause

Relative pronouns also introduce nominal relative clauses that function like NP as subject, direct object, subject complement, object complement, adverbial and prepositional complement:

(21)

Excuse me, I've got to do *what I did last time* (... *the thing that I did*

*last time*)

These clauses can be introduced by the subordinators: *what*, *whatever*, *whoever*, *whichever*, *where*, *wherever*, *when*, *whenever*, and *how*.

(۲۲)

- a. *What she said* made me angry. (subject)
- b. I hope you're going to give me *what I need*. (direct object)
- c. I often think about *where I met you*. (prepositional complement)

(Swan, ۱۹۹۶: ۴۹۳)

- d. I'm happy with *what I'm*. (subject complement)
- e. (That's) *what she called her sister*. (object complement)
- f. (Now is) *when I need you*. (adverbial)

(Quirk *et al*, ۱۹۸۵: ۱۰۵۷).

As for the *who*-pronouns (who, whoever, whosoever), these are subjective, while the *whom*-pronouns (whom, whomever, whomsoever) are objective. However, nowadays, the *who*-pronouns are generally used for the object functions, except in formal contexts.

(۲۳)

- a. The report outlines some of the opportunities that are available at our main branches and *who to contact for more information*. (informal)
- b. The report outlines some of the opportunities that are available at our main branches and *whom to contact for more information*. (formal) (Greenbaum, ۲۰۰۰: ۱۳۱)

## ۲.۴.۱.۴ Yes-No and Alternative NC

Yes-no NC is called so because they are indirect representations of *yes/no* questions which admit either a *yes* or a *no* answer (Tipping, ۱۹۳۳: ۴۰۳). These are introduced by the subordinators *whether* or *if*. In contrast, alternative clauses are introduced by *whether ... or*, or *if ... or* (Quirk et al. ۱۹۸۰: ۱۰۰۳).

(۲۴)

- a. I'm not sure *whether/if I'll have time*. (Yes-no NC)
  - b. I'm not sure *whether/if I'll have enough time or not*. (Alternative NC)
- (Swan, ۱۹۹۶: ۰۹۳)

The two subordinators *if* and *whether* are interchangeable after certain verbs such as *ask*, *want to know*, *wonder* and *tell* (Alexander, ۱۹۸۸: ۲۹۴-۵)

(۲۵)

- a. Tom asked *if/whether it was raining*.
- b. He wants to know *if/whether we want any dinner or not*.
- c. He didn't tell me *if/whether he would be arriving early or late*.
- d. She didn't say *if/whether she was coming to lunch*.
- e. I don't know *if/whether I've passed my exam yet*.
- f. I wonder *if/whether they have heard the news yet*.

However, the subordinator *whether* conveys a slightly greater doubt and some verbs (like *discuss*) can only be followed by *whether* (ibid. ۲۹۵). When the nominal subordinate clause initiates the sentence, the

subordinator *whether*, not *if* is used:

(26)

a. *Whether this is true or not*, I cannot say.

b. \* *If this is true or not* I cannot say. (Eckersley and Eckersley, 1969:

269)

## 2.4.2 Non-Finite NC

As their name indicates, non-finite NCs do not contain finite (or: tensed) verbs. Instead, they are expressed via the gerund, the infinitive with *to* or bare infinitive.

### 2.4.2.1 Gerundial NC

Gerundial clauses can only fill nominal roles and in the widest range of nominal roles. Like other NCs, they can serve as subjects as in (27), direct objects as in (28), and subject complement as in (29). They can serve as objects of prepositions as in (30), adjectival complementation (31), appositive (32) and indirect object as in (33)

(27) *Watching television* keeps them out of mischief.

(28) He enjoys *playing practical jokes*.

(29) Her first job had been *selling computers*.

(30) I'm responsible for *drawing up the budget*.

(31) They are busy *preparing a barbecue*.

(32) His current research, *investigating attitudes to racial stereotypes*, takes

up most of his time.

(Quirk et al. 1980: 1063).

(33)

- a. Harriet gave *buying that overpriced dress* a lot of thought, but decided against it.
- b. Harriet gave *Miriam (s) flying a plane to France* no credence.

Gerund clauses can also serve as object complements as in (34), but they are more usual in the function of the direct object instead as in (35).

(34)

- a. The student considered the first task *writing an outline for their group project*.
- (b). I found the most heinous act *Harold (s) stealing the money from your desk*.

(35)

- a. The students considered *writing an outline for their group project* the first task.
- b. I found *Harold (s) stealing the money from your desk* the most heinous act.

## 2.4.2.2 Infinitival NC

This type of NC is formed either with the *to*-infinitive, or with bare-infinitive. In the first form, the *to*-infinitive may function as subject, direct object, subject complement, appositive, or adjectival complement

(ibid: ۱۰۶۱):

(۳۶)

- a. *To be neutral in this conflict* is out of the question. (subject)
- b. He likes *to relax*. (direct object)
- c. The best excuse is *to say that you have an examination tomorrow morning* (subject complement)
- d. Your ambition, *to become a farmer*, requires the energy and perseverance that you so obviously have. (appositive)
- e. I'm very eager *to meet her* (adjectival complement)

In formal style, and in children's speech, the subject use of the infinitival NC is much more common (Crown, ۱۹۹۶: ۵).

The nominal bare-infinitive clause can function only as subject or subject complement:

(۳۷)

- a. *Mow the lawn* was what I did this afternoon (subject)
- b. What the plan does is *ensure a fair pension for all*. (subject complement)

## ۲.۵ Generative Approaches to Nominal Clauses

The description of the types and functions of the NC discussed so far has been largely based upon the Traditionalist (e.g., Jespersen: ۱۹۲۷, ۱۹۳۳) and the Neo-traditionalist (e.g., Quirk *et al*, ۱۹۷۲, ۱۹۸۵) approaches. Another widely discussed linguistic description of this particular syntactic structure that has been continuously developed is that of the advocates of the Generative approach to syntactic description. In the following sections, the outlook of two of the latest generative approaches (Revised Extended Standard Theory: REST) and (Minimalist Program: MG) are surveyed.

## 2.5.1 Transformational Approach

According to the Revised Extended Standard Transformational (REST) approach (e.g., Radford, 1988: 293), nominal subordinate clauses are called *Complement embedded Clauses*; namely, clauses that function as the *Complement* of a Verb, Noun, and Adjective. Nominal subordinators are called *Complementizers*, abbreviated as COMP or simply *C*. According to Emonds (1976: 142) and Soames and Perlmutter (1979: 63), *C* is generated within *S* as a sister of the subject NP of the clause by the Phrase Structure Rule:

$$S \rightarrow C NP M VP$$

Where *S* is *Sentence*, *C*: *Complementizer*, *NP*: *Noun Phrase*, *M*: *Modal*, *VP*: *Verb Phrase*.

Bresnan (1970: 297) offers an alternative analysis by suggesting that *C* and *S*, together, form a larger clausal unit which she calls 'S-bar' (=S')

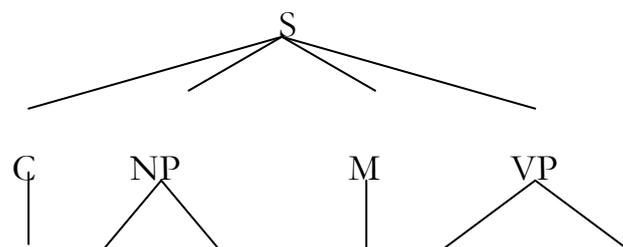
$$S' \rightarrow C S$$

$$S \rightarrow NP M VP$$

The difference between the two analyses above can be shown in the following two tree diagrams (Radford, 1988: 293):

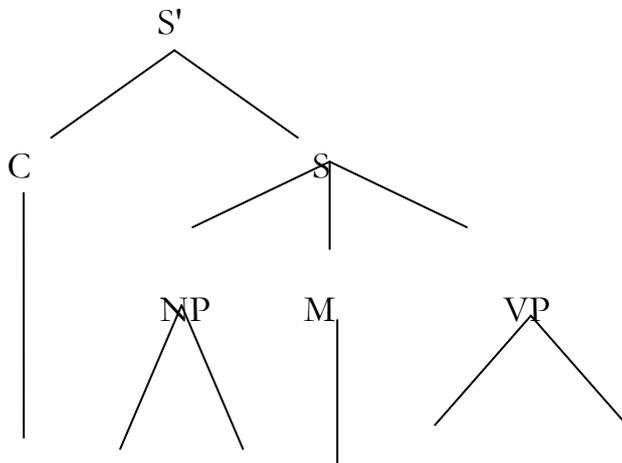
(38)

a.



That the President will approve the project

b.



That the President will approve the project

There are a number of arguments that support the S-bar analysis. One of these arguments comes from the structural fact relating to a type of ellipsis known as *gapping* in which there is an apparent gap in the middle of one or more of the conjunct clauses. This type of ellipsis is subject to the restriction shown in the following two sentences:

(39)

a. I wonder whether [<sub>S</sub> John likes fish] and [<sub>S</sub> *Mary meat*]

b. \*I wonder [<sub>S</sub> whether John likes fish] and [<sub>S'</sub> *whether Mary meat*]

where the verb *likes* can be omitted from the second conjunct clause leaving a gap where one would otherwise expect the verb in (a) but not in (b). Such a restriction can only be solved by presupposing that the existence of S and S-bar as separate categories.

As for that deletion, this can be accounted for by assuming that

the COMP's position has been left *empty* (= *e*). Thus, the nominal subordinate clause '*the President will approve the project*' in the sentence "We know for certain the President will approve the project" can be labeled as follows:

(xi)

[S' [C <sup>e</sup> [S the president will approve the project]

(Radford, 1988: 294).

As for the main clause in such sentences, these are analyzable as S-bar constituents that are subject to the restriction that the C position in the main clause must be obligatorily left empty of overt COMPs like *that/for/whether* as will be shown in the discussion of the Minimalist Program in the next subsection.

From what has been said so far, the following universal conclusions can be drawn:

- (i) Embedded clauses containing an overt COMP are S-bar constituents.
- (ii) Embedded clauses lacking an overt COMP also have the status of S-bar with an empty C.
- (iii) Main clauses containing an overt COMP or inverted auxiliary are S-bar constituents.
- (iv) Main clauses lacking an overt COMP or inverted are S-bar constituents with an empty C. (ibid. 301).

Two features [ $\pm$ WH &  $\pm$ FINITE] are used to indicate whether a certain COMP is: i) an interrogative one or not, ii) can introduce a finite

or a non-finite clause, or both, as shown hereunder (ibid. ۳۰۳):

*that* = [-WH, +FINITE]

*for* = [-WH, -FINITE]

*whether* = [+WH, ±FINITE]

*if* = [+WH, +FINITE]

## ۲.۵.۲ The Minimalist Program

Before discussing how the different types of NCs are tackled according to the latest Minimalist Program (e.g., Chomsky, ۱۹۹۵; Haegeman and Gue'ron, ۱۹۹۹), a general outline of the Program's descriptive apparatus is required first.

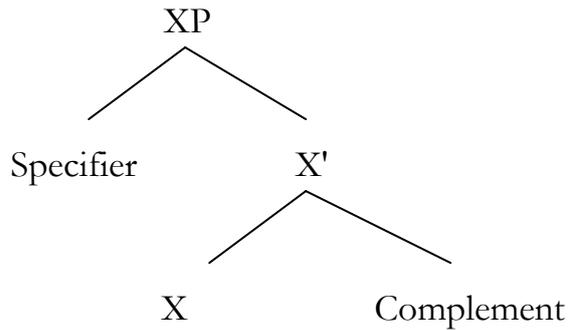
According to this approach, the sentence and its constituents are **endocentric structures** in that they are organized around a central unit: the **head** (Haegeman and Gue'ron, ۱۹۹۹: ۱۳۸). Among the potential heads of sentence constituents, a distinction is made between lexical elements (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions) which contribute to the descriptive content of the sentence, and functional elements (auxiliaries, articles, and conjunctions) which do not. The properties of constituents are determined by the properties of their heads. Thus, a head of the category V(erb) heads a projection of the Category V(erb) P(hrase), and N heads a N(oun) P(hrase), and so on, according to the following format (where 'X' stands for any sentences constituent, and 'P' for Phrase):

An XP is a constituent headed by X.

An XP is a projection of X.

(ibid).

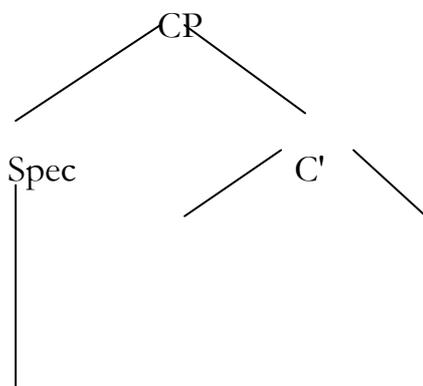
All projections are represented in terms of a single binary system summarized by the following X-bar format system:

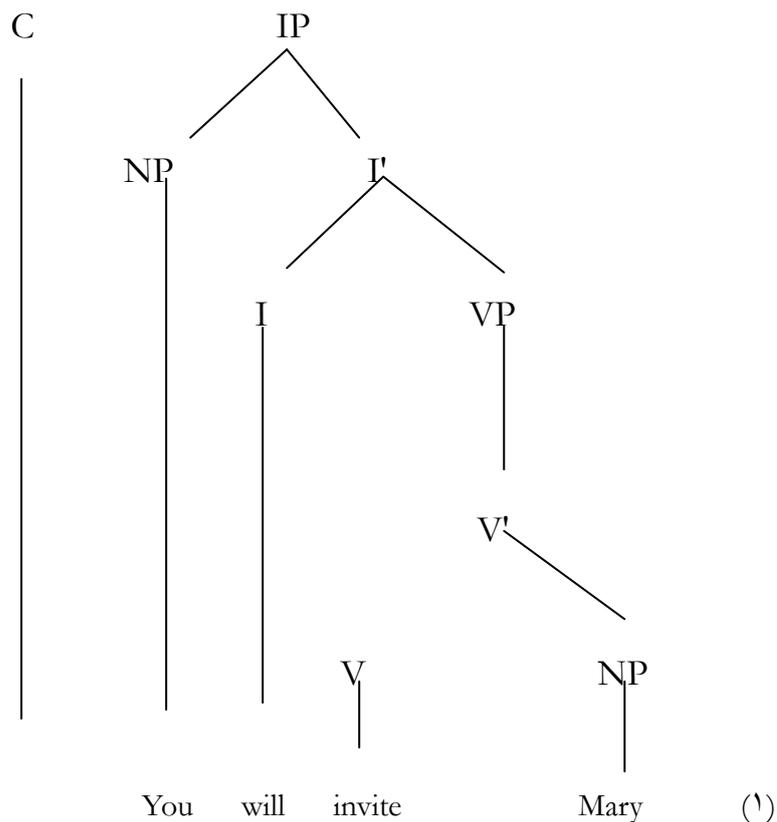


(ibid: 139)

The X-bar format above is common to both lexical projections (NP, VP, AP, AdvP, and PP) and the functional projections. Clauses are projections of V augmented by two types of functional projections: Inflection Phrase (IP), and COMP Phrase (CP). The inflectional heads spell out verbal morphology (tense and agreement); the CP encodes the illocutionary force of the sentence (interrogative [+WH] versus declarative [-WH]). The following diagram shows how the same X-bar format can account for (1) finite root declarative, (2) finite root interrogative, (3) finite embedded declarative, (4) finite embedded interrogative, (5) non-finite embedded interrogative, and (6) non-finite embedded declarative clauses (*ec*=empty category):

(41)





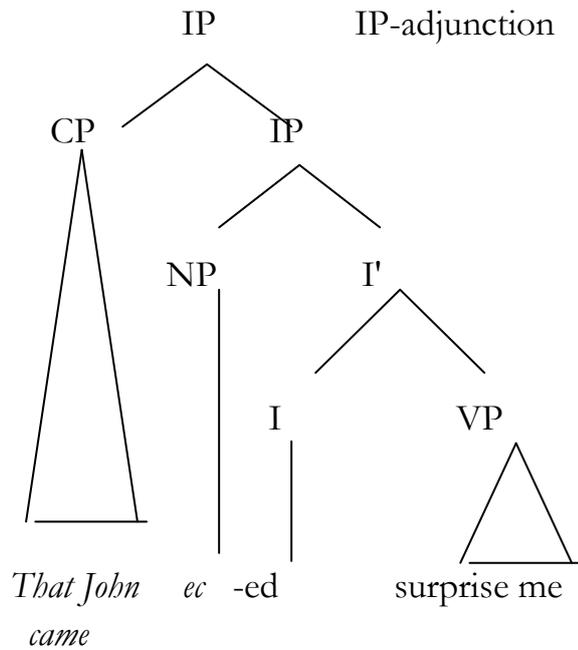
- |      |      |           |      |        |      |     |
|------|------|-----------|------|--------|------|-----|
| When | did  | you       |      | invite | Mary | (2) |
|      | That | you       | will | invite | Mary | (3) |
| When |      | you       | will | invite | Mary | (4) |
| When |      | <i>ec</i> | to   | invite | Mary | (5) |
|      | For  | you       | to   | invite | Mary | (6) |

(ibid: 140-2)

Nominal subordinate clauses are called embedded ones because they stand as constituents of the larger root or matrix clause. Subordinating conjunctions ('subordinators' in Traditional Grammar) are labeled Complementizers (C). As a head, the COMP selects a clause, an IP, as its complement. In sentences with clausal subjects (NC functioning as the subject of the whole matrix sentence), these clausal subjects are adjoined to IP or CP, and are co-indexed with a non-overt pronoun in the canonical subject position (Spec, IP) (ibid. 118-9):

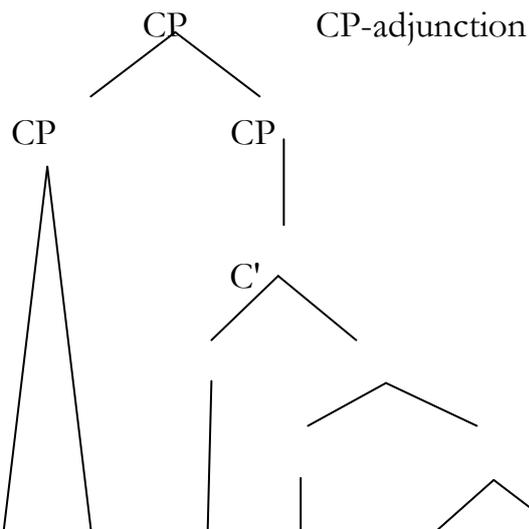
(42)

*That John came* surprised me.

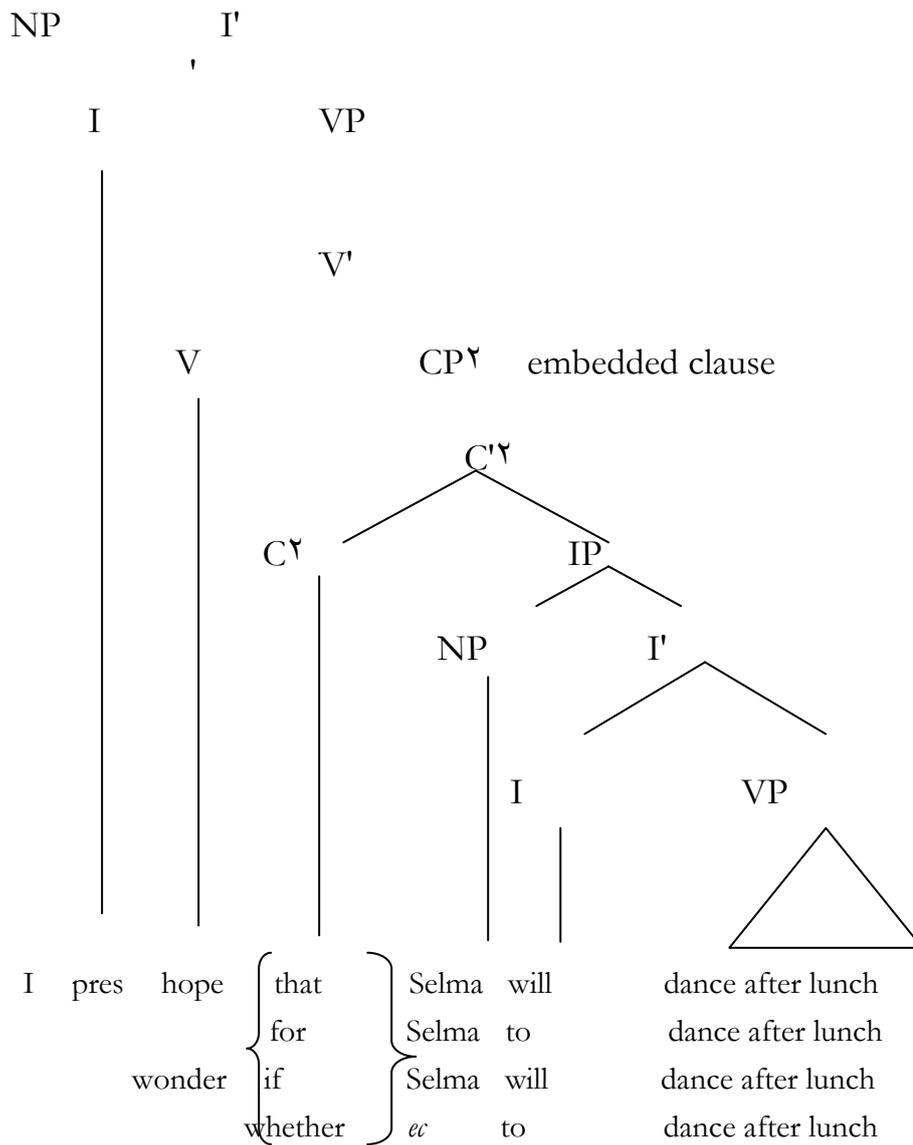


In the tree-diagram above, the initial NC is adjoined to IP as a Complementizer Phrase. The NP node is an empty category (*ec*) co-indexed with the IP clause. Another possible way of grammatical analysis is to label the initial NC in the same way above as an adjoined Complementizer Phrase with C as a zero category as shown in the following diagram:

(43)







(ibid: 100)

### 2.5.2.1 Indirect Questions in English

The example (20) below illustrates the formation of embedded questions:

(๕๐)

- a. I think (that) *Selma will meet Louise after lunch.*
- b. \*<sup>1</sup> wonder *that Selma will meet Louise after lunch.*
- c. I wonder *whether Selma will meet Louise after lunch.*
- d. I wonder *whom Selma will meet after lunch.*

In (๕๐a) the main verb *think* selects a nominal declarative finite clause introduced by optional *that*. The main (matrix) verb of (๕๐b), *wonder*, does not select a *that* clause; rather, it selects an interrogative clause, either a *yes/no* question (๕๐c), or a *wh*-question (๕๐d). The Complementizer C is the head of CP and the properties of the head C percolate to – or are shared by – the maximal projection, CP. An interrogative clause is headed by a C carrying a [+WH] feature, and the head of a declarative clause is a C marked [-WH]. Interrogative sentences functioning as embedded clauses are **indirect** questions; those functioning as main clauses are **direct** questions or **root** questions. There are similarities and differences between direct and indirect questions.

The comparison between direct and indirect *yes/no* questions shows that root *yes/no* questions are formed by Inflection-to-Complementizer (Henceforth: I-to-C) movement, giving rise to Subject-Auxiliary-Inversion (Henceforth: SAI). In indirect *yes/no* questions there is no I-to-C movement in Standard English:

(๕๖)

\* I wonder will Selma meet Louise after lunch.

Indirect or embedded *yes/no* questions are introduced either by *whether*, as

in (ξ<sup>o</sup>c) or by *if*:

(ξ<sup>v</sup>)

I wonder *if Selma will meet Louise after lunch*.

(ξ<sup>o</sup>d) contains an embedded or indirect *wh*-question. Once again, direct and indirect *wh*-questions differ in that the former, though not the latter, are formed by I-to-C movement giving rise to SAI. On the other hand, in both root and embedded *wh*-questions a *wh*-phrase cannot remain in its sentence-internal base-position, but must move to the clause-initial [Spec, CP]. In embedded questions the fronted *wh*-constituent is incompatible with an overt complementizer. Accordingly, one can assume that the complementizer position in embedded *wh*-questions is non-overt.

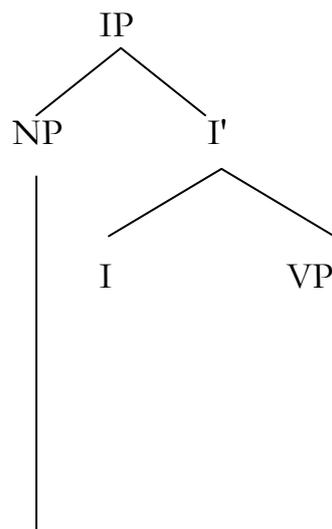
(ξ<sup>λ</sup>) \*<sup>λ</sup> wonder [whom that Selma will invite after lunch].

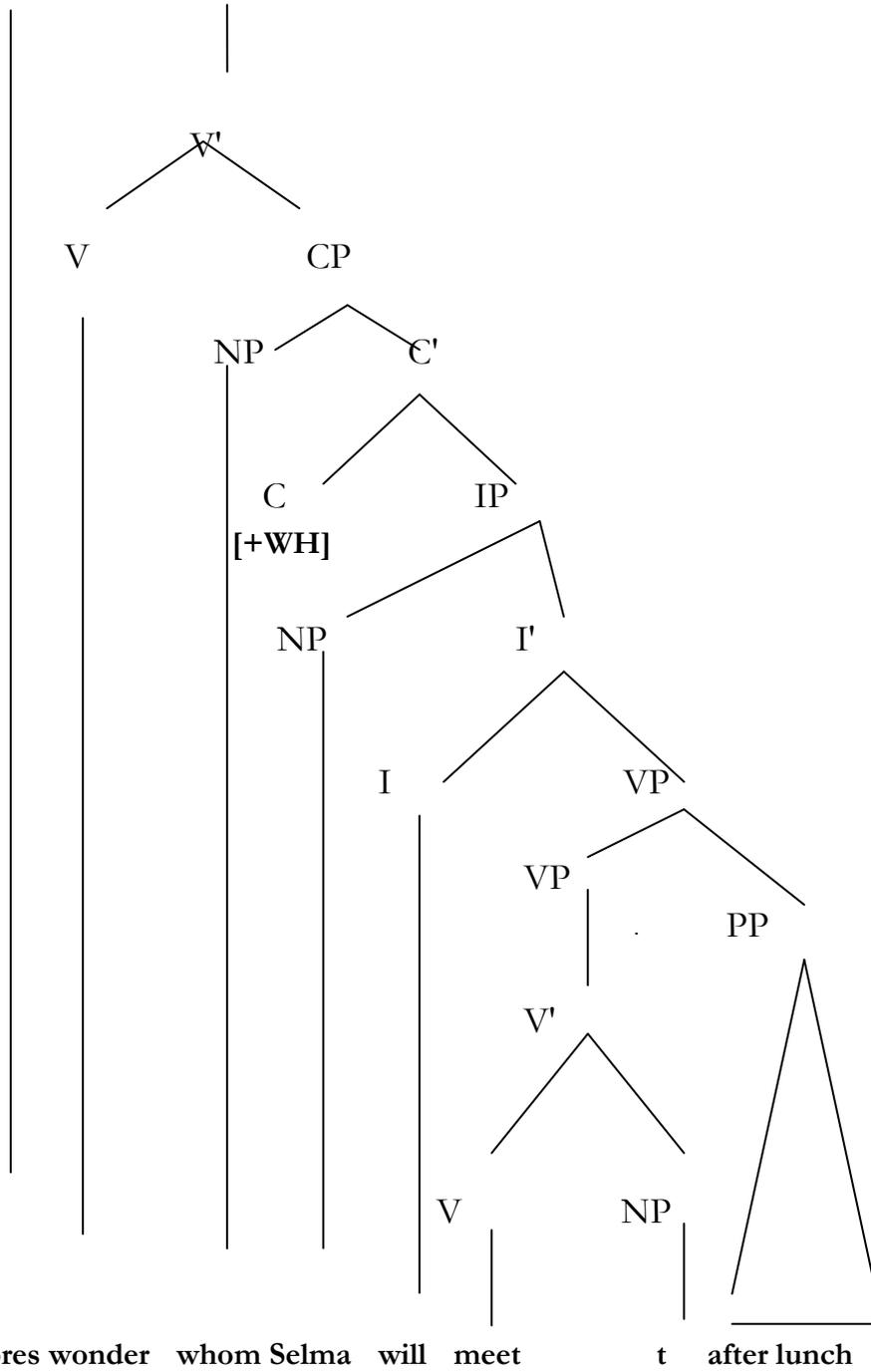
[whether that Selma will invite Louise after lunch].

[if that Selma will invite Louise after lunch].

Apparently there is a constraint on the spelling out of elements carrying the [+WH] feature. If a *wh*-phrase occupies the specifier of an embedded interrogative clause, then the head of that clause, C, assumed to carry the feature [+WH], is not spelt out.

The S-structure of (ξ<sup>o</sup>d) is as follows:





(Haegeman and Gue'ron, 1999: 174).

In the examples above, *wh*-movement applies to a finite embedded clause. *Wh*-movement may also extract a constituent from a non-finite clause:

(29)

a. I wonder whom to meet.

In (११a.) the non-finite IP is headed by the infinitival marker *to*; the subject is non-overt and is controlled by the matrix subject *I*; the object of *meet* is the *wh* constituent *whom*, which has been proposed. The structure of (११a.) is as follows:

(११)

b. [IP I [VP wonder [CP whom [IP *ec* to [VP meet t]]]]].

### १.१.१.१ The Status of *whether* and *if*

The choice of COMPs *whether* and *if* varies along two dimensions: (i) finiteness, and (ii) illocutionary force (ibid: ११०). Finite declaratives are introduced by *that*, finite interrogatives by *if*, and non-finite clauses by *for*. *Whether* has a special status in that it introduces both finite and non-finite interrogatives.

(१०)

a. I wonder [CP *whether* [IP I should go]].

a'. I wonder [CP *whether* [IP [*ec*] to go]].

*Whether* does not select a type of embedded clause. In this respect, *whether* resembles proposed *wh*-constituents which also do not have an impact on the finiteness of the clause which they introduce:

(๐•)

b. I wonder [CP whom [IP I should invite]].

b'. I wonder [CP whom [IP [ec] to invite]].

c. I wonder [CP where [IP I should go]].

c'. I wonder [CP where [IP [ec] to go]].

Like *wh*-phrases such as *whom* and *when*, *whether* can introduce an infinitival clause with a non-overt subject. *If*, on the other hand, only selects finite clauses. Hence it cannot introduce an infinitival clause with a non-overt subject:

(๐•)

d. I wonder [CP **if** [IP I should go]].

d'. \*I wonder [CP **if** [IP [ec] to go]].

One can exploit the parallelism in (๐• a—c) by assuming that *whether* occupies the same position as *whom* and *when*, i.e. [Spec, CP]. Based on the parallelism between (๐• d') and (๐• e), the analyzer might argue that, like *that*, *if* is a complementizer and occupies the position under C.

(๐•) e. \*I expected [CP that [IP [ec] will go]].

The fact that *whether*, unlike *if* and *that*, does not impose selectional restrictions on the finiteness of the complement IP can be related to the fact that, unlike the complementizers mentioned, *whether* is not the head of CP but is a *wh*-phrase in the specifier of CP. Like other *wh*-phrases in [Spec, CP] it is compatible with both finite and non-finite clauses.

### २.९.२.३ Movement and Locality

Interrogative sentences are formed by moving an interrogative constituent, a *wh*-phrase, leftward to [Spec, CP]; in root questions, the relevant constituent is moved to the matrix [Spec, CP]; in embedded questions, it is moved to the embedded [Spec, CP]. The *wh*-constituent can move beyond the boundaries of the clause in which it originates:

(९१)

- a. I asked [CP **whom** [IP they will meet tomorrow]].
- b. I asked [CP **whom** [IP they think [CP that [IP they will meet tomorrow]]]].
- c. I asked [CP **when** [IP they will meet Mary]].
- d. I asked [CP **when** [IP they think [CP that [IP they will meet Mary]]]].

In (९१) the matrix verb *asks* selects an interrogative clause. This clause is derived by leftward movement of a *wh*-phrase to the specifier of the clausal complement of *ask*, i.e. to the embedded [Spec, CP]. The *wh*-phrase moves to the specifier position of a C which carries the interrogative feature [+WH]. The *wh*-phrase and the head to whose specifier it moves match with respect to the interrogative feature. The moved *wh*-constituent signals overtly that the embedded clause is a question.

(९२)

- a. I asked [CP **whom** [IP they will meet *t* tomorrow]].
- b. I asked [CP **whom** [IP they think [CP that [IP they will meet *t* tomorrow]]]].

c. I asked [CP when [IP they will meet Mary  $t_i$ ]].

d. I asked [CP when [IP they think [CP that [IP they will meet Mary  $t_i$ ]]]].

In (๑๒b) and (๑๒d), the *wh*-phrase, *whom* and *when* respectively, originates in the embedded clause. It moves out of its original clause and on its way to the higher [Spec, CP], it crosses an intervening declarative complementizer *that*.

In (๑๓), *whom* has crossed two declarative COMPs before ending up in the appropriate specifier position of an interrogative CP:

(๑๓)

I asked [CP whom [IP they thought [CP that [IP Bill had said [CP that [IP Mary would invite  $t_i$ ]]]]]].

The question now is whether *wh*-movement is bounded or unbounded, i.e. whether or not it is subject to any conditions of locality. Consider (๑๔):

(๑๔)

a. I wonder [CP whom<sub>i</sub> [IP they will meet  $t_i$  tomorrow]].

b. ? I asked [CP whom<sub>i</sub> [IP they wonder [CP whether [IP they will meet  $t_i$ ]]]].

c. ? I asked [CP whom<sub>i</sub> [IP they wonder [CP when<sub>j</sub> [IP they will meet  $t_i$   $t_j$ ]]]].

d. \*I asked [CP how<sub>i</sub> [IP they wonder [CP whether [IP they will meet Mary  $t_i$ ]]]].

e. \*I asked [CP how<sub>j</sub> [IP they wonder [CP whom<sub>i</sub> [IP they will meet  $t_i t_j$  ]]]].

f. \*I asked [CP how<sub>j</sub> [IP they wonder [CP when<sub>i</sub> [IP they will meet Mary  $t_j t_i$  ]]]].

Comparing the grammatical acceptability of the examples above shows that while a *wh*-phrase can be separated from its base-position by intervening occurrences of the COMP *that*, the intervention of interrogative constituents such as *whether*, *whom* or *when* renders the sentence at best marginal and sometimes ungrammatical. An intervening *wh*-phrase gives rise to degradation for movement.

The COMP *that* occupies the head position of the clause, C. In (12b), a *wh*-phrase is extracted from the lower clause and the embedded [Spec, CP] remains unoccupied. The proposition here is that the *wh*-phrase transits through this unoccupied [Spec, CP] position on its way to the highest or root [Spec, CP].

*Wh*-movement is local: a *wh*-phrase has to move through the specifier of each CP it crosses. In other words, in the first stage of movement, the *wh*-phrase moves to a local [Spec, CP], the [Spec, CP] of the clause which contains it. Each following step is also local in that the *wh*-phrase moves to the next [Spec, CP] up. *Wh*-movement cannot skip a [Spec, CP] to move to a higher one. At each step, the movement leaves a co-indexed trace.

Accordingly, one has to postulate that there is only one position through which a *wh*-phrase can escape from the clause which contains it in order to move into a higher clause. This hypothesis is confirmed by the observation that one cannot move two constituents to the specifier of the same clause:

(๑๑)

- a. To whom did he say **what**?
- b. \*To whom what did he say?
- c. \*What to whom did he say?

(๑๒)

- a. I wonder to **whom** he said **what**.
- b. \*I wonder to whom what he said.
- c. \*I wonder what to whom he said.

As the ungrammaticality of the (b)- and (c)-sentences shows, English grammar does not allow for multiple *wh*-movement.

One property of *wh*-movement which emerges from the examples above is that it is subject to locality conditions: a *wh*-phrase moves first into the specifier of the clause that dominates it, and then it moves step by step to the higher specifier. Violation of the locality condition leads to degraded acceptability, as shown by (๑๖a).

(๑๖)

- a.? I ask [CP<sup>1</sup> whom<sub>i</sub> [IP they wonder [CP<sup>2</sup> whether [IP Mary thinks [CP<sup>3</sup> *t*<sub>i</sub> that [IP she will meet *t*<sub>i</sub> ]]]]]]]]

The first step of the movement of *whom* is OK: *whom* moves into [Spec, CP<sup>1</sup>], the specifier position of the lowest COMP *that*. The second step is blocked by the presence of *whether* in the next higher [Spec, CP<sup>2</sup>]. *Whom* cannot cross the intermediate [Spec, CP<sup>2</sup>]

This means that the blocking effect of *whether* can be explained in

terms of the minimality condition. Starting from the specifier position of the CP<sup>Y</sup>, one needs to establish a relation with the specifier of CP<sup>X</sup>. However, a similar relation could be established in principle with the specifier of CP<sup>Y</sup>. Since [Spec, CP<sup>Y</sup>] intervenes between [Spec, CP<sup>X</sup>] and [Spec, CP<sup>X</sup>] the relation with [Spec, CP<sup>X</sup>] cannot be established.

A problem arises when we consider (e<sup>Y</sup>b), where the COMP *if* introduces an indirect question:

(e<sup>Y</sup>)

b. ? I ask [CP<sup>X</sup> whom<sub>i</sub> [IP they wonder [CP<sup>Y</sup> [C *if*] [IP Mary thinks [CP<sup>X</sup> *t<sub>i</sub>* that [IP she will meet *t<sub>i</sub>* ]]]]]].

Here, there is a need for an extra provision to block movement of a *wh*-constituent through the apparently unoccupied specifier of *if* in CP<sup>Y</sup>. When C is occupied by *if*, its specifier turns out not to be available for movement. The suggestion is that the presence of *if* under C somehow endows the specifier of CP<sup>Y</sup> with an abstract [+WH] feature which blocks the insertion of movement of other material.

# CHAPTER THREE

## *DATA COLLECTION*

### **३.१ Introduction**

This chapter describes the procedures used in data collection. It deals with the statement of the objectives of the test with respect to the hypotheses of the study. It will tackle such relevant issues as the population of the study, its sample, the pilot test, main test layout, test administration and virtues.

### **३.२ The Objectives of the Test**

Tests are used to have specific aims to achieve. Test is the way by which we will be able to elicit students' <sup>(1)</sup> responses about the subject under study. It should be able to elicit the “intuitional” and the “textual” data that formulate the learners interlanguage (Corder, १९७३: ०९). These two types of data comprise the receptive and the productive knowledge. The function of the first part of the test, the Recognition, is to elicit the receptive knowledge while the function of the second part, the Production, is to elicit the productive knowledge. Therefore, the most important objective of the test is to measure the testees' overall

competence in the use of the English NC in accordance with the hypotheses of the present study which anticipate that:

١. Of the four types of finite NCs; those introduced by *that* complementizer, nominal relativizers, *yes-no* & alternative interrogative and *wh*-clauses, it is hypothesized that the order of acquisition is:

*that*-clause > nominal relative > *yes-no* and alternative > *wh*-clause.

٢. the level of acquisition is higher in comprehension than production.

٣. A good mastery of all types of the nominal clause under study is not achieved by Iraqi EFL learners during their four-year study of English as a second language.

By using the present test, these hypotheses are either going to be validated or refuted.

### **٣.٣ Test Design**

The test comprises two questions with a total of thirty items that assess the subjects' acquisition of the English NC at the recognition and production levels. The first question has fifteen multiple-choice items that test the subjects' recognition of NC; whereas the second question has another fifteen items of the completion type testing the subjects' production of the same structures.

The multiple choice type is designed to measure the students' receptive knowledge, this to elicit intuitional data about the subject under

study. Four choices are given to each item where only one choice is correct. Recognition part of the test is based on the whole possible structures used to express the English NC. The distracters are chosen according to structures that have been detected in the Iraqi EFL learners' interlanguage at various stages of learning.

Production part of the test is designed to measure the productive knowledge of the testees, i.e., to elicit textual data. By using the "completion" technique, students are required to make use of key words (given between brackets) to build up sentences that express the various structure of the English NC.

### **٣.٤ Material Selection**

All the test items were selected from genuine sentences given in Jespersen (١٩٣٣), Quirk et al (١٩٨٥), Alexander (١٩٨٨), and Swan (١٩٩٦). The test includes items wherein NCs are introduced by the subordinators (in their order of appearance): *whichever, why, whether, if, who, that, when, whatever, whenever, whom, what, how, where, whose, and whoever*. This list is coextensive with all the possible English subordinators that can introduce NCs.

The test layout has been organized in such a way that the subjects will give their responses on the same test sheet. An answered example for each of the two questions was supplied to offer a guide for the subjects as to how to offer their responses (see Appendix ١).

To ensure that the test design achieves its objectives, its first version was submitted to a jury of nine university professors and

lecturers for assessment and comments. Hereunder is a list of their names:

١. Assist. Prof. Abdullatif al-Jumaily, Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics, Head of the English Dept, College of Arts, University of Baghdad

٢. Prof. Kadhim Al-Jawadi, Ph.D. in Linguistics, College of Arts, University of Baghdad

٣. Dunya al-Jazrawi, Ph.D. in Translation and Linguistics, College of Arts, University of Baghdad

٤. Assist. Prof. Abbas Diegan Derwish, Ph.D. in Translation and Linguistics, Head of the English Dept, College of Education, University of Babylon.

٥. Hussain Alwan Hussain, Ph.D. in Translation and Linguistics, College of Arts, University of Baghdad.

٦. Assist. Prof Riyadh Tariq Kadhim al-Ameedy, Ph.D. in Translation and Linguistics, College of Education, University of Babylon

٧. Assist. Prof Razaq N. Mukheef (MA) in Linguistics, College of Education, University of Babylon.

٨. Lubna Riyadh al-Shaikhly, Ph.D. in Translation and Linguistics, Head of the English Dept. College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad

٩. Maysa'a K. Hussain, Ph.D. in Language and Linguistics, College of Education, University of Al-Qadisiya.

Upon collecting the test papers from the jury members, all the comments and remarks that were suggested by them were incorporated

in the final test version.

## **٣.٥ Data Collection**

Research data consists of a thirty-item proficiency test administered during the second semester of the academic year ٢٠٠٣/٢٠٠٤ to both the First and Fourth Year Iraqi EFL learners at the Department of English, College of Education, University of Babylon. Further data and sample description are offered in the following sections.

### **٣.٥.١ Population and Samples**

Two samples were selected to test administration. The first group (Henceforth: G<sup>١</sup>) consisted of (١٠٩) first-year subjects, the second group (G<sup>٢</sup>) of (٥٠) fourth-year subjects. Both groups have a representative rate of (١٠٠٪) of all the admissible population. Such a complete representative rate has been aimed at in order to rule out the disadvantages that are inherent in the random sample method such as the absence of exhaustiveness.

Subjects of G<sup>١</sup> were First Year male and female Iraqi students at the Department of English, College of Education. These students have been studying English as a foreign language in Iraqi primary and secondary schools for eight academic years before admission to college. Fourth year stage was chosen to take the test depending on the fact that its students are at the final stage and they are expected to have a good mastery of the subject under study taking into consideration that they

have already taught the NC in the fourth year of their study at the university; the textbook<sup>(1)</sup> is *A University Grammar of English* (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973).

The sample taken should be homogeneous (Corder, 1981: 103-6); therefore, the researcher has made sure that the average age of all participants is about nineteen years (for G<sup>1</sup>) and twenty two years (for G<sup>2</sup>). Sample homogenization was ascertained through the admission of all those admissible subjects that share the same linguistic background, age, region, level of study, and nationality.

Classification according to sex has been ignored since sex is not a criterion under investigation in this study.

The reason why the test was administered to these two groups is related to the objectives of this study which aims at evaluating the acquisition of the NC during the period of four-year-study of English at the collegiate level. Thus, G<sup>1</sup> represents the starting point of formal acquisition of English at the college level, while G<sup>2</sup> represents the end-point of such acquisition at the same level.

## **3.7 Test Virtues**

Good test are characterized by two main virtues: reliability and validity. These two points are discussed in the following two subsections.

### **3.7.1 Reliability**

Efficient tests are required to be consistent in that when repeated, the scores should not fluctuate to the effect that subjects' scores relative

to each other must obtain (Pilliner, 1971: 23). In other words, reliable tests produce similar results on different occasions under similar circumstances (Oller, 1979: 4). Test reliability can be assessed in a number of ways such as the test retest procedure, the split-half method, and the parallel test-forms method (Harris, 1979: 19).

One widely used estimate of Test Reliability is that of Kuder-Richardson Formula 21:

$$R = 1 - \frac{M(n-M)}{ns^2}$$

where  $M$  is the mean,  $n$  is the number of the items in the test, and  $s$  is the Standard Deviation.

The application of the formula above requires calculating Standard Deviation first. By Standard Deviation (Henceforth: SD) is meant the extent to which each particular test score deviates from the test's mean (Baker, 1919: 49). In this test, SD has been calculated using the following formula:

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{N}}$$

Where 'd' is the squared value of subtracting the test mean score of the upper one-sixth from the lower one-sixth, and 'N' is half the number of subjects (Harrison, 1913: 124). The application of the formula above to the test of G 1 and G 2 has yielded the two SDs of 13.44 and 17.92, respectively.

On applying Kuder-Richardson formula above to the scores of G 1 test, one gets the following figures:

$$R = 1 - \frac{44.7(30 - 44.7)}{30 \times 4.7}$$

$$R = 1 - \frac{44.7 \times -11.7}{30 \times 118.73}$$

$$R = 1 - \frac{701.17}{5419}$$

$$R = 1 - 0.12$$

$$R = 88\%$$

As for  $G_{\bar{r}}$ , the application of the same formula above yields approximately the same Reliability estimate as shown hereunder.

$$R = 1 - \frac{7.07(30 - 7.07)}{30 \times 17.92}$$

$$R = 1 - \frac{7.07 \times 22.93}{30 \times 321.12}$$

$$R = 1 - \frac{160.713}{9633.79}$$

$$R = 1 - 0.19$$

$$R = 81\%$$

The two Reliability estimates above show quite acceptable test

ratios, and as such confirm its consistency.

## 3.7.2 Validity

Validity is concerned with relevance (Bell, 1981: 198). According to Harris (1979: 19), and Oller (1979: 4), the validity of a test means the extent to which the test measures what it is designed to measure and nothing else. Every test must aim to provide a true measure of the particular skill which it is intended to measure (Heaton, 1988: 109).

The two most important types of validity are *content validity* and *face validity*. Content validity is concerned with designing test items in such away as to allow the subjects' performance to truly reflect the language skill acquired for genuine communication in that language (Bell, 1981: 198). For the purpose of securing content validity, the test should sample adequately "the class of situations or subject-matter about which conclusions are to be drawn" (Payne and McMorris, 1977: 78). Moreover, "the items actually included are a sample of possible items" (Ingram, 1974: 314).

In this test, content validity has been obtained through the inclusion of only those items that are strictly related to the comprehension and production of the English NC.

Face validity has been taken into consideration by ascertaining the prior approval of nine university professors and lecturers mentioned in (3.4) to all its items over and above the initial ratification of the researcher's two co-supervisors, to judge whether or not the test on its

face value , the jury has recommended that certain sentences be replaced or modified by more adequate ones.

## **٣.٧ Pilot Test**

According to Harris (١٩٦٩: ٢٥), the administration of the pilot test refers to “trying out the test material on a similar group for whom the test is being designed”.

On April the ١٨<sup>th</sup> of the academic year ٢٠٠٣-٢٠٠٤ and one week before the Main Test administration, a random group was chosen of twenty Iraqi undergraduate students of the Department of English, College of Education, University of Babylon, were subjected to test. Ten students from the first and ten from the fourth year were selected to sit in the pilot test. Three principal points were aimed at in this tryout. The first is to make sure that the subjects face no difficulty in understanding what is wanted from them. The second is to ensure that the allotted time of forty-five minutes is enough for the subjects to finish all the test items. The third is to make the necessary changes or modifications, if any, on the basis of the pilot administration.

The pilot administration is also a good indicator of the applicability of the test and the plausibility of the results it is hoped to yield.

The test paper is designed in such a way that elicits information related to subject's age, first language, and nationality. The pilot test has shown that the students have encountered no special difficulty in understanding how to respond to the two questions since no questions

were asked in this respect. It has also shown that the time allotted to the test is adequate since all the subjects submitted their responses before the end of the period of forty-five minutes. The subjects who sat in this test were excluded from the main test administration.

### **3.4 Main Test Administration**

The main test was administered on April the 25<sup>th</sup> of the academic year 2003-2004 for both G<sup>1</sup> and G<sup>2</sup>, in one sitting each. In order to take the test seriously, the subjects were asked to give their names on the test papers. In addition, they were informed beforehand to do their best and to leave out no blank items since this test will also be administered to students from other universities and that they were required to prove their true competitive efficiency in this respect.

For G<sup>1</sup> subjects, the test was administered in two classrooms; one supervised by the researcher himself, and the other by a colleague staff member. The subjects raised no questions on how to respond, and the test-papers were all submitted within the prescribed time. The testees were informed to answer on the test sheet to save time and avoid “possible errors arising from the ‘mental’ transfer of the answer sheet itself” (Heaton, 1988: 108).

To avoid the effect of guessing, testees were informed not to give any response incase they were not sure of the right answer.

### **3.5 Scoring Scheme**

A definite scoring scheme is adopted in order to add to the

reliability and objectivity of the test.

Each test paper was scored out of 40 by allocating forty-five marks for each of the two questions. In other words, both the recognition and the production were given an equal score. Blank items were neglected and given no scores. Multiple-choice recognition items were scored as either correct or incorrect. Production items were scored out of three marks each, distributed according to the correct production of the subject, verb, and complement of each clause by allocating one mark for each. NCs with intransitive verbs were also scored out of three marks by allocating two marks to the production of the correct verb in its correct position. Irrelevant mistakes, such as spelling ones, were ignored.

The following table illustrates how scores are distributed between the two questions of the test:

**Table (1)**

**Distribution of the Scores of the test**

Type of Question	No. of Items	Scores	Percentage %
Multiple Choice	10	40	0.4
Completion	10	40	0.4

### Notes to Chapter Three:

١. The terms **students**, **learners**, **testees** and **subjects** are used interchangeably in this study.
٢. The textbooks for the four years of the study are:
  - A. Murphy, R. (١٩٨٧) *English Grammar in Use*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
  - B. Quirk, R. and Greenbaum, S. (١٩٧٣) *A University Grammar of English*. London: Longman.
  - C. Stageberg, N. (١٩٧١) (٢<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) *An Introductory English Grammar*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## *DATA ANALYSIS*

### **ξ. 1 Introduction**

This chapter is concerned with data analysis. The discussion in this chapter moves to item analysis and the presentation of the general test results using statistical tables, means and formula. Error analysis follows. The ultimate aim of the chapter is get at statistical evidence that verifies the validity of the hypotheses put forward in Chapter One.

### **ξ. 2 Item Analyses**

Two types of item analysis are discussed below: facility value and discrimination index. These two reflect: i) how difficult the test items are, and ii) how well they sort out the better students from the poorer ones.

#### **ξ. 2. 1 Facility Value**

Facility value (or index) provides the tester with a mathematical means for measuring the difficulty of each test item. It is simply the percentage of the subjects who give the correct answer, calculated according to the following formula:

$$\text{Item FV} = \frac{\text{correct responses}}{\text{total responses}}$$

For example, if twenty out of twenty-five subjects answered one item correctly, the facility index for that item would be:

$$\text{Item FV} = \frac{20}{25} = 0.8 \text{ or } 80\%$$

The most usual facility value for a whole test ranges from about 40% to about 70% (Harrison, 1983: 121). In this test, the means of facility values for G 1 are 44% and 40%; for G 2, 66% and 56%. This makes mean of FVs for G 1 is 44%, against 61% for G 2. These means fall within the most usual range above; and as such confirm the fact that test items have the fairly and middling facility indices, which, as whole, satisfy one of the requirements of good tests. The figures above are illustrated in Table (2-5) hereunder.

**Table ( 5 )**  
**Facility Value for G 1, Recognition**

Item No	Facility Value%	Item No.	Facility Value%	Item No.	Facility Value%
1	56.8	7	35.7	13	22.9
2	51.3	8	50.4	14	28.4
3	53.2	9	41.2	15	37.6
4	36.6	10	56.8	<b>Total</b>	<b>662.0</b>

٥	٥٥.٩	١١	٢٨.٤	<b>Mean</b>	٤٤.١٦%
٦	٥٨.٧	١٢	٤٨.٦		

Table (٧)  
Facility Value for G ٢, Recognition

Item No	Facility Value%	Item No	Facility Value%	Item No	Facility Value%
١	٧٨	٧	٦٨	١٣	٥٢
٢	٧٨	٨	٦٠	١٤	٧٠
٣	٧٨	٩	٦٨	١٥	٥٢
٤	٧٤	١٠	٧٦	<b>Total</b>	١٠٠٠
٥	٨٢	١١	٤٠	<b>Mean</b>	٦٦.٦%
٦	٧٤	١٢	٥٠		

Table (٨)  
Facility Value for G ١, Production

Item No	Facility Value%	Item No	Facility Value%	Item No	Facility Value%
١	٧.٦	٧	٦٤.٢	١٣	٤٧.٤

٢	٤٤.٦	٨	٥٤.١	١٤	٦٨.٨
٣	٥١.٩	٩	٨٣.٨	١٥	٥١
٤	٣٣.٩	١٠	٧.٣	<b>Total</b>	٦٨٧
٥	٥٩	١١	٢.٧		<b>Mean</b>
٦	٣٦.٤	١٢	٧٤.٣		

Table (٩)

### Facility Value for G ٢, Production

Item No	Facility Value%	Item No	Facility Value%	Item No	Facility Value%
١	١٩.٣	٧	٣٤.٦	١٣	٦٩.٣
٢	٦٦	٨	٦٠	١٤	٩٢.٦
٣	٦٥.٣	٩	٨٥.٣	١٥	٦٢
٤	٣٦.٦	١٠	٢٢	<b>Total</b>	٨٤٣.٤
٥	٧٤.٦	١١	١٤.٦		<b>Mean</b>
٦	٥٤.٦	١٢	٨٦.٦		

### ٤.٢.٢ Item Discrimination Index (ID)

One important feature of a test is its capacity to discriminate among the testees by reflecting the difference in the performances of

the individuals in the group (Heaton, 1911: 170). In other words, good tests are required not only to discriminate between the high-versus-low performance students as a whole, but also to ascertain that each test item also does so (Harrison, 1913: 121). This condition is satisfied when no test item that is incorrectly answered by the majority of the upper-half of the testees is correctly answered by the majority of the lower-performance testees.

The discrimination index is arrived at by subtracting the number of correct answers in the bottom group from the number of correct answers in the top group and dividing the result by the number of students in one of the groups (half the total number of students involved):

$$D = \frac{\text{Correct T} - \text{Correct B}}{\frac{1}{2} N}$$

The application of the formula above to the scoring results of the testees in G<sup>1</sup> and G<sup>2</sup> has yielded the results in Tables (7 - 9) below:

**Table (7)**

**Discrimination Value, G<sup>1</sup>, Question I, Recognition**

<i>Item No</i>	<i>Discrimination Value</i> %	<i>Item No</i>	<i>Discrimination Value</i> %
1	.30	11	.31
2	.3	12	.47

٣	٠.٣٣	١٣	٠.٣٧
٤	٠.١٨	١٤	٠.١٧
٥	٠.٢٠	١٥	٠.١٣
٦	٠.٣٣	<i>Total</i>	٣.٩٨
٧	٠.٣١		<i>Mean</i>
٨	٠.٢٠		
٩	٠.٢٠		
١٠	٠.١٥		

Table (٧)

Discrimination Value,  $G^1$ , Question II, Production

<i>Item No</i>	<i>Discrimination Value %</i>	<i>Item No</i>	<i>Discrimination Value %</i>
١	٠.١١	١١	٠.٠٨
٢	٠.١٤	١٢	٠.٣١
٣	٠.٢٠	١٣	٠.١٠
٤	٠.٢٤	١٤	٠.٢٦

5	.21	10	.10
6	.10	<i>Total</i>	2.71
7	.31	<i>Mean</i>	.180
8	.10		
9	.29		
10	.10		

Table (A)

Discrimination Value,  $G^2$ , Question I, Recognition

<i>Item No</i>	<i>Discrimination Value %</i>	<i>Item No</i>	<i>Discrimination Value %</i>
1	.20	11	.08
2	.24	12	.20
3	.21	13	.41

٤	٠.١٢	١٤	٠.١٢
٥	٠.٢٠	١٥	٠.٤٨
٦	٠.٣٦	<i>Total</i>	٤.٣٦
٧	٠.٢٤	<i>Mean</i>	٠.٢٩٠
٨	٠.٤٨		
٩	٠.٥٦		
١٠	٠.٣٢		

Table (٩)

Discrimination Value,  $G^2$ , Question II, Production

<i>Item No</i>	<i>Discrimination Value</i> %	<i>Item No</i>	<i>Discrimination Value</i> %
١	٠.٣٦	١١	٠.٠٨

٢	٠.١٢	١٢	٠.٠٨
٣	٠.٣٢	١٣	٠.٣٢
٤	٠.١٢	١٤	٠.١٦
٥	٠.٢٤	١٥	٠.٢٨
٦	٠.٣٢		
٧	٠.٤٠		
٨	٠.١٦		
٩	٠.٠٨		
١٠	٠.٢٤		
		<i>Total</i>	٣.٢٨
		<i>Mean</i>	٠.٢١٨

The tables above show the following statistical means and rates:

١. There are no negative discrimination indices. The inference in this respect is that all the test items are positively discriminative.

٢. There are no null-discrimination indices.

٣. The mean of the discrimination value of all the test items for G ١ and G ٢ is ٢.٤٪, which is a satisfactory index, given that the optimal rate in this respect is ٣٪ (Harrison, ١٩٨٣: ١٢٩).

٤. As far as G ١ is concerned, the highest discrimination values are those of items ١٢ and ١٣ on the recognition level whose IDs are ٠.٤٥٨ and ٠.٣٦٦, respectively; while the highest production IDs are those of items ٧ and ١٢ who show a uniform rate of ٠.٣١.

The lowest discrimination value for the production level is item ١١ with ID of ٠.٠٨. Likewise, test items ١٠ and ١٥ have the lowest discrimination values (i.e., ٠.١٥ and ٠.١٣) on the recognition level.

٥. In G ٢, the highest recognition IDs are those of test items ٨, ٩,

and  $V^2$ , whose IDs are  $0.48$ ,  $0.56$  and  $0.48$  respectively, whereas the highest production IDs are those of items  $V^1$  and  $V^2$  whose rates are  $0.37$  and  $0.44$ , respectively. On the opposite side, the lowest recognition ID is that of item  $V^1$  whose rate is  $0.14$ , while the lowest production IDs are those of items  $V^1$  and  $V^2$  who show a uniform rate of  $0.14$ .

## 4.2 General Results

### 4.2.1 Statistical Means and Acquisition Rate

The mean of test scores for the total subjects of  $G^1$  stands at  $(41.2)$  out of  $(90)$ , namely,  $(45.7\%)$ , which is a quite low performance mean, being less than  $(50\%)$ . Only  $(38)$  of the total subjects of  $(109)$  managed to get at the pass mark of  $(40)$  out of  $(90)$ , with a low pass-rate of  $(34.8\%)$ . As for  $G^2$ , their score mean is  $(50)$  out of  $(90)$ , i.e., at a total performance mean of  $(55.6\%)$ , which reflects a humble differential acquisition mean of about  $(10\%)$ . In this group, out of fifty subjects, only  $(36)$  managed to get the pass-score of  $(40)$  out of  $(90)$ , with a pass rate of  $(72\%)$ . Despite this comparatively higher pass rate, the acquisition percentages show a differential acquisition pass rate of  $(10.6\%)$  over a four-year period of studying English as a foreign language at the college level. This rate is obtained by dividing the differential between the acquisition pass rates of  $G^1$  and  $G^2$ , which is  $(37.2\%)$ , by the initial acquisition rate of  $(34.8\%)$  for  $G^1$ . This pass-rate of  $(10.6\%)$  is not quite considerable since it shows that the subjects' acquisition rate has only doubled over a four-year period of formal English study.

Looking at the figures above from another statistical angle, the differential performance rate achieved by G<sub>1</sub> turns out to be only 30.7%, which is quite poor one. The latter rate is calculated by subtracting the end-product performance rate of (60.56) from the initial performance rate of (91.26) and dividing the result of subtraction (i.e., 30.70) by the initial performance rate above. The resultant performance rate of (30.7) shows that the subjects at their final semester before graduation are indeed far away from drawing close to achieving a complete mastery of the nominal clause.

This proves the validity of the third hypothesis which reads:

**3. A good mastery of all types of the nominal clause under study is not achieved by Iraqi EFL learners during their four-year study of English as a second language.**

The figures above are summarized in Tables (10) and (11) below:

**Table (10)**

**G<sub>1</sub> Subjects' Scores (out of 90 and 100) and Test's**

**Mean**

Subj	Score (out of	Score (out of									
------	------------------	------------------	------	------------------	------------------	------	------------------	------------------	------	------------------	------------------

	၉.၀)	၁.၀၀)		၉.၀)	၁.၀၀)		၉.၀)	၁.၀၀)		၉.၀)	၁.၀၀)
၁	၆၆	၇၃	၃၄	၄၄	၀၄	၀၇	၃၈	၄၃	၈၀	၃.၀	၃၃
၂	၆၀	၇၃	၃.၀	၄၈	၀၃	၀၈	၃၈	၄၃	၈၆	၃.၀	၃၃
၃	၆၃	၇.၀	၃၁	၄၈	၀၃	၀၄	၃၈	၄၃	၈၇	၃.၀	၃၃
၄	၆၃	၆၄	၃၃	၄၇	၀၃	၆.၀	၃၈	၄၃	၈၈	၃.၀	၃၃
၅	၆၃	၆၄	၃၃	၄၇	၀၃	၆.၁	၃၈	၄၃	၈၄	၃.၄	၃၃
၆	၆၃	၆၄	၃၄	၄၇	၀၃	၆.၃	၃၈	၄၃	၉.၀	၃.၄	၃၃
၇	၆.၀	၆၇	၃၀	၄၀	၀.၀	၆.၃	၃၇	၄၁	၄၁	၃.၈	၃၁
၈	၀၄	၆၀	၃၆	၄၀	၀.၀	၆.၄	၃၇	၄၁	၄၃	၃.၈	၃၁
၉	၀၈	၆၄	၃၇	၄၀	၀.၀	၆.၀	၃၇	၄၁	၄၃	၃.၈	၃၁
၁၀	၀၇	၆၃	၃၈	၄၀	၀.၀	၆.၆	၃၆	၄၀	၄၄	၃.၇	၃.၀
၁၁	၀၇	၆၃	၃၄	၄၄	၄၄	၆.၇	၃၆	၄၀	၄၀	၃.၇	၃.၀
၁၂	၀၇	၆၃	၄.၀	၄၄	၄၄	၆.၈	၃၀	၃၄	၄၆	၃.၇	၃.၀
၁၃	၀၇	၆၃	၄၁	၄၄	၄၄	၆.၄	၃၀	၃၄	၄၇	၃.၆	၃.၄
၁၄	၀၇	၆၃	၄၃	၄၄	၄၄	၇.၀	၃၀	၃၄	၄၈	၃.၆	၃.၄
၁၅	၀၀	၆၁	၄၃	၄၃	၄၈	၇.၁	၃၄	၃၈	၄၄	၃.၆	၃.၄
၁၆	၀၀	၆၁	၄၄	၄၃	၄၈	၇.၃	၃၄	၃၈	၁.၀	၃.၀	၃.၈
၁၇	၀၀	၆၁	၄၀	၄၃	၄၈	၇.၃	၃၄	၃၈	၁.၁	၃.၄	၃.၇
၁၈	၀၄	၆.၀	၄၆	၄၃	၄၈	၇.၄	၃၄	၃၈	၁.၃	၃.၃	၃.၆
၁၉	၀၄	၆.၀	၄၇	၄၃	၄၇	၇.၀	၃၄	၃၈	၁.၃	၃.၃	၃.၄
၂၀	၀၄	၆.၀	၄၈	၄၃	၄၇	၇.၆	၃၃	၃၇	၁.၄	၃.၃	၃.၄
၂၁	၀၄	၆.၀	၄၄	၄၃	၄၇	၇.၇	၃၃	၃၇	၁.၀	၃.၀	၃.၃
၂၂	၀၃	၀၄	၀.၀	၄၃	၄၇	၇.၈	၃၃	၃၆	၁.၆	၁.၄	၃.၁
၂၃	၀၃	၀၄	၀.၁	၄၁	၄၆	၇.၄	၃၃	၃၆	၁.၇	၁.၄	၁.၆
၂၄	၀၃	၀၈	၀.၃	၄၁	၄၆	၈.၀	၃၃	၃၆	၁.၈	၁.၃	၁.၃
၂၅	၀.၁	၀၇	၀.၃	၄၁	၄၆	၈.၁	၃၁	၃၄	၁.၄	၄	၁.၀
၂၆	၄၄	၀.၄	၀.၄	၃၄	၄၃	၈.၃	၃၁	၃၄			
၂၇	၄၄	၀.၄	၀.၀	၃၄	၄၃	၈.၃	၃၁	၃၄			
၂၈	၄၄	၀.၄	၀.၆	၃၄	၄၃	၈.၄	၃.၀	၃၃			
<b>Totals</b>	၁၀၇၄	၁၇၀၁		၁၃၃၃	၁၃၀၄		၄၇၁	၁.၇၄	<b>Totals</b>	၆၁၁	၆၇၇
										၁၀၇၄	၁၇၀၁
										၁၃၃၃	၁၃၀၄
										၄၇၁	၁.၇၄
										၄၃၈၃	၄၈၆၆
									<b>Means</b>	၄.၃	၄၄.၆

Table (١١)

G٢ Subjects' Scores (out of ٩٠ and ١٠٠) and Test's Mean

Subject No	Score( out of ٩٠)	Out of ١٠٠	Subject No	Score( out of ٩٠)	Out of ١٠٠	Subject No	Score( out of ٩٠)	Out of ١٠٠
١	٨٨	٩٧	١٩	٦٢	٦٨	٣٧	٤٩	٥٤
٢	٨٨	٩٧	٢٠	٦٢	٦٨	٣٨	٤٧	٥٢
٣	٧٢	٧٩	٢١	٦١	٦٧	٣٩	٤٧	٥٢
٤	٧١	٧٨	٢٢	٦١	٦٧	٤٠	٤٦	٥١
٥	٧١	٧٨	٢٣	٦٠	٦٦	٤١	٤٥	٥٠
٦	٧٠	٧٧	٢٤	٥٨	٦٤	٤٢	٤٣	٤٧
٧	٦٩	٧٦	٢٥	٥٥	٦١	٤٣	٤٣	٤٧
٨	٦٨	٧٥	٢٦	٥٣	٥٨	٤٤	٤٣	٤٧
٩	٦٧	٧٤	٢٧	٥٢	٥٧	٤٥	٣٩	٤٣
١٠	٦٧	٧٤	٢٨	٥٢	٥٧	٤٦	٣٧	٤١
١١	٦٦	٧٣	٢٩	٥١	٥٦	٤٧	٣٤	٣٧
١٢	٦٥	٧١	٣٠	٥١	٥٦	٤٨	٢٤	٢٦
١٣	٦٤	٧٠	٣١	٥٠	٥٥	٤٩	٢١	٢٣
١٤	٦٤	٧٠	٣٢	٥٠	٥٥	٥٠	١٨	٢٠
١٥	٦٣	٦٩	٣٣	٥٠	٥٥			
١٦	٦٣	٦٩	٣٤	٥٠	٥٥			
١٧	٦٢	٦٨	٣٥	٥٠	٥٥			
١٨	٦٢	٦٨	٣٦	٥٠	٥٥			
<b>Total</b>	<b>١٢٤٠</b>	<b>١٣٦٣</b>		<b>٩٧٨</b>	<b>١٠٧٥</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>٥٣٦</b>	<b>٥٩٠</b>
							<b>١٢٤٠</b>	<b>١٣٦٣</b>
							<b>٩٧٨</b>	<b>١٠٧٥</b>
						<b>GT</b>	<b>٢٧٥٤</b>	<b>٣٠٢٨</b>
						<b>Means</b>	<b>٥٥,٠٨</b>	<b>٦٠,٥٦</b>

## ξ. ٣. ٢ Acquisition Route

Hereunder is a table showing the acquisition rates for each of the basic four categories of finite nominal clause: i) *that*-clause (henceforth: *that-cl* ), ii) *wh*-clause (henceforth: *wh-cl* ), iii) *nominal relative* clause, (henceforth: *nom rel*) and iv) *yes-no* and *alternative* (henceforth: *yes-no & alt*) clause constructions described in ٢.٤.١.١-ξ achieved by the subjects of G٢ on the levels of production and recognition, all-together:

Table (١٢)

Rates of Acquisition of the Nominal Clauses by G٢

Nominal Clause Category	Rate of Acquisition
<i>that-cl</i>	٨٠.٦٥%
<i>wh-cl</i>	٥٨.٢٣%
<i>nom rel</i>	٦٧.٣٠%
<i>yes-no &amp; alt</i>	٨٤.٣١%

On the basis of the relative weight of G<sup>2</sup>'s correct-response frequencies whose percentages are shown in Table (12) above, the following hierarchy can be drawn for their acquisition route by Iraqi EFL learners at the university level:

***Yes-no & alt > that-cl > nom rel > wh-cl***

where “>” means "has acquisition priority over" (Dik, 1997: 30f).

Significantly, the same hierarchy reveals essentially the same route of acquisition for Iraqi EFL learners of G<sup>1</sup> as shown in the following table:

**Table (13)**

**Rates of Acquisition of the Nominal Clauses by G<sup>1</sup>**

Nominal Clause Category	Rate of Acquisition
<i>yes-no &amp; alt</i>	77.07%
<i>that-cl</i>	58.70%
<i>nom rel</i>	52.09%
<i>wh-cl</i>	30.34%

One relevant observation is that the hierarchy above, based upon statistical evidence of markedness expressed by means of frequency, seems to reflect a general tendency in the acquisition of the categories of

NC by Iraqi EFL learners. More studies are required to verify this general tendency in Iraqi ESL acquisition.

The result above provides empirical evidence that refutes the validity of the first hypothesis presented in ١.٣ which reads:

١. Of the four types of finite nominal clauses, those introduced by *that* complementizer, nominal relativizers, *yes-no* & alternative interrogative, and *WH*-words, it is hypothesized that the order of acquisition is:-

**that-clause > nominal relative > yes-no and alternative > *wh*-clause.**

It is now obvious that the hypothesis above – based on mere conjectural terms – requires to be reformulated.

Tables (١٤) and (١٥) below show the rates of acquisition for G٢ for each type of the four types of NC under study.

**Table (١٤)**

**Rates of Acquisition of the Nominal Clauses by G٢  
(Recognition)**

Nominal Clause Category	Rate of Acquisition
<i>yes-no &amp; alt</i>	٨٥.٨٠%
<i>that-cl</i>	٩٠.٢٠%
<i>nom rel</i>	٧٣.٣٣%
<i>wh-cl</i>	٦٦.٧٠%

**Table (١٥)**

**Rates of Acquisition of the Nominal Clauses by G<sup>٢</sup>  
(Production)**

Nominal Clause Category	Rate of Acquisition
<i>yes-no &amp; alt</i>	٨٢.٨٣%
<i>that-cl</i>	٧١.١١%
<i>nom rel</i>	٦١.٣٠%
<i>wh-cl</i>	٥٠.٤٠%

The results above provide statistical evidence confirming the validity of the second hypothesis presented in section ١.٣ which reads:

**٢. The level of acquisition is higher in comprehension than production.**

### **٤.٤ Error Analysis**

In the following sections an attempt is made at identifying and describing the most frequent types of errors found in test papers as well as their plausible causes. Before commencing with error analysis, a statement must be given about the nature of identifying and explaining error cause.

The problem of describing and classifying errors made by second language learners is one which has been recognized for a long time as "what most teachers will agree is the most disorderly of all their problems ... Errors defy classification, for one kind merges into another as grey shades off into blue" (French 1951:13).

However, error-analysis helps to elucidate what and how a learner learns in the course of studying a second language. In addition, there is an applied object in error analysis which is that of enabling the learner to learn more effectively by exploiting the analyzer's knowledge of his dialect for pedagogical purposes. The second objective is clearly dependent on the first. Corder (1971: 108) presents a useful formal model for the linguistic description of L<sub>2</sub> learners' errors. He describes it in the following terms:

**The methodology of description is, needless to say, fundamentally that of bilingual comparison. In this, two languages are described in terms of a common set of categories and relations, that is, in terms of the same formal model.**

In other words, description of the error consists of a combination of translation and contrastive analysis: the learner's deviant utterance is translated into the language of the native speaker (e.g. \*I want going = I want to go), and the result of this translation is described in a contrastive statement (e.g. "-ing participle instead of to-infinitive").

Corder (1967: 126) suggests that the first stage in error analysis is the "recognition of idiosyncrasy" and the interpretation of the deviant utterance –i.e., determining what the speaker has intended to say. The second stage is error description, which involves the bilingual comparison mentioned above. The third and – for Corder – the "ultimate object of error analysis is explanation." By this he means causology and systemics--the attempt "to account for how and why the learner's idiosyncratic dialect is of the nature it has."

The following analysis will be conducted along the basic lines specified above.

### **ξ. ξ. ) Error Type and Cause**

The analysis of the subjects' incorrect responses has shown that their errors can be attributed to four major types of error source (cf. Ellis, 1994: 57-63). These are:

1. Interlingual Transfer
2. Intralingual Transfer
3. Communication Strategies
4. Context of Learning

In the following subsections, the relative weight and some examples for each of the four sources above are discussed.

## ٤.٤.١. ) Interlingual Transfer

According to Odlin (١٩٨٩: ٢٧), transfer in general is defined as the “influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously acquired”. As far as the subjects of this research are concerned, the ‘other language’ is that of Iraqi Arabic since subjects whose mother tongue is other than that of Arabic have been excluded from the test. In cases of structural similarities between the learners’ target language and mother tongue, transfer can be positive (i.e., facilitative), whereas it is negative (i.e., interference) in cases of relative differences between the two. Hereunder is a table illustrating some examples of errors that are attributable to negative transfer:

Table ( ٧ )

Examples of Errors Due to Negative Transfer

Correct Response	Typical Incorrect Response
١. a. That is why I do not go there.	١. b. *That is why I not go there.
٢. a. You should vote for whichever candidate you think best.	٢. b. *You should vote for whichever you think candidate.
٣. a. Whatever books you see	٣. b. *Whatever you see

are yours.	books is yours.
٤. a. How a book sells depends on the publisher.	٤. b. *How sells a book depends on the publisher.
٥. a. The worst thing is that he does not answer our letters.	٥. b. *The worst thing is that he not answer our letters.
٦. a. Quality is what counts most.	٦. b. *Quality is what most counts.

In Table ١٦ above, the error in example (١. b.) is most possibly caused by transferring the mother tongue's negative structuring rule (which allows verb negation through the placement of the negative operator ( لا ) directly before the verb, (e.g., لا أذهب) into the target language which requires the negative operator not to follow an auxiliary verb. This same cause also explains the incorrect response of "The worst thing is that he not answer our letters" in (٥. b.).

In (٢. b.), the error is assumable to the negative transfer of the mother tongue' structure of (من أنت تعتقد مرشحا) into the target language, producing the incorrect structure of (\* whichever you think candidate). Similarly, in (٣. b.) the negative transfer of the Arabic structure:

ما ترى من كتاب هو لك .

into English has induced the production of the incorrect response: "\*whatever you see books is yours". In (٤. b.), the interference of the Arabic equivalent structure of (كيف يباع الكتاب) explains why the

erroneous production of the sentence “\*How sells a book depends on the publisher” has taken place.

As for the error in (7.b), it is most probably caused by the transfer into English of the target language’s structure (أهم شيء) in such Arabic sentences as:

النوعية هي أهم شيء .

Finally, interlingual transfer accounts for ٢٣% of the incorrect responses in the data, being the second-highest negative factor.

### ٤.٤.١.٢ Intralingual Transfer

By intralingual transfer is meant those errors in the learner language that reflect learner’s transitional competence and which are the result of such learning processes as overgeneralization which can produce such errors as \**comed* (Ellis, ١٩٩٤: ٧١٠, ٧١٧). Errors of the latter type can be explained as being caused by the transfer of the learner’s already existing knowledge of the second language rules to cases in that language where such rules are inapplicable as shown by the previous example in which the formation of the past tense of the irregular verb “come” is erroneously made through the addition of the suffix “ed” which is only applicable to such regular verbs as ‘want’.

At the recognition level, many of the test items of the least FVs were incorrectly answered because of intralingual overgeneralization involving the undue application of the rule of subject-verb inversion in the indicative nominal clause as shown in the following Table:

Table ( 11)

Examples of Intralingual Transfer (Recognition)

	Correct Response	Typical Incorrect Response
1.a	Here is where I buy the food.	1. b. Here is where bought I the food.
2.a	It depends on how far he has gone.	2.b. It depends on how far has he gone.
3.a	I've forgotten what his book is called.	3.b. I've forgotten what is his book called.

This same mistake recurs at the production level as manifested in the examples given hereunder in Table ( 11) below.

Table ( 11)

Examples of Intralingual Transfer (Production)

Correct Response	Incorrect Response
1.a. You should vote for	1.b.* You should vote for

whichever candidate you think best.	whichever do you think candidate.
٧.a. You should vote for whichever candidate you think best.	٧.b.* You should vote for whichever candidate do you think best.
٧.a. He wanted to know who she is.	٧.b. * He wanted to know who is she.
٨. a. That is why I don't go there.	٨.b. * That is why amn't I go there.
٩.a. That's what she calls her sister.	٩.b. * That's what does she call her sister.
١٠.a. Whatever books you see are yours.	١٠.b. * Whatever books do you see.

In all the examples above, the subjects have resorted to overgeneralizing the target-language rule of subject-verb/operator inversion in interrogative sentences to that of the declarative sentences containing NCs introduced by *wh*-subordinators.

This negative factor has been found to account for ٣٨% of all the incorrect responses. Thus it is by far the most important cause of error. The suggestion in this respect is that EFL learners who have passed the secondary school level tend to be more influenced by the rules of the target language than those of their native one.

### ٨.٤.١. ٧ Communication Strategies

These are strategies that are employed when learners are faced

with the task of communicating meanings for which they lack the requisite linguistic knowledge (Ellis, 1994: 797). In such cases, learners make hypotheses derived from their total linguistic competence in order to cope with communicative demands.

Examples of the use of communication strategies in the data are given in Table (19) below which shows how the students sometimes resort to haphazard additions, deletion, or substitution of certain lexical items (boldtyped) that require to be obligatorily reintroduced in their responses.

Table (19)

Examples of Errors Due to Communication Strategies

	Correct Response	Incorrect Response
1.a.	He wanted to know who she <b>is</b> .	1.b.* He wanted to know who she <b>came</b> .
2.a.	How <b>the book</b> sells depends on the publisher.	2.b.* How <b>you</b> sell depends on the publisher.
3.a.	I asked them if they <b>wanted</b> meat or fish.	3.b.* I asked them if they <b>would have want</b> meat or fish.
4.a.	<b>How a book sells</b> depends on the publisher.	4.b.* <b>How many books you</b> depends on the publisher.
5.a.	The question is whether <b>he will sign the contract or not</b> .	5.b.* The question is whether <b>contract or not he sign</b> .
6.a.	You should vote for whichever <b>candidate you think best</b> .	6.b.* You should vote for whichever <b>think best candidate</b>

		you.
--	--	------

Communication strategies have been calculated as accounting for (17%) of all the incorrect responses in the data. Comparatively, it is the factor with the least effect.

### 3.3.1.3 Context of Learning

Several factors that surround the learning process can hinder EFL learning. These include poor classrooms, inadequate teaching throughout the learning period, and/or poor syllabus design and material sequencing. All these factors can negatively influence the learning of the target language in that they can create gaps in the learners' knowledge of this language (Brown, 1987: 179).

Hereunder are some examples of errors that can be attributed to the context of learning. The classification of errors under this rubric is strongly motivated by the convenience that all the errors that are unexplainable in terms of the previous three major factors are attributable to the negative effect of the context of learning, though the actual errors' causes can be multiple.

Table (٢٠)

Examples of Errors Due to the Context of Learning

	Correct Response	Incorrect Responses
١.a	When he did it is a mystery.	١.b. * When he do it is a mystery.
٢.a	I asked them if they wanted meat or fish.	٢.b. * I asked them if they want meat or fish.
٣.a	Whoever just now phoned was very polite.	٣.b. * Whoever just now phone was very polite.
٤.a	The question is whether he will sign the contract or not.	٤.b. * The question is whether he sign the contract or not.
٥.a	That's what she calls her sister.	٥.b. * That's what she call her sister.
٦.a	I suppose that I can use your phone.	٦.b. * I suppose that I use your phone.

All the examples above involve the use of incorrect verb forms. They reflect deficiencies in the subjects' learning of the use of the present simple tense with the third person singular subject ( ١.b, ٤.b, & ٥.b), proper tense sequencing ( ٢.b & ٣.b), and the obligatory use of

modal verbs in clauses occurring after such verbs as “suppose” (٦.b).

Errors attributable to the context of learning have been found to be the third-most influential negative factor behind learners’ mistakes, accounting for about (٢٢٪) of all errors.

### ٤.٥ Summary

The previous discussion has shown that as far as the acquisition of the nominal clauses is concerned, Iraqi EFL learners at the end of four-year study of English as a second language at the university level are unable to completely master the various structures of the nominal clause. This means that the present methodology and syllabus selection and design that are in use at the Departments of English of the College of Education are in need of serious modifications and reform.

As far as the causes of errors made by the students, the following table shows the order of their relative frequencies:

**Table (٢٧)**  
**Error Causes Relative Frequency**

ERROR CAUSE	FREQUENCY %
١. Intralingual Transfer	٣٨
٢. Interlingual Transfer	٢٣
٣. Context of Learning	٢٢
٤. Communication Strategies	١٧



# CHAPTER FIVE

## *CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS*

### **๑.๑ Introduction**

This chapter offers a summary of the conclusions that can be drawn from the general results detailed in the previous chapter and from the description given in Chapter Two. It also offers certain recommendations and suggestions for further research.

### **๑.๒ Conclusions**

#### **๑.๒.๑ Theoretical Conclusions**

The theoretical background has shown that NCs are characterized by complex, multi-functional structure with at least (๑๑) subordinators that can occur in sentence-initial, -medial, or -final positions. Unlike *wh*-questions, they do not admit subject-verb inversion. Moreover, some of the subordinators (e.g. *whoever*, *whichever*) require special structuring. In other words, nominal clauses have marked and diversified syntactic

structures that require additional effort in order to be acquired. In addition, they are also frequent and offer significant modes of expression that can aid the learners' overall command of English.

### 5.2.2 Practical Conclusions

1. On the basis of the relative weight of both Groups' correct-response frequencies whose percentages are shown in table (12) the following hierarchy can be drawn for their acquisition route by Iraqi EFL learners at the university level:

*Yes-no & alt > that-cl > nom rel > wh-cl*

One of the possible causes for the easiness of the “*Yes-no & alt*” structure is that it is highly emphasized in the learner's previous studies during the secondary and the college levels.

The result above provides empirical evidence that refutes the validity of the first hypothesis presented in 1.3 which reads:

**Of the four types of finite NCs, those introduced by *that* comp, nominal relativizers, *yes-no &* alternative interrogative, and *WH*-words, it is hypothesized that the order of acquisition is:-**

**that-clause > nominal relative > yes-no and alternative > *wh*-clause.**

2. As for the rates of acquisition for G2 at the two levels of recognition and production, the mean of test scores was 62.48% and

٥٥% respectively. For G<sup>١</sup>, the mean of test scores was ٤٤% and ٤١.٥٩% respectively. These results provide statistical evidence confirming the validity of the second hypothesis presented in section ١.٣ which reads:

**The level of acquisition is higher in comprehension than in production.**

٣. As far as the acquisition of NCs is concerned, Iraqi EFL learners at the end of four-year study of English as a second language at the university level are unable to completely master the various structures of the NC. The resultant performance rate of (٣٥.٧%) shows that the subjects at their final semester before graduation are indeed far away from drawing close to achieving a good mastery of the nominal clause.

This validates the third hypothesis of the present study which reads:

**A good mastery of all types of the nominal clause under study is not achieved by Iraqi EFL learners during their four-year study of English as a second language.**

٤. The analysis of the subjects' incorrect responses has shown that their errors can be attributed to four major types of error source:

**A.** The results of the causes of error have shown that intralingual overgeneralization plays a crucial role in hindering the acquisition. This result calls for extra practice and explanation of the differences between the structure of *wh*-questions and *wh*-NCs to minimize the effect of such a major cause of error.

This negative factor has been found to account for ٣٨% of all

incorrect responses. Thus it is by far the most important cause of error. The suggestion in this respect is that EFL learners who have passed the secondary school level tend to be more influenced by the rules of the target language than those of their native one.

**B.** The types of interlingual errors in the subjects' responses also show that a considerable percentage of the students at the fourth level in the Department of English are even incompetent in the correct production of negative clauses, or even simple subject + verb sentences. This means more instructional work is required even at such basic levels of acquisition.

Interlingual transfer accounts for 22% of the incorrect responses in the data, being the second-highest negative factor.

**C.** Communication strategies have been calculated as accounting for (14%) of all the incorrect responses in the data. It is the factor with the least effect. Students sometimes resort to haphazard additions, deletion, or substitution of certain lexical items that require to be obligatorily reintroduced in their responses.

**D.** Errors attributable to the context of learning have been found to be the third-most influential negative factor behind learners' mistakes, accounting for about (22%) of all errors.

## ٥.٣ Recommendations

١. Being marked structures, English NCs require special attention in curriculum design. One way that can facilitate their acquisition is by taking into consideration the hierarchy of their acquisition as formulated in this study. This can be achieved by introducing first categories first in the students' grammar books, then enhancing the instructional work in those categories that have a lesser accessibility of acquisition through adequate revisions.

٢. The poor test results obtained by the subjects in both groups of this study show that teachers of English should pay more attention to the teaching of nominal clauses by focusing on those structures signaling *wh*- clause and nominal relative clauses since teachers in most cases are the only input available to the students other than text box.

٣. Departments of English are supposed to be able to offer their graduates advanced competence in English so that they can efficiently carry out their job as competent teachers in intermediate and preparatory schools. This calls for a serious reconsideration of the grammar syllabus taught at the Departments of English in the Colleges of Education in Iraq, since the current one is obviously quite inadequate, especially in the area of the NCs.

٤. Teachers should refer to the difference between Arabic and English in signaling the nominal clauses to avoid the negative carryover of learners' mother tongue.

### ٥.٣ Suggestions for Further Research

The researcher recommends conducting studies of the following types:

١. A contrastive study of the NC between Arabic and English, concentrating on the pedagogical implications of their similarities and differences.
٢. A study of the acquisition route of the *wh*-questions and the magnitude and types of difficulties faced by Iraqi EFL in such acquisition.
٣. A study of that rate of acquisition of the English NCs of MA and PhD students of English.
٤. A study of the acquisition results of students given extra instructional work concentrating on the structure of the NCs in contrast with the *wh*-questions during their first and second collegiate years.