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Iraqi EFL Learners' Use of Intransitive Verbs in English

A paper

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا ۗ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ (٣٢)

صدق الله العظيم

سوره البقره ايه (٣٢)

Glory is to You, we have no knowledge except what " you have taught us. Verily, it is You , the knower , the Wise".

God Almighty has spoken the truth

Surat Al Baqara , Verses
Ali (2006: 32)

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Dedication

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

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 The Problem of The Study

Intransitive verbs are verbs that do not require a direct object. Intransitive verbs follow the subject and complete an independent clause, and they may be followed by prepositions, adverbs, or another clause to further contextualize the action of the verb. Common intransitive verbs include words like (run, rain, die, sneeze, sit, and smile) which do not require a direct or indirect object. For example, in the simple sentence, (He walks) the intransitive verb (walks) is not being done to someone or something. (Quirk ,1985: 21).

This study tries to answer the following questions :

1. What is intransitive verbs?
2. What is the structure of intransitive verbs?
3. What difficulties do Iraqi EFL learners face in recognizing and producing intransitive verbs?

1.2 The Aims of The Study

This study aims to:

1. Show the meaning of intransitive verbs.
2. Investigate the structure of intransitive verbs.
3. Diagnose the difficulties that Iraqi EFL learners face in recognize and producing intransitive verbs .

1.3The Hypotheses of The Study

It is hypothesized that :

1. There are many definitions of intransitive verbs.
2. Iraqi EFL learners use transitive verb more than intransitive verb .
3. Iraqi EFL learners face difficulties in recognize intransitive verbs.

1.4 The Procedures of The Study

1. Presenting a theoretical background knowledge about verbs in general and intransitive verb in particular .
2. Testing students from the Department of English College of Education for Human Sciences /University of Babylon (2023-2022).
3. Conclusions of the study .

1.5The Limits of The Study

The study is limited to explain the difficulties that Iraqi EFL learners face in recognize and producing intransitive verbs also it limited to test (30) students from the Department of English College of Education for Human Sciences University of Babylon(2023-2022).

1.6The Value of The Study

It is hoped that this study would be of help to those who have interest in grammar whether they are students or teachers.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 The Verb

The verb is a word part of speech that describes an action or a state. Every sentence has a verb, which is its main component. The only word type that alters in English to indicate past or present tense is the verb. Verbs are a part of every language in the world, but they are not always used in the same ways. In different languages, they can also have various characteristics. For instance, some other languages do not modify verbs for the past and present tenses. The definition therefore only applies to verbs in English. Basic English uses a wide variety of verb types. They are: be, do, have, come, go, see, seem, give, take, keep, make, put, send, say, let, get. (Harmann,1976:90).

Auxiliary verbs and regular verbs, also known as lexical verbs, are the two main categories of verbs in English. The main distinction between them is where they can go in a sentence. Although some verbs fall into both categories, English has very few auxiliary verbs. Auxiliary verbs come in two varieties: modal verbs and non-modal verbs. We should also note that some verb forms share a similar shape. The plain form of walk and the plain present, for instance, have the same shape. The past and past participle both follow this pattern. However, these various forms can take on various shapes in other verbs. For instance, the plain present of "be" is typically "are," but the plain form "is" be. Additionally, the past tense of eat is ate rather than the past participle 'eaten'. (Quirk et al, 1985: 54).

2.2 Intransitive verbs

According to Hornby (1974:61) intransitive verbs are verbs that do not require a direct object. Intransitive verbs follow the subject and complete an independent clause, and they may be followed by prepositions, adverbs, or another clause to further contextualize the action of the verb. Common intransitive verbs include words like (run,” “rain,” “die,” “sneeze,” “sit,” and “smile,” which do not require a direct or indirect object.

For example,

1.He walks

The intransitive verb “walks” is not being done to someone or something.

According to Ramelan(1992:8), intransitive verbs are action verbs that always express doable activities. They are different from transitive verbs because there is no direct object following an intransitive verb. As;
(Walk/ Laugh / Cough / Play / Run)

2. We travelled to London.

The intransitive verb is **travelled**, the subject is **we**, but **London** is not a direct object because London is not receiving the action of the verb.

3.John **eats** before leaving for school.

This example shows that the verb **eats** can be both transitive and intransitive depending on whether there is a direct object or not. If the sentence read: John **eats** the cookies before leaving for school, **eats** would be transitive as there is a direct object – the cookies. Some verbs can be both transitive and intransitive. These verbs include: start, leave, change, live, stop. An intransitive verb is the opposite of a transitive verb: it does not require an object to act upon. (Kilby , 2004:10)

A number of English verbs can only be intransitive; that is, they will never make sense paired with an object. Two examples of intransitive-only verbs are arrive and die. You can't arrive something, and you certainly can't die something; it is impossible for an object to follow these verbs (kilby ,2004: 21).

2.3 Types of Intransitive Verbs

2.3.1 Action Verbs

According to Qurik, (1973:90) intransitive verbs are also action verbs because they express something that a person, animal, or thing can do and they can be physical or mental.

Example:

4. Kevin fell and scraped his knee.

The verb is fell.

There is no direct object, so we know that “fell” is an intransitive verb and an action verb.(Ibid)

2.3.2 Linking Verbs

Linking verbs are also intransitive. Linking verbs do not express an action, but instead link a sentence's subject to more information about the subject. For this reason, linking verbs do not have direct objects.

Linking verbs include become, seem and any form of the verb be (like am, is, are, were, etc.). (Harmer 1999:9)

Example:

5. Jeremy is tired.

The verb in this sentence is "is," a form of the verb "be." In this sentence, the verb is linking the subject (Jeremy) to more information about the subject (he's tired). "Is" is not an action that can be performed on anyone or anything, this sentence has no direct object. "Is" is a linking verb and an intransitive verb.

Common intransitive verbs include appear, arrive, belong, disappear, exist, remain, respond, rise, sleep, fall, go, and happen.

Some verbs can be both transitive and intransitive, depending on how they are used in a sentence. (Harmer 1999:11)

Example:

6. Joey walked for thirty minutes.

7. Joey walked the dog.

2.4 Use of Intransitive Verbs

1. Start with a subject. subject is any noun or pronoun that illuminates the (who) of sentence. A subject can be a noun, like (the dog,) a collective noun, such as (the school of fish) a proper noun, like (The Empire State Building,) or a pronoun, like (we). (Haycock,2006:96)

2. Add an intransitive verb. The intransitive verb will be the action tied to subject. Transitive verbs should follow the subject for sake of clarity. With just a subject and a transitive verb we will have completed an independent clause and, as such, a complete sentence. Transitive verbs can take on any tense. (Mcarthur,1992:87)

For example:

8. We jumped.

3. Parts of speech. sentence is complete with just a subject and an intransitive verb (We jumped), but we can add further texture by adding in an adverb (We jumped quickly), or a prepositional phrase (We jumped off the platform). (Mcarthur,1992:88)

4. subject and verb agree. For example, it might seem like the subject (A group of children) is plural, but it is actually singular. (Group) is the singular subject, and (of children) is a prepositional phrase modifying the group. (A group of children is studying English) instead of (A group of children are studying English) . (Haycock,2006:98)

5. Use the active voice. Sentences that have an intransitive verb cannot be in the passive voice since there is no direct object. For example, in the sentence (The baby smiled) the noun phrase (the baby) and the verb (smiled) cannot be made passive. (Mcarthur,1992:88)

Chapter Three

The Test

3.1 Testing

According to Skehan (1999:203), a language test is a systematic method and a means of checking the student's performance through the elicitation of certain behaviour to make inferences about certain characteristics of an individual.

According to Brown (1987 : 219), " A test is a method of measuring a person's ability or knowledge in a given test ".

The test is used as means of checking what student can do with the language (Aljuboury ,1999 :1)

3.2 The Features of a Good Test

A good test should have the following features:

3.2.1 Validity

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

The most important types of validity are:

A . Content Validity

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

B. Face Validity

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

3.2.2 Reliability

Reliability is the ability of apparatus, mechanic or system to consistently perform its intended or required function or mission and demand and without degradation or failure .

3.3 The Sample of the Test

The test is applied to (30 students) as a sample of fourth year students of Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences ,University of Babylon during the academic year 2022-2023.

3.4 Test Design

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

3.5 Test material

Most items of the test are taken from grammar books mentioned in Chapter Two and Mainly from University Grammar of English by (Quirk , G :1973).

The Analysis

The Results of the Test

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

Table (1)

Items	No. of correct responses	Percentage %	No. of incorrect responses	Percentage %
1	10	30%	20	70%
2	12	40%	18	60%
3	11	36%	19	64%
4	7	24%	23	76%
5	13	44%	17	56%
6	18	60%	12	40%
7	14	46%	16	54%
8	10	30%	20	70%
9	7	24%	23	76%
10	7	24%	23	76%
Total	109	36%	191	64%

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

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

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

Item (4)The total number correct answer is (7) while the percentage of incorrect answer is (23) because the point is not very easy .

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table (2) Students' Performance of Question Two

Table (2)

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

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

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

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

Item (4)The total number correct answer is (11) while the percentage of incorrect answer is (19) because the point is not very easy .

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter Four

Conclusion

Intransitive verbs are verbs that do not require a direct object. Intransitive verbs follow the subject and complete an independent clause, and they may be followed by prepositions, adverbs, or another clause to further contextualize the action of the verb.

According to the results of the test at both levels , the number and percentage of incorrect responses for the whole test are more than those of correct responses. These results of the whole test indicate , that the students face difficulty in using in transitive verbs . The reason behind their performance in some items is the lack of knowledge about the topic .

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The Test

Q1/ State whether the underlined verbs in the following sentences are transitive or intransitive :

1. The girls carry water to their village.
2. Could you phone the neighbors?
3. My dog fears thunderstorms and whistles
4. Michelle used to run a restaurant.
5. He was living a life of luxury abroad.
6. Have you washed your hands?
7. I washed, dressed, and went out.
8. Kevin couldn't read or write
9. Our cat lived till he was 10.
10. They fought a clean fight.

Q2/ Change the sentences from transitive into intransitive :

1. I wrote two books.
2. I sent him a donation.
3. I lifted the box.
4. The senior class elected him president
5. I punched the punching bag.
6. At the University, they called me mad
7. I wrote him a letter
8. I found their excuses lacking.
9. I bought them some candy
10. She has accomplished her dreams.

The answer of Test

Q1/

- 1.transitive
- 2.transitive
- 3.intransitive
4. intransitive
- 5.transitive
- 6.transitive
- 7.intransitive
- 8.intransitive
- 9.intransitive
- 10.transitive

Q2 /

- 1.I wrote in the afternoon
- 2.I sent to him
- 3.the box was lifted
- 4.The senior class was electing.
- 5.The punching bag was punched
- 6.at the university , they called mad
- 7.I was writing last day
- 8.I found excuses lacking
- 9.some candy was bought
10. her dreams has been accomplished

The test is valid by :

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