

**Ministry of Higher Education**  
**University of Babylon**  
**College of Education for Human Sciences**  
**Department of English**



***Investigating Difficulties Faced by Iraqi EFL  
Learners in Fronting***

A paper

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

قَالُوا سُبْحٰنَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا اِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا ۗ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَلِیْمُ الْحَكِیْمُ (۳۲)

صدق الله العظيم

سوره البقره ايه (۳۲)

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**

To the dearest and closest people to my heart, to my dear mother and dear father, who were my help and support.

To the one who supported me, took my steps with me, and eased my difficulties , my dear husband, who endured a lot and suffered until I reached this stage.

To all the professors who have been credited with my academic career.

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 The problem

In English grammar, fronting describes the arrangement in which a phrase appears at the start of a sentence, typically following a verb. Furthermore known as front focus or preposition (Baker, 1992:144). Fronting is a focus technique frequently used to establish accents and create cohesion. When used in conversation, it enables the speaker to draw attention to the beginning of the sentence, strengthening its impact. In discourse, fronting serves a number of purposes, particularly in terms of preserving cohesion. They can be used to express contrast, arrange information in a text's flow, or highlight particular ideas. Prepositions, in particular, assist in making non-subject components the subject of a sentence. (Halliday 1970, p. 162).

Fronting can also cause what is called subject-verb reversal. Moving the subject out of its natural environment meant a change of accent, representing another aspect of this focal apparatus. This was typical of narrative sequences. It still maintained a kind of mock drama. Moving a part of a sentence from its normal position to the beginning of a sentence is called fronting. Advanced phrases are objects or other complements, adverbs, or even the main verb itself. Fronting is used by writers (writers, journalists) for dramatic effect. A short form, especially with sentences containing adjectives and interrogatives, sometimes used in speech for emphasis. (Yule, G. , 1983:78)

This paper tries to answer the following questions:

1. What is meant by fronting?
2. How do the Iraqi learners use the fronting in English ?
3. What are the difficulties faced by Iraqi EFL learners in using fronting in English ?

## **1.2 The Aims**

The study aims at:

- 1.Explaining the meaning of fronting in English .
2. Shedding lights on the students problems in fronting .
3. Investigating the difficulties faced by Iraqi EFL learners in using fronting in English .

## **1.3 The Hypotheses**

The study hypothesizes that:

- 1.There are different definition of fronting.
- 2.The Iraqi EFL learners use fronting in English incorrectly.
3. Iraqi EFL learners face a difficulty in producing fronting in English .

#### **1.4 The Procedure**

1. Presenting a theoretical background knowledge about fronting in English .
2. Testing students from the department of English /college of Education/ University of Babylon at fourth grade in the academic year of 2022-2023.
3. Make a conclusion of the study .

#### **1.5 The Limit**

The paper is limited to find out how the fronting used by Iraqi EFL learners. The role of its use in English language. The way being used by the fourth grade students in the academic year of 2022-2023 at university of Babylon .

#### **1.6 The Value**

It is hoped that this paper would be of some help to English students.



## Chapter Two

### Literature Review

#### 2.1 Fronting in English Grammar

Fronting is the process of moving a sentence's normal beginning to the beginning of the sentence. The portion of the sentence that has been brought forward may be the object, another complement, an adverb, or even the main verb. Authors and journalists who want to create a dramatic effect will front. The shorter forms with adjectives and clauses containing question words are particularly frequently used for emphasis in speech. (James, 1980:43).

According to Quirk et al. (1985,1377), fronting is the term we use to describe the achievement of a marked theme by moving an item into initial position that is otherwise unusual there. In this definition, the term markedness refers to a departure from the norm as used by linguists. According to James (1980:110), a marked theme can be easily achieved by moving an object, verb, or even an adverb to the beginning of the sentence.

When we want to draw attention to or emphasize a particular clause in a sentence, we rearrange it so that the verb comes before the noun. This makes use of fronting and inversions, two sophisticated grammar rules. By flipping the usual sentence structure so that the second part of the sentence the part we want to focus on comes before the first part, we can draw attention to a particular portion of a sentence. (Halliday,1970:41).

The food was excellent but even better than that was the wine.

Emphasises that something was 'even better'.

The wine was even better than the food.

She keeps causing me a lot of trouble. This type of problem I can't ignore any longer.

Focuses and links the problem to the first sentence.

I can't ignore this type of problem any longer.

Although the terms "fronting" and "phonology" are used interchangeably in English, they each have distinct communication-related meanings and functions. On the other hand, phonology research examines the speech sounds in a language. Grammar research concentrates on word formation and structure. When a group of words such as an object, complement, adverb, or prepositional phrase that would typically come after a verb are instead placed at the beginning of a sentence, the practice is known as fronting in English grammar. The verb itself may start a sentence in some instances. Fronting is typically used to highlight a crucial or important part of the sentence. Word order is altered to emphasize a particular piece of information when fronting occurs. Generally speaking, this means bringing anything after the verb to the front of the sentence. (Halliday,1970:45)

Non-fronted sentence: A mug of coffee was on the bench.

Fronted sentence: On the bench was a mug of coffee.

Before the verb "was," the phrase on the bench has been inserted. Fronting is frequently used in speech (as well as written communication) to highlight specific phrases and improve the flow of ideas. Additionally, it can be used to add drama and interest to a situation. (Yule, 1983:87).

In many languages, fronting involves more than just shifting clauses or sentences from their natural positions. English has a variety of syntactical patterns that enable speakers and writers to prioritize what is most important to them and front it. (Ibid).

Conditional sentences

Learners are sometimes, unforgivably, told that there is no difference in meaning between:

She can come on condition that you pay for her lunch

On condition that you pay for her lunch, she can come

Passive structures

There is a clear difference in meaning among these:

John broke the window

The window was broken

The window was broken by John

The window got broken

## Subordination

A central characteristic of subordinators is that they can move with their clauses so we can have, for example:

So that he could see over the wall, he stood on a chair

He stood on a chair so that he could see over the wall

Because my train was late, I missed the meeting

I missed the meeting because my train was late

In these cases, although the central meaning is unchanged, the speaker's perception of what is important is clear. ( Yule, 1983:87)

## Coordination

Unlike subordinators, coordinators proper are fixed in position between the clauses or other items they connect. The items can, however, often be reversed so we can have:

They cooked curry and rice for lunch

They cooked rice and curry for lunch

(Aziz, 2000:23)

## **2.2 Types of Fronting**

### **2.2.1 Adverb Fronting**

Emonds (1976:28) maintains that several kinds of adverbs may be fronted. When they are fronted, they are marked:

Rarely does John drink coffee.

Into the house the strange man entered.

There run the thief.

### **2.2.2 Fronting of Prepositional Phrases**

There are some prepositional phrases that function as sentence adverbs which can be fronted as in the following examples(Ibid)

In my opinion Jack will fail in the exam.

Among the teachers sat some students.

### **2.2.3 Fronting of Adjective Phrases**

Emonds (1976:35) points out that adjectives that can function as the head of an adjective phrase are mobile and can be placed in the initial position: Long and tidy, her hair played in the breeze. Allan (1986:87), on the other hand , states that predicate adjectives can be fronted but he says that this expression is poetic, as in the following example:

Bright were the stars.

### **2.2.4 Fronting of Verb Phrases**

Verb Phrase, according to Emonds (1976:31), can be fronted to express emphasis:

Mary once predicted that John would pass an exam, and pass one he now has.

He confirms that the sentence above is derived from the following underlying structure:

Mary once predicted that John pass an exam eventually and he has passed one.

### **2.2.5 Noun Phrase Fronting**

Noun phrase that functions as direct objects can be fronted as in:

What subject can't you understand?

History I just can't understand.

Her husband was killed by this criminal. (Ibid)

### **2.2.6 Inversion**

Quirk et al(1985:1379)point out that fronting of an element is often associated with inversion. For example, the subject-operator inversion which has to do with yes/no questions as in:

Tom will pass the exam.

Will Tom pass the exam?

### **2.2.7 Wh-Fronting**

Wh/questions, like yes/no questions, can be fronted in order to get emphasis. In both of these kinds of questions, the theme is the last marked one: (Baker, 1992:56)

Where is he going ?

Why did they leave the party early?

### **2.2.8 Cleft Fronting**

Allan (1986:90) affirms that the cleft consists of a formulaic onset of a third person subject pronouns as in the following examples:

It's an Alfa that Max has got.

In this example, the marked theme is "it's an Alfa" and not just "It".

The cleft presents new information that, in the speaker's judgments, is contrary to expectation because it is contradiction to some information presents earlier. The information in the cleft is regarded as highly salient. (Ibid)

### **2.2.9 Pseudo-Cleft Fronting**

Allan (1986:91) points out that Pseudo-Cleft can be fronted since it may bear new information and another focus further along in the utterance as in the following example :

Winter is when it's so unbearable.

## 2.3 Function of Fronting

We can begin an affirmative clause with the object or complement to make this the topic of the sentence or to emphasise its importance. This is termed fronting. (Baker, 1992:76)

A great day that was!

Very nice time we had yesterday.

Fronting is also possible in a formal style.

This matter we have already dealt with at length.

This matter has already been discussed at length.

Fronting the object or complement

A very good day it was, too.

It was a very good day.

Fronting with a question-word clause

How the cat got out, we'll never know.

We'll never know how the cat got out.

Fronting with adverbial expressions

At the top of the stairs stood Gwendolyn holding a flickering candle.

Gwendolyn stood at the top of the stairs holding a flickering candle.



## **Chapter Three**

### **Data Analysis**

#### **3.1 Test**

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 a 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 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 the university grammar of English by quirk,R,G,1973).

## The Analysis

### 3.6 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	23	76%	7	24%
10	23	76%	7	24%
<b>Total</b>	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 while some of them leave the point without answer. For example someone answer the point as (NF)

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 while some of them don't have enough information while some of them leave the point without answer. For example someone answer the point as (F)

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 while some of them don't have enough information .

Item (4) The total number correct answer is (7) while the percentage of incorrect answer is (23) because the point is not very easy and they don't have enough information while some of them leave the point without answer .

Item (5) has correct responses and the percentage is (44%) while the incorrect answers are of percentage (56%) leave the question without answer another students saw the point is not very easy and they don't have enough information.

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) total number correct answer is (14) 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 with point . while another students use guess in their answer

Item (9)The total number correct answer is (23) while the percentage of incorrect answer is (7) because the point is very easy .

Item (10)The total number correct responses is (76%) while the percentage of incorrect responses is (24%) because they have enough information .

**Table (2) Students' Performance of Question Two**

**Table (2)**

<b>Items</b>	<b>No. of correct responses</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>	<b>No. of incorrect responses</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
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	26	86%	4	24%
10	24	80%	6	20%
<b>Total</b>	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 while some of them leave the point without answer. As (small bed it stood beside the table )

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 because they don't have enough information. As (the lid it is removed carefully )

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. As ( the snow it started all a sudden )

Item (4)The total number correct answer is (11) while the percentage of incorrect answer is (19) because the point is not very easy and leave the point without answer . As ( a little shop stood on the corner)

Item (5) has correct responses and the percentage is (50%)while the incorrect answers are of percentage (50%) because this point is familiar

Item (6) The total percentage of the correct responses are(30%) while the incorrect ones are(70%) because they don't know the meaning of point and use the guess in answer . As (A mug of coffee was on the bench )

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 (26) while the percentage of incorrect answer is (4) because the point is very easy .

Item (10)The total number correct responses is (80%) while the percentage of incorrect responses is (20%) because they have enough information .



## **Chapter Four**

### **Conclusion**

#### **4.1 Theoretical conclusions**

concludes that fronting is a term applied to the achievement of marked themes by moving into initial position an item which is otherwise unusual there. Markedness is a concept used by linguists to refer to departure from the norm. There are many ways in which fronting can be achieved in English such as adverb fronting, fronting of preposition phrases, fronting of adjective phrases, etc. Fronting is a focus technique frequently used to establish accents and create cohesion. When used in conversation, it enables the speaker to draw attention to the beginning of the sentence, strengthening its impact. In discourse, fronting serves a number of purposes, particularly in terms of preserving cohesion.

#### **4.2 Practical Conclusion**

The results of Question one show that the percentage of the incorrect answers is higher than that of the correct one which means that the students do not have enough information about the fronting at the recognition level. Question two, which measures the student's ability at the production level, shows that students committed errors which show that answered incorrectly due to the effect of teaching.

The results of the test reflect that most of the Iraqi EFL third year the students face difficulty in recognizing and producing the negation because they do not have enough information about the topic. Another reason there are many type of fronting .

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