

Investigating Iraqi EFL Learners' Use of Grammatical Zero

تقصي استخدام متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية العراقيين لظاهرة الغياب النحوي

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Abstract:

This paper explores the phenomenon of grammatical zero, the absence of markers indicating grammaticality in some constructions but they are still grammatical. It aims at giving an analytic account of EFL Iraqi learners' ability to recognize and produce grammatical zero through conducting a test to college students of English departments to address the main argument of the paper which is whether they face difficulty when performing the phenomenon in question. The findings obtained from the results of the test prove the hypothesis of the paper saying that Iraqi EFL learners' ability to use grammatical zero is poor. Consequently, the paper concludes that the reasons for such poor performance are attributed to language transfer represented by the interlingual and intralingual negative transfer, context of learning and communicative strategies.

Keywords: Grammatical zero, Recognition, Production, Performance, Language Transfer, Context of Learning, Communicative strategies.

1. Introduction

Due to some negative transfer inter-language issues, EFL learners usually have difficulties when dealing with grammatical phenomena that do not exist in their mother tongue. Hence, they would apply those grammatical rules of their own language to such situations. Grammatical zero is one of the phenomena found in English but not in Arabic, a matter that leads Iraqi EFL learners to incorporate rules of Arabic into English. Accordingly, they face difficulty in using such a

phenomenon. This paper tries to address the question of whether Iraqi EFL learners are able to recognize and produce grammatical zero.

It is aimed at investigating the use of and categorizing the grammatical zero by Iraqi EFL learners. Through having some account of the learners' awareness of such a phenomenon, it is hypothesized that the ability of Iraqi EFL learners to recognize and produce grammatical zero is poor. They miss grammaticality in the sentence they either recognize or produce.

To give an account of this phenomenon, the present paper introduces a theoretical review of grammatical zero. Then, a diagnostic test is formulated and submitted to a representative sample of Iraqi EFL learners at university level (departments of English at College of Education and College of Arts, Kufa University) at the stages where the subjects have already studied such phenomenon. In the test, items are designed to cover the students' performance of recognition and production of the phenomenon in question. Data are collected and analyzed in order to get at the results to verify or reject what is hypothesized.

Six types of grammatical zero are to be investigated. They are zero article, zero relative pronouns (bare relative) (that, whom, which, who...), zero conditional, zero plural, zero infinitive (bare infinitive) and, zero subordinate conjunction.

2. Grammatical Zero

English grammar contains absence of several grammatical constructions, yet still the sentences are well formed at the grammatical level. Quirk and Greenbaum (1989), Nelson (2001), Alexader (2002), and Hewings (2005) argue that such constructions as the markers of definite/indefinite articles, relative pronouns, conditionals, plurality, infinitive, subordination conjuncts and others are omitted in particular contexts, though reserving their grammaticality.

This phenomenon is illustrated further in the following extract from (grammar.about.com: 2014):

"A grammatical zero is something like an empty chair at a dinner party where one of the guests has failed to arrive. As long as that chair remains empty (or in grammar, *null*), we're at least vaguely reminded of the absent character."

Grammatically speaking, such grammatical zeros (nulls) are called so because of the absence of the markers indicating them. Otherwise, their grammatical sense is already present. This phenomenon is also called zero-marking, including all the morphemes markers (Yule, 1998: 333).

Hence, as an operational definition to grammatical zero, it can be defined as the absence of a grammatical constructs or markers with preserving their grammaticality for reasons of formalities, irregularities, and politeness.

3. Types of Grammatical Zero

Based on the definition above, grammatical zeros are of types as much exist in the different types of English grammar.

3.1. Zero Article

Alexander (2002: 65) mentions that the non-use of the indefinite article is a positive thing. The absence of such articles does not affect the grammaticalness of sentence. Normal zero article is used on three conditions: plural countable nouns, e.g. *girls*; uncountable, e.g. *suger*; and proper nouns, e.g. *Baghdad*.

More precisely, zero article can be used in the following (ibid: 66):

a. It could also be used in tittles such as Mr, Mrs, and Miss, e.g.

Can I help you Miss?

b. It is used with times of the day, e.g.

Before, after, at, by down, daybreak...etc.

c. It is used with meals, e.g.

Dinner is served.

Lunch is ready.

- d.** Some nouns are used with zero article when we refer to their primary purpose or the activity associated with them, e.g.

Go to bed, church, college, court, hospital...

However, when such nouns are used specifically (i.e. to particular purposes other than their primary ones), the definite article can be used.

- e.** Zero article can be used for transportation, e.g.

By air, by bus, by train on foot...

Taking into account the matters of specification (in the local bus).
(ibid: 68)

- f.** There are some fixed phrases where no article is used, e.g.

Arm in arm, face to face, from top to bottom, keep in mind;
or some pairs combined by 'and', e.g.

Day and night, father and son, husband and wife. (ibid: 69)

- g.** Zero article is sometimes used with nouns in apposition to give a generic reference to the apposed noun, i.e. an implication the noun is well known, e.g.

Barak Obama, president of the US, delivered a speech today.
(ibid: 70).

- h.** Zero article is used when a person is given a new job, position or a unique title, e.g.

She has been appointed head of the company (93-94).

- i.** It can be used with holidays, days and seasons when they are holidays, e.g.

Mon... Spring... (ibid).

According to Quirk and Greenbaum (1989: 71), zero article could be used when referring to generic concrete and abstract plural nouns, e.g.

He likes cream, games, long walks.

Different contexts (abstract unit) where the indefinite article is used have zero articles. They are categorized as mentioned above, adding that the function such definite or indefinite articles is still the same when they are absent (ibid: 73-74).

3.2. Zero Relative

Sometimes, the definite relative pronouns representing objects are omitted, though keeping the sentences well grammatically formed. This is called zero relative pronoun (Alexander, 2002: 19). Such pronouns are absent for reasons of avoiding choice between who or whom, e.g.

The energetic man (who, whom) we met on the holiday works for the EEC. (ibid)

Relative pronouns can be omitted when they refer to definite clauses, e.g.

He is the man I met on Friday.

Otherwise, these pronouns must be used in non-defining clauses. There is no need to use an object and relative pronoun together to refer to the same object, e.g.

** This is the photo that/which I took it* (ibid: 20).

Such pronoun does not refer to the subject of the relative clause, for the subject is the same as that of the matrix clause ⁽¹⁾. Therefore, the relative pronoun can be omitted to give a zero relative pronoun (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1989: 381), e.g.

The man who/whom I saw. The man I saw.

3.3. Zero Conditional

As a matter of being more doubtful and for reasons of politeness, some conditional sentences are used without a conditional marker, usually 'if' (Alexander, 2002: 276).

Using conditional sentences to tell people what to do, the modal verb "should" is introduced, e.g.

Should you be interested in our offer, please contact us.

In such a situation there is no mention to the conditional if, though it is implicated in the conditional sense starting with 'should'. This is called zero conditional (Alexander, 276).

There are several constructions implicating conditionals without the existence of 'if'. They are as follows:

- a.** Such zero conditionals are used to make requests, bargains, offers, advice... etc. (ibid), e.g.

Provide the materials, and we will do the job.

This means that if you provide the materials, we will do the job. Another example is more illustrating:

Fail to pay, and they will cut the electricity.

- b.** In the very formal contexts, the conditional construction "if...were to" can be used without 'if' to give zero conditional. In such a construction, there is a kind of conversion for eloquence reasons, e.g.

Were the government to cut taxes, price would fall.

This conversion has no negative form; only with the full form, no negative conversion form. (Dowing and Locke, 2006: 355).

- c.** Another zero conditional is the absence of 'if' and the appearance of 'had' when having the unreal conditional clauses. 'had' can be fronted before the subject and have a negative form (ibid: 280), e.g.

Had the government acted sooner, the strike would have not happened.

This means if the government had acted sooner, the strike would have not happened (Quirk et al, 1985: 1090-1091).

- d.** Zero conditional can be introduced by such constructions as (ibid: 1092):

- Prepositional phrase, e.g.

With luck, we will be there tomorrow.

- Past participle, e.g.

Given the time, they will probably agree.

- Infinitive, e.g.

To hear him talk, you would think he was the prime minister.

3.4. Zero Plural

Normally, pluralizing a noun is done by adding (s, es, and z) to the end of the noun, sometimes, by bringing particular morphemes about. A noun could have different morphemes representing plurality such as changing the middle vowel like foot –feet, adding a suffix like ox – oxen, or without any addition like sheep (ibid: 207).

A group of nouns have the same form for both singular and plural. This is known as 'zero plural', e.g. *trout, salmon, sheep, deer, series, species, aircraft* (Alexander, 2002: 44).

Some nouns 'collective nouns' imply both singularity and plurality. In other words, they can be used as singular and plural, e.g. *family, committee, audience...etc.*

The audience breaks into clapping.

The audience break into clapping.

In the above mentioned examples, the noun 'audience' is used as singular and plural accordingly.

3.5. Zero Infinitive

According to Alexander (ibid: 299), when a base form of a verb is used to function as infinitive without its marker 'to', the construction is labeled as bare or zero infinitive. There are five conditions where zero infinitive appears:

- After modal verbs like can, could, may ... etc, an infinitive is used without its marker (ibid: 300), e.g.

I can leave soon.

I may go home by seven in the evening.

- b.** Zero infinitive comes after causative verbs (make, have, let), e.g. *Have him come.*

Make Layla smile.

Let Ali enter.

- c.** There are some zero infinitives with fixed phrases such as *let fall, let go, live and let live...* etc.

- d.** Zero infinitive comes after such constructions as 'would rather' and 'had better', e.g.

I would rather work on land than work in a factory.

You had better go near the edge.

- e.** In addition to the above mentioned constructions, some verbs take infinitive without its marker 'to'. These verbs are like: feel, see, hear, look at, watch, notice... (Ibid: 302), e.g.

I watched him draw a portrait.

I heard him unlock the door

3.6. Zero Subordinate Conjunction

According to Quirk and Greenbaum (1989: 317), zero subordination 'that' is normally used when the clause is brief and incomplete, e.g.

I knew he was wrong.

When noun clauses function as the object of the verb, they are introduced with subordinator 'that'. Such a subordinator can be omitted in most cases except in longer sentences (Alexander, 2006:14), e.g.

Everybody knows (that) money does not grow on trees.

I think (that) he will not answer me.

Also, when a noun clause is a complement of an adjective clause, the subordinator 'that' is always omitted (ibid), as in the following examples:

I am afraid we have sold out of the tickets. He is sure I will go with him.

This type is confused with the zero relative clauses, for the subordinating marker *that* is the omitted one. However, in this type, the grammatical function of *that* is different. Often, the subordinating conjunction *that* is optionally omitted (Downing and Locke, 2006:454), e.g.

I wish you were here = I wish that you were here

It can be noticed that the dependent clause "(that) you were here" omits the subordinating conjunction *that*.

4. Data Analysis

This section is concerned with data in terms of collecting, using the suitable method of calculating, and discussing the findings.

4.1. Methodology

Diagnostic test is a type of test that measures how students have learnt a particular course in a considerable period (Harrison: 1983:5), for instance, grammatical zero. Since the diagnostic test is confound with such study, it is employed in order to correspond with the aims.

According to Boyle and Fisher (2007: 66), in order for the test to be reliable, valid and practical, it works with the following:

- a. Enough number of samples.
- b. Standard conditions, i.e. students should take the test under identical circumstances.
- c. Standard scoring, i.e. all tests are scored objectively.
- d. Standard questions, i.e. all students must be given the same questions

The test is conducted on a hundred students of the fourth stage in department of English, Faculty of Education, and Faculty of Arts, University of Kufa. The fourth stage is chosen in particular because they have studied the topic under investigation in their curriculum, from the first to the current stage, in addition to their equal cultural, age, and English levels.

The test is designed to cover both recognition and production levels. It consists of five questions. The first two contains ten items each, taken from the paper and other references. These questions are multiple choice and T/F formulae in order to examine the subjects' performance at the level of recognition. The second three questions also have ten items each in which examinees produce constructions with grammatical zeros to measure their ability to produce the phenomenon in questions. They include a fill in the blank question, put words to complete sentence question and make a sentence question.

The entire test has been scored out of **100**. The scores have been distributed in such a way as to give two scores for each correct answer and zero score for the incorrect one. The items that were left by the subjects with no answer have also been given zero since these items predict that the subjects have failed to give the appropriate answer.

Moreover, the necessary changes that were not made by the subjects have been given zero since these changes predict that the subjects failed to give the correct answer.

4.2. Findings and Discussions

This section is deemed to show the performance of the subjects on each of the five questions and the overall performance as well. It is also to explicate the types of errors and discuss their sources and reasons.

4.2.1. Subjects' Performance at Recognition Level (Questions 1&2)

Analyzing the data of the first and second questions which measure the ability of the EFL learners to recognize grammatical zero results in the findings demonstrated in Table (1) below:

Table (1)

Subjects' Performance at the Recognition Level of Questions (1and2)

| No. of Q | No. of CAs | Percentage | No. of InAs | Percentage |
|----------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| 1 | 406 | 40.6% | 594 | 59.4% |
| 2 | 357 | 35.7 % | 643 | 64.3 % |
| Total | 763 | 38.15 % | 1237 | 61.85 |

Table (1) presents the correct and incorrect answers of each item in both questions. The total number of correct answers in question (1) is **(406)** of the total number of the subjects' answers in this question which constitutes **(40.6%)** whereas that of incorrect ones is **(594)** which constitutes **(59.4%)**.

As for question (2), the answers of this question are totaled as **(357)** of the total number of the subjects' answers in this question which constitutes **(35.7%)** whereas that of incorrect ones are **(643)** which constitutes **(64.3%)**.

The total number of the correct answers in both questions is **(763)** which constitutes **(38.15%)**, whereas the total incorrect answers is **(1237)** which is **(61.85%)**.

Incorrect answers are summed up into two types of error ordered accordingly as follows:

1. **Wrong Choice:** this type of errors represents the largest number of the incorrect answers shown in Table (1). It appears in **(490)** items in question one which is **49%**. The items which are wrongly answered by the subjects are 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 and 9. This type of errors is also the largest number of the incorrect answers shown in question two. It appears in **(600)** items which is **60%**. The items which are wrongly answered by the subjects are: 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 9.
2. **Giving no Answer:** In question one, this type of errors is totaled **(104)** non-answers out of **(594)** answers, which constitutes **(10.4%)**. The items: 3, 6, 8 and 10, are the ones which the subjects failed to answer. With regards to question two, it is totaled **(43)** out of **(643)** answers, which constitutes **(4.3%)**. The items which are not answered are: 1, 6, 7 and 10.

4.2.2. Subjects' Performance at Production Level (Questions 3, 4 &5)

The subjects' total performance in the last three questions of production level can be summed up in Table (2):

Table (2)

Subjects' Performance at the Production Level of Questions (3-5)

| No. of Q | No. of CAs | Percentage | No. of InAs | Percentage |
|----------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| 1 | 384 | 38.4 % | 616 | 61.6 % |
| 2 | 328 | 32.8 % | 672 | 67.2 % |
| 3 | 326 | 32.6 % | 674 | 67.4 % |
| Total | 1038 | 34.6 % | 1962 | 65.4 % |

At the production level, Table (2) shows the correct and incorrect answers of each item in these three questions. The total number of correct answers in question one is (384) of the total number of the subjects' answers in this question which constitutes (38.4%) whereas that of incorrect ones is (616) which constitutes (61.6%).

Regarding question two, the correct answers of this are (328) of the total number of the subjects' answers in this question. This constitutes (32.8%), whereas that of incorrect answers are (672) which constitute (67.2%).

Finally, question three has the least correct answers represented by (326), which is (32.6%), and the largest incorrect number of items which are (674) making (67.4%).

To conclude, the total number of the correct answers in the three questions is (1038) which constitutes (34.6%), whereas that of incorrect answers is (1962) which is (65.4%).

Incorrect answers are classified into three types ordered accordingly as follows:

- 1. Failure to Make the Necessary Changes:** This type occupies the highest rank of wrong answers. It has (1245) items which constitutes (41.5%). This type of errors exists in questions two; items: 1, 3, 7, 8, and 9; and three, items: 3, 5, 6, 8, and 9.
- 2. Giving Incorrect Spelling:** This type of error appears in (395) answers, i.e., (13.1%) which is shown in the three questions respectively. This type of error is illustrated in items: 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 and 10 in question one; 2, 4, 5, 6 and 10 in question two; and 1, 2, 4, 7, and 10 in question three.

3. Giving no Answer: This type has the least number of items which are considered wrongly answered, for the subjects failed to give any answer. It is **(322)** items which constitutes **(10.7%)** out of the total number of the subjects. This error is found in the three questions as a whole. The items that are left without answers are: 5, 6, and 9 in question one; 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10 in question two; and 4, 6, 7, 9, and 10 in question three.

4.2.3. Overall Subjects' Performance

Table (3) below illustrates the overall performance of the subjects at both recognition and production levels in terms of using grammatical zeros.

Table (3)

Subjects' Performance at the Production and Recognition Levels of Questions

| Level | No. of CAs | Percentage | No. of InAs | Percentage |
|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Recognition | 763 | 38.15 % | 1237 | 61.85 |
| Production | 1038 | 34.6 % | 1962 | 65.4 % |
| Total | 1801 | 36.375 % | 3199 | 63.625 % |

The highest rate of the subjects' incorrect answers is **(1962)**, i.e., **(65.4 %)** at the production level, whereas the total number of the incorrect answers is **(1237)**, i.e., **(61.85%)** at the recognition one. This rate means that the Iraqi EFL college students face difficulty in mastering the grammatical zeros at both levels. The subjects' successful performance at the production level is lower than that at the recognition one. The subjects face more difficulties at the production level since the total number of their correct answers **(1038)** which adds up to **(34.6 %)** is lower than that of their correct ones at the recognition one **(763)** which adds up to **(38.15 %)**.

These results can also be confirmed by using certain measures such as the mean and coefficient variation.

Statistically speaking, the above results validate the main hypothesis of the paper which states that the subjects' achievement at the recognition and production levels of grammatical zero is poor. Furthermore, the results show that Iraqi EFL learners' ability to

produce the phenomenon in question is lower than the ability to recognize it.

4.3. Sources of Errors

As scholars of error analysis argue (Corder, 1973:290; Mukattash, 1980:144; and Lewis and Hill, 1990:90) that identifying sources of errors is not always an accurate process, for they might be attributed to a wide range of reasons, a matter that creates uncertainty. However, psychologically, there are several factors can manifest some sources of the errors through describing the EFL learners' performance.

In many cases, there appears to be several simultaneous processes going on: transfer, overgeneralization, faulty categorization, lapses and syntactic blends which operate in the planning and execution of utterances (Corder, 1973:290). In addition to that, there is a number of factors that interact and influence the linguistic performance of a second or a foreign language learner. They include language transfer, intralingual interference, context of learning and communicative strategies (Kardaleska, 2005:1).

The analysis of the learners' sources of errors in the current paper adopts what works out with the results of the data from the abovementioned strategies in order to address the reasons of the errors. The strategies are as follows:

4.3.1. Language Learning Strategies

These are represented by three sub-strategies:

1. **Interlingual Transfer** means the intermediate grammars constructed by second language learners on their way to the target language. Interlingual transfer may be either positive, when a source language pattern, identical with a target language pattern, is transferred, or it can be negative (transfer of training and overgeneralization), when a source language pattern, different from the target language, is transferred. Therefore, interlingual problems depend, to a great extent, on the linguistic differences between the source and target languages which are

traditionally known as “interference problems” (Brown, 1980:83).

Considering the items that are answered wrongly by the learners, the wrong choice shows the negative interlingual transfer.

In the subjects' native language, there are some general fixed rules to make definiteness or indefiniteness, plurals, relative pronouns, conditionals, infinitives, or subordinate conjunctions, whereas in the target language such rules can be changed to the extent that they are omitted. Incorrect spelling, on the other hand, displays negative interlingual transfer due to the fixed spelling system of the subjects' mother tongue. Accordingly, the subjects make some generalization to some nouns to make them plurals (sheep-sheeps, mouse- mice ... etc).

Thus, the items that show wrong choice and incorrect spelling can be ascribed to negative interlingual transfer (see Table (1) and (2)). It is noticed that (885) errors that might be attributed to the interlingual transfer, i.e., (62.1%) of the total number of the subjects' errors.

2. Intralingual Transfer: This refers to the error which deals with explanation of errors resulting from a complex structure of the target language itself. Thus, not all errors can be attributed to the linguistic differences between the two languages (ibid: 91). Negative intralingual transfer, on the other hand, can be marked in the following two types of errors, in addition to the third one 'overgeneralization' which is already mentioned above:

- a. **Errors of Simplification:** Errors of simplification result from omitting some grammatical elements. Simplification refers to the way in which learners seek to ease the burden of learning or using a second language by controlling the number of hypotheses they try to form at any one stage of development, or by omitting grammatical elements (Richards, 1974:220)

Incorrect spelling can sometimes result from simplicity. The subjects only use affixes that they consider correct without correct spelling like the case with plurals and infinitives.

b. Ignorance of Rule Restriction results from the necessary changes as in some constructions which should be changed when using grammatical zeros. Failure to make the necessary changes might be the result of such simplification. This type of errors constitutes (1245) adding up to (41.5%) of the total number of the subjects' errors.

3. Context of Learning: According to Corder (1973:140), this strategy is a pivotal on both types of the previously mentioned factors, i.e., interlingual and intralingual transfer. It indicates the classroom with its teacher and material. There is a logical relationship between what goes on in the classroom and the preparation of syllabuses and teaching material. The ease or difficulty of learning is not simply related to the nature of the task but has components of motivation, intelligence, aptitude and quality of teachers and teaching materials.

As far as this paper is concerned, the problem regarding context of learning is that there is no enough exposure of the phenomenon in question to the subjects. In other words, the learners are not exposed fully to such constructions as grammatical zeros within the context. This is obvious in the communicative strategy to be manifested in the section to come.

4.3.2. Communicative Strategies

Communicative strategies indicate the actual use of language (verbal, nonverbal contact) in order to communicate a thought when the exact linguistic forms are not available to the learner during the process of communication (Brown, 1987:91).

Richards (1974:117) argues about the difference between language learning strategies and communicative strategies lies in that the former is a matter of habits to be learnt through conditioning and the latter is a matter of competence to be built in mind.

There are several sub-strategies to communicative strategy such as risk avoidance, risk taking and guessing. What concerns this paper is the sub-strategy of guessing in which errors can be attributed to the subjects' unseriousness and/or lack of linguistic knowledge. This is

clearly found in questions one and two regarding the recognition as well as question three regarding production level. The total number of errors that may be attributed to guessing is (534) items, which is (26%). Guessing is the consequence of not only unseriouness, but also lack of linguistic knowledge due to shortage of context of learning.

5. Conclusions

This section is concerned with conclusions that are meant to serve as a basis to pedagogical recommendations and investigation further in this area, for there are still other types of grammatical zeros yet to be studied. The empirical part of the paper has come up with the following conclusions:

1. Grammatical zero is a subtle phenomenon whose existence belongs to one of the basic properties of language which is irregularity.
2. Iraqi EFL learners' ability to recognize and produce grammatical zero is limited to (36.375 %). This is considered a poor level.
3. At production level, the Iraqi EFL learners' performance is lower than recognition level. This is owing to lack of context which is shown in the recognition questions of the test.
4. The subjects' performance in the test has revealed the plausible causes underlying the subjects' poor performance which can be ascribed to such factors as:
 - a. Language learning strategies represented by interlingual and interlingual negative transfer as well as the context of learning.
 - b. Communicative strategies of learning manifested by the sub-strategy 'guessing'.

In the light of the abovementioned conclusions, it is recommended that Iraqi EFL be familiar with grammatical zero through presenting such phenomenon in the text books within special kinds of context. On the other hand, recognition is not the right way to measure the

ability to produce, rather production assignments are crucial to the process of learning.

In addition to the types of grammatical zero investigated, other types (e.g. zero past marker, imperative marker) in other contexts where language is involved have not been studied. Therefore, it is vital to conduct studies of such types.

المستخلص:

يتقصى هذا البحث ظاهرة الغياب النحوي والذي يعني غياب العلامات التي تدل على ان التركيب سليما من الناحية النحوية لكنها في الوقت ذاته تبقى تراكيب نحوية سليمة. فيهدف البحث الى تقديم دراسة تحليلية تعنى بقدرة متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية العراقيين كلغة اجنبية لتمييز وانتاج هذه الظاهرة من خلال اجراء اختبار لطلبة أقسام اللغة الانجليزية. يتناول الاختبار مسألة الصعوبة التي قد يواجهها المتعلمون عند استخدامهم لهذه التراكيب. فأن نتائج البحث اثبتت صحة فرضيته التي تقول بأن قدرة المتعلمين لتمييز وانتاج ظاهرة الغياب النحوي ضعيفة. وقد توصل البحث الى نتائج عديدة اهمها الاسباب التي تؤدي الى ضعف أداء المتعلمين العراقيين لهد الظاهرة النحوية والتي تعزى الى انتقال اللغة والمتمثل بالانتقال من لغة الى اخرى وفي داخل اللغة الواحدة انتقالا سليا وسبب اخر متمثل بالبيئة التي يتم فيها تعليم اللغة اما السبب الاخير فهو السيراتيجيات التواصلية عند عملية تعليم اللغة.

الكلمات الدليلية: الغياب النحوي، التمييز، الانتاج، الأداء، انتقال اللغة، البيئة التعليمية، السيراتيجيات التواصلية.

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