

**The Acquisition of Hyponymy by Iraqi EFL University Students**  
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### ABSTRACT

This study sets out to concentrate on hyponymy as one of the lexical relations which holds between words. In this relation, one word or phrase is included in that of the other. For the purpose of investigating the problems which the subjects of English face in using this phenomenon, the study deals with the identification of the students' performance to find out the causes of the subjects' errors and their sources. To get the core goal of the study, a random sample of one group of (50) Iraqi EFL subjects at the Fourth-year level, Department of English, College of Education, University of Babylon during the academic year 2015/16 is subjected to a diagnostic test. The analysis of the incorrect responses provides demonstration that the subjects are really incompetent in the correct recognition and production of hyponymy. This is evident from their achievement at these levels.

**Key words :** Hyponymy; Meronymy; Hyperonym; Compatibility

**تحصيل الاسم الأخص لطلبة الجامعة الدارسين اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية**

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### الخلاصة

تُعد هذه الدراسة باستقصاء المشكلة التي يواجهها الطلبة العراقيون دارسوا اللغة الإنكليزية لغةً أجنبية في استخدام احد العلاقات المعجمية المهمة مُتمثلة بتلك الكلمات التي تمتلك معاني التضمين (كلمة يدل معناها من المعنى الاعم الذي تدل عليه معنى كلمه أخرى) والتي تلعب دوراً في لغة الكلام. على هذا الأساس تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى شرح الخصائص الرئيسة للتضمين والتقصي العملي لمدى إدراك الطلبة للموضوع قيد الدراسة. ولتحقيق اهداف البحث 'صمم اختباراً' تشخيصياً نفذ على عينه عشوائية من (٥٠) طالبا وطالبه من طلبة المرحلة الرابعة في كلية التربية بجامعة بابل خلال العام الدراسي ٢٠١٥/٢٠١٦. ومن خلال التحليل الإحصائي واللغوي لإجابات الطلبة لفقرات الاختبار تبين ان النسب العالية لأخطائهم تعكس عدم تمكنهم من استخدام تلك المفردات على مستوى الإدراك والتمييز.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** علاقة التضمين ، علاقة الجزء بالكل ، المستوى الأعلى ، متوافق

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Problem

In everyday talk, the meaning of each word is often characterized in terms of its relationship to other words not in terms of its component features. It indicates what the word embraces ( how it relates to the world outside of language) and the entailment possibilities which the word gives to sentences ( Griffiths, 2006:22). Hence, the meaning of an expression is defined in terms of the inclusion of the sense of one item in that of another.

[ It is reckoned that a considerable number of Iraqi EFL university subjects may be incapable to make a distinction between a more specific or subordinate lexeme and a more general or superordinate lexeme related to hyponyms. In addition, such constructions could be problematic in the sense that the students may be unable to distinguish among the types of lexical relations, hyponyms, metonyms and synonyms.

## 1.2 Objectives

The study aims at:

1. Offering an account of understanding of one of the relationships among words, i.e. hyponymy.
2. Investigating the skillfulness of Iraqi EFL university subjects in recognizing and producing such topic.
3. Identifying the types of the subjects' errors and their sources on the test of the subject under study.

## 1.3 Hypotheses

The hypotheses to be suggested in this study are as follows:

1. It is hypothesized that a significant number of Iraqi university subjects may not all that good in employing hyponyms in recognizing and producing them.
2. Another hypothesis is that their mastery of the use of hyponyms is not achieved by such subjects in the fourth level.

## 1.4 Procedures

To realize the purposes of this study the procedures followed include :

1. Reviewing a description of English hyponymy.
2. Picking out a sample of Iraqi EFL university subjects for administering a test to find out the difficulties that they may face in using hyponymy.
3. Performing a statistical analysis of the subjects' responses and analyzing the results of the test to arrive at certain conclusions about the difficulties faced by the subjects at both levels of hyponymy.

## 1.5 Scope

This study will concern with assessing the proficiency of Iraqi EFL students in the use of hyponymy sense relation. The sample of the study consists in the Fourth Level at the Department of English, College of Education, University of Babylon for the academic year 2015-2016 as the topic is prescribed for them.

## 1.6 Value

It is hoped that the value of this work lies in the following aspects:

1. As far as the instructors of EFL are concerned, it might help who are interested in sense relations.
2. As for the subjects of English, it might also be of some benefit to them to perceive such sense relationships among words.

## 2. Hyponymy in English

### 2.1 Sense Relations

As the name suggests sense relation is an approach to the description of lexical relations attempting to classify lexemes according to shared and differentiating features. Its task is to account for the meaning relations between different expressions in a language ( Kreidler, 1998:86).

For Yule ( 2006 : 104) as the words are containers of meaning , they can also have relationships with each other. Therefore, the meaning of each word is characterized not in terms of its component properties, but in terms of its relationship to other word.

At the same time, Jeffries ( 2006: 168) announces that the individual senses of a lexeme can have different sets of relations with other word senses. The interrelations of word senses are collectively known as sense relations. Based on the relationships among words, there is a range of possible sense relations into which a word sense can enter. These different sense relationships have more in common than what their convention names imply.

Likewise, Trask and Stockwell (2007: 255) affirm that there are several ways by which the meanings of words may be related. In isolation words do not have meanings ; instead, the meaning of a word is usually related in important ways to the meanings of other words. Some of the most prominent of these relations in meaning are called sense relations.

Lastly, Riemer (2010:136) views that describing, accounting and knowing an expression's meaning involve not only its definition but also its relation to other words of the language and this is one of the principal goals of lexical relations. Such relations examine relationships among words

meanings, in terms of similarity (synonymy), differences (antonymy), a part- whole relation (meronymy), class inclusion (hyponymy) and so on. The last relation is the focus of this work.

## 2.2 Hyponymy : Concept

A hyponym (from Greek *hupó*, "under" and *ónoma*, "name") is a word or phrase whose meaning is included within that of another word, its hyponym or hypernym (from Greek *hupér*, "over") which is also known as a superordinate . Usually, a hyponym shares a *type-of* relationship with its hypernym. For example, **pigeon, crow, and eagle** are all hyponyms of **bird** (their hypernym); which, in turn, is a hyponym of **animal** (1).

A hyponymy, according to Lyons ( 1977:291), is one of the commonest and most important sense relations which applies to the lexical items of the same class: nouns, verbs, and to lesser extent adjectives. It holds between a more specific or subordinate lexeme and a more general or superordinate lexeme, as exemplified by such pairs as '**honesty**' : '**virtue**', '**buy** : **get**', '**crimson** : **red**'. '**Honesty**' is a hyponym of '**virtue**' ; '**crimson**', is a hyponym of '**red**', and so on.

On his part, Crystal ( 1980:165) proposes that the hyponymic relation refers to the notion of inclusion of one class in another , whereby it can be said that " an **X** is a kind of **Y**" , for example, a **car** is hyponym of **vehicle** . From other direction it may be said that **vehicle** is a superordinate or hyponym of **car**. It is understood from this that several lexemes (**car, train, lorry**) will be co-hyponyms, i.e. hyponyms of the same superordinate term.

Richards and Schmidt (2002:241) give another example which figures in the description of verbs: the meaning of **walk** refers to a type of **move**, and **move** is a wider category that embraces narrower categories as **walk, run, swim**..etc. The class denoted by the superordinate term embraces the class denoted by the hyponym as subclass; therefore the class of acts of **moving** includes subclasses of acts of **walking, running, swimming**.

From another direction, Todd (1995:85) declares that hyponymy is a sense relation related to complementarity and incompatibility relations. The former is about classification: **rose, dairy** and **daffodil** are kinds of **flower**. The latter is about contrast : **rose, lily** and **daffodil** are different from each other within the category of flowers.

The notion of hyponymy , as Trask (1999: 41-2) portrays, involves the logical relationship of entailment which holds between either words or sentences. For example, a **rose** is necessarily a **flower**, but the opposite is not true, but it might be a **lily**. Similarly, Brinton (2000:131) gives another example between the propositions expressed by the sentences: **Alan lives in Toronto** entails **Alan lives in Canada**. It is not the case that **Alan lives in Canada** entails **Alan lives in Toronto**.

It is reported by Cruse (2006: 80) that there are two ways of looking at hyponymy: extensionally and intentionally. Looking at the meaning from the extensional perspective, the category of **animals** includes the category of **dogs**. But thinking of meaning intentionally, the meaning of **dog** embraces the meaning of **animal**. The more general category (**animal**) is labelled superordinate and the included category (**dog**) is the hyponym which is, in turn, a superordinate of another (**collie**).

This fact has been put by Yule (2006: 107) in a hierarchy relation : one term (**metal**) may be a superordinate to various hyponyms (**iron, gold, steel** ) and at the same time may be a hyponymy of some higher superordinate (**mineral**). Words such as (**iron, gold, steel**) are considered co-hyponyms because their meanings are all included within the meaning of **metal**, and each of which is of equal specificity: they are all types of **metal**.

## 2.3 Hyponymy : Characteristics

There are several basic features related to hyponymy. For Cruse (1986) as (cited in Geeraerts ( 2010:83)) hyponymy plays an important role in defining. The definitional importance of hyponymy can be specified by examining the notion of inclusion which lies at the basis of hyponymy. Such notion may be viewed from an extensional point of view ( the set of **birds** includes the set of **finches**) or from an intentional one ( the relation is reversed : the concept **finch** includes the concept **bird** ).

A crucial property of hyponymy is that it expresses a 'one-way' relation which is not always straightforward ,i.e. one proposition entails another but the reverse is not true. (See 2.2). This feature helps us to build a picture of how lexicon might be structured (Radford et al., 2009:172).

A third significant feature of the principle of hyponymy is that it allows us to be as general or as specific as particular linguistic occasion warrants. Hyponymy deals with the relationships that exist within a specific language in terms of related sets and this relation is easy to demonstrate (Todd,1995: 88).

As noted by Peters (2004:260), the relationship between hyponyms and their nearer or more remote superordinate is important in the cognitive structures of thinking and writing. It allows us to move up and down the "ladder of abstraction" in an argumentative prose . He (ibid.) adds that helping the writers to extend their arguments, develop theories and contribute to cohesion in writing.

Another characteristic is that hyponymy reflects the hierarchical nature of some areas of the vocabulary which can be helpful in the description of language. Besides, the linguistic notion of hierarchy depicts the higher levels as simply representative of a larger body of language than the lower levels, or as more inclusive rather than more important (Jeffries, 2006:170).

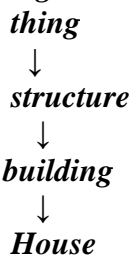
Moreover, hyponymy is a patchy relationship that shows the capacity of human language to organize some aspects of human experience in a quite detailed way, whilst other areas of experience remain vaguely connected and it happens not to exist. For example in English there is no gendered words equivalent to *sister* and *brother* to cover female and male (ibid.: 171).

Lastly, Riemer ( 2010 :142) confesses that hyponymy is a major semantic relation in the grammar of many languages. Furthermore, a particular type of hyponymy is an important aspect of the way we talk about the natural world. It also has a communicative function which helps communication to be integrated and logical in its development and effectively bonded in its expression.

#### 2.4 Hyponymy : Hierarchical Structure

As postulated by Hurford et al. (2007: 116), lexical hierarchy is a grouping of lexical items whose meanings are related in a way that can be represented by means of a 'tree-diagram'. Sometimes it is called a taxonomy which could be observed from top to bottom, where the higher level is more general and the lower level is more specific. Regarding the hierarchy of hyponymy, it consists of two relations; the vertical relation is (a variety of hyponymy) and the horizontal one is (a variety of incompatibility).(See also Cruse, 2006:94).

Kreidler (1998:96) illustrates that hyponymy is hierarchical by stating that one term may be a superordinate to various hyponyms and at the same time is a hyponym of some higher superordinate. In this sense , the hyponymy relation passes through intermediate levels in the hierarchy, i.e. the hyponym of one superordinate can also be the superordinate of a lower-level hyponym. In this connection, Griffiths ( 2006 : 47) shows a small hyponym hierarchy in which the hyponymic transitive relation can work at more than one level by the following example: *house* is a hyponym of the superordinate *building*, but *building* is, in turn, a hyponym of the superordinate *structure*, and, in its turn, *structure* is a hyponym of the superordinate *thing*. This can be seen in graph (1):

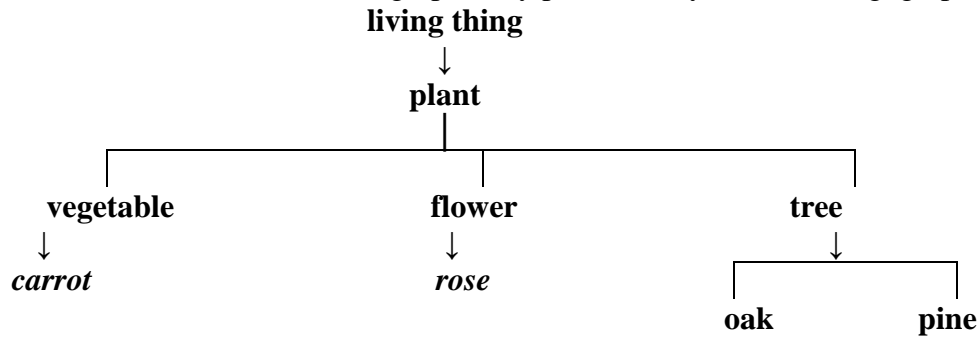


**Graph (1): Superordinates and hyponyms in a hierarchy.**

[[It has been noted that superordinates can be hyponyms and vice versa.

Another common way of presenting the hyponymic hierarchy is depicted by Yule (2006-106) who puts the hyponymous connections in more detail by looking at the meaning of words in some type

of hierarchical relationship. This relationship between a set of words such as *living thing*, *plant*, *vegetable*, *flower*, *tree*, *carrot*, *rose* and *oak* is graphically presented by the following graph:



**Graph (2): Hyponymous connections get more detailed.**

Looking at the diagram, it can be said that '*rose*' is a hyponymy of '*flower*' and '*carrot*' is a hyponymy of '*vegetable*'. In turn, the higher level words: *tree*, *vegetable*, *flower* are called the superordinate terms, while the two or more words that share the same superordinate term are co-hyponyms. So *pine* and *oak* are co-hyponyms of the superordinate term *tree*. Related to this issue, Radford et al. (2009:172) assert that *tree* along with *flower* and *vegetable* are also co-hyponyms for the superordinate *plant* which is a hyponym of the superordinate *living thing*. This system shows that hyponymy is multileveled, which means the basic level could be divided into more specific levels, and even more specific ones.

Jeffries (2006:169) points out that where there is a hierarchy, the word senses that occur 'higher up the tree' are semantically simpler than the members of the field that are lower down and their meanings are included within the meanings of the lower items. More succinctly, the higher the word the fewer semantic features it will have.

### 2.5 Hyponymy versus Meronymy

Hyponymy must not be confused with meronymy (Greek *mero* :

"part" and *nomos*, "name") , although some of their properties are similar . What these relations have in common are (a) both relations are semantic terms used as part of the study of sense relations, ( b) both are important in imposing a hierarchical structure upon the vocabulary and upon particular fields within the vocabulary and (c) they are both transitive relations (Lyons, 1977:295).

In addition to these prominent similarities hyponymy and meronymy differ in some aspects which make each relation has its own entity. One of the main differences which Meyer's remark (2009:175) is that hyponymy reflects the notion of '*is a kind / type / sort of*'; meronymy reflects the notion of '*is a part of*'. At this point their distinction is clear enough. A *dog* is a kind of *animal*, but not a part of an *animal*; a *body* has a *hand*, and a *hand* is a part of a *body*.

Another difference is that hyponym is an inclusion relationship which holds between co-hyponyms, where the semantic features of a more general word form part of the description of a more specific word while meronymy is an exclusive relationship which holds between co-meronyms, where the semantic features of the whole form part of the description of the part (Jeffries, 2006:169).

Following the terminology introduced by Trask ( 2007: 256) the word referring to the part is labelled the 'meronym' and the word referring to the whole is called the 'holonym'. For example, *hand* is a meronym of *arm*, but a holonym of *finger*. Thus, *little finger*, *ring finger* and *middle finger*, are co-meronyms. In contrast with hyponymy, one word denotes a special case of what is denoted by the other. For example, *lettuce* is a hyponym of *vegetable*, which in turn is a hyponym of the superordinate *plant*. Thus, *carrot*, *pepper*, *lettuce* are co-hyponyms.

Riemer ( 2010: 141-2) finds that a standard identification procedure for hyponymy is that it is a one way entailment relation (see 2.4.). On the other hand, a standard definition procedure for meronymy does not involve entailment relation. Typically, it is featured as being transitive which is

identical with hyponymy as has been mentioned above . For example: a *seed* is meronymy of a *fruit* which is in turn meronymy of a *plant*, then a *seed* is also meronymy of a *plant*. However, the transitivity will fail if it does not follow the logical transitive of the part-whole relation. For example: a *handle* is a part of a *door* and a *door* is a part of a *house*, it seems false and unnatural to say that a *handle* is part of a *house* (ibid.).

### 3. Test Construction and Data Analysis

#### 3.1 The Test

Before embarking upon a description of the test, it is important to know what a test is. For Richards and Schmidt (2002-7) a test is a procedure designed to measure how much of a language learners have successfully learned with specific reference to a particular course, textbook, or programme of instruction. Or as Tavakoli (2012-657) has defined it that a test is a means of measuring ability, knowledge, or performance. It is a set of instructions presented to an individual to elicit responses as an indicator of the extent to which the subject has been learned.

##### 3.1.1 The Test Description

On the basis of the information above, a test is formulated to identify where the problems exist and to check the subjects' proficiency in using hyponymy. A group of fifty subjects has been selected from the fourth academic year (2015-2016) of the Department of English at the College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Babylon for the sake of conducting a diagnostic test.

The test is divided into two parts, each with one question. Starting with the first question, it embraces ten items whose function is to test the recognition part wherein the subjects are provided with three choices to choose the correct option for every item. Moving to the second question, it covers the production part which consists of ten items wherein the subjects are required to give the hyponymy related to the underlined words. (See Appendix 1).

##### 3.1.2 Test Standards

Validity , reliability, and practicality are the most important virtues of a good test (Harrison, 1983: 10). The practicality of the test is achieved by carrying out an economy test (i.e. saving time and effort) and ease (i.e. smoothness of administration, responding to its items, and scoring). Validity and reliability are illustrated in the following subsection.

###### 3.1.2.1 Validity and Reliability

Heaton (1988:159) declares that the notion "validity" refers to the degree to which a test measures what it is planned to do. For a test to be valid it must meet two criteria : face validity and content validity. The former is secured by submitting the test to a jury of experts before its administration. The latter involves testing the skills that are related to the recognition and production of hyponyms .

Reliability, on the other hand, means the consistency with which a test measures the same thing all the time ( Harrison, 1983: 11). To calculate the reliability of the present study, a Kurder-Richardson formula is used:

$$R = N / N-1 (m ( N-m) / N X^2 ) \text{ where:}$$

**R** is the reliability

**N** is the number of items in the test,

**m** is the means of the test scores,

**X** is the standard deviation of the test scores.

### 3.2 Discussion of Test Results

Initially, the next subsections are set out to discuss the rates of acquisition achieved by the subjects on each question in particular and on the whole test in general. Lastly, the obtained results will be important to investigate the hypotheses in 1.3.

#### 3.2.1 Subjects' Performance of the First Question

**Q I** tests the subjects' performance at the recognition level. The following table provides the results obtained on each test item in the question. (See Table 1) .

**Table (1)**  
**Frequencies and Percentages of the test's items in Q I**

No. of Items	Correct Items		Incorrect Items		Avoided Items	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	38	76	11	22	1	2
2	23	46	23	46	4	8
3	5	10	43	86	2	4
4	6	12	44	88	0	0
5	30	60	20	40	0	0
6	18	36	32	64	0	0
7	1	2	49	98	0	0
8	36	72	13	26	1	2
9	4	8	45	90	1	2
10	8	16	42	84	0	0
Total	169	33.8	322	64.4	9	1.8

In Question I, as manifested in table (1) above, the rate of the correct responses is (33.8%) for the recognition level wherein the rate of the incorrect ones (*including the avoided items' rate*) is (66.2%). The lowest rate for this level is item (7) with rate of (2%). Likewise, test items (3,4,9) and (10) have also the lowest with percentages of (10%, 12%, 8%) and (16%) respectively. Accordingly, these low rates suggest that the subjects face more difficulty in recognizing these items than other ones, in turn, a reflection of their incapability to deal with such items. On the opposite aspect, it seems that items (1,5) and (8) whose rates are (76%, 60%) and (72%) respectively are the easiest items which test the recognition use of hyponyms. In contrast with the lowest rates, these figures reflect the subjects' familiarity with items (1,5) and (8).

### 3.2.2 Subjects' Performance of the Second Question

Q II is prepared to assess the subjects' acquisition at the production level. Their responses on each item are set down in the following table. (See Table 2).

**Table (2)**  
**Frequencies and Percentages of the test's items in Q II**

No. of Items	Correct Items		Incorrect Items		Avoided Items	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	30	60	18	36	2	4
2	7	14	42	84	1	2
3	11	22	29	58	10	20
4	36	72	11	22	3	6
5	7	14	41	82	2	4
6	1	2	43	86	6	12
7	18	36	23	46	9	18
8	18	36	26	52	6	12
9	16	32	25	50	9	18
10	20	40	29	58	1	2
Total	164	32.8	287	57.4	49	9.8

In Question II, as demonstrated in table (2) above, the rate of the correct responses is at (32.8%) while that of the incorrect ones (*including the avoided items' rate*) constitutes (67.2%). In this question the lowest item test is (6) with a percentage of (2%). Similarly, test items (2) and (5) have a uniform value (i.e., 14%). These unsatisfactory figures are indicative of the subjects' limitations on performing items (2,5) and (6). However, it sounds that items (1) and (4) whose rates are (60%) and (72%) respectively are the highest production items which test the production use of hyponyms. These resultant rates supply an indication that the subjects have knowledge enough to respond to these items.

### 3.2.3 Subjects' Total Performance of Hyponymy in the Whole Test

Hereunder is a table showing the acquisition rates for both levels: the recognition and production . (See Table 3):

**Table (3)**  
**Frequencies and Percentages of items in the Whole Test**

Level	Correct Items		Incorrect Items		Avoided Items	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Recognition</b>	169	33.8	322	64.4	9	1.8
<b>Production</b>	164	32.8	287	57.4	49	9.8
<b>Total</b>	333	33.3	609	60.9	58	5.8

The statistical information outlined in the above table tell expressly that the total rate of the correct responses forms (**33.3%**) which is lesser than that of the incorrect ones (*including the avoided items' rate*) which forms (**66.7%**). Apparently, it is a low performance rate which is an indicator of the subject's' failure in recognizing and producing hyponyms. Therefore, it verifies the first hypothesis presented in section 3.1 which says:

*It is hypothesized that a significant number of Iraqi university subjects may not all that good in employing hyponyms in recognizing and producing them.*

Moving to the scoring scheme, out of (**50**) subjects, only (**11**) subjects have got the pass score of (**50%**) or above which ranges between (**50%-65%**), i.e., subjects' score mean stands at (**55%**) out of (**100**), with a pass rate of (**22%**). Such figures assert graphically the subjects' deficiency in mastering hyponyms which proves the validity of the second hypothesis which says:

*Another hypothesis is that their mastery of the use of hyponyms is not achieved by such subjects in the fourth level.*

### 3.3 Error Analysis

Error analysis is an important aspect of applied linguistics and language learning. It is a systematic method to analyze learners' errors. Errors are not always bad rather they are crucial part in the process of language learning. As a result they provide a way of identifying, describing and explaining learners' errors which may help to better understand the process of language acquisition (2).

The focus of this section is on the errors found in test sheets and their plausible causes. Before commencing with an error analysis, it is important to say that an error explanation is not an easy task as it needs hypothesizing about what procedures are going on in the subject's mind which have caused the errors. Hence, the identification of the exact source of error made by the subjects cannot be completely accurate, i.e., there may be more than one plausible answers to identify and explain error causes (Corder, 1973: 290).

For Brown (2000:223-7), error sources in foreign language acquisition can be generally classified into four major types in the main :

1. Interlingual transfer,
2. Intralingual transfer,
3. Context of learning,
4. Communication strategies.

Each type of error categorized above will be discussed in the next four subsections.

### 3.3.1 Sources of Errors

#### 3.3.1.1 Interlingual Transfer

According to Yule (2006: 167), interlingual transfer is a sort of error caused by the learners when using expressions or structures from the first language performing in the second language. Item (6), in *Question 1*, and item (9) in *Question 2* may be attributable to the influence of the native language:

**Item (6):** He was shaking with **emotion** after the accident.

Correct answer: He was shaking with **fear** after the accident.

*\*He was shaking with sympathy after the accident.*



**Item (9):** There are a lot of very old **structures** in this town.

Correct answer: There are a lot of very old **buildings** in this town.

*\*There are a lot of very old scrapes in this town.*

It distinctly seems that the subjects have relied on translation into their first language (i.e.) Arabic to realize the semantic features of those words. Using wrong translation is behind such deviation responses.

### 3.3.1.2 Intranlingual Transfer

For Brown (1987: 82-3) there are certain factors behind this source of errors *such as overgeneralization; incomplete rules application and ignorance rules application*. In some cases the learner tries to apply the rules he/she knows in situations sometimes it is applicable and sometimes it is not. Errors like those in items (3) and (5) in **Question 2**, might have caused by applying wrong rules:

**Item (3) :** We buy a new **game** at Christmas. Correct answer : We buy a new **chess** at Christmas

*\*We buy a new play at Christmas.*

**Item (5):** Her face turned **red** after the operation .

Correct answer : Her face turned **crimson** after the operation .

*\* Her face turned colour after the operation .*

Obviously the subjects deviate away from the rules by giving the synonyms of the words rather than the hyponyms.

### 3.3.1.3 Context of learning :

This source of error refers to the negative influence of elements of the learning situation, such as the *classroom*, the *teacher* along with its *curriculum*. "Induced error" is another term used in this area to refer to an error caused by the way in which a language has been taught (ibid.:87). Errors attributable to these factors of learning process may be recognized in items ( 2) and (3) in **Question (1)**:

**Item (2):** She received a **pleasant** message last night.

Correct answer: She received a **smoothing** message last night.

*\*She received a patient message last night.*

**Item (3):** Do you like the taste of eating this **vegetable** .

Correct answer : Do you like the taste of eating this **leech** .

*\*Do you like the taste of eating this plant ..*

### 3.3.1.4 Communication strategies

Communicative strategies mean that devices which may be used by the learners to deal with problems or break- down in communication. These plans such as *approximation*, *avoidance*; and *guessing* enable the learners to cope with the situation so as to reach the intended communicative goal even when things do not go well ( Schmitt 2002:179).

A significant number of the errors in items (3,4,7,9 ) and (10)

(**Question 1**) may show signs of guessing. Also items (3, 6, 7, 8,) and (9) in (**Question 2**) are avoidable with no responses . As for *approximation*, the subjects try to use a word that has approximately the same semantic features with the word that he/she supposes to use. Such errors can be noticed in items (1) and (2) in **Question 2**:

**Item (1) :** The **bird** flies and sings.

Correct Response : The **finch** flies and sings.

*\*The creature flies and sings.*

**Item (2) :** The **tool** is getting out of his hand.

Correct Response : The **hammer** is getting out of his hand.

*\*The instrument is getting out of his hand.*

#### 4. Conclusions

In conclusion, the study offers the following ends:

- 1- In view of their low rate of acquisition , Iraqi EFL university subjects' four-year stage have been found to face difficulties in recognizing and producing hyponyms .This is indicated by the low performance rate of their correct responses , (33.3%), which is lesser than that of their correct responses, (66.7%), in the whole sample. The subjects' low competency at both parts advocates the first hypothesis of the study introduced in 1.3.
- 2- Since the acquisition rate is rather low, it appears that the subjects in the fourth level of English learning have poor competency and tend to lack a clear view of hyponymy which may lead to unsatisfactory and ineffective performance as they are supposed to. This result confirms the second hypothesis presented in 1.3
- 3- Plausible causes of errors discussed above can be outlined as follows:
  - A. Communication strategy is the error source by which the subjects wish to convey information while their linguistic knowledge do not help them to express correctly. It is the highest frequent error source in the data, accounting for (320,16.48%) of all the errors.
  - B. Intralingual transfer is the second frequent cause of errors accounting for (146,74.22%) of all errors. It occurs as a result from faulty or partial learning of the language or incorrect application of previously learned rules to present situation.
  - C. Interlingual transfer is the third highest negative factor of the incorrect responses in the data wherein the subjects use the system of their native language in learning that of the foreign one. It explains only (126,73.19) of all the subjects' incorrect answers.
  - D. Context of learning is the factor with least effective cause of errors whereby the errors are happened due to the elements of learning such as the classroom , the teacher and the textbook. In comparison with other three sources, it amounts to (73,37.11) of all the errors in the data.

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1. [https://en. Wikipedia. org/ wiki / File: Hyponymy and hyponyms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hyponymy_and_hyponyms).
2. [https:// www. macrothink. org](https://www.macrothink.org).

### APPENDIX ( I )

#### The Test

**Q I : Choose the hyponymy of the underlined word in each sentence.**

1. The boat **struck** a rock and began to sink.  
a. bear                      b. risk                      c. hit
2. She received a **pleasant** message last night.  
a. soothing                b. horrific                c. patient
3. Do you like the taste of eating this **vegetable** .  
a. plant                      b. leek                      c. fruit
4. This **tree** has a smooth trunk with three sides.  
a. fruit                      b. plant                      c. beech
5. He tried to keep the story out of the **media**.  
a. medals                      b. newspapers            c. transports
6. He was shaking with **emotion** after the accident.  
a. sympathy                b. fear                      c. readiness
7. She promised not to forget to buy a new **instrument**.  
a. flute                      b. tool                      c. stool
8. I doubted the **virtue** of taking a decision yesterday.  
a. insincerity                b. wisdom                      c. sensitivity
9. In some parts of the world, they keep **animals** on their farm.  
a. creatures                b. insects                      c. sows
10. Horses are used to pull the **vehicle** in former times.  
a. coach                      b. transport                c. van

**QII : Provide the hyponymy included under the underlined words in the following sentences .**

1. The **bird** flies and sings.
2. The **tool** is getting out of his hand.
3. We buy a new **game** at Christmas.
4. The groom gives her bride a **flower**.
5. Her face turned **red** after the operation .
6. The policeman was **injured** in the arm.
7. The roof of hut was made of smooth **metal**.
8. The farmer grows a new **living thing** in the field.
9. There are a lot of very old **structures** in this town.
10. An **insect** lives in large groups and works very hard.

**APPENDIX ( II )****Sample Answers****Q I :**

1. c
2. a
3. b
4. c
5. b
6. b
7. a
8. b
9. c
10. a

**Q II :**

1. finch
2. hammer
3. chess
4. daffodil
5. crimson
6. shot
7. iron
8. plant
9. buildings
10. ant