Investigating Iraqi EFL Undergraduates' Performance in the Production of Number Forms in English

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Abstract : The production of number forms in English tends to be problematic for Iraqi learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), even at the undergraduate level. To help better understand and consequently address this problem, it is important to identify its sources. This study aims at: (1) statistically analysing Iraqi EFL undergraduates' performance in the production of number forms in English; (2) classifying learners' errors in terms of their possible major causes; and (3) outlining some pedagogical recommendations relevant to the teaching of number forms in English. It is hypothesized in this study that (1) Iraqi EFL undergraduates still face problems in the production of number forms in English and (2) errors pertaining to the context of learning are more numerous than those attributable to the other possible causes. After reviewing the literature available on the topic, a written test comprising 50 items has been constructed and administered to a randomly chosen sample of 50 second-year college students from the Department of English, College of Education, Wasit University. The findings of the study showed that Iraqi EFL undergraduates still face problems in the production of number forms in English and that the possible major sources of learners' errors can be arranged hierarchically in terms of the percentages of errors to which they can be ascribed as follows: (1) context of learning (50%), (2) intralingual transfer (37%), and (3) interlingual transfer (13%). It is hoped that the implications of the study findings will be beneficial to researchers, syllabus designers, as well as teachers of English as a foreign/second language.

Keywords : L2 number forms, L2 vocabulary learning, productive knowledge, proficiency

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