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The Performance of Iraqi EFL University Students in Using Verbless Clauses

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Abstract

This Study deals with participles as one of the common and essential constructions in the English language on the one hand, and as a problematic area for English foreign language learners on the other hand.. A participle is a form of a verb that can be used in compound tenses of the verb. There are two participles in English: the past participle, which usually ends in '-ed', and the present participle, which ends in '-ing'.. So, Iraqi EFL students face difficulties in using them properly in context. The Formations of participle constitute a problem to those students because they are formed in many ways. This study aims to (1) Identify and analyzing the errors which students made in using participle. and (2) Give a clear rationale for the possible causes for such errors. To achieve these aims the following hypotheses have been put : (1) Most of the students encounter difficulties in producing participles.,(2) Most of them cannot identify the function of participles., and (3) Most of them flunk to acquire the proper use of participles.. To verify these hypotheses, the researcher designs a test and apply it to students of second years to find out the difficulties the encounter with this sort of participle and analyze the results on the bases of which conclusions have been drawn .This study is limited to fifty students in second year at the Department of English in College of Basic Education ,University of Babylon.

Key Words: Participles, production, recognition, difficulties.

Section One

Introduction

Participle is a word formed from a verb (e.g. going, gone, being, been) and used as an adjective (e.g. working woman, burnt toast) or a noun (e.g. good breeding). In English participles are also used to make compound verb forms (e.g. is going, has been). And there is no logical reason why one right in a certain context, whereas another is wrong.

Use participle correctly is problem faced by students because most of participle has several function.

1.1 The Problem

The problem is that many students cannot use participle correctly , they commit mistakes when employ participle and this is normal because most of participle have several function .

- (1) I was waiting for you for an hour.
- (2) I saw him running away from the crime scene.

(Boyles, 1985: 15) **1.2 The**

Aims of the Study

- 1_ Identifying and analyzing the errors which students made in using participle.

2_ Giving a clear rationale for the possible causes for such errors.

1.3 The Hypotheses

1_ Most of the students encounter difficulties in producing participles.

2_ Most of them cannot identify the function of participles.

3_ Most of them flunk to acquire the proper use of participles.

1.4 The Procedures

1_ Giving an account of participles depending on the literature in this field.

2_ Designing a test and applying it to a students of second years to find out the difficulties they encounter with this sort of participles .

3_ Analysing the result on the bases of which conclusion have been drawn .

1.5 Limits of the Study

This study is limited to fifty students in the second year at the Department of English in College of Basic Education ,University of Babylon.

Section Two

Theoretical Background

2.1 Introduction

The participle is a non- finite verb form combining the characteristics of verbs and adjectives (Huddleston , 1988 : 40) . English has two participle , the present and the past . the present participle is the non – finite verb form ending with (-ing) and used in the progressive aspect following “be” as in “he is writing it now” or in a participial clause , like “ calling early , I found him at home ”. The past participle is non-finite verb form ending in (-ed) with weak verbs . It is used in the perfective aspect following “have” as in “he has been called twice today”, in the passive voice following “be” as in “her brother is appointed captain” or in a participial clause, like “called early , he ate a quick breakfast”.

(Quirk et.al,1985:97)

2.2 Forms of Participle

Participle in English take different forms according to their distinctions in voice and aspect .

1- The Simple Active Participle

This participle is in (ing) form when used alone , i.e. not preceded by any other verb

(1) I watched him working in the farm.

2- The Simple Passive Participle

This is the participle in (-ed) form when used alone , i.e. not preceded by any other verb

(5) I observed the car damaged in the accident .

3- Progressive Active Participle

This is formed by placing “being” before the (-ing) form of the verb , as in :

(6) Being preparing for his travel , he is very busy.

4- Progressive Passive Participle

It is formed by putting “being” before the (-ed) form of the verb as in :

(7) I saw the tower being climbed by a man.

5- Perfective Active Participle :

It consists of the (-ed) form of the verb preceded by “having” , e.g.

(8) Having invited you , I expected you to come.

6- Progressive-Perfective Active Participle :

This is the participle which consists of the (-ing) of the verb preceded by “having been” . e.g.

(9) Having been working all day , he is very tired.

7- Progressive-Perfective Passive Participle:

This is the participle which consists of the (-ed) form of the verb preceded by “having been” . e.g.

(10) The work having been finished , I had to go home .

(Ibid)

2.3 Uses of the Participle

2.3.1 As Verbal

1-To form the progressive , perfective and passive forms of the verbs .

The participle may be part of the finite verb phrase , as in :

(11) He is working .

(12) He has seen the accident .

(13) You have been working .

(14) It was broken .

2- To form the complex conjugation of the infinite , as in :

(15) It is nice to be sitting with you .

(16) I am glad to have seen you .

(Ibid)

2.3.2 As Nominal

The participle used as nominal is very rare and it occupied only a subject position preceded by the definite article “the” and followed by a plural verb . e.g.

(17) All the wounded were removed to station A ; the dying were carried on to station B .

(Pence & Emery ,1963:306)

2.3.3 As Adjectival

The participle , whether ending in (-ing) or (-en) can be used premodificationaly and postmdificationally .

1-As a Premodifier :

(18) Barking dogs don't bite.

(19) The loaded ship is sailing in the Arab Gulf .

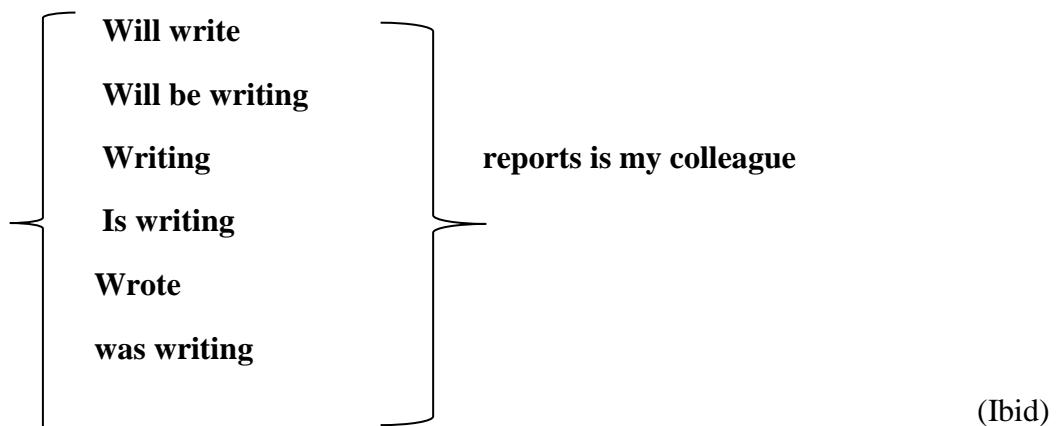
(Swan , 1988 : 451)

2- As a Postmodifier :

The participle in postmodification is used postpositively and appositively. The participle is used postpositively , when it immediately follows the noun it modifies . It usually has corresponding relative clauses .

(20) You should look for a man carrying a large umbrella . (= who will be carrying)

(21) The person writing reports is my colleague (=The person who)



(Ibid)

The other use of the participle as a postmodifier is in appositive position .this use is distinguished from the postpositive one in being the former inverted by commas , e.g.

(22) His only interest in life , playing football , has brought him many friends .

(23) Our team ,outweighed and outplayed , lost by a big score .

(Pence &Emery , 1963:305)

2.3.4 As Adverbial

In its adverbial use , the participle takes the types of ordinary adverbs , i.e , it can be an adjunct , a disjunct , a subjunct , or a conjunct .

(Ibid:325)

2.3.4.1 Adjunct

Participial adjuncts are of two types : those which modify the predication of the sentence (henceforth predication adjuncts) and those which modify the whole sentence (henceforth sentence adjuncts or free adjuncts). The second type is used in absolute constructions . e.g.

(23) They were too busy vaulting horses .



(24) The child came shouting his name . predication adjuncts

(25) Living in seclusion on an island, the English man became introspective .

free adjunct { } (Ibid)

2.3.4.2 Disjunct

The participle may be used to comment on the style of the utterance (henceforth the style disjunct or comment clauses), such as : “broadly speaking , roughly speaking , generally speaking , put in another way rephrased , worded plainly , stated bluntly ” , etc . these expressions are usually separated from the main clauses by “intonation ”and “punctuation ” e.g.

(26) Roughly speaking , there were fifteen people there .

(27) Stated bluntly , he had no chance of winning .

(Quirk et al., 1985:107)

2.3.4.3 Subjunct

The participle derived from the verbs "consider" "look at" and "view" is used as viewpoint subjuncts , e.g.

(28) -looking at it objectively

(20) *Winnipeg*

he is definitely at fault.

(Ibid)

The subject of the present participle, in this example is understood to be "I" , while the subject of the past participle is understood to be the whole sentence.

2.3.4.4 Conjunct

In this type ,the participle appears only in present form, as in :

"Capping it all , continuing recapitulating, summarizing , summing up" etc.

(Ibid:1069)

Participles, as adverb-equivalents , perform different semantic roles in the matrix clause , i.e. they have different semantic relations to their main clauses:

1-Time :

Both present and past participles may express a temporal relation to the matrix clause. Doing so, the present participle is introduced by one of the subordinators "once till, until, when(ever),while" and "whilst", and the past participle is introduced by one of the subordinators:"as soon as, once till, until, when(ever)"and "whilst". e.g.

(30) He wrote his greatest novels while living in Baghdad.

(31) Be careful when crossing streets.

(32) once having made a promise, you should keep it.

(33) Jam is delicious when made with raw sugar.

(34) Once seen, that painting will never be forgotten.

(35) Whenever known, such facts should be reported.

(Ibid)

- Present participle adverbials of time can be without subordinators.
- e.g.
- (36) Returning to my village after thirty years, I met an old school teacher. (=after/when I.....)
- 2-Place, as in:
- (37) Where having nothing, nothing can he lose.

- 3-Purpose, as in:
- (38) He went hunting, fishing, swimming, etc.
- (39) Lets go hunting, fishing, swimming, etc.
- 4-Manner, as in:
- (40) She came into the house shouting.
- (41) I must go dressed in these clothes.

- 5-Result, as in :
- (42)He mistook me for a friend, causing me some embarrassment.

- 6-Degree,as in:
- (43) To go ahead resolutely and fail is not so bad as not trying at all.

- 7-Means, for example:
- (44) Holding on the rope firmly I came safe to the shore.

- 8-Reason,as in:
- (45) Knowing theis, tastes, she was able to bring a gift that they would like.
- (46) Constructed according to my specifications, the building was able to withstand the earthquake.

(Hornby,1966:89)

- 9-Condition
- Both present and past participles may express condition. The present participle is subordinated to the main clause by "if" ,“even if ”or "unless" while the past participle is subordinated by "if" or “unless” only. e.g.
- (47) If coming by car, take the A 16 motorway and turn off at the A 414.
- (48) Even if
 receiving visitor , patient must observe normal
 Unless hospital rules
- (49) The grass will grow more quickly if watered regularly.
- (50) Unless otherwise instructed , you should leave by the back exit.

(Roberts,1954:78)

- 10- Concession
- Present and past participles of concession are introduced by although, thought (informal), even though ,while and whilst (Br.E) e.g

- (51) While not wanting to seem obstinate, I insisted on a definite reply .
 (52) Even though given every opportunity , they would not cooperate with us .
 Concessive participial adverbials can also be without subordinators .e.g.
 (53) Not wanting to give offence , they did so all the time .
 (54) Trained in boxing , he nevertheless used a gun to defend himself.

(Lado,1961:78)

11-Conditional Concessive

Conditional-concessive participles can be with or without subordinators .In the former case ,the subordinator is ' whether.....or' which denotes two contrasting conditions . e.g.

- (55) Sarah is always intense , whether working or playing .
 (56) Whether trained or not , Mary is doing an excellent job.
 Without a subordinator- :
 (57) Working or playing , Sarah is always intense.
 (58) Trained or not , Mary is doing an excellent job.

(Stone,1974:69)

12-Similarity and Comparison :

Participial adverbials that express such meanings are linked with their main clauses by "as" in similarity and "as if" in comparison . e.g.

- (59) Fill in the application form as instructed.
 (60) He bent down as if tightening his shoe laces

(Curme, 1953:178ff&
 Quirk et .al, 1985:1005ff)

2.3.5 Object + Participle

After the following category of verbs , the participle occurs preceded by "NP" functioning as an object of the participial verb : get , have, want⁽⁻⁾ , need⁽⁻⁾ , like⁽⁻⁾ , see , hear ,watch ,feel (oneself) , notice⁽⁺⁾ , perceive⁽⁺⁾ , observe⁽⁺⁾ , overhear⁽⁺⁾ , smell⁽⁺⁾ , spot⁽⁺⁾ ,spy⁽⁺⁾ , catch⁽⁺⁾ , discover , find , leave , spend , waste.

Verbs marked with (-) in this group are followed by past participles only . e. g .

- (61) I want /need/ like this watch repaired immediately .
 This construction has alternative with passive infinitive . e. g .
 (62) I want/need/ like this watch to be repaired immediately .
 Verbs marked (+) are followed by present participles only . e. g.
 (63) I caught them stealing my apples .
 Unmarked verbs collocate with both forms of the participle e. g .
 (64) I saw him lying on the beach .
 (65) He saw the team beaten .

(Quirk et al , 1985:1206ff,
 Thomson &Martinet , 1986: 123ff)

The verbs " feel , hear , notice , observe , overhear , see " and "watch" when followed by present participle , have an alternative structure with the bare infinitive . e. g .

- (66) Tim watched Bill mending / mend the lamp .

(Ibid)

2.3.6 To Form Compounds

Participles may form compounds with nouns , adjectives , adverbs and prefixes . The resulting compounds have adjetival status expressing state or quality .

A-With Nouns , as in :

- (67) A sea -- faring race , a tax - collecting policeman , ocean - going shipping , an ice - covered road , a heart - broken child,a government - controlled organization , etc .

B-With Adjectives , as in :

- (68) A free-ranging intelligence , a bitter -tasting orange , free - spoken service , an easy-running machine , etc .

C-With Adverbs , as in :

- (69) A far - reaching programme , a forward - looking leader , a never-tiring devotion , home - grown wheat , a well - kept lawn, etc .

D-With the prefix "un" as in :

- (70) Unceasing demands , unchanging views , unharmed child , unopened letter , etc .

(Scheuwelghs ,1959:155ff
Pence& Emery , 1963:305ff)

However , these compound adjectivals should not be confused with other derived nouns by adding " (e)d , like: "a broken- hearted child , a good = natured man , a full – blooded Scotch collie " , etc .

2.3.7 As Prepositions and Conjunctions

Certain participles in English have acquired the force of prepositions (with- ing) and are now used as so , such as " concerning during , excepting , regarding ."

- (71) I shall say just one thing concerning your proposal (= about your proposal)

- (72) I saw everybody excepting the executive secretary (= except or but the executive secretary)

- (73) Regarding the coming election one important fact must be kept in mind (= about the coming election)

(Pence& Emery,1963:121ff)

Quirk et al. (1985:1002-3) state that some participles lost their verbal features and are now functioning as conjunctions , like "assuming , considering , excepting , granting , providing , seeing , supposing , given , granted , provided " . e . g .

- (74) Considering its cost ,this machine is not worth buying .

- (75) Provided that a film entertains , few people care about its merits.

(Ibid)

Section Three The Test

3.1 Introduction

Skehan (1999:303) states that a test is " a systematic method of eliciting performance which is intended to be the basis for some sort of decision making".

The test comprises two questions: the first question is designed to measure the subjects' responses at the recognition level whereas the second question is designed to measure the subjects' responses at the production level. It aims at locating the precise areas of difficulty encountered by Iraqi EFL university students in using participles and simultaneously identifying the causes and types of their errors.

3.2 Data Analysis

The part of study is concerned with the analysis of the outcome of the test. It elucidate test errors , committed by Iraqi University students and the reasons behind these errors . furthermore it present the student's performance at each question in the test in particular and at entire test in general the following table shows the subject's performance in Q1

3.3 Subjects' Performance of the First Question

Table (1)

No. of Item	No . of correct responses	%100	No. of Incorrect responses	%100
1	31	62%	19	38%
2	27	54%	23	46%
3	10	20%	40	80%
4	20	40%	30	60%
5	17	34%	33	66%
6	20	40%	30	60%
7	10	20%	40	80%
8	20	21%	30	60%
9	29	29%	21	42%
10	10	10%	40	80%
Total	194	38.8%	306	61.2%

Q2 Subjects' Performance of the Second Question

Table (2)

No of item	No of correct responses	100%	No of incorrect responses	100%

1	10	20%	40	80%
2	6	12%	44	88%
3	18	36%	32	64%
4	29	58%	21	42%
5	20	40%	30	60%
6	25	50%	25	50%
7	20	40%	30	69%
8	16	32%	34	68%
9	15	30%	35	70%
10	10	20%	40	80%
Total	169	33.8	331	66.2

From the table about the total number of the incorrect responses (66.2) is higher than that of the correct ones (33.8)

Table (3)

Q1	194	38.8	306	61.2
Q2	169	33.8	331	66.2

Section Four

Error Analysis

4.1 Intralingual Transfer

This type of errors happens owing to improper learning of the foreign. such errors may be the result of the influence of one language item upon another.

According to Penny (2001:97) Intralingual errors encompass the following:

A- Generalization Error: It involves the incorrect application of the previously learned second language material to present second language context.

B-Ignorance of Rule Restriction : it means applying rules to contexts to which they do not apply .

(Richards and Simpson 1974: 40)

C-Incomplete Application of the Rules :These result from failure to use certain language structures because they are thought to be too difficult .

(Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 185)

D-False Concepts Hypothesized :These may derive from wrong comprehension of a distinction in that target language .

(Brown ,1987:122)

4.2 Context of Learning

This sort of errors arises from faulty methods of teaching or syllabus designers who concentrate on some aspects of the language and neglect other according to their belief or experiences the errors in items Q1 & items of Q2.

Section Five Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

The majority of Iraqi university students face difficulty in producing and recognizing participles as the total number of their correct responses (363) is lower than that of incorrect ones(637) this verifies the first hypothesis .The majority of text book writers and syllabus designers do not give the meaning of participles . For this reason, many students are easily liable to commit mistakes when they employ this sort of participles do not know their meaning, there are three sorts of errors can be summarized as following:

- a- wrong recognition of participles.
- b- incorrect production of such participles.
- c- giving no answers

5.2 Recommendations

As a result of studying participles, the following recommendations are presented in the hope that they can be useful for persons concerned with this subject :

- 1- Such widely used participles must receive much attention from parents since they are the first teachers of students .
- 2- Syllabus designers and teachers of English should take serious steps in some detail concerning participles. By doing so, there will be better understanding (and consequently practice) for the strategies and functions of such topic by students and the result is maintaining good relation among members .It is worth mentioning that neglecting educating members of this topic contributes to minimize the initiations inside oneself since one finds one's earlier initiations unappreciated.

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Appendix I The Test

Q1/ Complete each of the following with a participial clause making use of the words in the brackets .

1. I saw a small girl----- . (play with a doll)
2. Have you ever heard a nightingale ----- . (sing)
3. I found him ----- . (working in the garden)
4. We will have to get the car ----- . (polish)
5. Do you think you can get the radio ----- . (repair)
6. We will soon have you ----- . (transfer to another gob)
7. The man -----was taken to the hospital . (injure in the accident)
8. The boy----the tree to get birds eggs , had a bad fall .(climb)
9. If you do not get of my house , I will have you ----- . (throw out)
10. She has been quite different since ----- from America . (return)

Q2/ Fill each of the gaps with the right form of the participle given below .

1. I was woken up by a bell----- .
a. ringing b. rings c. rang d. rung

2. I observed the car ----- in the accident .
 a. damage b. to damage c. damaging d. damaged
3. Being ----- for his travel , he is very busy .
 a. prepare b. to prepare c. preparing d. prepared
4. The police caught him ----- the money .
 a. steal b. stole c. to steal d. stealing
5. ----- planes are dangerous .
 a . Fly b. to fly c. flying d. flown
6. All they ----- were removed to station A .
 a . wound b. wounded c. to wound d. wounding
7. You should look for man ----- a large umbrella .
 a . carry b. to carry c. carrying d. carried
8. She seems very ----- .
 a . calculate b. calculating c. calculated d. to calculate
9. His lung is ----- .
 a . disease b. to disease c. diseasing d. diseased .
10. ----- to study anthropology , he chose psychology instead .
 a . advise b. advises c. to advise d. advised .

Appendix II

The Possible Answers

Q1

- 1- Playing with a doll
- 2- Sung
- 3- Working
- 4- Polished
- 5- Repaired
- 6- Transfer to another job
- 7- Injured in the accident
- 8- Climbing
- 9- Threw
- 10-Returning

Q 2

- 1- (a) ringing

- 2- (d) damaged
- 3- (c) preparing
- 4- (d) stealing
- 5- (c) flying
- 6- (b) wounded
- 7- (c) carrying
- 8- (a) calculate
- 9- (d) diseased
- 10-(d) been