

Investigating Intermediate pupils Difficulties in Adverbs of Frequency

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Abstract

One of the fundamental grammar structures of English is called adverbs of frequency. This study attempts to determine how well pupils use adverbs of frequency in relation to form and function, identify their areas of weakness in this area, and recommend corrective measures to address such weaknesses. It is believed that using adverbs of frequency can be challenging for English language learners in Iraq. The theoretical portion of the study is where definitions, categories, and purposes of adverbs of frequency in the English language are covered. Next, the practical component was represented by a diagnostic test administered to 30 pupils at Al-Somood School in a random sample during the academic year (2021-2022). Test results indicated that students face difficulty in using adverbs of frequencies. At the end, conclusions, and recommendations are presented.

Keywords

adverbs, adverbs of frequency, difficulties, intermediate pupils

The Statement of the Problem

Adverb is a “word that modifies a verb, adjective, determiner, clause, preposition, or sentence. Adverbs can tell you how something is done, for example, speak nicely or work hard. Adverbs can also tell you how much or how many of something you have” (Anastasia, 2018).

Parrot (2000) also defines adverbs as “different kinds of words with quite different functions which occupy a range of positions in the sentence. He believes that choosing where to place them is often a major problem for the learner”.

Hernández (2006) states that learning a foreign language generally implies “making mistakes in various areas, especially in grammar”. When constructing grammatical structures, students frequently employ adverbs incorrectly, “specifically misplacing them in the sentence.” This shouldn't come as a surprise because adjectives, nouns, and verbs are easier to define than adverbs. The grammar of adverbs is “quite complex” and they have a wide variety of meanings. Adverbs “express ideas such as manner, time, and place (location or destination)” in terms of meaning. The majority of manner adverbs have a recognized form; they always finish in -ly. Other adverbs lack a distinctive suffix, making it difficult to identify them by their form. Additionally, they have the ability to change practically any English composition, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, and even complete phrases.

Stageberg (1971) states that there are several different subclasses of one-word adverbs and each subclass have a unique position in the different sentence patterns. The fact that adverbs are relatively complex constructs is also widely acknowledged by authors due to "their various classifications, meanings, and positions in the sentence." The adverb's syntactical and semantic activity, which is influenced by "its position in the sentence," is the cause of this intricacy. Adverb placement has the potential to "change the meaning of the sentence as well as the sentence's grammaticality."

Thus, Iraqi EFL University learners face difficulty in using the order of frequency adverbs in English because adverbs are regarded as "the most movable elements in English," therefore Iraqi EFL University students have trouble employing the order of frequency adverbs in English. Adverbs also take on distinct roles inside the sentence. They may come at the start of the clause, in the middle between the verb and the subject, or at the end. Adverbs in English "do not come between the verb and the object," generally speaking.

Aims of the Study

1. Determining and categorizing errors made in the usage of frequency.
2. Identifying the locations where intermediate students have trouble learning adverbs among of frequency.

Limits of the Study

This study is confined to first intermediate students' at Al-Samoud School for Girls, during the academic year (2021-2022).

Value of the Study

This study is hoped to be:

1. Beneficial for offering pedagogical insights to as syllabus designers, students, testers, textbook writers, and teachers.
2. Beneficial for students since the study identifies potential weak points in the grammar region in question by connecting incorrect student responses to potential causes.

Definitions of Basic Terms

Adverbs are "the words that add meaning to the verbs, adjectives or to an adverb itself" (Sastry, 2018)

Adverbs of Frequency are "adverbs that tells how often something occurs or did occur"(Nordquist, 2020)

Theoretical Background

Adverbs

Greenbaum & Quirk (1996:141) states that adverbs are "heterogeneous class, varying greatly in their functions and positional ranges. They constitute a serious of overlapping subclasses, and some of them belong to more than one subclass". For instance, the preposition "too" has a different meaning ('in addition') when it functions as "adverbial" (the

food was food, too), whereas the adverb "very" is "intensifier" that only functions as "pre-modifier" (very large, very carefully).

Adverbs are "words that modify verbs, adjectives, other adverbs and sentences" (Yule, 2006:110). Adverbs can be subdivided into the following kinds:

- a. Adverbs of specific time that provide a response to the inquiry "when?" At three o'clock yesterday, the week before, I
- b. Durational adverbs that respond to the question, "How long?" hours, for hours, every night for a week, from yesterday to dawn.

Types of Adverb

Types of Adverb are presented by Parrott (2000) as follows:

Adverb of Manner. Adverbs of manner "come after a verb. For example, Lilly dance beautifully. In another case, it is "used after the object when there is one". For example, He gave her the money reluctantly. When in a sentence we have "verb + preposition + object, an adverb is used either before the preposition or after the object". For example, Sam looks at me suspiciously or he looked suspiciously at me (Alexander, 1990).

Adverb of frequency. In English grammar, an adverb of frequency 'tells how often something occurs or did occur. Common adverbs of frequency include always, frequently, hardly ever, never, occasionally, often, rarely, regularly, scarcely, seldom, sometimes, and usually" (Folse, 2012).

Adverbs of frequency often "appear directly in front of the main verb in a sentence, although (like all adverbs) they may be placed elsewhere". If the verb is made up of more than one word, "the adverb of frequency is usually placed after the first word. With a form of the verb be as the main verb, the adverb of frequency goes after the verb". Adverbs of frequency sometimes "accompany verbs in the habitual present and the habitual past". (Folse, 2012)

Frequency conditions are (always, almost always, usually, often/ frequently, sometimes, occasionally, Hardly ever/Almost never and never).

Adverbs of Place as presented by Sastry (2018)

Adverbs are used to show their place where an action takes place.

e.g.

1 God is present everywhere.

1 You may come forward.

These are near, far, away, anywhere, here, there, somewhere, nowhere, forward, backward, in, up, out, down, above, below, inside, outside, within, without, everywhere etc.

Adverb of Time. An adverb of time is an adverb (soon or tomorrow) that describes when the action of the verb will be performed. "It can also be called a time adverb. Adverb phrase that answers the question "When?" It is called the time condition".

For example: Eventually, he came/he came eventually.

(Nordquist,2019)

Adverbs of degree. It modifies an adjective or adverb. It placed before an adjective or adverb. For example, you are absolutely right.

But enough follows its adjective or adverb. For example, the car is not big enough.

Alexander,1990)

Materials and Methods

Study time

During the period from March 2022 to April 2022, thirty students were collected from Al-Samoud School for Girls, in Baghdad, Al-Rusafa II.

Samples

Thirty students from the first intermediate grade were selected to be the sample of the present study.

Method details

The test consists of two questions, and each question consists of 10 questions. It was conducted on the first intermediate students before explaining the adverb of repetition, and the test was conducted again after the explanation.

Tools

The tools of the current study can be based on the following:

1. English language textbook "English for Iraq" for the first intermediate grade with activity book.
2. Class equipment such as blackboards and pens.
3. Sticky papers are used on which adverbs of repetition were written with their meanings in the Arabic language as a means of clarification.
4. Audio Speaker
5. Question papers

Procedures

The procedures of the present study summarized as follows:

- 1- Test papers were distributed to thirty students before explaining adverbs of repetition to them.
- 2- Students' test papers were corrected and it was found that their level and their understanding to adverbs of repetition were very poor.
- 3- Students' mistakes were noticed and several means were used to avoid making mistakes again, so the researcher explained the adverb of repetition and their position in the sentence and how to use them.
- 4- The test was repeated after explaining the conditions, and it the level of the students became good see Appenix 1.

Statistical Analyses

Appropriate statistical methods were used to analyze and evaluate the results which includes the following: Descriptive statistics: statistical tables and extracting percentages of students' answers before explanation for the adverb of repetition and after explanation.

Analysis of Results

Table 1

(Students Correct Responses on Q1 and Percentages Before and After Explaining Adverbs of Frequency)

Items	Students Correct Responses Before Explaining Adverbs of Frequency	Percentages	Students Correct Responses After Explaining Adverbs of Frequency	Percentages
1	18	60	27	90
2	20	66.66	25	83.33
3	22	73.33	28	93.33
4	25	83.33	26	86.66
5	26	86.66	28	93.33
6	22	73.33	30	100
7	23	76.66	29	96.66
8	28	93.33	25	83.33
9	27	90	28	93.33
10	27	90	29	96.66

Based on students correct responses and percentages in Q1 (table 1), it is clearly noticed that students faced little problems in using adverbs of frequency correctly before explaining them to students because of their experience. Later, the results have changed after explaining them to students and they begin overcome these little problems in adverbs by practices and this is shown in items correct responses and the percentages.

Table 2

(Students Correct Responses on Q2 and Percentages Before and After Explaining Adverbs of Frequency)

Items	Students Correct Responses Before Explaining Adverbs of Frequency	Percentages	Students Correct Responses After Explaining Adverbs of Frequency	Percentages
1	5	16.66	25	83.33
2	10	33.33	27	90
3	8	26.66	26	86.66
4	12	40	30	100
5	6	20	25	83.33
6	9	30	20	66.66
7	11	36.66	25	83.33
8	11	36.66	27	90
9	6	20	26	86.66
10	10	33.33	20	66.66

Based on students correct responses and percentages in Q2 (table 2), it is clearly shown that students faced problems and they are very weak in using adverbs of frequency correctly before explaining them. Later, the results have changed after explaining them to students and this is noticed in items correct responses and the percentages.

Conclusion

From the analysis of the results of this study, it is clearly noticed that intermediate learners face difficulties in question 2 put the adverbs of repetition in their correct place more than question 1 put the words in the correct order to make sentences with adverbs of frequency. This is maybe due to their teacher may not put a heavy emphasis in teaching them these adverbs so that learners face difficulty in it.

For this, it is highly recommended the following:

- 1) At all educational levels, the subject should receive more attention.
- 2) It is necessary to teach English adverbs through discussion, real-world scenarios with significance, and communication duties.
- 3) To help students identify the many kinds of English frequency adverbs, more drills and exercises should be given to them.

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Appendix (1)

•The Test

Q1. Put the words in the correct order to make sentences with adverbs of frequency:

1. late / is / she / sometimes
2. early / up / sister / never / Sundays / on / gets /my
3. go / you / restaurant / often / a / do / how / to /?
4. she / the / beach / to / always / goes / in / the /summer
5. home / they / get / six o'clock / usually / at
6. mother / a / in/ while/ Once / the kids/ babysits/ my/every
7. could/occasionally/they/heard/be/ laughing
8. shopping / people / frequently/ centers /are / with/ packed
9. ever / to/ have/ Japan /been/ you / ?
10. every / she / now / drinks/coffee / then / and/

Q2. Put the adverbs of repetition in their correct place:

1. I go to work by motorcycle (put: always)
2. She drinks tea at evening (use: never)
3. We go together to our Collage (use sometimes at the begining)
4. He drives his father's car (use:usually)

5. Don't forget your homework (change and put an adverb of frequency)
6. They are late to class (put a suitable adverb of frequency)
7. The teacher uses pictures to simplify the lesson. (put an adverb in complete form)
8. Do you go to yogo class? (put adverb of frequency to this question)
9. Does she go to her grand father? (put: how often)
10. I misplace my keys everywhere. (put: occasionally)