Investigating Errors Made in Implied Negation on Lexical Level by EFL University Students

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Abstract

The current study deals with a linguistic phenomenon in English entitled: Implied Negation on the Lexical Level which means the indirect use of negated words and phrases without employing explicit negators. It aims to (1) identify and classify errors made by EFL college students in using implied negation on the lexical level (2) find out

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whether there is any significant difference in students' performance between the two areas of the diagnostic test. To achieve these aims, a diagnostic test has been constructed on forty students from the second stage at the College of Education for Humanities-University of Tikrit for the academic year 2024-2025. In order to ensure the face validity, the test is exposed to a jury of specialists in the fields of linguistics and methodology of teaching EFL who agreed upon its validity and suitability. Twenty students are randomly chosen for the pilot study which revealed that the time needed to complete the test items is 50 minutes. As for the clarity of the items, it is noticed that most of the items are clear and the students find no difficulty in answering the test items. As for reliability, the items are divided into two halves (odd and even). Using the Pearson correlation formula, it is found out that the test reliability is 0.79. After applying the Spearman Brown formula, it is found out the test reliability is 0.89. This shows that the test is quite reliable and acceptable. The results of this study show that EFL College students make errors of different sources of the test. It is also clear that EFL College students encounter more and complex errors at the second part of the test (Using vocabulary to express negative meaning) and that their performance is inefficient in this area. Finally, the study ends up with some conclusions.

Keywords: lexical, noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, negation

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تحليل الأخطاء المرتكبة في النفي الضمني على المستوى المعجمي من قبل طلاب الجامعات متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية

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تتناول الدراسة الحالية ظاهرة لغوية في اللغة الإنجليزية بعنوان: "النفي الضمني على المستوى المعجمي"، والذي يعني الاستخدام غير المباشر للكلمات والعبارات المنفية دون استخدام أدوات نفي صريحة. تهدف الدراسة إلى: (1) تحديد وتصنيف الأخطاء التي يرتكبها طلاب الكلية المتعلمين للغة

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الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL) في استخدام النفي الضمني على المستوى المعجمي، (2) معرفة ما إذا كان هناك فرق ذو دلالة إحصائية في أداء الطلاب بين جزأي الاختبار التشخيصي. ولتحقيق هذه الأهداف، تم بناء اختبار تشخيصي تم تطبيقه على أربعين طالبًا من المرحلة الثانية في كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية بجامعة تكريت للعام الدراسي 2024–2025. ولضمان الصدق الظاهري للاختبار، تم عرضه على مجموعة من المحكمين المتخصصين في مجالات اللغويات ومنهجية تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، والذين اتفقوا على صلاحيته وملاءمته. تم اختيار عشرين طالبًا بشكل عشوائي لإجراء الدراسة الاستطلاعية التي كشفت أن الوقت المطلوب لإكمال بنود الاختبار هو 50 دقيقة. أما بالنسبة لوضوح البنود، فقد لوحظ أن معظم البنود واضحة ولم يجد الطلاب صعوبة في الإجابة عليها. وبخصوص الثبات، تم تقسيم البنود إلى نصفين (فردية وزوجية). باستخدام معادلة ارتباط بيرسون، تبين أن معامل ثبات الاختبار هو 0.79. وبعد تطبيق معادلة سبيرمان براون، تبين أن معامل الثبات هو 0.89. وهذا يدل على أن الاختبار يتمتع بثبات عالي ومقبول. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن طلاب الكلية المتعلمين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يرتكبون أخطاء من مصادر مختلفة في الاختبار. كما يتضح أن الطلاب يواجهون أخطاء أكثر وتعقيدًا في الجزء الثاني من الاختبار (استخدام المفردات للتعبير عن المعنى السلبي) وأن أداءهم في هذا المجال غير كفوء. وأخيرًا، تنتهي الدراسة ببعض الاستنتاجات.
الكلمات المفتاحية: معجمي، الاسم، الفعل، الصفة، الظرف، حرف الجر، النفي

1. INTRODUCTION

Implied negation in English is an interesting phenomenon which deserves the effort of studying and investigating. This phenomenon usually acts through the meaning of words and phrases. In case of implicit negation, the negation markers are absent; so negation is inclusively indicated and realized through word or phrase meaning which helps reach the idea of negation and this type of negation depicts the complication of language. In this way, speakers and writers forward meaning in amore shaded and remarkable way. Negative markers, such as not, no, never and so on are not used in sentences. Negators do not exist in the text. The listener or reader usually concludes the negated meaning relying on the meaning of a word or phrase.

Implied negation occurs by using words or phrases that are intrinsically negative. Examples of such inherently negative items that work with negative context imply any, ever, at all and nobody; by using many of these items in affirmative contexts, negation is subtly conveyed, for example: "I have seen nobody". The word nobody includes the negation of seeing someone (Ding, 2013).

Implied negation, as a powerful tool adopted by writers and orators, plays an important role in creating the feeling of anticipation, ambiguity, irony attracting the audience's fancy and calling upon them to actively take part in the analysis of the words and phrases (Quirk et al., 1985).

The problem of the present study includes a pedagogical aspect about which the learners of English at Department of English, College of Education for Humanities, Tikrit University cannot perceive implicit negation in English sentences. Since they do not know the meaning of certain words, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and certain prepositions so they need to look up such difficult words in a dictionary, especially, the complex constructions which include more than one word forming idiomatic negative terms. This topic may constitute a barrier against fast understanding for elementary learners, but this subject is not a difficult one to comprehend on the part of learners at intermediate and advanced levels since they have a big stock of words and phrases.

The present study aims at:

1. identifying and classifying errors made by the EFL College Students in using implied negation on the lexical level,

2. finding out whether there is any significant difference in students' performance between the two areas of the diagnostic test,

3. finding out all about important points related to the main topic of the paper, ex. types of negation and major categories of negative words formation are tackled adequately to make the learners be acquainted with these subtitles which involve crucial material besides the main material of the research in expressing the implicit negation obtained via certain nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions, and

4. finding out the functions of implied negation through dealing with so many words and phrases of negative nature and how to form sentences including such words, in addition to show the communicative significance of words with implicit negation which occupies an important spectrum in the mechanism of English.

2. THE CONCEPT OF IMPLISIT NEGATION

Negation is a kernel linguistic phenomenon that is represented by various forms and functions. Explicit negation is realized through direct means which refer to the absence or negation of a thought. In other words, it makes use of explicitly negative words called "negators" in English, whereas implied negation acts without explicit negation markers but by using words and phrases that convey the idea of negation (Marsden and Whong ,2017).

The present study subject is mainly to clarify the features and mechanisms of indirect negation in English as far as the lexical items are concerned; implied negation concept depends on the meaning of lexical words and phrases.

2.1 Means of Expressing Implied Negation

Marked negation is certainly distinguished by using explicit markers, such as not, no, never and so on; this type of negation stands in contrast to hidden negation that is usually called implied negation (Ding, 2013).

Negation in general refers to a linguistic category which is contradictory to affirmation, opposing the truth of a thought while implied negation means those sentences with negative meaning but in affirmative form (Ding, 2013)

This investigation looks deeply into the semantics and structure of implied negation on the lexical level. This subject is mainly a semantically-oriented one. It deals with implicitly negative words which refer to negation in the depth of the language. Anyhow this topic is identified by two approaches, viz, the lexical approach and the grammatical approach.

The lexical approach is represented by some nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and some prepositions that have obvious meaning of implicit negation, whereas the grammatical approach is related to some questions, conditional clauses, exceptions and exclamations that tend in particular occasions to act in away in expressing the meaning of hidden negation (Quirk et al., 1985).

The researchers of this study suggest the grammatical approach of implied negation for other scholars and researchers who like to exert the efforts to deal with it. Therefore, the present study will focus only on the lexical approach of implied negation.

2.2 Types of Negation

After thorough researching into words and phrases that imply negative meaning, linguists suggest to classify these words and phrases in the following ways:

1. Full negatives: not, never, non, nothing, nobody, nowhere, neither, nor

2. Absolute Negatives: not at all, by no means, in no way, nothing short of, etc.

3. Quasi negatives: hardly, scarcely, seldom, barely, few, little

4. Partial negatives: not every, not all, not much, not many, not always, etc.

5. Words implying negative sense: fail, without, beyond until, unless, lest, ignorant, refuse, neglect, absence, instead of, etc.

After mulling over on part of the researchers, they have reached the decision that types no. (1) and (2) should be combined together because they both mean about the same thing. The expression full negatives mean 'absolute negatives', and any of these terms implies incomplete negation; so no need to put them as two separate types. The same thing could be applied to no. (3) and (4) since the two terms quasi and partial reflect similar meaning so the combination of the two types into one type seems obligatory. Semantically both terms refer to incomplete negation.

2.3 Main Categories of Negative Formation

Two main categories are distinguished in term of negative formation: grammatically and semantically. As for grammatical category, it indicates the sentences

implying words, such as: not, neither, no, none, never, nobody, nothing, not at all etc., whereas the semantic category refers to sentences that include words with negative sense without obvious negators, such as: fail, refuse, far from, little, few and so forth.

Examples on Grammatical Category

32. She doesn't smoke hookahs.

33. You ought not to attend the session.

Examples on Semantic Category

34. They refused to hear her objection.

35. She failed in the last exam.

2.4 Lexical Negation

1- Noun

Certain nouns are considered important linguistic contributors in achieving the proposition of hidden (implied) negation. Such nouns can be met in various occasions in the language. The meaning of such nouns decides the negation of a concept. The context is not essential whether it is available or not in order to determine the negated meaning of a sentence. The inner negative meaning of a noun specifies the negation of a concept (Quirk et al., 1985).

There are numerous English Words that are utilized to indicate the meaning of negation. Many chosen nouns that capture the negative meaning of a thought are cited below:

 refusal, rejection, lack, loss, denial, failure, shortage, absence, reluctance, etc.

For example:

1. I feel frustrated about his rejection to any clue of emotion.

2. The loss of weight was an obligatory condition for any officer to get promoted to a higher rank.

In light of the presence of the noun "rejection" as a negation clue in the above sentence besides the use of the non-assertive' word 'any'; these two elements prove strongly the existence of the implied negation meaning (Quirk et al., 1985).

The noun "rejection" is the opposite in meaning of "acceptance" and loss" is semantically contrary to 'win', so both 'rejection' and 'loss' contain inclusively the denial to affirmation. Or, in other words, each of these nouns includes implicitly negative sense.

The negative nouns mentioned in the sentences (1) and (2) lead us to the definite belief that negation in such cases is unseen since it appears only through the inner meaning of these nouns. Anyhow, in this case, the negative sense is understandable from the clue of each noun meaning. The unseen negation can be sensed in the example below:

3. The Gazans are suffering sharp shortage of food and clean water.

2- Verb

The verbs of inherently negative sense are studied and analyzed by Quirk, et al (1985). Such verbs usually convey the meaning opposite to affirmation, i.e., they capture non-affirmative meaning. Verbs of this type are best represented by the coming selected ones; prevent, stop, fail, prohibit, hate, forget, resent, object, reject, ignore etc. The meaning of negation is clear in the instances cited below:

4.The president stopped any of the court sentences issued against the oppressed lady.

5. The boss objected all the suggestions made by the company staff.

The main negated verbs in sentences (4) and (5) can semantically accept the opposites: (confirm) and (approve) only when they are preceded by the explicit negation marker (never). The resultant constructions could be used instead of "stop" and "object". The sentence no. (4) uses the non-assertive form 'any'. So, this use asserts the negation of the sentence.

The negative meaning can be reached through certain verbs when they are accompanied by the non-assertion ever, too.

Examples:

6. She rejects I ever informed her.

7. She avoided ever defending.

The two examples, as Quirk, et al (1985) refer to, retain negative meaning which is tightened via the use of the non- assertive "ever". Marsden and Whong (2017) mention the verb "regret" which does not imply the idea of negation explicitly, but there is negation inference as in the example below:

8. John regrets that he ate at the wedding party.

Marsden and Whong (2107) reveal its hidden interpretation as "John wishes that he hadn't eaten anything at the wedding party."

Miestamo (2007:) adds verbs like fail, lack, leave and refuse in carrying negative orientation as factive negative verbs. In line with this trend, Foder and Garrett (1975: 515) show the unmarked or implied negation in the use one of the verbs: forget, fail and doubt, as in:

9. I doubt that she will come.

Ding (2013) denotes particular verbs of negative sense, such as: miss, resist, and neglect like:

10. She missed the bus (She didn't catch up with it)

All verbs mentioned previously are utilized to put the sentence into negative meaning. In other words, all add negative sense to the sentence. Or the concluded

meaning of any sentence including one of the aforementioned verbs is comprehended as implied negation.

3- Adjective

Certain adjectives are used to convey the negative meaning. Such adjectives carry inherently negative characteristics. In carrying out this semantic duty, they are similar to verbs and nouns dealt with previously. Quirk, et al., (1985) refer to some adjectives like "few" and "little" when used attributively, they usually convey the concept of implied negation, as in:

11. The little milk we have drunk. (not much)

12. The few books she read. (not many)

Quirk, et al., (1985) add the comparative adjective, "lower" that includes the implicitly-negated concept, as in the next example:

13 The temperature is lower than expected**.**

Those grammarians (1985) mention more adjectives like reluctant, hard, difficult and worried are provided to clarify these points, e.g.

14. Selma was reluctant to participate in any activity of the festival.

15. John was worried about the grade. (the grade worries him)

They (1985) add that adjectives like fuzzy, puzzled, and doubtful are intrinsically negative. Ding (2013) deals with some adjectives like free from, alien to, far from, different from, foreign to, loathe and absent are implicitly carrying the concept of negation. The following example clarifies this point:

16. Loath to say any word, Selma left the place soon.

Lansik (1969:) highlights that the adjective "bad" is an equivalent to "not good" ; in addition, the word 'less' as a comparative adjective has the negative orientation of meaning, as in:

17. Ali got less examination mark than her.

Some words, mostly adjectives, are made negative by attaching certain negative prefixes them. The prefixes un -, il-, ig-, in-, im carry the meaning of "not". The only difference between the particle „not" and a negative prefix is that "not" is a full word with full meaning, but a prefix is a part of a word which cannot occur independently, such as: unimportant unstable, incomprehensible, inadequate, illegal, ignoble, irresponsible, impossible

Examples:

18 The president's got an ignoble character.

19 The court sentence is illegal.

4- Adverb

Implicit negation can be realized through utilizing certain adverbs since English possesses several such utterances that convey the idea of negation. So adverbs like 'seldom', rarely', 'scarcely', 'hardly', and 'barely' are negative words in meaning but not in form (Ding ,2013)

Examples below:

20. They hardly finish their work early. (in fact, they do not finish)

21. Suha can barely lift this weight. (in fact, she cannot lift).

These adverbs are named by Quirk et al., (1985), "English minimizers". When the adverbs 'barely', 'scarcely', and 'rarely' are followed by non-assertive forms, they require negative tag-questions, as in:

22. The teacher rarely explained the lesson thoroughly, didn't he?

Lensik (1969) identifies that 'rarely' and 'seldom' are inherently negative adverbs and Clark (1976) highlights that implied negation is highly connected to expressions like 'hardly', 'scarcely', 'seldom', 'few', and 'little', treating the last two: 'few' and 'little' as quantifiers. Quirk, et al (1985) consider 'little' as 'not much' which is different from the homonymous adjective 'little'. In this concern, 'few' and 'little' are negative in meaning though they don't have the morphological negation and grammatical behaviour, as in:

23. There are few demonstrators in front of the presidential palace. (not many)

24. There is little concern about his warnings. (not much)

Ding (2013) clarifies that 'few' and 'little' as semi- negatives and Quirk, et al (1985) regards 'little' as a minimizing adverb, as clarified in the next example:

25 They little perceive that fact.

Several adverbs are signified as restrictive exclusives since they exclude any other feature and they limit the realization of their indication, i.e., the speaker only focuses on an exclusive point, such adverbs are: 'Just', 'alone', 'exclusively', 'only', 'merely', 'simply' and 'purely'. See the examples below:

26. Selma could only see Ali from the balcony. (She could not talk to him.)

27. Ahmed got A grade just for choosing that reply.

5- Preposition

Some prepositions are used negatively; so they are named negative prepositions, such as; 'away from' 'out of' and 'off', e.g.:

28. They went away from home. (They are away from home)

29. The pen fell off the table. (the pen is off the table)

30. Ali went of the water. (Ail is out of water)

Such prepositions can be compensated simply by the corresponding positive prepositions with 'not' in front of any of them: away from (not at), off (not on), out of (not in), (Quirk et al.,1985).

Other prepositions may be met in the language which capture the negative meaning in certain occasions, such as: past, above, without, beyond, instead of, against, below, besides, but, except, from, under, within (not beyond) and beneath (not worthy of), e.g.:

31. The president may direct an accusation against the students of Baghdad University involved in a demonstration (Quirk et al., 1985).

Moreover, implied negation can be conveyed through a mix of preposition with other words, such as: but for, in default of, in place of, in the dark about, in spite of, in vain, in lieu of, in defect of, out of order, out of practice, out of hope, out of reason, out of sight, out of sorts and many other constructions. There are many more English words and phrases that are not negative in form though they are negative in meaning (Lensik, 1969).

 It is worth mentioning that negation in meaning not in forms is named by some linguists Indirect Negation. This term is used to refer to the famous term Implied Negation.

3. CONSTRUCTION OF THE DIAGNOSTIC TEST

This part points out a detail description of the procedures used to visualize the empirical aspect of the present study. It consists of information about the population and the sample of the study; the construction of the diagnostic test; the reliability of the test; content and face validity, in addition to the pilot study.

3.1 Population and Sample

3.1.1 Population

Al Samawi (2000:197) defines population as "a group of people or documents of special features used for collecting data or represented by sample selected from among this group". The term population refers to a total group of individuals that a particular study is interested in and it involves all the subjects the researcher plans to study (Ary et al., 2010). The aim is to understand and to which or to whom the results of the study can be generalized or transferred (Casteel & Bridier, 2021). The population of the present study is represented by the EFL second year students at the College of Education for Humanities in the University of Tikrit.

3.1.2 Sample

Al-Samawi (2000) shows that sampling is selecting a number of individuals to represent the population. Sample is a subset of population. Sampling refers to selecting representative elements from the population (Israel, 2008). A sample of the students has been chosen randomly from second year students at the College of Education for Humanities in the University of Tikrit. They are 60 among whom twenty students are overlooked for the pilot study. The total number of the selected students is forty (twenty females and twenty males) which represents about 82% of its original population.

3.2 The Construction of the Diagnostic Test

In order to achieve an objective analysis for the students' performance in using implied negation on the lexical level, a diagnostic test has been constructed. Black and William (1998) affirm that a test may be constructed essentially as a way of evaluating students' performance in language. Hence, the construction of the present test primarily is meant to identify strengths and weakness aspects in a learner's knowledge and use of language. The following table of specifications reflects the contents of the test, its behaviours, items, as well as its scores:

Table (1)

The Table of Specification for Content, Behavioural Objectives, Items and Scores

Level	Content	Behaviours	No. of items	Scores
Production	Implicit and Explicit negation	To identify whether the given sentences express implicit or explicit negation	10	20
Recognition	Express Implied Negative Meaning	To use vocabulary to express implied negative meaning	10	20

Table (1) states that the diagnostic test consists of two questions. The first question includes ten items. Two marks are given to each item. The total number of scores is twenty. The participants in this question are asked to identify whether the sentences express implicit or explicit meaning. The second question also contains ten items, each of which represents a complete sentence. The participants are asked to utilize the vocabulary to express implied negative meaning. Two marks are specified for each item. The total number of marks is twenty. (See appendices).

3.3 Content and Face Validity

Content validity refers to the degree to which a measurement accurately represents the particular intended domain of the content (Boehm, 2008). For achieving content validity, a measure must sufficiently sample both the topics and the cognitive process involved in the content universe under consideration (Ary et al., 2010). To ascertain the content validity of the test, a table of specification has been constructed. This table specifies the contents of the diagnostic test, as well as its scores as shown in Table (1).

Face validity, on the other hand, is another aspect of validity. Face validity is the degree to which a test fits the requirements of those who are included in its use like teachers, administers, test takers and candidates (McNamara, 2000). To achieve the face validity of the test and find out whether its items are appropriate to assess the students' level of performance in using implied negation on the lexical level, the test has been exposed to a jury of specialists in teaching EFL. The jury members discussed with the researchers the various test items. Some of the jury members affirm that some of the items are very simple especially those in (Question 1), while others indicated that some of the items are too difficult to be answered by the examinees. The jury members advised

the researchers to rewrite and modified these items. After making all the necessary modification, the final version of the test is prepared.

3.4 Pilot Administration

The constructed diagnostic test has been initially applied on a sample of twenty students selected randomly from the original population of the study sample. The pilot study is conducted as an "attempt to determine whether the test items passed the desired qualities of measurement and discriminability" (Tuckman, 1972). This pilot administration is utilized to achieve the following purposes:

1- Finding out whether any of the test items is too easy or too difficult for the

research subjects to handle. In other words, to calculate the difficulty level of the test items and their discrimination power.

2- Finding out the required time for the administration of the test.

3- Making the necessary changes or modifications on the items of the   test.

After constructing the pilot administration of the test, items analysis formula is applied. Mousavi (1992) states that the analysis of items usually shows the identifications of the items which are too difficult or too easy. Items analysis is powerful instrument to develop the test and to enhance its reliability and validity. The items of the constructed test have been analyzed in order to determine their efficiency and acceptance as follows:

3.5 Difficulty Level

Difficulty level indicates the extent to which the test items are easy or difficult for a group of examiners (Brown, 2004). Statistically, difficulty level is calculated by dividing the number of students who answer the item correctly by the total number of students who answer the question (Whiston, 2013). To state the level of difficulty of items, their scores have been ordered decently from higher score to the lower one, then the whole scores have been separated into two halves, i.e. the higher scores and lower scores. The calculation requires representing 27% of high and low correct answers, then counting the number of correct answers to each item in the higher and lower group. The obtained difficulty level of the diagnostic test items ranges from 25% to 75%. This shows the suitability of items difficulty level since the satisfactory level of difficulty ranges from 30% to 90% (Madsen, 1983).

3.6 Discrimination Power

The item discrimination power is a feature that indicates the acceptability of an item and thus how well the test is constructed. It is defined by Richards and Schmidt (2013) as the extent to which a "test or an item in a test distinguishes among stronger and weaker test takers" (p.113). Item discrimination assist teachers in recognizing the questionable or very discriminating item so as to be discarded from the final copy of the test (Asaad, 2004). The following formula is used to calculate the discrimination power of the items:

Item discrimination = B2 – B1 / 1/2T

Whereas:

B2= Represent the number of the students in the higher group who   obtain the right number.

B1= Represent the number of the students in the lower group who obtain the right number.

1/2T = The total number of the students in the item analysis. The test is considered acceptable when its discrimination power is 0.30 and above while the item must be changed or modified if its discrimination power is less than 0.30 (Eble,1972). The obtained   discrimination power of the test items extends from 0.30 to 0.70.

3.7 Reliability of the Test

Alderson et al., (1999) state that reliability is the extent to which test scores are consistent. Reliability refers to the extent of the stability of the test, whatever it measures; it should be stable (Best & Khan, 2006:289). The method adopted to estimate the reliability of the constructed test is the split-half way. It is a technique which utilizes results on the two halves of the test taken at the same setting yields suitability coefficient more directly reliant on the test itself (Verma and Beard, 1981). Person correlation coefficient has been calculated between the single and dual marks of students. It has been elicited that its rate is 0.79. Then, when it is recalculated by the use of Spareman / Brown formula, it is found that the reliability coefficient is 0.89. This means that the test is suitable for application due to the fact that reliability coefficient of a test would be enough and acceptable if it is not less than 0.50 (Nunnally ,1979).

3.8 Analysis of Data and Discussion

Having completed the administration of the diagnostic test, the researchers have scored the responses of the students in order to find out their level of performance in dealing with implied negation on the lexical level. Data analysis will display the results according to the performance on each question of the test, as well as identifying and classifying the students' errors.

3.8.1 Students Performance on the First Question

The first question of the test is constructed to estimate the students' ability in distinguishing between implicit and explicit negation. The results of the students' response in this part are stated in the following table:

Table (2)

The Number of Errors and Percentage of Student' Performance on

Question No.1

The syntactic area	No. of items	No. of correct responses	No. of incorrect responses

	1	17		23	
	2	11		29	
	3	12		28	
	4	10		30	
To identify implicit and explicit negation	5	11		29	
	6	7		33	
	7	9		31	
	8	18		22	
	9	12		28	
	10	15		25	
	Total	122	31%	278	69%

The obtained results show that the students do not perform well, and commit difficulties in this question of the test. The outcomes manifested in table (1) points out many errors. The total number of errors for the students is (278) with percentage 69. This affirms that students show poor performance in most items of this question. The students could not distinguish well between implicit and explicit negation.

3.8.2 Students' Performance on the Second Question

The second part of the test is built in a way to measure the students' efficiency in using vocabulary to express implied negative meaning. The collected students' responses in this area of the test are exposed in the following table:

Table (3)

The Number of Errors and Percentage of Student' Performance on

Question No.2

The Syntactic Area	No. of Items	No. of Correct Responses		No. of Incorrect Response	
	1	10		30	
To use vocabulary to express implied negative meaning	2	8		32	
	3	9		31	
	4	5		35	
	5	11		29	
	6	9		31	
	7	4		36	
	8	6		34	
	9	9		31	
	10	12		28	
	Total	83	21%	317	79%

The outcomes reflected by table (2) point out that the total number of these errors is (317). The percentage of these errors is 79%. This area of the test forms the largest number of errors made by the students of the College of Education for Humanities/ English department/ University of Tikrit. This proves that the students have a problem in

this syntactic area, and do not perform well. It clarifies that the students could not use the given vocabulary to express implied negative meaning.

3.8.3 Students' Performance in the Whole Diagnostic Test

Reviewing the participants' responses in the whole diagnostic test points out clearly that testees encounter difficulties and problems in using implied negation on the lexical level. Therefore, they do not perform well in the areas of the test. The obtained results of their responses to each question of the test can be displayed in the following table:

Table (3)

The Frequency and Rate of Students' Performance in the Whole Test

No. of Question	No. of Errors	Percentage
Q1	278	69%
Q2	317	79%
Total	595	74%

It is concluded from table (3) that the total number of errors made by the participants is (595) with (74%). This means the information that the students have about implied negation on the lexical level is weak and insufficient. Implied negation on the lexical level constitutes a real problem for the second-year students in the College of Education for Humanities, Department of English; in other words, the two areas of the test state the weakness of the students regarding implied negation on the lexical items. The students' poor performance on the two parts of the diagnostic test could be attributed to many reasons. The first reason may be related to the lack of the knowledge about the subject, or faulty of comprehending implied negation, as well as, for the unawareness of the significance of implicit and explicit negation, and how to use vocabulary to express implied negative meaning. Another reason may be related to the insufficiency of the exercises in the students prescribed textbook which concern the implied negation. Finally, lack of emphasis in the teaching materials given to the subjects on this aspect are considered reasons for students' weakness in the of implied negation on the lexical level.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study is finalized by reaching the following outcomes after analyzing the whole material carefully knowing that any research is often judged an important success by its results. The end results of the research are shown below:

1. The high number of students' errors concerning implied negation on the lexical level reflects that this area forms serious problems to second year students of the Department of English at the College of Education for Humanities. This means that College students are deficient in using implied negation on the lexical level.

2- The highest percentage of students' errors occur in the second part of the test (79%) which clarifies that the students could not use the given vocabulary to express implied

negative meaning. It means that there is significant difference in students' performance between the two areas of the diagnostic test.

3. The inadequacy of the mastery of the English grammar and lack of knowledge including this aspect of grammar, i.e. implied negation on the lexical level is the reason behind students' errors.

4. Lack of English textbooks of the second-year students with sufficient description of implied negation on the lexical level, hinders their ability to critically analyze subtle linguistic nuances, such as words like deny, refuse, lack, or without, which convey negation indirectly without explicit markers like not or no.

5. It is somehow difficult to categorize the kinds of implied negation on the lexical ; therefore a condensed study of the subject is needed .

6. The overlap between implicit and explicit negation is thought to be problematic without a full comprehension of the all types of negation together, and therefore, College students suffer from distinguishing between implicit and explicit negation in the first part of the diagnostic test.

7- The testees are doing better in recognizing easily the explicit negation because of the existences of explicit negative markers. In fact, the absence of such clues works against fast understanding of the subject of implied negation which acts in deep layers of language.

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(Appendices)

Diagnostic Test

Q1 Identify Whether the Following Sentences Express Implicit or Explicit Negation (20 Marks)

_____ _____

1. Never had she seen such a beautiful sight before

2. Please, keep the news dark.

3. Khalid did not study hard.

3. He just lost the train.

4. Amal forgot to mail the letter.

5. The book fell off the shelf.

6. Sara never gets up early.

7. All music is a like to me.

8. John got out of the water.

9. Rarely will you hear such beautiful music.

10. I can hardly accept the course you advised me.

Q2 Use the Following Vocabulary to Express Implied Negative Meaning (20 Marks)

Absence, denial, refusal, neglect, far from, devoid of, hardly, seldom, lack, grudge