

College of Education for Humanities

English Department



MA. Studies/ Methodology

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Methods of Teaching

“Word Order and Assessment”

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1. Introduction

Word order plays a crucial role in conveying meaning in the English language. Unlike languages that rely heavily on inflectional markers, English depends primarily on the linear arrangement of words to signal grammatical relationships and sentence meaning. Words arranged randomly fail to communicate the intended message, as meaning in English emerges not from isolated lexical items but from their structured combination within a sentence. As Quirk and Stein (1990, p.105) emphasize, “a language cannot work with words alone,” highlighting the necessity of syntactic organization. Accordingly, the order of words is essential in determining the literal meaning of a sentence, as meaning is shaped by the position each element occupies within the sentence structure.

Despite the importance of word order in English, Iraqi preparatory school EFL students continue to demonstrate noticeable difficulties in producing grammatically accurate sentence structures. For Iraqi EFL students, this challenge is particularly evident due to the structural differences between Arabic and English. While both languages employ word order to convey meaning, Arabic permits a higher degree of flexibility in the arrangement of sentence constituents, allowing for multiple acceptable patterns without necessarily affecting grammaticality or meaning.

2 . Concept of Assessment

Since curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment are the three main messaging systems, assessment is essential to education. The term "assessment" is also contentious, with differing interpretations about its meaning (Taras, 2005). Wyse et al. (2015) state that the term assess originates from Old French & Late Latin, meaning "to set by" or "to sit down beside," as in the roles of an assessor, assistant,

or judge. While the primary notion of this definition pertains to utilizing evaluation to enhance learning, the term assessment is often more directly associated with the idea of judgment. The interchangeable usage of the terms assessment and evaluation in the realm of education exemplifies the confusion between the learning and judgment functions of assessment.(Taras, 2005).

3 . Formative and Summative Assessment

Assessment is often categorized into formative& summative types. Summative assessment is commonly recognized as being conducted after the conclusion of a learning activity, such as a project or term, to evaluate the overall effectiveness of that process (Airasian & Russell, 2007). In contrast, formative assessment emphasizes delivering reflective feedback to enhance students' learning during the process (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

Summative evaluation can also serve a formative purpose provided it delivers explicit, comprehensive information, including feedback that enables students to enhance their learning (Irons, 2007). Consequently, the differentiation between summative and formative evaluation is ambiguous (Sambell, McDowell & Montgomery, 2013). Formative assessment has garnered increased attention in educational practice and research following a review of classroom assessment practices, which highlights its potential to enhance student learning, particularly for low achievers (Black & Wiliam, 1998). In contrast, summative assessment is regarded as a mechanism for offering a snapshot of student learning without significantly or immediately influencing instruction (Stiggins, 2005).

4 . Alternative Assessment

Alternative assessments are classified as criterion-referenced assessments, in which an individual's performance is measured against a defined learning objective

or performance standard, rather than in relation to the performance of peers at the national or local level. As a result, alternate assessments provide "a crucial conceptual framework for considering the varieties of performance-based and purportedly authentic assessments that are presently advocated" (Linn, 1994, p. 12). Alternative assessment typically denotes innovative evaluation methods as opposed to conventional tactics, such as multiple-choice or short-answer examinations. As stated by Worthen (1993), alternative assessment is a broader word encompassing other sorts of assessments such as:

- 1) Direct assessment .
- 2) Authentic assessment.
- 3) Performance assessment.

Direct evaluation of performance may encompass the appraisal of abilities in music and athletics, as well as practical assessment in occupational disciplines, Competency assessment in the medical domain and linguistic proficiency evaluation in dialogue and translation.(Worthen, 1993). Direct evaluation of performance may encompass the appraisal of abilities in music and athletics, as well as practical assessment in occupational disciplines. Wiggins (1989) proposed two requirements for assessment authenticity: the assessment must mirror the obstacles, tasks, and standards encountered by working professionals, and it should provide students with chances for dialogue, explanation, and inquiry.

5. Concept of Portfolio Assessment

The concept of a portfolio originated in the fine arts, intended to display the extent and diversity of an artist's skills (Jongsma, 1989). Prior to examining the advantages of utilizing a portfolio as an evaluative instrument that facilitates students' development, let us ascertain its definition. Experts have provided multiple definitions for a portfolio. Winch et al. (2001, p. 272) define a portfolio as

“a systematic collection of a student's work that is analyzed to demonstrate progress over time concerning specific instructional goals.” Portfolios can encompass several kinds of each student's work, including reports, essays, and other products, which serve as precise documentation of the student's learning accomplishments. Students may be permitted to select the nature of their assignments and the subjects they will explore, so enhancing their engagement in a significant learning experience. Cooper (1999, p. 3) asserts that a portfolio is “the collection of evidence that demonstrates skills, achievements, learning, and competencies.”

6 . Advantages of Portfolio Assessment

Numerous scholars have highlighted the advantages of utilising portfolios as a method of assessment. Brown and Hudson (1998) delineated the benefits of portfolio assessment, categorizing them into three primary groups, including:

- 1- Enhancing student learning .
- 2- Informing teachers.
- 3- Facilitating the assessment process .

The two primary advantages of portfolio assessment are authenticity and beneficial washback. Authenticity denotes the inherent, contextualized, significant, and real-world attributes of language assessment (Brown, 2003). Fox (2008, p. 101) observes that several researchers connect authenticity in alternative evaluation with both reliability and validity. He asserts that portfolio assessment :

- a. Facilitates opportunity for genuine and advanced language utilization.
- b. Addresses the complex nature of language and multi-domain learning.
- c. Produces anxiety-free outcomes from time-limited assessments and examinations.
- d. Enhances students' motivation and engagement in tasks.

- e. Facilitates engagement both within and outside the classroom.
- f. Promotes online conversation and text sharing, hence improving ecological validity.