Assessing the Outcomes of EFL Learning Conversational Skills for Iraqi EFL Undergraduates

A Published Research

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Dedication

….To everyone whose Knowledge is his own Path...

Abstract

Speaking is so much part of human daily life activities, but   learning speaking (whether in a first or other language) involves developing detailed knowledge about why, how and when to communicate and other skills for producing and managing interaction. Such skills are called *conversational skills*. They are defined as language abilities needed to interact in social situations. Thus, the study aims to assess the outcomes of EFL learning conversational skills that are obtained throughout conversation courses at college level for Iraqi EFL undergraduates. The study determined the following conversational skills for the assessment. They are:

1- The skill or ability to recognize the situations in which certain linguistic forms are used.
2- The ability to use appropriate linguistic forms to satisfy certain functions in different situations.
3- The ability to express oneself appropriately at a given situation.
4-The ability to develop a dialogue using various linguistic forms in a prescribed situation.

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Chapter One

1.1 Statement of the problem:

As language is means of communication, people use it to express their own needs, feelings and thoughts. It follows that learning another language apart from the mother tongue helps people to express themselves to other nations. Learning how to communicate evokes the speaking skill. By developing the communication skills, people have to learn to speak effectively and listen attentively. Hence it is called "skill", it needs to be learned, practiced and developed. Speaking is so much part of human daily life activities, but learning speaking (whether in a first or other language) involves developing detailed knowledge about why, how and when to communicate and other skills for producing and managing interaction.(Brown,1995:22)

Derived from the speaking skill, there are conversational skills. They can be explained as language abilities needed to interact in social situations. Language abilities include speaking with appropriate vocabulary and structured linguistic forms.(Ibid) Conversational skills include also social skills and culture knowledge which can be generalized as what to say, when to say it, where and how to say it. When learning English Language Conversation Skills, students must include everything if they actually want to converse with native English speakers. The ability to communicate in English-- that is, the ability to interpret and produce meaning--is an important goal for English language learners--especially for those who need to fulfill roles as family members, community members, students, teachers, employers or employees in an English-speaking environment. While there are many influential factors in second or foreign language learning -- for example, learner characteristics such as age, personality, and intelligence-- the critical dimension in language learning, according to discourse theorists and social-integrationists, is interaction with other speakers (Ibid).

One learns to do by doing--people learn to walk by walking and they learn to drive by driving. It makes sense then that people learn to communicate by communicating. Learners must actively work on communicating to develop skills in communication, and they must practice extensively. Those learners who engage in the regular use of their second language and receive the greater quantity of input will most likely demonstrate a greater ability to use their second language(Burns,1996:56). It follows, then, that learners should be provided with as much speaking time as possible, both in and out of the classroom. This is one of the main reasons conversation partner programs are established. Communication involves being able both to comprehend the subject under discussion and contribute to the conversation. In order to understand or especially to speak on any subject, it is necessary to have some knowledge of the topic. (Ibid)

The more knowledge the learner has to facilitate understanding about a topic, the easier it is for the learner to be an active participant and to speak with ease and fluency. This means that the topics for conversational partners should be familiar to the learner. This often involves sharing information about life experiences such as schooling, family life, housing, and transportation. (Lynch, 1996: 78)

By eliminating the constraint of a lack of background knowledge and information, the learner has an opportunity to work on developing fluency. Armed with the following four competencies, EFL learners can have conversational skills, i-e, they need to employ the following competencies so as to manipulate and activate their conversational skills:

1- *Grammatical competence:* Grammatical competence is an umbrella concept that includes increasing expertise in grammar (morphology, syntax), vocabulary, and mechanics. With regards to speaking, the term mechanics refers to basic sounds of letters and syllables, pronunciation of words, intonation, and stress. In order to convey meaning, EFL learners must have the knowledge of words and sentences; that is, they must understand how words are segmented into various sounds, and how sentences are stressed in particular ways. Thus, grammatical competence enables speakers to use and understand English language structures accurately and unhesitatingly, which contributes to their fluency(Eggins,1997:42-9)

2- *Discourse competence.* In addition to grammatical competence, EFL learners must develop discourse competence. In discourse, whether formal or informal, the rules of cohesion and coherence apply which aid in holding the communication together in a meaningful way. In communication, both the production and comprehension of a language require one's ability to perceive and process stretches of discourse, and to formulate representations of meaning from referents in both previous sentences and following sentences. Therefore, effective speakers should acquire a large repertoire of structures and discourse markers to express ideas, show relationships of time, and indicate cause, contrast, and emphasis. With these, learners can manage turn- taking in conversation. (Schiffin, 1994: 109)

3- *Sociolinguistic competence.* Knowledge of language alone does not adequately prepare learners for effective and appropriate use of the target language. Learners must have competence which involves knowing what is expected socially and culturally by users of the target language; that is, learners must acquire the rules and norms governing the appropriate timing and realization of speech acts. Understanding the sociolinguistic side of language helps learners know what comments are appropriate, know how to ask questions during interaction, and know how to respond nonverbally according to the purpose of the talk. Therefore, adult second or foreign language learners must acquire stylistic adaptability in

order to be able to encode and decode the discourse around them correctly.(Thomas,1995:34-8)

4- *Strategic competence.* Strategic competence, which is the way learners manipulate language in order to meet communicative goals. Simply put, it is the ability to compensate for imperfect knowledge of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse rules. With reference to speaking, strategic competence refers to the ability to know when and how to take the floor, how to keep a conversation going, how to terminate the conversation, and how to clear up communication breakdown as well as comprehension problems. (Ibid)

When learners want to speak, not only should the conversational content be familiar, it should be useful or interesting to the speakers. The learners must be convinced of the need to relate to the subject and communicate about it to others. They need to feel that they are speaking not simply because the teacher expects them to, but because there is some interesting reason to do so or because there is something to gain from the interactions. Second language acquisition must be accompanied by second culture acquisition. A learner must acquire cultural knowledge in addition to communicative competence. Conversation programs should provide topics and activities that incorporate the goals, interests and experiences of the learners. (Burns, 1996:67-9)

Based on conversational skills, the course emphasis must be on developing a content based approach towards teaching conversational skills and completely incorporate immediate coursework concerns for a conversational skills course to be effective. Students should be aware of what they learned during a session and what more they could learn as they are exposed to websites and readings. If classes are concluded with an overview of conversational areas such as vocabulary and pronunciation, students will begin to visualize their bank of information. Furthermore, real life concerns of students such as other courses being taken or taught by the instructor should figure into the course, creating a meaningful context for conversation. (Ibid)

Conversation involves the following: using the language, listening to the language, processing the information, and then responding to it. The purpose of the conversation affects the process, as does the place and the people involved. (Carter, 1997: 89)

Generally the situation or setting makes a difference in the way the speaker uses the language; for example, time limitations. Does the speaker have time to "process" his or her thoughts before speaking out loud? Other conditions can also affect the use of language. Does it make a difference whether the speaker is interacting with one person or with a group? Differing situations do have distinct aspects and thus can influence the way in which the speaker uses language. (Cook, 1989: 32)

It is for this reason that it is vital to get TEFL students talking as much as possible. Speaking is usually the top priority as it probably the most important aspect of the language for communication and students enjoy it. Furthermore, speaking activities improve the atmosphere in the classroom, group dynamics and help build a rapport between students and teacher. Speaking activities are also a good indication of students' strengths and weaknesses.

When teaching English as a foreign language, students should not simply repeat what teachers say, but should perform oral tasks with real motivation behind them. When given a purpose, spoken activities are much more rewarding and engaging, not to mention. EFL learners need explicit instruction in speaking, which as any language skill generally has to be learned and practiced. However, in practice, it is too often assumed that spoken- language skills can be developed simply by assigning students general topics to discuss or by getting them to talk on certain subjects. Evidently, not enough attention is given to the factors that inhibit or facilitate the production of spoken language. Therefore, in order to provide guidance in developing competent speakers of English, instructors of EFL should keep these questions in mind: What affects adult EFL learners' oral communication? What are the components underlying speaking effectiveness? And how can adult EFL learners' speaking abilities be improved? (Lynch, 1996:98)

Thus, the study tries to assess the outcomes of EFL learning conversational skills that are obtained throughout conversation courses at college level for Iraqi EFL undergraduates and to find answers to the following questions:
1-Are they able to recognize the situations in which certain linguistic forms are used?
2-Are they able to use appropriate linguistic forms to satisfy certain functions in different situations?
3-Are they able to express themselves appropriately at a given situation?
4-Are they able to develop a dialogue using various linguistic forms in a prescribed situation?

1.2 The aim of The Study:
The study aims at assessing the outcomes of EFL learning conversational skills for Iraqi EFL undergraduates.

1.3 Hypotheses:
It is hypothesized that Iraqi EFL undergraduates are:
1-Unable to recognize to which situations the prescribed linguistic forms are used.
2-Unable to use appropriate linguistic forms to react towards the prescribed situations.
3-Unable to express themselves appropriately in a formal prescribed situation.
4-Unable to develop a prescribed dialogue with guided instructions.

1.4 The limitation of the study:

The study is limited to Iraqi EFL fourth class students in both English Dep., College of Arts, of Kufah Univ. & English Dep., College of Education of Al-Qadisiyah Univ. during the academic year (2008-2009).

1.5 The Definition of Basic terms:

1.5.1 Assessment: The process of determining whether an item or activity meets specified criteria. www.cdhb.govt.nz/glossary.htm

1.5.2 The Outcomes: Results or changes of a programme. Outcomes-Based assessment looks at impacts/benefits/changes during and/or after participation in a program. www.ichnet.org/glossary.htm

1.5.3 Conversational Skills: They can be explained as language abilities needed to interact in social situations. Language abilities include speaking with appropriate vocabulary Language abilities include speaking with appropriate vocabulary and structured linguistic forms.

Conversational skills also include social skills and culture knowledge which can be generalized as what to say, when to say it, where and how to say it. (Brown, 1995: 22). The conversational skills that are specified for this study are:
1- The skill or ability to recognize the situations in which certain linguistic forms are used.
2- The ability to use appropriate linguistic forms to satisfy certain functions in different situations.
3- The ability to express oneself appropriately at a given situation.
4-The ability to develop a dialogue using various linguistic forms in a prescribed situation.

Chapter Two

2.1 The Related Literature

The ability to communicate through effective speaking is as important to language skill development as is the ability to write effectively. It follows that any language learners must develop their communication skills through the authentic use of the conversational skills. Learners have to take note of the style they use when speaking and expressing themselves. Thus, linguists and teaching language methodologists showed their special concern regarding the fore-mentioned notion:

Coughlin claims that both motor-perceptive skills and interaction adeptness are usually required in conversation. Many times this pairing calls upon effective understanding of the two in order to implement oral exercises in an effective manner. Motor skills involve perceiving, recalling, and articulating in the correct order sounds and structures of the language. Interaction skills involve making decisions about communication, such as what to say and how to say it (Coughlin, 2006: 1).

Dostal sees that the first rule to be able to speak effectively; is planning what to say. What is the main idea of what the learners are trying to convey? Organizing their thoughts so they lead to the main idea of the message they are trying to send across (Dostal, 2007:1).

Wallace and Walberg believe that learners improve their speech when teachers provide insights on how to organize their ideas for presentation. Learners can give better speeches when they can organize their presentation in a variety of different ways, including sequentially, chronologically and thematically. Teachers can also help learners adapt their speeches and informal talks so as to correspond the information to be communicated, and the circumstances of the occasion at which they will speak (Wallace; Stariha and Walberg, 2008: 10). Generally the situation or setting makes a difference in the way the learner uses the language, for example, time limitations. Does the learner have time to "process" his or her thoughts before speaking out loud? Other conditions can also affect the use of language. Does it make a difference whether the learner is interacting with one person or of speech routinely used in conversation which teachers should be aware of while teaching in the classroom: (a) Interaction routines typically occur in any given situation and are likely to occur in a specific sequence. (b) Descriptions of places and people: demonstration of facts or comparisons all refer to "information routines." Such routines do not just concern speech, they also occur in written language. (c) Negotiation of meaning refers to the skill of communicating ideas clearly and includes the way learners signal their understanding during an exchange. (d) Feedback is the method of examining comprehension as the interaction unfolds. (e) Turn-taking is the knowledge which comes with negotiating the control of a conversation.

Practical turn-taking requires five abilities: 1. Knowing how to signal that one wants to speak. 2. Recognizing the right moment to get a turn. 3. How to use this structure in order to get one's turn properly and not lose it. 4. The ability to recognize other people's signals or desire to speak. 5. The ability to acknowledge other people's signals and let them take a turn. (f) Communication strategies are approaches designed to deal with conversation difficulties (Ibid).

In addition to being aware of the differing kinds of speech it might also be advantageous to develop a list of some of the important speaking skills the teacher need to teach to learners corresponding the conversational skill (whether they are elementary, intermediate or college learners) (Ibid):
a) The ability to reproduce sounds.
b) The knowledge and use of a practical vocabulary.
c) The use of idioms (for example: Hi, instead of Hello).
d) The ability to respond in sentences.
e) The ability to condense verbs (for example: replacing did not with didn't).
f) A vocabulary which enables the student to play games.
g) Knowing and using familiar "native speaker" greetings.
h) The ability to carry on a limited conversation.
i) The ability to agree or disagree.
j) The ability to identify people and places.
k) The capability to express preferences.
l) The skill to expresses opinions.
m) The ability to ask for and give suggestions.
n) The ability to report on what people are asking and saying.
o) The ability to summarize a conversation.
p) Learners may enjoy speaking about their personal experiences (Wallace; Stariha and Walberg, 2008: 10).

Yet, problems can arise when using interaction activities in the classroom, such as a learner's inexperience in focusing on a particular topic or a limited vocabulary for developing the necessary explanation. Different cultural backgrounds at times may also interfere with the uniform picture of the situation.

The teacher's ability to recognize cues in speech patterns and conversation goes a long way in developing one's classroom skills. Conversation is regarded as a skill requiring the teacher to generate speech that is acceptable in both content and form. Teachers learn to facilitate ease in the oral production of speech in many ways; also he must plan communication strategies to deal with conversation difficulties (Coughlin, 2006: 3).

2.2 Previous Studies

These studies are not adequate empirical studies on the same topic but there are previous studies on speaking skill that shed light on conversational skill in general without going deeply with the outcome of EFL learning conversational skill at the undergraduates' level.

2.2.1 Taeduck, Hyun; and Finch, A. E. (1997)

This study is conducted for "Promoting and Developing English Conversation Skills at Tertiary Level: a Process Approach in a Traditional Setting". Given the current emphasis on English conversation at all levels of education in Korea, this paper investigates how valid and authentic opportunities for communicative use of the target language might be offered, using Task-based methods and ideas in a traditional setting. Current teaching styles in Secondary education in Korea would need to be significantly changed if a complete shift to a Process approach were made, so this paper suggests how the present learning environment might become fertile soil into which the seed of Task-based theory might be planted. Such a proposed progression from Propositional to Process attitudes would be facilitated by sequenced use of language tasks in the classroom, according to characteristics such as linguistic/communicative complexity, information content, and learning-level. In this manner, authentic English Conversation would emerge from the present system, and would in doing so help to transform it, preserving that which is appropriate, and substituting a new authenticity for that which has had its day.

2.2.2 Li, Mingsheng (2002-2003)

This paper reports findings of a qualitative study conducted from December 2002 to March 2003 at two New Zealand English language schools; which is entitled " Culture and Classroom Communication: A Case Study of Asian Students in New Zealand Language Schools". Forty Asian students participated in the survey. The study reveals that, in spite of the positive learning experiences in the schools, there also exists a significant mismatch with Asian students' learning expectations. The recurring themes that reflect Asian students' negative perceptions and experiences relate to issues of teacher competence, teacher quality, teaching approaches, course content and learning materials. It was found that the interactive teaching methods adopted by New Zealand teachers are culturally incompatible with Asian students' learning conceptualizations. The findings suggest that some teachers' adoption of the communicative or interactive teaching approach led to Asian students' negative learning experience in New Zealand. The paper recommends that New Zealand teachers develop three sets of interrelated skills in order to cope with the complex ESOL teaching situations and to ensure quality teaching: linguistic skills, pedagogical skills and intercultural communication skills.

2.2.3 Wang, Chao; and Stephanie Seneff (no year)

This paper is about selecting "A Dialogue System for Language Learning"; which reports on methodologies for selecting target words, writing definitions and recording written definitions for spoken EFL learner-based definitions, and proposes possibilities of application of the spoken definitions to language learning.

Target words were selected from magazine articles and EFL learners then listed the specific words that they associated with these target words in class activities. Some of these associated words were selected for the present authors to write simple definitions of the target words. Oral readings of these sentences were recorded by an English native speaker. An experiment was conducted to test listenability of the recorded written definitions. Result of the experiment showed that the mean score for the written definition was slightly higher than that of dictionary definitions. Application possibilities of recorded definitions for improving EFL learners' listening and speaking skills and promoting their vocabulary acquisition were proposed.

Chapter Three

Procedures

3.1 The Population: It consists of Iraqi EFL fourth class undergraduates during the academic year (2008-2009). The determination of the class is justified due to the fourth class students are more advanced than other previous classes and they are supposed to have the accumulative knowledge of the previous academic years.

3.2 The Sample: (70) male and female fourth class students were randomly chosen. They were distributed into (36) students of English Dep.,college of Arts, Kufah Univ. & (34) students of English Dep., college of Education, Al-Qadisiyah Univ.

3.3 The Research Instrument: A written test form was chosen as the tool of the study. The following steps were adopted for the test:

3.3.1 constructing the test: The test form consists of four questions that are arranged in accordance with the tested conversational skills .As question one tests the student's ability to recognize the situations in which certain linguistic forms are used, seven items of linguistic forms are distributed in the question and the students are required to name the situation in which the linguistic form is used in each item. Those linguistic forms are chosen from the textbooks of the conversation courses of EFL college programme.Further, question two contains seven situations distributed in seven items and the students are required to react towards them as the question tests the student's ability to use appropriate linguistic forms for prescribed situations. Since question three tests the student's ability for self expression, the question provides a prescribed formal situation with guided instructions and the students are required to introduce themselves formally .Finally, question four contains a beginning of a dialogue and the students are required to develop it in accordance with guided instructions as the question tests the student's ability to develop a prescribed dialogue.

3.3.2 Face validity: A preliminary form of the test was submitted to a jury to face the validity of the test items. Some of the test items were modified in accordance with the jury's notes. The jury members whom the preliminary form of the test was submitted are arranged alphabetically as follows:

Name	Degree	position
Asst.pro Asim Al-Duleimi	PhD in English methodology	English Dep., College of Basic Education, Babylon Univ.
Asst.pro Fared Hameed	PhD in English Applied linguistics	English Dep., College of Education, Babylon Univ.

Asst.pro Hameed Hassson	PhD in English translation	English Dep., College of Education, Babylon Univ.
Asst. pro Riyadh Tarik	PhD in English Applied linguistics	English Dep., College of Education, Babylon Univ.

3.4 Statistical means: the percentage formula and Chi-A square test were adopted to obtain results for the study.

Chapter Four

The Analysis of Results

After implementing the test, the correction was made for the answer sheet of the sample of the study.The correction strategy varied according to each question.For question one ,(o-1) correction is adopted for each item as there is one defined answer and the total mark of the question was computed by the summation of the scores of all items.Whereas question two correction was done according to the four competencies(grammatical-discourse-sociolinguistic-strategic)which are supposed to be owned by the sample of the study and which help them to manipulate their conversational skills.Each competency has (0-1) score as there is a single sentence which formulate the answer for each item.The total mark of the question was computed by the summation of the scores of all copetencies in all items.A defined total mark was adopted for the correction of both question three and four as the anwers were under the suprasentecial level .The four competencies were checked and corrected throughout the total answers each of which varies from (2-0) score.

4.1 Results analysis of Question One: Low scores of succeeded answers were recorded by both divisions of the sample.The following tables show the results with percentages in the both divisions :

Table (1/A): University of Al-Kufah/ Question 1

Succeeded	Percentage	Failed	Percentage
7	20%	29	80%

Table (1/B): University of Al-Qadisiyah/ Question 1

Succeeded	Percentage	Failed	Percentage
2	6%	32	94%

Chi-A squre test was made to record (13.4) for the testees of Kufah Univ. and (26. 4) for the testees of Al-Qadisiyah Univ. as computed values and when compared with the table value which is (3.8) with (1) as the free degree ,the nill hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Those results were due to:

1. The testees were not exposed earlier to the examined situations in this question although they are found in their conversation courses of their EfL college programme.They are neglected items.
2. The testees were not taught properly during their conversation courses in a away that the examined situations were not emphsized so that they could be easily forgotten. Thus, the result proved the first hypothesis of the study as Iraqi EFL undergraduates are unable to recognize to which situations the prescribed linguistic forms are used.

4.2 Results analysis of Question Two:
The testees recoded different results in the two divisions of the sample. The following tables show the difference:

Table (2/A): University of Al-Kufah/ Question 2

Succeeded	Percentage	Failed	Percentage
14	39%	22	61%

Table (2/B): University of Al-Qadisiyah/ Question 2

Succeeded	Percentage	Failed	Percentage
22	65%	12	35%

Chi-A squre test was made to record (5.4)as a computed value in both divisions of the testees and when compared with the table value which is (3.8) with (1)as the free degree ,the nill hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted for both divisions of the sample.

Regarding the four competencies, the following results were recorded as shown in the following tables:

Table (3/A): University of Al-Kufah/ Question 2

Competences	Succeeded	Percentage	Failed	Percentage
Grammatical	27	75%	9	25%
Discourse	17	47%	19	53%
Sociolinguistic	13	36%	23	64%
Strategic	13	33%	23	67%

Table (3/B): University of Al-Qadisiyah / Question 2

Competences	Succeeded	Percentage	Failed	Percentage
Grammatical	31	91%	3	9%
Discourse	26	76%	8	24%
Sociolinguistic	22	65%	12	35%
Strategic	22	65%	12	35%

The above results indicate the following:
1. The testees relied heavily on their grammatical competency to formulate their answers for the question items. They are able to formulate answers that are structurally correct regardless of discourse, sociolinguistic and strategic factors.
2. Other competencies, apart from grammatical competencies, are not emphasized or at least not manipulated and activated throughout the testees EFL college programme.That was clearly manifested throughout the testees answers whereby discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competencies were not performed appropriately.

Thus, the above results proved partially the second hypothesis of the study as Iraqi EFL undergraduates are unable to use appropriate linguistic forms to react towards the prescribed situations. Yet, they are able to formulate answers that are structurally correct.

4.3 Results analysis of Question Three: The testees recorded low succeeded results in both diviosions of the sample as shown in the following tables:

Table (4/A): University of Al-Kufah/ Question 2

Succeeded	Percentage	Failed	Percentage
9	25%	27	27%

Table (4/B): University of Al-Qadisiyah/ Question 2

Succeeded	Percentage	Failed	Percentage
13	38%	21	62%

Chi-A squre test was made to record(9) for the testees of Kufah Univ. and(1.8)for the testees of Al-Qadisiyah Univ. as computed values and when compared with the table value which is (3.8)with(1)as the free degree ,the nill hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted for the testees of Kufah Univ. ,whereas the nill hypothesis was accepted for the testees of Al-Qadisiyah Univ.

The above results indicate the following:
1-The testees were in experienced in formal speech,i-e, they were not qualified to express themselves in formal situations.
2- The testees were not trained enough to express themselves in the target language.

Thus, the results analysis of the question proved the third hypothesis of the study as Iraqi EFL undergraduates are unable to express themselves appropriately in a formal prescribed situation.

4.4Results analysis of Question Four: The testees recorded low suceeded results in both diviosions of the sample as shown in the following tables:

Table (5/A): University of Al-Kufah/ Question 2

Succeeded	Percentage	Failed	Percentage
15	42%	21	58%

Table (5/B): University of Al-Qadisiyah/ Question 2

Succeeded	Percentage	Failed	Percentage
14	41%	20	59%

Chi-A squre test was made to record (1)as a computed value in both divisions of the testees and when compared with the table value which is (3.8) with(1)as the free degree ,the nill hypothesis was accepted .

The above results are interpreted as follows:

1. The testees were not frequently trained to use the target language to communicate with one another due to the absence of classroom interaction among themselves throughout their academic years.

2. The testees lacked the strategic competency which maintain language exchange and the rules how to take the floor, how to keep a conversation going, how to terminate the conversation, and how to clear up communication breakdown.

Thus, the results analysis of the question proved that Iraqi EFL undergraduates hardly mange to develop dialogues and not unable as the fourth hypothesis of the study supposed earlier.

Chapter Five

Conclusions & Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions: The study reached the following conclusions:

1- Conversation courses are subsidiary to other courses such as grammar courses when taught to Iraqi EFL undergraduates throughout their academic years.
2- No use of interactive techniques on the part of lecturers who teach conversation courses. Those techniques are required to manipulate and activate conversational skills. Such techniques are represented by devising talk shows throughout lectures.
3- Little opportunities are given to Iraqi EFL undergraduates' talk for self expression which causes diminishing their use of the target language inside the class and which, for further run, hinders using it outside the class.
4- There is a misunderstanding of the term 'course' as it is explained as merely the textbook especially in conversation courses whereas it includes other authentic materials presented throughout conversation lectures as well as the textbook.

5.2 Recommendations: The study recommends the following:

1- Conversation courses should be tackled equally in comparison with other courses that are taught throughout Iraqi TEFL college programme.
2- Extensive use of interactive techniques for manipulating and activating the conversational skills.
3- Maximizing Iraqi EFL undergraduate's role throughout conversation courses by providing situations for self expression.
4- Authentic materials are required in conversation lectures so as to help Iraqi EFL undergraduates develop their target language use appropriately.

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