The String of Multiple Adjectives Before The Head Noun In English Used By Fourth Year Students At The University of Anbar

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ABSTRACT
This research investigates the order of adjectives in English before the head noun. Adjective is an important constituent of parts of speech in some languages. Adjectives are words that tell us more about a noun. Adjectives have a prenominal, postnominal or both position. Adjective plays great role in English language, it adds esthetic value to the word it describes. It gives more information to the noun it modifies. Sometimes more than one adjective precedes the noun. These adjectives of different types include adjectives of opinion, size, shape, age, colour, material, origin and purpose. These adjectives have semantic meaning and syntactic functions.

The current study aims at comparing between students’ achievement in the Semantico-syntactic adjectives test according to gender. This aim is supposed to be achieved through testing the following null hypothesis:
There is no significant difference between the mean score of the pretest and the mean score of the posttest according to students' achievement in the semantico-. There is no significant difference in the mean score of female students' achievements in the Semantico-syntactic adjectives test and the mean score of male students' achievements in the sematico-syntactic adjectives test according to the variable of gender at the level 0.05 of significance.

Keywords: semantic types, syntax, noun phrase, premodifires, adjective order

1. Introduction
Adjective can be defined as any word that modifies or describes a noun. Vogel & Comrie (2000: 217) argue that it is generally acknowledged that not every language has a distinct class of adjectives. This can be due to two reasons: either the language does not clearly distinguish between adjectives and members of other major word classes (verbs, nouns) or the language simply lacks a distinct class of adjectives, then other techniques are utilized to represent adjectival notions (like a relative clause headed by a stative verb or an adnominal NP headed by an abstract noun). However, English language has an adjective class which is distinguished from noun and verbs. Adjectives can have prenominal or postnominal positions. Stageberg (1981) suggests six different syntactic positions of prenominal modifiers in a sentence. Adjectives are known as modifiers in English. A modifier “is subordinate element in an endocentric structure. It is a word or word group that affects the meaning of a headword in that it describes, limits, intensifies, and/or adds to the meaning of the head”. Modifiers may appear before such as dirty house or after house there the heads they modify. Semantically speaking, Dixon & Aikhenvald (2004: 4) suggests three semantic types of property concepts that can be applied to adjective classes: core semantic type (dimension, age, value, and color), peripheral semantic type (physical property, human propensity and speed) and semantic type in large adjective classes (difficulty, similarity, qualification, quantification, position and cardinal numbers).

2. Research question
The research seeks to answer the following question:
Is there a difference between male and female students achievement test in using prenominal order of adjectives?
3. Limitation of the study
This research is limited to the student’s use of semantico (types of adjectives) and syntax of adjectives (prenominal and postnominal) by fourth year students (male and female) in the Department of English College of Education for Humanities at the University of Anbar during the academic year (2020-2021). Data were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS program and qualitatively depending on Rosato (2013) intrinsic property and Quirk and Greenbaum (1973).

4. Definitions of key terms
4.1. Semantics: It is defined as the study of meaning of words, phrases, and sentences in language Yule (2010: 112).
4.2. Syntax: The word syntax comes originally from Greek and literally means “a putting together” or “arrangement”. So it is the study of structure of phrases and sentences.
4.3. Pragmatics: It is a branch of linguistics that deals with study of meaning, the invisible meaning of the speaker.
4.4. Adjective: It is a term used to refer to the main set of items which specify the attributes of a noun Crystal (2008: 11)

5. Literature review
This section deals with the previous studies on semantico-syntactic of adjectives in English. As the subject of adjectives has been investigated from different perspectives. This study focuses on semantics and syntax of adjectives and their order. It presents the most relevant and important topics that have a considerable connection to the order of adjectives. Ladu (2021:15) asserts that adjectives in terms of semantic sense, aim to express property concepts. Adjectives by their very own nature have their meaning and concept that they denote. Dixon (1982:15) that adjective which is one of the part of speech can be classified into seven types. This classification depends on semantics and syntactic level. These seven types are shown in the table (1) below.

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<th>A</th>
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<td>Dimension</td>
<td>Physical property</td>
<td>Color</td>
<td>Human propensity</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Value</td>
<td>Speed</td>
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A. Dimension: it is defined by Hornby (2015: 416) as “measurement in space such as the height, width or length of something”. It may be easy to know what adjective words belong to this type. Those measurements are usually in the form of height, width, and length. Height shows the extent of an object from vertical extent or position, like high, low, short, tall. Width shows the measurement of horizontal extent, from side to side, such as, wide, narrow, small, big, large, spacious. Length is concerned with the measurement of the distance between one to the other point, for example, far, near, long Ladu (2021:17).

B. Physical property: Sinclair (2001: 1155) claims that physical property in adjectives primarily refers to the physical characteristics of properties that can be described through human sense. It should be something that can be perceived by human sensory perception. This type includes many adjectives for instance: sour, sweet, soft, rough, cool, chill, fragrant, loud, bright, …etc.

C. Color: This category only concerns with color like, purple, violet, navy, turquoise, dark blue white, brown …etc.

D. Human propensity: Sinclair (2001: 1230) defines propensity as “a natural tendency that people have to behave n a particular way”. The purpose of this kind is to display human characteristics when they are contributing to or dealing with something. This kind of adjectives mainly is to explain the attitude of mind and feeling. Adjectives of this kind include: angry, eager, proud, anxious, wicked, rude, and many more adjectives.

E. Age: This type of adjectives relating to age reveals a particular time when a person or thing has existed. Time indicates the amount of time of the existing object. The most used adjectives in this category are: young, old and new Hornby (2015).

F. Value: Dixon (1982: 15) asserts that value in adjective refer to personal evaluation. This type of
adjectives is considered as subjective as it resulted from one’s viewpoint. Using value to describe things means that a person gives something or someone a value or quality based on preference and perception. This type of adjectives contain: bad, perfect, delicious, beautiful, amazing, excellent, fine, poor, good ... etc.

G. Speed: In semantics, it deals with the rate of motion at which a thing moves or performs. It indicates the progress and pace of something within a specific amount of time. This category contains specific number of adjectives: quick, fast and slow.

Ahmed and Sameer (2018: 209) refer to Rosato’s (2013: 4) statement that adjectives in the grammar of a language fill two roles. First, in a statement that something has a certain property. Second as a specification that helps to concentrate on the referent of the head noun in a noun phrase relating to a predicate argument. Their participation, however, must be in particular order. Grammar rules typically do not specify the order of adjectives, but this is achieved by specific intuitions of native speakers based on semantic aspects. The order of adjectives that form a barrier before non-native speakers can be justified by a semantic theory.

Rosato believes that a cognitive competence enables individual to write the adjectives in a correct order. The semantic mechanism supports the operation of this competence. Adjectives are commonly prenominal, with no number or gender agreement restrictions. This study will focus on semantic and syntactic analysis of adjectives. In most cases, adjectives are prenominal. The order of the adjectives will be written with its interpretation in the text. This interpretation is based on what is more intrinsic.

Quirk & Greenbaum (1973: 114) says that by looking at adjective in isolation, speakers can not say if a word is an adjective the form does not necessarily imply its syntactic function. Speakers normally recognize adjectives from its suffixes such as -ous (courteous), -ive (sensitive), -ic (heroic), -al (musical)...etc, but many common adjectives have no recognizing shape such as fat, good, young. Nor can we identify a word as an adjective merely by considering what inflections or affixes it will allow. It is correct to state that many adjectives inflect for the comparative and superlative form for example: great, greater, greatest, but many like good, goofer, goodest, do not allow inflected forms.

Chalker (1984:163) points out that there are many adjectives that do not have unique forms, but there are some that do. Typical endings for adjective are -able/-ible, -full/-less, -ous, -y, -ish/-ly and like and ly. For examples (washable, credible, powerful, powerless, disastrous, hungry, yellowish, childish and bobbly. Adjectives can be distinguished by two inflections for degree, -er comparative and –est superlative. However, not all adjectives take these inflections for example good, better, best. Plural and gender do not correspond/ agree with adjectives as they do in some languages.

Cabredo Hofherr, Patricia & Ora Matushansky (2010:7) confirm that there are three types of syntactic contexts where adjectives can appear: as attributive adjectives directly modifying a noun (1), as predicative adjectives in the complement of a copula (2) and as secondary predicates (3).

1. The red tractor went along the road.
2. The house is green.
3. a. George colored the apartment purple.
3. b. Sue and Peter are painting the house white.

Payne (2011:236) states that most adjectives can function either as prenominal modifiers or as predicate complements. However, there are some that function only as prenominal modifiers and others that function only as predicate complements in the following examples: adjectives that function only as prenominal modifiers:

The dolphin is a marine mammal. but not *Some mammals are marine.
She is an utter fool. but not *That fool is utter.
They were mere students. but not *Those students are mere.
He is an Olympic gymnast but not *That gymnast is olympic.

6. Research Methodology
This section provides information on the methodology of the present study, which includes population and sample, research instrument, and validity and reliability of the instrument.

The sample of this study includes forty students (morning studies), most were aged between 22 and 24, (20 male and 20 female) which represents 40% of the whole population. The final form of the order of adjectives test has been applied to the selected sample of students.
The population of this study represents the fourth year students in the Department of English College of Education for Humanities at the University of Anbar. The total number of the population is 129 Morning Studies students of the academic year 2020-2021. Concerning the participants of this study, the researcher follows procedures used in the random sampling. Names of students are written on paper sheets and closed each one separately. Then, paper sheets are put into two bowels one for males and the other for females. After mixing, 40 students are chosen randomly. The sample involves 20 female students and 20 male students.

In order to collect data properly, it is essential to use the proper instrument that match with behavioural objectives, aims and hypothesis of the study correctly. The researcher uses two structurally applicable but with a different content diagnostic test (i.e. pretest and posttest ) to be applied online on the Internet by using Google forms application because of the ban due to Corona Virus. Each test involves two questions. The first question represents the "comprehension" side that demands from students to choose the correct alternative. This question contains 25 items to be corrected objectively. The second question represents the "production" side that demands re-arranging the adjectives (pronominally and postnominally) to make a full correct sentences. It also includes 25 items to be corrected objectively. The total number of the test items is 50. Each item to be answered correctly is allocated (1) mark. On the other hand, each item to be answered wrongly, is allocated (0) mark. This means that the highest mark in the test is (50) and the lowest degree is (0).

Goodwin (2002:7) defines validity as “how appropriate, meaningful and useful are the inferences made from the scores of a test. So, it is a process of evidence accumulation to assist such inferences”. So, face validity and content validity of the instrument of this research are ensured through exposing the pretest and posttest to a jury members. One of the important steps within the procedures phase is to find out the reliability of the instrument of study. On the other hand reliability of a test is achieved when it produces similar or nearly similar scores when it is applied more than one time on different occasions when the test takers are the same Madsen (1983:179). Then the researcher compares the mean score of odd items and the mean score of even items by using Alpha Cronbach Formula.

7. Result
The obtained results show that: there is a significant difference in the mean score of pretest and the mean score of the posttest in favour of the posttest because students did much better in the posttest than in the pretest. There is a difference in the achievement of female students is in favour of male students because female students did much better in the test than males.

To achieve the third aim that is conducted to compare between students' achievement in the semantico-syntactic adjectives test according to gender. The sample members are divided into males and females (i.e male students are 20 and female students are 20). T-test for two independent samples is used to fulfill the third aim by comparing mean score of male students with the mean score of female students. Results show that the mean score of the female group is (39.3) and the standard deviation is (6.783). On the other hand, the researchers find that the mean score of the male group is (34.2), while the standard deviation is (7.971). After comparing, results show that the computed t-test value is (2.179) and the value of the tabulated t-test is (2.042) on the degree of freedom (38). When we compare the two values (i.e. computed t-test value and tabulated t-test value) we note clearly that the computed t-test value (2.179) is higher than the tabulated one which is (2.042). This means that there is a significant difference in the achievements of the semantico-syntactic adjectives test between males and females according to the variable of gender. Therefore, the third hypothesis is rejected and the alternative one is accepted. To explain more, this indicates that females' achievement in the test is better than males. See Table (2).

Table (2) The Statistical Difference in the Test Achievement between Males and Females
8. Conclusions

In the light of the results obtained, some conclusions are derived and appropriate suggestions for further studies are proposed by the researcher to enrich this field of investigation. The researchers conclude that, in ordering multiple adjectives before noun, the students face many difficulties, because of the lack in two of the grammar components which are syntax and semantics. So fourth year students need more attention and emphasis in studying it. Fourth year students don’t have enough knowledge about the order of adjectives before the head noun. This issue must be treated from early stages of learning grammar. In English there are eight parts of speech (noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and article. The term “part of speech” refers to the role a word plays in a sentence. Adjectives are the words that describe nouns. An adjective can go right before the noun it’s describing (she has a white cat), but it doesn’t have to. Sometimes, adjectives are at the end of a sentence (her cat is white). The role of adjective is a modifier to the head noun, because modifiers can precede and follow the head noun. In this study adjectives appear most commonly in the attributive position. Depending on intrinsic principle students must put the adjective in the correct order. Adjectives of origin and material must come very close to the noun because it is possible to postpone or leave the adjective of colour and others but not that of origin and material. This study concludes that both males and females students are showing nearly the same average but females are much better than males in ordering adjectives correctly. This is due to females participations, online attendance and self-confidence.

Using adjectives in English correctly is an important skill in language learning and in the world. In the modern world, one of the most important prerequisites is talking correctly. Therefore, fourth year students should know how to use strings of adjectives correctly in their sentences. The main purpose of this study is to see if fourth year students University of Anbar were aware of the prenominal adjective ordering scheme in English by testing their ability to reorder adjectives. There is a statistically significant difference between the answers of males and females on the test. In particular, females performed better than males. The number of correct answers provided by females is higher than that provided by males.

References


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<th>Degree of Freedom</th>
<th>Computed T-test Value</th>
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