



The Grammatical Performance of Iraqi EFL Learners' Errors in Learning and Understanding Obligation: A Syntactic Investigation

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Abstract: This study aims at investigating Iraqi EFL students' ability in recognizing and using the syntactic structures of obligation. In order to achieve our aim(s) a test has been designed, and the data has been capture from undergraduate Iraqi EFL in College of Education, fourth year students' of Thi-Qar University, College of Education, Department of English. The sample of the our test consists of 70 Iraqi EFL University students wherein Arabic is their native language. Due to Covide - 19, and its impact(s) on students' actual class attendance, the test was designed in Google form and then emailed to the investigated students. The subjects were provided with a test involving two questions. These question were designed to measure the investigated students' recognition and production levels. In terms of our investigation, the results show that the students face difficulties in their performances at both levels. . In the light of the results introduced in section "results and discussion" but we can say and according to our percentages their performance, at the recognition level is better than the production one.

Key Words: Obligation, EFL, Errors analysis, mode &modality

I. INTRODUCTION

Obligation is one of the subgroups of directive speech acts. It is defined as a speaker's intention to obligate someone to do or not do some act. In this connection, Palmer (1990:124) states that "the speaker is presuming that s/he has (physical, psychological, or institutional) authority over the hearer that gives such weight or power to her/his utterances." It implies some kind of necessity, in that obliging somebody or oneself to do something means it is necessary that the action in question is performed, in addition to the speaker's authority, the action is permitted, and the person obliged must be perceived to have the ability to carry out the required action. Thus, the situational components of obligation are the necessity of the action, the authority of the speaker, the ability of the hearer to carry out the action, and the availability of the action. In order to provide a clear picture of the syntactic structure(s) with reference to University students' errors production and understanding of obligation in English, literature review limits itself to the syntactic point of view. This on the other hand doesn't mean that the study will not consider the importance of "obligation" as a speech act.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Syntax is the way in which words are arranged to show relationships of meaning within (and sometimes between) sentences (Crystal, 1987: 94). If language is to express complex thoughts and ideas; it must to have a way to combine words into sentences to give meaning. Thus, it seems reasonable to focus on the syntactic structures of sentence types to get the meaning of obligation.

2.1 Constructions of Obligation

Most syntactic studies have focused on sentence structure, in which the most important grammatical relationships are expressed. Obligation is one of those grammatical relationships which can be performed explicitly and implicitly through the use of various syntactic forms (i.e sentence types). That is, it could be expressed in imperative, declarative and interrogative sentences. Therefore , it seems reasonable to consider sentence types that express the meaning of obligation.

2.1.1 Imperative Sentence

An imperative sentence is one of sentence types which can normally be interpreted as someone telling someone else to do or not to do something. (Quirk, *et al.* 1985:827 and Aarts, 2001:61). Thus, it is the unmarked forms of expressing obligation as in:

(1) Go home.

(2) Shut up.

Here, in both sentences above the speaker orders or obligate the hearer to do something, to go home in (1) and stop talking in (2). It shows the authority of the speaker rather than the hearer, as this enables him to order or obligate the hearer to implement the speaker's wish.

In negative, the imperative sentence (both without subject and without let) carries the meaning of obligation, simply by adding an initial 'Do not' or 'don't', replacing assertive by nonassertive items where necessary:

(3) Open the door. ~ Don't open the door.

(4) You open the door. ~ Don't open the door. Or you don't open the door <formal>

(5) Someone open the door. ~ Don't anyone open the door. Or No one open the door.

Brown and Yule (1983:25) and Leech and Svartvik (1994:145) hold that it is possible to get the meaning of imperative depending on the context (*the environment and circumstances in which language is used*) as in:

(6) More light here!

(7) Easy now!

Such sentences (6 and 7) can be deemed as imperatives (even in the absence of the imperative verb) depending on the contexts in which they are uttered. Consequently, any contextually appropriate Noun, Adjective, or Verb can be made suitable to give an imperative meaning.

2.1.2 Declarative Sentences

Declarative is a term used in the grammatical classification of sentence types, and usually in contrast with imperative, interrogative, etc. It refers to verb forms or sentences/clause types typically used in the expression of statements. It is sometimes called 'Indicative'(Crystal, 2003:124), as in:

(8) The man is walking.

Kerstens *et al.* (2001:54) state that 'declarative' in semantic point of view is a sentence to which a truth value can be assigned, given a certain situation or circumstance, as shown in:

(9) The Queen of Holland is bald.

This sentence is a declarative one, because it can be assigned a truth value. Leech *et al.* (1982:79) state that 'Declarative Mood' is generally used to make statements. It is the most basic form of the clause:

(10) Jim will post these letters.

In declarative sentences, there are various constructions that can be used for realizing or expressing the idea of 'obligation' in which a speaker may use one of the following constructions that take a form of declarative in order to express his / her authority on the hearer and to obligate him to do or not to do some acts .

1. Be + to + infinitive

A number of grammarians such as Schibsbye, (1970:76), Hornby,(1975:210), Leech and Svartvik (1975:145), Chalker, (1984:83), Quirk, *et al.* (1985:50), Eastwood,(1994:100) and Foly and Hall,(2003:183), agree that 'Obligation' can be carried out through a common construction which consists of 'be + to + infinitive', in which the commands or orders are given by the speakers (more usually) by some official authority, as in:

(11) You are to write your name at the top of each sheet paper.

(12) The passengers are to wait in the waiting area.

Although most grammarians affirm that this construction: [Be + to + infinitive] clearly denotes the meaning of 'obligation' in its different functions, Close (1987:259) disagrees with them saying that *"this construction is sometimes 'ambiguous' and only context could explain whether the sentence refers to 'obligation' or to other meanings"*. Consider the following illustrative example:

(13) This gate is to be opened today.

Contextually, this sentence has two possible meanings depending on its context. Either people are obliged to open the gate today. Or, it has been to open on some given occasion on the time referred. In this connection, Leech (1971:96) maintains that "be to" is similar in meaning to "have (got) to" and "ought to". In fact, it can be frequently substituted for either of these modal forms. Its main difference from "have (got) to" is that its principle meaning includes the specific idea of 'ordering' or 'commanding', Palmer, (1971:97) illustrates the difference in the two following examples:

(14) He is to return to Germany tomorrow.

(15) He has to return to Germany tomorrow.

Here, in (14) the most likely meaning is 'He has received explicit orders to return to Germany', whereas (15) could suggest that he has received orders, but more likely it means 'circumstances oblige him to return'- e.g. *he has run out of money, he has an appointment in Germany, his ticket expires tomorrow, etc.*

2. Be + Supposed + Infinitive

According to Leech (1989:550), Biber *et al.* (1994:500), and Thomson and Martinet (1986:268), the construction 'Be + Supposed + Infinitive' conveys the idea of 'duty and obligation', which is usually used to express what people have to do according to conventions or laws.

(16) You are supposed to know the laws of your country. (It is your duty to know...).

(17) You are supposed to start work at 8:30 every morning.

Leech (1989:550) describes the type of obligation imposed by (Be + Supposed + Infinitive) as a weak and less definite kind of obligation. In this case, it is similar to 'should', which can be used to talk about what people have to do according to the rules or laws.

(18) Our plane is supposed to take off at 10:a.m.

(19) You're supposed to help me.

To negate this construction, Swan (1995:752) simply adds the particle 'Not' after 'be'. In such a case it gives the meaning of 'Prohibition' (i.e. to obligate someone not to do something).

(20) You are not supposed to park on double yellow lines.

(21) People under eighteen aren't supposed to buy alcoholic drinks.

In this case it approaches to the meaning of 'Advisability'. In this respect Feigenbaum (1985:123) proposes that 'be + supposed + infinitive' is used for advisability that comes from outside the person:

(22) We are supposed to obey all laws, but some laws appear to be silly.

'In other words, it's necessary to obey all laws ...'

In Feigenbaum's term (ibid:124), 'advisability' and 'necessity' are related in meaning; they both indicate that there is some reason or motivation for the action or situation, that reason or motivation can come from outside a person, but 'advisability' is not as strong as 'necessity'. It means that there is a benefit to do it, or there is a disadvantage not to do it, with an element of choice whether to do it or not. But necessity is stronger and there is a compulsion laid on the hearer to do something; there is no feeling of

choice whether to do something or not. In this sense advisability seems to be as a weak kind of obligation, which let the hearer a chance of choice, whether to do or not. The idea of weak obligation can be correlated with the idea that "be + supposed + infinitive" can be made interchangeable with both 'should' and 'ought to'. Consider

Should

(23) They ought to study at least five hours tonight.

are supposed to

Here, the speaker seems to advise the hearer to read more than five hours, to get, for instance, high marks or to pass the examination. Hence, there is a kind of benefit to the hearer more than obliging him / her to do something for the speaker. (In case of strong obligation, the beneficiary is the speaker, and the hearer has no choice but to act.).

3. Need to + Infinitive

The meaning of obligation can be gained, through using the construction 'Need to + infinitive', where "Need" is a main verb, not auxiliary: (Quirk, *et al.*, 1985:127), as in:

(24) He needs to practice more if he is to improve his playing.

It is important to note here *need* in its normal verbal forms (need, needs, needed, needing) can occur in the obligation:

(25) I need a new suit.

(26) He needs to go there.

(27) Your hair needed cutting; I'm glad you had it cut.

Sometimes it can be followed by the infinitive (to + V), as in:

(28) You don't need to work so hard.

4. Infinitive Clause (to + V.)

Unlike verb tenses (e.g. writes, stood) infinitives (e.g. to write, to stand) do not usually show the actual times of actions or events. They usually refer to actions and events in a more general way, rather like -'ing' forms. Quirk, *et al.* (1985:1053) and Swan (1995:273) affirm that infinitive clause 'to + V.' has an obligation sense. In Quirk, *et al.*'s proposal an infinitive after Wh-clause (all Wh-words, but rare with why) has the sense of obligation:

(29) I don't know what to say. ('... What I should say.')

(30) You must explain to them how to start the motor. ('... how one/they should start the moto.')

(31) I'm wondering why to go at all. ('... Why I should go at all.')(rare)

Moreover, Swan (1995: 274) proposes that the structure 'Noun + infinitive' (to + V) can express the idea of 'obligation':

(32) I've got letters to write.

(33) The carpets to be cleaned are in the garage.

Active and passive infinitives are possible in this sense; Active infinitives are used if the subject of the clause is the person who has to do the action, as in (32), whereas when the subject of the clause is the person or thing that the action is done to, passive infinitives are normally used after 'be' as in (33)

(34) I've got work to do. (NOT I've got work to be done.)

(35) These sheets are to be washed. (NOT these sheets are to wash.)

Likewise, Quirk and Greenbaum (1973:386), and Close (1978:98) point out that 'infinitive clause' in non-finite clause can be interpreted as a sort of obligation, according to its context, as in:

(36) The time to arrive is 8 pm. (= at which you should arrive)

(37) The man to consult is Wilson. (= 'the man that you/he etc should consult' or 'that everyone should consult').

5. Indirect Questions

An indirect question is a type of questions which functions as a subordinate clause (Crystal, 2003:232). In this connection, Hornby (1961:219), Schibbye (1970:76), Quirk, *et al.* (1985:1052), and Swan (1995:274), affirm that 'Wh - question + infinitive' (to + V) is a structure which expresses the idea of 'obligation' in indirect speech:

(38) I wonder who to invite. (= ... who I should invite.)

(39) Show me what to do. (= ... what I should do.)

But this construction is rare with (Why), as in the following example:

(40) I'm wondering why to go at all. ('.....why I should go at all.')

2.1.1.3 Interrogative Sentences

Interrogative refers to verb form or sentence / clause types used in the expression of 'question'. e.g. the inverted order of 'Is he coming?' or the use of interrogative word; (or simply 'interrogative'). Interrogative expressions often can be sub-classified as interrogative adjectives (e.g. Which), Adverbs (e.g. Why) and Pronouns (e.g. Who) (Crystal, 2003:241).

2.2. Ways of Expressing Obligation

Obligation can be expressed by modality through the use of modal auxiliaries, and non-modality through the use of one of the other models such as nominal expressions, adjectival expressions and verbal expressions, main or full verbs (performative verbs).

2.2.1 Modal Auxiliaries

It is apparent that modality is mainly realized by a set of auxiliary verbs called 'modal auxiliaries'. Modal verbs are not normally used to say that situations definitely exist or that particular events have definitely happened. They are used, for example, to talk about things which are possible, not possible, or necessary, or which are likely to happen, which we are not sure about, which tend to happen, or which have not happened. Modality is used to make an assessment, judgement or interpretation of what is said or written, or to express an attitude towards something. As it has been mentioned earlier that obligation can explicitly be expressed by a set of modal verbs, a clear picture of these auxiliaries and a brief specification to their characteristics seem to be necessary here.

2.2.2 Must

It is a defective verb having only one form, which is always a special finite. All the grammarians such as (Wishon, 1980: 235; Chalker, 1989: 129; Leech, 1989: 272-273; Quirk and Greenbaum., 1990: 61,62 and Swan, 1995: 351) have agreed that 'must' has two basic meanings: 'obligation or compulsion' and 'logical necessity or deduction'. In obligation 'must' means necessity to act, and involves the speaker's authority, except in question, where it invites the listener's. The speaker is imposing an obligation, possibly on himself. However, the effect of speaker's involvement may be neutralized when the speaker states some external rule with which he agrees:

(41) I must write to my mother tonight.

(42) you must listen to me.

Wakely and McArthur (1974:14), Alexander (1998:174), Azar (1999:157), Side and Wellman (1999:54), and Foley and Hall (2003:182) agree that in obligation sense 'must' means that something is important, something is necessary, urgent and there is no other choice:

(43) All applicants must take an entrance exam.

(44) Life belts must not remove.

In negation, Quirk and Greenbaum (1973:56) and Palmer (1979:64) expound that deontic modals have two possibilities in negation, which is either 'modality' or the 'event' may be negated. Swan (1995:344) confirms that 'mustn't' is used to negate the event not modality, which means that things should not be done. (= obliged not to ...), or prohibition, as in:

(45) You mustn't put words into my mouth. (it lays an obligation not on the act).

Whereas 'modality negation' means that things are not obliged to do act:

(46) You may not borrow my car. (= No permission)

Thus, 'may not' and 'cannot' negate modality, i.e., they refuse permission as in (65), while 'mustn't' in (64), negate the event. i.e., they lay an obligation or giving an undertaking that the act will not take place. However, in terms of 'verbal crossing out', Halliday affirms that it is possible to use 'mustn't' to negate the modality where a previous 'must' is specifically denied:

(47) He must be there – Oh no, he mustn't.

Conversely, Zandvoort (1975:69) contends that in both cases of 'must' or 'mustn't', there is an idea or meaning of obligation whether to do something with 'must' or to not do something with 'mustn't'. Leech (1978:68, 72, 83) states that the rules of using auxiliary verbs in questions are sometimes different from those apply to statement. "Must" in question indicates or involves the listener's authority rather than the speaker. In other words, when we ask question we anticipate the attitude of the person being asked:

(48) Must they lock the door? ('Will you oblige ...?')

Yes, they must ('Yes, I do oblige...')

Actually, in statement 'must' indicates the speaker's authority:

(49) You must stay here.

2. 23. Have (got) to

'Have (got) to' is a semi – auxiliary verb, a verb which sometimes function as a main verb and sometimes as a modal, the former will be beyond this section. Eckersley and Eckersley (1967:196) states that the meaning of 'have (got) to' is concerned with 'must' meaning. Thus, 'have (got) to' is often used to express 'compulsion or 'obligation and 'logical necessity' Parrott (2001:125) states that in obligation sense 'have (got) to' is used to express that something is important and there is no choice, it is used to express what is called 'external obligation', (*obligation which is imposed by regulations, conventions or by somebody else's will*) as in:

(50) You have to declare everything in your tax return.

In logical necessity, Walker and Elsworth (2000:103) explain that 'have (got) to' is used to expresses that something is necessary to act, as in:

(51) To be healthy, a plan has (got) to receive a good supply of both sunshine and moisture. ('It necessary ...').

(52) We'll have to get there before 5 o'clock because the shops closed then.

In negative form 'have to' is ('haven't to' or 'don't have to') refers to 'no obligation' (Leech, 1971:73). Consider the following example:

(53) You haven't to go to school every day.

Thus, 'have to' in positive form refers to obligation but to absence of obligation in negative form (haven't or don't have). Thus, it negates the modality not event. In question, 'have to' has two forms either with or without 'Do', in which hearer's opinion assigns the speaker, as in respectively:

(54) Do you have to go now?

(55) Have you to go now?

2.2.4 Should / Ought to

These two modals are tackled together in this subsection because they have the same meaning especially in obligation and logical necessity. Palmer (1979: 100) points out that "it is not all clear that (except in subordinate clauses) English makes any distinction between 'should' and 'ought to'. They seem to be largely interchangeable, even with tag question" since there is nothing odd about the following sentences:

(56) I should/ought to go to the collage today.

(57) He ought to go tomorrow, shouldn't he?

Many grammarians, such as Zandvoort (1975:70), Eckersley and Eckersley (1967:211), Quirk and Greenbaum (1973:55), Lock (1996:207), affirm that 'should' and 'ought to' are used to express 'obligation' and 'logical necessity', but they are less categorical than 'must' and 'have to'. Consider the following examples:

(58) You should / ought to do as he says. (Obligation)

(59) They should / ought to be home by now. (Necessity)

Although, 'ought to' and 'should' express the same basic modalities of 'necessity' and 'obligation' as 'must' and 'have (got) to', they contrast with 'must' and 'have (got) to' in that they do not express the speaker's confidence in the occurrence of the event or state described. (Quirk *et al.*, 1985:227), as in:

(60) I ought to phone my parents tonight. ('but I probably won't have time')

(60) All students should submit their work by a given date. ('... but some of them don't!')

In present and past, 'should and ought to', have different constructions in expressing obligation. For present obligation, the following formula is suggested:

{ Ought to }
{ Should } + be + V- ing.

(61) Joyce ought to/ should be solving the problem.

In past, the following construction is proposed:

{ Ought to, ought not to }
{ Should, shouldn't } + have + past participle.

(62) I ought to/should have written that letter yesterday. (= but I didn't)

(63) You ought to / should have told me about this earlier. (= but you didn't)

In negative sense, 'ought to' and 'should' are parallel to 'mustn't' by inserting the particle "not" after 'should' and between 'ought' and 'to', as in:

(64) One oughtn't to / shouldn't complain.

This means that 'ought to' and 'should' in negative forms means 'Here is a sense of obligation 'not to do something'. But it is a weakening of "must", they bear the meaning of "logical necessity" In question form 'ought to' and 'should' take the initial position of the sentence:

(65) Ought to / should we go now?

Swan (1995:398) points out that some people feel that the normal question and negative forms of 'ought to' are rather formal. To avoid this formality, he proposes a certain structure with "think" or by using 'should' as shown respectively in:

(66) Do you think we ought to go now? (less formal than ought we to)

(67) Should we go now?

2.2.4 Shall

Eckersley and Eckersley (1967:162) and Chalker (1989: 121) define *shall* as a defective verb which has neither infinitive, participle and gerund nor imperative. Its original meaning is 'to be under a necessity'. It expresses obligation, compulsion, necessity or constraint, as in:

(68) Nobody shall leave the room during the exam.

(69) We shall come about 3:00 we shan't come to lunch.

Hornby (1961:213) and Palmer (1970:133) confirm that 'shall' covers the meaning of promise or what is Jespersen calls "obligational" in statement by using the second and third person, and with first person in questions. This covers a variety of meanings, as explained in the following examples:

(70) You shall have it tomorrow. (Promise)

(71) Shall I come? (wish of the person addressed)

(72) He shall do it. (Promise to enforce action)

In question '*shall*' inverts the subject's position with two meanings:

i. With first person, I/we to indicate a question about a person's wishes. 'it may be an offer of service.', as in:

(73) Shall I open the door? (= 'Do you want me ...?')

(74) Shall we carry the box into the house for you? (= 'would you like me ..?')

ii. with a noun and a third person pronoun 'shall' asks about the wishes of the person to whom the question is put, as in:

(75) Shall he carry your suitcases up stairs? (= Do you want, would you, him to do this?)

(76) Shall the messenger wait?

2.2.5 Will

Eckersley and Eckersley (1967:203) define 'will' as a defective verb which has neither infinitive, participles, gerunds nor imperative. One of its uses is obligation under the sense of promise, threat, and determination, as in the following respectively:

(77) You can count on me! I'll be there at 8 o'clock sharp. (promise)

(78) If you don't finish your dinner off, you'll go straight to bed! (threat)

(79) I will make this radio work even if I have stay up all night.(Determination)

Hornby (1975:213) supports Eckersley's proposal stating that 'will' in the first person is used to express a promise or threat. They both implicitly refer to obligation, as in:

(80) I'll be there to help my father.

(81) I'll punish you if you don't behave yourself.

On the other hand, Swan (1995:114) and Lock (1996:206) expound that the use of 'will' implies sufficiently strong authority on the part of the speaker to ensure that there is almost no doubt that the obligation will be completed with, as in:

(82) All members of the team will be at the station at 2:15 sharp.

Moreover, Swan (ibid) adds that 'Will + S + infinitive" usually introduces an order or request, as in:

(83) Will you do the shopping this afternoon, please?

Accordingly, Quirk and Greenbaum (1990:55) contend that 'will' in specific prediction use has the meaning of obligation, as in:

(84) The game

}	will	}	be	finished by now.
	must			
	should			

In negative form 'will' is 'will not' (won't), it negates the event like 'shall not' not modality. This means it is still having the meaning of obligation, as in:

(85) You won't be late. (you are obliged not to)

In question 'will' can invert the subject. In other words, it takes the initial position of the sentence indicating to the hearer's opinion, not the speaker's, as in:

(86) Will you open the window.

2.2.6 Need

There are two forms of need. One is normal and quite regular, having all the parts of normal verbs (need; needs, needed, needing). The second is an auxiliary or modal verb. The former is beyond this subsection. *Need* is a special finite; it is a defective, having only one form, it is similar in meaning to 'have to', which indicates the meanings of 'necessity and obligation'. Leech and Svartvik (1975:190), Swan (1995:351) and Parrot (2001:129) hold that 'need' as a modal can be constructed with bare infinitive and without the inflected forms (needs, needed), this construction is restricted to non – assertive context. In other words, it is mainly restricted to negative and interrogative sentences, as in:

(87) She needn't bring the files as long as she can remember the main details.

(89) Need I bring anything with me?

Swan (1995:351) expounds that the modal forms of 'need' normally refer to immediate necessity. They are often used to ask for or give permission – usually permission not to do something, as in:

(90) You needn't pay that phone call.

In negative form 'need' is 'needn't' which negates the event not modality (by inserting the particle (not)), i.e., the absence of necessity, as in:

(91) You needn't be so rude.

(92) You needn't write, but please phone.

Likewise, Eastwood (1994:117) and Parrot (2001:125) suggest two forms of negative with 'need'; 'needn't' and 'don't have to'. Each one of them can be employed to negate particular types of obligation, as in the following examples:

(93) you needn't stay after 6.00. (The person who says this has an authority to allow the employee to leave.)

Moreover, 'don't have (need) to' can be employed to express 'external' obligation, as in:

(94) You don't have to clean the tools each time you use them. (the person who says this is referring to external convention or regulations)

Need covers its question form by changing the word order. In other words by inversion, in this sense it implicates the addressee's authority, as in:

(94) Need he work so hard?

(95) Need I answer that questions?

Although grammarians affirm that '*need*' as a modal verb occurs only with negative and interrogative sentences, Chalker (2001:130) comes up with his proposal that '*need*' may occur positively only if:

(i) Qualified in some semi-negative way, as in:

(96) I need hardly say that I agree.

(ii) Subordinate to non- assertive main clauses as in:

(97) I'm not sure whether we need go.

However, it can also be used affirmatively with adverbs such as 'never, hardly, and scarcely, to predicate negative implication, as in:

(98) I hardly/ scarcely need say how much I enjoyed the holiday.

2.2.7 Had better ('d better)

Had ('d) better is an idiomatic modal which is combination of auxiliary and infinitive or adverb. None of them have nonfinite forms and they are therefore; always the first verb in the verb phrase (Greenbuam and Quirk, 1990: 77). Parrot (2001:122) points out that 'had better' is similar to pure modal verbs except that it consists of two words. Generally, it is used to give advice; advisability implies a weak type of obligation on the part of the speaker. It means that 'there is a benefit to do it', or there is a disadvantage not to do it. This also means that 'there is an element of choice whether to do it or not', as in:

(99) You had better check that the doors are all locked.

Here, the listener is not obliged to perform the act, although the speaker advises him to perform the act.

Moreover, Bosewitz (1987:115) points out that 'had better' has the same meaning of 'should', and 'ought to' (i.e. this is a good idea), as in:

(100) You have failed two tests. $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Should} \\ \text{You had better} \\ \text{Ought to} \end{array} \right\}$ start working harder.

Bing (1989:144) and Azar (1999:160) agree with him adding that it is stronger than them, since 'had better' suggests 'consequences' of an action as illustrated in the following examples:

(101) You look sick.

(101a) You should be in bed. (It's a good idea to go to bed)

(101 b) You had better take some aspirin. (The pain will continue if you don't take some aspirin.)

But, 'should' and 'ought to', are used when something advisable has not been done as in:

(102) The baby is crying. ~ You should have taken a nap, but s/he didn't.

(103) She is crying. ~ you ought to have fed her earlier.

Elaborately, Quirk *et al.*, (1985:141) propose that 'had better' has two kinds of negation:

(i) there is a negation in which 'not' follows the whole expression as in:

(104) You had better not lock the door. (Advisability not to act the action (lock), so the main verb has been negated.)

(ii) When 'not' follows the first word. (especially in negative questions) as in:

(105) Had not we better lock the door?

2.2.8 Be bound to

'Be bound to' is a semi-modal or idiom as Leech proposes (1989:63), it is generally used to express 'necessity' and 'obligation' as in:

(106) The plan is bound to fail. (= 'must inevitably fail'; necessity)

(107) You are bound to pay your debts. (= 'are compelled to'; obligation)

Additionally, Leech (*ibid.*: 550) adds that 'be bound to' is used to express a strong or definite type of obligation and necessity, as in:

(108) If you hurry too much, you are bound to make mistakes.

In negative forms, Perkins (1983:73) proposes that 'be bound to' has two negative meanings in obligation sense, as in:

(109) You are bound by law not to beat your wife. (= 'wife beating is illegal')

(110) You are not bound by law to beat your wife. (= 'wife beating is not compulsory').

2.2.9 Be To

Quirk, *et al.* (1985:141- 43) describe 'Be to' as an idiomatic verb, a verb which is neither like a main verb nor entirely like auxiliaries, since it does not behave as an operator. It is normally the first word alone which acts as an operator in negative and interrogative sentences, as in:

(110) I wasn't to know that you were waiting.

'Be to', is an idiom used to express an order by a person in authority, e.g. a teacher, parent, etc. as in:

(111) You're not to stay up late.

(112) The head master says you are to come at once.

Leech, (1971:96) states that 'Be to' is similar in meaning to 'have (got) to' and 'ought to'. In fact it can frequently be substituted for either of these modal forms, as in:

(113) They $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{have got to} \\ \text{are to} \\ \text{Ought to} \end{array} \right\}$ leave immediately.

'Be to' in negative, as Swan (1995:210) states, is an alternative for 'must' (prohibition), as in:

(114) You're not to tell anybody about this.

In (114) 'Be to' negates the event not modality, and in both cases whether in positive and negative it refers to 'obligation'

2.2.10 Be supposed to

According to Quirk *et al.*'s (1985:143, 237) classification 'Be Supposed to' is a semi- auxiliary verb, having both 'necessity' and 'obligation' meanings as in:

(115) Their team is supposed to be the best. (= 'it is necessary' = 'Should be')

(116) You were supposed to be here at nine. (= 'you are obliged to')

Leech (1989:501) describes the kind of obligation which results from 'Be Supposed to' as a weaker and less definite, in that it approaches to the meaning of 'advisability'. In the same context, Feigenbaum (1985: 123) holds that 'advisability' is related in meaning to 'necessity', they both indicate some reason for the action or situation, the reason may come from outside a person such as the law, as in:

(117) We are supposed to obey all laws, but some laws appear to be silly.

Bing (1989:138) argues that 'Be supposed to' in negative form refers to 'prohibition' by inserting the particle 'NOT' after the 'Be', as in:

(118) You are not supposed to park near the bridge.

(119) you are not supposed to smoke here.

In interrogative, the subject of the sentence is placed after 'Be' in question form, as in:

(120) Is this food supposed to be kept cool?

(121) Are these books supposed to be sold?

Although obligation is mainly realized by a set of auxiliary verbs called "Modal auxiliaries", there are other expressions like, nominal expressions, adjectival expressions, and modal lexical verbs (performative verbs), which can be used to realize or indicate the meaning of 'obligation', (to be explained in the coming sections).

III. METHODOLOGY

The study was designed to investigate Iraqi EFL University students' errors in learning and their ability in recognizing and producing obligation. Therefore, a written test has been designed and then administrated to fourth-year, students of English department, College of Education University of Thi-Qar. Practically, the suggested test consists of two main questions which in total involve 30 items. Since the aim of this study is to present a syntactic analysis, it focused on the syntactic point of view. Because of the Covide - 19, and it's negative impact on students' actual attendance, the test was designed in Google form and then emailed to students.

In terms of the emailed form of questions, question one covers the level of recognition. It is important to note that each item is designed to measure a particular syntactic structure of obligation. Question one consists of (15) items. In this level the subjects are instructed to choose the correct answer between the

brackets and then fill in the blanks with the correct choice. The second question covers the production level. The subjects are provided with 15 sentences and they are asked to provide new sentences in which denotes the same syntactic structure and carry the same meaning.

The total number of the sample was 70 male and female. The reason behind choosing fourth-year College students as subjects for the test is based on the assumption that proficiency in using obligation demands a long – term exposure to English, a condition which this group of learners is supposed to satisfy. It should be worth mentioning that the subjects almost are from a homogenous sample which satisfies the aspects of homogeneity as far as the learner's ages, L1 backgrounds, stage of development, etc. are concerned (see Ellis 1986:52).

IV. RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

As we explained above that the study was designed to understand the Iraqi EFL University students' ability in recognizing and producing of obligation. In which the results confirm that subjects' knowledge of obligation in general and their knowledge of the various syntactic structures is limited and their abilities to use obligation are unsatisfactory. On the other hand, the results also show that subject's performance at the recognition level is better than their performance at the production level.

In terms of percentages Table (1), shows that subjects correct responses at the recognition level is 40 % . Large number of the subjects face difficulty in recognizing the various types of syntactic obligatory structures. Meanwhile, table (1) makes it clear that the items that have highly correct responses are No. 7 (74%), No.2 (57%),No.8 (58%) and No.9 (42%). The subjects' responses to the items show that they have the ability to pick up the syntactic structures of modal auxiliaries with "must", "should", "ought to", and "be + supposed + infinitive", to express the meaning of obligation.

The analysis also indicates that item No. 10 (85%) is the most frequently misused one among the different structures. In addition, (85%) of the subjects fail to realize that (interrogative sentences) indicate the use of obligation. Moreover, it is also noted from the responses of items No. (11) that subjects give incorrect response about the use of the modal verb (will) which express the nation of obligation. . This can be due to many reasons, one of them is that there is not any emphasis to such area in the syllabus. Moreover, the analysis of the data at the production level reveals that the number of erroneous responses are more than their correct responses.

Table (1) Students' recognition of obligation

No.	Correct	Percent	ERs	Percent
1.	31	44%	39	42%
2.	40	57%	30	24%
3.	30	42%	40	50%
4.	36	51%	34	48%
5.	22	31%	48	54%
6.	10	14%	60	85%
7.	52	74%	18	14%
8.	48	58%	29	31%
9.	38	42%	40	45%
10.	33	37%	44	52%
11.	28	40%	42	60%
12.	23	32%	47	67%
13.	27	38%	43	61%
14.	14	20%	56	80%
15.	18	25%	52	74%
Total	428	40%	622`	59%

Furthermore, the responses of items No. (13, 12, 14, and 15) indicate that most subjects face difficulties in recognizing obligation semantically. This could be due to many reasons. One of which is that there is not

any emphasis to such area in the syllabus. In addition to that, item No. (1,3,4, and 5) show high percentages of difficulties for the subjects in dealing with obligation.

Table (2) Students' Production of obligation

No.	Correct	Percent	ERs	Percent
1.	28	40%	42	61%
2.	31	44%	39	55%
3.	23	32%	47	67%
4.	26	37%	44	62%
5.	10	14%	60	85%
6.	29	41%	41	58%
7.	17	24%	53	75%
8.	18	25%	53	75%
9.	28	40%	42	60%
10.	13	18%	57	81%
11.	22	31%	48	68%
12.	20	28%	50	71%
13.	35	50%	35	50%
14.	11	15%	59	84%
15.	19	27%	51	72%
Total	330	31%	720	68%

In terms of students' production level of obligation, the above Table (2) shows that items No. (2,6,9, and 13) express highly correct answers, whereas, items No (12,14,3,10,8,7,5,11, and 15) indicate the highly incorrect responses.

As the results show, the subjects answer correctly the items which are related to modal verbs. The results present that (50%) of the investigated students were able to produce the syntactic structures of modal verb with "must" and they produced an approximate percentage that related to "need" 44% , "ought" 41%, and "I have got" 40%. In the same context, the analysis shows that item No. 5 (84%) subjects fail to understand the situation as obligation which leads them to provide incorrect responses. This is also true with items No. (12,1,7,8,9,10, and 11). In the same level of analysis, item No. (15) reveals that 72% of the investigated students don't know that "shall" expresses the meaning of obligation. This finding confirms what has been resulted from the analysis of item No. (3).

To sum up, the statistical analysis confirm that all the subjects' responses at the recognition and production levels are poor and approximately they committed the same errors with the obligatory syntactic structures at both levels (recognition & production). Meanwhile, the analysis reveals that the examined students' performance at the recognition level (40%) is better than their level of production (31%). This percentage indicates that students' recognition of obligation is slightly better than of production. Such fluctuation in the percentage of errors among the various syntactic forms of obligation in both levels is due to incomplete awareness of the subjects in the nature of these different structures. This result confirms what has been said by Corder (1973:262) "there is a general belief among teachers that the learner's receptive abilities and the recognition of an item is easier than its retrieval in production."

V. CONCLUSION

This study was designed to investigate Iraqi EFL students' ability in recognizing and using the syntactic structures of obligation. As such 70 Iraqi EFL University students were chosen to be the sample of our analysis. Accordingly, the mathematic results found that:

1. Fourth year students face difficulty in using the structures and expressions of obligation,
2. Fourth year students encounter difficulties in recognizing and producing of obligatory structures. This is really reflected by the poor performance rate of the students in the main test.

3. Fourth year students recognize and use selected number of obligatory structures, such as the modals verbs like (must, should, ought to, need), and some structures like 'be + infinitive, be + supposed + infinitive'. Meanwhile, they show misuse and ignore other structures of obligation. This can be attributed to the incomplete and insufficient knowledge of the students in the literature of obligation and its structures and expressions.

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