

**استقصاء أداء الطلبة في استخدام زمن المضارع  
البسيط في الأقسام غير الاختصاص في اللغة الانكليزية**

**An Investigation of Students' Performance  
in Using Present Simple Tense for Non-  
English Departments**

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## المخلص

تبحث الدراسة الحالية في أداء الطلبة في استخدام زمن المضارع البسيط بين الأقسام غير المتخصصة باللغة الإنكليزية، وتحديدًا قسمي الإعلام وعلم الاجتماع في كلية الآداب بجامعة تكريت خلال العام الدراسي ٢٠٢٤-٢٠٢٥. شملت العينة ١٢٠ طالبًا وطالبة من المرحلة الثانية شاركوا في هذا البحث. تهدف الدراسة إلى تقييم الكفاءة النحوية للطلبة على مستويي التعرف (recognition) والإنتاج (production)، مع مقارنة لقدرات الطلبة بين القسمين. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تستقصي الدراسة الفروق في استخدام زمن المضارع البسيط عبر الأنماط المختلفة للجمل. وقد استُخدم اختبار تشخيصي لجمع البيانات حول أداء الطلبة في زمن المضارع البسيط، وأظهرت النتائج وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين أداء الطلبة في زمن المضارع البسيط والوسط الحسابي النظري، كما أظهرت أن أداء طلبة الجامعة في مستوى التعرف أعلى منه في مستوى الإنتاج بالنسبة لكلا القسمين (الإعلام وعلم الاجتماع). وأخيرًا، بينت النتائج أن الطلبة في كلا القسمين يواجهون صعوبات في الجمل الاستفهامية بزمن المضارع البسيط، حيث كان الوسط الحسابي النظري أعلى من مستوى أدائهم فيها. وقدم البحث توصيات تربوية مستهدفة لتعزيز إتقان زمن المضارع البسيط.

## Abstract

The current study investigates students' performance in using the present simple tense among non-English departments, specifically Media and Sociology Departments at the College of Arts, Tikrit University during the academic year 2024-2025. The sample are 120 second-stage students participated in this investigation. The study aims to evaluate students' grammatical competence at both the recognition and the production levels, comparing their abilities across the two departments. Additionally, it investigates differences in present simple tense usage based on students' accuracy in applying the tense across various sentence types. A diagnostic test is used to collect the data about students' performance in present simple tense, results show that there is a significant difference among students' performance in present simple tense than the theoretical mean score, also university students' performance are higher in recognition level than production level of present simple tense for both Media and Sociology Departments, and finally students at both Departments face difficulties with interrogative type of present simple tense sentences that the theoretical mean score is higher than the level of students' performance with interrogative sentences. The research provided targeted pedagogical recommendations to enhance present simple tense mastery.



## **Section One: Introduction**

### **1.1 Problem of the Research**

Mastering the present simple tense is fundamental for effective English language use, particularly for expressing habitual actions, general truths, and factual descriptions (Azar, 2002). However, many students in non-English-specialized departments such as Media and Sociology continue to struggle with its correct application in both spoken and written forms (Crystal, 2003). This weakness impacts their academic achievements.

Several studies have emphasized that grammatical competence is often underdeveloped in learners outside English-major programs, primarily due to limited instructional time and lack of contextualized grammar practice (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999). In addition, a performance gap is often observed between recognition (understanding correct grammatical structures) and production (using them accurately in writing), which may reflect insufficient integration of grammar teaching with meaningful practice tasks (Ur, 2012). Moreover, researches highlight that grammar learning outcomes can vary significantly across disciplines and learner demographics, including gender differences in language acquisition (Ellis, 2008).

Despite its importance, few empirical studies have specifically examined students' performance in using present simple tense within unspecialized departments, such as Media and Sociology. Likewise, there is a lack of comparative data regarding how gender, sentence structure types (affirmative, negative, interrogative), and departmental background influence students' grammatical accuracy (Savignon, 2002). Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by investigating students' recognition and production levels of present simple tense, while comparing results across departments and students' performance with the different types of present simple tense sentences.

### **1.2 Aims of the Research**

This research aims at investigating:

- 1-Students' performance in using the present simple tense at two departments (Media, and Sociology) at College of Arts at Tikrit university.
- 2- Students' abilities in using the present simple tense at both the recognition and the production levels, and comparing among students at the two departments of College of Arts at Tikrit university.
- 3- Students' abilities in using the present simple tense across different sentence types (affirmative, negative, interrogative) at the two departments at College of Arts at Tikrit university.



### **1.3 Research Questions**

This research tries to answer the following questions:

- 1-Are there statistically significant differences in students' performance in using the present simple tense?
- 2-Are there statistically significant differences in students' abilities to use the present simple tense at the recognition and the production levels, and do these differences vary among students from the two departments?
- 3-Are there statistically significant differences in students' abilities to use the present simple tense across different sentence types (affirmative, negative, and interrogative, and which type is the most difficult for students and results in the highest rate of grammatical errors?

### **1.4 Limits of the Research**

The limits of current research are:

- 1-The study is limited to second-year students enrolled in the Departments of Media and Sociology at the College of Arts, Tikrit University.
- 2-The data collection are confined to the first semester of the academic year ٢٠٢٤-٢٠٢٥.
- 3-The model of this research is Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999), model of the Present Simple Tense, including its three basic sentence types: affirmative, interrogative, and negative.

### **1.5 Plan of the Research**

The research is conducted through the following steps to achieve the aims:

- 1- Collect the theoretical background.
- 2- A diagnostic test is constructed, the research aims is developed, and its validity and reliability are rigorously established.
- 3-A sample of 120 second-year students from the two departments, at College of Arts at Tikrit University is selected for the research.
- 4- The diagnostic test is administered to the chosen sample.
- 5-The researcher analyzes the collected data using appropriate statistical methods to derive meaningful results.
- 6-The final step involves interpreting the analyzed results and providing conclusions, recommendations.

## **Section Two: Theoretical Background and Previous Studies**

### **2.1 Theoretical Background**

#### **2.1.1 Present Tense as a Foundation in English Grammar**



Within the broader grammatical system, the present tense occupies a foundational position due to its frequency and multifunctionality. The present simple tense is used to express habitual actions, general truths, scheduled events, and static states (Biber et al., 1999). Swan (2005) highlights that the present tense is not only essential for everyday communication but also plays a critical role in academic discourse, scientific reporting, and journalistic writing. Its pervasive use makes it one of the first tenses introduced in English language instruction and a persistent benchmark for grammatical competence. Mastery of the present tense enables learners to convey facts and establish a sense of immediacy, which is particularly important in disciplines that require accurate reporting and clear exposition (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999).

### 2.1.2 Relevance of Present Tense for Specialized Fields

The correct and contextually appropriate use of the present tense holds significant relevance for students in specialized academic fields. Hyland (2004) notes that disciplinary discourse conventions often dictate tense usage, influencing the structure and style of communication within professional domains. In media and journalism, for instance, headlines and news reports frequently employ the present simple to create a sense of timeliness and urgency examples include constructions like “President signs trade agreement” or “Researchers discover new species”. Similarly, in sociology, the present tense is often used to describe enduring social phenomena and generalizations, such as “Inequality affects community cohesion” (Flowerdew, 2015). For learners in specialized departments, mastering the present tense is not merely an academic exercise but a professional imperative that aligns with the communicative norms of their discipline.

### 2.1.3 Types of Sentences in the Present Tense and Their Function

The communicative scope of the present tense is expressed through its systematic realization in multiple sentence types, each serving distinct pragmatic and syntactic functions in discourse. Broadly, these types include affirmative, negative, and interrogative structures, though further sub-classifications such as yes/no questions, wh-questions, and alternative questions add layers of complexity to both recognition and production tasks in foreign language contexts (Quirk et al., 1985).

**1-Affirmative sentences** In the present tense, for example, “The committee meets every Monday,” typically convey factual information, habitual actions, general truths, or states of being. From a communicative perspective, they serve as the default declarative form, providing the foundation upon which other sentence types are contrasted (Celce-Murcia



and Larsen-Freeman, 1999). The cognitive demands here are relatively lower compared to other forms, as learners often encounter affirmative structures more frequently in instructional and naturalistic input (Ellis, 2006).

**2-Negative sentences**, such as “The organization does not support the initiative,” introduce an additional layer of morphological and syntactic processing. Negation in English requires the correct insertion of auxiliary verbs (e.g., do/does) and the negative particle not, while maintaining subject-verb agreement and proper word order. The complexity of negation poses documented challenges for EFL learners due to transfer effects from the L1 and the relatively marked syntactic structure of negative forms in English (Schachter, 1983)

**3-Interrogative sentences** in the present tense can be broadly divided into yes/no questions (e.g., “Does the department offer evening classes?”) and wh-questions (e.g., “When does the conference start?”). Yes/no questions primarily test learners’ mastery of subject-auxiliary inversion, whereas wh-questions demand both inversion and the correct placement and selection of interrogative words, often increasing processing load (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002).

#### **2.1.4 Cognitive and Pedagogical Challenges in Tense Use**

Despite its foundational status, the present tense poses notable challenges for EFL students. Ellis (2006) observes that learners frequently conflate the simple present with the present progressive, leading to errors such as “She is go to class” instead of “She goes to class”. Other recurrent issues include subject-verb agreement violations (“He walk to school”) and overgeneralization errors (“He don’t like it”), often stemming from first language interference and incomplete mastery of auxiliary forms. Gass and Selinker (2008) attribute these difficulties to the cognitive demands of tense selection, which require learners to map abstract temporal concepts onto morphosyntactic forms. Pedagogically, insufficient exposure to authentic, context-rich input can exacerbate these issues, limiting the learner’s ability to internalize form–function relationships (Krashen, 1982).

#### **2.1.5 Theoretical Models Supporting Current Investigation**

Several theoretical frameworks underpin the investigation of present tense competence in specialized contexts. Interlanguage Theory (Selinker, 1972) provides a lens for understanding how learners construct evolving mental grammars that approximate the target language, with tense usage serving as a diagnostic indicator of developmental stage. Krashen’s (1982)



Input Hypothesis emphasizes the necessity of comprehensible input slightly above the learner's current proficiency level to facilitate acquisition, while VanPatten's (1996) Input Processing model underscores the role of attention to form within meaningful communication. These perspectives align with cognitive-interactionist views, which posit that grammar development results from the interplay of input, output, and feedback in authentic communicative contexts (Long, 1996). Collectively, these models justify a research focus that combines targeted instruction with performance-based assessment in specialized academic domains.

### **2.1.6 Assessing Present Tense Competence**

Assessing learners' mastery of the present simple tense requires a multifaceted approach that evaluates both recognition and production abilities. In the context of grammar assessment, recognition refers to the learner's ability to identify, interpret, and select the correct present simple forms when presented in written or spoken input. This receptive dimension reflects the learner's awareness of grammatical accuracy and their capacity to distinguish correct forms from incorrect alternatives. Recognition tasks may include multiple-choice questions, error-identification exercises, or listening comprehension activities where students must detect specific verb forms in context (Alderson, 2005).

In contrast, production involves the active use of the present simple tense in speech or writing to convey meaning accurately and appropriately (Brown and Abeywickrama, 2010). This productive dimension requires not only grammatical knowledge but also the ability to retrieve and apply the correct tense form under communicative conditions. Production is typically assessed through tasks such as guided writing, picture-based description, oral interviews, or news-reporting simulations in which students must construct affirmative, negative, and interrogative sentences in real time. Research indicates that recognition often precedes production in the developmental sequence of grammatical acquisition (Nation, 2013). In specialized academic contexts such as media or sociology, assessing both levels is crucial for determining whether learners can meet the communicative demands of their discipline.

## **2.2 Previous Studies**

### **1. Riyatno (2020)**

This study aims at analyzing the common mistakes made by non-English departments' students in understanding simple present tense sentences. The sample are 89 students from the Telecommunications



Engineering Study Program at Institut Teknologi Telkom Purwokerto during the 2018–2019 academic year.

The researcher administers a test comprising five affirmative sentences, which students were required to transform into negative and interrogative forms within 20 minutes. Results show Students frequently misused auxiliary verbs especially with third-person singular subjects.

## **2. Fatimah (2018)**

This study aims at determining the problems faced by second-grade students in using the simple present tense, the sample are 40 students selected randomly from five classes.

The researcher uses interviews and tests to identify and classify students' difficulties with the simple present tense. Results show students exhibited low proficiency in using the simple present tense, with an average score of 3.9 out of 10. Factors contributing to these difficulties included lack of motivation, insufficient teacher guidance, and limited exposure to English language use

## **Section Three: Procedures**

### **3.1 Research design**

Research design is the overall plan and structured framework that guides the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data in order to answer the research questions . The research design is descriptive quantitative (Creswell,2014).

### **3.2Population and The Sample**

The population refers to the entire group of individuals, events, or objects that share a common characteristic and to which the researcher intends to generalize the study's findings (Creswell, 2012). And sample is a subset of the population selected for the purpose of conducting the study, representing the characteristics of the larger group (Gay, Mills, and Airasian, 2011).

In current research the population is 265, while the sample is 120 that chosen randomly .The students (male and female) are studying in second stage in Media and Sociology departments at Collage of Arts, Tikrit University. The period of applying the diagnostic test is during the academic year (2024-2025).

*Table (3.1)*

*The Population and Sample of Research*



| Pilot | Sample | Population | Tikrit University/<br>Collage of Arts |
|-------|--------|------------|---------------------------------------|
| 12    | 60     | 180        | Media dept.                           |
| 12    | 60     | 85         | Sociology dept.                       |
| 24    | 120    | 265        | Total                                 |

### 3.3The Research Instrument

In educational research, an instrument refers to the specific method used to collect data relevant to the research problem (Best and Kahn, 2006). In this research, an investigation through a diagnostic test is the instrument, designed to measure students' mastery of the Present Simple Tense, that's the researcher designed the test, in alignment with the objectives of the research, and it underwent expert review by jury members, who suggested modifications that were incorporated to refine its reliability and appropriateness

#### 3.3.1Construction of the Diagnostic Test

The diagnostic test in this research is constructed to evaluate students' performance in using the Present Simple Tense, focusing on its three sentence types :Affirmative sentences, Interrogative sentences, and Negative sentences. The test items are classified according to the specific objectives of the research, ensuring coverage of grammatical accuracy, correct verb forms. The test includes two questions, the first question at the recognition level consists of three branches affirmative, interrogative, and negative, scored out of thirty, and the second question is at production level consists of three branches affirmative, interrogative, and negative, scored out of thirty. In the construction of the test a specification of the behavioral objectives is derived, as illustrated in table (3.2):

*Table (3.2)*

*The Specifications of Behavioral Objectives , Levels, and Scoring of the Test*

| Total Marks | Marks per Item | Items | Behavioral Objectives         | Bloom's Taxonomy levels | Sentence Type  | Test Section   |
|-------------|----------------|-------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 10          | 2              | 5     | Students' ability to identify | Remembering             | a- Affirmative | Q1 Recognition |



|    |   |    |                                                                        |                                   |                 |                  |
|----|---|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
|    |   |    | correct verb forms                                                     | Understanding                     |                 |                  |
| 10 | 2 | 5  | Students' ability to identify correct verb forms                       |                                   | b-Negative      |                  |
| 10 | 2 | 5  | Students' ability to distinguish between correct and incorrect usage   |                                   | c-Interrogative |                  |
| 10 | 2 | 5  | Students' ability to use correct tense in guided sentence writing      |                                   | a-Affirmative   |                  |
| 10 | 2 | 5  | Students' ability to use correct tense in guided sentence writing      | Knowledge<br>Applying<br>Creating | b-Negative      | Q2<br>Production |
| 10 | 2 | 5  | Students' ability to make-WH-questions in present<br>- question by v.d |                                   | c-Interrogative |                  |
| 60 |   | 30 |                                                                        |                                   | Total           |                  |

### 3.4 Validity and Reliability of the Test

Validity and reliability are fundamental concepts in research that ensure the quality of any measurement tool. Validity pertains to how accurately a test measures the concept it is intended to measure, confirming that the results genuinely reflect the targeted construct (Messick, 1995). In contrast, reliability refers to the degree to which a measurement yields



consistent results across repeated applications under similar conditions (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

The main distinction between these two lies is: validity emphasizes the truthfulness and appropriateness of the measurement (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2018), whereas reliability concerns the stability and repeatability of the results (Field, 2013).

Validity can be categorized into several types, including face validity, content validity, and construct validity. Face validity refers to whether the test appears, on the surface, to measure what it claims to measure (Drost, 2011). To ensure content validity, a panel of experts comprising faculty members specialized in English Language Teaching methodology and linguistics reviewed the test items, providing feedback and suggesting revisions to guarantee the test's appropriateness and relevance.

Regarding reliability, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is widely recognized as an effective statistical measure for assessing internal consistency (Gliem and Gliem, 2003). In this research, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for the diagnostic test of present simple tense, yielding a coefficient of 0.81, which demonstrates a high level of reliability.

### **3.5 Pilot Study**

A pilot study involves selecting a small group of students to test the research instrument before it is administered to the main sample. This step is crucial in research as it helps identify any flaws or difficulties in the test, such as ambiguous questions or insufficient time for completion. The feedback gathered from the pilot allows the researcher to make necessary adjustments, ensuring the instrument's effectiveness and reliability when used with the full sample (Madsen, 1983).

The test was administered to a sample of 24 students who were specifically selected from the entire population in order to accomplish test's goals.

### **3.6 Scoring Scheme**

Scoring refers to the process of assigning numerical values to students' responses in order to quantitatively assess their performance. This process not only offers insightful feedback on students' academic achievements but also informs educators' instructional strategies (Genesee, Upshur, and Richards, 1996).

The diagnostic test is scored out of 60 that each question is allocated 30 marks, the scoring was conducted collaboratively by a designated scoring committee alongside the researcher to ensure objectivity and consistency. Each item is allocated a maximum of two marks, as shown in table (3.2). A student earns the full two marks if their response



satisfactorily demonstrates both grammatical accuracy and the correct use of verb forms. If only one of these criteria is met, the response is awarded one mark, if the response fail to meet either criterion, it receives zero mark.

## Section Four: Discussion of Results

### 4.1 Data Analysis

#### 4.1.1. Data Analysis of the First Question

The first question is " Are there statistically significant differences in students' performance in using the present simple tense?". And the aim is "Investigating students' performance in using the present simple tense at two departments (Media, and Sociology) at College of Arts at Tikrit university". The researcher used the T-test formula of one independent sample to obtain the mean scores of students' performance with present simple tense is (31.03) which is slightly higher than the theoretical mean (30), the standard deviation is (3.50) degrees. And tabulated t-value is (1.98) while the calculated t-value (3.06) is higher than the tabulated t-value with the degree of freedom (119) at a level of significance (0.05), as clarify in table (4.1)

Table (4.1)

*T-Test Value of students' Performance in Present Simple Tense*

| Level of Sig | DF  | T-Value           |                    | Theoretical mean | SD   | Mean S. | Students |
|--------------|-----|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|------|---------|----------|
| 0.05         | 119 | Tabulated<br>1.98 | Calculated<br>3.06 | 30               | 3.50 | 31.03   | 120      |

That means, there is a significant difference between students' performance in present simple tense and the theoretical mean of university students' performance. University students have a higher level in present simple tense than the theoretical mean score.

#### 4.1.2 Data Analysis for the Second Question

The second question is "Are there statistically significant differences in students' abilities to use the present simple tense at the recognition and the production levels, and do these differences vary among students from the two departments?". And the aim "Investigating Students' abilities in using the present simple tense at both the recognition and the production levels, and comparing among students at the two departments of College of Arts at Tikrit university". The researcher used: **A- a T-test formula** of paired sample to obtain the mean scores of students' performance at recognition level for Media department which is (28.606). And the mean scores of students' performance at production level is (24.220). And the tabulated t-value is (1.35) while the calculated t-value



(2.34) is higher than the tabulated t-value with degree of freedom (59) at a level of significance (0.05). As illustrated in table(4.2)

Table (4.2)

*T-Test Value of students' Performance in Recognition and Production for Students at Media Department*

| Level of Sig | DF | T-Value   |            | SD    | Mean S. | S. | Levels      |
|--------------|----|-----------|------------|-------|---------|----|-------------|
| 0.05         | 59 | Tabulated | Calculated | 9.22  | 28.606  | 60 | Recognition |
|              |    | 1.35      | 2.34       | 11.23 | 24.220  |    | Production  |

That means, there is a significant difference between students' performance in recognition and production levels. The students at Media department have a higher level in recognition than the production level.

**B- a T-test formula** of paired sample to obtain the mean scores of students' performance at recognition level for Sociology department which is (31.143). And mean scores of students' performance at production level is (25.102). And the tabulated t-value is (1.01) while the calculated t-value (2.67) that is higher than the tabulated t-value with degree of freedom (59) at a level of significance (0.05). As shown in table(4.3).

Table (4.3)

*T-Test Value of students' Performance in Recognition and Production for Students at Sociology Department*

| Level of Sig | DF | T-Value   |            | SD    | Mean S. | S. | Levels      |
|--------------|----|-----------|------------|-------|---------|----|-------------|
| 0.05         | 59 | Tabulated | Calculated | 8.95  | 31.143  | 60 | Recognition |
|              |    | 1.01      | 2.67       | 10.22 | 25.102  |    | Production  |

That means, there is a significant difference between students' performance in recognition and production levels. The students at Sociology department have a higher level in recognition than the production level.

The comparison of the theoretical means scores between the two departments revealed no statistically significant difference. That the students' performance at recognition level higher than production level in both departments.

#### 4.1.3 Data Analysis for the Third Question



The third question is " Are there statistically significant differences in students' abilities to use the present simple tense across different sentence types (affirmative, negative, and interrogative) and which type is the most difficult for students and results in the highest rate of grammatical errors?". And the aim is " Identifying Students' abilities in using the present simple tense across different sentence types (affirmative, negative, interrogative) at the two departments at College of Arts at Tikrit university".

To identify if there is the statistically significant differences among the three sentence types (affirmative, negative, interrogative), t-test for one sample is adopted to compare with the actual mean scores for each type since the theoretical mean is (10). The results are shown in table (4.4)

Table (4.4)

*The Mean Score, calculated t-value for the three types of sentences in comparison with the theoretical mean*

| Sig. | DF  | Tabulated T-value | Calculated T-value | Theoretical mean | SD   | Mean score | S. N | Sentence type |
|------|-----|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|------|------------|------|---------------|
| 0.05 | 119 | 1.19              | 17.12              | 10               | 2.20 | 12         | 120  | Affirmative   |
|      |     |                   | 13.25              |                  | 2.31 | 11         |      | Negative      |
|      |     |                   | 3.13               |                  | 3.50 | 8          |      | Interrogative |

It is clear from table (4.4) that the calculated t-value for the affirmative type reached (17.12), which is higher than the tabulated t-value (1.98) at the significance level (0.05) and degree of freedom (119). This indicates that students' mean score in affirmative sentences is significantly higher than the theoretical mean. Similarly, the calculated t-value for the negative type (13.25) exceeds the tabulated value, indicating a significantly higher performance than the theoretical mean. On the other hand, the calculated t-value for the interrogative type reached (3.13), which also exceeds the



tabulated value, but here the mean score (8) is below the theoretical mean (10), indicating a weaker performance in interrogative sentences.

It is evident from that the lowest mean score is found in the interrogative type (8), and the differences among the three types (of sentences) are statistically significant in favor of the affirmative and negative types. This indicates that the interrogative sentence type is the most difficult for students and results in the highest rate of grammatical errors.

## 4.2 Discussion of Results

1. There is a statistically significant difference between the actual mean score (31.03) and the theoretical mean score (30) in favor of the actual mean, which indicates that students' performance in using the simple present tense is significantly higher than the theoretical mean score.

2. The results indicate that in the Media Department, there is a statistically significant difference between students' performance at the recognition and production levels, in favor of the recognition level. Similarly, in the Sociology Department, students' performance at the recognition level is significantly higher than at the production level. The comparison of the theoretical mean scores between the two departments revealed no statistically significant difference. Overall, it is clear that in both departments, students perform better at the recognition level than at the production level.

3. The results show statistically significant differences in students' abilities to use the present simple tense across the three sentence types. The lowest mean score (8) was recorded for the interrogative type, with significant differences in favor of the affirmative and negative types. This confirms that interrogative sentences are the most difficult for students and produce the highest rate of grammatical errors.

4. Both Riyatno (2020) and Fatimah (2018) found that non-English majors face serious difficulties with the simple present tense, especially in interrogative forms. Similarly, the present findings at Tikrit University confirm students' weak performance in this tense, with interrogative sentences posing the greatest challenge.

A common factor across all studies is limited teacher focus and insufficient exposure to authentic English input, which reinforces students' grammatical weaknesses.

## Section Five: Conclusions and Recommendations



## 5.1 Conclusions

1-The findings reveal that students in both departments of the College of Arts at Tikrit University demonstrate generally have weak performance of the present simple tense. While some comparisons showed statistically significant differences, these differences were relatively minor.

2-Students' performance in interrogative sentences was notably low, confirming that this sentence type poses the greatest difficulty and is associated with the highest frequency of grammatical errors.

3-English instructors in non-specialized departments appear to devote limited attention to teaching the present simple tense, and students have minimal exposure to authentic English-language materials, which may contribute to their weak performance.

## 5.2 Recommendations

1-Emphasizing the teaching of the present simple tense due to its multifunctional role in expressing authentic material and stating facts.

2-Encouraging instructors in both specialized and non-specialized departments to devote greater attention to the present simple tense, providing students with sufficient exposure to authentic materials that demonstrate its use.

3-Integrating podcasts featuring native speakers or proficient users of English to enable students to develop both grammatical accuracy and spoken fluency through authentic listening experiences.



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### Appendix (A)

#### Diagnostic Test of Present Simple Tense

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Instructions for Students

1-This test measures your ability to recognize and produce the present simple tense in different sentence types.

2-Write neatly and check your answers before submission.

3-Marks are awarded for accuracy and correct word order.

**Q1/ Circle the correct answer.(30m)**

#### A.

- 1-She \_\_\_\_ to the university every day.    A) go    B) goes    C) going  
2-The sun \_\_\_\_ in the east.    A) rise    B) rises    C) rising  
3-My parents \_\_\_\_ in Baghdad.    A) live    B) lives    C) living  
4-The course \_\_\_\_ every Monday.    A) start    B) starts    C) starting  
5-Ali \_\_\_\_ English well.    A) speak    B) speaks    C) speaking

#### B.

- 6-He \_\_\_\_ like football    .A) don't    B) doesn't    C) isn't  
7-They \_\_\_\_ speak French.    A) doesn't    B) don't    C) aren't  
8-I \_\_\_\_ play the guitar    .A) don't    B) doesn't    C) am not



9-Sarah \_\_\_\_ go to the gym on Fridays. A) doesn't B) don't C) isn't

10-The shop \_\_\_\_\_ open on Sundays. A) doesn't B) don't C) isn't

C.

11-\_\_\_\_\_ you play the piano? A) Do B) Does C) Are

12- \_\_\_\_\_ she know the answer? A) Do B) Does C) Is

13-Where \_\_\_\_\_ he work? A) do B) does C) is

14-What time \_\_\_\_\_ the meeting start? A) do B) does C) is

15 -\_\_\_\_\_the students attend the lecture? A) Do B) Does C) Are

**Q2 / Write complete sentences in the present simple tense using the prompts (30 m)**

**A.**

1-(he / work / in a bank( \_\_\_\_\_

2- (my friends / study / English \_\_\_\_\_(

3-(the train / arrive / at 9:00)\_\_\_\_\_

4-(we / play / football every weekend)\_\_\_\_\_

5-(the sun / shine / in summer)\_\_\_\_\_

**B.**

6-(I / not / eat / fish( \_\_\_\_\_

7-(they / not / go / to school on Sundays\_\_\_\_\_ (

8-(she / not / drive / to work)\_\_\_\_\_

9-(my brother / not / watch / TV at night(\_\_\_\_\_