

أداء المتعلمين العراقيين متعلمي اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية في استخدام الأفعال  
المتابعة

## The Iraqi EFL Learners' Performance in using Catenative Verbs

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### Abstract

*This paper attempts to present semantic and syntactic perspectives to specific class of verbs in English language. More specifically, the study focuses on catenative verbs that can be followed either by to-infinitive or -ing form. Analytically, the study tries to find a reliable justification to "Why does one verb 'prefer' an -ing form rather than a to-infinitive and vice versa"? to that end, the distribution of these verbs with non-finite complements obviously needs to be explained and the factors that contributing to this distribution need to be investigated.*

*This study aims at: 1- Explaining the various expressive effects and the principles underlying the*

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*use of the structures 'verb + complement' with the infinitive and the gerund-participle as complements of verbs comprising the notion of 'catenative'. 2- Analyzing the causes of errors made by Iraqi EFL university students in the catenative verbs. This is to help them have a comprehensive understanding about the semantic and syntactic valence of catenative verbs in English 3-Identifying the Iraqi EFL university learner's performance to recognize and produce catenative verbs to help them know the effective use of catenative verbs. 4- Finding out the learner's errors in catenative verbs at both recognition and production levels and pointing out whether there are any significant differences between the whole sample's performance in catenative verbs at both recognition and production levels.*

*It hypothesized that fourth- year students confront difficulties in knowing how to use either to -infinitive or an -ing complement after these certain verbs and producing these uses in the suitable form with correct syntactic features, because these English verbal groups are emphasized on the complement predicator following the first*

*verb, which makes learners uncertain to choose complement in which only one is possible as in ‘he enjoys studying English’ and ‘she intends to study English’ or those where either may occur: ‘they love studying/to study English’. These catenative verbs may be followed by either nonfinite or infinitive, with little apparent difference in meaning; ex: It began to rain. / It began raining. The second hypothesis is that students seem to show clear variation in recognizing and producing the different types of catenative verbs.*

*Methodologically, a test of two sides; recognition and production, is conducted. Students were encouraged to submit for the test. They spent one hour and a half doing it. Their responses are analysed. The results obtained confirm the hypotheses. Their responses on the recognition of catenative verbs are better than their production of these verbs. They are good at answering some types other than the other types.*

*In terms of findings, the study found that this class of verbs represents a problematic area for students of English; therefore, it is important to know which form is appropriate in different contexts.*

**Key Words: Catenative Verbs, Semantic, Syntactic perspectives, Iraqi EFL learners' performance.**

المستخلص

تحاول هذه الدراسة تقديم شرح مفصل لفئة معينة من أفعال اللغة الإنجليزية وهي "الأفعال التتابعية" من الناحية الدلالية والنحوية. وينصب التركيز على الأفعال التتابعية التي يمكن ان تتبع إما بصيغة المصدر أو بصيغة المستمر . فلماذا احد الأفعال التتابعية "يفضل" صيغته المستمر بدلا من صيغة المصدر والعكس بالعكس؟ . من الواضح, ان توزيع هذه الأفعال مع متمات او مكملات غير محدودده يحتاج الى شرح. لهذا الغرض، لا بد من التحقيق في العوامل التي تسهم في توزيع هذا النوع من الأفعال و التي تمثل منطقة إشكالية لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية، لأنه من المهم أن نعرف أي شكل يتناسب مع السياقات المختلفة. لذا، تحاول هذه الدراسة تقديم عرض مفصل عن الأفعال التتابعية في اللغة الإنكليزية والتي تمثل جانبا نحويا يجب على الطلبة معرفه استخداماته, مجاميعه والخصائص النحويه والدلاليه له.

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى: 1- شرح مختلف الآثار التعبيرية والمبادئ الأساسية لاستخدام التراكيب " فعل + مكمل" مع صيغة المصدر وصيغة الفعل المستمر كتميمات للأفعال التي تشكل مفهوم التتابعية. 2- تحليل أسباب الأخطاء التي يرتكبها الطلبة الجامعيين العراقيين في الأفعال التتابعية لمساعدتهم على الحصول على فهم شامل حول التكافؤ الدلالي والنحوي للأفعال التتابعية في اللغة الإنجليزية 3- تحديد أداء متعلمي اللغة الإنكليزية كلفه اجنبيه على تمييز وإنتاج الأفعال التتابعية لمساعدتهم على معرفة الاستخدام الفعال لها 4- استيضاح أخطاء المتعلم للأفعال

التابعيه على المستويين (التمييز والإنتاج) مشيرا إلى ما إذا كانت هناك أي اختلافات بين أداء العينة كلها على المستويين التمييز والإنتاج.

افتترضت الدراسه أن طلبه السنة رابعه يواجهون صعوبات في معرفة كيفية استخدام صيغه المصدر أو صيغه المستمر بعد هذه الأفعال وإنتاج هذه الاستخدامات في شكل يتناسب مع الميزات النحوية الصحيحة، حيث ان هذه الافعال تشدد على المكمل الذي يتلوا الفعل الأول، الأمر الذي يجعل متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية غير واثقين من اختياراتهم . توضح الفرضية الثانية أن الطلبة عكسوا تنوعا في تمييزهم و إنتاجهم للأنواع المختلفة من الأفعال التابعيه.

لإثبات الفرضيات أعلاه، تم إجراء اختبار ذا جانبين (تمييز وإنتاج). تم تشجيع الطلبة للخضوع للاختبار و قد أمضوا ساعة ونصف للاجابة عليه. ثم تم تحليل إجاباتهم. و قد طبقت نتائجهم الفرضيات أعلاه. حيث كانت اجابتهم في تمييز الافعال التابعيه افضل من انتاجها. و قد اجادوا في اجابتهم على بعض الانواع من الافعال التابعيه أكثر من غيرها.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Catenative verbs

There is a particular feature of certain verbs like ‘*need*’, ‘*prepare*’, ‘*agree*’ or ‘*seem*’ which sets them apart from other verbs: their ability to be combined into chains of verbs, to ‘catenate’ (Lat. catena: chain). Rizo (1990: 382) defined catenative verbs as lexical verbs that have a “special capacity to combine with non-finite verbal forms according to certain fixed rules”. So, because of their ability to create catenative constructions they can be distinguished from the rest of lexical verbs. Catenative

constructions are “grammatical units consisting of a sequence of two predicates, both being verbal groups and the second a non-finite verbal form” (Ibid). NP, + VP, + (NP2) + VP2 (Non-finite) + ... + VP,,

Consequently, this investigation is concerned with the structures mentioned above, i.e:

NP, + CATENATIVE VERB + (NP2) + VP2: 'bare' infinitive 'to'-infinitive '-ing' form '-ed' form

In complex phrases that contain no less than two full verbs, catenative verbs function; the first a catenative and the following clauses involve subordination (Palmer, 1974: 172).

Mindt (1999: 343) argues that catenative verb cannot stand on its own: “A catenative verb does not occur on its own. It is followed by at least another verb form. It functions like an element of a chain (lat. catena ) uniting at least two separate verb forms to form one homogenous verb phrase”

“The term 'catenative' alludes to the ability of these verbs to be concatenated in sequences of non finite constructions” (Quirk, 1985:146). Eastwood (1994:75) says that “A finite verb phrase is one that can be the main verb of a sentence. A non-finite verb phrase is an infinitive, gerund or participle”.

Palmer (1974), Rizo (1990) and Mindt (1999) distinguish four types of verb forms that follow the catenative verbs:

catenative verbs followed by a to infinitive

catenative verbs followed by a –ing form

catenative verbs followed by a past participle (-en form)

catenative verbs followed by a bare infinitive

Mindt (1999:348) states that some catenative verbs belong to more than one subclass of central catenative verbs, on the other hand, Palmer(1974:173) argues that only first two are relevant for the majority of catenative verb.

## 1.2 Catenative and main verbs

**Palmer (1974:173) argues there is tight syntactic and semantic relationship between catenative verbs and main verbs. Mindt agrees with Palmer (1974) on the syntactic and semantic association between catenative verbs and other elements of the verb phrase. Nevertheless he disagrees that catenative verb phrase should be seen as a phrase containing two main verbs. He elucidates that this is a traditional description which “splits the verb phrase into a finite verb phrase and a non-finite verb phrase with two separate main verbs: one main verb belonging to the finite verb phrase, another main**

verb belonging to the non-finite verb phrase” (Mindt, 1999: 344).

Then, Mindt begins new description of catenative verb phrases, he says that they are “complex homogenous verb phrases, consisting of two or more verbal components. In catenative verb phrases there is only one main verb. It is always in final position. This common feature is obscured by the traditional description” (ibid).

Subsequently, he describes the advantages of this new description: “The new description of catenative verbs and non-finite verb phrases is based on both the syntactic and semantic relation between catenative verbs and other elements of the verb phrase. The new description avoids the discrepancies of the traditional approach, which assigns catenative verbs a status which ignores the function of catenative verbs in relation to other components of the verb phrase. This approach fully integrates catenative verbs into a coherent pattern, and gives a unified picture of the verb phrase as a whole. Cases which traditionally had to be described as exceptions can now be explained as examples of rule-governed grammatical behavior” (ibid: 345).



For the most part, it is not difficult to distinguish catenative verbs from main verbs. Sometimes it is difficult to make a precise distinction between them. Therefore, Mindt suggests two possible interpretations and provides examples to support his statement: "In the case of interpretation 1, there is only one homogeneous finite catenative verb phrase. The meaning of the catenative verb phrase is formed by a combination of the meaning of the catenative verb (e.g. help, think ) and the meaning of the to infinitive which follows help or think. The lexical meaning of the catenative verb phrase with help is 'to be instrumental to the improvement of a state or event expressed by the following to infinitive'. The lexical meaning of the catenative verb phrase with think is 'to have a belief or opinion about a state or event expressed by the following to infinitive'. In both cases, to is an infinitive marker and has no meaning of its own. For example:

*His soft eyes helped to put her at ease.*

*I never thought to see such nastiness.*

(ibid: 350).

In case 2 of interpretation, he goes on: "There are two separate verb phrases, which are divided by the

conjunction to. The forms helped or thought make up the finite verb phrase. The non-finite verb phrase is formed by the bare infinitive put or see. The two verb phrases are divided by to, which is used like a conjunction. In this case, to introduces an additional meaning component, which is similar to the meaning of the conjunction that. The two verb phrases have two separate meanings” (ibid: 351).

### 1.3 Catenative verbs with auxiliary and modal verbs:

Palmar, in *The English Verb*, states that catenative verbs partake some grammatical characteristics with auxiliary and modal verbs. Catenative verbs appear like modal and quasi-modal verbs in meaning. For example, both the catenative verb *have* and the modal verb *must* express obligation as in *You have to wash the dishes* and *You must wash the dishes*.

Mindt (1999: 343) in his essay states that catenative verbs inhabit the same syntactic position as auxiliaries or modals. All these verb classes can premodify main verbs. On the other hand, Quirk & et.al (1985: 146) state that catenative verbs have

**syntactic similarities (they are formed in according to a similar/identical set of rules) with auxiliary and modal verbs, but catenatives have a semantic relation to a following verb (they can premodify – closely determine the following verb), “such constructions have meanings related to aspect or modality, but are nearer to main verb constructions than are semi-auxiliaries, patterning entirely like main verbs in taking do –support. We may also include among catenative verbs certain verbs which resemble the auxiliary be in combining either with the – ing participle in progressive constructions, or with the – ed participle in passive constructions”. (Ibid)**

**Modal verbs are a sub-class of auxiliary verb – so called modal auxiliaries. Eastwood claims that modal verbs express meanings such as necessity and possibility. “With modal verbs we can express ideas such as actions being possible or necessary” (Eastwood, 1994: 78). By other words, “We can use modal verbs to tell or allow people to do things; or we can use them to say how certain or uncertain we are” (ibid: 113).**

Mindt (1999) further develops the distinction between catenative and modal verb and gives examples. "A very important function of catenative verbs is to allow overlap of two meanings within one verb phrase. This overlap cannot be achieved by modal verbs alone, because a verb phrase cannot contain more than one modal verb" (Mindt, 1999: 347). So, without a difference of meaning, some catenative verbs can occur as a modal verb or as a catenative verb for example:

*I need not tell you that.*

*I don't need to tell you that.*

Possibility/high probability can be expressed by *might* 'fever might kill him', volition/intention can be expressed by *will* 'I will not be a soldier'. When we want to combine possibility/high probability with volition/intention, we cannot combine the two modals *might* and *will*. It is possible to combine *might* with the catenative verb *want (to)* which also expresses volition/intention 'they might want to kill us'. (Ibid)

On the other hand, Quirk (1985) says "This propensity for forming chain-like structures is not, however, confined to catenative verbs, but is also

characteristic of semi-auxiliaries and main verbs followed by nonfinite clauses as objects: Hence such improbable, but structurally possible sequences as: We are going to have to enjoy seeming to like listening to his music. ” Quirk (1985:147)

## 1.4 Classification of catenative constructions:

There are obvious sets of criteria for the classification of the catenative verbs in terms of the constructions with which they occur. First, Catenative verb may or may not follow by a noun phrase (Palmer, 1974: 173). According to the presence of a noun phrase Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 215) classify catenative constructions. They distinguish two types of catenative verbs simple and complex catenative constructions “we can distinguish two subtypes of the catenative construction depending on the absence or presence between the matrix and dependent verbs of an intervening NP – an NP that is interpreted semantically as subject of the nonfinite clause”. They argue that complex catenative constructions have an intervening NP occurs between the two verbs and functions as the subject of the dependent clause, on the other hand in the simple catenative

constructions an intervening NP never occurs. “In the simple catenative construction the non-finite clause has no subject and there is no intervening NP that is understood as the subject. But as usual the interpretation requires that we supply an understood or implicit subject. In almost all cases this is syntactically determined by the subject of the matrix clause” (Ibid: 216).

On other hand, according to what catenative verbs indicate, Palmer in his book *The English Verb* provides another classification. He distinguishes nine main classes of catenative verbs: Futurity, causation, report, perception, process, achievement, attitude, need and appearance and chance verbs. (Palmer, 1974: 191)

**Futurity verbs** – Semantically, this class of verbs referring to future plans. Most of futurity verbs occur only with the to -infinitive, for example, ‘wish’, ‘desire’, ‘decide’, ‘persuade’, ‘order’, ‘expect’, ‘ask’, ‘promise’.

**Causation verbs** – Verbs like ‘help’, ‘make’, ‘let’, etc. Most of causation verbs occur only with the to -infinitive

**Reporting verbs** – Verbs of 'reporting', 'saying' , 'believing' , etc, for example, allege, consider, admit, claim, and verbs which concerned with memory e.g. remember, etc.

**Perception verbs** – A group of verbs, involving sensation and imagination. Verbs like 'see', 'imagine', 'know', etc.

**Process verbs** – are verbs concerned with processes, starting, stopping, Continuation, for example, 'Keep', 'start', 'finish', 'cease', 'leave', 'prevent', etc.

**Achievement verbs** – A group of verbs concerned with effort, failure and success. They occur only with to –infinitive, for example, attempt, try, manage, etc.

**Attitude verbs** – Most verbs of this type occur with either to infinitive or with – ing – form, for example, 'like', 'love', 'hate', etc. On the other hand, verbs like 'miss', 'detest', 'enjoy', 'deplore', etc. occur only with – ing form.

**Need verbs** – Verbs like 'need', 'deserve', 'want', etc.

**Appearance and chance** – Verbs like 'seem', 'happen' belong to this class of verbs.

Furthermore, Mindt (1999) according to the origin of catenative verbs divides them into three groups. He argues that beforehand catenative verbs have originated from main verbs. So, he distinguishes three classes of verbs.

Verbs which can be used as main verbs only, for example, 'say'

Verbs which can be used both as main verbs and as catenative verbs, for example, 'want'. These verbs have retained their original character as main verbs. On the other hand they have become catenative verbs.

Verbs which are in the process of becoming catenative verbs, for example, 'help' or 'think'. (Mindt, 1999: 352)

## 1.5 Using to–infinitive or –ing Form

There are various opinions concerning the use of to–infinitive and –ing form after catenative verbs. According to Biber et al. (1999), the construction 'verb + bare infinitive' is rare in fiction, news, and academic prose, while the pattern 'verb + noun phrase (NP) + bare infinitive' is "rare in news and academic prose, but occurring with moderate



frequencies (over 200 per million words) in conversation and fiction” (1999: 698). He argues verbs that take infinitive are perception verbs (feel, hear, tell, see, watch) and verbs of modality or causation (dare, have, help, let, make). Similarly, Huddleston and Pullum et al. (2002: 1244) list sensory perception verbs (feel, hear, notice, observe, overhear, see, watch), have, let and make among the causatives, and a few verbs found either with or without to: ought, dare, know and find (the latter in the sense of ‘see, notice’), and help.

Eastwood (1994:144) says after some verbs we can use infinitive with or without *to*, for example:

-I expect get my money back.

-Sarah agreed to work late at the office.

We can use a continuous or a perfect to-infinitive.

Continuous: *Andrew seems to be studying even harder these days.* Perfect: *David appeared to have hurt himself.*

“An infinitive can be a bare infinitive (e.g. play) or a to-infinitive (e.g. to play). There are also perfect and continuous forms” (ibid).

Johansson (1987:280) mentions that the infinitive form appears to involve potential and hypothetical

situation, while the -ing form holds a factive interpretation, “-ing forms, despite their distributional versatility, do have a common semantic core which distinguishes them from their infinitive counterparts. -ing clauses tend to refer to factive or actual situations, while infinitives refer to potential, still unrealized situations.” (Ibid: 282)

Furthermore, Bolinger (1977) agrees with Johansson and says that the to-infinitive refers to a possible future action and the -ing form is neutral. “Generally speaking, the -ing clause focuses on the continuity of the process denoted by the non-finite verb, while the infinitive focuses on the very notion of the process” (Johansson 1986, 184).

As a result -ing clauses are common when the focus is on the permanence or continuity of the process. The infinitive is common when the focus is on the 'idea' of the process, which is then a possible or imagined future action.

According to the use of to-infinitive and -ing forms after catenative verbs following classes are distinguished. This classification is common for most English grammars.

### **1.5.1 No Change of meaning**

**Mindt (1999) says in a number of cases, there is no difference in meaning when the same catenative verb is used as a member of different subclasses. Eastwood (1999:159) mentions after like, love, prefer and hate, we can use either a to–infinitive or an ing–form. The meaning is the same, for example:**

**–Mrs Miles likes to do/likes doing parachute jumps.**

**–She loves to look/loves looking down at the fields below.**

**–We always prefer to stay/prefer staying in small hotels.**

**– I hate to stand/hate standing up while I'm eating.**

**Eastwood (1999) argues that if we compare the two meanings of the verb like. Like to do and like doing, like takes a to–infinitive when it means that we prefer to do something even though we may not enjoy it.**

**–I like to check my work carefully before I hand it in.**

**While, like usually takes an ing–form when we use it to talk about hobbies and interests, for example:**

**–Claire likes skiing.**

**–I don't like swimming much,**

As well as, we can use either a to–infinitive or an ing–form after these verbs: begin, bother, continue, intend, propose (= intend), start, can't bear, cease, commence, continue, hate, like, love, prefer, for example:

- People began to leave/began leaving the theatre before the end of the play.
- Rachel didn't bother to do/bother doing the washing–up.
- Do you intend to make/intend making a complaint?

The meaning is the same (Eastwood,1999:159). Alexander (1988) and Palmer (1974) agree that such verbs are followed by a to–infinitive or –ing without any change of meaning.

–I can't bear to see/seeing people suffering.  
(Alexander, 1988, 319)

## 1.5.2 Little change of meaning

Eastwood (1999) says after would like, would love, would prefer and would hate, we use a to–infinitive but not usually an ing–form, for example:

- I'd like to do a parachute jump one day.
- My sister would love to work as an artist.

- Mark would prefer to drive rather than take the train.

- I'm glad I live here. I'd hate to live in a big city.

He argues that if we compare would like and like.

- I'd like to lie on the beach today. It's too hot to do anything else.

- I like lying on the beach. I always spend my holidays sunbathing.

I'd like means 'I want', but it is more polite, while I like means the same as 'I enjoy',

Palmer (1974) agrees with Eastwood and says verbs like like, prefer, hate and love can be followed by a to-infinitive or -ing (would like, would prefer, would hate and would love are always followed by a to- infinitive).

Alexander (1988, 320) refers "We often use a to-infinitive after these verbs to refer to a specified future event and the -ing form to refer to an activity currently in progress or existing in general", he provides following examples:

- I hate to disturb you. (= but I am just about to do so)

- I hate disturbing you. (= I am disturbing you and I am sorry)

With verbs of liking and hating, sometimes the gerund gives a sense of the action really happening, while the infinitive often points to a possible action.

### 1.5.3 Fundamental change of meaning

Eastwood (1999), Palmer (1974) and Alexander (1988) say with some verbs, like remember, forget, regret, dread, try, stop, mean, go on, need, want, require, deserve, etc. The choice of a to-infinitive or an ing-form depends on the meaning. For example:

- I must remember to post this letter today. It's important.
- The clothes are still dirty because I forgot to switch on the machine. We use 'remember/forget' to do for necessary actions. The remembering is before the action.
- I can remember posting the letter. I posted it on Friday morning.
- I'll never forget flying over the Grand Canyon. It was wonderful.

We use 'remember/forget' doing for memories of the past. The action is before the remembering.

- We regret to inform you that we are not taking on any new staff at present.

**'Regret' to do something means to be sorry for something you are doing, e.g. giving bad news.**

- **I regret spending all that money. I've got none left.**

**Regret doing something means to be sorry because of something that happened in the past.**

- **The teacher introduced herself and went on to explain about the course.**

**'Go on' to do something means to do something else, to do the next thing.**

- **The teacher told everyone to be quiet, but they just went on talking.**

**'Go on' doing something means to continue doing it.**

Eastwood (1999:161)

## **2. Catenative in English Language Learning**

Teaching grammar does not mean the idea of mastering the grammatical rules of the language being taught. This implies the idea that the word grammar is not simply a function of the class that a word belongs to in the sense that a word can have its own unique grammatical profile. Therefore, using a language depends not only upon knowledge of structure but also upon the context in which the

language is used. Speaking and writing imply the idea that both semantics and syntax work together to transmit meaning. This is often the case for the catenative verbs that is used differently according to complement following them and the context of situation which the speaker is in. The source of problem or difficulty in using the catenative verbs lies in the fact that EFL learners fail to recognize that catenative verbs emphasized on the complement predicator following the first verb, which makes learners uncertain to choose complement in which only one is possible as in ‘he enjoys studying English’ and ‘she intends to study English’ or those where either may occur: ‘they love studying/to study English’. These catenative verbs may be followed by either nonfinite or infinitive, with little apparent difference in meaning; ex: It began to rain. / It began raining. Being difficult for learners to master all the verbs and their complementation patterns, the focus on the form regardless of all other aspects of language use is of a limited and specific objective. This implies the idea that teaching English has to be built on the form that is represented by the verb and its



complementation, and the context of use. In other words, it is a matter of language awareness; it is axiomatic that the problem be first encountered in a meaningful context. It is form and function that should be focused on. However, when it comes to accounting for verbal complementation it is not entirely satisfactory. It is suggested that the one should go beyond the form-focused instruction to meaning-focused instruction depending on the semantic properties of verbs. The first semantic property that teachers should depend on in clarifying the appropriate complement of catenative verbs is factivity that is one of the semantic properties to enable learners to predict the type of complement that can be selected. Factivity refers to the idea that the information contained in the complement is true. To Kirby (1987:24), it is in contrast with the mere assertion or assumption. Factive verbs are complemented by gerund, for example:

He resented paying the bill.

While the non-factive ones are complemented by the infinitive, for example:

He hoped to visit China.

To avoid the problem that learners may face in distinguishing which of the verbs is factive and which is not, one can say that the reference of the complement with the factive verbs is to an event that happened prior to the action of the matrix verb, as in:

**She admitted hitting the child.**

Here, it is possible to say that, according to factivity, the 'hitting' action clearly took place before 'admitting'. Kirby (1987:38) adds saying "the likelihood of having a gerundive complement is closely bound up with the degree of factivity inherent in the matrix verb." The same is in the verbs that take both the infinitive and the gerund constructions indicating some sort of difference in meaning, as the following:

**He stopped smoking.**

**He stopped to smoke.**

Where the first refers to the idea that the man has kicked the habit of smoking the second conveys the message that the man stopped what he was doing in order to have a cigarette.

The second semantic property is the gerund implies 'actuality' and 'fulfillment'. It is associated

with verbs expressing the idea of activity, action, or event. Action verbs refer to verbs like avoid, enjoy, detest, etc. Quirk et al. (1985, 1191) say that the infinitive implies 'potentiality' or 'yet unrealized activities'. Verbs expressing potentiality include wish, hope, want, etc., as in: We enjoyed reading books.

We expect to arrive at 6pm. ( Quirk et al., 1972: 825)

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 The importance of using the Test

The researcher has used diagnostic test which is considered an instrument of evaluation of student's performance. The important of use testing in educational program is to give us (or teachers of English) information for making judgments for learners of English, i.e. to give an evaluation of Iraqi learners. An educational program contains any situation in which one or more learners are joined in teaching and learning. However, there are two majors uses of language test : the first use of the test represents as source of information for making decisions within the context of education programs;

and the second one as indicators of learner's abilities /or attributes.

### 3.2 Sample

To verify what is hypothesized, the study is built on a test given to forty fourth year EFL learners at the Department of English, College of Education, University of Thi-Qar. The sample is of homogeneous population for being taught the same EFL grammar textbooks and by the same instructor and under the same conditions.

### 3.3 Design

The test is a diagnostic test which is considered an instrument of evaluation of student's performance. Corder (1973:356-7) affirms that if the diagnostic test is formed to do it's job correctly, it will be valid. In fact, content validity here refers to the test which has content validity when questions in, or the activities it requires the subject to answer, are those which s/he has been taught to do in the course of his study. Therefore, It is important to refer to test specification because the specification will include instructions on such matters as the length and the structure of each part of the test ,i.e. the category of

the materials with learners will have to utilize, the extent to which authentic materials may be altered, the response format, the test rubric, and how responses are to be scored. Consequently, all the test items are taken from grammar book. The test (Appendix1) is composed of four questions. The first two questions are concerned with learner's recognition level but the last two questions are concerned with learner's production level. See the following table of Specification (1)

Table (1)

**Specifications of Behaviours, Number of Items, and Scores Of the Diagnostic Test No**

No. of the questions	Number of Items	Behaviour at the recognition levels	Behaviour at the production levels	Scores
1	15	To recognize the forms or expressions to complete the text		30

2	10	To recognize and identify the usage of the given verbs to complete Sentences		20
3	10		To produce the correct forms of catenative verbs	20
4	15		To use appropriate forms of verbs to complete the sentences	30
Total:4	50			%100

### 3.4 Procedures

The data of the test are given in a way to serve the aims of the study, providing learners with a good opportunity to recognize the use of the catenative verbs according to the complements.

The present test includes 50 items based on four questions, Some of them are modified in the light of the jury members' notes <sup>(1)</sup>. Each item has taken 2 marks .They are all scored out of %100 marks in general. A scoring test is divided equally between recognition and production, i.e. recognition level gets %50 marks while production level gets %50 marks.

#### **4. Data Analysis**

A percentage is statistically used in this part of the study which is measure the ratio of different correct /or incorrect answers to total numbers of overall student's answers and show the frequency rates of errors which are committed by the learners of English in each question as follows:

1.The jury includes: 1. Prof Dr. Mahammed Al-Seady 2- Prof Zainab K. Igaab 3- Dr. Raheem Al-Zubaidy (Assis. Prof)

#### **Table (2)**

**The numbers of Correct, Incorrect Answers and percentages of Learner's performance in the first**

#### **Question**

No	Number Of Correct Answers	Percentage %	Number Of Incorrect Answers	Percentage %
1	32	%80	8	%20
2	28	%70	12	%30
3	27	%67	13	%32
4	14	%35	26	%65
5	18	%45	22	%55
6	15	%37	25	%63
7	21	%52	19	%48
8	32	%80	8	%20
9	12	%30	28	%70
10	31	%78	9	%22
11	29	%72	11	%27
12	14	%35	26	%65
13	15	%37	25	%63
14	31	%78	9	%22
15	20	%50	20	%50
<b>Total</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>%57</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>%43</b>



Table (2) reveals that the total number of student's correct answers in this question is 339 which constitutes %57 while the total number of student's incorrect answers is 261 which constitutes %43. It is obvious that the highest percentage of correct answers occurs in the use of infinitive form after the catenative verb 'promise', which is one of *Futurity verbs* – Semantically, this class of verbs referring to future plans. Most of *futurity verbs* occur only with the to –infinitive, and 'attempt', which is one of *Achievement verbs* – this class of verbs concerned with *effort, failure* and *success*. They occur only with to –infinitive, items 1 and 8 consecutively, which constitutes %80. While the highest percentage of incorrect answers is in the use of the infinitive after the head verb 'appreciate' that should be complemented by gerund, item 9 which constitutes %70.

### Table (3)

The numbers of Correct, Incorrect Answers and percentages of Learner's competence in the Second Question

No	Number of Correct Answers	Percentage %	Number of Incorrect Answers	Percentage %
1	28	%70	12	%30
2	14	%35	26	%65
3	19	%47	21	%53
4	29	%73	11	%27
5	17	%42	23	%58
6	26	%65	14	%35
7	20	%50	20	%50
8	25	%63	15	%37
9	26	%65	14	%35
10	20	%50	20	%50
Total	224	%56	176	%44

Table (3) confirms that the total number of learner's correct answers is 224 which constitutes %56 and the total number of learner's incorrect answers is 176 which constitutes %44. The highest number of student's correct answers occur in the use of the infinitive after the head verb 'like' that should be complemented by infinitive, to express

the sense of futurity, item 4 which constitutes %73. While student's incorrect answers occur in the use the gerund as a verb complement, though the head verb, 'mean' that means 'I intended to tell her', item 2 which constitutes % 65.

**Table (4)**

**The numbers of Correct, Incorrect Answers and percentages of Learner's competence in the third Question**

No	Number of Correct Answers	Percentage %	Number of Incorrect Answers	Percentage %
1	14	%35	26	%65
2	20	%50	20	%50
3	20	%50	20	%50
4	15	%37	25	%62
5	14	%35	26	%65
6	28	%70	12	%30
7	14	%35	26	%65
8	19	%47	21	%53
9	29	%73	11	%27

10	17	%42	23	%58
11	25	%62	15	%38
12	12	%30	28	%70
13	12	%30	28	%70
14	10	%25	30	%75
15	10	%25	30	%75
<b>Total</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>%43</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>%57</b>

Table (4) confirms that the total number of learner's correct answers is 259 which constitutes %43 and the total number of learner's incorrect answers is 341 which constitutes %57 .The highest number of student's correct answers occur in the use of the gerund 'smoking' as a verb complement of the Catenative phrasal verbs' gave up' which, in general, is followed by the gerund , item 9 which constitutes %73 .While student's incorrect answers occur in choosing the infinitive after the verbs 'get', item (14) which in this sentence means 'hurry up', and 'came', item (15) for being verbs that should be followed by the gerund.

**Table (5)**

**The numbers of Correct, Incorrect Answers and percentages of Learner's competence in the forth Question No**

No	Number of Correct Answers	Percentage %	Number of Incorrect Answers	Percentage %
1	12	%30	28	%70
2	13	%32	27	%68
3	13	%32	27	%68
4	18	%45	22	%55
5	10	%25	30	%75
6	12	%30	28	%70
7	16	%40	24	%60
8	6	%15	34	%85
9	15	%38	25	%62
10	8	%20	32	%80
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>%30</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>%70</b>

Table (5) confirms that the total number of learner's correct answers is 123 which constitutes

%30 and the total number of learner's incorrect answers is 277 which constitutes %70. The highest number of student's correct answers occur in the use of the infinitive as a verb complement, though the head verb, 'like' to express the sense of futurity, item 4 which constitutes %45 . While student's incorrect answers occur in the use of infinitive form as verb complement, though the head verb is 'imagine', which is one of *Perception verbs*, item 8 which constitutes %85.

Table (6)

**Correct, Incorrect, and Percentages of Student's performance at Recognition and Production Levels.**

Recognition			Production		
No of Questions	1	2	No of Questions	1	2
No of Items	15	10	No of Items	15	10
No of correct answers	339	224	No of correct Answers	259	123
Percentage%	%57	%56	Percentage%	%43	%30
No of	261	176	No of	341	277

<b>Incorrect answers</b>			<b>Incorrect Answers</b>		
<b>Percentage%</b>	<b>%43</b>	<b>%44</b>	<b>Percentage%</b>	<b>%57</b>	<b>%70</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>25Items</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>25Items</b>	

Table (6) shows that student's performance at the recognition level is better than their performance at the production level. As for as the recognition level, the total number of student's correct answers is 563 which forms %56.3 and the total number of student's incorrect answers is 437 which forms %43.7. Concerning the production level, the total number of student's correct answers is 382 which forms % 38.2 whereas the total number of student's incorrect answers is 618 which forms% 61.8. The highest percentage of student's incorrect answers occurs at the production level in question four whereas highest percentage of student's correct answers occurs in at the recognition level question one. In general, it is obvious that student's performance at recognition level is better than production level according to their total percentage. From the table (6) as well as other stated tables we

found that Iraqi EFL learners face many difficulties in using catenative verbs in all areas of the current test. Iraqi learners are inefficient and make various types of errors. Learners of English are puzzled in using catenative construction. Undistinguishing and uncontrolled are frequently occur in the areas of the test. Disordering and misplacement of catenative constructions are very clear. These errors may be come from insufficient chances to practice such patterns of verbs and poor authentic activities to use such verbs

## Conclusion

According to the subjects' error analysis, the study confirms the idea that catenative verbs are one of the major problems in which learners confront difficulties in knowing how to use either to – infinitive or an –ing complement after these certain verbs and producing these uses in the suitable form with correct syntactic features. Many verbs can be followed by one or more than one verb form. So, the problem is that most of learners of English can't recognize which form is appropriate to be used. This reflects the fact that context is of a significant role in the interpretation of utterances. Accordingly,



teaching English must be built on exercises and drills that enable EFL learners to understand and recognize the semantic relations among the linguistic forms in utterances and to form messages that are coherent to the context of use.

To be pedagogically valuable and to avoid the sense of confusion, instructor has to teach catenative verbs deepening on the syntactic and semantic association between catenative verbs and other elements of the verb phrase. In short, learners of English are unable to comprehend the catenative constructions and have many difficulties in using catenative verbs and their complement. Learner's uncontrolled of catenative verbs come from poor restricted techniques, poor mechanical activities in their textbook. As a result of that, we advise learner's of English to focus/or answers some exercises in different sources and read more authentic text contained different types of catenative verbs. Likewise; teacher of English should encourage their student to read more about catenative verbs as well as to use various techniques to improve their student's efficiency.

In general, student's performance at the recognition level is better than their performance at the production level. As for as the recognition level, the total number of student's correct answers is 563 which forms %56.3 and the total number of student's incorrect answers is 437 which forms %43.7. Concerning the production level, the total number of student's correct answers is 382 which forms % 38.2 whereas the total number of student's incorrect answers is 618 which forms% 61.8.

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## Appendix (1): A Copy of the Test <sup>(2)</sup>

**Q1// Write the number of the sentence and the word that completes its meaning:**

1. I promise (told, to tell, telling) the truth.
2. He admitted (took, to take, taking) the money.
3. I would like (drinking, drank, to drink) some water
4. You are allowed (wearing, wore, to wear) jeans here
5. I advise (left, to leave, leaving) immediately
6. I fail (understood, to understand, understanding) your argument
7. We aim ( pleased, to please, pleasing) all our clients.

8. This is the second time we have attempted (climbed, to climb, climbing) the mountain..
9. I would appreciate ( received ,to receive, receiving) more help with this.
10. I can't help (liked, liking, to like) the way he smiles.
11. I have complete ( painting, to paint, painted) the kitchen
12. I regret ( to tell ,told, telling) you that the show has been cancelled.
13. Never had guests been invited ( enjoyed, to enjoy ,enjoying) such a sumptuous meal as this
14. They wish to (have, had, to have) a car
15. Would you mind (to open, opening, opened) the door, please.

**Q2// Rearrange the words in each sentence to form meaningful sentences:**

1. Tessa/ want/ buy /a new coat/ soon
2. I / mean/ tell/ her/ yesterday/ but/ I / forget
3. We / must/ avoid/ waste / so much time
4. I / like/ see/ the Rocky Mountains / some day

5. Sometimes/ a country / refuse / take part/ in the Olympics
6. The buses/ usually / stop/ run / before midnight
7. I / can't face / get up/ at five / tomorrow
8. Last year/ we / make/ an agreement / work/ together
9. Yesterday / you / promise/ carry on / shoot / the film
10. My father / seem / get / better/ now

**Q3// Fill in the blanks with one of these verbs, then put in a to- infinitive or an ing- form:**

*( keep, ask, sail, paint, eat, leave, work, rain, dance, play, smoke, drink, travel, help, go)*

**Note** *that each blank must be filled only with one verb.*

1. I suggest ..... your teacher about it.
2. When you finish ..... the shed, let me know.
3. You are requested ..... immediately.
4. We had to delay ..... because of the weather.

5. I am tempted ..... adding examples all night.
6. It began .....
7. That's right. I really enjoy .....
8. How can you resist ..... those lovely chocolates?
9. I gave up..... last year.
10. I like to practise ..... the piano every day.
11. Many employees have been forced ..... unpaid overtime.
12. That valve is intended ..... keep the machine from overheating.
13. I would like ..... some water.
14. Get ..... !
15. She came ..... with me last night

**Q4// Write a new sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first. Use the words in the brackets:**

1. I wish I hadn't sold my bike. (regret)
2. The children were eager to see their presents. (wait)
3. I hate to get up in the dark. (stand)



4. I enjoy watching snooker on the TV. (like)
5. The police continued to watch the house. (carried)
6. They forbid smoking in the restaurant. (prevent)
7. Would you like to go for a walk? (imagine)
8. The shop usually opens ten minutes late. (tends)
9. I hate to brush my teeth. (dislike)
10. You are allowed to smoke here. (permit)

2. Most statements of the test are taken, after modification, from Eastwood, J. (1999). Oxford Practice Grammar and From Wikipedia, the free Encyclopaedia