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### The Effect of Wasta on Learning the English Language in Iraq

Fakhri Aladhami

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**The Effect of Wasta on Learning the English Language in Iraq**

by

Fakhri Aladhami

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts in

Teaching English as a Second Language

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to identify the reality of Wasta in some Iraqi educational institutions and determine its impact on learning the English language and on the personal lives of individuals. The study data is collected to answer the research questions. The researcher conducted 30 interviews using a semi-structured and background survey with students who came to America to study in U.S universities. The students reflected their views on Wasta and how practicing Wasta became a part of their personality, noting its impact on studying both before and after arrival arriving in America. In analyzing the data, this study concludes the following: Iraqi students agree on multiple definitions of Wasta, including as a breach of the law, and corruption. The most prominent reasons for Wasta are: weak religious faith, lack of legal accountability, and the absence of penalties the supremacy of the tribal social system, the absence of a good example, and the decline in the value of work. As well, Wasta has negative effects on education in Iraqi schools, especially learning English. This is due to several factors, the most important of which are: economic weakness, inequality between students, weak motivation to study, and the role of Wasta in getting a job.

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## Chapter I: Introduction

Success in the exam is the dream of all students. In addition to that, obtaining a certificate and embarking on future life is a goal and corner of study. There are those who graduate through their effort and perseverance in studying and achievement. There are those who through graduate using the Wasta that has become a tangible reality in the academic edifice. Many teachers and students have admitted the existence of Wasta. Mediators interfere in several academic matters including raising grades and obtaining a result that the student does not deserve. However, academic conscience necessitates addressing the phenomenon of Wasta that infringes upon the right of super students and frustrates their motivation in studying. Also, Wasta is considered a magic formula for raising grades unjustly. At the outset, Mohamed (2008) asserts that Wasta has an influential role on the final grades of the semester, and some teachers give full grades to those who have Wasta. But Wasta does not exist only in the academic field, and it is not a discovery of today. The history of the use of Wasta starts from ancient times.

Özsemerci (2002) says that Wasta has continued for centuries, but nowadays it has become widespread in society. Wasta plays a big role in granting privileges on the basis of kinship and not on the basis of equality to those who do not have thought, creativity, or certificates. Wasta creates a feeling of injustice, especially when people with Wasta get more money than others even though they work in the same job. As a result, people lose the principle of parity, productivity, and correct work, and a gap is created between members of society.

Although some studies have dealt with Wasta as a form of administrative corruption, it can be said that this is the first study—to the best of the researcher's knowledge—to deal with Wasta and its relationship to learning the English language in Iraq. In this section, the researcher

reviews a large number of previous studies related to the research topic, with the aim of providing a theoretical background that contributes to explaining the phenomenon and showing its negative results in various fields. A top priority of any country is the academic field, which is truly the mainstay of any institution, whether economic or social (Morettini, 2005).

This study aims to clarify the influence of Wasta in teaching and learning English among Iraqi students. This study will explain the spread of Wasta concept in Arab countries, including Iraq; the difference between Wasta in the past and the present; and the effect of Islam on Wasta. Each of these factors affects many areas, including education.

For example, some research has addressed the question of how Wasta affects student acceptance to universities. This leads to the graduation of large numbers of incompetent teachers, which in turn affects the education of students in school, especially those who study the English language. Students graduating from Iraqi schools lack the ability to use the English language well. These students suffer from deficiency in many language skills such as listening, speaking, writing, and reading. This means that the Iraqi government must pay for preparatory courses such as TOEFL IBT or IELTS for scholarship students, even though they have studied English since first grade of the Iraqi elementary school.

## Chapter II: Literature Review

### Background

Wasta is a global phenomenon that has persisted throughout history. It is linked to the existence of man and his interactions on the Earth. Wasta has an effect on political, economic, social, and moral aspects. In addition to that, it plays a role in threatening societies and hindering the development of civilizations (Kathawala et al., 2012). Wasta has contributed to the production of negative manifestations in society such as poverty, underdevelopment, irresponsibility, and lack of interest in the society. It also steals government's capabilities and goods, causing in the internal structure of the state and taking away personal rights. Governments in the modern era have sought to fight this phenomenon in all forms through enacting legislation and laws, holding conferences, establishing national institutions to follow it, and prosecuting citizens involved in Wasta, whether individuals, groups, or institutions. Table 1 provides several definitions by various scholars regarding today's Wasta.

**Table 1***Author Definitions about Wasta*

<i>Researchers</i>	<i>Definitions</i>
Andy H. Barnett, Bruce Yandle, and George Naufal (2013)	<i>“One is said to “have Wasta” when those from whom they can request assistance are in Positions of power that make it possible for them to grant the requested assistance. Those who have Wasta can jump the queue in acquiring public services while those who do not struggle through the “normal” bureaucratic process” (p. 3).</i>
Yusuf M. Sidani & Jon Thornberr (2013)	<i>“Wasta is often perceived as a practice brings using a nonobjective measure of employment based on kin relations rather than an objective measure such as skills or professionalism” (p. 69).</i>
A. A. Mohamed & H. Hamdy (2008)	<i>“Wasta is defined as the intervention of a Patron in favor of a client to obtain benefits and/or resources from a third party” (p. 1).</i>
R. Adi (2014)	<i>“Wasta is having the power of connections or who you know and employing it in gaining preferential treatment for a person who is ineligible for it” (p. 4).</i>

Several definitions of Wasta have emerged indicating that all authors show agreement on the concept of Wasta: it is a concession granted to individuals whether they deserve it or not as a result of a relationship that binds them with the person granting these privileges. To achieve Wasta: there must be three parties: The first party is the one who wants a favor for themselves, the second party is the one who facilitates communication between the first party and the third party, and the third party exerts their influence in order to achieve the favor for the first party. To simplify the concept of Wasta further, there are two categories of Wasta, each defined in relation to the nature of its activity. The first category involves the mediator, a person who mediates a conflict between two people or two groups; an example of this is the clan Sheikh (a specific head of a tribe) who mediates to solve problems between parties. The second type of Wasta involves intercession, which is the request for help and assistance in achieving something from an

influential person who has the power to achieve what is required by a person who cannot fulfill their demand by their own efforts. Wasta permeates the reality of daily life in Arabic structure. Therefore, dealing with an individual depends on the measure of one's personal relationship with that person, and not by one's efficiency. The situation in some societies has reached the point where an individual feels that he will not have a successful life without it. They will not be able to work, travel, study, trade, or receive medical care.

Mohamed and Hamdy (2008) confirm that one of the reasons contributing to the low level of efficiency in government administration is that many administrative decisions or procedures are based on Wasta because incompetent people have taken over, thus assaulting and denying the rights of others. Wasta always works against the principle of equal opportunity and equality between citizens in obtaining services from the government. Therefore, the government seeks to fight against Wasta, because it considers persons participating in Wasta in need of being held accountable and deserving of punishment to achieve the principle of equivalence between individuals.

Sidani and Thornberry (2013) state that Wasta has become an integral part of Arab culture. It is seen as a means to facilitate procedures, whether in the governmental or economic sphere. At individual levels, Wasta has become a family obligation that all family members must abide by, and failure to abide by it will negatively affect one's relationship with their family in the end. Given the daily use of Wasta, it has become an accepted reality in Arab culture.

## **History of Wasta**

Wardi (2005)<sup>1</sup> says that it is difficult to arrive at a specific date for the appearance of the phenomenon of Wasta because it is an ancient habit. Wasta emerged in most Arab countries over centuries due to the absence of deterrent laws as well as the existence of unequal opportunities. On the other hand, Arab society is a tribal society that affects the lives of individuals and the decisions they make. Individuals in the Arab community are bound by family, clan, and regional ties. The term Wasta means there is a mediator between a beneficiary and a decision-maker.

The Al-Waseet Dictionary (1973)<sup>2</sup> gives the following definition: Wasta in the Arabic language means mediation. The present tense verb is “mediates” meaning to use a mediator to solve a problem or obtain a benefit. Wasta also involves using a network of social relationships based on knowledge, kinship, or common interests to obtain various benefits.

Mohamed and Hamdy (2008) describe the social system for Arabs as a charter or a law that regulates many relationships and disputes between members of the tribe. The Arabs were and still are using mediators to end disputes related to the distribution of property or land, and to reconcile parties by relying on traditional tools such as “jiha” or “kindness”. Also, Mohamed and Hamdy (2008) mention that the concept of Wasta has developed to the point where an official who has a high position has become an intermediary to employ his relatives and his family on the basis of kinship rather than on the basis of competence. The phenomenon of Wasta has

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<sup>1</sup> The reference for this author is included in the Arabic reference list at the end of the paper (p. 70). Number 8 on that page refers to the author used for this reference.

<sup>2</sup> The reference for this author is included in the Arabic reference list at the end of the paper (p. 70). Number 6 on that page refers to the author used for this reference.

infiltrated all economic, social and educational fields, regardless of the existence of divine laws and civil laws that should prevent the practice.

### **Development of Wasta**

Wardi (2005) says that Wasta is the use of the social network represented by the family, clan, and region, and it aims at the convergence of common interests for the purpose of obtaining certain benefits.

In a tribal society in which tribal values prevail, Wasta is an integrated part of the clan system. It is like a charter or a law that organizes most tribal relations or conflicts. Members resort to the mediator or tribal sheikh to mediate their disputes caused by conflicts over land, water or property, and to fix matters through tribal formulas such as prestige and attribution. The concept of Wasta has resulted in preference for some relatives over others because of kinship or clan, and not because of competence. It is one of the forms of corruption in the joints of the different states and sows a seed of prejudice. Its ultimate goal is to obtain benefits for those who have no right to them and to confiscate the rights of others. It increases the divergence between the segment of the poor and the state. It may result in isolation and loss of confidence, as well as open doors for bribery and corruption. The easy way to obtain whatever benefit the applicant wants is by paying money to those who are able to help. Those who are not able to pay can do nothing but keep silent or present their problem to the media.

### **The Difference between the Concept of Wasta in the Past and Now**

In the Arab community, Wardi (2005) confirms that in the Arab community people deal with Wasta as if they had a dual personality. As individuals, they reject mediation in their writings and speeches, yet they work to allow it in their working life. They denounce mediation

and call for the principle of equality and to not differentiate between citizens. They call for mediation at times and for equality at other times. It is two contradictory principles. The phenomenon of Wasta is part of the local values that people have grown up with in their old environment, they still cling to their values, and refusing to change. The principle of equality between people is a new matter for them and they are not used to it. Wasta values are in contradiction to modern civilization because those values originated in a Bedouin society and are appropriate for it. As for practice of Wasta in a modern society, it leads to degeneration and demolition.

Modern civilization is based on specialization and placing the right person in the right place. It comes with ideas and concepts that contradict the social norms. It comes with the principles of equality, justice, democracy, and freedom. These are not consistent with the values of fanaticism and kinship that were prevalent in the past generations and whose effects still remain. This is why the Arab world has been a field of conflict between nomadism and civilization since the beginning of history until now. But the current of civilization is strong; it is overwhelming and no one can stand up to it. Modern civilization has brought a new concept of social relations that differs from the traditional concept. It is the concept of homeland instead of the concept of family or clan. A person may change his habits, values, and beliefs, depending on the time and the place (Wardi, 2005).

### **The View of Wasta in Islam**

Kalliny and Gentry (2007) state that Islam plays a very important role in influencing cultural values and practices of people. Ali (1992) confirms that Islam helps in organizing business, in governmental issues, and in relationships of individuals. All these factors helped to

melt the tribal society of Arabs into a country that includes everyone (Sabri, 2011). Rice (1999) states that Islam has an effect on the relationship of family members. All family members must cooperate with each other and take care of their relatives. In addition to that, Islam has become a source of legislation in Arab governments. Islamic law has been the “religion-administrative force for centuries” (Kabasakal & Bodur, 2002, p. 45).

Al-Hussan (2011) claims that Islam focuses on consolidating some values such as honesty, fulfillment of promises, and trust to regulate the relationships between people. The Quraan, the Holy Book for Muslims, explains how the family and individuals are related. In addition, it mentions Wasta and its role in helping the needy, provided that it does not cause harm to others (Ali & Azim, 1996). Islam also emphasizes the necessity of employment on the basis of competence and trustworthiness and not on the basis of family relations. However, “Wasta has come to play a large role in the hiring process and business decisions” (Mohamed & Mohamed, 2011).

Islam called for Wasta only in moral cases, such as assistance, removing injustice, redressing the oppressed, and restoring the truth to its companions (Al-Hussan, 2011). As for immoral cases, Islam forbids them, such as harming others, taking their rights, and promoting inequality among members of a society (Al-Jahwari & Budhwa, 2016). Despite the spread of the Islam religion in Arab societies, the use of Wasta according to the tribal concept is still continuing and Wasta is responsible for the employment of incompetent people on the basis of kinship and family relations. Whitaker (2009) says that “That’s how Wasta spread and gave birth to thousands of unqualified and unproductive employees who do nothing but wait for their salaries at the end of the month” (p. 10).

### **The Effect of Wasta on Society and Institutions**

Many studies and questionnaires have been conducted on the negative impact of Wasta on members of society and the way that individuals who got their jobs by Wasta in state institutions. Faisal and Abdella (1993) conducted a study on students in Saudi universities for males on whether Wasta has affected society and organizations. The results of the study showed that Wasta appeared as a result of the difficulties and challenges that individuals faced in society. The participants in this study also emphasized that Wasta is not considered a negative phenomenon in society, but rather as a criterion for an individual's relationship with his family and tribe. Al- Taweel (2011) investigated 20 employees who work in governmental and non-governmental institutions in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The results of this study have become clear, that citizens in Jordan see that it is difficult to realize any achievement without the help of mediator. This means that if you do not use Wasta, you will face many difficulties and obstacles. Wasta is considered in Jordan as part of the concept of assistance, generosity, and Arab culture. Therefore, the person who does not help his relatives is considered one of the less generous. Sadozai et al. (2012) conducted a study in Pakistan with 222 employees working in eight different institutions regarding the positive role of Wasta in their jobs, while Hayajenh et al. (1994) conducts a survey with 166 Jordanian participants and 376 Egyptian-origin HR managers working in Jordan. The results of the studies in Pakistan and Jordan showed that Wasta plays a major role in raising levels of frustration and tension among workers. The questionnaire showed that most young people resort to using Wasta because of fear for their future or to guarantee getting a job. More than 70% of the students considered Wasta to be a critical social phenomenon. Mohamad and Mohamed (2011) demonstrated through a questionnaire conducted

on 421 university students studying in the Department of Business Administration at Cairo University in Egypt that the participants who were students of a high social status perceive the people who got a job by means of Wasta to be incompetent. In contrast, students of a lower social status have a positive view of the people who got a job by Wasta. In conclusion, all the studies and questionnaires that were conducted in Arab and Islamic countries showed that Wasta plays a vital role in society and the work of organizations and institutions.

### **Wasta and Recruitment**

“I am on the side of so-and-so” is a magic phrase that opens doors for you and relieves difficulties for you. Will anyone deny that? Davidson and Cooper (1992) say that the phenomenon of Wasta expresses a painful truth, and it is one of the most common types of corruption in administrative circles and in state institutions. Therefore, it must be punished by law because it is an assault on the rights of others and has social repercussions such as a weakened sense of responsibility, the absence of justice, and diminished equal opportunities. Milgram (1969) stresses that Wasta is a major reason for killing the ambition of creators and causing them to conceal their creativity. Mohamed and Mohamad (2011) confirm that Wasta erodes the structure of institutions and public and private companies. Wasta contributes to the domination of incompetent people, who gain control of administrations and institutions despite their lack of ability to give creativity. Mohamad and Mohamed (2011) believe, “Since having strong Wasta requires connections, Wasta may create a reinforcing cycle where the powerful receive the resources while the weak become weaker” (p. 412). For example, the Ministry of Higher Education should not send students to study abroad unless they are outstanding young people who will return to serve their country because society needs them. Unworthy scholars

should not be sent by a mediator simply because they are the sons of so-and-so. Cunningham and Sarayrah (1994) say that institutions should work hard to achieve a reform. They need to choose the best of those applying for jobs and the most deserving for taking over leadership positions and promotions. Many researchers, such as Morrison (1992), Cleveland et al. (2000), and Ogden et al. (2006), have emphasized the role of Wasta in the employment process for Arab countries, where many citizens use their social networks to achieve their goals in obtaining a job or promotion. Several reasons for continuing the practice of Wasta in Arab countries are:

- Many people feel that they will face problems and difficulties when carrying out administrative responsibilities, so they must use Wasta because this will help in achieving their goal.
- There are no deterrent penalties that prevent people from using Wasta.
- Tribal society is the predominant society in Arab countries. Therefore, people feel the need to help their relatives and friends.
- The political system in Arab countries depends on social networks, as most politicians rely on the help of their relatives and friends to obtain benefits in exchange for voting for a politician in elections to keep him in power (Loewe, 2011).

McGinley (2013) explains that Arabian institutions will have a large number of employees who are unable to participate in the progress process. This means that they will not influence the progress of the state institution. They receive salaries, bonuses, and other gains without providing anything to the state institution or the facility because they were hired by a mediator. Therefore, Wasta poses great risks to the future of the state institution because development, modernization and innovation depend on creativity at work and not on Wasta. It is

also worth mentioning that those changes do not come because those people are not motivated. Motivation is a crucial factor at work. If you know there are smarter people who can replace you, you will work harder, but these people feel secure on the job, so they are not motivated even if they have the knowledge of how to do it. Stephenson and Al-Hamarneh (2017) note that the development process requires thinking, seriousness, and creativity in order to harvest positive results. Because Wasta plays a role in hiring employees on the basis of their personal relationship and not on the basis of competence, Wasta negatively affects the morale of workers who have experience and qualifications and who make sincere efforts to develop their institutions. They cannot be equated with those who got their jobs by a mediator. UN News Centre (2013) states, “The real issue is the need for jobs with social dignity rather than jobs that come at the expense of dignity”.

Table 2 below provides some Arab proverbs and explanations about the role that Wasta plays in Arab societies.

**Table 2**

*Examples of Arab Proverbs on Wasta* (Mohamed & Mohamad, 2011, p. 415)

<b>Proverbs</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<i>“He who has a back will not be hit on his stomach”</i> (p. 56)	Those who have a strong social network will not be rejected in their application, unlike those who do not have a social network, who will face accountability and punishment.
<i>“Lucky is the person who the governor is his uncle”</i> (p. 505)	A person who has strong relationships with important people (especially those working in government) is considered a lucky person because all his needs will be met.
<i>“Seek who you know, so that your needs will be fulfilled”</i> (p. 32)	People like to serve those they know because if they don't know anyone, they will have difficulty finding someone to help them.
<i>“If you have a turban, you will have a safe trip”</i> (p. 106)	The turban means Alshekh which symbolizes a senior respected person. If you know a senior person, your requests will be served.

**Table 2 (continued)**

“No one can escalate except those who have a ladder” (p. 107)	The person whom has strong connections can reach important people who fulfill his requirements.
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### **The Human Need for Using Wasta**

There are many reasons behind the emergence of the phenomena of Wasta in Arab societies. These societies are considered Semitic. They reside in the region between the Atlantic Ocean and the Arabian Gulf. A group of tribes lives in this region, spreading among them customs and traditions. One of these customs is Wasta, which was aimed at resolving conflicts between members of the tribe. At present, Wasta has become based on giving privileges and benefits on the basis of kinship, not on the basis of equivalence. In addition to that, Wasta has spread widely in the social, educational, and political sectors of the state due to several reasons. Among the causes of Wasta are the imbalance of wealth distribution and the predominance of injustice among members of society. These reasons drive people to create ways for profit, corruption, and embezzlement of public funds. From a legal standpoint, Abu Drees (2013)<sup>3</sup> states that Wasta is a reflection of the absence of accountability in all its forms. This means that the legal system does not have accountability mechanisms, and there is neither constitutional oversight nor real parliamentary accountability. Among the reasons for this is the lack of efficiency and integrity of administrative leadership because they are usually chosen based on personal relationships, recommendation, or on the basis of kinship, friendship or mutual benefits, without taking into account the principle of objective evaluation based on competence, experience, and integrity.

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<sup>3</sup> The reference for this author is included in the Arabic reference list at the end of the paper (p. 70). Number 1 on that page refers to the author used for this reference.

Al-Sheikhly (2004)<sup>4</sup> states that one of most important reasons behind the spread and use of Wasta is immigration from the countryside to the cities, especially in Arab countries. Although individuals move to the city, they still cling to their traditional values, social customs, and sometimes their cultural and psychological systems. Since the social system of tribal nature prevails in the countryside, the immigrants move their way of living and thinking from one community to another without abandoning the values of their original community. Then, it can be pointed out that cultural factors related to the nature of the prevailing values in the community, such as loyalty to relatives or tribes, often leads people to go beyond the administrative, ethical, and educational rules to satisfy their relatives.

Maabda (2005)<sup>5</sup> notes that the tribal society is considered a society cooperation and solidarity. Its children have a collective mentality based on support, relief of the distressed, and the answer to the needy. These values have their roots in Arab culture, but with the passage of time these values have turned into negatives that are rejected by divine laws, including those of the Islamic religion. Al-Ramahi (2008) states that intercession and mediation still are acceptable in social relations up to the present time, especially in societies that tend to maintain tribalism, but they do not agree with the nature of the state and its institutions. So the tribe is a social reality, while the state is a political, legal, and administrative reality. The tribe is part of the people, while the state is supposed to be the incubator for the entire people, and it must provide state services to all citizens on the basis of justice and equal opportunities. Hence, Wasta has

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<sup>4</sup> The reference for this author is included in the Arabic reference list at the end of the paper (p. 70). Number 3 on that page refers to the author used for this reference.

<sup>5</sup> The reference for this author is included in the Arabic reference list at the end of the paper (p. 70). Number 10 on that page refers to the author used for this reference.

become a form of harnessing the privileges of public authority (the state) to serve individuals because of family or tribal relationships, and that against the goals of the state for which it came.

The reason for this is the absence of supervisory authority and deterrent laws to limit this phenomenon in the Arab community. For example, an institution like the school is considered a function of society, and it is part of the national society of a country. Thus, any institution is required to have individuals who offer their loyalty to the state or institution in which they work. This assumption is not well activated in Arab institutions, especially government ones. The reason for this may be that the process of selecting and appointing individuals sometimes takes place based on subjective grounds. This has led to the lack of job opportunities and the unfair distribution of individuals.

Al-Hayajneh (1994)<sup>6</sup> confirms that reasons for using Wasta in the Arab world are based on four factors:

1. The social and cultural structure of Arab societies and their institutions, which are mostly biased towards kinship and family ties. These relationships and ties constitute the main tributary of institutional and organizational values and are the engine of the individual's behavior and values. These values encourage individuals to favor Wasta and fulfill their responsibilities towards their families. All members of a tribe share a strong commitment towards their tribes and families at the expense of the national or institutional dimension.

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<sup>6</sup> The reference for this author is included in the Arabic reference list at the end of the paper (p. 70). Number 7 on that page refers to the author used for this reference.

2. Weakness of the economic structure in some Arab countries, which resulted in limited markets. In addition to that, the dependence of some Arab countries on agriculture and light industries led to weakness in generating job opportunities and an increase in the unemployment rate. These factors together constitute a fertile environment for Wasta for relatives in public office.
3. Educational structure effected in the majority of Arab countries by the colonial policy imposed during colonial rule. In light of this, some educational programs focused on traditional types of education and neglected the necessary vocational education for the growth of industry, which created an imbalance in the labor market in the equation of supply and demand. This means that Wasta has played a large role in finding jobs and in employment opportunities. Tlaiss and Kauser (2011) say that many educational leaders believe that Wasta was among the critical factors causing student violence, the absence of justice among students, poor scientific research outputs, and the violation of academic norms. In some cases, it was a reason for appointing academics to different job positions and for getting academic promotions. The result is a negative impact on the quality of higher education, in addition to feeling discontent with decision-makers in the state.
4. Political structure in Arab countries which is relatively recent in terms of their upbringing, compared to others. Most of them were established after the First World War, in addition to having faced great problems and difficulties to gain their independence. Upon building these countries, the public sector became the largest employer for citizens. This means that these countries hired the sons of some

influential people in successive governments to obtain their loyalty, which led them to use their influence to practice Wasta to employ their relatives and associates in the government. (pp. 51-73)

There is no doubt that Wasta has grave effects on many aspects of social life and the administrative system. Therefore, Wasta is one of the factors that undermines society, destabilizes its structure and unity, and affects the dynamics of its development and the development of its projects. Wasta also carries with it psychological implications represented in fear and its complications, the consolidation of guilt complex, and other lapses and deficiencies resulting from various manifestations of personality disorder. In the social aspect, Blackmur (2004) says that Wasta is greatly responsible for the loss of confidence in the two elements of seriousness and competence, the desire to work, the decline of individuals' motivation towards research and creativity, and the increase in work turnover and absence.

In the administrative sphere, Wasta has led to negative consequences such as neglect of the professional dimension during the performance of a job, and a related lack of sense of responsibility, poor performance and quality, waste of public money, discrimination between people, and poor enforcement of, and circumvention of, the law.

### **The Effect of Wasta on Teaching the English Language**

Wasta has many names that differ according to place and time. Some researchers such as Robinson (1998) and Tlaiss and Kauser (2011) agree that Wasta is part of the concept of corruption. Wasta was also able to achieve a great spread in state institutions, including educational institutions, which negatively affected the teaching process.

Nowadays, education has become an international industry, in which the English language plays an important and effective role as a language spoken by most students, and is required for admission to international universities. In most countries of the world university study requires proficiency in the English language. Mohammed and Hamdy (2008) believe that the spread of corruption and Wasta in education has led to the weakness and regression of the educational system that contributes to the decline of students' level of learning the English language. This means students will face more difficulties when enrolling in foreign universities or getting a job that requires mastery of the English language. Until the present time, there are no clear and accurate writings that can rise to the level of a unified and comprehensive theory to explain the phenomenon of corruption or Wasta, especially in teaching the English language. Theorists cannot determine the true causes of corruption and Wasta or diagnose the mechanisms for its treatment, but there are some ideas and visions that are concerned with this phenomenon and its effect on teaching the English language. These include:

- First, economic weakness the low salaries of teachers in some societies have led them to resort to providing private lessons in order to increase their salaries. Teachers pressure students and push them to use Wasta. This has greatly affected the teaching process, especially the teaching of the English language. Hassan Al-Alawi (1998)<sup>7</sup> says that some teachers resort to private lessons to obtain some material benefits, while offering a poor quality of education similar to that found in school and the reliance of the student on Wasta in order to achieve success instead of studying diligently. Both Cheung and Changm (2008) affirm that Wasta weakens people's

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<sup>7</sup> The reference for this author is included in the Arabic reference list at the end of the paper (p. 70). Number 4 on that page refers to the author used for this reference.

confidence in school education, affects the quality and output of education, and leads to lower levels of professionalism and skill among graduates. It also leads to creating negative values that may remain with students even after their graduation. This means that the impact of Wasta in the education field is deeper and greater than in other fields.

- Second, dissatisfaction of English teachers with their job Heinemann (2004) highlights the teachers' dissatisfaction with their jobs due to a lack of equality between them and their fellow teachers as a result of the spread of Wasta or corruption in schools, which leads to their poor teaching of students, especially the teaching of the English language. He coined the term “education corruption”, which is not very different from other concepts of corruption or Wasta. He adds that a school free of corruption or Wasta must have several characteristics, most notably achieving justice in the distribution of opportunities in the educational process, in distributing the teaching tasks, a in the process of training and promoting faculty members, and most important, in commitment to professional behavior.

### **Practical Practices of Wasta in Institutions of Higher Learning**

Wasta permeates many of the activities in higher education institutions in Arab countries. On the student’s side, Abu Drees (2013)<sup>8</sup> says that Wasta in educational institutions begins after the announcement of the results of the general secondary education (baccalaureate) admission test. The admissions policy in Iraqi public universities is based on standard scores for each major

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<sup>8</sup> The reference for this author is included in the Arabic reference list at the end of the paper (p. 70). Number 1 on that page refers to the author used for this reference.

or degree. Candidates for university seats are ranked according by a computerized system according to their preferences, in a descending order. This system, however, is not without some shortcomings in the legal framework, such as allocating seats to certain groups in society. Although these groups have percentages and a certain competition between them, they represent a fertile environment for Wasta in order to obtain university seats. The second level of Wasta begins with students influencing university teachers to obtain marks or succeed in university courses. In this case, Al-Husban (2017) says that Wasta may take forms such as bias towards relatives, bias towards a geographical area, or bias based on demographics. Wasta also plays role in raising the GPA of students because they fear losing their seat in the college or department. Sometimes the student mediates in the first year to obtain a GPA that qualifies him to transfer to a specialization that requires a higher acceptance score. Thus, Wasta is not limited to the student's dealings with the university, but it also includes members of the teaching and administrative bodies and some academic leaders. It extends to the processes of academic promotion, publication of research, and scholarships for students to complete higher studies.

### **Quality in Higher Education Institutions**

There is no explicit agreement about what quality is, and the reason for this may be due to the different intellectual principles and perspectives on this topic. Jiang (2002) believes that quality is the ability to not only fulfill the customer's needs, but to exceed those need. Quality means conforming the final product or service to the required specifications. It also means a set of characteristics related to the product or service that affects its ability to fulfill the explicit or implicit needs of the customer (European Foundation for Quality Management [EFQM], 1992). Regarding the quality of educational services, some writers such as Youssef (2002) and Maguire

and Gibbs (2013) believe that the implementation of quality aims to satisfy the stakeholders or the beneficiaries of the services of educational institutions, whether they are students, or parents of students, or the teaching and administrative staffs or society. In general, Harvey and Greene (1993) use a set of expressions to describe quality in higher education, namely, excellence, perfection, harmony with goals, economic and transformative value, and the extent of contribution and influence. The goal of educational quality is embodied in the pursuit of the interaction and integration of the elements (human, material, and financial) of the educational institution towards identifying the needs of the beneficiary and meeting them efficiently and effectively.

By this definition, an educational institution is of good quality if it fully achieves its goals. Thus, the level of quality is directly related to the degree of achievement of the goals and objectives. Twaissi (2008) asserts that quality means the quality of input from material, human and knowledge resources, in addition to the quality of the processes of using these factors and investing them in an optimal way. The Al-Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University Council (2012)<sup>9</sup> confirms that the quality of an educational system is judged by its ability to meet the needs of society in terms of qualified and trained human resources, in addition to the effective contribution to the comprehensive development of all members of society. Quality is also related to the degree of the educational institution's ability to balance between the educational outputs in terms of quantity and quality. Based on the goals of any higher education institution engaged in teaching, quality must be the focus of these goals, and the institution must seek to achieve that quality efficiently and effectively.

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<sup>9</sup> The reference for this author is included in the Arabic reference list at the end of the paper (p. 70). Number 9 on that page refers to the author used for this reference.

Both Davidson and Cooper (1992) believe that total quality management (TQM) means that all members of the institution should participate in the process of continuous improvement in order to satisfy the expectations of clients. Cruickshank (2003) confirms that any institution that applies TQM must be characterized by dynamism and must adopt the thinking of strategic planning to be able to achieve the requirements of society that are constantly changing, with the aim of facing future challenges. Abu Fara (2006)<sup>10</sup> meanwhile, sees that the responsibility for the quality of educational service rests on all university employees, including professors and administrators, while not forgetting the pivotal role of the student in achieving quality through his participation in defining quality specifications and requirements.

Ono (2004) says that TQM in higher education institutions aims to achieve fundamental and strategic changes in the performance of the teaching and administrative bodies. It also focuses on creating a culture of institutional excellence by addressing new methods, curricula, tools and models in presenting university issues. The overall quality in education means a set of efforts by members of the educational institution that aim to raise the level of the educational product of graduates, research, studies, programs, and projects, which go hand-in-hand with the requirements of the local and national community.

Sahney et al. (2004) says that a new educational system demands a transformation in the social, economic, and cultural fields, which results in an increase in responsibility and accountability. Because of this, many educational institutions have shifted their focus from quantitative expansion to the concept of quality. This point of view was applied in the

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<sup>10</sup> The reference for this author is included in the Arabic reference list at the end of the paper (p. 70). Number 2 on that page refers to the author used for this reference.

educational development of industrialized countries, and it has affected some countries in the developing world as well, including the Arab countries. Some educational institutions in the Arab world have adopted the idea of quality in a serious attempt to respond to the demands of society. Educational institutions have found themselves facing intense competition and increasing pressure to improve the reality of their educational systems in order to satisfy their internal and external clients. Thus, the process of introducing quality concepts into higher education is not an intellectual luxury but an urgent necessity to enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as well as for laying the foundations to reform the higher education systems in the Arab world. Ahmad (2003) emphasizes a set of reasons for expanding the introduction of concepts of total quality management in Arab institutions of higher education, including:

1. Most Arab societies desired to expand higher education at the beginning of the seventies at the expense of quality, which contributed greatly to the increase in the unemployment rate and the weakening of the compatibility between educational outcomes and the requirements of the labor market.
2. The competition for economic growth increased, which made educational institutions look to the educational system as a weapon to confront economic competition and the repercussions of globalization.
3. The information and communication technology revolution has posed a great challenge to the human mind in obtaining information, retrieving it, and using it in a timely manner. This pushed educational institutions to compete in improving the quality of their educational systems.

A group of researchers including Long (1992) Abu Fara (2006), and Maguire and Gibbs (2013) states that the application of TQM in education helps in many ways. It encourages the participation of members of the teaching and administrative staff in the process of continuous development and improvement. It also plays an important role in enabling them to make decisions based on information, data, and facts. It aims to create an institutional environment supportive of continuous development and improvement, and contributes to establishing a culture of quality. In addition, it helps in identifying errors and problems before they occur. It increases the competitiveness of educational institutions, improves their image, and builds distinction that will lead to their success. Finally, it applies the concept of teamwork, improving employee morale and motivation and increasing the university's efficiency in serving society by providing them with graduates with a high degree of distinction and competence in all cognitive, skill, and behavioral domains.

Despite the application of the concepts of quality and excellence in many Arab and Iraqi institutions of higher education, there are still a number of challenges, difficulties, and obstacles that hinder the success of implementing TQM and prevent the achievement of institutional excellence in the management of higher education. These challenges fall into seven categories:

### **Resistance to Change**

Koch and Fisher (1998) says that administrators and academics are resisting change because they feel that implementing TQM ideas will rob them of the independence they enjoy. In addition, they recognize the difficulty of reconciling their independence in making a decision within the requirements of the total quality management (TQM). TQM requires monitoring of

academics' decisions and their work in order to achieve the goals of the educational institution and its future aspirations.

### **Lack of Continuity in Leadership**

Every new leader in institution of higher education brings vision and ideas through which he tries to torpedo the plans, programs and strategic directions of those who preceded him. Thus, Al-Qahtani (1993)<sup>11</sup> believes that continuous change may lead to killing the enthusiasm of employees, and perpetuate a short-term plan outlook, while the thought of quality focuses on putting strategic plans in place for long term. In addition, continuous change leads to the failure of many programs, plans, and projects that the university intends to undertake.

### **Failure to Employ Principle of Profit and Loss**

Mishra and Pandey (2013) believe that governmental higher education institutions always move away from the principle of profit and loss, in contrast to what is common in private higher education institutions that have applied the principles of TQM and obtained material benefits.

### **Lack of Motivation**

Education institutions need to work on motivating employees and academics financially and morally. In addition, academic leadership must be involved in support for the TQM idea, rather than the senior management taking all procedures about adopting the idea of quality by themselves without involving academic leadership in the decision-making process.

### **Lack of Teamwork**

Ruben (1995) states that the organizational culture prevailing in Arab institutions of higher education encourages individuals to work and achieve at the expense of teamwork.

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<sup>11</sup> The reference for this author is included in the Arabic reference list at the end of the paper (p. 70). Number 5 on that page refers to the author used for this reference.

## **Outdated Curriculum**

Mishra and Pondey (2013) confirm that weakness in designing the educational curriculum leads to the failure of comprehensive quality management in higher education institutions because the curriculum often does not include basic performance indicators related to quality. Koch and Fisher (1998) believe that many universities rarely review curricula and study plans or update the curricula and books. Hence, they lose the element of innovation and fail to keep pace with changes in the market and society.

## **Evaluation and Monitoring**

Morgan and Mergatroyed (1999) say that higher education institutions have many issues such as weakness in evaluation and monitoring its administrative body's work. In addition to that, educational institutions do not have the ability to know the labor market requirements or how to evaluate the level of the students who graduate from its institutions annually, whether or not they have the appropriate competencies to engage with the requirements of jobs. Al-Alawi (1998)<sup>12</sup> adds another set of reasons that contribute to the faltering of quality programs in Arab higher education institutions. These include:

- The aging of the administrative structures and the adherence to administrative and cultural organizational values that are difficult to break with;
- The dominance of the administrative sector over the academic sector, a reality of many Jordanian universities, as the number of administrators exceeds the number of teaching staff by many times;

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<sup>12</sup> The reference for this author is included in the Arabic reference list at the end of the paper (p. 70). Number 4 on that page refers to the author used for this reference.

- The centralized decision-making process, and the weak role of teamwork;
- The dominance of the educational approach based on rote memorization instead of analysis, conclusion, and critical and creative thinking;
- Restriction of scientific research for the purposes of promotion and authorship with the aim of material gain;

### **The Research Questions**

1. Does Wasta play a role in influencing students' learning of the English language in Iraqi schools?
2. Does the concept of Wasta affect the efficiency of English teachers in Iraq?

### **Chapter III: Methodology**

In this chapter, information about participants, the design and implementation of surveys, and an analysis of the results will be presented.

#### **Participants**

This research was conducted with Iraqi participants. The participants consisted of 18 Iraqi undergraduate and 12 graduate students who finished high school in Iraq and came to the United States of America in order to complete their university studies; their majors are English, Engineering, and Business Administration. Their gender was 22 male and 12 female. The researcher chose to conduct the research with Iraqi students who came to study in America because they would be able to know the differences between English language education in American and in Iraqi educational institutions in terms of the influence of Wasta. Also, this number was selected in order for the researcher to obtain the largest possible amount of information. The participants have taken a TOEFL or IELTS test because that reflects their level of proficiency in English, the language that is used at USA universities. International learners who want to enroll in any U.S. university must pass either the TOEFL or IELTS.

All participants were between the ages of 20 and 29 because at this age the participant is able to remember his / her experience in learning the English language. The focus was not on one gender of participants, but rather on a mixed group of females and males.

#### **Recruitment Process**

Participants for this study were recruited using a “snowball” technique, “chain referral sampling method that relies on referrals from initial subjects to generate additional subjects” (Johnston & Sabin, 2010, p. 38). The initial post was on Facebook pages and groups such as

“Iraqi students in the United States, and HCED Iraqi students in USA” because they are made up of Iraqi students who study in the USA. Anyone who wanted to participate needed to send the researcher a message via the e-mail that was mentioned on the post. Each participant was required to prove that he/she was a current student in an American university by sending a picture of their student ID to the researcher by email. Then, a return email was sent to these students asking them to sign a form granting consent to use information from their background survey and agreeing to record an interview by voice. After that, Iraqi students were asked to ask their friends about the possibility of sharing in this experience. “Chain referral sampling method that relies on referrals from initial subjects to generate additional subjects” (Johnston & Sabin, 2010, p. 38).

### **Material**

In order to collect data, two instruments were used. The first was a survey to gather ethnographic and demographic information, and the second was a semi-structured individual interview.

**The background survey** was the first tool implemented to collect data. The survey had some questions related to gender, age, and years spent in learning English in Iraqi schools, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the participant’s language skills. This background survey (Appendix A) contained 16 questions written in both English and Arabic, so that participants could easily understand them.

**Regarding the semi-structured individual interview**, Lambert (2012) says that it is an effective way to gain an in-depth understanding about a participants’ opinions and point of view.

The interview conducted for this study consisted of nine questions (Appendix B) to help the researcher to discuss new aspects that enhanced the topic discussed.

### **Procedure and Data Collection**

E-mails were sent to the participants in the research. When they agreed to participate, the researcher made some arrangements with the participants, such as agreeing on the program used to communicate either WhatsApp or Facebook, as they are the most used programs. The dates of the interviews were arranged, and a consent form for participation in the research was transmitted. Upon meeting with the participants, the researcher asked them to perform several tasks. First, they were asked to sign a form granting consent to use information from their background survey and agreeing to record the interview by voice. Second, participants were given a detailed explanation about the process that the researcher would perform. Third, a semi-structured individual interview was held with each of the participants. After they finished signing the approval to participate in the survey, the researcher sent them the survey by e-mail. The background survey was written in Arabic and English. When participants finished answering the background survey, they returned it to the researcher in the same way. The interview was also in both Arabic and English, in order to remove any language obstacles that might hinder the participants from speaking and expressing their opinions freely. This type of interview also allowed the researcher to “pursue new lines of inquiry in response to what interviewees say” (Lambert, 2012, p. 104). Lichtman (2009) adds additional rationale for using the semi-structured individual interview: “Individual interview is a process where the participants share what they know, have learned and can add dimensions to our understanding of the situation by using their own words, in his voice, with his languages and narrative” (p. 143). The researcher used a coding

system for the information that would be considered to be identifiable when linking to specific individuals. All data was recorded anonymously and any possible identifying information was deleted at the end of the study. Subjects' initials and email addresses were not used. Direct quotes which were translated from Arabic to English, and paraphrases of quotes, were credited to informants identified as A, B, C, etc. The results of the background survey were sent to the Statistical Consulting and Research Center of St. Cloud State University in order to use their feedback and suggestions to make the survey suitable for the current research. The duration of each interview was between 30 and 40 minutes. The researcher used an iPhone to store the audio interviews with the participants.

### **Data Analysis**

Data from the participants was analyzed to obtain accurate and clear information. The information was processed as follows:

First, demographic data of the participants was analyzed, including gender, age, majors, and years of study in the English language.

Second, the participants' interview answers were analyzed. Their responses related to the period of learning and practicing the English language, when they started studying the English language, and their proficiency in the English language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, based on their experience in passing the TOEFL iBT or IELTS test, in addition to the using of Wasta throughout their education.

After the answers of the participants were obtained, they were linked to codes that emerged from the surveys, and then were reviewed and organized into groups. In this qualitative research, coding was not determined prior to the interview, but evolved through data that were

taken from the participants. Using the data of Individual Perception Interviews is called thematic analysis (Gomm, 2004), with the thematic analysis codes for each conversation based on the theme.

After reviewing the interview answers, the researcher was more familiar with the data (King & Horrocks, 2010). The participant responses were not translated in their entirety because some information did not serve the research; however, all that would serve the research, whether recorded voice or written in the Arabic language, was translated. Segments from the opinions of the participants were extracted and assigned a code to group those segments that denoted the same problem. Finally, the codes were named to represent a basic meaning and then organized by theme according to the meanings they represent (Saldana, 2009).

## Chapter IV: Results

### Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents two types of surveys. The first is the background survey. This is a set of pre-prepared questions in (Appendix A), which in this case are 16 questions presented to the participants to find out about their experience in non-Iraqi educational institutions. Through the participants' answers to the background survey questions, the researcher found percentages that reveal the participants' ability to use Wasta in non-Iraqi educational institutions. These percentages play a very critical role in clarifying the possibility of using Wasta and the extent of its affection in the practices of the participants. The first questions focus on two aspects:

The first aspect reflects the participants' level of proficiency in the English language at the time they tried to join studies in non-Iraqi educational institutions by passing the TOEFL or IELTS test. Their answers show in a simple way how a variety of factors affected the participants' learning of the English language; among these factors is the concept of Wasta. The first set of questions focuses on the number of times the participant took the TOEFL or IELTS test before passing, and whether the score improved after taking preparatory courses for the test, focusing on the language skills that the participants sought to improve.

The second set of questions focuses on the possibility of using Wasta in non-Iraqi institutions after reaching America. These questions that ask about the chances of a teacher detecting cheating or plagiarism, or the possibility of student influencing the teacher's decisions in America.

The second type of survey is an Individual Perception Interview (IPI). This focuses on the participant's experience with the concept of Wasta and its impact on education in Iraqi schools. This IPI consists of two aspects. The first reflects the answers of the participants through an interview conducted with the researcher about the questions found in Appendix B. The researcher extracts from the participants' answers a number of themes (Table 7). The second aspect reveals the reasons that led to the emergence of these themes, from the viewpoint of the participants. The researcher extracts a number of codes (Table 7) within each theme, in order to clarify through them the influence of Wasta on education in general and teaching the English language in particular, and what factors have led to the spread of Wasta in Iraq.

### **Background Survey about Participants' Learning Experiences in non-Iraqi Institutions**

This survey was conducted on 30 Iraqi participants who came to the United States of America to study. The aim of this survey is to know the extent of the possibility of practicing Wasta in non-Iraqi educational institutions. The researcher will explain the competence of the participants in the English language based on several factors. These factors include: the number of times a student needed to take a test in order to obtain a score that qualifies the student for registration in American universities; whether or not test scores improve after students take preparation courses, and which skills are more improved after preparation; opportunities to rely on friends for exam answers or assignments (cheating); the teacher's chances of discovering matching responses between students and their friends on exams or assignments (plagiarism); and the chances of relying on one's personal relationships or the relationships of one's relatives to influence the teacher in order to adjust a grade.

**Table 3**

*Measure the Competence of 30 Participants in the English Proficiency Test*

<b>Number of times TOEFL/IELTS was taken</b>	<b>Participant count</b>	<b>Percentage of all participants</b>
1	6	20%
2	1	3%
3 or more	23	77%

As shown in Table 3 above, the researcher conducted a survey about how many times the participants needed to take the English proficiency test before passing. The results of this question show the participants' level of proficiency in the English language before coming to the United States of America. The survey results show that 77% of the participants could not pass the test the first or second time. Only seven participants were able to pass the language proficiency test the first or second time and achieve a grade that qualified them for admission to universities in the United States.

**Table 4**

*Preparation Courses*

<b>Whether or not score improves after preparation courses</b>	<b>participants Counts</b>	<b>Percentage of all Participant</b>
Yes	30	100%
No	0	0%

This survey shows whether a participant used preparatory courses to develop his/ her English language skills to pass the TOEFL or IELTS exam. The aim of this question was to show

the effect of Wasta, which is one of the factors affecting education of the English language in Iraqi schools, and its effect on the participant. Wasta directly affected the participants' learning of the English language when they relied on using their personal relationships in order to obtain good scores on the English exam. The participants did not need to develop their English language skills even if they started English learning in an early grade in Iraqi schools. However, when the participants wanted to pass the TOEFL or IELTS test, they found themselves in need of preparatory courses for this exam, or to learn the English language despite their years of education in Iraqi schools. The survey results show that all participants (100%) registered in preparatory courses in order to pass the proficiency test.

**Table 5**

*Improving Language Skills*

<b>Language skill needing most improvement</b>	<b>Participants Counts</b>	<b>Percentage of Participants</b>
<b>Listening</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Speaking</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Writing</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10%</b>

Table 5 demonstrate the skills that participants sought to develop, based on their TOFEL or ILETS test scores. 67% of the participants had poor speaking skills and 20% of the participants had impaired listening skills. Three out of 30 (10%) sought to develop writing skills.

**Table 6**

Using Wasta to Get a Good Score on Exams in non-Iraqi Schools

<b>Opportunities to rely on friends for exams or assignments (cheating)</b>	<b>Participants Counts</b>	<b>Percentage of Participants</b>
0%	7	23%
25%	5	17%
50%	18	60%
75%	0	0%
100%	0	0%

Table 6 shows the advantages of study in non-Iraqi schools in terms of using personal relationships to influence the teacher in order to pass tests and assignments. The results show that 60% of the participants could use personal relationships with friends in class in order to pass the exam about half the time, while 23% of the participants asserted the inability to cheat on exams for various reasons. Seventeen percent of participants confirm that the relationships could sometimes be used to pass exams.

**Table 7***Discover Matching in Students' Answers*

<b>The teacher's chances of discovering a match between you and your friends on exams or assignments (plagiarism)</b>	<b>Participant count</b>	<b>Percentage of participants</b>
<b>0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>25%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>50%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>75%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>100%</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>70%</b>

Table 7 shows that 70% of the participants indicated that their teacher was able to detect any match in their answers due to the use of technology, while 20% of the participants confirmed that the instructor could detect a large percentage of cases of congruence, but not all. Three out of 30 (10%) said that the teacher could detect matches about 50% of the time.

**Table 8**

*Using Relationships to Get a Good Grade on Exams*

<b>Chances of relying on your personal relationships or the relationships of your relatives to influence the American non-Iraqi teacher in order to adjust the grade</b>	<b>Participant count</b>	<b>Percentage of participants</b>
<b>0%</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>25%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>50%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>75%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>100%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>

Table 8 shows that all participants demonstrated the inability to influence a teacher in order to change a grade in a non- Iraqi school.

In summary, Wasta takes many forms and has a great impact on education, especially English language learning. The background survey covered most of the forms of Wasta that are used in Iraqi schools and directly affect the education process. Effects of Wasta include the students' need for preparatory courses in order to develop their skills to pass the English language proficiency test. The survey also aims to show whether Iraqi participants are able to use Wasta in American educational institutions.

The background survey focuses on the experiences of the participants after arriving in America, while the individual interview with the participants following will highlight the experiences of the participants before arriving in America, in learning the English language in Iraqi schools and the effect of Wasta on them.

### **Individual Perception Interview Results**

The table below contains five themes: Wasta during education; Wasta after graduation; the effect of Wasta on the student's psychological state; the dominance of the Wasta over schools' administration and individuals' dependence; the effect of Wasta on the standard of students' education.

These themes, emerging through the interview, reflect the views of the Iraqi participants on the effect of Wasta on their social lives and education in general, and learning of the English language in particular.

**Table 9***The Semi-structured Individual Interview*

<b><i>Theme 1</i></b>		<b><i>Wasta during education</i></b>
	Code 1	Wasta by same religious sect
	Code 2	Wasta by family, clan, or region
	Code 3	Wasta and bribery
	Code 4	Student Wasta power
<b><i>Theme 2</i></b>		<b><i>Wasta after graduation</i></b>
	Code 1	Professional life
	Code 2	The effect of Wasta on students' competence in practicing the English language
<b><i>Theme 3</i></b>		<b><i>The effect of Wasta on the student's psychological state</i></b>
	Code 1	Motivation
	Code 2	Discipline
	Code 3	Desire to progress
	Code 4	Administrative and academic satisfaction and student's morale
<b><i>Theme 4</i></b>		<b><i>The dominance of Wasta over schools' administration and individuals' dependence</i></b>
	Code 1	Personal Relationship
	Code 2	Getting a job
	Code 3	Weak internal and external oversight of education institutions
<b><i>Theme 5</i></b>		<b><i>The effect of Wasta on the standard of students' education</i></b>
	Code 1	Reliance on others
	Code 2	Weak religious faith

**Table 10***Wasta during Education in Iraq*

<b>Code 1.1</b>	Wasta by same religious sect
<b>Code 1.2</b>	Wasta by family, clan, or region
<b>Code 1.3</b>	Wasta and bribery
<b>Code 1.4</b>	Student Wasta power

As shown above, Wasta during Education in Iraq (Table 10) includes four codes: Wasta by same religious sect, Wasta by family, clan or region, Wasta and bribery, and Student Wasta power. These codes represent student perceptions about the characteristics of teachers. All students agree about these codes as part of teacher treatments to some of their classmates inside the classroom.

**Code 1.1: Wasta by same religious sect.** Twenty-one of 30 participants confirmed that a teacher prefers some students over others when the teacher and these students are of the same religious sect. The teacher often seeks to maintain a good reputation among the followers of his religious community. Participant (A) says:

***In Arabic language:***

أعلم أن أستاذي ينتمي إلى الطائفة التي أنتمي إليها لذلك كان يعاملني المعلم بمعاملة خاصة من بقية الطلاب الذين لم يكونوا من نفس الطائفة أو الدين. ساعدني المعلم في تغيير درجتي في الامتحان من مقبول إلى جيد جدًا.

***In English language:***

I know that my teacher belongs to the religious sect to which I belong. The teacher treated me with special treatment from the rest of the students who were not from a same

sect or other religion. The teacher helped me to change my score in the exam from acceptable to very good.

**Code 1.2: Wasta by family, clan, or region.** Seventeen of 30 participants indicated that there is a family, regional, or clan relationship between the teachers and some students, which prompts the teacher to wipe out the absences of these students despite their not attending the class in order to preserve this relationship. Participant (B) says:

***In Arabic language:***

لدي علاقة قرابة مع المعلم ، وكنت دائماً أتأخر عن المحاضرة بسبب صعوبة الحصول على الموصلات. رفض المعلم أي عذر لتوضيح الغياب ، لكن عندما تحدثت و ذكرته بصله القرابة التي بيننا . قرر المعلم مسح الغيابات لي ولجميع الطلاب.

***In English language:***

I have a kinship relationship with the teacher, and I was always late for the lecture because of the difficulty in getting transportation. The teacher refused any excuse to clear the absence, but when I spoke to him, he wiped out the absences for me and all students.

**Code 1.3: Wasta and elicited bribery.** Twenty-four of 30 participants confirmed that students were discriminated against by other students. Seven participants assert that they were subjected to discrimination and mistreatment by the teacher, so they decided to attend private lessons with the same teacher. Gradually, the teacher's treatment of them changed. There are some teachers who provide private lessons to students at home. In recent years, private lessons have become a routine phenomenon. It has become natural for the student to receive a private lesson. The prevailing concept has become that to get a satisfactory grade on an exam, one must have a private lesson. Among the factors that contributed to the spread of the phenomenon of

private lessons is the teacher's attempt to stress students in the classroom through bad treatment, or giving them unsatisfactory grades, or making the questions difficult in the exam. All these factors push parents to enroll their children in private lessons with their teachers at the school so that they can use Wasta to adjust their grades in case their children fail in the exams. Participant (C) states:

***In Arabic language:***

عرف أحد أساتذتي في المدرسة الثانوية أن الوضع المالي لوالدي جيد. هذا المعلم عاملني معاملة سيئة وعاقبني كثيرا. كانت درجاتي في الامتحان سيئة ، على الرغم من أنني كنت أدرس بجد ، لكن ذلك لم يكن مفيداً. عندما أخبرت والدي ، تحدث والدي إلى المعلم وحجز موعداً معه من أجل إعطائي درساً خاصاً في المنزل. فجأة ، أصبحت درجات امتحاني جيدة.

***In English language:***

One of my high school teachers knew that my father's financial status was good. This teacher treated me badly and punished me a lot. My grades in the exam were bad, although I was studying hard, but it was useless. When I told my father, my father spoke to the teacher and booked an appointment with him in order to give me private lessons at home. Suddenly, my exam scores became good.

**Code1.4: Student Wasta power.** Twenty-eight of 30 participants indicated that when they failed to get a good grade to pass an English test, they resorted to the sheikh of the clan to use Wasta with the teacher in order to let them retake the exam. This is effective even if they are from a different clan than the teacher, because of the customs and traditions in Iraq. The sheikh of a clan has authority and a good position in society. Participant (D) confirms:

***In Arabic language:***

ذات يوم عندما كنت في مناسبة عائلية مع أقاربي. سألني شيخ العشيرة عن درجاتي في المدرسة. عندما أخبرته أن درجاتي منخفضة في أحد فصولي. لقد وعدني بحل هذه المشكلة. بعد أسبوع ، أخبرني المعلم أنه أجرى مقابلة مع شيخ عشيرتي وقرر إعطائي فرصة أخرى لإجراء الاختبار معي.

***In English language:***

One day when I was at a family event with my relatives, the sheikh of the clan asked me about my grades at school. When I told him that I have low grades in one of my classes, he promised me to solve this problem. After a week, the teacher told me that he has an interview with the sheikh of my clan and he decided to give me another chance to take the exam to me.

**Table 11**

*Wasta after Graduation*

<b>Code 2.1</b>	Professional life
<b>Code 2.2</b>	The effect of Wasta on students' competence in practicing the English language

**The *Wasta after graduation*** table includes two specific codes: Professional life and “The effect of Wasta on students’ competence in practicing the English language. There is no doubt that Wasta plays a very important role in the behavior of students after graduation. This means that the concept of Wasta does not end within a period of time, but rather is stuck in the behavior of individuals. This will be indicated by the answers of the survey participants.

**Code 2.1: Professional life.** Twenty-one of 30 participants confirmed that most of their fellow graduates suffer from the inability to obtain a job in the government sector to work within their specialization due to hiring in this sector and the absence of government planning. Those

graduates rely Wasta, using their network of contacts in order to get a job. Participant (E) defines this network of relationships as a strategy that aims to uncover more professional opportunities and build effective relationships with the aim of exchanging interests through communicating with others, including surrounding people such as family, neighbors, friends, classmates, and past and current work colleagues. In addition to that, it plays a critical role in planning to communicate with influential people in the field of work. Participant (E) states, “I applied to many government jobs, but I was unable to find a job, so I resorted to paying the recruiters money in order to get a job”. Participant (H) confirms, “I used my relationship with the mediator to use the Wasta for me in order to get a job as a teacher at the school that I want it”.

In the absence of a mediator, one can use money in order to bribe a person who has the authority to use his / her relationship (Wasta) to achieve a personal benefit such as getting a job.

**Code 2.2: The effect of Wasta on students’ competence in practicing the English language.** Twenty of 30 participants emphasized the role of Wasta in influencing their English language proficiency. This influence generated a feeling that they do not need to study diligently or constantly practice the English language to pass the English exam. Participants could use Wasta to influence the English teacher to overlook the oral competence test. This created a problem for them because they had to demonstrate their proficiency in the four English language skills of listening, writing, reading, and speaking via the TOFEL or ILETS when they wanted to join universities in the United States. Participant (F) says:

***In Arabic language:***

درست اللغة الإنجليزية من الصف الأول الابتدائي إلى شهادة البكالوريا بتقدير جيد ، لكن عندما تقدمت للحصول على الشهادة لماجستير من خلال اختبار TOEFL و IELTS. وجدت أن درجاتي ضعيفة للغاية في مهارات اللغة الشفوية. شعرت بخيبة أمل من نتيجة استخدام الوسطة لاجتياز اختبار اللغة الإنجليزية الشفوي في المدارس العراقية

***In English language:***

I studied English from the first grade of elementary school to the baccalaureate certificate, but when I applied to obtain the certificate with a good grade through the TOEFL and IELTS exam, I found my grades very weak in the oral language skills. I was disappointed in the result of using Wasta to pass the oral English test in the Iraqi schools.

**Table 12**

*The Effect of Wasta on the Student's Psychological State*

<b>Code 3.1</b>	Motivation
<b>Code 3.2</b>	Discipline
<b>Code 3.3</b>	Desire to progress
<b>Code 3.4</b>	Administrative and academic satisfaction and teacher's morale

As shown in Table 12, the effect of Wasta on the student's psychological state section has includes four codes: Motivation, Discipline, Desire to progress, and Administrative and academic satisfaction and teacher's morale. This section has shed a light on how Wasta has an effect on students' life.

**Code 3.1: Motivation.** Twenty-two of 30 participants confirmed that school students feel a lack of desire to learn, which leads them to eventually abstain from studying and regular learning. They stress that there are fundamental reasons that push students toward such behavior; primarily, the school environment lacks academic encouragement for students to study. The

schools fail to create an environment of equality among students and prevent the use of Wasta.

Participant (W) states:

***In Arabic language:***

كانت المدرسة تستخدم نظامًا تقليديًا قديمًا ولم تعتمد على التكنولوجيا. هذا ما جعل بعض الطلاب يستخدمون الوساطة لمصلحتهم الشخصية. عندما رأيت ذلك ، شعرت بنقص المساواة بين الطلاب في النظام المدرسي ، مما أدى إلى عدم وجود حافز لبذل جهد في الدراسة.

***In English language:***

The school was using an old traditional system and did not rely on technology. This is what made some students use Wasta for their personal benefit. When I saw that, I felt a lack of equity between students within the school system, which led to lack in my motivation to make an effort in studying.

This means that the absence of justice and equality among students has led some students to use Wasta instead of making effort in studying. This is also a reason for a lack of motivation to achieve any progress, whether in the academic field or other fields.

Secondly, some instructors treat students unfairly and badly, especially when the teacher gives good grades to students who do not deserve them. This destroys motivation for students and pushes them to try to find Wasta instead of studying hard. Participant (G) states:

***In Arabic language:***

كان المعلم في المدرسة يعاملني معاملة سيئة. دفعني هذا إلى تجنب الذهاب إلى المدرسة واختلاق الحجج والأعذار. كنت أعتقد أنه إذا تمكنت من العثور على وسيط في ذلك الوقت ، فإن معاملة المعلم قد تغيرت لأن هذا العلاج قد تغير مع زملائي في الفصل.

***In English language:***

The teacher at school was treating me badly. This prompted me to avoid going to school, and fabricating arguments and excuses. I was believing that if I could find a mediator at that time, the teacher's treatment would have changed as this treatment had changed with my classmates.

**Code 3.2: Discipline.** Sixteen of 30 participants confirmed that they have customarily used Wasta since they were young to be able to get the things they want without making an effort. This means that the Wasta phenomenon has grown with those students even after their arrival at universities in the United States. They are still using their relationships to reach their goals, as they believe that this ensures that they will achieve them. Participant (H) mentions that:

***In Arabic language:***

أثرت علي في استخدام العلاقة الشخصية من أجل تحقيق الهدف (الواسطة) ألا أقع في أي مشاكل عندما أتيت إلى أمريكا ، وخاصة في الفصل الدراسي. حيث كنت أساعد زملائي القادمين من نفس البلد أو الذين يتحدثون العربية في الإجابة على واجباتهم المدرسية. لقد أوقعنتني هذه المساعدة في مشكلة مع الأستاذ بعد اكتشافها.

***In English language:***

It influenced me to use the personal relationship in order to achieve the goal (Wasta) to fall into no problems when I came to America, especially in the classroom, where I used to help my classmates who came from the same country or who spoke Arabic in answering their homework. This help got me into trouble with the professor after finding out.

**Code 3.3: Desire to progress.** Twenty-five of 30 participants do not have incentives to encourage them to compete or to raise their ability to obtain a high score on an exam, in order to be able to get a good job after graduation. Also, they are discouraged by the presence of a large

number of employees who rely on Wasta to obtain jobs without any effort. This creates a feeling of injustice for participants who have high competencies. Participant (L) stresses:

***In Arabic language:***

عندما أرى بعض زملائي الكبار بعد التخرج من المدرسة الثانوية يستخدمون علاقتهم الشخصية (الواسطة) من أجل الحصول على وظيفة في وضع جيد. هذا يجعلني أشعر بالإحباط وعدم الرغبة بالدراسة

***In English language:***

When I see some of my senior classmates after graduation from high school who use their personal relationship (Wasta) in order to obtain a job in good position, this makes me feel with frustration and unwillingness.

**Code 3.4 Administrative and academic satisfaction and teacher's morale.** Eighteen of 30 participants assert that Wasta diminished the satisfaction and morale of administrators and academics. Wasta created a feeling of injustice in the areas of recruitment, promotion, bonuses, and training because the poor economic situation prompted some teachers to accept the Wasta offer from a mediator in order to get some benefits from private lessons. This situation creates bad relationships between students and teachers. Participant (M) says that:

***In Arabic language:***

إذا كان المعلم غير راضٍ عن راتبه ولا يشعر أنه كافٍ بالنسبة له بسبب الضعف الاقتصادي ، فإن هذا سيولد شعوراً بعدم الرضا. بعد ذلك ، سيؤثر ذلك بالتأكيد على أدائه التدريسي ويؤثر على تعلم الطالب. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، سيبحث المعلم عن بدائل أخرى من أجل تحسين المستوى المالي بقبول الواسطة.

***In English language:***

If the teacher is not satisfied with his salary and does not feel that it is sufficient for him due to economic weakness, then this will generate a feeling of dissatisfaction. Then, it

will definitely affect his teaching performance and affect the student's learning. In addition, the teacher will search for other alternatives in order to improve the financial level by accepting Wasta.

**Table 13**

*The Dominance of Wasta over Schools Administration and Individual's Dependence*

<b>Code 4.1</b>	Personal relationships
<b>Code 4.2</b>	Getting a job
<b>Code 4.3</b>	The weak internal and external oversight of education institutions

As shown in Table 13, the dominance of the Wasta over schools' administration and individuals' dependence section includes the personal relationships, Getting a job, and the weak internal and external oversight of education institutions. In this theme, the participants reflect their views about how some students demonstrate their dependence on others through the use of Wasta with each other in order to achieve some benefits for themselves. These benefits may include passing an exam or getting a job after graduation, or having a specific effect on an education administration.

**Code 4.1 Personal Relationship.** Twenty-one of 30 participants mentioned that personal relationships, which are considered as one of the Wasta shapes, play an important role among students in helping each other during exams. The students may be bound by friendship, kinship, or clan. This means that some students completely depend on their relationships in order to obtain a good score on an exam instead of studying and being diligent in learning. This will prompt students to rely on friends in order to achieve their goals without fatigue or effort.

Participant (V) says:

***In Arabic language:***

كنت أستغل علاقتي مع ابن عمي لمساعدة بعضنا البعض لاجتياز الامتحان. أنا أعتبر ذلك سلوكًا غير عادل ، لكن لا يمكنني رفض مساعدة ابن عمي في الامتحان لأن ذلك سيعتبر اني شخصًا ضعيفًا وغير قادر على مساعدة أقاربي

***In English language:***

I was using my relationship with my cousin to help each other to pass the exam. I consider it unfair behavior, but I cannot refuse to help my cousin in the exam because that would be considered a weak person and unable to help my relatives.

**Code 4.2: Getting a job.** Among the 25 participants who got jobs, all mentioned that they got their jobs through their knowledge of managers who assisted them. Those managers used their network of relationships with employees who had authority in the Ministries in order to get jobs. Seventeen of 30 participants stressed that they used their own network of relationships directly with the employers who were responsible for hiring. Participant (H) confirms:

***In Arabic language:***

حصلت على الوظيفة عندما دفعت لشخص ما مبلغًا معينًا من المال للتوسط والحصول على الوظيفة كمدرس. لم أجتاز أي اختبار يوضح كفاءتي في اللغة الإنجليزية عند التقدم للوظيفة.

***In English language:***

I got the job when I paid someone a certain amount of money to mediate and get the job as a teacher. I did not pass any test showing my proficiency in the English language when applying for the job.

**Code 4.3: The weak internal and external oversight of education institutions.**

Twenty-five of 30 participants believe that the weak internal and external oversight of Iraqi education institutions is one of the reasons leading to the increase in the phenomenon of Wasta in

Iraqi schools. 60% of participants state that bureaucratic procedures accompanying the administrative and academic process are among the reasons for the spread of Wasta in educational institutions. Commenting on this, some participants said that public schools are bureaucratic organizations crammed with high numbers of employees and students. Despite the improvement of school systems and of communication technology, there are still gaps in the systems of registration, complicated by the administrative procedures. This creates a fertile environment for the mediator. Participant (I) says: Many students are forced to use their social networks and those of their families in order to register at school after the prescribed period has passed.

**Table 14**

*The Effect of Wasta on the Standard of Students' Education*

<b>Code 5.1</b>	Reliance on others
<b>Code 5.2</b>	Weak religious faith

As shown in Table 14, **the effect of Wasta on the standard of students' education** includes two codes: Reliance on others and weak religious faith. This section will show the influence of Wasta on student behavior from the participants' point of view.

**Code 5.1: Reliance on others.** Twenty-two of 30 participants mentioned that some students rely on Wasta for their success instead of making any effort. This way is considered the easiest and best guarantee of success. This means that these students will be incompetent after their graduation. Yet, anyone who rejects a Wasta request will be exposed to social problems. Wasta is seen by Arabs as part of the concept of help, generosity, and Arab culture. Therefore, the person who refuses to participant in Wasta is considered less generous because he/she

refused to assist of his/her relatives, friends, or another person seeking help. Participant (J)

confirms:

***In Arabic language:***

يستخدم عدد كبير من الطلاب الوساطة من أجل الحصول على درجة في الامتحان لا يستحقها أو لمسح الغياب. من الصعب رفض الوساطة لأنك إذا رفضتها فسوف يرفضك المجتمع وسينظر لك الناس بانك شخص غير كريم.

***In English language:***

A large number of students are using Wasta in order to obtain an exam grade that he / she does not deserve or to clear absence. It is difficult to reject Wasta because if you reject it, you will be rejected by society and people.

**Code 5.2: Weak religious faith.** Twenty-four of 30 participants see weak religious faith as one of the reasons behind Wasta. A large number of students still practice Wasta despite their conviction that it is prohibited in their religion. Participant (K) says:

***In Arabic language:***

في أحد أيام العام الدراسي ، كلفنا مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية بوظيفة دراسية يجب علينا إكمالها والعودة إليه. عندما قام المعلم بتصحيح الأوراق ، اخبرنا أن هناك إجابتين من الطلاب متطابقة مع بعضهما البعض. في اليوم التالي وجهه المعلم الطالبين ولكن تفاجئه عند تبرير أحد هؤلاء الطلاب إنه لا يعش ولكن هذا واجب ديني.

***In English language:***

One day of the school year, my English teacher gave an assignment to us that we must complete and return to him. When he corrected the papers, he told us that there were two students' answers matching with each other. The next day, he confronted them and one of those students told him that he did not cheat but that was a religious duty.

This means that there is a wrong concept to explain the concept of Wasta in religion among students. Based on what was mentioned in the literature reviews, religion urges people to help each other with good, but also to refuse to favor one person over others by grant him/her privileges that he/she does not deserve on the basis of kinship or family or religious ties. In addition to that, religion has prohibited cheating among people. This information is still not explained clearly among students, which causes some students behaviors to behave in ways that they believe are correct, believing that religion calls for actions, such as cheating among students in the exam and considering cheating as a form of help. This is not true because religion forbids such practices.

## Chapter V: Discussion

While previous research has proven that Wasta is a form of discrimination that negatively affects students, no previous study has clearly investigated this phenomenon in terms of the effect of Wasta on learning the English language. The current study was carried out by conducting interviews with Iraqi students studying in the United States of America to show how Wasta affects their learning of the English language. The results reveal that Wasta is closely associated with impaired satisfaction of basic psychological needs and increased psychological stress. On the other hand, the presentation of Wasta to others emerged as a way to show students' desire to increase the satisfaction of basic psychological needs and reduce psychological pressure. The review below, presents the main conclusions that can be drawn from the data collected in this study, as well as a discussion of its limits and importance, in addition to some recommendations for future research.

As is evident by the qualitative analysis, there are large numbers of Iraqi students who have used Wasta in Iraqi educational institutions or in other institutions. The reason for this is that the concept of Wasta deeply pervades Iraqi society. The Iraqi students who participant in this study consider Wasta to be a cultural heritage. According to one of participants, "Wasta is an integral part of Iraqi society, and therefore it cannot achieve any achievement without it." Therefore, Iraqi students began using Wasta due to inequality among students in the classroom. The indication of this study is that students who have a mediator have influence on the teacher's decisions in terms of adjusting grades and assessments. The results of this study are in agreement with previous researchers such as Harbi et al. (2016) and Tlaiss (2015). These researchers emphasized that personal relationships play a very important role in determining an individual's

future. The phenomenon of Wasta is not a new discovery: we have already seen in previous studies how Wasta affects the recruitment and admission processes of universities, in addition to any other matters, and this was confirmed in the current study.

Through comprehensive analysis, this researcher concludes that Wasta affects the individual's practice and psychological state, whether positive or negative, depending on the outcome of the Wasta act. With regard to student learning of the English language in Iraqi schools, a student who has a strong network of relationships with a teacher can achieve good scores on paper that are completely different from their real level of skill.

This means that students do not need to study, strive, or develop capabilities, as they can pass any exam through the use of Wasta. Cheung and Changm (2008) state that the use of Wasta in exams is a phenomenon that appears strongly at the end of each academic year. Students' use of Wasta has been shown to create a state of disproportion among students, which leads to negative effects. This inequality leads to disappointment in the educational successes or competencies of those who do not use Wasta, and suppresses any opportunity for social or economic mobility.

Blackmur (2004) asserts that Wasta has been the cause of the collapse of educational institutions in Arab countries. The results of this study also confirm that this is due to the absence of deterrent laws that prevent individuals from using Wasta. Many participants consider their efforts and creativity either unrecognized or pointless. Some participants feel desperate because there is no real competition with the presence of Wasta. Students who use Wasta will get all the benefits. The results also reveal that Wasta is encouraged when school administration does not use technology when conducting exams. Teachers likewise rely on traditional tools to conduct

the exams, which helps students who use a mediator in order to either cheat or modify their grade. Furthermore, this effects the development of the educational organization in Iraq a finding are consistent with Özsemerci (2002) and Ruben (1995). Researchers see that school administration should insist on the use of technology in the processes of exam correction and detection of plagiarism. This would additionally create a sense of credibility of the examination process and generate a sense of equality among students.

## **Chapter VI: Recommendations**

In this study, the focus is on the weakness of teaching the English language and the injustice that students face as a result of Wasta in Iraqi schools. Responses of the participants, both males and females, reveal that they feel that the most effective way to obtain qualified teachers and good teaching of the English language is through a radical treatment of the concept of Wasta, by establishing laws that deter the users of Wasta. According to the quantitative analysis, all 30 participants who participated in the individual interview called for the elimination of Wasta because it is so widespread in Iraqi society. Therefore, the best solution is clearly, to pressure the Iraqi state to impose fines on those using Wasta. In addition, participants make other recommendations aimed at improving the quality of teaching staff for the English language and the quality Iraqi schools.

### **Specific Recommendations**

1. The Iraqi educational ministry should design and implement an electronic system that assesses students' competence in a fair and anonymous manner. This system must aim to determine the students' competence through correction and evaluation based on the student's real level. Long (1992) and Maguire and Gibbs (2013) assert that the electronic correction system helps preserve students' rights and ensures a fair correction process free from Wasta. The electronic correction system can utilize on codes (the student does not write a name) that are given to each student once she / he completes an exam or job application via the Internet. This program will allow "blind correction" for students. The goal of this system is that the English language teachers will correct students' papers on the basis of competence, as they will not be able to

- know the identity of the student; there is no personal name of the student or family name on the exam. Thus, the teacher will fairly grade the student. This system may not eliminate the concept of Wasta completely, but it may reduce its use.
2. The Iraqi state must more consistently inculcate religious and human values in Iraqi schools. Many of the failures that we suffer in our contemporary world are the result of human behavior alone. Therefore, if we want to contribute to treating negative phenomena such as Wasta, it is necessary to know the system of values in which an individual believes and the extent of his/her commitment to it. Hence, it is necessary first to activate religious values in a person's life with the aim of modifying their behavior, which creates a sense of responsibility for the religious values of honesty, justice, equality, and respect for public money.
  3. The Iraqi state should create independent and impartial bodies to combat educational corruption and the related aspects of Wasta. In addition, the government needs to support the judiciary and promote the values of positive culture among members of Iraqi society, as well as enhance the values of loyalty with decent livelihoods for teachers.
  4. The Iraqi education department should conduct character training and build the administrative capabilities of schools. This should be done through training programs designed to educate students and members of the teaching and administrative bodies. This training would enhance the values of justice, integrity, and transparency. The education department should build clear and easy administrative and academic

- instructions aimed at reaching a high degree of objectivity in decision-making and maximizing the values of parity.
5. The Iraqi education department should codify an ethical charter or an ethical and educational constitution that stipulates that academics and administrators in Iraqi schools perform their work accurately, honestly, and quickly, avoiding discrimination between students and avoiding of mediation and exploitation.
  6. The Iraqi education department should amend the penal code and stipulate stricter punishment for acts of Wasta, including Wasta and other forms of corruption in educational institutions. In addition to encouraging students, employees, and faculty members to report the factors and pressures they witness, the laws should provide legal guarantees for their protection.
  7. Educational institutions should build objective and fair foundations for selecting academic leaders and avoid selecting them by Wasta.
  8. All institutions and governing bodies should do serious work to provide social environment in homes, schools, various state agencies, and educational institutions that are keen to respect the rules that must be followed, respect the rights of students, and support the values that help in fighting the manifestations of corruption and Wasta.

## Chapter VII: Conclusion

From the beginning of the study to the end, the phenomenon of Wasta was referred by its correct name without fear of hurting the student's feelings or causing any insult to her/him. The researcher has always sought to clarify to the participants the risks of this type of behavior and how it affects education in general and English language education in particular.

Even among themselves, students know about this phenomenon, but are ignorant of its seriousness and its direct impact on their lives directly. Many forms of Wasta, to which this study refers, affect not only the student's education in the English language, but also his personal life, because the phenomenon is used not only in schools, but also in state institution, and in the practices of daily life. Therefore, the process of combating Wasta should not be carried out by state institutions only, but also by individuals themselves.

During this study, the researcher found that Iraqis who come to study in America form a bond of friendship based on values of honor and generosity. Members of this association seek to help each other and are afraid of refusing help (Wasta) because they do not want to be alone without friends.

In the first stage of this thesis, the researcher shed light on how Iraqi students deal with educational institutions in America and how these institutions were able to reduce the concept of Wasta, as it relies heavily on technology in correcting papers or revealing similarities in exam papers. In addition, the class supervisor cannot distinguish between students based on personal, religious, or ethnic relations, as there are strict laws in America that prohibit this.

The second part of the research focused on the effect of Wasta on teaching students the English language and how it affected their motivation to study and their professional and

academic lives. Several religious, economic, bribery, family, and tribal causes drive the educational process to deteriorate, and affecting students, especially those coming to the United States of America with the aim of studying.

Finally, the researcher found, through his interviews with Iraqi students, the extent of the influence of Wasta on their education. The researcher found that Wasta has become a word that penetrated many systems and is considered a phenomenon of administrative and educational corruption that many Arab societies, especially Iraq, suffer from. For some students, Wasta has become the lifeboat they are looking for to satisfy their needs, whether large or small. Wasta is a rampant crisis in Arab society, especially in Iraq. Wasta is a lot of negativity that reflects on the individual and society until it has become a routine that affects the level of work and leads to dire results from us unemployment for those with degrees, studies and competencies because the individual who got what he wants through the Wasta is considered himself better than others and infringes on their rights.

Among the disadvantages of Wasta is also not putting the right person in the right place because it works to bring the unqualified and specialized people closer to the decision-makers. All these reasons lead to the great and wide spread of Wasta in state institutions and its impact on individuals and society.

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## Appendix A: Background Survey

### English Language Version

#### Questions:

1. **Gender:**    A. Male            B. Female            C. Prefer not to answer
2. **Age:**
3. **How many years have you studied English In the Iraqi school?**
4. **What are the strengths and weaknesses of your English?**  
       **Strengths**.....  
       **Weaknesses**.....
5. **How many years have you been in the USA? (If you student)**
6. **How many years have you worked in the field of teaching English? (If you are teacher)**
7. **What is your current educational level?**  
       A. Undergraduate                    B. Graduate                    C. Other
8. **What is your current major?**
9. **When did you start attending US universities?**  
       A. 2015 or before 2015            B. 2016  
       C. 2017.                            D. 2018 or after 2018
10. **Which English test did you take?**  
       A. TOEFL iBT                        B. IELTS Academic
11. **How many times have you taken TOEFL iBT or IELTS Academic?**  
       A. 1        B. 2        C. 3        D. 4        E. More than 4
12. **How much are your chances, relying on your friends, to pass the exam or assignment in non- Iraqi schools?**  
       A. 25%    B. 50%    C. 75%    D. 100%    E. 0%
13. **How much are your chances, relying on your friends, to pass the exam or assignment in Iraqi schools?**  
       A. 25%    B. 50%    C. 75%    D. 100%    E. 0%

**14. How much is the teacher's chances of discovering the match between you and your friends in exams or assignments in non-Iraqi school (plagiarism)?**

**A. 25%    B. 50%    C. 75%    D. 100%    E. 0%**

**15. How much is a chances of relying on your personal relationship or the relationship of your relatives to influence the teacher in order to adjust your grade in non-Iraqi school?**

**A. 25%    B. 50%    C. 75%    D. 100%    E. 0%**

**16. How much is a chances of relying on your personal relationship or the relationship of your relatives to influence the teacher in order to adjust your grade in Iraqi school?**

**A. 25%    B. 50%    C. 75%    D. 100%    E. 0%**

## Arabic Language Version

ملحق أ

أسيئلة:

1. الجنس: أ. ذكر ب. أنثى ج. يفضل عدم الإجابة

2. العمر:

3. كم سنة درست اللغة الإنجليزية في المدارس العراقية؟

5. ما هي نقاط القوة والضعف في لغتك الإنجليزية؟

نقاط القوة .....

نقاط الضعف .....

6. كم سنة لك في الولايات المتحدة؟ (إذا كنت طالباً)

7- كم سنة عملت في مجال تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية؟ (إذا كنت مدرساً)

8. ما هو مستواك التعليمي الحالي؟

أ. البكالوريوس ب. خريج

جيم أخرى

8. ما هو تخصصك الحالي؟

9. متى بدأت الالتحاق بالجامعات الأمريكية؟

2015 أو ما قبل 2015 ب 2016

م 2017. د 2018 أو بعد 2018

10. ما هو اختبار اللغة الإنجليزية الذي خضته؟

أ. **TOEFL iBT B. IELTS Academic**11. كم مرة خضت فيها **TOEFL iBT** أو **IELTS Academic**؟

أ 1 ب 2 ج 3 د 4 هـ أكثر من 4

12. ما هي فرصك ، بالاعتماد على أصدقائك ، في اجتياز الامتحان أو التعيين في مدارس غير عراقية؟

أ 25% ب 50% ج 75% د 100% هـ 0%

13. ما هي فرصك ، بالاعتماد على أصدقائك ، في اجتياز الامتحان أو التعيين في المدارس العراقية؟

أ 25% ب 50% ج 75% د 100% هـ 0%

14. ما هي فرص المعلم في اكتشاف التطابق بينك وبين أصدقائك في الامتحانات أو الواجبات في مدرسة غير عراقية

(opالانتحال)؟

أ 25% ب 50% ج 75% د 100% هـ 0%

15. ما هي فرص الاعتماد على علاقتك الشخصية أو علاقة أقاربك للتأثير على المعلم من أجل تعديل درجتك في مدرسة غير

عراقية؟

أ 25% ب 50% ج 75% د 100% هـ 0%

16. ما هي فرص الاعتماد على علاقتك الشخصية أو علاقة أقاربك للتأثير على المعلم من أجل تعديل درجتك في المدرسة

العراقية؟

أ 25% ب 50% ج 75% د 100% هـ 0%

## **Appendix B: Semi-structured Individual Interview for Students**

### **English Language Version**

1. Can you describe how the relationship between you and some of your colleagues with English teachers was?
2. Can you give me some examples about these relationships whether they are good or not?
3. Can you tell me how these relationships have had positive or negative effects on you and your professional life?
4. Can you provide a description of your feelings about these relationships and how they impacted you?
5. Can you provide examples about how this kind of relationship have helped some of your colleagues in getting grades that they do not deserve or do not reflect their competency?
6. Have you ever had an unfair assessment because you don't have Wasta? Explain
7. In what situation, you would support the use of Wasta? Explain.
8. Did you use this relationship with the English teacher to help you amend the answer during the exam?
9. Did you seek the help of one of your friends in the class or one of your relatives to help you answer during the exam?

## Arabic Language Version

ملحق ب

مقابلة فردية شبه منظمة للطلاب

- 1- هل يمكنك وصف العلاقة بينك وبين البعض من زملائك بمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية؟
- 2- هل يمكنك أن تعطيني بعض الأمثلة عن هذه العلاقات سواء كانت جيدة أم لا؟
- 3- هل يمكن أن تخبرني كيف كان لهذه العلاقات آثار إيجابية أو سلبية عليك وعلى حياتك المهنية؟
- 4- هل يمكنك تقديم وصف لمشاعرك حول هذه العلاقات وكيف أثرت عليك؟
- 5- هل يمكنك إعطاء أمثلة عن كيف ساعد هذا النوع من العلاقة بعض زملائك في الحصول على درجات لا يستحقونها أو لا تعكس كفاءتهم؟
- 6- هل سبق أن كان لديك تقييم غير عادل لأنك لا تملك الوساطة؟ أشرح
- 7- في أي موقف ستؤيد استخدام الوساطة؟ أشرح .
- 8- هل استخدمت هذه العلاقة مع مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية لمساعدتك في تعديل الإجابة أثناء الامتحان؟
- 9- هل طلبت مساعدة أحد أصدقائك في الفصل أو أحد أقاربك لمساعدتك في الإجابة أثناء الامتحان؟