Difficulties Faced by Trainees of English Department at the Practice Period

الصعوبات التي تواجه مطبقي قسم اللغة الانجليزية في فترة التطبيق

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Section One

1.1 Introduction

Teaching English as a second or foreign language has been a growing profession . In the last fifty years, language teaching has been a number of "revolutions " in methods and technology .There has been a lot of studies in language learning in the past few decades, but ones still don't fully understand how people learn a second Language. Thus, teachers need to meet the enormous demand for courses in English. The development of national standards for foreign language learning are placing a number of few demands on foreign language teachers. Teachers require a combination of competence and background that may be necessary in the preparation of language teachers.

All teachers must attend a four-year college and earn a bachelors' degree. The college courses they take are related to what aspiring teachers plan to teach College students who plan to become teachers are assigned students teaching jobs, usually during their last

year at the college. This is the first opportunity to apply what they have learned to real world of teaching.

In this context, Richard and Remandya (2002:41) point out three levels of influence on the language being learned ,the national and cultural influences, the educational system and the immediate classroom environment. Teachers may wonder which way they ought to go before they enter a classroom, this usually means that teachers need to plan what they want to do in their own classes in the way of managing objectives of language activities.

One of the main aims of training teachers is to familiarize them with the effective methods and techniques which guarantee maximal learning(Al-Khuli, 1996:10).The teacher is instrumental in creating the conditions for learning. His competence is reflected in his understanding of the nature of foreign language teaching and learning, his knowledge of teaching theories and methods in communicative practice.

All teachers wish they never had behavior problems with their students .However, students do sometimes get into trouble and teachers must be prepared to deal with them. The problem of this study can be stated by this question :What are the difficulties that may face the trainees of English Department at the college of Basic Education/Diyala University during the practice period ?

1.2 The Significance of the Study

This study may be significant in these areas:-

1. It may be useful to college students by exploring the exact difficulties that faced by trainees in practice period which give clear idea to other students in the following years of training**..**
2. It gives an idea to the teachers of English language in general by finding out the weak and strong points of the trainees performance in teaching English.
3. Supervisors may emphasize on the real learning situation and what is going on inside classrooms according to the results and suggestions of the study and ,
4. The significance of the study stems from the importance of the role of teachers in language learning.

1.3 Aim

This study aims at :-

1. Identifying and analyzing difficulties faced by trainees at the practice period .

1.4 Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that :

1. There are no difficulties faced by trainees in English language teaching at practice period.

1.5 Limits

This study is limited to investigate the difficulties that faced by trainees of English Department (morning and evening classes) college of Basic Education/Diyala University during the academic year 2009-2010

Section Two

Theoretical Background and Previous Studies

2.1 Practice Requirements

Teachers learn a lot of valuable information while they are in college. However, they learn most of what they need to know by actually teaching .One of the first lessons teachers learn is the importance of building good relationships with students. There are no absolute rules about how a lesson should proceed, but experienced teachers find that they select from a standard collection of techniques what is suitable for their students . Finnochiaro (1983   :101) states that teachers' more specific task is to give attention to communicative purpose and function and particularly to the interpersonal function. It should start from the first level of learning .Thus ,an effective lesson plan starts with appropriate and clearly written objectives.

Teachers deal with different challenges in language learning .However, no matter how young or how old their students are ,teachers must know how to be firm and directive when necessary inside the

classroom. Morris (1980:14) states that there is no royal road for modern language teacher which can be adopted by teachers to lead them successfully to their goals. Teachers must try to create interest and excitement in subjects that students may not normally find interesting.

An effective teacher has to be a good classroom manager and organizer. Teachers need to create lessons in an economical and efficient way . Linsay (2000 :19) concentrates on the basic components of a lesson;

1. The learning environment (the classroom),
2. Giving instructions,
3. Organizing the learning relationships and activities.

2.2 Effective Teaching

An effective teaching implies minimal waste of time and effort on the part of the learner and teacher .The competence of the teacher is reflected in his understanding of the nature of foreign language teaching and learning, his knowledge of teaching theories ,methods and objectives of instruction are determined by the teaching professional skill. When preparing his teaching materials or lessons ,teachers should take into consideration the learners, age, attitude, ability, previous language experience to the target language.

2.3 Teaching Strategies

Teaching strategies can be defined as the mental and communicative procedures teachers use in teaching the target language (Nunan:171). Knowledge of strategies is important because the greater awareness lead to effective language learning strategies. This importance of teaching strategies can be stated in two situations; first, they are active, self-directed involvement which is essential for developing communicative competence. Second, learners who have developed appropriate learning strategies have greater self-confidence and learn more effectively (ibid).

There are two kinds of strategies in language learning; direct strategies which include memorizing ,analyzing, reasoning and guessing intelligently and indirect strategies which include things such as evaluating ones, learning and cooperating with others.(ibid).

Teachers differ in their way to make these decisions and realize these objectives .Teachers decisions and choices of techniques depend on the nature of the situation they face. The application of teaching techniques cannot be regarded as either (right or wrong) and it is not a matter of personal whim a fancy. Effective teaching is often accompanied not only by good learnings, but involves motivation, variation, aids, social warmth, and similar experience to students.

Cooperative learning can lead to a more dynamic classroom instruction that promotes more learning. Nunan (2004:49) states that the benefits of the cooperative learning include:

a-less teacher talk

b-more varied and increasing students talk and,

c-greater motivation for contribute.

These advantages contribute significantly to language learning. The daily planning decisions that English language teachers make before they enter the classroom are necessary for the success with which a teacher conducts a lesson is often thought to depend on the effectiveness with which the lesson was planned (Richard ,2002 :30) .

Classroom management is also one of the teaching strategies in language learning. It refers to the way teachers organize what goes on inside the classroom (Gebhard, 2006 :80). Thus an effective teacher has to be a good classroom manager and organizer. Teachers need to create lessons in an economical and efficient way. Teachers often struggle within their own classes is how to manage classroom learning to achieve successful results.

2.4 Previous Studies

The main purpose of teaching English in Iraq is taught it shall serve as a medium for international communication. In a situation like this, there must be certain objectives which are to be put forward in order to lead the teaching process to achieve this aim. The main objectives are to enable learners to master the foreign language be developing the four language skills :listening ,reading, speaking and writing.

According to the limited knowledge of the researcher ,there is no previous studies dealing with identifying difficulties faced by trainees of English Department at the college of Basic Education. But, there are different studies dealing with the difficulties faced by trainees at other departments like Arabic, Physics and Educational Arts.

Section Three

Procedures and Methodology

The procedures that are followed to carry out the aims of the study are as follows:-

3.1 Population and Sample

The total number of the trainees are (60) males and females .Hence, the number of the trainees is limited, they are all considered the sample of the study. They comprise the trainees of morning and evening classes at English Department/College of Basic Education during the academic year (2009-2010).

3-2 Description of the Instrument

A checklist is built and developed through constructing a closed questionnaire contained the expected difficulties that may face the trainees during the practice period. It consisted of (35) items . These items have been collected on the bases of related literature .

3-3 Face Validity

Validity is defined by Heaton (1975:153)as "the extent to which a tool measures what is supposed to measure and nothing else". The face validity is proved by exposing to a jury of specialists in teaching English as foreign language and Linguistics . The jury members are:

1- Professor Rijia , Khalil I. Ph. D. in Linguistic / College of Education for Humanities /University of Diyala.

2- Assistant Professor . Izat S . Najim M.A. in Linguistic / College of Basic Education /University of Diyala.

3- Assistant Professor Muslim M. Jasim M.A. in Literature /College of Basic Education /University of Diyala.

4- Instructor Innam Y. Abdul Khaliq Ph. D. in ELT / College of Basic Education /University of Diyala.

5- Instructor Abbas , Amthel Muhammad Ph. D. in Translation / College of Education for Humanities /University of Diyala. Each member in the jurey has been kindly requested to modify,omit or add what he/she finds suitable to the checklist (See appendix 1)

According to the suggestions and modifications of the jury members ,some items have been modified and (6) items are excluded. Thus ,the remaining items are (24) which constitute the final version of the checklist.(appendix 2). To ensure the face validity of the items of the checklist, the percentage of agreement is used. Thus,   the jurors agreed on the items of the checklist   as being appropriate for the aims of the study with a percentage of 90.25% .

3-4 The Pilot Administration of the Study

The checklist developed in the present study is built on the basis of tentative questionnaire .The checklist has a three point scale ranging from "always" to " never ".The final version of the checklist is submitted to the trainees of English Department . To check the clarity of the items included in the checklist,(3) trainees have been chosen randomly for the pilot administration of the study. This sample is excluded from the total number of the study. All the trainees were requested to score all the difficulties that they had faced in their practice period. The frequency of each difficulty and the degree of power of these difficulties were recorded.

3.5 Reliability of the Checklist

Guantlet (1961;110) defines reliability as "the degree which a test or examination measures what it does measure". The instrument of the present study is considered reliable since the collection has been assessed by using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient formula where it was found to be (0.85) which can be seen as a desirable correlation.

3-6 The Statistical Means

The present study used the following statistical means:

1- The percentage is used to find out the agreement of the jury members on the face validity of the instrument, and to calculate the final results.

2- Weighted Mean : it is typically used to find the weighted mean of items checklist to count the highest or lowest weight for each item (Madansky, 2003 :23).

3- Weighted Percentile : It is used to count the weighted percentile for each item in the checklist (Madansky, 2003 :23).

Section Four

The Results, Conclusions and Suggestions

4.1   The Results of the Study

To fulfill the aim and the verification of the null hypothesis , two statistical means are used which are weighted mean and weighted percentile , thus the theoretical mean is (2) , i.e. the item is achieved at level two and above.   the result of the most difficulties are faced by the trainees is the item number (4), which is " The absence of teaching aids inside the classroom." (Weighted M.=2.23, W.P. =74%). While, the lowest rating item is number (23), which says " Difficulty in evaluating pupils achievements (productive skills)." (W. M.=1.65, W.P. =55%).

Table (1)

Weighted Mean, Weighted Percentile, and Rank Order for the Difficulties faced by trainees at Practice Period

No.	Items	Rank	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile
2	The absence of teaching aids inside the classroom.	1	2.23	74%
4	Directorate of Education doesn't have any role in the practice period.	2	2.16	72%
5	There isn't any help from the specialists of directorate education of Diyala.	3	2.03	67%
1	There isn't a guide for the teaching material.	4	1.88	63%
11	The high number of the students inside the classroom .	5.5	1.83	61%
19	Parents don't give any interest to the lesson of English language.	5.5	1.83	61%
15	Difficulty in dealing with individual differences among students.	7	1.8	60%
20	lack of using the board due to the weakness in handwriting.	8	1.08	60%
12	Difficulty in stimulating students attention to the subject of the lesson.	9	1.78	59.44%
7	The English teachers are not cooperative with the trainees.	11	1.76	59%

10	Difficulty in dealing with the problems that may happen inside the classroom.	11	1.76	59%
17	Confusing before the beginning of the lesson.	11	1.76	58%
6	The school administration doesn't take the practice period seriously.	13	1.75	58%
3	Difficulty in dealing with school administration.	15.5	1.73	57%
16	Feeling of disappointment due to misunderstanding of students to the materials of the lesson.	15.5	1.73	57%
21	Difficulty in preparing a lesson plan before teaching.	15.5	1.73	57%
24	lack of using English language laboratories for teaching in schools.	15.5	1.73	57%
22	Feeling of exhausted due to the high number of the lessons per week.	18	1.07	57%
14	Using the oral punishment(bad words)to control the situation.	19	1.56	55%
8	Un ability in class management.	20	1.68	56%
9	Un ability to have a variety of techniques to deal with students.	21.5	1.66	56%
13	Forcing to use the punishment (hitting with hand or stick).	21.5	1.66	56%
18	Difficulty in evaluating students (receptive skills).	23.5	1.65	55%
23	Difficulty in evaluating pupils achievements (productive skills).	23.5	1.65	55%

The analysis of results showed that trainees have to face a lot of distractions in classroom daily .They may have to deal with uninterested pupils or they may suffer from burden in absence of teaching aids support. Many pupils are more interested in checking their attentions toward aural - visual – aids in paying their concerns, respect for authority and motivation. The absence of teaching aids involvement makes the burden on trainees even more onerous.

Teaching aid has become an essential part of education, thus, Directorate of Education should equip with all types of aural-visual aids in classrooms today . This leads to shed light on the low performance of the specialists of directorate in primary education is also matter of concern. Poor specialists attendance and low contact time with trainees in school are factors contributing to low level of learning achievement.

4.2 Conclusion

In the light of objective , the statistical analysis and findings of the study , the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The lacking of teaching aids inside the classrooms.
2. Directorate of Education doesn't have any role in the practice period.
3. The absence of the educational specialists role to pursue and develop trainees performance through constant communication by giving them help, advice and feedback along the way of practice period to make sure that they are really on the right path to achieving the major goal of educational process.

4-3Suggestions

According to the results, certain suggestions are presented as follows:-

1. Providing schools with audio-visual aids that may be effective in language learning and teaching .
2. Motivating the specialists in the Directorate of Education to give an attention to the trainees and they may guide the trainees by giving them certain lectures about language learning and teaching at the beginning of the practice period.
3. Emphasizing on the expected difficulties and working hard to find outsuitable solutions to facilitate the trainees work as the main responsibility of Directorate of Education .
4. Urging teachers to be more cooperate with the trainees by providing enormous advice, help and support where necessary .
5. Encouraging the trainees to avoid all kinds of punishments and enhancing them to use the educational methods like the positive motivation .
6. Focusing on the individual differences as a psychological principle inside the classroom .

<center>Appendix 1

A Letter Submitted to the Jury Members</center>

Dear sir/madam

   The researcher intends to conduct a study entitled " **Difficulties faced by trainees of English Department at Practice Period**". The instrument of the study a checklist containing the expected difficulties that may face trainees during the practice period. As specialists in the field of TEFL, please read the items of the questionnaire and kindly state if they are suitable or not. Any addition or modification will be

highly regarded.   .

Thank you in advance for your cooperation

  Yours

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A Checklist of Difficulties Faced by Trainees at Practice Period

No	Items	Suitable	Unsuitable	Modification or Suggestions
1	There isn't a guide for the teaching material.			
2	The absence of teaching aids inside the classroom.			
3	Difficulty in dealing with school administration.			
4	Directorate of Education doesn't have any role in the practice period.			
5	There isn't any help from the specialists of directorate education of Diyala.			
6	The school administration doesn't take the practice period seriously.			
7	The English teachers are not cooperative with the trainees.			
8	Un ability in class management.			
9	Un ability to have a variety of techniques to deal with			

	students.			
10	Difficulty in dealing with the problems that may happen inside the classroom.			
11	The high number of the students inside the classroom .			
12	Difficulty in stimulating students attention to the subject of the lesson.			
13	Forcing to use the punishment (hitting with hand or stick).			
14	Using the oral punishment(bad words)to control the situation.			
15	The study of Psychology doesn't help in understanding student's behaviour.			
16	Difficulty in dealing with individual differences among students.			
17	Feeling of disappointment due to misunderstanding of students to the materials of the lesson.			
18	Confusing before the beginning of the lesson.			
19	Difficulty in evaluating students.			
20	The theoretical background is weak for preparing good teachers.			

21	Parents don't give any interest to the lesson of English language.			
22	Embarrassment due to the weakness in handwriting.			
23	Difficulty in preparing a lesson plan before teaching.			
24	Feeling of exhausted due to the high number of the lesson per week.			
25	Weakness of the college textbooks in teaching students.			
26	Difficulty in evaluating pupils achievements.			
27	The absence of any financial support for trainees in the practice period .			
28	The absence of the laboratories for teaching in schools.			
29	The need to limit the practice period to the secondary stage only.			
30	Students need different techniques in class management.			

Appendix 2
The Final Version of the Checklist

No.	Items	Always	Sometimes	Never
1	There isn't a guide for the teaching material.			
2	The absence of teaching aids inside the classroom.			
3	Difficulty in dealing with school administration.			
4	Directorate of Education doesn't have any role in the practice period.			
5	There isn't any help from the specialists of directorate education of Diyala.			
6	The school administration doesn't take the practice period seriously.			
7	The English teachers are not cooperative with the trainees.			
8	Un ability in class management.			
9	Un ability to have a variety of techniques to deal with students.			
10	Difficulty in dealing with the problems that may happen inside the classroom.			
11	The high number of the students inside the classroom .			
12	Difficulty in stimulating students attention to the subject of the lesson.			
13	Forcing to use the punishment (hitting with hand or stick).			

14	Using the oral punishment(bad words)to control the situation.			
15	Difficulty in dealing with individual differences among students.			
16	Feeling of disappointment due to misunderstanding of students to the materials of the lesson.			
17	Confusing before the beginning of the lesson.			
18	Difficulty in evaluating students (receptive skills).			
19	Parents don't give any interest to the lesson of English language.			
20	lack of using the board due to the weakness in handwriting.			
21	Difficulty in preparing a lesson plan before teaching.			
22	Feeling of exhausted due to the high number of the lessons per week.			
23	Difficulty in evaluating pupils achievements (productive skills).			
24	lack of using English language laboratories for teaching in schools.			

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