

An analytical study on identifying the causes of the difficulties faced by Arab teachers teaching English as a second language while using Bilingual Method

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Abstract:

The present study entitled “An analytical study on identifying the causes of the difficulties faced by Arab teachers teaching English as a second language while using Bilingual Method” aims at investigating and analyzing the most common difficulties faced by the Arab teachers in using Bilingual Method. It attempts to find out answers to a set of research questions. In order to achieve the aims of this study, a questionnaire was developed that consisted of 20 items and demographic information was designed. The major portion of this paper is devoted to present the difficulties encountered by the Arab teachers in general and Iraqi teachers in particular.

The population of this study includes seventy teachers (Male 22 and Female 48) who were selected randomly from different regions in the middle and north of Iraq. The findings have showed that the participants had positive attitude for some questions and negative attitude for others. In the finding, the researcher has found that most of the teachers lack in using appropriate teaching method and also lack of knowledge regarding the different types of methodologies. The teachers have only one language that is Arabic with them and less of second language that is English understanding, therefore translation was incorrect for them to either apply academic helped in teaching nor their experience helped in developing this methodology & they slacked miserably. Thus it has been impossible. The researcher also has analyzed through this study that most of teachers emphasized on

reading skills more than other skills like Speaking, listening and writing so the concept of Bilingual Method was not achieved by them at all.

Key words: Identifying, Causes of the Difficulties, Arab English Teachers, ESL, Bilingual Method.

Introduction

Teaching English for students who study English as a second language (ESL) is always affected by many factors because of the social and cultural backgrounds of the students. Teachers of English face a lot of problems while teaching English when using Bilingual Method in teaching Arab students especially in Iraq. The first and the most important reason is that the Arab students have no knowledge of even basic English although they are being taught English in schools. Perhaps in the school, teachers do not pay proper attention towards the teaching of English. Whatever may be the reason for this but the teacher who teaches these students in higher classes suffers the most and face a lot of difficulties and challenges while teaching them a prescribed book or course in higher classes.

On the other hand, students look towards their teachers with great hope. They consider the teacher as the most competent, and they think that their teacher would make them learn English very soon. Thus teacher's responsibility towards his students is doubled. As a result, many English teachers are fed up and disappointed and so leave the assignment in the middle of their contract. But if the teacher has patience and is competent and intelligent, he will handle the situation easily and achieve his goal. So we find a lot of students who belong to different environments attending lessons of English language, and they learn formally and like any material methodology taught in the class. However, at the end of the lesson, they

leave the school without paying any sort of attention to whatever they have taken especially in English language class.

English language needs more interaction and communication between learners of ESL and others who know how to speak English or even among themselves. Therefore, we find a lot of students attending lessons of English language only for the sake of getting grades and passing the exams; and that by keeping answers appropriate in the curriculum and without motivation to learn the language, and spend number of years without making use of the language. This case fluctuates right from the beginning students learn the material of English in the primary stage and until the end of the secondary stage, then when they come to post secondary and access to colleges and universities to study other sciences such as medicine, engineering and computer science, they face problems this is because all the sciences taught in English.

However, this is a study of exploring and identifying the causes of the difficulties faced by Arab teachers in general and Iraqi teachers in particular in teaching English as a second language by using Bilingual Method. The study was motivated by the author's observation over many years of teaching English language to young and adult learners. An investigation of the role of Bilingual Method in teaching and learning appeared to be acceptable in view of the fact that the author had observed greater levels of met linguistic awareness among Arab English teachers (**Smith, 2004**). The difficulties faced by the teachers and the methods of teaching English to these students have been discussed in details in the present research paper.

English Language Teaching (ELT):

English language teaching tradition has undergone through many tremendous changes, particularly in the 20th century. Such a tradition has been practiced in English language

classrooms in the world over. It is worth mentioning that the methodologies used in teaching math and physics are quite different from those used in teaching English language.

With the technological revolution and e-learning system English Language has emerged as one of the world's most important tools of formal communication. A very important reason for considering English as a global language is that the world's knowledge is seen to be preserved in English. English is the most preferred language even in the regions where the local language is supposed to be as important as the culture. But, when it comes to the link language issue, it is English that deals with the issues of cross cultural communication.

Teaching of English as a foreign Language is always difficult. Teaching of English Language in the Arab regions in general and Iraq in particular catches attention of many researchers and scholars especially when the issue is particularly related to the classroom situation. The contemporary world is a universal town and the communities of the world are getting nearer to each other. Through language different people and communities share their thoughts and concepts.

Lyytinen (1985); pointed out, “man uses language to express feelings and attitudes and to establish, coordinate, and control relationship with others”. In the result of these interactions the majority of the nations of the world are becoming Bilingual. As **Smith (1994)** pointed, “The majority of the people in this world can call themselves speaker of at least two languages”. According to **Brown (2000)** becoming Bilingual is a way of life. Every bone and fiber of your being is affected in some way as you struggle to reach beyond the confines of your first language and into a new language, a new culture, a new way of thinking, feeling, and acting. In the context of present day situation, it is difficult (**qtd. In Asghar Ansari, 2012**).

It has been always a unique pedagogical approach that is the Teaching of English language as it is a foreign language; an essential concept is that the concentration has transferred from teacher-oriented classes to student-oriented classes. This concept has laid new “ideologies” and conceptions, specifically for the teacher. Pedagogy in recent times has understood that the class is a balanced either way relationship between the one who educate and the one who learns. Hence, the two things “negotiate” their implications in the classroom, in the sense that, for a better learning prospect the one who teaches should become more or less transforming or dynamic. Therefore the part played by a teacher in a classroom should be more active toward the thing the participants could be enthusiastic about. There should be level playing field for the students to learn more stuff rather than just being receipt ants. I think we should finalize this statement by saying that the teacher has to create the conditions in which The Comfortable Learning can be put up in stages. The reasons why we aim at optimal activities are to obtain the most desirable result **(Dodson,1967)** .

Teaching a second language is not easy. But it can be taught effectively with patience and hard labour with the help of self-invented methodologies suitable for one's students. For this a teacher has to, first of all, study the problems and difficulties faced by his students in the process of learning English. Once the problems and difficulties are found out, the task of teaching becomes easy for an intelligent teacher. A competent, intelligent, hard working and cooperative teacher is necessary for learning a second language.

A learner is lucky if he gets a competent teacher while learning a second language. When he starts learning a second or foreign language, a student faces a lot of problems. At this stage his teacher comes for his rescue. He tries to understand his student's problems, solves them and saves the students from depression. He frames Curriculum suitable for his students, selects reading materials for them and creates a

suitable environment for learning English in the class room. While learning a second language, a student faces a many fold problems like socio-cultural problems, unfamiliarity with the subject, different style of writing from his mother tongue, pronunciation problem, problem in recognizing the alphabets etc.

The socio-cultural background of a student plays a vital role in learning the second Language. His culture is totally different from the culture of the language which he is learning. This unawareness of the culture confuses the student. At this crucial stage his teacher comes for his help. The teacher tells him something about the culture, the way of the living of the people, and the linguistic nature and style of the second language. He also makes his student familiar with the subject through the class-room practice. He teaches alphabets, words and finally gives short familiar topics to write on and to read the selected passages, in order to improve Students' linguistic knowledge (**R. Kannan , 2009**).

Kannan (2009); said that the majority of the students who are coming from rural areas, Bilingual Method is adopted in language classes. This method helps only to slow learners to some extent. Moreover, this act reduces the real learning processes a whole. If a student does not understand anything in English, he/she asks for explanation in L1 i.e. in his/her mother tongue. Consequently, the English teacher is in a state to adopt bilingual method. ELT specialists view this as a wrong methodology.

In schools, students are being taught that English is an international language. To learn this language requires constant practice and patience. The kind of feeling that prevails among students is that it is not possible to achieve fluency or mastery over English language. This kind of tendency prevents students from learning new languages like English. Since most of the students are first generation learners, how can a student get acquainted with the foreign language with regard to

English without any guidance from their parents and others? Even though students are studying English, they are not able to produce even a single sentence without any grammatical error in English. The reason stated for this is that they study subjects from the examination point of view only. This is true with English language too. Our examination system is such that it makes students' rote memorization rather than testing their analytical and creative skills. In this process, they memorize lessons, reproduce them in exam halls and forget them in the someday itself. Students learn basic grammar at school level for the purpose of passing only in the tests and in the examinations and not to face any real life situations. Application-oriented advanced grammar is not taught in schools. Furthermore, adequate practice is not given to students to learn a language. Exposure too is far less to them. School study is an important phase in students' life.

A student grows from a small child to a grown up when he/she completes higher secondary examinations. After this phase, a student enters into college life. This period is considered as a transition period. The system followed in colleges is different from that of schools. Moreover, students have their own whims and fancies about college life because of the tremendous influence of mass medias like theatres and satellite channels on them. These Medias project a false perception about colleges and students. On seeing such things in movies, students take it for granted. As a result of this, they have formed an image for a college and want to act upon those images (Devika Malini, 2011). .

Objectives of the Study:

1. To identify the difficulties those are faced by Arab teachers in teaching English as a second language by using Bilingual Method.

2. To find out the reasons for these difficulties faced by the teachers.
3. To suggest various remedies for improvement of teaching situations through Bilingual Method. .

Research questions:

Q1: What are the challenges which ESL teachers encounter in the field of teaching English in Iraq and other Arab regions?

Q2: What are the reasons behind the challenges which Arab English teachers faced in teaching?

Q3: What are the solutions for such difficulties in teaching ESL?

Materials and Methodology

This chapter presents participated, research questions & throws light on the designing of the research and its importance, the instruments of the data collection, general description of teachers' questionnaire, and finally ends with data analysis procedures.

The Sample of the Study

A questionnaire has been answered by seventy teachers selected randomly from different secondary schools located in different regions in the middle and the north of Iraq.

Location: The teachers have been selected from different regions from the middle and north of Iraq.

Background: Teachers with similar educational background have been selected.

Selection of sample: Random selection and samples.

Age: The age of the teachers is fluctuating between 23- 50.

Gender: 22 are male and 48 are female.

Tools of the Research:

In this study, the instrument used in collecting data is teachers' questionnaire designed by the researcher under the supervision of his supervisor and other teachers of the department of English and foreign language.

General Description of Teacher's Questionnaire:

The instrument for data collection used in this study was teachers' questionnaire. This questionnaire had been used to serve as a "research" in eliciting supplementary source data – seventy copies of these questionnaires were distributed. This questionnaire contains 20 questions besides demographic questions. The majority of participants have responded to these questions. The questionnaire for this study composes of 4 sections. The first part aimed at gathering background information about the participants, their age, gender, qualification, and type for the study in their schools. Part No. one in this study contained all these information. The second part revolves around teaching experience, this part has also four questions related to years of teaching, training in teaching English programmes sessions also it asks whether they enjoy in teaching English or not.

The third part of the questionnaire is related to teaching methodologies, this part is composed of three questions. Teachers were asked three questions about training or whether joined in any of methodologies sessions in G.T.M., D.M., Bilingual Method and so on and also asked whether they face difficulties in teaching English as a second language when they use Bilingual Method or not. In the fourth and the last part, teachers were asked about using four skills (speaking, listening, writing and reading) in teaching English in the class room and this is the most important part in the questionnaire; it has eleven questions. Finally, the last two questions in this

questionnaire, teachers were asked whether they were satisfied with English proficiency for their students and achieving that through English lesson or not, also they were asked about consideration themselves as competent teachers in regard the communications; clarify ideas and reaching of the level of students.

Discussions

On the basis of the results achieved through the questionnaire, most of Iraqi English language teachers seem to face different difficulties and their causes in teaching English as a second language specially in using Bilingual Method.

The first difficulty cause which gets the highest percentage is in item No. (6), which reads “Have you joined any of the methodologies training sessions” If yes which of these types of teaching techniques do you follow? (G.T.M., D.M. Bilingual Method, Other, All of them , No one of them). The majority of the teachers answered “No one of them” (25) (25,17%). This is the highest percentage. This difficulty is a cause and according to the second question of the hypothesis of the study is not verified, also this item achieves answering the first question of the study.

The second difficulty cause we have obtained through the results in item No. (7) Which reads “Do you think that you face difficulties in teaching English as a second language when you use Bilingual Method”. The majority of the teachers have answered (Sometimes)(forty two) that they faced difficulties when they use this method, and as we have mentioned in the first difficulty cause that most of the teachers did not join in any of the methodologies training sessions because most of the teachers did not have a specific method applying in teaching English and this is also another reasons behind that. Through these two items, we have fulfilled the two of the questions of

this study also the second part of the hypothesis have been achieved through these two difficulties.

The third difficulty cause that we have got from the findings in item No.(10) reads “Do you face any difficulties when you use these exercises in speaking skill?” the findings for this question was that (40) teacher said “Yes” ,and (30) said “No” in spite of many of teachers use these exercise every day but they still have difficulties and the reason behind that may be the teacher himself suffers from using these exercise or may be misuse these exercises or may not have enough time for using them .

The fourth difficulty cause that the researcher has found through items No. (16, 17, 18) which are read in sequence in findings above about using the reading skill and it’s comprehension; most of teachers ask their students to read aloud and to write what they read in the classroom . The findings of these three questions by the teachers item No.(16) the majority (52) teachers (74,28%) , item No. (17) the majority (35) teachers (50%) , item No. (18) the majority (30) teachers (41.45%) that they use reading and writing every day. The reason is that most of the teachers spend most of their time in reading and writing and this is a cause when teachers emphasis on reading more than speaking and listening skills .

The fifth and the last difficulty cause through the findings of this study in the item No. (13) which reads” do you use the following exercises (Movies , Talks, Reports, Scene,) in the classroom to develop student’s listening comprehension ?” the finding of this item is that (35) of the teachers have answered (sometime) and this is a difficulty faced by the teachers because listening comprehension is very important to develop teachers’ and students’ skills and these are very important in educational process . The reason behind that may be the shortage in using these exercises techniques in the schools or maybe it is difficult in using them in classroom because there was no adequate time for using these things.

Finally, the other findings that we have obtained, all the teachers have answered positively through the items Nos. (1,2,3,4,5,8,11,12,14,15 ,19,20) and the high findings for each one as following No.1. (4-6) years, (18) teachers, and (17) teachers above 37 , item No.2 (50) teachers answered (yes) , item No.3 . (60) teachers answered (No) , item No. 4 (34) teachers answered (so much) , item No. 5 (46) teachers answered (yes) , item No. 8 (41) of the teachers answered (all of them) , item No.11(53) teachers answered (yes), item No.12 (41) teachers responded (much) , item No. 14(65) teachers answered (yes),item No. 15 (33) of teachers answered (well) , item No. 19 (33) teachers responded with (reaching the level of the students) , and finally item No. 20 (29) teachers answered (fairly satisfied) .

Conclusion

Through the findings that we have obtained from this study, it can be summarized some of these difficulties causes as the following:

Most of the teachers lack in the use of appropriate teaching methods and also lack in their experience in the field of training on the latest methods used in world and failing to communicate with other in the exchange of experiences as well as the non-participation of a lot of teachers in training courses on teaching methods during service in the field of education.

The findings that the Researcher has got said that reading comprehension has been frequently used. The majority of the teachers have used reading skills and follow the traditional methods and give more time and more importance to reading more than other skills, and these in turn are considered as reasons for difficulties faced by teachers. The Bilingual Method promotes both fluency and accuracy and emphasis on speech and pattern practice so students miss on good teaching

& teachers study unaware of new techniques & education is affected.

Most of the teachers lack in some authentic materials like (Tap Recorder, Language Laboratory, Video Machine, the Overhead Projector etc) in the classroom and the reasons besides that either was not available in the schools or lack and difficulty in using materials by the teachers also this is back to lack in training & a validity of equipment teaching aids and lack in experience knowledge of how to use them.

Finally, through the experience in the field of education, the Researcher has found most of the students do not have the motivation in learning English as a second language and that was because of either religious reasons or lack in using the language in daily life. Lack in interaction with others in the school, in the house, & on the street which has made most of the teachers do not have motivation in teaching English and developing their skill and desiring to teach English in honestly.

Recommendation and Suggestions

Recommendation: In order to achieve answering question No.3 of this study which reads “what are the solution for such difficulties in teaching ESL”?

The researcher recommended the following:

1. To encourage the teachers to constitute and communicate with other teachers in order to exchange the ideas and opinions.
2. Performing educational training courses in how to deal with syllables and texts.
3. Educational institutions should provide teachers more courses and training in this field to gain experience and also demanded in engaging sessions and learn modern methods used in the present global.

4. Demands that educational institutions should provide schools with the best means and enhance using authentic materials like (tape recorder, language laboratory, video machines the overhead projector etc) to enable teachers interaction with the students in the classroom also teachers are demanded to use these materials without any difficulties.

5. Teachers should emphasis on the speaking and writing skills and give more time for practicing in the classroom more than reading comprehension or other readings.

6. Encouraging and boosting the students to write what they learnt from the teacher and discussing the committed errors with their teachers.

Suggestions:

In order to achieve the third objective for the present study, the researcher suggests the following:

1. The researcher suggests carrying out researches on comparative studies between different methods that is in use now a days.

2. Carrying out researches about improving four skills and emphasizing on them.

3. Adopting a research on the functions and aims of speaking and listening skills.

4. In the present study only seventy teachers of secondary schools from different regions in the middle & north of Iraq were taken as a sample. For more enhance reliability and validity, the size of the sample can be increased.

5. In this study, only questionnaire is used for collected data. The interview and observation method can also be applied.

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