A STUDY OF NOVICE TEACHERS' CHALLENGES AT THEIR PRACTICAL TEACHING PHASE

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Abstract. *Starting the teaching profession can be considered as challenging for novice teachers [1]. Thus, this study aims to explore the linguistic difficulties that novice teachers encounter and the major defects that such teachers have in their lesson planning while demonstrating the lesson steps to their pupils. The sample of this study is nine of the fourth level students at the English department, college of education, Al-Mahra, Hadhramout university, for the academic year 2017-2018. The researcher uses qualitative research design. The data were collected using classroom observation and novice teachers' lesson plans. The study found that the majority of the Yemeni novice teachers have problems in pronunciations which if not amended will be transferred into the learners. Overuses of Arabic is also the second major problem that the novice teachers had. Moreover, time is not organized effectively during the lesson steps. No enough activities are used in each lesson, and assessment is hardly done. The study also revealed that the novice teachers have problems in preparing their lesson plans. Such problems start from the fogy teaching objectives and the warming up activities are minimized to just ask the class about the time and date of the day. Similarly, the activities are not enough to achieve the lesson objectives and finally the time of each lesson step is not set and assessment is not mentioned.*

Keywords: *Novice teachers, teachers' development, linguistic problems, lesson-planning.*

INTRODUCTION

Fourth year B. A students at Yemeni colleges of educations do the practical teaching as a requirement to apply the theoretical knowledge they have earned through the college years into practical teaching. To my knowledge, there is no any similar studies in the Yemeni context which focused on the linguistic and lesson-planning problems that novice teachers encounter during the practical period. The significance of

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[1] Dickson, M., Riddlebarger, J., Stringer, P., Tennant, L., & Kennetz, K. (2014). Challenges faced by Emirati novice teachers. *Near and Middle Eastern Journal of Research in Education*, 4, 1–10.

this study is to discover the linguistic and lesson-planning problems and suggest some solutions to be given to college students at early years of study. As a part from the author responsibilities as a teaching staff in the faculty and head of the English department, he is requested to visit some of the fourth year students who are during that time doing their practical teaching practice at some of the province schools. Students have been doing this practical teaching as a part of their fourth year requirement to get their B.A degree in English. The author scheduled time with nine of the students paying attention to their proper time. The students are teaching at five preparatory schools. Four students are teaching in *Aisha Omel Monuun* school in which the author observed just three of them in the first visit and later on at the end of the visit, the author had met them in their office and gave them some points that needed to be focused on.

The author planned to visit, *Al-Wahda school*, the second school in which two novice teachers were teaching there. It seems that there were no contact between the previously visited students and second. As soon as the author had attended with the new two novice teachers at their classes and checked their lesson plans and gave them some points to be took care of. Furthermore, the author got a message from on the students requesting a revisit.

In the third visit, the author revisited the first school to observe the fourth student and gave her some feedback, and whenever the visit had finished, and the lesson plan had checked, the author left to the second school to revisit the student who requested a revisit. The revisited teacher had changed the class because of the crowdedness and the noise of the first class. She got little improvement like making time for each steps in the lesson and using the workbook, etc.

In the fourth visit, the author visited two novice teachers at *22 May school*. Whenever the visit had been finished and the lesson plans were checked. The author gave some feedback to them. Some improvements in the teachers' performances are also found because of the contact amongst the novice teachers at the different visited schools.

In the fifth school, the last novice teacher had been visited to *Mukhbal school*. There was just one novice teacher who was teaching the eighth class a lesson named *can and can't*. Whenever the lesson had been finished, the author gave the intern teacher some comments and suggestions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A Study of Novice Teachers' Challenges at Their Practical Teaching Phase

Novice teachers

Novice teachers are those newly teachers with fresh theoretical knowledge, and they seek to start their teaching careers. The term *novice* is stand for "a teacher who has less than two years [experience] of teaching''[2]. As the teachers are beginner, they are certainly required to come up with the difficulties they meet. Richards views that novice teachers face many problems, and the most challenging one is "to acquire the basic classroom skills needed to present and navigate their lessons [3]." . In this study, the term *novice teachers* is used to stand for fourth year students of English departments who are doing their practical teaching at their schools.

Teachers' development

Teaching for the first time is considered as challenging for any teacher. Therefore novice teachers depend on their motivation and background to shape their first teaching. Bartell confirms that novices' teaching experience is built up from their previous motivation and the new environment they are teaching in [4]. Likely, the British Columbia Institute of Technology mentions three stage of learning that students and teacher should pass through, they are beginning (motivation), middle (guidance), and end (practice) [5]. So, getting teaching experience needs development and enhancing over time. Sato states that "for innovation to happen, we must find ways to help teachers to become lifelong learners in a collaborative environment [6]." .

Studies about novice teachers

Many studies have been conducted on novice teachers at different contexts. A study in the UAE revealed that novice teachers encountered difficulties in both

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[2] Karataş, P., & Karaman Cendel, A. (2013). Challenges faced by novice language teachers: support, identity, and pedagogy in the initial years of teaching. *The International Journal of Research in Teacher Education*, *4*(3), 10–23. P11

[3] Richards, J. C. (2011). *Competence and Performance in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. P17

[4] Bartell. (2004). The challenges facing beginning teachers, 1–19. P1

[5] British Columbia Institute of Technology. (2010). Preparing lesson plans. Learning and Teaching Centre. P2

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controlling the classroom and performing the lesson according to the plans [7]. Another study was conducted in Cyprus about the challenges that novice teachers had and the supports they did need to pursue their future teaching. The study suggested that educational leaders should organize opportunities to foster novice experiences and save their esteem [8]. Similarly, a study was conducted in the Malaysian context about novice teachers' problems at their classes. The study found that novice teachers are unable to manage their classroom or control the students. it also revealed novice teachers' shortage of knowledge and they don't have confidence [9]. To conclude, the above mentioned studies focused on the novice teachers problems in managing their classes, performing the lessons or the kind of supports that such teachers are in need. However, this study focuses on the linguistics problems that novice teachers have and also the problems they encounter in lesson planning and applying such plan in performing their lessons. Thus, the observation and amendment to the problems of novice teachers are to be performed by educative mentoring.

Educative mentoring

Educative mentors are a group of experience teachers who observe beginner teachers. Their roles are to "interact with novices in ways that foster an inquiring stance. They cultivate skills and habits that enable novices to learn in and from their practice." [10]. The winning teacher award sets some secrets which can help novice teachers as:

- ✓ Provide novice teachers with guidance on strong lesson planning.
- ✓ Provide ongoing guidance related to classroom management.
- ✓ Provide guidance and support in making professional decisions
- ✓ Remember to teach novices routine school procedures [11].

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[7] Dickson, M., Riddlebarger, J., Stringer, P., Tennant, L., & Kennetz, K. (2014). Challenges faced by Emirati novice teachers. Near and Middle Eastern Journal of Research in Education, 4, 1–10. P1

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Sampling

This research is conducted on the fourth level students of the English department, college of education Al-Mahra, Hadhramout University. The researcher randomly selected nine novice teachers as the sample of this study. The selection is given by the department because the remaining teachers were visited by other observer. The sample forms nearly about 40% of the whole population (all fourth level students). As the sample is selected randomly, thus it is representative for the whole class.

METHODOLOGY

Research design "is governed by the notion of 'fitness for purpose'" [12]. The design of any research should be in parallel with its aims and the kind of data that will be collected to answer the research questions. This study uses the qualitative research design. Qualitative study is usually conducted whenever the literature does not reveal much about the study problems and the researcher does not know which variables are to be searched. Thus the researcher got enough information about the problem and variable by exploring the sample [13].

Instruments:

The study uses two tools to collect the data from the sampling, i.,e, the observation and students lesson-plans. The researcher observes nine novice teachers at their school and writes down their defects. Moreover, the researcher takes a scanned photo of the novice teachers' plans for the lesson being taught.

Analysis

To answer the questions mentioned so far, the researcher observes the novice teachers and analyses their lesson plans individually.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Findings
Table no (1) shows novice teachers linguistic and planning defects.

Students no	observation	Lesson plan

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[12] Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research methods in education* (5th ed.). London: Routledge. P 73
[13] Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education. P 16

1	The teacher seems without any objectives The teacher focuses on spelling and forget pronunciation. The teacher has mispronounced some words like, toes, ear, etc. The teacher gives grammar rule incorrectly. English is not used in class. No real assessment is established.	No enough activities are presented. Assessment is not performed Warming up is minimized to tell the date of that day.
2	• Overuse of Arabic • The teacher had pronunciation problems, i.e. walk /walk/, bike/bik/ climb /klimb/, etc. • English was not used in class	Too much aims are set. Warming up is limited to ask pupils questions about last lessons. Activities are not given to help pupils do what the teacher wants. No real assessment is given.
3	• The teacher gave too much time to pre-lesson. • Misused of grammar, like: What is mean? Who will know? • Mispronunciation problems Bracelet /braklet/, paint/pent/ • Overuses of translation. • Teacher was rigid with pupils • English was not used in class.	Activities are not organized Assessment is not performed Time is not given to every step.
4	• Mispronunciation of, pupil /pi:pl/. • Teacher did not use workbook. • English is not used in class. • Teacher gave grammar rule incorrectly. • Teacher strictly corrected every errors	Teaching aims are not clear. Teacher does not warm up her pupils. Activities are not enough. Assessment is not performed. Time is not organized
5	• Teacher lost time by warming student up on unrelated things. • Teacher strictly treated pupils • Teacher did not really symbolize the family member. • Misused of words, parts instead of member. • Teacher mispronounced many words, i,e,. pepel /pju:pl/, father, /fe ðər / , etc. • Teacher loses time by calling pupils to come to the board • Class time is not regularly divided. • Evaluation is not organized	Aims are not correctly written. No real assessment is used. Time is not organized

6	• Teacher did not give introduction to the listening lesson • Teacher seemed objectiveless • Misused of grammar, as "what is mean time idea?" • Mispronunciation of words, chess set /chi:z set/ plane/plan/ • Teacher did not use workbook • Teacher did not practice the new vocabulary • Class time was not organized	Assessment is not performed There is no enough activities. Time is not organized effectively. Workbook is not used.
7	• Teacher seemed objectiveless • Misspelling the title "part of the body. (Bart). • Teacher mispronounced, head/hi:d/, nose figure /fju:nger/, eyes /i:z/. • Assessment was not set, • Teacher did not motive pupils to use the new learnt words in real situation.	Teaching aims do not encourage the use of language. Warming up is not done. Time is not organized.
8	• Teacher did not use time effectively • Teacher mispronounced pupils /pi:pls/, he's /hi iz/ • Misused of grammar as "Are you finished?" • Teacher negatively motived class to think in Arabic • Teacher did not motivate class to use language. • assessment was not performed	No specific aim is given Assessment is not clearly performed Language areas are not focused on.
9	• Teacher mispronounced some words: Title/ti:tl/, words w3:diz/, say/ si:/, hands/handiz/, etc. • Teacher did not use the context to teach new words. • Teacher did not motivate class to use the language. • assessment was not given	

Discussion

  The collected data will be discussed qualitatively under two major questions. The first question seeks answer about what are the linguistic difficulties that novice teachers face while teaching at their school, and the second question focuses on their ability to prepare lesson-plans.

Observation

The researcher observed nine novice students at their schools and the observation had occurred after scheduling time with them. So their defects will be summarized as:

Mispronunciation

The majority of the observed novice teachers seemed to have problems in pronunciation. Some of the words which have been clearly noticed are:

Table no (2) shows novice teachers' pronunciation problems

words	Phonetic transcription	Students pronunciation	notes
walk	wɔːk/	/wɔːlk/,	Pronouncing the silent l
bike	/baɪk/	/bik/	Changing the vowel phoneme
climb	/klaɪm/	/klimb/,	Pronouncing the silent l and changing the vowel phoneme
pupil	/pjuː.pəl/	/pepil/, /piːpl/	Changing the vowel phoneme
father	/ˈfɑː.ðər/	/fe ðər /	Changing the vowel phoneme
he's	/hiːz/	/hiː iz/	Adding more vowel phoneme
chess set	/ˈtʃes ˌset/	/tʃiːz set/	Changing the vowel phoneme
plane	/pleɪn/	/plæn/	Changing the vowel phoneme
title	/ˈtaɪ.təl/	/tiːtˀl/,	Changing the vowel phoneme
words,	/wɜːdz/	/wɜːdiz/	Adding vowel between consonant clusters
say	/seɪ/	/siː/,	Changing the vowel phoneme
hands	/hændz/	/hændiz/,	Adding vowel between consonant clusters
head	/hed/	/hiːd/,	Changing the vowel phoneme
nose	nəʊz/	naʊz/	Changing the vowel phoneme
finger	/ˈfɪŋ.gˀr/	/fjuːnger/	Mispronouncing the consonant /ŋ/ and changing the vowel phoneme and adding a consonant phoneme /j/
eyes	/aɪz/	/iːz/	Changing the vowel phoneme
bracelet	/ˈbreɪ.slət/	/ˈbreɪ.klət/	Changing the /k/ instead of /s/.

As table (No 2) above shows, novice teachers have committed mistake in their pronunciation to the class. Therefore the pupils learn the mispronunciation from their teachers and memorize them which is a bad teaching, and such errors will be fossilized

in their memories. It is suggested to the novice teachers to enhance their pronunciation before going to the class. They have to look up every words in their dictionaries or their smart phones as there are many online dictionaries which give both transcription and audio pronunciation for the English words in both American and British Englishes.

Overuse of Arabic

The more that Arabic is overused in English class, the less that English is used. According to the observed teachers' performances, no one has set an aim that English is taught to enhance learners' communicative abilities. So Arabic is used in the warming up stage, classroom language, and even during activities or the language skills or grammar. Learners are exposed into Arabic language not to English.

Losing class-time

It is necessary for the teachers to organize their time from the beginning. Losing any minute means losing part of the lesson. Amongst the observed teachers, some were found to spend nearly about a quarter of the given time by asking about the last lesson or by spending more than five minutes asking pupils about the date and day and call them to come to the front of the class to write the date or time on the board.

Similarly, teacher were found to spend time on certain phases of the lesson and the time of the period ends without completing their lessons.

Objectiveless

Some teachers seemed that they don't have any objectives in their mind to teach the class about. So, when the teachers don't know what they will teach to the class, thus, pupils will learn nothing.

Misuse of grammar

According to the observation, some novice teachers could not even use the basic English grammar properly at their class, for examples:

*What is mean? Who will know?

*Are you finished?

*What is mean time idea?

Moreover, it has been found that some teachers give incorrect rule to their pupils. For example, a teacher was teaching her class prepositions and analyzed a sentence like (the ball is under the car) saying to them that (is) is a helping verb in the sentence.

No real assessment is given

Some teachers didn't check whether their objectives are achieved or not. For those teachers who did the assessment, it is not real, for example, they ask about the meaning of certain vocabulary or tell the class to say the studied vocabulary. No one asked class to use certain words in full sentences.

Lesson-plans

Defects in teaching objectives

According the lesson plans of the same observed teachers, it has been found that whether the objectives are unclear or set too much objectives. In such cases the teachers do not know what to do and what to achieve during the given time. Others seem to have many objectives, so they don't know which ones are more important to be focused on.

Warming up is minimized

Warming up activities are one of the most important elements for a successful lesson planning and teaching. The majority of the analyzed lesson-plans showed this sentence as a warming up activity (I will greet the students and ask them about the time and date). So warming up is minimized to just asking pupils about the time and date. Teachers do not focus on pupils' background knowledge and motivate them to share it or relate it into the new lesson.

Activities are not enough

Activities are used to process and actualize the teaching objectives into reality. According to the analyzed plans, it has been found that whether the activities are not enough for achieving the teaching objectives or pupils are not given enough time to practice the language or participate in such activities.

Language areas and skills are not integrated

Any successful lesson plan should integrate the language areas and skills together. However the analyzed plans of the observed teachers reveal that whether they focus on one areas of language and neglects the skills or neglect other skills.

Assessment is not mentioned

According to the lesson plans, assessment is not found or mentioned in the lesson plans. It reveals that teachers are not aware of the importance of such elements in lesson planning or teaching.

CONCLUSION

This study focused on novice teachers' linguistic problems and, their ability to properly plan their lessons and teach at their schools. Similarly to the previous studies conducted on UAE and Malaysia, the current study found that novice teachers encounter problems in achieving the lesson within the given time and according to the prepared lesson plan. However, this study found that the Yemeni novice teachers encountered some difficulties regarding the practice of teaching. The majority of them have some problem in pronunciations. Such problems shape a challenging for them and for their pupils. They should expose themselves for over doses of listening and using the language. The researcher relates such weakness in the teachers' pronunciations to their inactive participations during the B.A program. Thus, tutors at colleges are advised to get rid of the traditional teaching methods and pursuing contemporary ones which give great role of the class time to the students. The more that the students are participated in classroom activities the better that their pronunciation will be.

In addition to the Yemeni novice problems in pronunciations, the study revealed their overuses of Arabic in English classes. O'Neill, Snow, and Peacock state that: "It is obviously important that English is used as much as possible during the English lessons. However, there are occasions when it is necessary and natural for both teacher and pupils use Arabic" [14]. Thus, Arabic is only preferable to be used whenever explaining the meaning or the classroom instructions could not be understood by English, or trying to demonstrating the meaning in English may lose the class time.

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[14] O'Neill, T., Snow, P., & Peacock, R. (1999). English course for Yemen teacher's book 6. Reading RGI 4Qs. Uk: Garnet Publishing Limited. P 12

Losing time was also noticeable. Teachers are advised to divide the time properly according the school time systems for each period. It is advised to give five minutes for warming up activities, ten minutes for overviews and twenty for the activities including the language areas and skills and the remaining for closing and assessments.

Regarding the second part of this study, the findings revealed that novice teachers have also problems in planning their lessons. They whether don't know how to form their teaching objectives or to shape the warming up activities. Similarly, the teaching techniques are not enough or clear to achieve the teaching objectives. Finally assessment is not performed and the time of each step in the lesson is not set. The researcher relates such weakness to the inefficient of teaching courses they have studies previously regarding the practical teaching or teaching school texts. Moreover, novice teachers did not study lesson plan in English during their university courses. It is suggested that lesson planning should be taught practically and theoretically in "teaching school text" course.

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