

Problems Faced by Iraqi Teachers of English in Teaching Iraq Opportunities Textbook at Primary Schools

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Abstract

This study aims at identifying and classifying the problems in teaching Iraq opportunities textbook for Iraqi teachers .

The population of this study comprises the teachers of English at the primary stages in General Directorate of Education in Misan Governorate . forty teachers are randomly assigned as the main sample , while ten teachers are randomly assigned as the pilot sample .

In order to achieve the aims of this study and to point out the problems that faced by Iraqi teachers when teaching Iraq Opportunities textbook . At first , the researcher has constructed an open questionnaire contained the following open questions : " Do you have any problems in teaching " Iraq Opportunities " textbook " and " What are the mean problems that you face in teaching " Iraq Opportunities " textbook " .

The obtained results of this study show that indicates that the average weighted mean of this area is (2.17) which is higher than the theoretical mean which means (2) . This means that the teachers efficiency in this area is active since the items of this area with numbers 7 , 1 , 3 , 5 and 10 have the weighted means of (2.99 , 2.75 , 2.45 , 2.35 and 2.3) . Nevertheless , items with numbers (6 , 2 , 4 , 9 and 8) have the weighted means of (1.99 , 1.98 , 1.8 , 1.8 and 1.3) respectively , which are less than the theoretical mean (2) . This means that these items are more problematic in this area . Therefore , it concludes that

this area which is related to the teacher efficiency is acceptable because the average weighted mean is (2.17) which is more than the theoretical mean which is (2) .

المشاكل التي تواجه معلمي اللغة الانكليزية في تدريس كتاب فرص العراق في المدارس الابتدائية

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ملخص البحث

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد وتصنيف المشاكل في تدريس العراق كتاب الفرص للمعلمين العراقيين. يتكون مجتمع الدراسة من معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في المراحل الابتدائية في المديرية العامة للتربية بمحافظة ميسان. تم تعيين أربعين مدرساً عشوائياً كعينة رئيسية، في حين تم تعيين عشرة معلمين عشوائياً كعينة تجريبية.

من أجل تحقيق أهداف هذه الدراسة وإبراز المشكلات التي واجهها المعلمين العراقيين عند تدريس كتاب فرص العراق. في البداية، قام الباحث ببناء استبيان مفتوح يحتوي على الأسئلة المفتوحة التالية: "هل لديك أي مشاكل في تدريس كتاب" فرص العراق " و "ما هي المشاكل التي تواجهها في تدريس كتاب" فرص العراق ".

أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن الوسط المرجح لهذا الحقل هو (2.17) وهو أعلى من المتوسط النظري الذي يعني (2). وهذا يعني أن كفاءة المعلمين في هذا المجال نشطة لأن بنود هذا المجال مع الأرقام 7 و 1 و 3 و 5 و 10 لها الوسط المرجح (2.99، 2.75، 2.45، 2.35 و 2.3). ومع ذلك، فإن العناصر ذات الأرقام (6 و 2 و 4 و 9 و 8) لها الوسط المرجح (1.99، 1.98، 1.8، 1.8 و 1.3) على التوالي، وهي أقل من المتوسط النظري (2). وهذا يعني أن هذه العناصر أكثر إشكالية في هذا المجال. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن هذا المجال المرتبط بكفاءة المعلمين مقبول لأن الوسط المرجح هو (2.17) وهو أكثر من المتوسط النظري وهو (2).

Introduction

1.1 Problem of the Study and Its Significance

Teaching communicative syllabuses is not an easy mission for teachers. Khan (2005: 72) states that the teacher needs an effective teacher- training so as to be able to assimilate the educational values and ideas of one's own culture and of modern needs. He also clarifies that it is the teacher 's responsibility to afresh his knowledge up date his potential and equip himself with the advancement

of the society and use of technology in general and educational environment in particular (ibid).

Khan (2011 : 69) asserts that the teachers face challenges due to the following : Their qualification , training as an EFL teacher , experience as a bilingual teacher , perception of Arab culture , psychology of the learners , language policy , method and strategies , assessment etc . He also states that sometimes , it becomes difficult for the subject teacher to encourage some enthusiastic learners to use the target language due to those students who are not very good in English , or at least hesitant to use English in and outside the classroom .

Many English foreign language countries have shifted from traditional grammar –based teaching method to communicative –focused instruction. In Iraq, the ministry of Education (MOE) tried to keep up with the progresses and developments of life, so they made change of English syllabuses and reshaped them to provide communicative function that reflect real life use of language. They developed new English courses called "**Iraq opportunities**" begin from third primary which is the first level of a ten levels course of young Iraqi learners of English. This syllabuses supposed to urge teachers and learners to engage in real life contexts and communicative situations that express their real demands and needs.

In this connection , this research is meant to proved to be quite helpful towards the finding out the actual problems and the difficulties that teachers may face in teaching Iraq opportunities textbook and tries to answer the following questions :

Do teachers face problems in teaching Iraq opportunities textbook? Which aspect of their teaching practice do the teachers find most challenging?

1.2 Aim

This study aims at identifying and classifying the problems in teaching Iraq opportunities textbook for Iraqi teachers .

1.3 Values

1-This study is anticipated to be value for Iraqi teachers who teach Iraq opportunities textbook from its findings about the most problems they may face to find the possible solutions in the light of the recommendation that will be written in this research .

2- It is going to provide feedback about the new textbook .

1.4 The Hypothesis

Do English teachers face problems in teaching " Iraq Opportunities " textbook ?

In order to answer the previous question, the study try to answer the following questions:

1-What are the main problems that face teachers in teaching Iraq Opportunities?

2-How could we reduce these problems in teaching text book of Iraq Opportunities?

1.5 Limits

The present study is limited to :

1-Iraq opportunities textbook that used at Iraqi primary schools .

2-Teachers of English in Misan Directorates of Education .

3 - Investigation of the : A - Teacher B - Syllabus C - Lesson D - Pupil

1.6 Procedures

The following procedures will be adopted to achieve the aim of this study to collect data :

1-Choosing a number of teachers from Misan Directorates of Education at random to represent the study sample .

2- Preparing a rating scales questionnaire under the supervision of a number of specialists who examine its validity and make any comments , suggestions and modifications if necessary .

3- Interpreting the results in the light of the hypothesis by using the proper statistical means that suit the study .

1.7 Definition of the Basic Terms

1.7.1 Problem

According to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2010 : 1202) , it defines problem as a thing that is difficult to deal with or to understand.

1.7.2 Teaching

According to Webster ' s College Dictionary (2010 : 1150) , it defines teaching as the act or profession of a person who teaches .

1.7.3 Teacher

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2007 : 1574) , it defines teacher as a person whose job is teaching .

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Essentials of Iraq Opportunities textbooks

2.1.1 General Teaching Approaches

Iraq Opportunities textbook uses a communicative approach to language learning . This method enables pupils to use English from the very first day.

Iraq Opportunities textbook also makes use of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method , it's based upon the theory that memory is enhanced through association with physical movements .

2.1.2 Communicative Approach to Language Learning

Since the 1990s , the communicative approach has been widely implemented because it describes a set of very general principles ground in the notion of communicative competence as the goal of second and foreign language teaching , and a communicative syllabus and methodology as the way of achieving this goal (Richard , 2006:22) .

Hancock (2012 : 14) states that this method enables pupil to use English from the very first day and involves several stages of learning . The first step is usually to elicit the language previously taught in class in order to build upon pupils' existing knowledge .

Karavas (1996 : 187) and Nunan (1987 : 136) say that teachers feel a wide gap between theory and actual classroom practices . This is because courses designed seem to give priority to train teachers in the contents of the new approach and persuading them of its effectiveness . Since the primary aim of the approach is to prepare learners for meaningful communication , errors are tolerated . The range of exercise types and activities compatible with a communicative approach is unlimited . Moreover , it is not assumed in this approach that the teacher is the center of all classroom activities (AL-Mutawa&Kailani , 1989 : 12) .

Additionally ,Richards (2006 : 3) states that communicative language teaching sets as its goal the teaching of communicative competence , competence refers to the knowledge we have of a language that accounts for our ability to produce sentences in a language . It refers to knowledge of the building blocks of sentences (e.g. , part of speech , tenses , phrases , clauses , sentence patterns) and how sentences are formed .

2.1.3 Total Physical Response (TPR) Method

Part of the teaching methodology is based on the Total Physical Response (TPR) classroom system .TPR is based on the theory that memory is enhanced through association with physical movement , and TPR in teaching foreign language is based on listening linked to physical actions . TPR is especially effective for young learners and is based upon the theory that if children are encouraged to associate physical actions with words in the foreign language , they are more likely to retain and recall this language at a later stage in the learning process (Hancock , 2012 :15) .

Total physical response (TPR) is a language teaching method developed by James Asher, a professor emeritus of psychology at San José State University Asher developed TPR as a result of his experiences observing young children learning their first language . He noticed that interactions between parents and children often took the form of speech from the parent followed by a physical response from the child. Asher made three hypotheses based on his observations : first , that language is learned primarily by listening ; second , that language learning must

engage the right hemisphere of the brain ; and third , that learning language should not involve any stress (Wikipedia , 2014 , Int.) .

2.1.4 Classroom Management

Wolfgang and Glikman (1986 : 20) state that classroom management is a term used by teachers to describe the process of ensuring that classroom lessons run smoothly despite disruptive behavior by students . The classroom management as a process consisting of key tasks that teachers must attend to in order to develop an environment conducive to learning . These tasks include :

(1) organizing the physical environment , (2) establishing rules and routines , (3) developing caring relationships , (4) implementing engaging instruction and (5) preventing and responding to discipline problems (Wikipedia , 2012 : Int) .

2.1.5 Group and Pair Work

The class can be organized in different ways according to the activity being taught . In other word , the teacher may use the pair or group work according to the nature of the activity .

Working in pairs and groups is less stressful and more effective for students, especially introverts who needn't perform in the front of the whole class . They feel more confident working with the friend they like and are more likely to accept his / her correction or criticism . There are always more and less gifted pupils in the process of language learning and these methods prevent them from not being laughed at by the whole class if they say something wrong . "It is generally easier to show that you do not know , or do not understand something , in a smaller group than in a large one (Norman , Levihn and Hedenquist , 1986 : 8) .

3. Procedures

3.1 Population & Sample

The population is defined as a group of people or documents of special features used for collecting data or represented by a sample selected from this group (Al- Samawi , 2000 : 111) .

Al- Samawi (ibid : 112) defines sample as the selecting a number of individuals to represent the population The population of this study comprises the teachers of English at the primary stages in General Directorate of Education in Misan Governorate . Because the size of the whole population of this study is too large , therefore two samples are randomly chosen from this research : forty teachers are randomly assigned as the main sample , while ten teachers are randomly assigned as the pilot sample .

3.2 Instrument of the Study

In order to achieve the aims of this study and to point out the problems that faced by Iraqi teachers when teaching Iraq Opportunities textbook .

At first , the researcher has constructed an open questionnaire contained the following open questions : " Do you have any problems in teaching " Iraq Opportunities " textbook " and " What are the mean problems that you face in teaching " Iraq Opportunities " textbook " .

The researcher distributed these open questions to a sample of ten teachers After analyzing the results obtained from the open questionnaire , The researcher construct the closed questionnaire and considered it as the main instrument of the present study .

3.2.1 The Questionnaire

Good and Hat (1952 : 33) state that in general the word 'questionnaire ' refers to a device for securing answers to a series of questions by using a form which the respondent fills in himself . The questionnaire is typically the most efficient way of gathering that information , if large – scale information is needed from a great many people (Brown & Rodgers , 2004 : 22) . The questionnaire consists of four areas comprising 20 items as shown in Table 1.

These items supposed to conclude teachers' problems of three rating scales : agree , partially agree , disagree . The items represent the most important difficulties in teaching Iraq Opportunities textbook from the point of view of the teachers . For detailed description of the questionnaire.

Table (1)**Items of the Questionnaire**

No	Area of the Questionnaire	No. of items
1	The Teacher	10
2	The Syllabus	3
3	The Lesson	2
4	The Pupil	5
	Total	20

3.2.1.1 Face Validity

Validity is the most important criterion to consider in selecting or constructing any research instrument to be capable of achieving the aims behind it . Best (1981 : 153) defines validity as that quality of data gathering instrument or procedure that enables it to determine what it was designed to determine . An instrument validity is a reflecting of how well it measures what it is designed to measure (Mehrens& Lehmann , 1991 : 50).

Face validity refers to whether the instrument looks like measuring what is supposed to measure (Celce- Murcia & Macintosh , 1979 : 330). Eble (1972 :410) adds that face validity is ensured by asking experts to decide whether the statements represent the features the researcher wants to measure .

To ensure the face and content validity of the questionnaire , it has been exposed to a jury of experts in the field of TEL . The jurors have also been requested to include their remarks and suggestions about the suitability of the items of the questionnaire to the sample for achieving the objectives of this study . The items have been discussed with them and their directions and modification have been considered

before putting the questionnaire in its final form . All experts have agreed upon the validity of the questionnaire and its suitability for the teachers .

3.2.1.2 Pilot study

Klein (1974 : 129) states that the pilot study is a common practice that data collection instruments should be tried out before the finally administered . Therefore , the questionnaire has been administered to a sample of ten teachers randomly drawn from the population .

3.2.1.3 Reliability

Best (1981 : 199) states that a questionnaire is reliable when it yields the same results over a given time . Best adds that " a test is reliable to the extent that may measure consistently , from one time to another " . Reliability is an important characteristic of evaluation results .

To ensure the reliability of the present questionnaire Alpha Cronbach Formula has been used . This approach is based on the number of items , and variance of the questionnaire . The reliability calculated is 0.86 , which is accepted .

3.2.1.4 Questionnaire Administration

After being certain that the questionnaire is valid , it was administered from the 10th of January to the 1st of March to the sample of 40 English teachers at primary schools in Missan .

The teachers were asked to give their views regards the items according to scale of three dimensions finally , the teachers ' responses have been utilized by the researcher .

3.2.1.5 Scoring Scheme

The questionnaire consists of twenty items divided into four areas . Each item in the questionnaire is given three alternatives (agree , partially agree , disagree) . The alternative (agree) is given three points , the alternative (partially agree) is given two points , the alternative (disagree) is given one points .

4. Analysis of Results

In order to achieve this aim the data obtained from the questionnaire has been processed statistically using the weighted mean . Since the theoretical weighted mean is (2), the items with weighted means that are higher than (2) are considered active . Each area in the questionnaire has been discussed separately and finally compared with other areas .

4.1.1 The Teacher

Table (2) indicates that the average weighted mean of this area is (2.17) which is higher than the theoretical mean which means (2). This means that the teachers efficiency in this area is active since the items of this area with numbers 7 , 1 , 3 , 5 and 10 have the weighted means of (2.99 , 2.75 , 2.45 , 2.35 and 2.3) . Nevertheless , items with numbers (6 , 2 , 4 , 9 and 8) have the weighted means of (1.99 , 1.98 , 1.8 , 1.8 and 1.3) respectively , which are less than the theoretical mean (2) . This means that these items are more problematic in this area . Therefore , it concludes that this area which is related to the teacher efficiency is acceptable because the average weighted mean is (2.17) which is more than the theoretical mean which is (2) .

Table (2)

The Weighted Means of the Items of the " Teacher "Domain

<i>N</i>	<i>Item Range</i>	<i>Item content</i>	<i>Weighted Mean</i>
1	7	Teaching grammatical rules communicatively may be difficult for non native speaking teacher	2.99
2	1	Most teachers have little experience in communicative syllabuses	2.75

3	3	It 's difficult for most teachers to assess all pupils performance in a lesson which makes the assessment process unreliable .	2.43
4	5	Some teachers who are used traditional method do not allow their pupils to be engaged in role play, pair and group work .	2.35
5	10	Some Iraqi teachers ' abilities are not suitable to the teaching of the intended syllabuses .	2.3
6	6	Some teachers face problems in pronunciation which can create tension inside the classroom .	1.99
7	2	It is difficult for some teachers to plan well structured lesson.	1.98
8	4	Some teachers tend to emphasize (Yes\No) questions and not focus on the communication .	1.8
9	9	Some teachers suffer difficulty in communication , so that the teachers may feel despairing and cannot apply the required activities .	1.8
10	8	Teachers may not use all activities or strategies of motivation for teaching of " Iraq Opportunities Textbooks .	1.3
Average			2.17

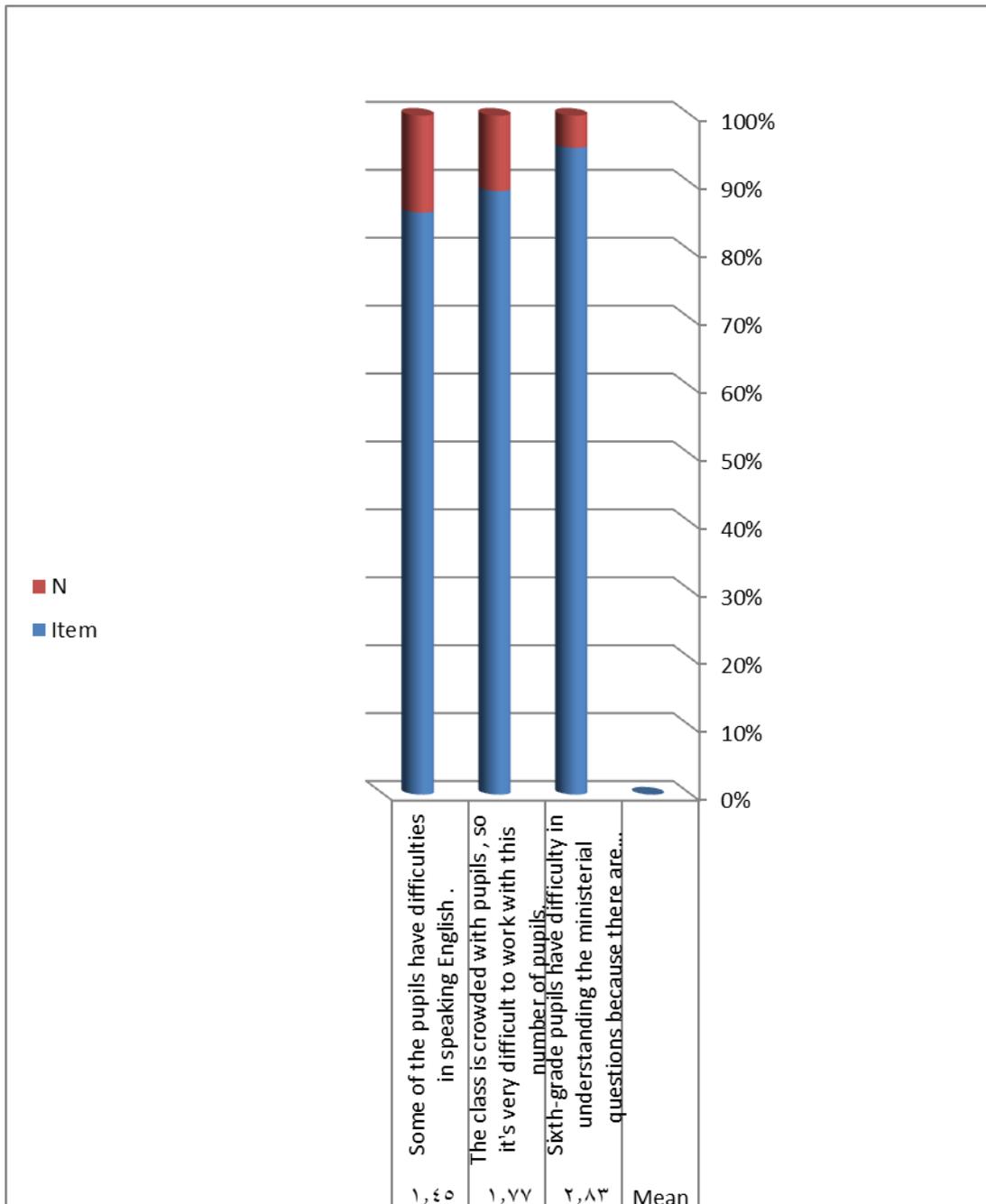
4.1.2 The Syllabus

It is clear from Table 3 that this area is active since the average weighted mean is (2.60) which is higher than the theoretical mean (2). This means that this area is the most active in general . The weighted means of the items of this area are arranged as follows : 11 and 13 have the weighted means of (2.98 and 2.85). The item (12) has the weighted mean of (1.99) which are less than the theoretical mean (2). This means that this item is less active in this area .

Table (3)

The Weighted Means of the Items of the " Syllabus "Domain

N	Item range	Item content	Weight mean
11	11	Most language textbooks are designed for an ideal homogeneous class.	2.98
12	13	Some components of the course are not available, like there are no flashcards or wall charts.	2.85
13	12	The use of authentic material may cause a burden for the teacher with regard to the structures, functions and content .	1.99
A ve ra ge			2.60



Graphic (1)The Weighted Means of the Items of the " Syllabus "Domain

4.1.3 The Lesson

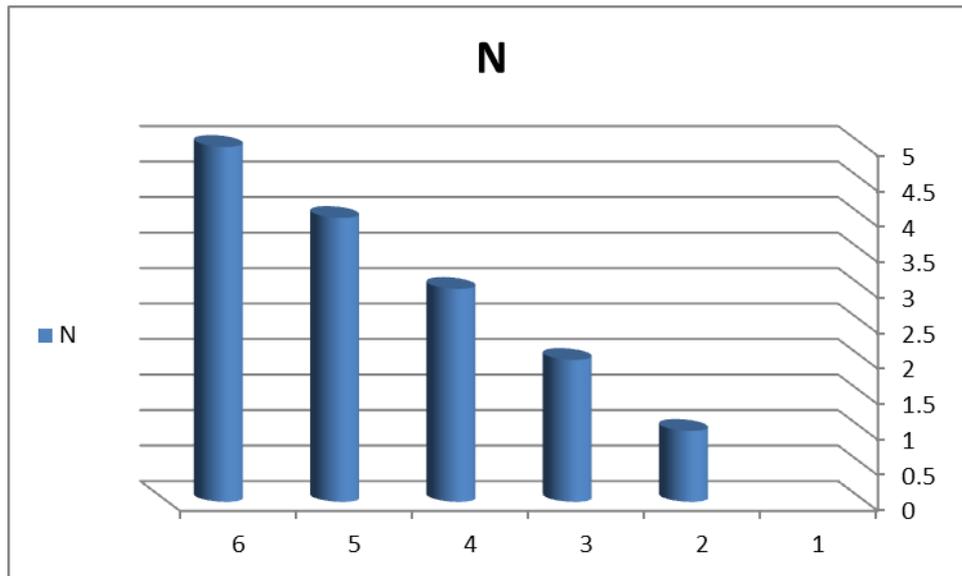
Table 3 shows that this area is less active ,this results concluded from Table 3 since the average weighted mean is (1.56) which is less than the theoretical mean which is (2). The weighted means of this items are

arranged as follow : items number 14 and 15 have the weighted means 1.65 and 1.42 which are less than the theoretical mean (2) . Therefore , it concludes that this area which related to the lesson is not acceptable because the average weighted mean is (1.56) which is less than the theoretical mean which is (2) .

Table (4)

The Weighted Means of the Items of the " Lesson " Domain

N	Item range	Item content	Weighted mean
16	14	The period of the lesson is not sufficient to manage communicative classroom activities.	1.65
17	15	The sixth-grade lessons are four lessons per a week which are not sufficient to cover all the material of the context .	1.42
Average			1.56



Graphic (2)The Weighted Means of the Items of the " Lesson " Domain

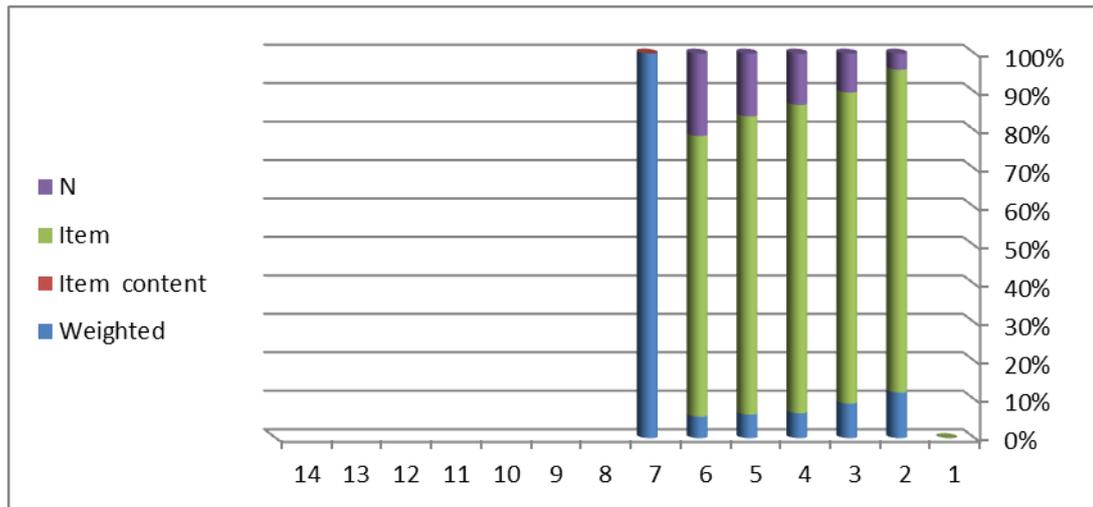
4.1.4 The Pupil

Table 3 shows that this area is less active , this result concluded from Table 3 since the average weighted mean is (1.77) which is less than the theoretical mean which is (2) . The weighted means of this items are arranged as follow : items number 20 has the weighted mean (2.83) which is more than the theoretical mean while the other items with numbers 16 , 18 , 19 and 17 have the weighted means 1.77 , 1.45 , 1.5 and 1.3 which are less than the theoretical mean (2). Therefore , it concludes that this area which related to the lesson is not acceptable because the average weighted mean is (1.77) which is less than the theoretical mean which is (2) .

Table (5)

The Weighted Means of the Items of the " Pupil " Domain

Item Range	Item content	Weighted Mean
20	Sixth-grade pupils have difficulty in understanding the ministerial questions because there are differences between the questions they practiced and the ministerial questions .	2.83
16	The class is crowded with pupils , so it's very difficult to work with this number of pupils.	1.77
18	Some of the pupils have difficulties in speaking English .	1.45
19	Some pupils are willing to express their thoughts and ideas in English .	1.5
17	Extrovert pupils tend to occupy the teachers attention , while shy pupils are suppressed .	1.3
Average		1.77



Graphic (3) The Weighted Means of the Items of the " Pupil " Domain

Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions

5.1 Conclusions

After presenting the problems faced by Iraqi teachers of English in teaching Iraq Opportunities throughout the analysis of result of this study , the researcher considered the weighted mean of the items that ranges from (2.99 to 2.3) as active topics . Consequently , eight items were considered to be active . Conclusion remarks can be clearly pointed out as follows :

1 - Teachers face difficulty in teaching grammatical rules communicatively this due to the fact that teachers are used to traditional method which use direct grammar .

2 - Most teachers have little experience in communicative syllabuses since teaching techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic , authentic , functional use of language for meaningful purposes which are new for teachers .

- It's difficult for most teachers to assess all pupils performance in a lesson which makes the assessment process unreliable , this due to the loading classes with large numbers of students , so it's difficult to assess all pupils in one lesson

5.2 Recommendations

1 – Communicative language teaching needs applying different activities . Accordingly , teachers need to be expert with a variety of instructional methods .

2 - Achieving an ideal atmosphere for teaching communicative syllabuses needs time , supportive classroom environment , providing certain technologies . schools should be provided with technical equipments in order to simplify the teaching process and implement the new course successfully .

3 - providing the teachers with all the components of the course that helps them in teaching these communicative syllabuses

5.3 Suggestions for Further Studies

1 - A study is needed to investigate the difficulties faced by English teachers in teaching " English for Iraq " textbook .

2 - A comparison between " Iraq Opportunities " and " English for Iraq " textbooks .

3 - A similar study is needed to investigate the problems faced by Iraqi students in learning communicative syllabuses .

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