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Investigating EFL teachers' perspectives towards using extracurricular activities in developing secondary school students' performance in learning English language

Arwa Harith Hasan

College of Basic Education, University of Babylon, Iraq.

Email: arwa.hassan.h21bed57@student.uobabylon.edu.iq

Prof. Sabeeha Hamza Dehham

College of Basic Education, University of Babylon, Iraq.

Email: sabeehadehham66@gmail.com

Prof. Dr. Abd Ali Nayif Hasan

College of Basic Education, University of Babylon, Iraq.

Abstract---This study aims to investigate EFL teachers' perspectives towards using extracurricular activities in developing secondary school students' performance in learning English language. To achieve the aim of the study, the researchers conduct a survey of a questionnaire. The participants were 340 (235 females and 105 males) EFL teachers from the public schools in the Second Al-Karkh General Directorate of Education in Baghdad, Iraq during the academic year 2020-21. The design of the study is a quantitative descriptive study which based on a questionnaire to collect the data. After analyzing the data, the results revealed that EFL teachers have positive perspectives toward applying extracurricular activities in developing secondary school students' language performance. There are no statistically significant differences in the Iraqi EFL teachers' perspectives towards applying extracurricular activities in developing secondary school students' language performance due to the gender (males and females) variable.

Keywords---EFL Teachers' Perspectives, Extracurricular Activities, Students' Performance.

Introduction

Statement of Problem

There are ready-made educational programs that consist of integrated materials and curricula to teach, for example, the skill of conversation and communication. These extra materials prove to be helpful and have developed students' language skills and performance, this has been approved by Thompson et al. (2013), Bahdi (2014), Díaz-Iso (2019), Sabirov (2019), and Lanier, et al. (2021). Now, as we are in what is called 'post Covid-19 era' educational institutions return back to face-to-face education with a little mixed with distance learning (blended learning) and the educators resume to teach the 'Textbooks materials' without the aid of the extra materials which have students used to use in learning language skills. From the researchers' experiences in field of education, it is obvious that the students miss an important helpful tool (aid) that facilitates their learning, thus it is worth to investigate EFL teachers' perspectives towards the things that the students most miss in using face-to face- education. A need analysis was conducted by distributing an open question to the EFL teachers which stated "what are the most things that the students miss in learning English language inside classroom"? After analyzing EFL teachers' responses, it is found that 64% miss extracurricular activities, 19% miss online dictionary, 12% miss online listening task, and 5% miss team work activities. To this end, it is worth to investigate EFL Teachers' perspectives towards the application of extracurricular activities to develop secondary-school students' oral performance.

This study aims to reveal the role of extracurricular activities in enhancing EFL students' English language performance from the Iraqi EFL teachers' perspectives towards the applying of the activities in developing secondary-school students' performance. The design of the study is a quantitative descriptive study which based on a questionnaire to collect the data. Thus questions were formed to answer the questionnaire items as follows:

- 1- Are there any statistically significant differences in the Iraqi EFL teachers' perspectives towards applying extracurricular activities in developing secondary-school students' language performance?
- 2- Are there any statistically significant differences in the Iraqi EFL teachers' perspectives towards applying extracurricular activities in developing secondary-school students' language performance due to the gender variable?
- 3- Are there any significant statistical differences in the Iraqi EFL teachers' perspectives towards applying extracurricular activities in developing secondary-school students' language performance due to the age variable?
- 4- Are there any significant statistical differences in the Iraqi EFL teachers' perspectives towards applying extracurricular activities in developing secondary-school students' language performance due to the years' experience variable?
- 5- Are there any statistical significance differences in the Iraqi EFL teachers' perspectives towards applying extracurricular activities in developing secondary-school students' language performance due to the qualification variable?

The participants are the EFL teachers from Secondary schools of the Second Educational Directorate in Baghdad.

Location: the location of the schools are in Al-Karkh area in Baghdad, Iraq.

Duration: the study was conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2021- 22.

Theoretical Background and Related Previous Studies

Definition of Speaking

Speaking is an essential skill that language learners should master with other language skills. It is a complex process of sending and receiving messages through verbal expressions, but it also involves non-verbal symbols such as gestures and facial expressions. Hedge (2000: 261) defines speaking as "a skill by which they [people] are judged while first impressions are being formed." That is to say; speaking is an important skill which deserves more attention in both first and L2 because it reflects people's thoughts and personalities (Dehham, et al., 2020).

Some errors and mistakes characterize L2 learners' speech. Therefore, speaking is not a simple skill; its complete mastery requires some experience and practice (Bairmani, et al., 2021). Hedge argues that "speaking in a foreign language is very difficult and competence in speaking takes a long time to develop." The skill of speaking is quite different from writing in its typical grammatical, lexical and discourse patterns. Moreover, some of the processing skills needed in speaking differ from the ones involved in reading and writing. (Hussein, et al., 2019; Kareem, 2019)

Extracurricular Activities 'ECA'

Extracurricular activities fall outside the realm of the standard curriculum of school or university education performed by students. ECAs exist at all levels of education, from primary school to university. Such activities are generally voluntary, i.e. they are not part of the regular school curriculum, as opposed to mandatory, non-paying, social, and often involve others of the same age. Students often organize and direct these activities under faculty sponsorship, although student-led initiatives like independent newspapers are joint. "Extracurricular activity" includes the students' clubs, associations, and organizations that conduct those activities. It does not have athletic competitions or practices or athletic teams or organizations (Marsh and Kleitman, 2002).

ECA: An Overview

The history of extracurricular activities began in the United States in the nineteenth century. First, as Casinger described, they were an additional part of the normal academic year schedule. It complemented the curriculum as much as subverted it. The students found a kind of laboratory for practical and vocational interests in it. Literary societies were the first associations that became popular at

Harvard University and Yale University. Then various debate clubs appeared, and different fraternities and sororities were organized (Thompson et al., 2013).

ECA within Foreign Language Learning

In the twentieth century, many researchers focused on the impact of ECA on students' performance in class and other skills necessary for everyday life (Tchibozo, 2007). In particular, it was observed that ECAs eliminate the chances of dropping out of school for some categories of students (Mahoney and Cairns, 2000). The findings proved that the ECAs were just as necessary for building academic and social skills as the regular classes (Tenhouse, 2003; Astin, 1993; Darling et al., 2005).

The Role of ECA in Language Teaching

The reported advantages of extra-curricular activities for language acquisition include: improvement of student-teacher relationship as well as of student-student relationship, improvement of school morale, improvement of school community relationship, decrease in the need for disciplinary control, and increase in the school's holding power. ECAs have been shown to foster effective teamwork between students, school staff, teachers and the principal (Anderson, 1963).

Learners' Attitudes to Extracurricular Activities

Very little research is available on the learners' attitudes to ECAs and their direct impact on language learning. One study conducted in Russia showed that language-related EC work in a university environment increased students' communicative skills and had a positive effect on their self-confidence. Another study claimed that ECAs do not guarantee a high level of language proficiency for their participants. Conversely, many students notice that experiences obtained in out-of-class language environments were more meaningful and educative than those obtained in the classroom. (Druzhinina, 2009).

Benefits of Extracurricular Activity Participation

Considerable researchers (Silliker & Quirk, 1997; Tavani & Losh, 2003) have established the benefits of extracurricular activity participation on academic performance and the decrease of delinquent behaviours during adolescence. Darling et al. stated; that "extracurricular activities have been touted by their proponents as enabling youth to socialize with peers and adults, set and achieve goals, compete fairly, recover from defeat, and resolve disputes peaceably" (p. 52). (Abbas, et al., 2018)

Types of Extracurricular Activities Used in Side the Classroom

Following are the most common extracurricular activities that used inside the classroom: Group Work; Role Play; Problem Solving; Discussion and Debates; and Communicative Task (Jameel, 2022; and Anber and Jameel, 2020).

Previous Studies

Al-Shreege (2020) investigated the principals' point of view of the obstacles that encounter to implementation of extracurricular activities in schools. The participants were 159 male and female principals from Qasbet Al-Mafraq in Jordan. A questionnaire was used to collect the data. The results revealed that the principals point of view were very high concerning the high degree of obstacles that encounter the application of extra curriculum activities in teaching foreign language skills in particular and education in general. The results also revealed that there are no statistical significance differences at 0.05 significant value due to qualification, gender, and years of experience. (Ali, et al: 2019; Rahoomi et al:2019)

Zakhir (2019) investigated the English language teachers' attitudes towards the use of extracurricular activities in TEFL classes. The participants were 14 teachers (3 females and 11 males) who were randomly chosen from two Economic faculties in Moroccan universities. The Teachers belonged to the English department but they all taught English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Based on a quantitative and qualitative method, it examined the role of extracurricular activities in developing students' self-learning of English. A questionnaire was used to collect the data. The results revealed that teachers rarely used extracurricular activities to motivate students to learn. Also, the study revealed that there are no significant differences in teachers' attitudes that attributed to gender, age, and years of experience.

Methodology and Procedures

The sample of this study is 340 English language teachers (235 females and 105 males)

Instrument

In order to achieve the aims and answer the questions the researcher reviewed the literature and the previous studies related to the topic, it was noticed that the best scale to collect data about the teachers' perceptions towards the application of extracurricular activities to develop secondary-school students' oral performance is a questionnaire.

Data Analysis, Results, and Conclusions

Result of the First Question

To answer the first question, one sample test, P-value, 95% confidence interval of differences were used.

Table 1
One-Sample Test, Test Value, paired Sample Test

Total First Dimension Test Value = 0									
N	Mean	Std. D	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed) P-value	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
340	70.15	11.97	0.649	108.02	339	0.000	70.147	68.87	71.42

Table 1 shows that the mean score is 70.15, with a standard deviation of 11.97. Due to this result, the P-value is 0.00, which is less than 0.05, and the mean difference of teachers' perspectives who respond to the questionnaire items is 70.147, and the confidence interval does not include zero; its range is basically from 68 to rounding, all the way to 71.42, this result indicated a significant positive difference in the Iraqi EFL teachers' perspectives towards applying extracurricular activities in developing secondary school students' language performance.

Result of the Second Question

To answer the second question, Levene's Test for Equality of Variances and t-test for Equality of Means were used. Table 2 shows the results.

Table 2
Levene's Independent Sampling Test for Equality of Variances and t-test for Equality of Means

Total Dimension	first	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
		Female	235	69.78	11.879	0.775
Male	105	70.96	12.200	1.191		

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed) P-value	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	2.26	0.133	-0.83	338	0.402	-1.179	1.406	-3.945	1.587
Equal variances not assumed			-0.83	195.20	0.408	-1.179	1.421	-3.981	1.623

Table 2 shows that the t-value -0.83 with the (2-tailed) value of 0.402 with the significance of 0.05, which was revealed to be greater than 0.05; thus, there is no significant difference.

Result of the Third Question

To answer the third question, Tukey's test was used which two tables come-out, the Post-hoc-tests which is labeled Multiple Comparisons and the Test of Homogeneity of Variances which labeled Levene Statistic (ANOVA) table. Table 3 shows the results.

Table 3.
Multiple Comparisons and the Test of Homogeneity of Variances of the Teachers' ages

Descriptive

Ages	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	Upper Bound
21-25	74	63.51	13.099	1.523	60.48	66.55
26-30	56	72.38	11.625	1.553	69.26	75.49
31-35	71	70.35	12.353	1.466	67.43	73.28
36 and above	139	72.68	9.903	0.840	71.02	74.34
Total	340	70.15	11.974	0.649	68.87	71.42

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4426.407	3	1475.469	11.222	0.000
Within Groups	44176.240	336	131.477		
Total	48602.647	339			

Table 3 shows that there are statistically significant differences in the Iraqi EFL teachers' perspectives towards applying extra-curricular activities in developing secondary-school students' language performance due to the age variable in favour of the ages between 21-25 years.

Result of the Fourth Question

To answer the fourth question, a Post-hoc-tests which are labeled Multiple Comparisons and the Test of Homogeneity of Variances which labeled Levene Statistic (ANOVA) were used. Table 4 shows the results.

Table 4
Test of Homogeneity of Variances of the Teachers' years of Experiences.

Test of Homogeneity of Variances					
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.		
8.139	3	336	0.000		

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2010.290	3	670.097	4.832	0.003
Within Groups	46592.357	336	138.668		
Total	48602.647	339			

Post Hoc Tests Multiple Comparisons

(I) Years		Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Less than 5 years	6-10 years	-1.113	1.892	0.556	-4.83	2.61
	11-15 years	0.850	1.783	0.634	-2.66	4.36
	more than 16 years	-5.183*	1.687	0.002	-8.50	-1.87
6-10 years	Less than 5 years	1.113	1.892	0.556	-2.61	4.83
	11-15 years	1.963	1.966	0.319	-1.90	5.83
	more than 16 years	-4.070*	1.880	0.031	-7.77	-0.37
11-15 years	Less than 5 years	-0.850	1.783	0.634	-4.36	2.66
	6-10 years	-1.963	1.966	0.319	-5.83	1.90
	more than 16 years	-6.033*	1.770	0.001	-9.52	-2.55
More than 16 years	Less than 5 years	5.183*	1.687	0.002	1.87	8.50
	6-10 years	4.070*	1.880	0.031	0.37	7.77
	11-15 years	6.033*	1.770	0.001	2.55	9.52

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 4 shows that the Leven test value is 8.13 with a significant value of 0.000 which means that there is a significant difference between the years of experience towards applying of extra-curriculum. The ANOVA test F. value is 4.832 with a significant value of 0.003, which is less than a 0.05 significant value. This means that there is a significant difference between the years of experience variable for the favor of more than 16 years.

Result of the Fifth Question

To answer the fifth question, Test of Homogeneity of Variances which labeled Levene Statistic (ANOVA) were used. Table 5 shows the results.

Table 5
Test of Homogeneity of Variances of the Teachers' qualifications.

Test of Homogeneity of Variances					
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.		
10.393	3	336	0.000		

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4870.335	3	1623.445	12.473	0.000
Within Groups	43732.312	336	130.156		
Total	48602.647	339			

Post Hoc Tests Multiple Comparisons

(I) Qualification		Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Bachelor	High Diploma	12.101*	2.212	0.000	7.75	16.45
	Master	1.096	1.684	0.516	-2.22	4.41
	Ph.D.	8.868*	2.790	0.002	3.38	14.36
High Diploma	Bachelor	-12.101*	2.212	0.000	-16.45	-7.75
	Master	-11.005*	2.573	0.000	-16.07	-5.94
	Ph.D.	-3.233	3.401	0.342	-9.92	3.46
Master	Bachelor	-1.096	1.684	0.516	-4.41	2.22
	High Diploma	11.005*	2.573	0.000	5.94	16.07
	Ph.D.	7.772*	3.085	0.012	1.70	13.84
Ph.D.	Bachelor	-8.868*	2.790	0.002	-14.36	-3.38
	High Diploma	3.233	3.401	0.342	-3.46	9.92
	Master	-7.772*	3.085	0.012	-13.84	-1.70

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5 shows that the Leven test value is 10.393 with a significant value of 0.000 which means that there is a significant difference between the teachers' qualifications towards extracurricular application. The ANOVA test F. value is 12.473 with a significant value of 0.000, which is less than a 0.05 significant value. This means that there is a significant difference between the teachers' qualifications variable for the favor of Bachelor qualification.

Discussion of the Results

This study aims to reveal Iraqi EFL teachers' perspectives towards applying extracurricular activities in developing secondary school students' language performance. The results showed that the teachers' perspectives were varied due to several variables such as teachers' gender, ages, years of experience, and qualification. The results revealed the following:

1- EFL teachers have positive perspectives toward applying extracurricular activities in developing secondary school students' language performance. This result can be attributed to the fact that extracurricular activities have positive features that students like and are interested in learning oral skills. It seems that these extracurricular activities are close to students' learning preferences

2- There are no statistically significant differences in the Iraqi EFL teachers' perspectives towards applying extracurricular activities in developing secondary school students' language performance due to the gender (males and females) variable.

This result can be attributed to the fact that both the male and females EFL teachers follow the same teaching methods, and the extracurricular activities are an easy task that both genders can use.

3- There are statistically significant differences in the Iraqi EFL teachers' perspectives towards applying extracurricular activities in developing secondary school students' language performance in favour of the ages between 21-25 years. Teachers between 21-25 years are influenced by the formal teaching methods and the textbook material. The teacher's age is close to the students' ages; thus, using

extracurricular activities is not within their interests. Teachers between 21-25 years old are influenced mainly by technology, and thus they try to implement technology in teaching.

4- The years of experience revealed to have an effect on EFL teachers' perspectives toward applying extracurricular activities in developing secondary school students' language performance there were significant differences in EFL teachers' perspectives due to their years of experience and for the favour of the years more than 16 years.

This result can be attributed to teachers with long experience who have practised all the teaching methods and can provisionally design extracurricular activities. Thus, they show more positive perspectives toward the use of extracurricular activities in teaching oral skills for the level of secondary schools.

5- The results revealed a significant difference between the teachers' qualifications towards extracurricular application in favor of the teacher with Bachelor's qualifications.

This result is a natural result for the previous aims that prove a significant difference in teachers' perspectives due to age between 21-25. This result shows a significant difference in teachers' perspectives in favor of the teacher with a Bachelor's qualification (usual ages between 21-25). Extracurricular activities establish a sense of teamwork among students and the teachers, free anxiety communication, friendly relationships, and a sense of belonging; all these aspects enable students unconsciously to develop positive attitudes toward engaging in communication, which means to use the language not only to gain knowledge of the language system.

Conclusion

To sum up the results and the data analysis, the following main results have been reached:

- 1- Concerning the role of extracurricular activities in developing language performance, the EFL teachers believe that extracurricular activities can provide good exposure to the new ideas and novice information, help student to express thoughts, feelings, and opinions freely, develop students' oral fluency and flexibility performance, increase student's motivation, improves students' brainstorming and problem-solving, and increases students' acceptance of different students' opinions.
- 2- Concerning the role of extracurricular activities in developing students' oral language performance, the EFL teachers believe that extracurricular activities can develop students' oral performance skills due to the use of authentic materials, take the risk of using English language in a dialogue, exchange information outside the textbook, use learning tools that close to students' interest, improve students' general communicative knowledge, encourage students to participate inside and outside the class in oral communication, and motivate students to practice exchange information in English language.
- 3- Extracurricular activities are great importance teaching English language. They are a complement tool for teaching English, they can expand and deep students' language knowledge, and develop oral skills. The extracurricular can increase students' interest in learning English

language. In short, the pedagogical implications of these findings are that extracurricular activities facilitate teaching English, motivate students to learn and make them more interesting for long-life learning.

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