



## Examining the Use of Teaching Activities in Iraqi EFL University Level: Case study of Najaf

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### Abstract

EFL teachers at the university level in Najaf most usually employ the goals of the study determining the kinds of teaching activities. Indicating the influence of the teaching activities on student involvement and enthusiasm in EFL courses at Najaf institutions, Among the teaching actions include showing someone how to do something, guiding in the study of transmitting knowledge, and making someone know or grasp something. Particularly in Najaf Governorate, the English as a Foreign linguistic (EFL) teaching program at Iraqi institutions has certain difficulties that compromise the linguistic competency of the students. Many students feel inadequate and insecure about their English language abilities, even if it is vital for the global economy and job search chances. Many educators depend on conventional approaches that stress memory and theoretical practice without considering the needs or engagement of their pupils. Najaf's universities lack the necessary instructional tools, like books and modern technologies. These methods lack interaction and active participation, which affects students' motivation and commitment. Universities in Najaf suffer from a lack of appropriate educational resources such as books and technological equipment. This lack limits teachers' ability to design effective learning activities that suit students' needs. Indicating the teaching activities.

**Keywords:** EFL, Teaching Activities, Teaching Actions, Instructional Tools

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### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1. Overview

With the introduction of numerous technologies, the abilities and performance of teachers in the classroom are evolving in the ever-evolving current state of education. Since teaching the principles of knowledge involves a thorough and significant shift in students' behavior, the majority of officials, educators, teachers, and administrators concur that this is one of the alternatives that may be helpful in addressing the activities of the current period. Since education has grown in importance for both individual and social achievement, the process of conveying ideas to pupils forces teachers to move beyond old teaching methods and adopt current techniques in the era of technology (Borko, 2004) <sup>[2]</sup>.

Teacher professional development is the process by which teachers, both alone and in collaboration with others, evaluate, renew, and expand their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching, despite the fact that some researchers view the term as vague. Teachers gain and improve their knowledge, abilities, planning, and practice with kids, teens, and coworkers through professional development. The foundation of educational progress to satisfy societal expectations is this process (Evans, 2002) <sup>[7]</sup>.

Among other things, the teacher's role as a classroom manager should include setting the stage for the development of students' social and psychological traits. They are also in charge of the instruction and academic development of the kids. Learning students' names, making eye contact, and becoming familiar with their personality types are a few ways to achieve this. Effective

classroom management benefits both teachers and students by enhancing the teaching and learning process. Teachers can work more readily, classes run more quickly, and students successfully comprehend and grasp the learning objectives in well-managed classrooms because an inspiring environment is created (Diaz et al., 2018) <sup>[6]</sup>.

### 1.2. Statement of the Problem

The English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching system in Iraqi universities, especially in Najaf Governorate, faces a number of challenges that negatively affect students' learning effectiveness and language skills. Despite the importance of English in the global economy and job search opportunities, many students feel inadequate and insecure about their language skills. Many teachers rely on traditional teaching methods that focus on memorization and theoretical practice without taking into account students' needs or interaction. These methods lack interaction and active participation, which affects students' motivation and commitment. Universities in Najaf suffer from a lack of appropriate educational resources such as books and technological equipment. This lack limits teachers' ability to design effective learning activities that suit students' needs.

### 1.3. The Significance of the Study

The significance of the study "Examining the Use of Teaching Activities in Iraqi EFL University Level. This study focuses on the specific teaching activities employed in EFL classrooms in Najaf, with the goal of offering practical recommendations that can enhance the quality of English language instruction at the university level. Such improvements are likely to result in better language acquisition and overall academic performance among students.

### 1.4. Purpose of the Study

1. Identifying the types of teaching activities are most commonly used by EFL instructors at the university level in Najaf.
2. Indicating the teaching activities impact student engagement and motivation in EFL classes at Najaf universities.

### 1.5. Research Questions/ Hypothesizes

1. What types of teaching activities are most commonly used by EFL instructors at the university level in Najaf?
2. How do the teaching activities impact student engagement and motivation in EFL classes at Najaf universities?

### 1.6. Limitations of the Study

The study focused on examining the use of teaching activities in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes at the university level in Najaf, Iraq. The research aimed to identify the effectiveness of various teaching activities in improving students' language proficiency and engagement in the classroom. Additionally, the study only focused on a few specific teaching activities, such as role-plays, group discussions, and multimedia presentations, without considering other potential strategies that could also be effective in the EFL classroom.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Classroom Activities

Nobody truly understands how learning occurs. Creating classroom communication exercises in which new kinds of activities are available is one of the current challenges in language instruction. Every new activity in the classroom takes time and effort to get going. People who are interested in it should think about it and be given the chance to participate in the teaching and learning process. Students are rarely encouraged to apply their language abilities in authentic contexts in standard classroom settings. They just practice in the classroom. Despite spending years studying English in grammar-translation classes, many students were still unable to use the language proficiently. Although the students have a fundamental understanding of language, they were unable to actively apply that knowledge. It was progressively acknowledged and accepted that a new method of teaching and learning languages was required in order to facilitate their communication and use of that language knowledge (Nunan, 2004) <sup>[16]</sup>.

According to Chastain (1988) <sup>[3]</sup>, children have been drawn to grammar rather than meaning as a result of common classroom activities. Students should participate in the construction or recreation of meaning through language in modern classroom activities. They ought to devote more time to translating ideas into language or language into concepts. Instructors should develop the ability to assess the value of class activities based on how students thinking.

### 2.2. Learning Activities

Students' learning and pursuit of knowledge lead to learning. This results in targeted activities that students participate in because of the entire educational setting as well as their personal perspectives and inputs. Learning activities are defined as "behaviours and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning and that are intended to influence the learner's encoding process". The impact of learning activities can be observed in the manner that learners acquire or choose new information, as well as in their motivation. According to Weinstein and Mayer (1986) <sup>[19]</sup>, learning activities are therefore seen as a fundamental component of classroom activities.

According to Chastain (1988) <sup>[3]</sup>, kids learn how to communicate by engaging in a sequence of progressively challenging and intricate tasks. She outlines three phases of learning activities:

1. Meaning and comprehension are the first steps in the language learning process. For classroom activities to be more beneficial and successful, students must comprehend their meaning.
2. Practice and preparation of previously taught material constitute the second phase of learning activities.
3. Communication is the third step. At this point, both educators and learners have finally achieved their objective of using the language to comprehend, communicate, read, and write in contexts involving free choice.

Two examples of learning activities that motivate pupils to learn in a meaningful way are proposed by Wittrock (1980). Initially, in a study on vocabulary acquisition, college

students' memory of the terms rose from 20% to over 90% when they employed them in a sentence. Second, when reading a story, students who write a summary phrase at the conclusion of each paragraph are better able to understand the story and recall the events. Other authors (Williams & Burden, 1997) <sup>[21]</sup> refer to foreign language instruction as "learner training," which focuses on methods of explicitly teaching students language acquisition strategies and how and when to employ activities to help them become self-directed.

How might educators encourage greater activity in the classroom? Hedge (2000) <sup>[10]</sup> states the following as the response to this query:

1. **Cognitive Strategy Training** This word refers to a collection of learner training exercises that the instructor can gradually incorporate into a program that aims to expand students' understanding of practical learning strategies and create the necessary actions. These exercises will take the place of the methods that students once anticipated from their lecturers.
2. **Developing Metacognitive Techniques** Metacognitive techniques are regarded as self-help techniques. These tactics come in a variety of forms. Classifying the categories of centering learning (e.g., over-viewing; paying attention), organizing and planning learning (e.g., goal-setting, planning, and seeking out practice opportunities), and evaluating learning (e.g., self-monitoring) is crucial. The final category of learning activities is known as "socio affective strategies," which give students practice chances. Some examples of these include spending more time in the language lab or listening to the radio or viewing TV shows in the language.

A different type of learning exercise known as a communication exercise involves students using gestures, mime, synonyms, paraphrases, and similar terms from their native tongue to help them comprehend and carry on a conversation. Based on the aforementioned facts, learning activities are defined as the procedures through which students are exposed to new and dynamic information in order to acquire and choose the most important components. In order to retain information and get it ready for memory storage, individuals must then acquire effective memory strategies (ibid:78).

### 2.3. Teaching Activities

Getting the majority of pupils to engage high-level cognitive processes that most academic students naturally employ is the definition of good teaching. Higher learning processes are not well supported by conventional teaching techniques including lectures, tutorials, and individual study. Teaching activities include showcasing knowledge, ideas, and concepts both inside and outside of the classroom using a variety of approaches and strategies. Furthermore, while instructional activities are helpful, they are insufficient to support students' personal development. Teachers must understand the importance of their own personalities if they wish to create an environment that fosters both language and personal growth (Savignon & Berns, 1984) <sup>[17]</sup>.

Littlewood (1984) <sup>[14]</sup> notes that the conscious element is strong in most conventional language-teaching exercises. Teachers therefore assign dialogues to be taught, structures to be rehearsed, and vocabulary to be memorized. However,

classrooms today require a new set of activities where students are focused on communicating in the language rather than the language itself. Other activities that instructors do in the classroom include language games that recycle vocabulary and provide more information. This allows teachers to vary the tactics they use in the classroom. One example of a language teaching activity in the classroom is the use of collocations, which are crucial for vocabulary acquisition. In addition to understanding the meaning of a word family and other associations, recognizing a word also entails determining if its occurrence is limited to specific collocations.

According to Savignon & Berns (1984) <sup>[17]</sup>, "guided induction" is one of the effective teaching activity kinds. The teacher must pose questions in this exercise that help the students comprehend the discourse's characteristics. This exercise works well for four reasons:

1. It enables the instructor to identify parts of the conversation that could be problematic for the learner.
2. It permits the highest possible degree of student involvement in the analytical procedure.
3. Students are more involved in the analytical process as a result of this involvement.
4. Students' motivation and curiosity are boosted by this involvement. whether or not students have used this tactic.

Allowing them to apply what they have learned through follow-up activities is advised. Gebhard (2006) <sup>[9]</sup> offers a variety of instructional activities that provide opportunities for reflection on instruction and experience. These tasks include "teaching lessons in different settings, read about teaching, observe others' teaching, write and talk about teaching issues and problems". Teachers may have additional opportunities to grow their teaching experiences and views by engaging in these activities. Engaging students in learning-related activities that support them in achieving the specific course objectives such as discussing, coming up with new ideas, reflecting, and problem-solving is how the teaching process operates (Celce-Murci,2001).

### 2.4. Relation between Teaching / learning Activities

The system of teaching and learning activities is balanced, with all of its parts and facets supporting one another. Learning is what students need most, both inside and outside of the classroom. People must study, and in the majority of contemporary civilizations, schools are the places where youth concentrate on these crucial responsibilities. Consequently, a class that does not include students in learning activities is not meeting their needs (Chastain 1988:162).

Cook (2001:149–150) asserts that "the classroom is a variable not a constant." Teachers are free to use it whichever best fits their students' needs and goals. It's also important to remember that education doesn't just happen in classrooms. An autonomous, self-motivated learner can learn just as effectively as one who is instructed in a classroom. Teaching and learning entail much more than just imparting knowledge, guiding activities, asking students to demonstrate their understanding, and fixing mistakes. Students should always receive more attention than the teacher (Chastain, 1988) <sup>[3]</sup>. According to Widdowson (1978) <sup>[20]</sup>, an excessive focus on usage can frequently detract from the learner's personal language experience. He further states "by focusing

on usage, the language teacher directs the attention of the learner to those features of performance which normal use of language requires him / her to ignore".

Furthermore, Davies & Pears (2004) include crucial elements that support the teaching and learning processes:

1. Physical aspects of the classroom, such as enough room, a small group size, good lighting, and a cozy setting.
2. Less physical classroom conditions, such as lots of chances for students to engage in class and an environment that inspires them to study.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Overview

The design of the present study was correlational since Correlational research studies the relationship between or among the variables (Fitzgerald et al, 2004) <sup>[18]</sup>. In such a quantitative research works, the researcher deals with collecting, editing, and analyzing numbers (Monka et al, 2020) <sup>[15]</sup>. This research is quantitative the researcher conducted on the examining the use of teaching activities in Iraqi EFL University level: Case study of Najaf.

#### 3.2. Participants

A random sample of teacher's are selected from in English department, College of Education, University of Islamic during the academic year (2024-2025). This sample consists of 10 teacher's (males and females).

#### 3.3. Instruments

The researcher used one tool to collect data, this tool was a questionnaire. The researcher relied on the statistics related to the results of the questionnaire to carry out the analysis. The questionnaire conducted by researcher Muhammed (2015) <sup>[16]</sup> was relied upon.

#### 3.4. Procedure

A sample questionnaire was conducted in order to collect the data for the current study. The test conducted at English department main hall. The answer sheet with questions papers was distributed among the participants. Furthermore, the participants spent 30 minute to answer all of the questions. Meanwhile, the exam began for all participants at the same time. Gradually, the answer sheets had been collected by the researcher when all participants finished the exam.

#### 3.5. Data Analysis

The researcher collected the answer sheets from the participants and then corrected these answers to know the percentage of each variable in each question of the questionnaire. Then the researcher discussed these results.

### 4. Results

1. **I use interactive software:** This shows that the use of interactive software is some common among respondents, with a majority using it always 20% or often 20%, and a significant portion sometimes 50% using it.
2. **I use "team-teaching" to teach the class:** Team-teaching is a moderately common practice, with most respondents employing it sometimes 40%, often 30, or rarely 20%. Only a small portion always 10% use this method.

3. **I practice language activities other than classroom activities:** The majority of respondents often engage in language activities outside the classroom, with a significant portion sometimes 30%, often 60% doing so and a smaller group always 10% participating.
4. **I employ the use of language labs and practice language outside the classroom:** The use of language labs and outside practice varies widely, with respondents spread across all frequency categories. A notable portion always 30%, often 20%, sometimes 20% use these methods, while some rarely 20% or never 10% do.
5. **I employ the use of student-led tutorial activities:** The employment of student-led tutorials is also diverse, with many respondents often using these activities, while others are spread across often 30%, sometimes 20%, always 20%, rarely 20%, and never 10% categories.
6. **I have the freedom to choose the classroom topics I prefer:** A significant majority have the freedom to choose classroom topics, with half often 50% doing so, and the rest either always 20% or sometimes 30% having this freedom.
7. **I employ the use of concept maps. And long term planning:** Concept maps and long-term planning are frequently used, with the majority often 60% employing these methods and a smaller group using them sometimes 40%.
8. **I practice listening to tapes and doing follow-up exercises:** Listening to tapes and follow-up exercises are commonly practiced, with most respondents often 60% engaging in these activities, and some always 10% or sometimes 10% and never 10% participating.
9. **I participate in teaching-learning discussions through chat rooms at internet websites:** Participation in online discussions varies widely, with a significant portion rarely 40% participating and others always 30% or sometimes 10, often 10% and never 10% engaging in these discussions.
10. **I use pre-communicative activities such as giving lengthy explanations, drilling, and asking questions:** Pre-communicative activities are highly common, with the majority often 60% using these methods and a significant portion always 30% and sometimes 10% doing so.

#### 4.1. The quantitative Data Analysis

This part is concerned with the descriptive statistical Percentages of the data in current work. It aims at endorsing the findings of examining the use of teaching activities in Iraqi EFL University Level through using several Participants This section intends to actualize the aims and the hypotheses of the current work in presenting teaching activities components that basically form the present work in Iraqi EFL University Level through using several Participants.

##### 4.1.1. Descriptive Statistical Percentages of the Ten teachers under Study

The current analyzing reveals the statistical findings of examining the use of teaching activities in Iraqi EFL University Level through using several Participants and the results depend on difference aspects like use interactive software, team-teaching, practice language activities, language labs and practice language, student-led tutorial activities, teaching-learning discussions and pre-communicative activities (see Fig 1). these findings

demonstrate the percentages of the aims and hypothesis.

Device	interactive software	team-teaching	language activities	student-led tutorial activities	concept maps	follow-up exercises	teaching-learning discussions	pre-communicative
Participant	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Percentage	20%	30%	50%	30%	60%	%60	10%	60%

The current analyzing reveals the statistical findings of examining the use of teaching activities in Iraqi EFL University Level through using several Participants and the results depend on difference aspects like use interactive software, team-teaching, practice language activities,

language labs and practice language, student-led tutorial activities, teaching-learning discussions and pre-communicative activities (see Fig 3). these findings demonstrate the percentages of the aims and hypotheses of this work

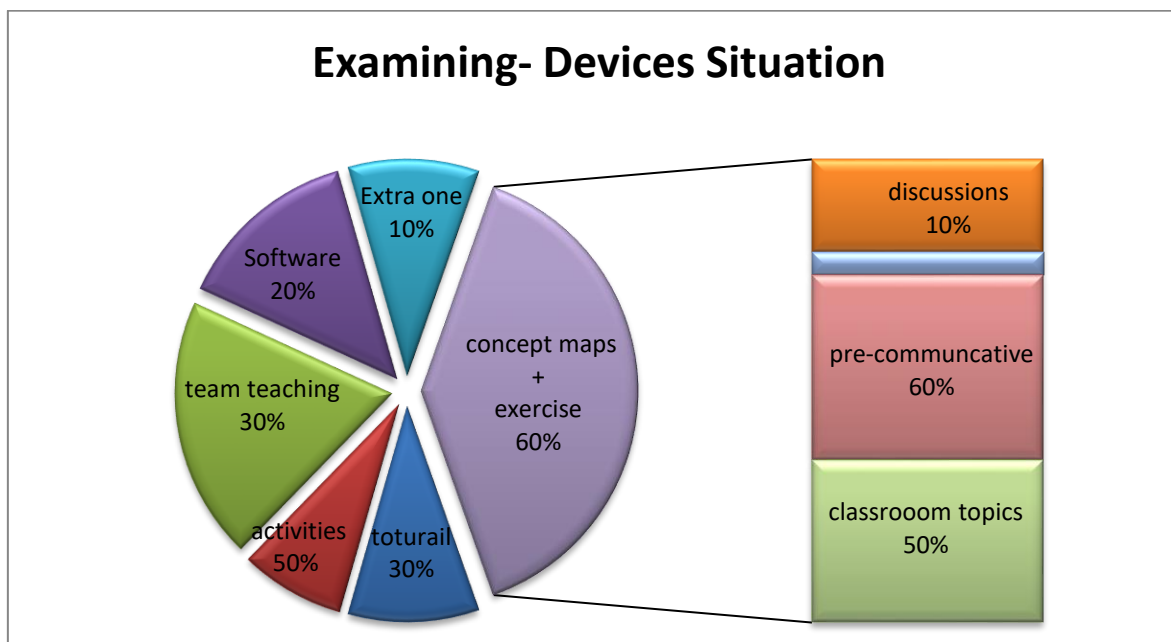


Fig 1: The Overall Percentages of this study

The overall statistical analysis conducted in the current work reveals overall frequent the use of structures by speakers in data under analysis as displayed in *Table (1)* below. It is shown that classroom activities and listening to tapes and doing follow-up exercises are more frequently exploited by the teachers.

**5. Discussions, Conclusion and Recommendations**

**5.1. Discussions**

The text highlights the use of interactive software in teaching, but also emphasizes the importance of team-teaching and extra-curricular language activities. It also shows a varied approach to using language labs and practicing outside the classroom, possibly due to limited technology access or preference for other approaches. Reflects a moderate implementation of student-led tutorials, encouraging student autonomy and active participation in the learning process. Indicates a significant level of autonomy in topic selection, which can lead to more engaged and personalized teaching experiences. Suggests a strong reliance on structured

approaches and long-term planning to organize and deliver content effectively. Exhibits regular utilization of auditory learning resources, essential for language acquisition and understanding. Suggests sporadic involvement in online discussions, potentially attributable to a preference for in-person encounters or constraints in online engagement platforms. Emphasizes the significance of foundational activities, including drills and explanations, in establishing a robust foundation for communication competence.

**5.2. Conclusion**

In the realm of higher education, it is increasingly evident that conventional teaching approaches are not the most efficacious means to attain desired learning objectives. The conventional class/method entails the lecturer articulating material for passive, note-taking pupils presumed to be empty vessels awaiting knowledge acquisition. This strategy is constrained in its efficacy, as the flow of information typically occurs in a singular direction. An enhanced pedagogical approach entails augmenting students'

engagement and participation in the learning process. This strategy promotes self-directed learning and helps maintain a more consistent level of attentiveness across students.

The majority of teachers use interactive software activities are most commonly. Team-teaching is a moderately common practice, with most teachers employing. The majority teachers engage in language activities outside the classroom. Language labs and outside practice are also common. Student-led tutorial activities are also common, with a diverse range of usage. The majority have the freedom to choose their

preferred classroom topics. They also frequently use concept maps and long-term planning. Online discussions and pre-communicative activities are also common. Emphasizes a strong focus on extra-curricular language activities, which can greatly enhance language acquisition and practical application for students. Shows a varied approach to using language labs and practicing outside the classroom, which might reflect varying access to these resources or differences in their effectiveness for different topics.

## Appendix

Items	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. I use interactive software.					
2. I use "team-teaching" to teach the class.					
3. I practice language activities other than classroom activities.					
4. I employ the use of language labs and practice language outside classroom.					
5. I employ the use of student led tutorials activities.					
6. I have the freedom to choose the classroom topics I prefer.					
7. I employ the use of concept maps. And long term planning.					
8. I practice Listening to tapes and doing following up exercises.					
9. I participate in teaching learning discussions Through chat room at internet websites.					
10. I use pre communicative activities such as giving lengthy explanations, drilling and asking question.					

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