
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Investigating Iraqi Teachers' Cognition of Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Selected Schools

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| ABSTRACT

The present study is a psychological study of Iraqi English teachers' cognition in relation to teaching English as a foreign language. It focuses on teachers' knowledge, belief, knowing, and thinking in teaching English. Thus, this paper discusses what cognitions English teachers have and how these cognitions contribute to improving students' learning. The methodology used in this study is a questionnaire with 20 statements and four multiple choices. The researcher randomly investigated (20) Iraqi secondary schools in Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf Governorate with a total number of (60) participants distributed in two phases (30) males and (30) females. As for the importance of the current study, it is significantly held to improve and know English teachers' capabilities and to stand on the main challenges that both teachers and students face in teaching and learning English as a foreign language.

| KEYWORDS

Educational psychology, teaching English as a foreign language, teachers' knowledge, beliefs, knowing, thinking, a good teacher.

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1. Introduction

Teachers' cognition is considered a fundamental element in teaching English since it is related to the prior knowledge and some mental processes of Iraqi English teachers, such as thought, knowledge, belief, experience, and sense. It also refers to the unobservable dimension of teaching a foreign language.

The main goal of this study is to understand and know what teachers think, know, believe, and do, and the relationship of these mental processes to what teachers do in teaching English as a foreign language in the classroom in some secondary schools in Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf Governorate, and also to improve and develop Iraqi teachers' ability in teaching English as a foreign language in an efficient way.

The importance of the current study is knowing and developing more about what teachers' cognition can do, how these cognitions can develop, how these cognitions can interact with teachers learning, and how they interact with classroom practice. The study also has limitations in that it focuses on some secondary schools as samples in one Iraqi governorate which is Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf.

The problem of the study is that many students in secondary schools in Iraq have difficulty learning English as a foreign language, and their level is not in demand even in their advanced stages of study compared to the neighboring countries.

The main research questions of the current study that will be investigated through analysis are:

1. What cognitions do teachers have about teaching English as a foreign language?
2. How do these cognitions contribute to improving students' level in learning English?
3. Are these cognitions properly used by Iraqi teachers in teaching English?

The main aims that this paper tries to fulfill are:

1. To know Iraqi teachers' cognitions about teaching English in secondary schools.
2. To examine how these cognitions contribute to reinforcing students' level in learning English.
3. To investigate whether these cognitions are successfully used or not.

This study hypothesizes that:

1. Iraqi English teachers have negative and positive cognitions about teaching English.
2. Iraqi English teachers face many problems in contributing their cognitions to improve their students' level.
3. Some of Iraqi teachers' cognitions are out of their control because of the followed school systems in Iraq.

2. Educational Psychology

Educational psychology studies focus on individual differences, assessment, and learning behaviours in the 1940s and 1950s, whereas later studies in the 1960s and 1970s focus on the study of cognitive developments and learning (Woolfolk, 2016: 40).

Berliner and Calfee 1996 cited in Whitcomb (2003: 534), mention that Educational psychology is "distinctive in its substance: the systematic study of the individual in context". It guides the central role that teachers' cognition plays in learning to teach.

So, the concept of "Educational Psychology" today "is a distinct discipline with its own theories, research, problems, and techniques". The researchers in this field do research about learning and teaching as well as work to improve educational policy and practice (ibid).

Educational psychology aims to understand and improve the teaching and learning processes, and the job of educational psychologists is to develop methods and knowledge. In addition, they use methods and knowledge of psychology to study teaching and learning in everyday situations (ibid: 51).

The main concern of "Educational Psychology" is teaching and learning. It involves topics of motivation, memory, intelligence, cognition, as well as intellectual developments, evaluation, and assessment (Larson, 2009: vii).

3. Teaching English as a Foreign Language

English is considered an international language, and it is studied as a foreign or additional language in many countries. It has become the global lingua franca, "the language of commerce", technology, science, and many other fields (Salkiad & Rasmussem, 2008: 343).

A foreign language is " a language that is learned in a community where that language is not commonly spoken by most people" (Oxford, 2017: 28). The main goals of teaching English are language development and library development. Teaching English makes students able to speak English, understand spoken English, and read and write English (Patel & Jain, 2008: 13).

However, teaching English is the process that teachers teach, and students learn from their teachers. In the process of teaching-learning, the teacher should make his/her lesson effective. The tools that make teaching very effective are teaching aids and instructional material because language teaching is a dynamic, not a static, process. Here are types of teaching aids and instructional material: (ibid: 57)

• Visual aid :

1. Boards: Blackboard, Flannel boards, softboards.
2. Charts, Maps, Pictures, Drawings.
3. Static and Working Modal
4. Film strip, Slide Projector, Over Head Projector, Transparencies and Episcopes.

• Audio aids :

1. Audio Cassette Player
2. Radio

• Audio-Visual aids :

1. Video Cassette player
 2. Video Compact Disc Player
 3. Television
 4. Film Projector
- Language Laboratory

- Computer Assisted Learning (ibid:59)

4. Teacher's knowledge:

Teacher's knowledge means specific knowledge and strategies that guide students with appropriate information in the class. This knowledge requires new teaching and learning or pedagogical practices for teachers to understand the content they plan on teaching. Thus, the teacher's knowledge should contain the following:

- 1-Content knowledge.
- 2-General pedagogical knowledge.
- 3-Curriculum knowledge.
- 4-Pedagogical content knowledge.
- 5-Knowledge of learners.
- 6-Knowledge of educational contexts.
- 7-Knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values. (Niess, 2012:1-2)

Ronau et al., cited in (Niess 2012:179), mention that every teacher may have "knowledge about what to teach, how to teach, the ways students learn and ways for a classroom to meet the needs of every student. Moreover, Woolfolk (2016:557) considers pedagogical content knowledge complex and specific to the situation. It is the teacher's knowledge that combines the ability of academic content with knowing how to teach the content and how to match the instructions to students' differences.

5. Teachers' beliefs

There is no single overall definition of the term "beliefs" because of the confusion arising from the distinction between beliefs and knowledge. So, Pajares (1992), cited in Bryan (2012:478), refers to the problem of defining beliefs as "at best a game of player's choice" and mentions that the distinction between beliefs and knowledge is "beliefs are based on evaluation and judgment while knowledge is based on objective fact".

Thus, Woolfolk (2016: 32) refers to the teacher's beliefs as "teachers' sense of efficacy," which means "teacher's belief that he/she can reach even difficult students to help them learn". In this regard, Bandura (1997), cited in Blonder et al. (2014: 3-4), defines self-efficacy as "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives". Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998), cited in Blonder et al. (2014: 6), add that self-efficacy is a "teacher's belief in his/her ability to organize and execute the courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context". Moreover, Bandura (1986) and Gibbs (2002), cited in Blonder et al. (2014: 3), remind us that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are "suggested as impacting on how teachers think, feel and teach".

As a result, teachers, especially English teachers, possess beliefs about learning and teaching that influence their behavior and practice. However, understanding the nature of English and how students learn English aid in forming a set of beliefs that guide practice and behavior within the classroom (ibid:10).

Zheng (2015:17) mentions that teacher beliefs can be understood from three common features: first, beliefs are generally contextualised and associated with a particular situation or circumstance. Second, beliefs are interpretive and reflective. Third, teachers' beliefs are seen as "inclusive concepts," including conscious opinions and unconscious intuitions, personal values, attitudes, and ideologies. Whereas Wallace (2014:17-18) and Bryan (2012:478-9) mention some characteristics of teacher beliefs:

1. Beliefs are far more influential than academic knowledge in framing, analyzing, solving problems, and making teaching decisions.
2. Some beliefs are more strongly held than others, resulting in "core" and "peripheral" beliefs. An individual's core beliefs may be more resistant to change.
3. Beliefs do not exist independently of one another but are arranged in ecology or an "internal architecture" of systems that have psychological importance to the individual.
4. Individuals may have competing belief sets about the same topic.
5. When one belief is changed, it is likely to affect other beliefs throughout the system.
6. Some scholars posit that belief systems occur in "nests" (Bryan, 2003) or sets of beliefs, including core and peripheral beliefs about various principles that are linked or grouped together.

6. Teachers' knowing

Teachers, especially English teachers, must know well what they teach, the material they teach, language skills, goals and objectives of teaching, curriculum, evaluation and assessment, and methods of teaching. Thus, Velez-Rendon (2002:461-62) focuses on

teachers' knowledge from two sides: subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, and mentions that subject matter knowledge is about what teachers know about what they teach, whereas pedagogical knowledge is what teachers know about teaching their subjects.

Singer et al. (2003: 39) point out that teaching is the process of helping learners to learn things you already know. It helps students to acquire new knowledge and skills. They also mention some responsibilities that every teacher should know:

- 1-Teachers have to know the subject they will teach.
- 2-Teachers have to look at the course from the learner's point of view by telling the students what to look for or what to do until the students master the operation.
- 3-Teachers have to know what results to expect as the standard performance of the job.
- 4-Teachers have to develop their skills as instructors.

Lytle and Cochran-Smith (1993: 115) assert that when teachers study and write their work, they make their own distinctive ways of knowing about teaching and learning more visible to themselves and others. They also mention ways of knowing that teachers should have about teaching:

- 1-The practical knowledge that teachers have about how and when to act in actual teaching situations.
- 2-Knowledge about teaching by making adaptations in their work according to the changing knowledge base and their own teaching situations.
- 3-Knowledge base for teaching that will provide teachers with a unique fund of knowledge.
- 4-Teaching is a profession, and knowledgeable teachers are not technicians but professionals; they are able to make decisions or judgments and plans based on principled knowledge that is adapted to the particulars of their teaching situations, students, experience, special insights, self-knowledge, values, and commitments.
- 5-There is no single taxonomy or correct way of structuring the knowledge base for teaching, and a particular structure likely will be revised in the future on the basis of the added knowledge and improved professional insights. (ibid: 41-42)

7. Teachers' thinking

Teachers' thinking, planning, and decision-making assign a large part of the psychological context of teaching, and within this context, the curriculum is interpreted and acted upon. So, teachers' behavior is influenced and determined by teachers' thought processes Clark & Peterson (1984: 255). Therefore, thinking is inside, and it belongs to the individual, and then it is expressed outside through words.

Moreover, they point out that the major goal of research on teachers' thought processes is to increase understanding of how and why the process of teaching looks and works as it does. However, they develop a model for teachers' thoughts and actions and characterize this model in two scopes: first, teachers' thought processes, and second, teachers' actions and their observable effects. These two scopes differ in two ways: first, they differ in the extent to which the processes involved are observable. Thus, teachers' thought processes occur inside teachers' heads, and they are unobservable, whereas teachers' behavior and students' behavior are observable. Second, the two scopes represent two paradigmatic approaches to research on thinking. However, the dominant research paradigm was the process-product approach to the study of teaching effectiveness, whereas the domain of research on teachers' thought processes assigned a paradigmatic approach to research on teaching that has only recently emerged (ibid: 256-57).

In addition, Richard, Li & Tang 1998 cited in Borg (2003: 95) identify four areas of language teaching that beginner teachers are less skilled at:

- 1-Thinking about the subject matter from the learners' point of view.
- 2-Having a deep understanding of the subject matter.
- 3-Knowing how to present the subject matter in an appropriate way.
- 4-Know how to join language teaching with curriculum goals.

However, thoughts are also guided by oral and written exams, school systems, and students assessments. Pijl & Foster (2005: 167) say that teachers' judgments on students with information on the nature of the instructional task and institutional constraints are inputs into teaching decisions. Thus, making decisions on teaching in the preactive phase of teaching, teachers develop a plan. So, planning is any activity of teachers concerned with preparing a framework for guiding future action. To make a plan, teachers have to decide on goals, objectives, teaching methods and materials, evaluation ways, means, dates, etc. Planning should do with choosing actions, and these actions are formed from teachers' education and through years of experience (idid: 168).

Schoefeld (2010: 187) points out that in decision making, "people's decision making in well-practiced, knowledge-intensive domains can be fully characterized as a function of their orientations, resources, and goals". Therefore, Tyler 1949, cited in Laursen (1994: 131), mentions that teachers' decision making is concerned with four areas when preparing lessons:

- a-Purpose.
- b-Selection of teaching experience.
- c-Organization of the learning experience.
- d-Evaluation.

8. A good teacher

Shaw (2012: 181) defines a good teacher as "a teacher who knows his/her material, knows the students, and loves being in the classroom. Harden & Crosby (2000:335) mention that a good teacher is someone who helps students to learn. So, the role of the teacher is not only to give information to students but also he/she should have a range of key roles to play in the educational process. Thus, the process of teaching is based on the strategies of Teacher-Centred and Student-Centred education. The teacher-centered strategy focuses on the teacher as a transmitter of information, with information passing from the expert teacher to the beginner learner, whereas the student-centered strategy focuses on changes in students' learning and on what students do rather than what the teacher does (ibid).

Sulasmi (2017: 5) points out four categories of good English teacher characteristics:

- 1-Technical knowledge, which includes the four English skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing), grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, explaining material clearly, and managing time.
- 2-Pedagogy skills include managing the classroom, motivating students, giving feedback, applying appropriate and variety of techniques, and evaluating students' abilities.
- 3-Interpersonal skills such as friendly, enjoyable, communicative, humorous, welcoming critics, and so on.
- 4-Personal qualities such as patience, discipline, honesty, responsible and good figure.

9. Methodology

The methodology used in this study is a questionnaire with 20 statements and four multiple choices. The multiple choices are arranged and given percentages as follows: always 100%, usually 75%, sometimes 50%, and never 25%. The questionnaires are printed on sheets, and each participant should write down his/her name, age, sex, years of experience, and the stage(s) he/she taught. Then, every participant should circle or underline his/her choice according to the note that the researcher wrote on the top of the questionnaires. The researcher handed the questionnaire sheets to the participants manually, and then he gathered the sheets once the participants finished the required statements.

However, Brown (2001: 6) defines a questionnaire as "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to show which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers". Thus, the questionnaire intends to serve some purposes such as obtaining some background information on Iraqi English teachers, showing strengths and weaknesses in teaching English, developing English teachers' capabilities, etc.

The researcher draws a chart and diagram using Microsoft Office, especially Word and Excel. The diagram shows the arrangement of the percentages of multiple choices that are already given, while the chart shows the results of the questionnaires by giving numbers for males/females based on their choices. The statistical data and percentages are calculated manually.

The model used in this study is Bandura's (1997) theory of social cognition. He (ibid) describes the interaction between people and their environment through their cognitions, effects, and behaviors. The value of this model comes from its recognition of the interaction of multiple factors on teachers' behaviors, motivations, and capabilities. Bandura puts a heavy emphasis on social influence and its impact on internal and external factors and focuses on the social environment in which individuals perform actions. With this in mind, the researcher modifies such a model to suit his research, especially in collecting and analyzing the data in question.

10. Data Collection and Description

The data used in the current study are a type of questionnaire collected randomly from different secondary schools in Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf Governorate. These schools are located in different places, in the city center and the villages nearby. The maximum number of English teachers in each school varies according to the number of students and classes in each school. As for the number of teachers, it is around 2 to 4 teachers in each school. Hence, those teachers/participants have different ages, sex, culture, experience, region, and styles.

Nevertheless, the researcher randomly investigated (20) Iraqi secondary schools in Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf Governorate with a total number of participants: 60 participants distributed over two sides (i.e., 30 males and 30 females). Those participants teach different stages such as (first, second and third intermediate; fourth, fifth, and sixth preparatory). The educational system followed in these schools consists of:

- Classes ranging from 10 to 18 in each school.
- Lessons ranging from 5 to 7.
- Period of time for each lesson ranging from 35 to 45 minutes.
- Number of students in each school ranging from 450 to 1000 students.
- Number of students in each class ranging from 25 to 50 students.
- The adopted curriculum of the Ministry of Education in teaching English consists of a series of "English for Iraq" (student's book, activity book, and teacher's guide).

11. Analysis and Results

A quantitative-qualitative analysis is adopted in the current study. Participants are flexible and helpful toward the questionnaires. Their responses were based on what they had already experienced in terms of their knowledge, beliefs, and thoughts in teaching English. Thus, the questionnaire statements, choices, and results are filled in the following chart:

No.	Questionnaires statements	Multiple choices				
		Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never	Sex
1	English teachers who have long teaching experience are more able to teach scientific material to their students than those who have little teaching experience.	16	6	5	3	Males
		12	8	6	4	Females
2	The curriculum used in teaching English meets the requirements of students to learn English correctly and effectively.	15	5	8	2	Males
		17	7	4	2	Females
3	A large number of students in one class has a negative effect on learning English effectively.	20	6	4	0	Males
		23	4	3	0	Females
4	The small number of students in one class has a positive effect on learning English effectively.	25	3	2	0	Males
		27	2	1	0	Females
5	The ideal class is a class in which you can teach your students correctly and successfully with a number of students ranging around (15-20 students).	26	3	1	0	Males
		25	2	2	1	Females
6	Students acquire the four English skills quickly in learning English as a foreign language.	6	10	9	5	Males
		5	12	10	3	Females
7	Your attitudes toward students in evaluation and judgment are based on: (participation in the class, written exams, homework, and oral exams).	20	6	2	2	Males
		18	8	3	1	Females
8	Students understand and know what they are studying in relation to their participation.	15	8	4	3	Males
		17	6	6	1	Females

9	English teachers use teaching aids such as (pictures, drawings, audio, computers, etc.) in teaching English in the classroom.	10	8	9	3	Males
		12	11	6	1	Females
10	Dealing with students in one way without a distinction between a student and another.	25	3	2	0	Males
		27	2	1	0	Females
11	Students interact and participate with you in the classroom while giving the lesson.	12	10	6	2	Males
		14	8	7	1	Females
12	Having knowledge about (curriculum, methods of teaching, educational contexts, students' assessment, evaluation, and testing) makes the process of learning more successful.	20	4	3	3	Males
		17	5	6	2	Females
13	Preparing your lesson plan and organizing the material that you are going to teach.	12	7	7	4	Males
		14	9	6	1	Females
14	-Informing the material that is going to teach by taking into account the objectives to be achieved from the lesson.	10	9	5	6	Males
		13	6	6	5	Females
15	Preparing a framework for planning, evaluating, and decision making is an essential element in teaching English.	15	8	6	1	Males
		13	7	7	3	Females
16	Looking for the material that you are going to teach from the learners' point of view.	18	6	5	1	Males
		15	8	4	3	Females
17	Students' prior knowledge plays an important role in acquiring and understanding the material you will apply for the course.	22	3	4	1	Males
		19	6	5	0	Females
18	The duration of the lesson is sufficient to achieve the objectives of the lesson and take into account individual differences.	7	6	8	9	Males
		6	7	7	10	Females
19	Students' level in learning English as a foreign language is good, and they are able to communicate with each other by speaking English in a fluent way.	8	6	6	10	Males
		10	5	4	11	Females
20	A good teacher is a teacher who knows his/her students, material, and he/she should take into account individual differences, motivate his/her students to learn, and he/she should also be patient, honest, fair, and doesn't differentiate between one student and another.	25	3	2	0	Males
		27	1	2	0	Females

Figure (1) Questionnaire statements, choices, and results

The percentages of multiple choices that are already given to participants with questionnaires statements arranged from top (always) to bottom (never) for both males and females and shown in the following diagram:

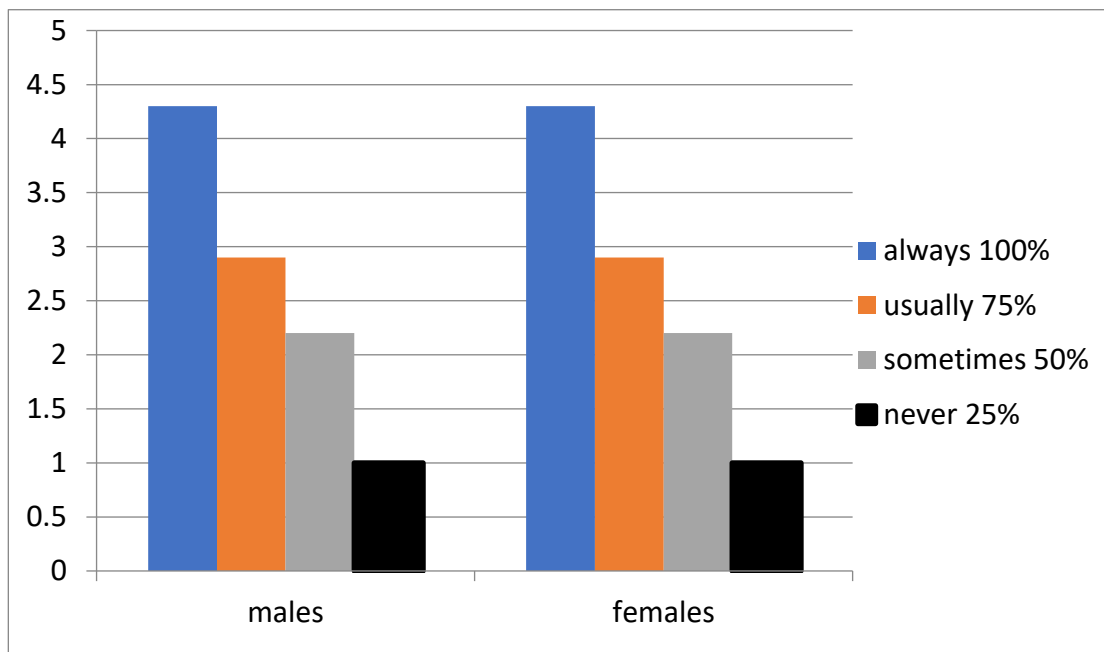


Figure (2) The scores of teachers' cognitions (males and females)

The chart in figure (1) shows Iraqi English teachers' cognitions toward the questionnaire statements, and each participant expresses his/her knowledge, beliefs, and thoughts through what he/she had in his/her mind about teaching English as a foreign language in Iraq. The researcher is now in a position to discuss the results of each questionnaire alone and then give percentages for males and females. Then, the total scores will be calculated for all questionnaires.

The first statement of the questionnaire shows that the cognition of the highest percentage (46% for always) of participants of, both males and females support the idea that experienced teachers are more able to teach their students than those who are less experienced, while other percentages record (23% for usually), (18% for sometimes) and (11% for never).

The second statement of the questionnaire offers that the cognition of the highest percentage (53%) for always of Iraqi English teachers are satisfied that the curriculum used in teaching English meets the requirements of students in learning English, whereas other percentages score (36%), (20%) and (6%), for usually, sometimes and never respectively.

The third statement scores (71% for always) of participants agree that a large number of students in the class has a negative effect on students in learning English, and this point is considered one of the problems that face both Iraqi English teachers and the learners in teaching and learning English effectively. Whereas other percentages scores (16%), (11%) and (0%) for usually, sometimes and never respectively.

The fourth statement shows that the highest number of English teachers support the small number of students in one class in order to take each student an adequate role by participation and discussion. So, the percentages are arranged as follows: (86%, 8%, 5%, 0%) for always, usually, sometimes, and never respectively.

The fifth statement of the questionnaire records a high percentage (85% for always) of teachers asserting that the number of students in the ideal class should range from around (15 to 20) students. This means that a large number of students in one class has a negative effect on students learning English effectively. The other scores percentages were (8%, 5%, and 1%) for usually, sometimes, and never respectively.

The sixth statement scores the following percentages (18%, 36%, 31%, and 13%) for always, usually, sometimes, and never respectively. This shows that students do not acquire the four English skills quickly, maybe because of the influence of their mother tongue or other problems in the early stages or not using teaching aids by teachers, etc.

The seventh statement explains teachers' cognitions about ways of evaluation and judgment that teachers follow with their students. The high percentage records (62% for always) of English teachers based on student's participation, oral and written exams, and homework in evaluating their students. Whereas other percentages were (23%, 8%, and 5%) for usually, sometimes, and never respectively.

The eighth statement records that (53% for always) of English teachers think that their students understand and know what they are studying based on their participation and discussion. The other percentages were (23%, 16%, and 6%) for usually, sometimes, and never respectively.

The ninth statement shows that not all English teachers or they are not always use teaching aids in the class, and this point negatively reflected on the students' level of learning English correctly. The percentages were (36%, 31%, 25%, and 6%) for always, usually, sometimes, and never respectively.

The tenth statement clearly scores the highest percentage of English teachers dealing with their students without differences, and this is considered a positive point for them because differences have a bad effect on students' feelings and maybe lead to bullying. The percentages were (86%, 8%, 5%, and 0%) for always, usually, sometimes, and never respectively.

The eleventh statement shows that students do not always interact and participate with their English teachers in class, and this is an important point in teaching and learning English as a foreign language because interaction removes barriers of fear in learning English. The scores were (43%, 30%, 21%, and 5%) for always, usually, sometimes, and never respectively.

The twelfth point of the questionnaire appears that most English teachers have knowledge about curriculum, methods of teaching, educational contexts, students' assessment, evaluation, and testing. These tools are important to make the process of learning more successful, and the scored percentages were (61%, 15%, 15%, and 8%) for always, usually, sometimes, and never respectively.

The thirteenth statement is an essential point for English teachers because it enables teachers to plan, prepare and organize their lessons correctly in relation to goals that will be achieved for their students. The recorded percentages were (43%, 26%, 21%, and 8%) for always, usually, sometimes, and never respectively. This means not all English teachers are planning, preparing, and organizing their lessons before giving the lesson.

The fourteenth point is somewhat similar to the thirteenth one. It explores that not all English teachers inform their material before entering the class. This leads to a kind of randomness in giving the lesson. The scored percentages were (38%, 25%, 18%, and 18%) for always, usually, sometimes, and never respectively.

The fifteenth statement of the questionnaire scores close proportions in preparing a framework of planning, evaluating, and decision making as in the thirteenth and fourteenth questionnaires. The percentages were (46%, 25%, 21%, and 6%) for always, usually, sometimes, and never respectively.

The sixteenth point (55% for always) of English teachers look to the material that they teach from the learners' point of view. In this way, English teachers will discover their students' abilities to understand the material they teach. The other percentages were (23%, 15%, and 6%) for usually, sometimes, and never, respectively.

The seventeenth statement shows English teachers' cognitions of their students' prior knowledge. The highest percentage reinforces that students' prior knowledge in relation to their previous stages plays an important role in acquiring and understanding the material they learn. The percentages were (68%, 15%, 15%, and 1%) for always, usually, sometimes, and never respectively.

The eighteenth statement asserts that most English teachers agree that the duration of the lesson is insufficient, especially with a large number of students in one class. So, taking into account individual differences needs sufficient time to achieve the objectives of the lesson. The percentages were (21%, 21%, 25%, and 31%) for always, usually, sometimes, and never respectively.

The nineteenth scores of English teachers declare that students can not be able to communicate with each other while speaking English, and this point reinforces statement number (6) in that students acquire the four English skills slowly. The percentages were (30%, 18%, 16%, and 35%) for always, usually, sometimes, and never, respectively.

The last statement of the questionnaire explains that most teachers agree that the character of a good teacher is the person who knows his/her students, material, and motivates his/her students to learn, should take into account individual differences, and he/she also be patient, honest, fair, and doesn't differentiate between one student and another. The other scores were (86%, 6%, 6%, and 0%) for always, usually, sometimes, and never respectively.

12. Conclusions

The conclusions are based on the formulated research questions, which are based on the summary of the findings. Thus, the analysis shows that Iraqi teachers have many positive and negative cognitions about teaching English as a foreign language. They have positive cognitions about experienced teachers and their abilities to teach their students in a correct way. They have knowledge about the curriculum, methods of teaching, assessment, evaluation, and testing. They also have beliefs about the small number of students in one class, which contributes to improving students' level in learning English as a foreign language. Iraqi English teachers also have positive cognitions about ways of evaluation and judgment, and they think that their students know what they are studying through participation and discussion. English teachers deal with their students without any differences, and they are looking for the material that they teach from the learners' point of view. They also assert that students' prior knowledge is very important in understanding the material they will learn. Iraqi English teachers' cognitions about a good teacher are (knows his/her students, material, and motivates his/her students to learn, takes into account individual differences, patient, honest, fair, and doesn't differentiate between one student and another. Thus, all mentioned above reinforce the validity of the first hypothesis.

The analysis also explains some negative cognitions that Iraqi English teachers have about teaching English. These negative cognitions are considered as main problems facing both teachers and students. Some of these cognitions are controlled, while others are out of English teachers' control. However, Iraqi English teachers have negative cognitions about a large number of students in one class and its negative effect on students' learning. They also have negative cognitions about students in acquiring the four English skills. Teaching aids are not always used by teachers, and some of them don't plan, prepare, organize and inform their material before entering the class. English teachers also have bad cognitions toward their students in relation to their interaction and participation in the class. The analysis also shows that students can't communicate with each other by speaking English, and it also shows that the duration of English lessons is not sufficient to achieve teachers' objectives, especially with classes that have a large number of students. Yet, all mentioned above reinforce the validity of the second and third hypotheses.

Therefore, negative cognitions are considered the main challenges that face both teachers and students in teaching and learning English as a foreign language, especially those which are not under the control of English teachers, because they are related to the educational system followed in Iraq.

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