The Challenges Face Intermediate- School Stage Teachers of English Language in Iraq When Teaching Speaking and listening Skills from Teachers' Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the challenges faced intermediate-stage teachers of the English language in Iraq when teaching English speaking and listening skills from teachers' perspective. The study participants were 32 English teachers in Al-Rassafa 3 Directorate of Education in Baghdad who were selected using the stratified random technique through the second semester of the academic year 2023/2024.

This is a descriptive survey study. A questionnaire which consisted of three domains (i.e. School/classroom-related variables, curriculum-related variables, and student-related variables) was used to collect the data for the study. Data were analysed via SPSS (i.e. Means and standard deviations and ANOVA).

The findings revealed that teachers encounter the same challenges while teaching listening and speaking skills. The finding also showed that the main challenges were (students' lack, of motivation, learning environment, inadequacy of teaching aids and facilities, and limited teaching methods).

Based on these results, the researcher recommends that the number of students in each class should be decreased, supervisors should hold training workshops on teaching and assessing listening and speaking skills for teachers, and more facilities should be accessible to students.

Keywords: Challenges, listening skills, speaking skills

التحديات التي تواجه معلمي اللغة الإنجليزيه للمرحلة المتوسطة في العراق في تدريس مهارتي الاستماع والتحدث باللغة الإنجليزية من وجهة نظر المعلمين أنفسهم

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الملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة الى استقصاء التحديات التي تواجه معلمي اللغة الإنجليزيه للمرحلة المتوسطة في العراق في تدريس مهارات الاستماع والتحدث باللغة الإنجليزية من وجهة نظر المعلمين. كان المشاركون في الدراسة ٣٢ معلمًا اة للغة الإنجليزية في المديرية العامة للتربية في الرصافة الثالثة. تم اختيارالمشاركون باستخدام تقنية العشوائية الطبقية خلال الفصل الدراسي الثاني من العام الدراسي ٢٠٢٣/٢٠٢٤.

هذه دراسة وصفية مسحية. تم استخدام استبيان يتكون من ثلاث مجالات (أي المتغيرات المتعلقة بالمدرسة / الفصل، والمتغيرات المتعلقة بالمنهج، والمتغيرات المتعلقة بالطالب) لجمع بيانات الدراسة. تم تحليل البيانات باستخدام SPSS (أي المتوسطات الحسابية والانحرافات المعيارية و اختبارات تحليل التباين المتعدد).

أظهرت النتائج أن المعلمين بغض النظر عن خبرتهم يواجهون نفس التحديات أثناء تدريس مهارات الاستماع والتحدث. كما أظهرت النتائج أن التحديات الرئيسية كانت (عدم ثقة الطلاب، القلق، الدافع، البيئة المكتسبة، عدم كفاية الوسائل والمرافق التعليمية، ومحدودية طرق التدريس). بناءً على هذه النتائج، توصي الباحثه بضرورة تقليل عدد الطلاب في كل فصل، وعلى المشرفين عقد ورشات عمل تدريبية حول التدريس وتقييم مهارات الاستماع والتحدث للمعلمين، و توفير المزيد من التسهيلات للطلاب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التحديات، مهارات الاستماع،مهارات التحدث.

Introduction

Teaching is the consciousness of teachers to teach language not only on the level of linguistics rules and definitions, but they should encourage students to communicate instinctively and meaningfully. To be intelligent to communicate instinctively and meaningfully, students should have suitable language skills (Brown,2007).

Learning and teaching speaking skills is crucial simply because it is the means through which students can communicate with others to express

their ideas, opinions, information, and hopes or to attain certain goals (Alzahrani, 2019).

Progressions in listening and speaking skills should have an outstanding place in language programs around the world currently. The increasing need for fluency in English around the world is the significance of the role of English as the world's international language and has given importance to the discovery of more active ways to teach these vital language skills.

Listening comprehension skills need to be close attention in classes and universities since every EFL teacher realises students' production of oral skills depends seriously on their listening comprehension

proficiency. Also, on a typical day, we listened more than we spoke. Then, this enhances the importance of listening comprehension skills (Brown and Abeywickrama, 2010:161).

The listening skill of a second/foreign language is not derivative naturally; it needs some learning procedures. The classroom listening processes include the active interface between teachers and students. In a listening classroom, the teacher can be the foundation of the listening itself or become the teacher and the manager

when they utilize other listening courses. Many listening resources are derived from recorded excerpts, for instance on tape records, CD video and others. (Utomo, Kusmaryati, & Sulistyowati,2019).

Theoretical background

The challenges of teaching listening skills are diverse. Nushi and Ourji (2020) stated that several challenges were identified and classified by teachers into three categories; pronunciation, content, and individual characteristics, along the same line. Celik and Yavuz (2015) divided listening challenges into internal and external. Internal caused by the learner himself, some learner-related factors such as (anxiety, stress) and the appropriateness of the listening material. Furthermore, the

external was caused by the quality of the audio material as well as the noisy setting.

The teacher is the most powerful factor in the learning development of students in a classroom (Edge,1999). Teachers play a significant role in the language teaching progression. The role of the teacher is to produce a suitable learning environment that helps the students grow their language skills impeccably. Since the teacher assesses the student's work to determine how well they are performing, the teacher also serves as an evaluator. Additionally, the teacher is a planner of all the actions that happen both outside and inside of the class. As such, he needs to be well-organized when it comes to teaching foreign languages and should understand exactly what makes a lesson successful. To avoid wasting a lot of time, he shouldn't provide the students with meaningless information or unclear directions.

English is a challenging process. Many structures influence the success of learning English

Since English has turned out to be an international language, various countries in the world presented it in their educational structure. Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) has become very common throughout the last century, and the foundational principles for this field have been established. Teachers face diverse types of problems and difficulties that make the procedure slow and rather weak. These difficulties put the teachers in a problem in dealing with the lack of teaching. Teaching English language in the Arab countries, particularly in Iraq.

This study was planned to focus on the challenges faced intermediate-stage English language teachers while teaching speaking and listening skills at the Alrasafa 3 Directorate of Education in Baghdad.

Study Statement

However English was introduced as a required subject in the education Iraqi system from the primary stage to the secondary stage, there are many serious challenges facing Iraqi EFL teachers in teaching oral skills, especially in the intermediate- stage. Accordingly, these difficulties affect the student's ability in English. Henceforth, this study highlights these difficulties and proposes some resolutions to overcome such difficulties in schools in Iraq.

According to the Literature review, there is a necessity to identify the explanations behind teachers' challenges which may hinder students' learning to orally communicate with speakers of English. That led the researcher to do this research, and was noted that English teachers complain that students lack enough vocabulary, knowledge, and confidence to participate in listening and speaking activities. So, the researcher felt the necessity to investigate the challenges of teaching speaking and listening skills from the intermediate-stage EFL teachers' point of view. She assumes that exploring these challenges may assist suggest ways to overcome these challenges.

Definition of Terms

-**Listening skills**: Listening comprehension is the procedure of one individual noticing another via sense, (exactly aural) organs, assigning a meaning to the message and understanding it. It is an essential and indispensable requirement of individual interaction in social life (Kutlu & Aslanoğlu,2008)

According to DeVito (1995), listening is "the efficient process of perception, comprehension, recognition, evaluation and reaction in communication".

-**Speaking skills**: speaker's ability to use the language accurately to express meaning and transfer or receive knowledge and information from others in a communicative situation (Diep, 2017). In this study,

speaking skills refer to intermediate-stage students' abilities to communicate in English during English classes.

Limitations of the study

The study had the following limitations:

1. The study sample was limited to 32 English language intermediate-stage teachers in the Alrassafa 3 Directorate of Education in Baghdad during the second semester of the academic year 2023/2024.

2. The instrument of the study was only a questionnaire

Review of Literature

Teaching speaking and Listening, out of the four language skills, has long been the most challenging one for both foreign language teachers and students. While speaking and listening is a difficult skill, it is an important component of learning a language. One likely spends twice as much time listening as speaking, four times as much listening as reading, and five times as much listening as writing (Rivers, 1981; Weaver, 1972); so, the importance of these skills is indisputable. To teach oral skills, some aspects affect the achievement of these skills. In this situation, Pourhossein and Reza (2011) claim that the importance of listening, the study of its teaching theory, and the utilization of the most advanced listening teaching methods are the most vital factors. Regarding teaching methods, Pourhossein and Reza (2011) stated that the communicative approach is the method teachers should utilise to meet the students' requests and gain effective English speakers and listeners as a product. They claimed that English must be taught as a tool for communication and that listening capacity must be central to teaching practice.

Teaching Speaking has always been considered a significant language skill for language students because it lets speakers take a message and interact with others (Widiati & Cahyono, 2006). For this purpose, teaching speaking demands diverse methods and strategies

that assist learners in expanding their communication skills. Concerning methods for teaching speaking, the (CLT) Communicative Language Teaching approach is one of the most regularly used. In this respect, Widiati and Cahyono (2006) explain that CLT "values interaction among students in the process of language learning". These authors also state that CLT emphasises classroom activities, which have a vital role in empowering students to cooperate and thus progress their speaking proficiency. In addition, carefully prepared instruction and appropriate practice are required to assist EFL students speak fluently because they are not regularly showing to the target language.

Related study

Many studies have shown the challenges that teachers face in teaching speaking and listening skills to foreign-language learners, such as the following, and these studies are arranged chronologically:

Al-Abri(2008) claimed that the lack of oral activities in textbooks is one of the reasons for students' difficulties in speaking. The population of this study involved stage 5 teachers and students in basic education schools in Oman. Four teachers of English and three classes from one school were involved. Three tools were utilized in the study, and interview, they are lesson observations and curriculum analysis. Therefore he recommended counting some oral actions in the form of songs, rhymes, stories and more conversations of language to empower students to have more exciting learning to progress speaking and listening skills.

Firstly, Hamouda (2013) investigated the Listening Comprehension Problems Encountered by Saudi Students in the EL Listening Classroom. The study sample consisted of 60 students who took the listening course in 2012/2013. The tools of the study were questionnaires and interviews. The data was investigated by means. The study's outcomes presented that accent, pronunciation, speed of

speech, insufficient vocabulary, different accents of speakers, lack of concentration, anxiety, and bad quality of recording were the main listening comprehension problems encountered by EFL Saudi learners.

Saeed (2015) This study intended to investigate the challenges of Teaching English language skills in Iraqi Schools in Mosul for the Intermediate Stage from the Teachers' Opinion. The study attempted to distinguish the aspects that stand behind the weakness in teaching skills of English and to discover proposed solutions to overcome this weakness, a purposive sample of the study, the participants were 50 teachers, covering diverse age ranges, educational backgrounds, genders, teaching experience and courses attended was chosen to fill the questionnaire. The tools of the study were; a questionnaire and open-ended interviews Outcomes presented that there are several problems in teaching English in the intermediate schools in Mosul-Iraq. These problems are divided into two types; First, problems associated with teachers themselves in terms of attitudes and experience such as the teachers' necessity for more training courses and the waste of the source language (Arabic) as the language of teaching. Second, problems associated with the teaching-learning situation and the convenience of resources such as visual-audio aids in the schools.

Another study, conducted by Al-Abdallat (2018) investigated the challenges of teaching oral skills as apparent by the upper basic-stage language of English teachers and their proposals to overcome them in Amman; Jordan. The method was quantitative–qualitative descriptive. The sample involved 130 EFL teachers in public and private Jordanian schools who were chosen randomly throughout the academic year 2017/2018. A questionnaire and interviews with participants were applied to the study. The findings revealed that teachers face many challenges such as students' level, lack of facilities, and teachers' professional skills. The findings also revealed that teachers' proposals

to overcome the challenges are motivating students and encouraging them.

In addition, Ihsan and Wahidah (2019) conducted a study to determine the teachers' efforts to overcome the students' difficulties in speaking ability in the eleventh grade of high school in the academic year 2017-2018 in Indonesia. The study was descriptive qualitative research. The participants of the study were 15 students eleventh grade of high school in the academic year 2017-2018. The data in the study were collected through observation, questionnaires and interviews. The data was roughly and detailed analyzed. The outcome of the analysis presented that three types of the students' difficulties in speaking capacity in the eleventh grade of high school in the academic year 2017-2018 were the absence of vocabulary, uttering the word and fluency. The teachers' efforts to overcome the students' difficulties in speaking capacity were; asking the students to learn the vocabulary, creating English groups, practising speaking in English, and contributing to the students' motivation about the significance of English.

Furthermore, Utomo, Kusmaryati, & and Sulistyowati (2019) were conducted to describe the process of teaching English (listening) and identify the problems in teaching (English) listening in a Junior High School in Kudus. This study utilizes an exploratory research design. The subjects of the study are five teachers of English from a Junior High school in Kudus, they have experience teaching English for more than ten years. They have been teaching from diverse classes, class 7, class 8, and class 9. This study has revealed the challenges and problems in learning and teaching in Junior High Schools in Kudus. Most teachers feel that time organization becomes their main challenge in managing the classes. They have prepared lesson plans, but sometimes the lesson does not work the same. They have to work with different-level

students, with students with learning problems, and with learners who come from diverse backgrounds.

Finally, Alrasheedi (2020) conducted a study to investigate the psychological features influencing the Speaking Performance of Saudi EFL students. The sample involved 200 females and males at Majmaah University in Saudi Arabia. The tool of the study was a questionnaire used to collect data. The finding indicated that affective aspects impacting students' performance in speaking skills are peer pressure, shyness, anxiety, and fear of committing mistakes. Other aspects that obstacle speaking performance are missing necessary vocabulary, missing exposure to the target language, and scarce chances to practice speaking outside the classroom. The study recommended that the use of the English language must be organised in the classroom.

Purpose and Questions of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the challenges that faced the English language teachers in Baghdad in teaching listening and speaking skills at the intermediate stage from the teacher's perspective. More specifically, the study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What challenges face intermediate-stage English language teachers in teaching English speaking and listening skills from their perspective?

2. Are there statistically significant differences (α= .05) between English language teachers' points of view, which can be attributed to their teaching experience?

The study significance

This study may present theoretical background about the challenges of teaching speaking and listening skills. The researchers may discover the results and findings of the study significant to investigate additional features of the challenges.

On the other hand, the study may provide significant data to the Ministry of Education about the challenges in teaching listening and

speaking skills. Curriculum developers and textbook authors might benefit from the results of the study and review challenges while designing the textbooks (e.g. include more listening and speaking exercises that progress students' level in these skills, and deliver audio material on CDs attached to the textbooks). Furthermore, the significance of the research stems from the requirement for English teachers to adapt their teaching methods and instructional practices considering the hindering variables of teaching listening and speaking skills. Hence, teachers may conquer some challenges.

Commentary on previous studies

This review of the previous studies showed that many of them investigated the challenges of speaking and listening skills from teachers' points of view in schools such as (Al-Abdallat,2018). Other studies described the process of teaching English (listening) and identified problems in teaching listening such as (Utomo, Kusmaryati, & Sulistyowati, 2019). Other studies emphasized on challenges of teaching speaking and listening skills in schools from teachers' perspectives Such as (Saeed,2015). Another study focuses on the Listening Comprehension Problems encountered by Students like (Hamouda,2013). Finally, there is a study that emphasized the psychological aspects influencing the Speaking Performance of EFL students such as (Alrasheedi,2020).

The present study is similar to those studies in that it aimed to explore the challenges of teaching English listening and speaking skills using a questionnaire. However, this study is different in that it emphasises the challenges of teaching both skills listening and speaking by intermediate-stage English language teachers. Such challenges are related to the school, classroom, student, teacher, and curriculum. Furthermore, this study involved different teaching experiences.

Method

This part describes the population and sample of the research, the researcher design, the research instrument, the validity and reliability measures, and the procedures of the study.

Population and sample of the research

The study population consisted of (32) intermediate-stage teachers in Baghdad AL-Rsafa 3 Directorate of Education through the academic year 2023/2024, the researcher utilized the stratified random sample technique.

Design of the research

This is a descriptive survey study intended to investigate the challenges of teaching English speaking and listening skills to intermediate-stage students in Iraq from teachers' point of view.

This study has variables:

Teaching experience which has three levels: Short (1-3 years), Medium (4-9 years), and Long (10 years or more)

The dependent variable is the teachers' mean scores regarding the challenges they face in teaching listening and speaking skills to intermediate-stage EFL students in the AL-Rasafa 3 Directorate of Education.

Population and sample of the research:

The study population consisted of (32) intermediate-stage teachers in the AL-Rassafa 3 Directorate through the academic year 2023/2024. By using the stratified random sample technique, 32 EFL teachers were chosen from this population. The distribution of the sample is shown in Table 1:

Table 1: The distribution of the sample in light of the variable:

Teaching Experience	Short(1-3 years)	4
	Medium(4-9 years)	8
	Long(10 years or more)	19
	Total	31

Instrument of the research:

The researcher developed a questionnaire based on the related literature (Al- Abdallat (2018), Alrasheedi (2020) to collect data for this study. The questionnaire consists of two parts: The first part elicits personal information including teaching experience. The second part is the questionnaire items on challenges: seven items on "School/classroom-related variables, eight items on "Curriculum-related variables", and ten items on "Student-related variables."

The questionnaire validity

The questionnaire research was distributed to a jury of 8 EFL experts (7 university professors and 1 school supervisor) to approve its validity. Those experts were kindly asked to comment on the simplicity, accuracy, completeness and relevance of the questionnaire items. The main proposals they provided were: moving some items from one domain to another, re-writing some items so that they reproduce challenges, fixing some language mistakes, and changing the domain's title. Those notes were applied to write up the second form of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire reliability

The questionnaire research was distributed to a pilot study of 10 EFL teachers from the study population to measure Cronbach's Alpha correlation coefficient. As for the "School classroom- related variables" domain Alpha was (0.65), for the "Curriculum –related variables" domain (0.81), for the "Student-related variables" domain (0.29), and for the whole questionnaire it was (0.92). Therefore, these values were considered suitable to conduct the study.

Procedures

The following steps were applied to collect the data for this study:

1. Permission from the Ministry of Education was taken to conduct this study.

2. A questionnaire was developed based on related literature.

3. The validity of the questionnaire was ensured by consulting eight EFL university professors and two English supervisors.

4. The reliability of the questionnaire was recognized by utilising the Cronbach Alpha method.

5. All the questionnaires were distributed and received by email to the sample of the study.

6. Data were collected for analysis.

Data Analysis:

The four-point Likert Scale was used to measure the degree to which teachers agree on the questionnaire items. "Strongly agree" was given a score of (4), "Agree" a score of (3), "Disagree" a score of (2) and "Strongly disagree" a score of (1). Mean scores were designed out of 4 and then distributed to three degrees: Low (1–1.99) average (2– 2.99) and high (3– 4).

Teachers' answers to the questionnaire were statistically examined by using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). This involved calculating means and standard deviations and arranging them in descending rank order. Multivariate Investigation of Variance (ANOVA) was also utilised to account for the variances in the mean scores of the respondents about the variable of the research.

Results

This section presents the results of the two questions of the study.

1. The first question results

1. What are the challenges intermediate-stage EFL teachers face in teaching English speaking and listening skills from their perspective?

To answer the first question means and standard deviations were intended. Findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Means and Standard deviations about each of the 3 domains of the questionnaire presented in rank order.

Domain	Mean	St Dev	Rank	Degree
Third domain	3.197492	0.584275	1	High
First domain	3	0.671015484	2	High
Second Domain	2.629921	0.686437	3	Average
All domains combined	2.959477	0.686199		Average

* Low degree (1-1.99); average degree (2 – 2.99); and high degree (3. – 4)

As Table 2 demonstrates, the mean scores of all three domains of the questionnaire range between (3.19 and 2.62 out of 4), which shows a high degree. This means that the 32 teachers, in general, agree that different variables contribute to the challenges they face in teaching listening and speaking to intermediate-stage students in Iraq. On the other hand, the results of Table 2 show that teachers of English in Iraq consider that most challenges are due to student-related variables (M= 3.19), followed by school/classroom-related variables (M= 3), and curriculum-related variables (M= 2.62).

To see how the items under each domain are ranked according to the degree they are responsible for these challenges according to teachers' points of view, results are presented in the following Tables (3-5)

Results related to School/Classroom –related variables are shown in Table 3

Table 3: Means and Standard deviations about items of School/classroom–related variables presented in rank order.

Table 3: Means and Standard deviations about items of School/classroom–related variables presented in rank order.

Table 3 first domain

Item	Mean	St dev	Rank	Degree
Students have little / no chances to train in listening and speaking outside the classroom	3.34375	0.653002	1	High
Students feel embarrassed to contribute to the listening and speaking classes because the classroom environment is not supportive.	3.09375	0.640533	2	High
Using technological aids through speaking and listening is not available.	2.96875	0.782237	3	Average
Managing overloaded classes during listening and speaking activities is too difficult.	2.96875	0.594837	4	Average
The time allocated for speaking and listening tasks is unsatisfactory.	2.9375	0.618922	5	Average
The	2.6875	0.592289	6	Average

classroom/school is located in an uncomfortable and noisy area.				
First domain	3	0.671015484		High

Low degree (1-1.99); average degree (2 – 2.99); and high degree (3. – 4)

The results of Table 3 show that the mean scores of the items in the first domain (**school/classroom-related variables**) range between high level and average level (3.34 and 2.68). More explicitly, the highest 25% of these mean scores were associated with the following two items: "Students have little / no chances to train in listening and speaking outside the classroom" *(M=* 3.34) and "Students feel embarrassed to contribute to the listening and speaking classes because the classroom environment is not supportive."(3.09). as for the lowest 25%, the two associated items were "The time allocated for speaking and listening tasks is unsatisfactory." (M= 2,93) and "The classroom/school is located in an uncomfortable and noisy area." (M=2.68).

Results for the Curriculum –related variables are shown in (Table 4)

Table 4: Means and Standard deviations about the items of curriculum–related variables presented in rank order.

Table 4 second domain

Domain	Mean	St dev	Rank	Degree
The audio-visual aids are not offered for all lessons.	2.84375	0.723316	1	Average
Variety is absent in listening and speaking teaching tips provided for the teacher.	2.75	0.718421	2	Average

There is a lack of diversity in listening and speaking activities in the student's textbooks.	2.709677419	0.588419	3	Average
Listening and speaking exercises mainly revise grammatical rules.	2.65625	0.545325	4	Average
Listening and speaking tests are not emphasised in the EFL curriculum.	2.65625	0.482559	5	Average
The listening and speaking materials are unrelated to the learner€™s needs and interests.	2.5	0.672022	6	Average
Listening and speaking skills are not stressed in the curriculum document like other language skills.	2.483870968	0.811212	7	Average
Textbooks do not consist of enough speaking and listening activities.	2.4375	0.840027	8	Average
Second domain	2.629921	0.686437		Average

Low degree (1-1.99); average degree (2 – 2.99); and high degree (3. – 4)

The results of Table 4 show that the mean scores of the items in the second domain (**curriculum-related variables**) range between high level and Average level (2.85 and 2.43). More explicitly, the highest 25% of these mean scores were related to the following two items: "The audio-visual aids are not offered for all lessons*." (M=* 2.85) and "Variety is absent in listening and speaking teaching tips provided for the teacher*" (*M=2.75). As for the lowest 25%, the two associated items were "Listening and speaking skills are not stressed in the curriculum

document like other language skills."(M= 2.48) and "Textbooks do not consist of enough speaking and listening activities."(M=2.43).

Results for Student' related variables are shown in (Table 5)

Table 5: Means and Standard deviations about the items of students' –related variables presented in rank order.

Table 5 third domain

Domain	Mean	St dev	Rank	Degree
Shyness and fear of committing mistakes discourage students from speaking in English.	3.4375	0.504016	1	High
Students find trouble recognizing the intonation, stress and accent of English native speakers.	3.419355	0.50161	2	High
Students need to listen to the recorded material many times to understand it	3.34375	0.482559	3	High
Students are demotivated towards speaking in English.	3	0.622171	4	High
Students find it hard to pronounce many unfamiliar words.	3.1875	0.592289	5	High
Students find trouble in understanding recorded material when the topic is unfamiliar.	3.15625	0.57414	6	High
Students have difficulty communicating with others.	3.125	0.707107	7	High
Students find it difficult to attention when they have to listen to the text and	3.125	0.553581	8	High

look for answers at the same time.				
Students have a limited amount of vocabulary which hinders speaking.	3.09375	0.588019	9	High
Students find difficulty in listening to taped material because the speaker speaks very fast.	3.09375	0.588019	10	High
Third domain	3.197492	0.584275		High

* Low degree (1–1.99); average degree (2 – 2.99); and high degree (3. – 4)

The results of Table 5 show that the mean scores of the items in the third domain (**Students'– related variables**) range between high level and high level (3.43 and 3). More specifically, the highest 25% of these mean scores were associated with the following three items: "Shyness and fear of committing mistakes discourage students from speaking in English." (M= 3.43), "Students find trouble recognizing the intonation, stress and accent of English native speakers."(M= 3.41) and "Students need to listen to the recorded material many times to understand it" (M=3.34). As for the lowest 25%, the three associated items were "Students find it difficult to attention when they have to listen to the text and look for answers at the same time." (M=3.125), "Students have a limited amount of vocabulary which hinders speaking."(M= 3.093) and "Students find difficulty in listening to taped material because the speaker speaks very fast." (M=3.093).

2. **The second question results**

2. Are there statistically significant differences (α= .05) between EFL teachers' points of view, which can be attributed to their teaching experience?

The answer to this question, means and standard deviations for each variable were intended. Results are revealed in Tables 6 and.

Table 6: Means and standard deviations of the challenges from teachers' perspective concerning teaching experience

Variable	Domain	Group	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Teaching Experience	First (*School/classroom-related variables*)	Short	3.25	4	0.866
		Medium	3.125	8	0.7033
		Long	**2.933**	20	0.657
		Total	**3**	32	0.669
	Second (*Curriculum-related variables*)	Short	2.59	4	0.756
		Medium	2.793	8	0.626
		Long	**2.629**	20	0.688
		Total	**2.629**	32	0.688
	Third (*Students- related variables*)	Short	3	4	0.648
		Medium	3.325	8	0.568
		Long	**3.185**	20	0.567
		Total	3.197	32	0.580

Table 6 shows that there are variances in the mean scores of teachers due to their teaching experiences. To test whether these differences are statically significant or not *(α= .05)*, **one-way ANOVA tests** were applied. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Anova. Single factor tests of the statistically significant differences *(α= .05)* in the perspective of teachers, which can be attributed to teaching experience.

Summary

Groups	count	Sum	Average	Variance		
10 years	20	1436	71.8	45.43158		
4-9 years	8	592	74	74.85714		
1-3 years	4	274	68.5	7		

ANOVA

Source of variance	Ss	Df	MS	F	P-value	F
Between Within Gr	81.675	2	40.8375	O.840994	0.44153	3.327654
	1408.2	29	48.5586			
Total	1489.875	31				

＊Statistically significance at significance level (a=0.5)

Table 8 shows that there are no statistically significant differences (α= 0.05) between teachers' points of view which can be attributed to teaching experience the value of significance was greater than (α= 0.05). (.44153 > 0.05).

Discussion of the Results

Discussion of the results related to the first research question:

*1. **What are the challenges intermediate-stage EFL teachers face in teaching English speaking and listening skills from their perspective?***

The findings of the first question showed that the mean score of EFL teachers' perspective concerning the challenges they face in teaching listening and speaking skills is (M=2.959477= 3). as revealed in Table 2. This shows that teachers agree to a high degree that they face challenges in teaching listening and speaking skills due to different variables. However, the results reveal that the "student-related variables" have the highest mean score (M=3.197), whereas "curriculum-related variables" have the lowest mean score (M= 2.62). This implies that curriculum is considered the least responsible source of the challenges faced whereas students are the most responsible source. The results of this study are consistent with those of Alrasheedi (2020), and Ihsan and Wahidah (2019). These studies concluded that students' psychological factors; anxiety, motivation, shyness, and fear of criticism could hinder teaching and learning speaking and listening skills.

As for the *"School/classroom-related variables"* domain, the obtained mean score was (3), which indicates that teachers also agree to a high degree on these variables as sources of encounters they face in teaching speaking and listening skills. The results of this study are consistent with those of Utomo, Kusmaryati, & and Sulistyowati (2019), and Saeed (2015) who found unavailability of facilities and teaching aids could burden teaching listening and speaking. One possible clarification of the results related to school/ classroom variables could be that the learning environment does not sustain students to participate in listening and speaking classes. In other words, students may not take risks to connect orally in English in the classroom or at school. Moreover, the lack of facilities such as technological aids in school seems to have delayed learning and teaching in listening and speaking classes.

Regarding the *"Curriculum-related variables"*, the obtained mean score was (2.62), which shows that teachers believe these variables represent an average challenge to them. This result is incongruent with other studies such as Al-Abri(2008).

As for the "Curriculum-related variables" domain, teachers use the same teachers' books and teach the same textbooks "English for Iraq "to intermediate-stage students. Consequently, teachers might have the same curriculum-related challenges such as the lack of audio-visual aids and lack of variety in listening and speaking skills activities. In other words, all teachers may not have the choice to vary the learning materials, activities or methods of teaching methods described provided by the Ministry of Education.

Discussion of the results associated with the second research question: *Are there* statistically significant differences (α= .05) between EFL teachers' points of view, which can be attributed to their teaching experience?

The finding of this question presented that there are no statistically significant differences (α= .05) between teachers' perspectives which can be attributed to experience since all values of significance were bigger than (α= .05). This denotes that teaching experience alone may not be a significant factor influencing the points of view of EFL teachers. This result is consistent with the study Al- Abdallat (2018)) who found that the teaching experience of the teachers has no effect on their views about difficulties during teaching listening and speaking skills. Teachers may receive similar training in teaching oral skills regardless of their experience level. If the training is standardized and comprehensive, it may equip teachers with the necessary skills and strategies to address oral skills difficulties effectively, irrespective of their experience.

Another explanation for why teachers have no significant differences in their points of view regarding these challenges could be that all teachers teach in public schools with almost the same conditions for instance the large number of students in the class. This was supported by their high means score regarding "School/classroom-related variables" (M= 3).

Conclusion:

Due to different variables, English teachers in the Al Rassafa3 Directorate of Education face many challenges while teaching listening and speaking skills to intermediate-stage students. These variables are student-related, School/classroom-related variables, and curriculum-related variables. Student-related variables include issues such as affective filter (e.g. motivation), students' lack of vocabulary and previous knowledge about the topic discussed. These problems may hinder or facilitate speaking and listening among students. Second, school/classroom-related challenges such as uncooperative classroom/ school environment, lack of technological facilities and teaching aids in schools, and overcrowded classes with few chances of participation in oral classroom activities. Third, curriculum-related variables such as

insufficiency of audio-visual aids and lack of practice in listening and speaking skills outside the classroom

and the experience of the teachers has no effect on their views about difficulties during teaching listening and speaking skills.

Recommendations:

Based on the results of this study, it can be recommended that:

1. Students' numbers in the class should be minimized to give teachers and students more opportunities to communicate in the listening and speaking classes.

2. Teachers should help students with their oral summaries, presentations, listening to audio, and talk show viewing.

3. Follow appropriate teaching methods as well as differ in selecting them (role-play, group work, communicative games, debate).

4. The material of audio should be accessible to students by uploading it on the website or mobile application so that students

5. can have more entrance to authentic listening and speaking activities practice.

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