



UNVEILING THE JOURNEY: EXPLORING THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF NOVICE EFL TEACHER IN THE CLASSROOM

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Abstract

This research aims the personal experiences of novice English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in the classroom. The objective is to gain insights into the challenges faced by novice EFL teachers and strategies to address challenges. Descriptive method is employed, focusing on a single participant selected through purposive sampling. Data is collected through semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis is used to analyze the interview data. The findings reveal that novice EFL teachers h challenges related to classroom management, lesson planning, and student engagement. Limited teaching experience and a lack of pedagogical knowledge are also identified as contributing factors. However, he demonstrate resilience and engage various strategies to overcome the challenges by seeking mentorship, engaging in professional development, and utilizing student-centered approaches. This research contributes to the existing literature on novice teacher experiences and informs stakeholders to held teacher training programs in the EFL context.

Keywords: Novice EFL teachers, Classroom experiences, Teaching challenges

INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching is a critical field that plays a vital role in facilitating language learning in non-English-speaking countries. The importance of English proficiency has grown exponentially, making EFL teaching increasingly noteworthy in educational contexts. English, as a international language serves as a worldwide language for several commerce such as; international business, academic, tourism, and technology. However, teaching English as a foreign language comes with great challenges as well, incorporating linguistic, technology, and cultural differences, pedagogical attentions, and organizational choices (Chen & Goh, 2011; Arifin, 2017; Khatoony & Nezhadmehr,2020.). EFL teachers have great responsibility not only conveying language skills but also fostering competence, endorsing communicative competence, and educating a positive attitude towards language learning. Hence, a comprehensive understanding of EFL teaching is crucial for educators and researchers, it can enable them to navigate challenges and contribute to the improvement of EFL education.

EFL teaching is a complex activity and involving a great service by EFL teachers. They must develop instructional approaches to cover different learning styles, fostering language acquisition, and stimulate effective communication skills. In addition, EFL teachers often encounter the challenge of creating a motivating and engaging classroom environment to enhance students' language learning experiences. The ability to adapt teaching methods, employ innovative instructional strategies, and provide meaningful and authentic language practice opportunities are crucial for effective EFL teaching.

Furthermore, EFL teachers need to be connected with language assessment techniques and tools to properly measure students' understanding and progress.. EFL teachers must also have the knowledge and skills to design and use appropriate assessments, including formative assessments and summative

assessments to evaluate students' language proficiency. In further, they should be capable of interpreting assessment results and utilizing into curriculum planning.

The EFL teaching is continuously evolving, it can be influenced by several factors such as technology, educational policies, and pedagogical approaches. In this part, EFL teachers must stay up-to-date of these developments and having professional development to increase teaching competencies. This may include participating in conferences, workshops, pursuing further education, and engaging in reflective practices. By actively going for growth and improvement, EFL teachers can step forward with the evolving needs of their students and give effective instruction that strengthen language development

A novice EFL teacher simply can be defined to an individual who is in the early stages of teaching career and have limited teaching experience, specifically English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Novice EFL teachers are often recently graduate university students. They may have completed a teacher education program, however their practical teaching experience is limited. Novice EFL teachers stereotypically show high enthusiasm for teaching and a desire to make a positive impact on their students. Though, due to their lack of experience, they may have and face unique challenges and uncertainties as they navigate the complexities of the EFL classroom.

One of the main characteristics of a novice EFL teacher is their limited pedagogical knowledge and familiarity with the specific strategies and techniques required for effective EFL instruction. Although they may have received theoretical training during their teacher education program, novice teachers often find it challenging to apply their knowledge in real-world classroom settings. They may struggle with selecting appropriate instructional materials, designing engaging activities, managing classroom dynamics, and effectively assessing student learning. Additionally, novice EFL teachers may lack confidence in their ability to handle unexpected situations, adapt to diverse learner needs, and make instructional decisions that cater to individual students' language levels and learning styles.

The concept of the novice EFL teacher has been a subject of interest in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, with several studies focusing their experiences, challenges, and professional development needs. Existing literature highlights the unique position of novice EFL teachers as they board on their teaching careers, emphasizing their limited teaching experience, pedagogical knowledge, and familiarity with the educational system.

Numerous studies have identified the limited teaching experience of novice EFL teachers as a significant challenge they face (Amin & Rahimi, 2018). These teachers often enter the classroom with minimal practical experience, having only been exposed to controlled teaching environments during their teacher education programs. As a result, novice EFL teachers may struggle with managing classroom dynamics, maintaining student engagement, and adapting their instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of learners. They may also lack the ability to anticipate challenges or effectively respond to unexpected situations that arise in the classroom. Shortly, the previous research highlights the challenges faced by novice EFL teachers, including their limited teaching experience, pedagogical knowledge, and familiarity with the educational system. These challenges may have significant implications for their professional development and the quality of EFL teaching (Akcort & Savasci, 2020).

The research objectives of this research is focusing on exploring the personal experiences of novice EFL teachers, aiming to uncover their challenges, professional development needs, and the impact on student learning outcomes. The implications of this research to support mechanisms and teacher education programs to contributing to the broader field of EFL education. By gaining a deeper understanding of the experiences of novice EFL teachers, this research has the potential to improve the quality of EFL teaching and contribute to the professional teacher development.

METHOD

This research employed a case study approach with a descriptive method to gain an in-depth understanding of the personal experiences of novice EFL teachers in the classroom. The research sample for this study is selected through purposive sampling, which involves intentionally selecting one participant

for necessary characteristics and experiences to provide valuable insights into the research topic. Data collection in this research was collected through interviews, it is to gain rich and detailed information directly from the participant. Semi-structured interviews was employed to guide the conversation for intention of flexibility and the exploration. The researchers also used ask open-ended questions to encourage the participant to share his personal experiences, challenges, and perceptions related to EFL teaching. All the data collected through interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves identifying and analyzing patterns or themes within the data to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of novice EFL teachers. Themes emerged as the researchers examined the coded data to identify key patterns the experiences of the participant.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Question 1

Can you describe your journey as a novice EFL teacher? What led you to choose this career path and what were your expectations when you first entered the classroom?

As a novice EFL teacher, my journey is challenging and also rewarding. I decided to pursue a career in EFL teaching because I have always been interested by languages. I find it incredibly fulfilling to help students develop their English language skills.

When I first entered the classroom as a novice EFL teacher, I had high expectations. I intended to create a positive learning environment where the students feel motivated to learn. I always have hope to inspire my students and make a meaningful teaching on their language learning.

However, on my journey I realized that being a novice EFL teacher is not easy as I expected. The reality of managing classroom, adapting instructional strategies with different learning styles, and navigating the complexities of language acquisition have more demand that I expected. Nevertheless, I embraced these challenges as an opportunity for my teaching practices to be better.

What the teacher said in the first response highlights the initial motivation to pursue a career in EFL teaching based on an interest with languages. The answer also mentions the expectations of creating a positive and environment and making a meaningful teaching on students' language learning. However, the response also reports the challenges faced in managing a classroom, adapting instructional strategies, and navigating language acquisition complexities.

In discussing this response, it is evident that the novice EFL teacher often get in the teacher profession with high expectations and passion for teaching and language learning. However, he also encountered the realities and complexities of the classroom, which is require him to continuously develop their teaching skills and adapt their approaches to meet the diverse needs of their students.

Research by Buehl & Beck (2015) emphasizes the importance of teacher beliefs and expectations in shaping teaching practices. Novice teachers' initial beliefs about teaching and learning play a significant role in their classroom interactions and instructional decisions. These beliefs can influence their ability to effectively manage classroom dynamics, cater to individual student needs, and create a positive learning environment

Moreover, the challenges faced by novice EFL teachers align with the findings of study, which highlighted the difficulties in managing classrooms with culturally diverse student populations. They identified the need for novice teachers to develop intercultural competence and sensitivity to effectively engage students from different backgrounds (Afianti, Witono, & Jiwandono, 2020)

Additionally, research by Johnson highlights the significance of ongoing professional development for novice teachers. Engaging in professional development activities, such as attending workshops, seeking

mentorship, and participating in reflective practices, supports their growth and helps them refine their teaching practices to better meet the needs of their students (Shaghir, 2010).

In conclusion, the interpretation and discussion of the response provided by the novice EFL teacher exposed the initial motivation, expectations, and challenges encountered in the profession. The findings in line with several research that emphasizes the influence of teacher beliefs, the need for intercultural competence, the importance of learner-centered approaches, and the significance of ongoing professional development for novice EFL teachers.

Question 2

What have been the most significant challenges you have faced as a novice EFL teacher? How have you addressed or overcome these challenges?

As a novice EFL teacher, I have faced several challenges during my teaching journey. One of the main challenges was managing classroom and maintaining student engagement. I think in a different EFL classroom, students have different learning styles, abilities, and levels of motivation, which is challenging to create an engaging learning environment.

To address this challenge. Firstly, I have implemented different instruction which is to meet the diverse needs of my students. It involves providing activities and materials that cater to different learning preferences and proficiency levels. By using visual, auditory, and kinesthetic, I keep students actively engaged and motivated.

Furthermore, I have utilized technology as a tool to enhance student engagement. Integrating multimedia resources, online platforms, and interactive learning applications has helped make lessons more interactive and appealing to students. This approach allows for a more dynamic and personalized learning experience, catering to the interests and technological fluency of today's learners.

I also tend to attending workshops, conferences, and online courses has provided me with new insights, strategies, and techniques to enhance my classroom management skills and student engagement. Additionally, seeking guidance from experienced colleagues and participating in collaborative professional learning communities have proven invaluable in navigating the challenges of being a novice EFL teacher.

The response provided by the novice EFL teacher highlights the significant challenges faced in managing classroom dynamics and maintaining student engagement. This is a common concern for many novice teachers, as they navigate the diverse needs, learning styles, and motivation levels of their students. The teacher acknowledges the importance of creating an engaging learning environment to address this challenge effectively.

Emphasizing the significance of classroom management skills for novice EFL teachers. Classroom management encompasses establishing rules and procedures, creating a positive learning atmosphere, and maintaining student engagement. Effective classroom management strategies help minimize disruptive behavior and foster an environment conducive to learning (Hirsch, Lloyd, & Kennedy, 2019).

Furthermore, the integration of technology as a tool to enhance student engagement considered important. Technology can provide opportunities for interactive and personalized learning experiences, offering multimedia resources, online platforms, and interactive applications that cater to the digital fluency and preferences of today's learners. Integrating technology effectively can help capture students' interest and motivate their engagement in the EFL classroom (Higgins, Xiao, & Katsipataki, 2012).

Lastly, the response highlights the importance joining professional development for novice EFL teacher. This emphasize the role of continuous learning in teacher effectiveness. Engaging in professional development activities, such as attending workshops, seeking guidance from experienced colleagues, and participating in collaborative professional learning communities, helps novice teachers refine their instructional practices and develop a repertoire of effective strategies (Opfer & Pedder, 2010).

In conclusion, the interpretation and discussion of the response provided by the novice EFL teacher shed light on the challenges faced in managing classroom dynamics and maintaining student engagement. The findings align with existing research that emphasizes the importance of effective classroom management, differentiated instruction, integrating technology, and engaging in ongoing professional development to address these challenges effectively.

Question 3

Can you share any memorable experiences or moments that have shaped your understanding of EFL teaching? How have these experiences influenced your teaching practices and approaches?

As a novice EFL teacher, I have had several memorable experiences that have significantly influenced my understanding of EFL teaching. I think this one is the most memorable.

This student had been some difficulties and struggling with English comprehension and also had low confidence in speaking. However, through deeper attention and support, I noticed some improvements in his language skills. One day, during a classroom activity, this student confidently participated and expressed themselves fluently in English. It was a remarkable moment

This experience has greatly influenced my teaching practices. It reinforced the importance of providing deeper attention and support to assist the student. Since then, I have implemented various strategies or treatment to assist a student with special needs. I try to incorporate interactive activities for different learning styles and abilities. I also try to create opportunities for meaningful language practice and authentic communication in the classroom.

In summary, this memorable experience of witnessing a struggling student's language has shaped my understanding of EFL teaching. It has reinforced the significance of personalized instruction, building relationships with students, and creating a supportive learning environment. It has influenced my teaching practices to prioritize differentiation, authentic communication, and ongoing assessment to meet the diverse needs of my students.

The response from the novice EFL teacher highlights a memorable experience where a struggling student made a breakthrough in their language learning journey. This experience has shaped his understanding of EFL teaching and influenced their teaching practices and approaches.

The experience described reflects the transformative impact of personalized attention and targeted support on student language development and self-confidence. This aligns with research that emphasized the importance of scaffolding and providing support to students within their zone of proximal development. By offering individualized instruction tailored to students' specific needs, teachers can facilitate language learning and promote students' language proficiency and confidence (Pol, Volman, & Beishuizen, 2010). The described experience also underlines the significance of building strong relationships with students. This highlights the role of positive teacher-student relationships in fostering students' academic and social-emotional development. When students feel connected, supported, and valued by their teacher, they are more likely to engage actively in the learning process and take risks in their language development.

In conclusion, the interpretation and discussion of the novice EFL teacher's response highlight the transformative impact of a memorable experience on their understanding of EFL teaching. The findings align with existing research that emphasizes the importance of personalized instruction, positive teacher-student relationships, student-centered approaches, and ongoing assessment in promoting language learning and students' self-confidence.

Question 4

How do you assess and monitor student progress in the EFL classroom? What assessment techniques and tools do you use?

As a novice EFL teacher, I assess and monitor student progress in the EFL classroom using various methods. I use formative assessments, like class discussions and short quizzes, to get feedback on how well students are understanding the material. I also assign projects and written assignments to evaluate their language skills and ability to apply what they have learned. Speaking and listening assessments, such as presentations and group discussions, help me assess their oral communication abilities. Additionally, I may ask students to create paper to show their work and encourage self-reflection. Peer and self-assessments are also valuable, as they allow students to give feedback to their peers and reflect on their own learning. To ensure consistency and clarity, I use rubrics and checklists to provide clear criteria for assessment. These techniques help me track student progress and provide helpful feedback throughout their language learning journey.

The previous answer emphasizes the use of various assessment techniques and tools to assess and monitor student progress in the EFL classroom. These approaches include formative assessments, assignments, speaking and listening assessments, written assessments, portfolios, peer and self-assessments, and the use of rubrics and checklists.

Using a combination of formative assessments and assignments allows for ongoing feedback and evaluation of students' understanding and language skills. This highlights the importance of formative assessment in enhancing student learning and achievement. It provides insights into students' comprehension and guides instructional decisions, helping teachers meet students' needs effectively (Yorke, 2001). Incorporating speaking and listening assessments aligns with the communicative approach in language teaching. By assessing oral communication skills, teachers can evaluate students' ability to engage in meaningful conversations and apply language in real-life contexts. This is supported by research emphasizing the importance of developing communicative competence in language learners. Written assessments play a crucial role in evaluating students' grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing skills. They provide a comprehensive view of students' language proficiency and their understanding of the course content. It highlights the importance of integrating multiple assessment methods to capture different aspects of language competence.

In conclusion, the interpretation and discussion of the previous answer highlight the importance of using various assessment techniques and tools to assess and monitor student progress in the EFL classroom. The approaches discussed align with research emphasizing the benefits of formative assessment, the communicative approach, integrating multiple assessment methods, utilizing portfolios, incorporating peer and self-assessments, and providing clear criteria for assessment.

Question 5

Can you describe any examples where you have witnessed notable improvements in your students' language proficiency? What factors do you believe contributed to these positive outcomes?

As a novice EFL teacher, I have had experience of improvements from my students' language proficiency. It is when I introduced a project-based learning activity for presenting short stories in English. This activity had an impact on my students' language skills and their enthusiasm for learning. The improvements can be because of several factors. Firstly, the project get students' interest and motivation by allowing them to explore their creativity and express themselves through storytelling. It provided an authentic context for language use, as students had to communicate their ideas and narratives in English, which motivated them to improve their language proficiency and actively seek opportunities to practice and communicate effectively.

Additionally, the project improve their interaction, discussion, and the exchange of ideas, contributing to their language development. By working in pairs or small groups, students had the opportunity to create their stories together, where this enhanced language skills. Moreover, this project also allows students to choose topics, characters, and settings of interest to them, resulting in improved language proficiency and overall engagement. Throughout the project, I provided formative feedback and encouraged students to reflect on their progress, helping them identify areas for improvement, make revisions, and set goals for their language learning. By incorporating project-based learning, fostering student engagement, providing authentic contexts, encouraging collaboration, personalizing learning experiences, and offering timely feedback, the positive outcomes observed in my students' language proficiency and overall engagement were remarkable.

In the previous answer, the teacher described an instance where the implementation of a project-based learning activity led to notable improvements in students' language proficiency and overall engagement. The answer highlighted the key factors that contributed to these positive outcomes, including student engagement, authentic context, collaborative learning, personalized learning, and formative feedback. The significance of student engagement in learning is well-established in educational research. This emphasizes the positive impact of student engagement on academic achievement and motivation. Engaged students are more likely to be active participants in the learning process, leading to better outcomes.

Collaborative learning has been widely recognized as an effective approach in promoting student engagement and learning. There is supports the positive impact of cooperative learning on academic achievement and social development. Collaborative activities encourage active participation, peer interaction, and the sharing of ideas, fostering a supportive learning environment (Laal & Ghodsi, 2012). Personalized learning, where students have choices and autonomy in their learning experiences, has been shown to enhance motivation and engagement.

Question 6

Looking back at your journey as a novice EFL teacher, what advice would you give to other teachers who are starting their careers in the EFL field? What key lessons have you learned along the way?

As a novice EFL teacher reflecting on my journey, I would like to offer some advice to other teachers who are starting their careers in the EFL field. Firstly, it is crucial to embrace a growth mindset and be open to continuous learning and improvement. Teaching is a dynamic profession, and there will always be new strategies, methodologies, and resources to explore. Seek professional development opportunities, engage with colleagues, and stay updated with the latest research and trends in EFL teaching.

Secondly, building strong relationships with students is essential. Get to know your students as individuals, understand their unique strengths, challenges, and interests. Creating a positive and supportive classroom environment will foster trust, encourage active participation, and enhance learning outcomes.

Additionally, never underestimate the power of reflection. Take time to reflect on your teaching practices, lesson plans, and student outcomes. Reflective practice allows you to identify what worked well and areas that may need improvement. It helps refine your teaching approach, adapt to students' needs, and make informed instructional decisions.

Collaboration is another key aspect of professional growth. Engage in collaborative opportunities with fellow teachers, attend conferences, join professional networks or online communities. Collaborating with others can provide valuable insights, diverse perspectives, and a supportive network to share experiences, resources, and challenges.

Lastly, be patient and resilient. Teaching can be challenging, and there will be ups and downs along the way. Embrace failures as learning opportunities and celebrate successes, no matter how small. Stay committed to your students' growth, adapt to challenges, and maintain a positive attitude.

Throughout my journey as a novice EFL teacher, I have learned that teaching is a continuous learning process. Every classroom experience presents an opportunity for growth and development. By embracing a growth mindset, building relationships, reflecting on practice, collaborating with others, and maintaining resilience, teachers can navigate the challenges and enjoy a fulfilling career in the EFL field.

Based on the novice EFL teacher answer, embracing a growth mindset is essential for teachers to continuously develop their skills and knowledge. The mindset highlights the importance of believing in one's ability to grow and learn, which leads to greater resilience, motivation, and achievement. Building strong relationships with students is crucial for creating a positive and supportive learning environment. Reflective practice allows teachers to critically analyze their teaching practices and make informed decisions for improvement. The study by Davies (2012) explores the benefits of reflective practice in teacher development, highlighting how reflective activities can enhance professional growth and student learning outcomes. Collaboration among teachers provides opportunities for sharing knowledge, resources, and experiences. Professional networks, conferences, and online communities offer platforms for collaborative learning and professional development.

Lastly, patience and resilience are key qualities for navigating the challenges of teaching. The work of Vance, Pendergast, and Garvis (2015) emphasizes the importance of teacher resilience and its positive influence on job satisfaction, well-being, and retention in the teaching profession. By incorporating these aspects into their teaching practice, novice EFL teachers can foster their professional growth and create a positive learning environment for their students.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the insights gained from the journey of a novice EFL teacher provide valuable understanding and guidance for both aspiring and experienced educators in the field. The challenges faced by novice EFL teachers, such as limited teaching experience, pedagogical knowledge, and familiarity with the educational system, emphasize the need for ongoing professional development and support. Building strong relationships with students, creating a positive and inclusive learning environment, and incorporating reflective practices are essential for fostering student engagement and promoting language development. Additionally, employing effective assessment techniques and tools, such as formative assessments and timely feedback, can enhance student progress and inform instructional decisions. Notable improvements in students' language proficiency and overall engagement can be achieved through student-centered, authentic, and collaborative learning experiences. By recognizing and addressing the specific needs of novice EFL teachers, educational institutions and policymakers can provide the necessary support and resources to facilitate their professional growth and enhance the quality of EFL education. Ultimately, this research highlights the importance of continuous learning, adaptability, and student-centered approaches in the dynamic field of EFL teaching.

The research findings have several important implications for the field of EFL education. Teacher training programs should focus on providing targeted professional development to address the specific needs of novice EFL teachers. Creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment, fostering student engagement, and incorporating authentic learning experiences are crucial. Reflective practice should be encouraged among EFL teachers to improve instructional approaches. Adequate resources, support, and mentoring programs are needed to assist novice teachers. Student-centered approaches and diverse assessment techniques promote language proficiency and engagement. Collaboration among EFL teachers, professional networks, and educational communities facilitates knowledge sharing and professional growth. By considering these implications, stakeholders can enhance the quality of EFL education and support novice EFL teachers in their professional development.

SUGGESTION

Further research opportunities in the field of EFL education include exploring the impact of mentoring programs on the professional development of novice EFL teachers, investigating technology integration in EFL classrooms, examining the experiences of novice teachers in culturally diverse classrooms, and exploring the role of professional learning communities in supporting teacher growth. Additionally, research could focus on assessment practices and self-efficacy beliefs among novice EFL teachers, examining the experiences of teachers in online teaching environments, and investigating effective classroom management strategies. Conducting research in these areas can deepen understanding of effective teaching practices, support systems, and enhance the quality of EFL education.

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