

Investigating EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Using Colloquial Language in English Language Teaching

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Abstract

The researcher discussed the problem of using colloquial language in teaching, because using the language in informal writing and speech can sometimes create confusion when switching to formal language. This may impact how learners build their vocabulary and develop their skills in academic writing. Then, the study discusses the aims, the hypothesis, the procedures, and the limits of the study; furthermore, a brief theoretical explanation is provided, such as the definition of colloquial language and the effect of using colloquial language in the English classroom. There were two basic aims for this research: first, discussing the effect of colloquial expressions in learning, and second, investigating EFL teachers' perceptions of using colloquial language in the English language. There were (40) teachers submitting to the questionnaire in different primary schools in Babylon Governorate to answer several questions.

Key Words: Colloquial, Language, Teachers, Learners, Classroom

دراسة انطباعات معلمين اللغة الانكليزية لغة اجنبية في استخدام اللغة العامية في تعليم اللغة الانكليزية

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الخلاصة

ناقش الباحث مشكلة استخدام اللغة العامية في التدريس، إذ قد يُسبب استخدامها في الكتابة والتحدث غير الرسميين ارتباكاً عند الانتقال إلى اللغة الرسمية. وقد يؤثر ذلك على كيفية بناء المتعلمين لمفرداتهم وتطوير مهاراتهم في الكتابة الأكاديمية. ثم تناولت الدراسة أهدافها وفرضياتها وإجراءاتها وحدودها، وقدمت شرحاً نظرياً موجزاً، مثل تعريف اللغة العامية وتأثير استخدامها في صفوف اللغة الإنجليزية. كان للبحث هدفان رئيسيان: أولهما، مناقشة تأثير التعبيرات العامية في التعلم، وثانيهما، استقصاء آراء معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية حول استخدام اللغة العامية في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية. شارك في الاستبيان أربعون معلماً من مدارس ابتدائية مختلفة في محافظة بابل، حيث أجابوا على أسئلة متعددة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العامية، اللغة، المعلمون، المتعلمون، الفصل الدراسي

1.1 Problem

Teaching EFL learners needs a lot of efforts and practicing of the English language in order to communicate with different people from different languages but using the colloquial language in teaching that will obstructs the process of learning. The use of colloquial language inside the classroom is almost a common practice by many teachers during the teaching of English as a foreign language for their learners. One of the basics step of teaching English language is practicing it, either inside or outside the classroom by speaking with the teacher or with classmates, but the excessive use of colloquial language leads to a decrease in the use of English among EFL learners. This is due to a significant problem and difficulty in learning English language in a correct way.

1.2 Aims

1. Discussing the effect of colloquial expressions in learning.
2. Investigating EFL teachers' perceptions of using colloquial language in the English language.

1.3 Hypothesis

Most EFL teachers focus on colloquial language in the classroom rather than the use of the English language in teaching.

1.4 Procedures

1. A brief presentation about colloquial language.
2. Providing a sample of teachers to question them about colloquial language randomly.

1.5 Limits

There were (40) teachers who answered several questions of the questionnaire in different primary schools in Babylon Governorate.

2.1 Definitions of Colloquial Language

(Hulu, 2019), defines colloquial language as follows:

“It is words or phrases that are only used in utterances in spoken language”. Moreover, colloquial language is conceded as “an informal language normally applied in daily communication in society”.

“Colloquial is words or phrases that are only used in utterances in spoken language”. On the other hand, Al-Alami (2024) states that colloquial language is an informal language style that suits oral speech more than written one.

2.2. The Use of Colloquial Language

Trask (2001) assumes that native speakers use colloquial speech in informal situations with friends and family.

Colloquial language is used in informal conversation to make communication easier and simpler in communication among them. (Sato & Kim, 2012).

Using colloquial language in informal writing and speech can sometimes create confusion when switching to formal language. This may impact how learners build their vocabulary and develop their skills in academic writing (Briones, 2024).

2.3 A Phenomena of slang, colloquial and transformational language

A Phenomenon of slang, colloquial, and transformational language has occurred and is used in many countries. These languages are spread across all aspects of language use in the community and other formal situations (Hulu, 2019).

2.3.1. Meaning of Slang

Slang language can be considered as another area of vocabulary which reflects a person's age. On the other hand, the use of slang language can be affected by some social factors such as age, gender, status, etc. Language is important in our everyday conversation therefore, people need a language to communicate with each other in their society. slang is also considered to be a variation of language. (Holmes, 2001)

Slang language is kind of speech variety, thus speech variety or language variety - refers to any distinguishable form of speech used by a speaker or a group of a speech variety

can be found at the lexical the phonological, the morphological or The syntactical level of the language (Daiw. Hez , 2010).

The context of slang language is specified by its meaning. referring to linguistic dictionaries. Slang expressions are derived solely from native speakers. The words of slang language are familiar to those who use them. Slang language is a visible aspect of local culture, but its nuances and implications may not be easily understood by outsiders (Hulu, 2019).

2.3.2 Types Of Slang

According to Partidge (2004) there are four types of slang language:

1. Cockney Slang

Ex :- Back double

“means a back street”

2. Public House Slang

Ex:- Booze –shunter.

“Means a beer drinker”

3. Workmen's Slang

Ex:- Jumping Jinny

“means a mechanical stamper used in road- repairs”

4. Society Slang

Ex:- silver pheasant

“means A beautiful society woman”.

2.4 The differences between Colloquial Language and Slang Language

“Slang language consists of informal words and expressions that are common in casual conversation but inappropriate in academic writing. These phrases often change over time and may not be universally understood” (CLU Writing Center. 2015).

Don't use casual or non-standard words and contractions: (wanna, gonna, y'all, till, I'm blue, etc.)

Examples & Formal Alternatives:



Bounce ideas → Exchange thoughts or brainstorm

Level up → Improve skills or status

Low-key → Somewhat or subtly

“Colloquial language reflects everyday speech and informal expressions. In academic writing, it is important to maintain a more analytical and professional tone”. Colloquial words and phrases are commonly shown in dictionaries with the abbreviation colloq. as an identifier. Avoid conversational expressions and contractions: (frankly, got, can't, don't), (CLU Writing Center. 2015).

Examples & Formal Alternatives:

"Let's wrap this up." → Conclude the discussion.

"That checks out." → That is verified or logically sound.

"Pulling an all-nighter." → Staying up all night to study or work.

"Hit the books." → Study diligently.

3.1 The Design

The researcher discussed colloquial language in teaching. Whereas the design of the experimental study involved answering the questions in the questionnaire.

3.2 The Pilot

The pilot was submitted as a questionnaire for Iraqi EFL teachers in several schools in Babylon Governorate. It is designed to find out the effect of using colloquial language in teaching.

3.3 The Participants

3.3.1 Teachers

There were 40 EFL teachers as participants of the study in ten different primary schools. Teachers were chosen in a random way from the Babylon Governorate (male and female). There were 20 females, while the males were 20. The teachers were asked to answer the questionnaire. The researcher noted that most EFL teachers use colloquial language in teaching during a specific time of their lessons.

3.4 The Tools

3.4.1 The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was presented to 40 teachers; it consisted of 15 points, two of which are optional. It parted into 2 section. Firstly, it dealt with personal information. Second, it was about the use of colloquial language in teaching and its effects in the classroom.

4.1 Overview

The overview of this section presents the questionnaire and its results to prove the hypotheses, which were " Most EFL teachers focus on colloquial language in the classroom rather than the use of the English language in teaching ". So, the following tables show the results in each part of the questionnaire.

4.2 Demographic Characteristic

Table (1) The data

category	frequency (%)	percentage
Gender		
male	20	50%
female	20	50%
Educational qualification		
B.A	39	97.5%
B.SC	1	2.5%
Teaching Experience		
1-10	20	50%
11-20	19	47.5%
21-30	1	2.5%
or more		

The majority of participants in table (1) above indicated that the males (50%) and the females (50%) most of the participants had B. A (97.5%), then (2.5 %) had BSC. For the Educational qualification, the experience of the participant in teaching was (50%) which was 1-10 years of teaching. On the other hand (47.5%) of participants had 11-20 years of teaching experience, and for 21-30 years of teaching, there were only (2.5%) of participants. According to the specialization of the participants, they are specialized in English teaching, and all of them serve in primary schools in several places in Babylon Governorate.

4.3 Analysis The Responses Of The Questionnaire About The Use Of colloquial Language

Table (2)

Items	Yes		No	
	Frequency (n 10)	Percent %	Frequency (n 10)	Percent %
Do you use colloquial language inside the class?	25	62.5%	15	37.5%
Do you use authentic material in teaching ?	30	75%	10	25%
Do learners find colloquial language difficult to be understood?	20	50%	20	50%
Dose colloquial language help your - learners to learn the skills easier and faster?	25	62.5%	15	3.5%
Does the use of colloquial language bring fun to the class?	25	62.5%	15	37.5%
Does colloquial language support the materials in the curriculum?	25	62.5%	15	37.5%
Do you made a safe environment for your learners?	40	100%	0	0%

Items	Yes		No	
	Frequency (n 10)	Percent %	Frequency (n 10)	Percent %
Do you discuss learners problems with their parents?	39	97.5%	1	2.5%

In Table 2 above that (62.5%) of participants use colloquial language inside the class, while (37.5%) do not use this point.

(75%) Of the participants use authentic material in their language, while (25%) do not use it.

(50%) of participants find colloquial language difficult to understand, while (50 %) of them don't find it difficult to understand.

(62.5%) (of participants find the colloquial language helps their learners to learn the skills fast, while (37.5%) of them do not find that the colloquial language helps their learners to learn the skills faster.

(62.5%) of participants agree that the use of colloquial language brings fun to the class, while (37.5%) of them disagree that the use of colloquial language brings fun to the class.

(62.5%) of participants agree that the colloquial language supports the materials in the curriculum, while (37.5%) of participants disagree with it .

(100%) of participants made a safe environment for their learners, which means all the participants.

(97.5%) Of the participants discuss the problems of the learners with their parents, which means most of the participants, while (2.5%) of the participants do not discuss this point.

Conclusion

According to the results of the study, it is concluded that the use of colloquial language in the classroom could be a helpful way in teaching the English language for EFL learners, but that use should be limited and in particular times because if the teacher depends on the colloquial language, it will be difficult for learners to learn the English language correctly. Furthermore, Table 2 showed that the frequency and the percentages of column (yes) were higher than the frequency and the percentages of column (no), which means the use of

colloquial language is a kind of habit inside the classroom by EFL teachers. Therefore, the results of the questionnaire proved the hypothesis that “ Most EFL teachers focus on colloquial language in the classroom rather than the use of the English language in teaching”.

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