

## **The problems facing students of English with learning disabilities from their teachers' point of view**

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### **Abstract**

Students with learning disabilities face different problems while studying English language. This group of students have special features that are different from their regular peers. Therefore, there is a need to identify these challenges and problems to help educators deal with this issue. This study aimed at identifying and evaluating the problems facing English language students with learning disabilities from their teachers' point of view in Bani Ubaid district in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The study population consisted of all (170) English language teachers. The sample was chosen randomly at a rate of (50 %) of the teachers, and their number was (85). The study used the survey approach and developed a questionnaire consisting of (30) paragraphs distributed into (3) areas: the academic field, the administrative field, and the social field. The results of the study showed that the problems facing English language students with learning disabilities from the teachers' point of view were arranged according to the different fields of importance as follows: social, health, and administrative.

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## INTRODUCTION

Several countries seek to develop their material and human resources to serve their societies and provide the citizens' needs in all areas of life. Education is one of the basic pillars through which societies develop. Education support societies to cope with the progress and growth in science and technology, which has a great impact on the lives of people and their development. Education also plays an important role in the prosperity and progress of society and the development of its capabilities to face the challenges and problems of development and to invest its human and natural resources (Huddleston. 2003).

The availability of trained human resources, which are qualified scientifically and professionally, is an urgent necessity for all countries. This helps society to keep pace with all the rapid developments. Since Jordan lacks material resources, it has paid most of its attention to human resources being the main source of recovery and progress. This main wealth receives care, education, and training through establishing academic, vocational, and industrial schools in particular (Mahdi, 2014).

Teaching the English language became very important and received much attention through the introduction of its programs within public education. Jordan is like other countries that started to put many efforts into teaching the English language to keep pace with the developments taking place in the world and the acceleration of changes in the world. Based on this interest in teaching English language in Jordan, the Ministry of Education was concerned with preparing the trained workforce at various levels by introducing English language education programs into the study plans at the basic and secondary education stages since the fifties (Muhammad, 2016).

## Problem Statement

Teaching English faces several problems, such as the lack of new teaching methods in English language, the lack of practiced and trained teachers, the lack of specialized supervisors, and the lack of financial incentives necessary to encourage teachers. These problems affect students and their academic adaptation. This view extended to secondary schools, being the last resort for students, which in turn would lead them to university education (Crystal, 2003). Therefore, this study came to shed light on the problems facing English language students with learning disabilities from the teachers' point of view (Al Khawaldeh, 2017).

## Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

What are the problems facing English language students with learning disabilities in Bani Ubaid District from the point of view of their teachers?

Are there any statistically significant differences in estimating the problems facing English language students with learning disabilities from the viewpoint of their teachers due to the scientific qualification and the educational experience variables

## Significance of the Study

The significance of this study stems from the importance of teaching English language in particular in building and developing society, meeting its needs, and providing job opportunities for a large number of graduates. This study will shed light on some of the problems that English language students with learning disabilities face and will provide valuable information for those interested in teaching English and the bodies responsible for education.

## Delimitations of the Study

This study will be limited to English language teachers and students in Bani Ubaid

District in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for the academic year 2020/2021.

### Literature Review

English language education suffers from a weak link between its outcomes and the workplace and its institutions. This is due to the lack of participation of these institutions in planning English language education, or contributing to building its curricula or participating in supervising practical training for students. In addition, the educational institutions do not allow students to have the opportunity to choose between different types of secondary education. Thus, these institutions only follow some types of education (Al-Khawaldeh, 2017). In addition, the lack of incentives and reward for teachers lead to a decrease in their desire for teaching and a reluctance to innovate (Khataybeh, 2000).

It is noticed from the experience of teaching English language the poor academic achievement of its students, which prevents the comprehension of scientific subjects. The predominance of theoretical education instead of practical education and the overcrowding of some disciplines with large numbers of students are also other challenges facing teaching English language (Yassin, 2013).

These problems reflect negatively on the personalities of students and affect their academic adaptation. It is necessary to seek the help of a psychological counselor who can confront these problems under his specialization, and with his technical methods of counseling and guidance to help students to adapt (Lado, 2000).

### Previous studies

Barham, A. K. (2020) identified the problems and difficulties that prevent schools from achieving their objectives effectively and the ways of solution through the case study of the American academy of technology in Zarqa, Jordan. The study used the semi-open interview to collect data and information from the school principal, (12) teachers, and (12)

students about the problems and difficulties facing this school. The results of the study revealed that many problems and difficulties are facing foreign schools. These problems include the use of foreign schools for English language in the teaching of all subjects, the recruitment of staff of foreign teachers who speak English fluently and quickly, and the different curricula in foreign schools from the curricula of public schools, which increase the gap between students of foreign schools and students of public schools. Many activities and examples do not conform to the customs and traditions of Jordanian society, in addition to the limited number of foreign schools in Jordan, making it more difficult for students to access it, and the high cost of study in foreign schools.

Al-Rawashda and Al-Khawalda (2019) investigated how Arab learners of English approach the scope of negation. Non-native speakers of English face great difficulty with English sentences that contain a negative particle, especially when the negative particle negates more than one element in the sentence. This study relied on the qualitative and quantitative approaches and was applied to sixty students at Mu'tah University in Jordan. The sample was given a test consisting of 15 English negative sentences, and each question had two choices. The results of the study revealed that Arab learners face serious problems in understanding sentences where the negative particle has multiple readings.

Ali, J. K. M. (2019) investigated the reason non-English major students at university fail in English courses. The study used a questionnaire to gather information from a sample of (56) male students at the University of Bisha, Saudi Arabia. All members of the sample have experienced the failure in English courses before. These students were retaking the English courses while conducting this study. The results showed that teachers, anxiety, and unsuitable teaching methods were among the major factors behind the failure of these students. The results also revealed clear difference between students who only failed once in the

English course and those who failed two or more other courses. Students who failed in more courses showed higher anxiety than those who failed once. The study recommended instructors to receive training on collaborative learning and student-oriented methodologies. The study also recommended designing English curriculum for non-English major students in a way that fits their specializations.

Al-Yaseen, W. S. (2018) explored problems in writing faced by English major student-teachers at Kuwait University. The sample included (60) students from the first and second years. The variables of the study were gender, year of study, and educational districts. The study used the quantitative approach and collected data using a questionnaire consisting of 26 items distributed into three fields (punctuation, spelling, and language usage). The results of the study revealed that English student-teachers have problems in writing even after studying English for 12 years before enrolling at University. For example, students still mix between the use of a colon and a semicolon, especially when using a list of objects. Students also still do not know the difference between the spelling of /p/ and /b/. They also mix the use of synonyms and acronyms. The results also showed that these students still need instruction and guidance in their attempt to compose writing materials. They rely on the literal translation of sentences from Arabic into English. Therefore, the study recommended providing writing courses tailored to students' needs and focus on their weakness in writing. These advanced courses could focus on group/pair writing sessions, peer correction, use of dictionaries, and developing reading habits.

Saadeh and Damour (2017) identified the problems facing teachers of English for the first secondary grade students in Al-Karak Region from the teachers' perspectives. The study was applied to a sample of (60) teachers. The study used a questionnaire of (60) items as a n instrument to collect data after ensuring its validity and reliability. The result of the

study showed that there was a high level of problems facing English language teachers, where the standard deviation was (3.83). The results also revealed that the dimensions of the student and the required textbook as problems facing teachers were also high. However, for the teachers' role in creating problems, the results show a moderate level of problems.

## METHOD

### Population and Sample

The study population consisted of all (170) secondary school teachers in Bani Ubaid District. Their distribution is illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Distribution of the study population according to the school

Name of school	No. of teachers
Hamad Al-Farhan High School	69
Khalil Al Salem High School	22
Al-Mazar Comprehensive High School	14
Al-Huson Comprehensive High School	31
Edun Comprehensive High School	18
Ketem comprehensive High School	16
Total	170

The study sample consisted of (85) teachers, 50% of secondary school teachers, distributed in six secondary schools, who were selected randomly.

### Research Instrument

To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher designed a questionnaire to measure the problems facing English language students with learning disabilities from the viewpoint of their teachers. The paragraphs of the questionnaire were built after the researcher reviewed previous theoretical literature and the opinions of referees and

experts in universities and educational institutions. The researcher also directed an open question to a random sample of teachers, which includes asking them to write the most important problems facing English language students in Bani Ubaid District. The problems were classified, the less frequent problems were excluded, and the most frequent (30) paragraphs were kept. They were distributed into three areas: the academic field, the administrative field, and the social field (see Appendix 1).

### Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure the validity of the instrument, the researcher presented the study tool to a group of (10) judges from the faculty of Jordanian universities, and those working in the field of English language education. Based on the judges' suggestions, some paragraphs were reformulated and deleted or amended. Thus, the opinions of the judges constituted an indication of the apparent validity of the instrument. To verify the reliability of the instrument, the researcher applied the study instrument to a sample from outside the study sample, (20) teachers. Then the instrument's stability factor was calculated by the method of retesting after two weeks. The correlation coefficient (stability) of the instrument was (0.87). The reliability of the instrument was also verified by the internal consistency method of the paragraphs according to the Cronbach Alpha equation, where the total stability coefficient of the tool according to this method was (0.90). Thus, the study tool had sufficient validity and reliability indications for the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### First: results of the first question

To answer this question, the mean scores and standard deviations were found for each paragraph of the study instrument and each field, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** The mean scores and standard deviations of teachers' responses to fields of the study as a whole, in descending order

Rank	Paragraph number in the questionnaire	Field	Mean score	Standard deviation
1	3	Social	3.88	.59
2	1	Academic	3.51	.51
3	2	Administrative	3.19	.75
		Total	3.526	.47

It is clear from Table (2) that the mean scores for the fields of the study instruments were (3.19-3.88). The social field obtained the highest mean score of (3.88), followed by the academic field with a mean score (3.51), and then followed by the administrative field with a mean score of (3.19). The total mean score of the instrument was (3.526), which is within a high degree.

As for the discussion of results related to the fields of study, the results are presented separately.

Concerning the academic field (practical and theoretical), the results of the study revealed the existence of problems facing students of vocational and industrial education from the teachers' point of view. The most important of these problems is the low academic level of students, the long period dedicated to the theoretical part, too many students in the same classroom, lack of educational materials, and the long exhausting application period.

As for the administrative field, the results of the study revealed the existence of problems facing students of vocational (industrial) education from the teachers' point of view. The most important of these problems is a large number of administrative instructions and that the administration does not reward outstanding students.

The results of the study also found the existence of several problems facing English language students in the administrative field that were moderate in light of the teachers' responses. The most important of these problems are the poor distribution of school classes, the lack of understanding between administration and students, and the lack of

management oversight of food in the school canteen.

Concerning the social field, the results of the study concluded that problems are facing English language students as their teachers see it larger. The most important of these problems is the lack of media interest in English language students, students prefer other subjects other than learning English language, and the weak relationship between home and school.

### Second: results of the second question

To answer this question, the Two-way ANOVA analysis was used. The following two tables present the mean scores and standard deviations in light of the study fields.

**Table 3.** The mean scores and standard deviations of the fields and the instrument as a whole according to the academic qualification of the teacher

	Diploma		BA and higher	
	Mean score	Standard deviation	Mean score	Standard deviation
Academic	3.61	.52	3.44	.51
Administrative	3.27	.86	3.13	.65
Social	3.89	.58	3.88	.60
Total	3.56	.53	3.51	.42

**Table 4.** The mean scores and standard deviations of the fields and the instrument as a whole according to the experience of the teacher

	Less than 5 years		10-5 years		More than 10 years	
	Mean score	Standard deviation	Mean score	Standard deviation	Mean score	Standard deviation
Academic	3.28	.51	3.51	.51	3.58	.51
Administrative	3.35	.60	3.41	.50	3.10	.82
Social	3.87	.48	4.13	.51	3.83	.62
Total	3.50	.39	3.68	.38	3.52	.51

It is evident from the above two tables that there are apparent differences in the mean scores of the sample members (teachers) for the problems facing English language

students. to determine the sources of those differences, the two-way ANOVA analysis was used, and Table (5) shows the results.

**Table 5.** The Two-way ANOVA analysis of the impact of qualification and experience

Source of variance	Sum of squares	Freedom value	Mean square	F-value	Sig.
Qualification	.175	1	.175	.784	.379
Experience	.372	2	.186	.835	.437
Error	17.604	79	.223		
Total	18.078	82	.220		

It is evident from Table 5 that there are no statistically significant differences at the level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in the degree of problems facing English language students as seen by teachers due to the two variables of academic qualification and educational experience.

This can be explained by the fact that teachers are present in a single educational environment. The educational groups of teachers covered by the study agree on the problems facing English language students in the same way, regardless of the degree of academic qualification that the teacher holds.

Concerning the experience variable, the results of this study indicated that there are no statistically significant differences at the level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). This means that the degree of teachers' views toward the problems facing their students does not differ according to their levels of the educational experience. This may be because teachers work in one educational environment and hence they feel the same problems regardless of their level of experience.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

Increasing training courses for administrators working in schools.

The need for a coordinator and a guide for the counseling process for students.

Creating a mechanism for the methods of providing incentives for creative students.

Conducting other studies on different variables.

## CONCLUSION

The problems facing English language students with learning disabilities were identified from the teachers' point of view in Bani Ubaid region in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The results of the study showed that the problems facing English language students with learning difficulties from the

teachers' point of view were arranged according to different fields according to the following order, social, health, and administrative. Since these problems negatively affect the personality of students and affect their academic adaptation, it is necessary to seek the help of a psychological counselor who is able to confront these problems by virtue of his specialization, and with his technical methods of counseling and guidance that enable him to help students to adapt.

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