The Effectiveness of Secondary Schools' English Language Teachers Training Programs in Satisfying the Teachers' Professional Needs

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of secondary schools' English Language teachers (In – service and Pre – service) training programs and evaluate the role of these programs in preparing qualified English language teachers . Also the study tries to identify the problems that teachers face in their teaching practice and their professional needs,. The researcher used an interview as a tool to collect the necessary data for the study . The most important findings which the research has come to can be as follows: - Per - service and In – service English language teachers training programs are helpful in developing teachers' skills to be effective English language teachers . Pre – service and In – service teachers' training programs acquainted teachers – trainee with curricula development specially those related to applied linguistic , methodology , educational psychology and sociology . There is always a lack of correlation between the theoretical training and training in the practice of teaching . Teachers' development activities generally do not focus on the teachers' needs and circumstances . In the light of the results and conclusions of the present study, the following recommendations are suggested: There should be systematic tools to identify and assess the English teacher training needs .There should be well designed programs to be used as in-service training for the English teachers .

Keywords : role – qualified – prepare – support - trainees

اثر البرامج التدربية (قبل و اثناء الخدمة) لمعلمي اللغة الانجليزية بالمرحلة الثانوية في تلبية حاجياتهم المهنية

المستخلص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلي تقصي اثر البرامج التدريبية لمعلمي اللغة الانجليزية (قبل و أثناء الخدمة) في إعداد معلمين أكفاء قادرين علي اداء مهامهم التدريسية علي اكمل وحه . تهدف الدراسة أيضا إلي التعرف علي المشكلات التي تواجه المعلمين إثناء ممارستهم لمهامهم التدريسية داخل الصف و معرفة احتياجاتهم المهنية   . استخدم الباحث المقابلة الشخصية مع مشرفي اللغة الانجليزية بالمرحلة الثانوية كاداة   لجمع البيانات الازمة لاجراء هذه الدراسة . وقد توصل الباحث للنتائج الاتية :- البرامج التدريبة امعلمي اللغة الانجليزية (قبل و اثناء الخدمة) بالمرحلة الثانوية فعالة في اعداد معامين اكفاء قادرين علي اداء مهامهم المهنية علي اكمل وجه – البرامج التدريبة امعلمي اللغة الانجليزية (قبل و اثناء الخدمة) بالمرحلة الثانوية يجب ان تمد المعلمين و المتدربين بالمناهج المتطورة خاصة تلك التي لها علاقة بعلم اللغة التطبيقي و طرق التدريس و علم النفس التربوي و علم المجتمع .هذالك دائما ضعف في الارتباط بين الناحيتين النظرية و التطبيقية في البرامج التدريبية

انشطة تطوير المعلمين لها اثر ايجابي لدي المعلمين في اكتساب المعارف الاحترافية . هنالك بعض الفترات الزمنية المبددة خلال العام الدراسي خاصة في بدايته و نهايته و التي يجب ان تستغل في تدريب المعلمين و تاهيبهم. في ضوء هذه النتائج يوصي الباحث بالتي :

يجب ان تكون هنالك الية ممنهجة لتقويم البرامج التدريبية للمعلمين

يجب تكون هنالك برامج ادريبية جيدة التصميم لاستخدامها في تدريب المعلمين

يجب علي مصممي البرامج الندريبية للمعلمين اتاحة الفرصة للكتدربين بابداء ارائهم و ملاحظاتهم حول هذه البرامج و التي من شانها ان تؤثر ايجابا في تدريبهم .

كلمات مفتاحيه : دور – مؤهل – إعداد – مساعدة – متدربين

INTRODUCTION

Teacher training courses in English language as a foreign language around the world , at both pre- service and in- service levels , usually consists of a fairly predictable set of comport parts . Firstly , with few exceptions , there will be methodology / pedagogical skills components , in which different methods and techniques for teaching English are explored , and the various classroom skills the trainee need to teach successfully are discussed and practiced . This component of course sometimes divided into a number of sub-component , such as methodology (usual theoretical parts) , micro- teaching and practice teaching . It is probably true to say that in most parts of the world , the main emphasis in English language teacher training , especially in pre – service courses , it is on methodology , and that the teacher's proficiency in the language itselfe is largely taken for granted . There are of course exceptions . In China , for example , Hundleby (1988) and Breet (1990) report on situation where teacher training is seen principally as a process of raising the language level of the trainee , to the virtual exclusion of methodology , a situation which , of course apparently designed to improve teachers' practical skills , would it self appear in appropriate , and would doubtless lead to problems of a different natures . Alternatively , language improvement may become confused with the subject matter of the linguistics component , with the emphasis on increasing knowledge and a awareness about the system of a language , rather than on ability to use this knowledge in real communication ; this is often the result of a number of unavoidable constraining factors , such as the limited time available for the course , or the large number of the participants attending the course .

Importance of the Problem

English language teachers face many problems that   negatively affect their performance in teaching English language . One of these problems is the lack of the useful   pre-service and in- service teacher training programs   . However, English language teachers do not receive enough training in pre – service and in – service teacher training programs to be qualified in teaching English as a foreign or second language .Teachers need to be aware of the importance of such programs .

The Aims of the Study

This study aims to : .

Investigate the effectiveness of the professional development in teacher training Programs as perceived by English language teachers and supervisors to adopt new methods of teaching and the participants' problems and their needs for English language teaching . **Research Questions**

The study attempts to find answer to the following questions :

1- What are the teachers' attitudes towards the development activities (namely the pedagogical training , organizational aspects , teaching practice and the lengths of the programs) ?

2- What are the attitudes of the participants towards teacher training programs ?

The Research Methodology

The study adopts descriptive analytical methods to evaluate the pre – service and in – service teacher training programs . The study will be conducted via reviewing related literature and previous written on pre – service and in – service teacher training programs . The main tool for collecting data is an interview with the English language supervisors to know their opinions about these training program .The population for this study is the secondary schools English language teachers in Omdurman, which their number runs up to six hundred teachers ,   the final year students of faculties of educations who trained at secondary school as a part of their academic year and English language supervisors at secondary schools .

. The participants   of the study consist of 8 English language supervisors' who represent (Ombadah province) (randomly selected), 14 trainees who trained at (Ombadah)secondary schools as a part of their   academic year .

In order to check the apparent validity for the study questionnaires and validation of their statements according to the formulation and explanation, the researcher showed the questionnaires to three Ph.D. holder referees who are specialists in the study field. They made some suggestions, and agreed that the interview is suitable, Actually, the researcher studied all suggestions, and made use of them.

The Instructor's Role In Training :

Talking about instructor's role in 'training', Whitmore (2006) says that in training, the instructor provides the students with a progressive series of exercises leading to competence and coaches students when necessary. It limits the number of students that one instructor can manage, typically to less than ten or twelve in one class. In education, the instructor presents information and students learn as much of the information as possible. The emphasis is on clear explanations and presentations that motivate students to study. Presentations are often broadcast to large numbers of students simultaneously. Some classes may consist of a hundred or more students with just one instructor.

One can find out that in 'training', the instructor is concerned with exercises and drilling of activities. The purpose is to get expertise in performing some specific task. The smaller the number of students the more focus on practice and drilling. In 'education', the instructor is concerned with providing students theoretical knowledge of different concepts with suitable explanations and presentations. Focus is on development of cognitive abilities so that the learner may be able to comprehend the foundations of theories and practices.

The interesting point to consider is that in 'training', the instructor asks the students to do and repeat the tasks. So the learners do as they have been 'asked to do'. There is no 'free will' and 'independent thinking'. The instructor is not interested in such phrases. In 'education', the instructor gives learners freedom to think and speak because here his purpose is different from that of 'training'. The learners present their own views regarding various concepts instead of doing what they have been 'asked to do'. The instructor in 'training' has limited perspective and is more focused. The instructor in 'education' has broader perspective and more general rather than being specific.Teachers' professional development plays an essential role in successful education improvement. Teachers' professional development serves as the bridge between where prospective and experienced teachers are now and where they will

need to be to meet the new challenges of guiding all students in achieving higher standards of learning and development. Developing EFL teachers' professional knowledge is considered as an ongoing learning process in which teachers engage voluntarily to learn how best to adjust their teaching to the learning needs of their students. Martinet et al (2001: p.7) describe professional development as a continuous process, in which individuals trained to practise a particular profession. People do not become skilled practitioners the moment they finish their training. Rather, they progressively acquire experience and ongoing professional development over the years and in certain cases achieve a level of expertise. Profession is a dynamic, continuous learning process given the complexity of the situations and the continually-changing professional context; it is a process that is never completed. Ali (2002: p.5) defines professional development of pedagogical knowledge for teachers as a continuing process, consisting of activities that enhance professional growth. It may include workshops, independent reading and study, conferences, and consultation with peers and experts. Rahimi (2007: p.3) describes professional knowledge of teachers as learning about teaching and it is presented to teachers through a collection of courses on content knowledge and pedagogy. According to Badawi (2009: p.25), pedagogical knowledge refers to teachers' knowledge about the basic teaching/learning matters such as learning theories, teaching approaches, curriculum designs, evaluation techniques, and relevant managerial issues. The pedagogical knowledge also refers to EFL teachers' awareness of four specific teaching/learning areas namely: learner feedback, learner strategies, authentic material, and alternative assessment. There seem to be three essential components (triangle of success) that contribute to the success of EFL teachers:
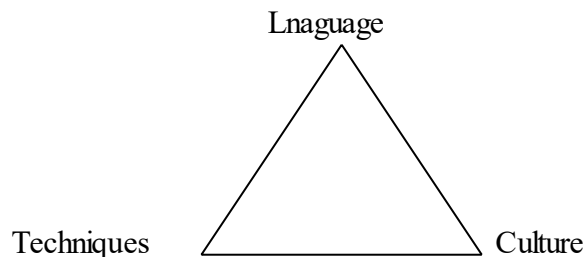
Figure (1): success triangle of EFL teacher "Millrood, 1999"

Professional teachers havet to:
1. Be strict towards the class.
2. Be kind towards individuals.
3. Help students overcome learning problems even if it requires sacrificing one's own time after classes.
4. Empathize with the learner.
5. Be always available, even on the telephone for consultations.
6. Translate the material into a digested form (Millrood, 1999: p.6).

It is crucial for teachers to study their teaching context, paying special attention to their students, their materials, and their own teaching. Michael (1997: p.13) determines that teachers need to study their own teaching methods and overall classroom style. Do they incorporate various ways that students can learn the language that are modeling, practising or presenting, in order to appeal to a variety of learning styles and strategies? Does teaching allow learners to approach the task at hand in a variety of ways? Is training implicit, explicit, or both? By audio-taping or video-taping one's classroom teaching an instructor ma actually taught and modeled, and how

students responded and appeared to learn. Do they allow students to work on their own and learn from one another? As they circulate in class, are they encouraging questions, or posing ones relevant to the learners with whom they interact?

Effective professional English language educators do not come to pedagogical content knowledge by osmosis, but rather they develop that knowledge base by reading about, reflecting on, and practicing strategies and techniques as described and refined by many scholars, researchers, theorists, and other practitioners in their particular field. A body of pedagogical knowledge related to specific content and processes of the English language arts does exist that can and should inform what we do in our classrooms (Stover, 2006: p.34).

Martinet, et al. (2001: p.43) argue that professional competency is in a real-life professional setting, follows a progression from simple to complex, based on a set of resources, based on the ability to mobilize resources in situations requiring professional action, involves a successful, effective, efficient, recurrent ability to act.

Effective teacher should be capable of making so many choices regarding methodology, discipline, educational technology, attractive aids, strategies, activities and materials. The more the teacher learns, the better he or she can monitor his or her teaching. Thus, teachers have to continue developing their abilities and to get lifelong professional development. EFL teachers need to be able to deal with so many related skills in order to be effective in teaching. They have to be fluent in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Also, EFL teachers have to be intercult competent, this means that they have to understand their own culture and English culture to be familiar with the similarities and differences between them. Al-Mekhlafi (2007: p.4) defines teachers' language proficiency as the teachers' ability to demonstrate an effective use of the target language in all skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing). Proficiency in English is the backbone of the teaching profession of non-native EFL teachers. Rahimi (2007: p.5) states that language proficiency is one of the most essential characteristics of a good language teacher and it has constituted the bedrock of the professional confidence of non-native English teachers.

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (2008: p.58) determines what a foreign language teacher must know and be able to do:

. Teachers demonstrate a high level of proficiency in the target language and seek an opportunities to develop their proficiency.

.They understand the linguistic elements and changing nature of the target language. They recognize the similarities and differences between

.They understand the connections among the perspectives of a culture and its practices and products, and they integrate cultural framework for the target language and other languages. or for foreign language standards into their instructional practices.

.They understand language acquisition at various developmental levels and use this knowledge to create supportive and meaningful classroom environments. Teachers provide a range of learning opportunities to meet the need select, adapt, and design instructional materials.

. They conduct multiple ongoing assessments to measure student performance. They report the results of the assessment to all stakeholders and adjust instruction accordingly.

.They engage in professional development opportunities and reflect on their practice.

Data Analysis

The second axes of the interview investigates whether teachers have negative attitudes towards pre-service and in-service training programs activities or not. The

dimension contains the responses of 5 statements. They are the fourth, fifth, eighth, tenth and fifteenth statements of the interview shown in the table (4-8)

4 - Pre - service training and in-service programs are helpful in introducing innovation .

5 – There is a lack of correlation between the theoretical training and training in the practice of teaching .

8 – Teachers' development activities should be carried out in the form of group work instead of being individually .

10 – Teachers' role is passive in their own professional development activities .

15 – Teachers' opinions have never been taken into account in choosing the subjects of the in – service training programs .

Table (4-8) Responses of Teachers Negative Attitudes

No.	Statements	SA n	%	A n	%	N n	%	D n	%	SD N	%
1	Fourth	36	36.00	48	48.00	5	5.00	7	7.00	4	4.00
2	Fifth	47	47.00	43	43.00	4	4.00	3	3.00	3	3.00
3	Eighth	28	28.00	17	17.00	10	10.00	21	21.00	24	24.00
4	Tenth	55	55.00	24	24.00	8	8.00	8	8.00	5	5.00
5	Fifteenth	56	56.00	28	28.00	6	6.00	3	3.00	7	7.00

Table (4-8) shows the frequencies and percentages of the participants' opinions about teachers' negative attitudes towards development programs activities.

Table (4-9): Detailed Responses of the Second Axe

No.	Statements	A	%	N	%	D	%	Total	%
1	Fourth	84	84.00	5	5.00	11	11.00	100	100.00
2	Fifth	90	90.00	4	4.00	6	6.00	100	100.00
3	Eighth	45	45.00	10	10.00	45	45.00	100	100.00
4	Tenth	79	79.00	8	8.00	13	13.00	100	100.00
5	Fifteenth	84	84.00	6	6.00	10	10.00	100	100.00

Table (4-9) shows detailed participants opinions about teachers' negative attitudes towards pre-service and in-service training programs activities. It is found that 84 out of 100 participants, who represent 84.00%, agreed that attending programs during working hours makes teachers feel tired while 5 who represent 5.00 % are neutral and 11 who represent 11.00% disagreed. Moreover, 90 participants who represent 90.00% agreed that there is a lack of systematic planning and evaluation of the programs whereas 4 who represent 4.00% are neutral and 6 who represent 6.00% disagreed. Furthermore, 45 out of 100 participants, who represent 45.00%, agreed that English language teachers have negative attitudes towards the programs while 10 who represent 10.00% are neutral and 45 who represent 45.00% disagreed. In addition, 79 participants who represent 79.00 % agreed that there is a lack of correlation between theoretical and practical training programs while 8 who represent 8.00% are neutral and 13 who represent 13.00% disagreed. Analysis of data shows that 84 out of 100 participants who represent 84.00% agreed that time allowed to English teachers training programs is insufficient while 6 who represent 6.00% are neutral whereas 10 who represent 10.00% disagreed.

Table (4-10) shows the T-test results of the second dimension items of the questionnaire. According to the tables (4-8, 4-9 and 4-10) the participants' opinions about teachers' negative attitudes pre-service and in-service training programs activities tend to be agreeing. For example, in answering item two of the second dimension, 90.00 % agreed that there is a lack of systematic planning and evaluation of the program activities, which is a high percentage.

Table (4-10) T-test results of the Second Axe Item

No.	Statements	No. of Participants	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Fourth	100	4.1	1.1
2	Fifth	100	4.3	0.91
3	Eighth	100	3.0	1.5
4	Tenth	100	4.2	1.2
5	Fifteenth	100	4.2	1.2

The mean of all the items is higher than 3 (neutral value) whereas item three that represents the eighth statement is neutral. All standard deviations' results indicated that there was no significant difference in the participants' responses and more than 75% of them agreed with the 5 items.

Table (4-11) Second Dimension Statements Arithmetic Mean and Answers

No.	Statements	Arithmetic Mean	Answer
1	Fourth	4	A
2	Fifth	4	A
3	Eighth	3	N
4	Tenth	4	A
5	Fifteenth	4	A

Table (4-11) shows the arithmetic mean and answers of the statements of the second

Table (4-12) Chi-square Test for statements of the Second Dimension

No.	Statements	df	Chi Sq. Values	Sig.
1	Fourth	4	84.500	0.00
2	Fifth	4	104.600	0.00
3	Eighth	4	9.500	0.05
4	Tenth	4	87.700	0.00
5	Fifteenth	4	100.700	0.00

Table (4-12) shows the values of Chi Square of the second dimension statements.

Table (4-13): Frequency Distribution of the Second Dimension' Statements

Options	SA	A	N	D	S D	Total
No. of Participants' Answers	222	160	33	42	43	500
Percentage	44.4%	32.0%	6.6%	8.4%	8.6%	100%

According to Tables (4-8), (4-9), (4-10), (4-11), (4-12), (4-13), and Figure (4-2), It is found that more than 75% of the study participant tend to agree to the statements of the second dimension of the questionnaire. This indicates that majority of the participants agree that teachers have negative attitudes towards the program activities. In fact, 382 which represent 76.4 of the answers agreed to the statements that investigate the issue.

Results :

The most important findings can be run as follows:

1 – Per - service and In – service English language teachers training programs are helpful in developing teachers' skills to be effective English language teachers .

2 – Pre – service and In – service teachers' training programs acquainted teachers – trainee with curricula development specially those related to applied linguistic , methodology , educational psychology and sociology .

3 – There is always a lack of correlation between the theoretical training and training in the practice of teaching .

5 – Teachers' development activities generally do not focus on the teachers' needs and circumstances .

6 – Professional development activities have positive impact on professional teachers' knowledge .

7 – School academic year contains many wasted periods that should be invested in teachers' development , e.g. at the early beginning of the year and after final examinations.

Recommendations

In the light of the results and conclusions of the present study, the following recommendations are suggested:

. There should be systematic tools to identify and assess the English teacher training needs.

.There should be well designed programs to be used as in-service training for the English teachers .

. The Training and Qualifying Sector at The Ministry of Education should employ researchers to design and prepare suitable training programs for in-service English teachers.

.It is important for designers of in-service teacher training programs to offer teachers opportunities to observe, experience, and participate in activities that emphasize teacher-centered and hands-on learning.

. The aims of the in-service teacher training programs have to be reconsidered in the light of teaching reality, experts' views and teachers' needs.

. Communicating, observing and working with colleagues should be recommended in in-service teacher training programs as these techniques are intellectually stimulating and promote professional growth.

Using diversity assessment techniques to assess the EFL teachers' teaching performance.

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