



Original article

Teacher Training Programme for English Teachers at University of Duhok: A Critical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The present paper investigates the teacher training programme for English teachers at the University of Duhok. It is also to analyze the available type of In-service teachers' training programme in terms of skills, capabilities and techniques. To collect the opinions of teachers a questionnaire has been prepared. In addition, qualitative data were collected during the interviews. For the present study, the sample comprises altogether 44 English teachers. It has been found from the present study that English teachers at the Department of English, College of Basic Education at the University of Duhok do not get enough scope for their Professional Development. Though some of the teachers have a plan yet they are unaware as to how far that will be materialized. Data shows that majority of the teachers have attended In-service teacher training programmes only once in their teaching career which is not sufficient concerning their continuous professional growth.

Keywords: Teacher, teacher training, programme training

برنامج تدريب المعلمين لمعلمي اللغة الإنكليزية في جامعة دهوك: تحليل نقدي

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المُستخلص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في برنامج تدريب المعلمين لمعلمي اللغة الإنكليزية في جامعة دهوك. حيث ان الدراسة الحالية تهدف الى تحليل النوع المتاح من برنامج تدريب المعلمين أثناء الخدمة من حيث المهارات والقدرات والتقنيات. ولجمع آراء المعلمين تم إعداد استبيان. بالإضافة إلى ذلك تم جمع البيانات النوعية من خلال المقابلات. وتالفت عينة الدراسة من 44 مدرسًا للغة الإنكليزية. وقد وجد من الدراسة الحالية أن معلمي اللغة الإنكليزية في قسم اللغة الإنكليزية، كلية التربية الأساسية في جامعة دهوك لا يحصلون على مجال كافٍ لتطويرهم المهني. يهتم معظم المعلمين بتعلم منهجية تدريس اللغة الإنكليزية الجديدة. لا يوجد برنامج محدد ينظمه قسم اللغة الإنكليزية ليوفر لهم مثل هذه الفرص. على الرغم من أن بعض المعلمين لديهم خطة إلا أنهم غير مدركين لمدى تحقيق ذلك. تظهر البيانات أن غالبية المعلمين قد حضروا برامج تدريب المعلمين أثناء الخدمة مرة واحدة فقط في حياتهم المهنية التدريسية وهو ما لا يكفي فيما يتعلق بنموهم المهني المستمر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التدريسي، تدريب التدريسي، برنامج تدريب

1. Introduction

There has been growing importance of English as an international language as well as a language of opportunity. The need for ongoing teacher development has been a recurring theme in education, especially in English language teaching. The English language plays a unique role in education. This uniqueness refers to the language itself and to the ways it is taught as a second or foreign language. In most schools and institutions today, English language teachers are expected to be updated with the developments in the field of teaching and learning and to regularly review and evaluate their teaching according to the changing needs/requirements of the students. Language teaching institutes are also expected to maintain high professional standards, to provide opportunities for their teachers to be in line with their Professional Development. This paper titled “teacher training programme for English teachers at the University of Duhok: a critical analysis” aims to find out the regularity and validity of the In-service Teacher Training Programmes for English Teachers at the Department of English, College of Basic Education at the University of Duhok. It attempts to provide insights into the nature of teacher learning and Professional Development for improving the professionalism of English Teachers at the Department of English, College of Basic Education at the University of Duhok. Aggarwal (2005, p. 78) has stated that “it is hoped that the introduction of professional training and development programmes along with the changes in teacher training curriculum would bring about qualitative changes on teachers’ teaching practices and student learning”. Therefore, it has been earlier planned to offer training to every teacher of English; however, this is yet to be realized. Teacher training for English Teachers at the Department of English, College of Basic Education at the University of Duhok is comparatively a new concept. The study also examines the Professional Development practices and the challenges in the context of English Teachers at the Department of English, College of Basic Education at the University of Duhok with emphasis on the In-service Teacher Training Programmes for English teachers.

Literature review

Richards (1998, p. 374) has stated that “the scope of teacher education can be understood by discussing its position at different levels of education, triangular basis of teacher education and aspects of teacher education”.

2.1. Education: Meaning and Concept

The process of teacher education can take any form such “as Pre-service education, induction, staff development, in-service education and continuing education” (Richards & Nunan, 1990, p. 33). In addition, “teacher Education is considered as a continuous process with its three phases: Pre-service, Induction and In-service. It is based on the theory that Teachers are made, not born, in contrast to the assumption, teachers are born, not made. Besides Pre-service and In-service programmes for teachers, it is expected to be involved in various community programmes and extension activities, viz adult education and non-formal education programmes, literacy and development activities of the society. To prepare teachers who are competent to face the challenges of the dynamic society, teacher education has to keep being informed of the latest developments and trends. The entire process of teacher education lies in its curriculum, design, structure, organization and transaction modes, as well as the extent of its appropriateness” (Hussain, 2024, p. 517). “The teacher education curriculum has a knowledge base which is sensitive to the needs of field applications and contains meaningful, a conceptual combination of theoretical understanding. Teacher education is a system that involves an interdependence of its Inputs, processes and outputs” (Ferguson, 1991, p. 465). Furthermore, Hussein, (2024) has indicated that language teaching requires communication skills among learners and teachers. Then, he has shown us how communication can be a significant instrument to improve language teaching and help in-service teachers training in terms of skills, capabilities and techniques. Dornyei & Ushioda (2021) emphasize on the role of communication and motivation on education output as well as engagement of students’ materials and language teaching in terms of curriculum designing.

2.2. Teacher Education at Different Levels of Education

Dunkin (1987, p. 178) has cited that teacher education is connected with teachers at Primary, Secondary, Higher Secondary and the Tertiary level of education. “The needs and requirements of students and education vary at each level. Therefore, level and stage-specific teacher training are essential. Teacher education also helps developing the teachers’ teaching skills in professional institutions. The teachers in professional institutions have theoretical and practical knowledge of their respective subjects. They require specialized teacher training inputs to deal with students entering their professions. Teacher education also teaches special education and physical education. Thus, where there are teachers, there would be teacher education”. Moreover, “the increasing interest in learner-centered method has created the necessity for students’ improved perspectives during assessing classroom materials. Student feedback lets educators develop educational approaches which prove more useful and appropriate to improve students’ communication performance levels and build their self-assurance in real-life scenarios” (Mohammed Sharif & Qassim: 2025, p. 1346).

2.3. Triangular Basis of Teacher Education

To build the relevant knowledge base of education, “it requires a high degree of academic and intellectual understanding of subject related to teacher education at each stage. This involves the selection of theoretical knowledge from disciplines equivalent to Education, namely, Psychology, Sociology and Philosophy, and converting it into forms suitable for teacher education. Teacher education derives its content from the disciplines of Philosophy, Sociology and Psychology” (Burns & Richards, 2009, p. 98).

The philosophical basis is to provide insights to the student teachers about the implications of the various schools of philosophy, ancient and modern philosophical thoughts, educational thoughts of philosophical thinkers on education and its various aspects such as curriculum construction and discipline. The sociological basis helps the student teachers to understand the role of society and its dynamics in the educational system of a nation and the world at large. It encompasses the ideals that influence the national and international scene. The psychological basis helps the student teachers develop insights into students’ psychological make-up. This enables the student teachers to understand themselves, their students and the learning situations so that they can provide meaningful and relevant learning experiences to their students. These disciplines provide the base for better understanding and application of teacher education (Anjum, 2017, p. 681-687).

2.4. Types of Teacher Training Programme

a. Pre-service Teacher Education: Pre-service education of teachers means “education of teachers before they enter into service as a teacher. This refers to student teachers who will become teachers after completing their pre-service training. Pre-service training could involve a component on inclusive education, or how to respond to special educational needs in the classroom” (Yagit, 2008, p. 69).

The goal of pre-service training is to “help the student-teacher develop an understanding of the role of the teacher and to gain the necessary skills and competencies to become a teacher. When organizing a component on inclusive education in Pre-service training, different activities like school visits, classroom observation activities and practical assignments based on the content of the training will need to be arranged. Ideally, inclusive education should not be understood as a component, but as a fundamental principle of teaching all content. The whole pre-service curriculum should therefore be based on responding to diversity by using inclusive practices” (Yagit, 2008, p. 74).

b. In-service Training: According to Lawrence, “In-service education is the education a teacher receives after he has entered to the teaching profession and after he has had his education in a teacher’s college. It includes all the educational, social programmes and others in which the teacher takes a virtual part, all the extra education which he receives at different institutions by way of refresher and other professional courses and travels and visits which he undertakes”. (Yagit, 2008, 75).

2.5. The Aims and Objectives

1. To know the teachers' opinions and knowledge about In-service training programmes that they have undergone.
2. To get an idea of how In-service programmes for Secondary School English teacher operates at the Department of English, College of Basic Education at the University of Duhok.
3. To find out the regularity and validity of the In-service teacher training programmes.
4. To identify the areas of mismatch between the training imparted by teacher training programmes and actual practices.
5. To collect the opinions of English teachers concerning the types of training programmes needed further.

Methodology

The research methodology is a systematic framework of processes to find out the objectives of the research. There are many kinds of research designs, according to the need of the research. Therefore, to gain the preset objectives of this research, exploratory research and descriptive research designs have been adopted, keeping in view the requirement of the study. The present study employed both quantitative and qualitative data. The foremost aim of this study is to examine the appropriateness and effectiveness of the teacher training programmes undertaken by the English teachers at the Department of English, College of Basic Education at the University of Duhok. The entire system of English education needs careful examination and the methodology of teaching English at the University of Duhok needs necessary modification. It is possible only through the implementation of an effective In-service training programme for English teachers. The broad insight of the study: Teacher Training Programme for English Teachers at Department of English, College of Basic Education: A Critical Analysis, leads us to specify this study as exploratory and descriptive research, analyzing the impact of In-service training programmes on English language teaching at the Department of English, College of Basic Education.

3.1. Research Design

The purpose of any research is to provide a maximum amount of information relevant to the problem under investigation at minimum cost. The present study is intended to analyze the available type of In-service teachers' training programme in terms of skills, capabilities and techniques. The study also aims to collect the opinions of English teachers concerning the types of training programmes needed and offer recommendations for the improvement of English language teaching at the Department of English, College of Basic Education at the University of Duhok. Thus, the purpose of this study is exploratory. To collect the opinions of teachers a questionnaire has been prepared. In addition, qualitative data were collected during the interviews.

3.2. Setting, Population and Size

- Setting: The setting selected for the present study is the Department of English, College of Basic Education at the University of Duhok.
- Population and Size: For the present study the sample comprises altogether 44 English teachers.
- Sampling: The samples of the study were chosen using random sampling techniques. As mentioned earlier, forty-four English teachers, nine principals, two hundred students and five teacher trainers were chosen for the study.

3.3 Data Description

This section discusses the responses elicited through the tools to find out the general opinions of the respondents. The data obtained from the questionnaire's responses are presented in the form of statistical tables using percentages and values, while the data obtained from interviews and observation is presented after transcribing it from the notes taken during these processes. The notes taken were based on exploring the need for training, adequacy of training in terms of inputs and duration, teaching-learning techniques and approaches, tasks and activities practised, course objectives and their implications, quality of teaching materials, practice teaching, interaction and feedback. The data gathered through different sources and tools are presented separately and compared to arrive at a meaningful conclusion.

Data analysis

4.1. Analysis of Data from English teachers' questionnaire

This section demonstrates a brief picture of findings of the teacher training conducted on the Department of English, College of Basic Education at the University of Duhok. The data had been analyzed in different stages. Entry of the data had been done by using Microsoft Office Excel Sheet. It has been arranged and represented through the tables. Quantitative data obtained through survey was further subjected to qualitative analysis in the form of an interview.

The first few questions in this section represent the background of respondents including gender, educational qualification, age and teaching experience.

Table 1. Gender-wise Classification of Respondents

Male	Female	Total respondents
12	32	44
27%	73%	100%

*** The percentage has been rounded off**

As indicated in the above table 73 % of the teachers were female and the remaining 27% were male teachers. This implies that the majority of the English language teachers selected for the study are females.

Table 2. Teaching Experience of Respondents

Less than 5 years	5-10 years	10-15 years	15-20 years	More than 20 years	Total respondents
7	12	10	7	8	44
16%	27%	23%	16%	18%	100%

* The percentage has been rounded off

The data depicts that teacher of varied experiences are included in the study. When the overall experiences included in the study are considered, we find 16% of teachers have less than 5 years of teaching experience, 27% have 5 to 10 years, 23% have 10 to 15 years, 16% have 15 to 20 years and 18% have more than 20 years. The data reveals that more than 80% of the teachers have more than 10 years of teaching experience, and this corresponds with the age group of the sample.

Table 3. which methods do you use for teaching English?

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
GTM	2	5%
ALM	1	2%
CLT	13	30%
A mix of all	28	64%
Total	44	100%

* The percentage has been rounded off

Many teachers have given more than one response to this question. “Most of the teachers i.e. 30% teachers use Communicative Approach for teaching English in the classroom at the Secondary level. Very few (5%) teachers use the Grammar translation Method followed by 2% who used the Audio-lingual method. 64% of the teachers indicated they used mixed of all methods. Teachers also use the Grammar translation Method along with the Communicative Approach for teaching English. The majority of the teachers have given more than one answer. The information given by the teachers has been found somewhat contradictory to the information collected through the observation of classroom lessons of the teachers. Hence, it is clear that teachers though, having the impression that they use Communicative Approach for teaching English, do not know all the aspects and proper procedure of using Communicative Approach”.

Table 4. which method do you find most useful for improving basic language skills?

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
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GTM	6	14%
ALM	1	2%
CLT	9	20%
A mix of all	28	64%
Total	44	100%

*** The percentage has been rounded off**

As the table shows 14% of the respondents find Grammar Translation Method most useful for teaching English as a second language. Only 2% stated that the Audio-lingual method is most useful followed by 20% stating CLT as the most useful method. 64% of teachers have given weightage to a mix of all methods. Teachers generally say that they use the Communicative Approach for teaching English but the fact is that they are not much aware of it and have very vague and limited knowledge about the Communicative Approach. All the teachers have some idea about language teaching methods but when it comes to implementation, they find it difficult. Teachers must consider students' needs and level of proficiency in choosing the best method of language teaching as this may help students in improving their competence in language skills.

Table 5. Do you find yourself competent enough for teaching English?

Yes	To some extent	No	Total respondents
35	9	0	44
80%	20%	0%	100%

*** The percentage has been rounded off**

As per data obtained, 80% of the teachers have valued themselves good in teaching English and the rest 20% responded that they are competent to some extent. An interesting thing is that no one has rated themselves as poor.

Table 6. How far are your students able to follow instructions in English?

Always	Often	Sometimes	Total respondents
24	17	3	44
54%	39%	7%	100%

*** The percentage has been rounded off**

It has been observed that the majority of the teachers (54%) evaluate their students' ability as high whereas 39% of teachers describe it as average. Only 7% choose "sometimes" as their response. Most of the students are thus able to follow the instructions and have a good ability in understanding instructions in English.

Table 7. How do you rate students' knowledge of the English language in the following language skills?

	Good	Satisfactory	Average	Unsatisfactory
Listening	15(34%)	13(30%)	16(36%)	0(0%)
Speaking	4(9%)	18(41%)	16(36%)	6(14%)
Reading	10(23%)	21(48%)	13(30%)	0(0%)
Writing	7(16%)	18(41%)	15(34%)	4(9%)

* The percentage has been rounded off

4.2. Listening

The above table shows that 34% of the teachers responded "Good" and 30% of the teachers responded "Satisfactory" whereas 36% of teachers said "Average". It can be observed from the teachers' responses that students' listening skill is good and satisfactory but not proficient. This indicates that the majority of the students are weak in listening skills. Listening skill is the ability to accurately receive and interpret a message in the communication process. Listening plays an important role in all effective communication.

4.2. Speaking

The table represents the speaking abilities of students. 9% of the teachers rated their students' ability in speaking skills as "Good" and 41% of the teachers responded, "Satisfactory" while 36% of the teachers chose "Average" as their response. Only 14% report it as "Unsatisfactory". The result indicates that students do not have a good ability to speak. Teachers must provide speaking opportunities for students to speak and express their ideas and also provide a communicative classroom. Students must be able to speak effectively with the teacher and with other students.

4.3. Reading

To this question, 23% of the teachers responded "Good" and 44% of the teachers agree on "Satisfactory" whereas 30% of teachers report it as "Average". This means students' reading ability is just satisfactory.

4.4. Writing

The analysis indicates that only 16% of the teachers grade the writing ability of their students as "Good". 41% of teachers grade students writing skills as "Satisfactory" whereas 34% of teachers report it as "Average" and only 9% of teachers grade it as "Unsatisfactory". The result shows students writing skill is satisfactory. There is a need to emphasize this part.

Table 8. How do you assess students' knowledge of the English language?

Assess students' knowledge	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Question and answer	10	23%
Group discussion	0	0%
Role play	0	0%
Group work/pair work	1	2%
All of the above	33	75%
Total	44	100%

*** The percentage has been rounded off**

As the table shows there are several strategies used by teachers for assessing students' performance in the classroom. 23% of the teachers use the question and answer technique and the Group/Pair work technique is used by only 2% of the teachers. As a whole 75% of the teachers used all the above-mentioned techniques in their classroom. The table thus indicates the extent to which these strategies are used in actual practices. The majority of the teachers use the traditional practice of asking questions whereas very few use group work / pair work. This is clear that the teachers do not use Communicative activities. Except 'pair work' teachers have very little knowledge about these activities. It means effective strategies should be used for evaluating students' performance.

Table 9. What types of materials do you use in the class?

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Prescribed textbooks	31	71%
Handouts	0	0%
Supplementary material	0	0%
Blackboard	1	2%
All of the above	12	27%
Total	44	100%

*** The percentage has been rounded off**

As the table represents, the majority of the teachers (71%) used prescribed textbooks for teaching the English language in the classroom. Whereas only 2% of respondents stated they use blackboard in the classroom. 27% of respondents indicated they use prescribed textbooks, handouts, supplementary materials and blackboard altogether in the classroom. It can be generalized that the majority of the teachers use prescribed textbooks only. So there is a need to use interactive, authentic, activity-based materials in the classroom. Learning materials, syllabus and teaching are the resources that teachers

use to deliver instructions. They support students' learning and increase students' achievement. Appropriate teaching materials increase students' attention, focus, motivate them to practice higher-level critical thinking skills and promote meaningful learning experiences.

Table 10. Do you think the present syllabi of English are relevant to the future needs of learners at the Department of English?

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total Respondents
1	33	10	0	44
2%	75%	23%	0%	100%

* The percentage has been rounded off

Only 2% of the teachers hold the view strongly agree that syllabi are relevant to the needs of students while 75% of teachers rate it as "agree" and 23% of the teachers' rate "disagree" and none of the teachers "strongly disagree" with the relevance of syllabus. The responses of teachers show that most teachers agree on the relevance of the present syllabi but not to a great extent. There can be some modifications to the syllabus.

Table 11. What types of training programmes have you attended for teaching English?

Pre-service	In-service	Pre-service and In-service both	None	Total Respondents
6	15	23	0	44
14%	34%	52%	0%	100%

* The percentage has been rounded off

As the table shows only 14% "respondents got adequate Pre-service training for teaching English and 34% received In-service training for teaching English, whereas 52% of teachers have responded that they have received both pieces of training Pre-service along with In-service. Pre-service training to use the Communicative Approach is not given to most of the senior teachers because it was not introduced before in training colleges or training schools. It means Pre-service did not prove adequate for teaching English at the department level current. There is no sufficient arrangement for providing In-service training to the English teachers. Teachers were very confused when they were being asked about In-service programmes they attended".

Table 12. Why do you attend In-service programmes?

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Self-development/ Skill enhancement	25	57%
Because it is mandatory to attend them by the school/college	3	7%
For promotion	1	2%
All of the above	15	34%
Any other reason	0	0%

*** The percentage has been rounded off**

The majority of the respondents 57% agree with the statement that they have attended In-service training programmes for self-development/ skill enhancement. Whereas 7% of teachers stated that they have attended In-service training programmes because it is mandatory by the school and only 2% indicated that getting a promotion is also a part of the In-service programme/Professional Development. Besides that 34% of the teachers have added to the point that all the above-mentioned factors are there behind attending In-service training programmes. It implies that there is a purpose behind attending In-service training programmes. Most of the teachers seem to be satisfied with the In-service training programme.

4.5. Your suggestion for improving the teaching of English at the Secondary Schools in the Department of English

Question no. 13 is an open-ended question which aims to know the opinions of trained English teachers on the type of In-service training programme they want to have. The respondents were given the freedom to express their opinions. Some of the comments of the respondents are mentioned below.

1. "Subject-based training should be emphasized".
2. "Training should be organized and more helpful".
3. "Long duration, modern teaching materials and techniques, and efficient trainers should be included in the training programme".
4. "Use of teaching aids and how to improve classroom facilities should be included".
5. "Communicative English course should be given more importance in the training programme".
6. "Teaching method should be more adequate".
7. "Short-term training should be conducted at least once in a year".
8. "Trainers should be more active, effective, proficient, and responsible".
9. "Resource persons for In-service training should be experts in teaching English".
10. "Duration of In-service programme should be more".
11. "There should be the provision of extra In-service training for the teachers".
12. "It should be given from time to time and should be up-to-date".
13. "Emphasis on the use of new techniques and practical work should be there".

4.6. Overall Comments and Suggestions

In the questionnaire, teachers were asked to give overall comments and suggestions on continuous Professional Development programmes at the Department of English, College of Basic Education at the University of Duhok. Teachers were asked what they generally think about the necessity of Continuous Professional Development programmes for English teachers. In response to this question, most of the teachers said that Professional Development programmes are necessary for English teachers. It should be done regularly. These programmes will help the teachers in their personal development and enable them to adjust to the changing needs of the learners. It will help the teachers to get acquainted with the new methodology and approaches and know the recent trends in the teaching of English. The classes were not interactive. The trainer spoke more than the teachers. Most of the teachers were passive. The teaching was mechanical and in one of the classes, the trainer was teaching grammar instead of teaching how to teach grammar. Most of the classes were chaotic. The teachers were not attentive or motivated. Even there was no follow up activities. The trainers were sometimes deviating from the area to be focused. There was no interaction between the teachers and the trainers and even amongst the teachers themselves.

Conclusion

It has been found from the present study that English teachers at the Department of English, College of Basic Education at the University of Duhok do not get enough scope for their Professional Development. Teachers do not have a clear understanding of what Professional Development is. There are no awareness-raising opportunities on Professional Development for English teachers. A majority of the teachers have said that there is no such programme that has brought any significant change about Continuous Professional Development of English teachers at the University of Duhok. Teachers get a chance to participate in very few training programmes which are not adequate for their professional growth. Though all the teachers agreed that they have a plan for their professional growth most of them do not have any specific idea. They could not specify their plans. Most of the teachers are interested to learn new ELT methodology. There is no specific programme organized either by the department of English or the education department that can provide them such opportunities. Though some of the teachers have a plan yet they are unaware as to how far that will be materialized. The data shows that majority of the teachers have attended In-service teacher training programmes only once in their teaching career which is not sufficient for their continuous professional growth.

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