ILLUMINATING TEACHERS’ VOICE AND PERSPECTIVES ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NORTHERN CITY OF JORDAN

SALM FANKHOUR ALWAN ALSHIRAH

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA
2012
Permission to Use

In presenting this thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for a postgraduate degree from Universiti Utara Malaysia, I agree that the University Library may make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for the copying of this thesis in any manner, in whole or in part, for scholarly purpose may be granted by my supervisor(s) or, in their absence, by the Dean of Awang Had Salleh Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. It is understood that any copying or publication or use of this thesis or parts thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to Universiti Utara Malaysia for any scholarly use which may be made of any material from my thesis.

Requests for permission to copy or to make other use of materials in this thesis, in whole or in part, should be addressed to:

Dean of Awang Had Salleh Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
UUM College of Arts and Sciences
Universiti Utara Malaysia
06010 UUM Sintok
Abstrak


Kata kunci: Profesionalisme, Pedagogi, Latihan, Polisi pengajaran EFL.
Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to shed light on teachers' perceptions and experiences on the challenges and problems that they encounter in teaching English as a foreign language in Jordan. The respondents of the study were purposefully selected to get an in-depth understanding on the process of teaching and learning English in Jordan. The primary respondents were five English teachers working in two secondary schools located at the north of Jordan. Besides teachers, six students, one school principal, two English supervisors, two English professors, two curriculum designers, three ministry officers, and two parents participated in the study to get a holistic picture on the case that was being investigated. Data collection was done using various methods primarily through interview, and complemented by class observation, photographs, and document analysis. The findings revealed that there are various problems with the teaching of English in Jordan. These include teachers’ competency and proficiency and general weaknesses on using the English language, ineffectiveness of teachers' training programs, teachers’ low motivation, and job satisfaction, poor working environment, poor interaction between teachers and students, teachers and parents, teachers and principals, and cooperation among teachers themselves, discipline problems, teachers’ workloads, burnt-out syndromes among teachers, and shortage of learning materials in the Jordanian schools. The research ends by extending various recommendations particularly to the important stakeholders in Jordan to optimize the process of teaching English in the future.

Keywords: Professionalism, Pedagogy, Training, EFL teaching policy.
Acknowledgement

Finishing this study took a lot of efforts and sacrifices than I had expected. This study could not have been completed and written without the support and help from many people.

I am greatly indebted to my supervisor, Associate Professor Dr. Hisham Dzakiria who has given me lots of encouragement and advice to me during my study. He always gave me continuous, constructive and valuable guidance, comments and advices throughout the process of completing this thesis. He has not only been a lecturer and an advisor throughout my study, but a brother and friend as well.

I am also deeply grateful to my parents who have supported me financially and taught me the value of education. I also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my brothers and sisters for always being with me throughout the study.

I am also very grateful to my wife, Hamidah and children (Wisam, Dania, Rama and Hisham) who have inspired me to work towards the completion of this study. You all have been a wonderful family and your support to me has been endless.

I would like also to thank my friends who have always been encouraging me to complete this work: Ali Al-sharah, Masnawaty and Ibrahim Al-Sharah. My thanks go to all the collaborators who had participated in this study. They contributed and shared their efforts, time and ideas to this study. Thank you all. May Allah bless ALL of you, Insha’Allah.
# Table of Contents

Permission to Use.................................................................................................................. i
Abstrak .................................................................................................................................... ii
Abstract ................................................................................................................................... iii
Acknowledgement.................................................................................................................. iv
Table of Contents .................................................................................................................. v
List of Tables ........................................................................................................................ x
List of Figures ........................................................................................................................ xi
List of Appendices ................................................................................................................ xiii
List of Abbreviations ............................................................................................................. xiv

## CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION ................................................................................. 1

1.1 Personal Research Discourse ......................................................................................... 2
1.2 My Study Background .................................................................................................. 5
  1.2.1 Jordan Education System ..................................................................................... 7
1.3 Problem Statement ........................................................................................................ 9
1.4 Theoretical Framework ................................................................................................. 11
1.5 Methodological Framework ........................................................................................ 17
1.6 Research Objectives ..................................................................................................... 18
1.7 Research Questions ....................................................................................................... 18
1.8 Significance of the Study .............................................................................................. 19
1.9 Scope of the Study .......................................................................................................... 20
1.10 Study Limitation .......................................................................................................... 20
1.11 Definitions of Key Words or Concepts ....................................................................... 21
  1.11.1 Teachers’ perceptions ......................................................................................... 21
  1.11.2 Communicative Competence ........................................................................... 21
  1.11.3 Curriculum ...................................................................................................... 21
  1.11.4 Language Policy ............................................................................................... 22
  1.11.5 Pedagogy .......................................................................................................... 22
1.12 Summary ........................................................................................................... 22

CHAPTER TWO STUDY CONTEXT ........................................................................... 25
  2.1 Introduction ....................................................................................................... 26
  2.2 Country Profile ............................................................................................... 26
  2.3 Education in Jordan .......................................................................................... 29
    2.3.1 Educational Trends for the Development of Education: Historical Views 32
    2.3.2 Supports of Political Leaderships in Education ........................................ 35
    2.3.3 Management of the Educational System .................................................... 36
    2.3.4 The General Outcomes of the Jordan Education System ....................... 38
    2.3.5 General Objectives of Basic and Secondary Education in Jordan .......... 39
    2.3.6 Jordan Philosophy of Education ............................................................... 42
  2.4 Teacher Education ............................................................................................ 42
    2.4.1 The Traditional Role of Teachers in Jordan .............................................. 46
  2.5 The Development of English Language Teaching in Jordan ....................... 47
    2.5.1 The Situation of EFL Teachers in Jordan ................................................ 50
    2.5.2 General Goals of Teaching English in Jordan .......................................... 51
  2.6 The Schools included in the Study .................................................................... 53
    2.6.1 School 1: First Secondary School for Boys .............................................. 55
    2.6.2 School 2: Second Secondary School for Boy ........................................... 57
  2.7 Summary ............................................................................................................ 58

CHAPTER THREE LITERATURE REVIEW .................................................................. 60
  3.1 Introduction ....................................................................................................... 60
  3.2 Importance of Learning English ...................................................................... 60
  3.3 Foreign Language Teaching: Challenges ....................................................... 64
  3.4 The EFL Policy on Teaching ............................................................................ 68
    3.4.1 Teaching Materials .................................................................................. 71
    3.4.2 Using Technology in EFL Classroom ..................................................... 72
  3.5 Studies on the Teaching and Learning of English ........................................... 75
    3.5.1 English Teachers’ Perceptions on Teaching English .............................. 75
    3.5.2 Students’ Perceptions on Learning English ............................................. 78
3.5.3 Teachers and Students’ Perceptions on Native and Nonnative Teachers of English ................................................................. 81
3.6 Motivation in English Language Teaching and Learning ... 82
  3.6.1 EFL Teachers’ Motivation ................................................. 84
    3.6.1.1 Monetary Rewards and Motivation ......................... 85
    3.6.1.2 Large English Classes and its Impact on Motivation .... 87
3.7 Activities for EFL Learning .................................................. 88
  3.7.1 Interactions in the EFL Classroom .................................. 90
    3.7.1.1 The Use of L1 in L2 Classroom ............................... 92
  3.7.2 Language Learning Strategy ......................................... 94
3.8 Training for English Language Teachers .............................. 96
  3.8.1 Investigation of Feedback Session on Teaching Practice .... 103
  3.8.2 EFL Teachers’ Motivation towards Training ................... 104
3.9 EFL Teachers’ Professionalism ............................................ 106
  3.9.1 EFL Teachers’ proficiency ........................................... 108
3.10 EFL Teachers’ Pedagogy .................................................... 112
  3.10.1 Teachers’ knowledge of English Language ................. 112
  3.10.2 Teachers’ knowledge of English Language ................. 115
  3.10.3 The Influence of Environment on Learning the Language .... 116
3.11 Summary ............................................................................. 118

CHAPTER FOUR RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .......................... 119
4.1 Introduction ............................................................................ 119
4.2 Research Design ................................................................. 119
4.3 Employment of a Case Study ................................................ 120
4.4 Participants of the study ....................................................... 122
  4.4.1 Participants ................................................................. 124
  4.4.2 Setting ............................................................................ 124
4.5 Data Collection ................................................................. 125
  4.5.1 The Interview ............................................................... 125
  4.5.2 Issues in Employing Interviews .................................... 126
    4.5.2.1 Making the interviews as informal and casual as possible .... 127
5.6.3.2 Students’ Weakness at English Speaking ............................................................. 169
5.6.3.3 Students’ Shyness in Speaking the Language ......................................................... 171
5.7 English Teachers’ Lack of Motivation .......................................................................... 173
  5.7.1 Low Image of Teaching Profession .......................................................................... 176
  5.7.2 Low Monetary Rewards ......................................................................................... 178
  5.7.3 The English Teachers’ Work Loads ......................................................................... 181
  5.7.4 Discipline Problems as Perceived by English Teachers ............................................. 184
  5.7.5 Overcrowded Classes ............................................................................................ 187
  5.7.6 English Teacher-Principal Relationship .................................................................. 191
  5.7.7 English Teachers-Parents Relationship .................................................................. 192
5.8 EFL Pedagogy ............................................................................................................... 194
  5.8.1 Effective English Classroom .................................................................................... 194
  5.8.2 Interaction in the FL Classroom .............................................................................. 196
  5.8.3 Using Arabic Translation ........................................................................................ 197
  5.8.4 Communicative Activities Conducted in the English Class ...................................... 202
  5.8.5 English Teachers do not Plan and organize their Lessons ........................................ 204
  5.8.6 English as a Language of Instruction ...................................................................... 205
  5.8.7 English Language Teacher – Student Relationship .................................................. 208
  5.8.8 Collaboration among English Teachers .................................................................... 210
  5.8.9 Teachers’ Unawareness of Teaching Methods ........................................................ 213
5.9 EFL Teaching Policy ..................................................................................................... 216
  5.9.1 The Current Policy on EFL Teaching ...................................................................... 216
  5.9.2 Teachers’ Perceptions on the Current English as a Foreign Language Curriculum .................................................................................................................. 220
  5.9.3 The Focus on Grammar in Teaching ....................................................................... 224
  5.9.4 The physical Environment of the Classroom ............................................................ 226
  5.9.5 Shortage of Learning Materials .............................................................................. 229
5.10 Teachers’ Perceptions on Training Programs ............................................................. 234
  5.10.1 Teachers’ Lack of Interests in Training Programs .................................................... 234
  5.10.2 Teachers’ Perceptions on the Trainers ................................................................. 236
  5.10.3 Learning by Interaction ......................................................................................... 238
  5.10.4 Lack of Awareness on the Culture of English Speaking Countries ......................... 239
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Introduction</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Teachers' Perceptions on Teaching of English Language in Jordan</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Problems and Challenges that Deter the Teaching of English in Jordan</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Teachers' Perceptions on the Challenges they Encountered in Teaching</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 English Teachers' Perceptions on the Current English Curriculum</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6 Summary</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Introduction</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Measures to be Taken by the Ministry of Education</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 Efforts by English Teachers</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4 Efforts that Parents Should Make</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5 Summary</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6 Future Research</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

Table 2.1: Number of the Periods of English in the Basic Stage Weekly ............... 49
Table 2.2: Number of the Periods of English in the Secondary Stage Weekly ........50
List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Regional Map of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan .......................... 27
Figure 2.2: A morning Meeting in a School Courtyard (26 October, 2008) .......... 54
Figure 2.3: Daily Time Schedule for Jordanian Basic and Secondary Schools, 2008/2009 ................................................................................................................. 54
Figure 2.4: First Secondary School for Boys (September 15, 2008) ................. 56
Figure 2.5: Teachers’ Office in the First Secondary School (October 17, 2008) .... 56
Figure 2.6: Teachers’ Office (October 17, 2008) ............................................... 57
Figure 2.7: A classroom in Second Secondary School for Boys (October 19, 2008) 58
Figure 5.1: English Teachers are Maintaining Discipline in the School (November 5, 2008) ........................................................................................................... 182
Figure 5.2: Making Verbal and Nonverbal Noise in the Classroom by Students (December 9, 2008) ......................................................................................... 185
Figure 5.3: Overcrowded Class (December 9, 2008) ....................................... 188
Figure 5.4: Using Arabic for Translation of English Words (October 6, 2008) ...... 198
Figure 5.5: All Teachers of Different Subjects Sharing One Room (December 9, 2008) ............................................................................................................ 212
Figure 5.6: Broken windows of First Secondary Class (September 16, 2008) .... 228
Figure 5.7: No Materials in the English Classroom except the Blackboard (November 7, 2008) ................................................................................................. 232
Figure 5.8: The lab in the First Secondary School (December 10th, 2008) ........ 233
List of Appendices

Appendix A: Consent Form from UUM to Conduct the Study in Jordan ............309
Appendix B: Interview Protocol ........................................................................310
Appendix C: Sample of An Interview with a Participant (Full Transcript)..........314
Appendix D: Observation Guide........................................................................319
Appendix E: Research Contract: Consent to Participate in Research on Teaching and Learning of English in Jordan .................................................................320
Appendix F: Approval Letter from Ministry of Education in Jordan to Conduct the Study in the Jordanian Schools .................................................................321
### List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>English for Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>Curriculum Designer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information Communication Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLT</td>
<td>Communicative Language Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL</td>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTM</td>
<td>Grammar Translation Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALM</td>
<td>Audio Lingual Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESP</td>
<td>English for Specific Purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCSE</td>
<td>General Certificate of Secondary Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to offer a contribution about the experiences and views of English language teachers in Jordan about the scenario of teaching and learning of English in Jordan secondary schools. The chapter follows a modified version of the outline suggested by Silverman (2000): why the topic was chosen, why it of interest to the researcher is, the methodological and theoretical framework, and finally the research questions or problems. Therefore, the chapter discusses the personal research discourse, study background, statement problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, methodological and theoretical framework, and definitions of terms.

English has become an essential subject for every student to develop academically in most of the third world countries. There are 300 million people who use English as a second language and an additional 100 million people who use English as a foreign language (George, 2009). In Jordan, English is a lingua franca that needs to be mastered by all Jordanian students. Like many other developing nations, the English language is seen as an important vehicle or tool for future advancement. In many cases, English language is often seen as the language or medium of disseminating knowledge. As Jordan progresses into the borderless world, English language has become more important today than before. Jordanians are expected to have good proficiency upon completing their secondary education. Presently, due to the importance of English, the Jordanian government is particularly concerned about
The contents of the thesis is for internal user only
REFERENCES


290


Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M.C.Wittrock (Ed.), Handbook of research on teaching(pp.119-161). New York: Macmilan.


Mann, G. (2004). An evaluation approach towards feedback "betterment" in an initial teacher training in EFL. *AsianEFL, 6*(1), 54-64.


300


Wolcott, H. F. (2001). Writing up qualitative research... better. *Qualitative Health Research, 12*(1), 91-103.


