

Training Needs of Jordanian EFL Teachers in Pronunciation Instruction: A Case Study

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Abstract

Objectives: This study aims to enhance our understanding of the training requirements of Jordanian EFL teachers regarding English pronunciation and speaking instruction, considering the perspectives of both teachers and supervisors.

Methods: The study involved the participation of 372 teachers and 6 supervisors. The teachers completed a questionnaire expressing their opinions on their needs for capacity building in English pronunciation instruction, while supervisors engaged in semi-structured interviews to discuss their perspectives on teacher training in this area. Both qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed.

Results: The study revealed that 74.8% of the participating teachers expressed a need for more specialized training in teaching English pronunciation. This need was further emphasized by the supervisors during the interviews.

Conclusions: Jordanian EFL teachers require tailored capacity building in the instruction of English pronunciation and speaking. The findings from this research can be utilized by supervisors to emphasize the necessity for remedial programs for both teachers and students. Additionally, supervisors can propose a plan for training teachers on the use of new technologies that facilitate the teaching of this skill.

Keywords: Training needs, pronunciation instruction, EFL teachers.

الاحتياجات التدريبية لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية الأردنيين في تعليم نطق وتحدث اللغة الانجليزية

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ملخص

الأهداف: تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تعزيز فهمنا للاحتياجات التدريبية لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية الأردنيين فيما يتعلق بتدريس نطق اللغة الإنجليزية والتحدث بها من وجهة نظر كل من المعلمين والمشرفين.

المنهجية: شارك في الدراسة ثلاثمائة واثنان وسبعون مدرسًا وستة مشرفين. أجاب المعلمون ن استبيان يعبر عن آرائهم فيما يتعلق بحاجاتهم لبناء قدراتهم في تعليم نطق اللغة الإنجليزية، بينما شارك المشرفون في مقابلة لمناقشة وجهات نظرهم فيما يتعلق بتدريب المعلمين في هذا المجال. كما جرى تحليل البيانات النوعية والكمية للحصول على النتائج.

النتائج: وجدت الدراسة أن 74.8٪ من المعلمين المشاركين أشاروا إلى حاجتهم إلى تدريب أكثر تخصصًا حول كيفية تدريس نطق اللغة الإنجليزية، وهو ما أكدته أيضًا المشرفون في المقابلات.

الخلاصة: يحتاج مدرسو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية إلى بناء قدرات متخصص فيما يتعلق بتدريس نطق اللغة الإنجليزية والتحدث بها. يمكن للمشرفين استخدام نتائج هذا البحث لتبسيط الضوء على الحاجة إلى برامج علاجية لكل من المعلمين والطلاب. كما يمكنهم أيضًا اقتراح خطة لتدريب المعلمين على استخدام التقنيات الجديدة التي تسهل تدريس هذه المهارة.

الكلمات الدالة: احتياجات التدريب، تدريس النطق والتحدث باللغة الإنجليزية، معلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

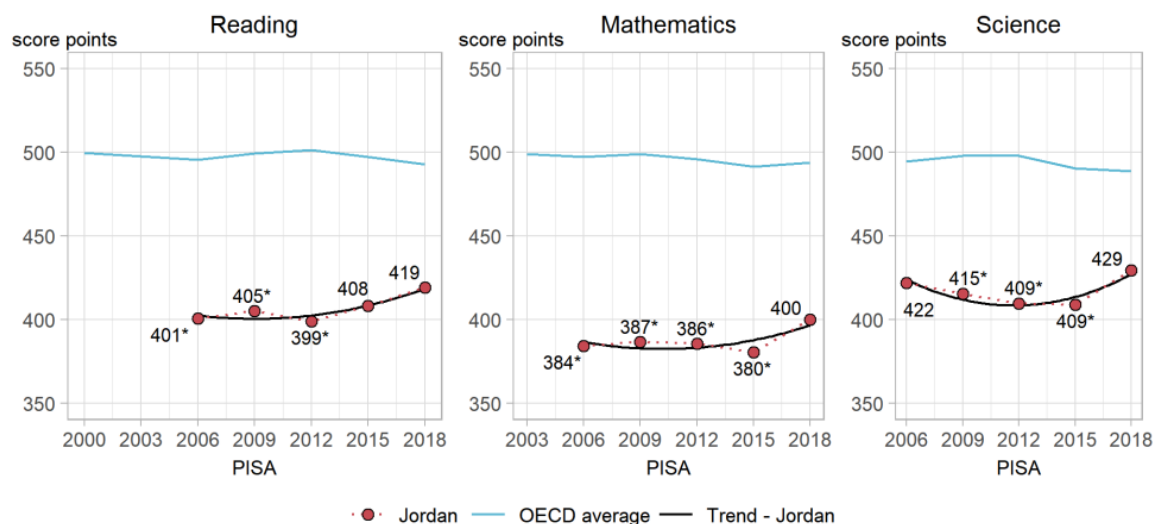


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1. Introduction

Jordan has seen a substantial drop in student learning outcomes over the past decade. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) scores for the year 2012 showed Jordan among the 10 lowest performers among 65 participating countries, ranking 61 (OECD, 2013). Although PISA examines Mathematics, Science and Reading, the results of the tests provide general feedback concerning the learning outcomes of students that could be reflected on other untested fields of knowledge. In PISA (2018a), a positive increase in the scores of Jordanian students was witnessed. Nevertheless, Jordan remains below the global average in PISA tests with around 100 points (see Figure:1).



Notes: *indicates mean-performance estimates that are statistically significantly above or below PISA 2018 estimates for Jordan. The blue line indicates the average mean performance across OECD countries with valid data in all PISA assessments. The red dotted line indicates mean performance in Jordan. The black line represents a trend line for Jordan (line of best fit). Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database, Tables I. B1.10, I. B1.11 and I. B1.12.

Figure 1: Curvilinear trajectories of average performance in Reading, Mathematics and Science across PISA assessments of Jordan. Source: https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA2018_CN_JOR.pdf

Subsequently, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has prioritized the professional development of 80,000 in-service teachers in Jordan. It is estimated that in 2022, 50% of public-school teachers are to be trained in accordance with the National Professional Teaching Standards for the Professional Development of Teachers (NSPDT) that were released in May 2018 mapping the principles required for professional learning programs and charting out pathways to certifying future teachers as well as practicing teachers (ACER, 2019). MOE's plan is not easy to implement though, knowing that less than 700 of those teachers have hardly completed any pre-service training.

2. Problem and Research Questions

English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in Jordan have limited opportunities of capacity building and fragmented professional development programs, negatively affecting their performance in classrooms and dramatically impacting the achievement of their students. The paper aims at answering the following questions:

1. What are the attitudes of Jordanian EFL teachers towards the training they receive concerning the teaching of pronunciation and speaking?
2. What are the perspectives of supervisors towards teacher training and performance concerning speaking, oral skills and pronunciation in EFL classes?

3. Literature Review

To be effective, teacher training needs to be individually targeted and repeated, with follow-up coaching often about a specific pedagogical technique. The training should also be linked to incentives that increase teacher's motivation (World Bank Group, 2018). The Jordanian MOE has initiated pre and in-service professional development programs aiming at reaching all teachers regardless of their education and the length of experience. Furthermore, the National Strategy for Human Resources Development (2016–2025) has identified the need for continuous teacher training and self-development courses that are linked to teachers' appraisals and incentives (NSHRD, 2015:107).

3.1 Professional Development Programs for Teachers in Jordan

3.1.1 Pre-Service Training

For teachers, leaders and educational institutions, pre-service training refers to the Bachelor-equivalent, relatively long teacher certification program, that involves both theory and application of pedagogy (QRF, 2015). Teachers in Jordan, however, do not go through pre-service training. The Education Strategic Plan (ESP) (2018-2025) states that “there is no comprehensive or clear system for teacher pre-service training in Jordan except for that assigned to kindergarten teachers and teachers for the first three grades who currently receive pre-service training through university education programs that are practice-oriented” (ESP, 2018:15).

To fill the gap in pre-service training programs, which results in sending teachers to the field with no practical experience, the MOE has initiated the process of designing and developing a comprehensive national structure for pre-service teacher training supported by Queen Rania Teachers' Academy. It is hoped that the work on this system would be completed through the course of the education strategic plan (2018-2025) (ESP, 2018:15).

To understand the task that the MOE is trying to achieve in the time span of the ESP, it might be helpful to point out that 28 percent of the 1314 Jordanian teachers surveyed by Queen Rania's Foundation (QRF) negated the receipt of any training prior to joining the profession. The majority of trained teachers criticized the short length of the training program, compared to countries such as Finland, whose teachers go through a full year training program before being assigned their roles as teachers (Sahlberg, 2013).

The fruit of the cooperation between the MOE and Queen Rania Academy was the Teacher Education Professional Diploma (TEPD). The program is a “24-credit hour, nine-month accredited diploma offered by the Queen Rania Teacher Academy (QRTA) and awarded by the University of Jordan” (QRTA, 2020). The program that was launched in 2016 by QRTA to prepare Jordanian teachers for the challenges of the 21st century classroom with the support of the University College London (UCL) – Institute of Education, combines theory and practice to equip future educators with innovation, leadership and skills that encourage intellectual curiosity, and civic participation among their students. However, a small number of teachers were found to have completed the intensive pre-service professional diploma according to Jordan's Economic and Social Council (JESC & UNICEF, 2019).

Considering the importance of teacher training in all subjects and the influence of teacher training on students, EFL teachers are thought to have more training needs than teachers of other subjects as “one should not assume that the completion of a baccalaureate degree in English literature implies that the student has obtained reasonable content-area knowledge” (Abu Naba'h et al., 2009: 279). Conversely, the cumulative process of foreign language acquisition and language teaching entails more complex aspects than merely the college major. Therefore, English language teachers are thought to have precise necessities that might not be addressed through generic teacher preparation programs (Abu Naba'h et al., 2009). In his research, Alkhawaldeh (2010) found that lack of educational preparation of teachers during the course of university instruction results in a gap between the pre-service preparation of EFL teachers and the actual teaching practice in the classroom. The same gap could be witnessed in other countries, such as Turkey, where the pre-service training program was described as outdated and irrelevant to the actual needs of EFL teachers. The study by Yusuf Demir (2015) concluded that pre-service training of Turkish teachers was futile in preparing teachers for a proper delivery of EFL content while balancing teacher- and student-centered approaches. The same could be stated concerning pre-service programs in

Jordan as no national training program has been officially set although more than 20 years have passed since Al-Naimi (1999) viewed Jordanian pre-service programs to be promising and more flexible to adjust to changing needs of the English language teacher.

In his research, Schrier (1994) outlined some desirable features of foreign language teachers, all of which entail the need for high proficiency in English, being the mode of instruction, which results in the need for more specific training of EFL teachers (Sullivan, 2001). The features include aptitude in the foreign language and its culture, expertise in designing and implementing curriculum as well as technological orientation. A teacher must also have pedagogical content knowledge, which is the skill to address knowledge from the perspective of the learner: an ability that a teacher is expected to have beyond the scholarly content knowledge acquired through university degrees (Shulman, 1987). The features mentioned agree with the competencies pointed out by Abu Naba'a and colleagues (2009) who specifically addressed Jordanian EFL teachers in their research. They believed that EFL teachers in Jordan needed content knowledge as well as practical skills to teach the language and motivate students. According to Abu Naba'a (2009), Jordanian teachers also needed to learn how to integrate technology in the learning process to achieve desired outcomes and implement curricula.

3.1.2 In-Service Training

While lacking a suitable pre-service training system, the MOE attempted to prepare new teachers to join the teaching profession through the Teachers' Induction Program (QRF, 2015). The induction is a kick-off training that aims at introducing novice teachers to the curriculum taught and the general regulations of the MOE inside schools. The program faced several challenges including high cost and limited outreach. It failed to serve as a comprehensive pre-service teacher training program due to its short length and general themes. Therefore, the MOE collaborated with Queen Rania Academy to outline the Teacher Education Professional Diploma (TEPD) mentioned earlier.

To chart out pathways to certifying future teachers as well as practicing teachers, the MOE released in (2018) the National Standards for the Professional Development of Teachers (NSPDT). The framework identified four levels of teachers: Licensed Teacher, Specialized Teacher, First Teacher and Expert Teacher. For each level, standards have been developed to create a common vision of the professional roles of teachers, define the competencies that they are required to have and facilitate their appraisal. The framework is also meant to guide teachers' professional learning and their continuous professional development over time (ACER, 2019).

Alhababha, Pandian and Mahfoodh (2016) indicated that the establishment of national standards for English language professional development programs in Jordan is highly required. Standards are recommended to rely on findings of recent research, redefining the concept of English language teaching and monitoring and evaluating current practices. Lack of a standardized vision for EFL teaching in Jordan, results in sending graduates from educational sciences programs -who have limited language content knowledge and poor pedagogical skills- to classrooms with no previous practical experience. A study by Al-Wreikat, Abdullah and Kabilan (2010) revealed that even if EFL teachers got the chance to go through in-service training courses in Jordan, those courses failed to equip trainers with effective teaching techniques. Hijazi (2010), however, explored the influence of MOE EFL teacher training programs on the enhancement of teachers' practical application of knowledge and the development of their students' English linguistic competence. She concluded that training programs positively affected teachers' classroom practices and improved the English linguistic competence of their students. She also pointed out some reasons behind teachers' refusal to engage in MOE EFL training programs. She believed MOE training programs are not based on teachers' professional needs, focus on theoretical aspects rather than practical ones and are not linked to incentives. Alkhawaldeh (2017) advocated for school-based teacher training as a solution for the lack of pre-service training programs in Jordan. Participants in his study considered school-based training to be an effective means of applying training to teacher's classroom instruction techniques.

Abdo and Breen (2010) also believed that a high percentage of Jordanian EFL instructors are not adequately educated, trained, or prepared to understand the linguistic learning styles of Jordanian students. The research conducted resulted in the conclusion that a part of Jordanian students struggles in English language acquisition partially because their instructors fail to apply effective EFL teaching methods. Furthermore, the School Network Project which is a two-year program based

on building networks among schools that serve as a medium for continuous professional development of teachers and continuous exchange of expertise reported that English teachers had the lowest number of meetings with peer teachers for the purpose of exchanging knowledge (Pratt-Williams & Corcoran, 2015:25).

3.1.2.1 In-Service Programs for EFL Teachers of Pronunciation and Oral Skills

In-service training in Jordan does not focus on pronunciation and oral skills while preparing teachers for classroom instruction. The general objective of the induction training conducted by the MOE is familiarizing trainees with the components of the curriculum currently used by the MOE (Ayash, Hamdeh, & Olayan, 2017).

Several best practices could be taken into consideration when highlighting recommendations for specific in-service training for EFL teachers on oral skills and pronunciation. Teachers from seven European countries filled an online questionnaire in (2013) investigating three areas, one of which is the training they have received to teach English pronunciation. The teachers in the sample - who were 90% non-native speakers of English- indicated that their pronunciation competences were enhanced through “phonetics and transcription, repetition and drills, discussion exercises, reading aloud, and listening tasks. Training in a language lab, theoretical lectures, exercises for practicing phonetic symbols and phonemic transcription, English sound formation and categorization, basic phonetic and phonological rules, and different types of intonation patterns” were also mentioned as training material (Henderson et.al, 2012:5).

Abdo and Breen (2010) recommended using unrestrained conversations and spontaneous oral presentations to enhance the proficiency and fluency of EFL learners in Jordan. Even though this recommendation was given to be practiced by teachers in classrooms to enhance the accuracy of EFL students, the same recommendation could be applied during the in-service training of EFL teachers to reach the same goal. It is worth mentioning that although EFL teachers were not trained on oral skills, their perception concerning their pedagogical and linguistic competences was found to be high compared to their actual capacities in the domain in research done by Zawahreh (2011).

3.2 Supervisors

The MOE in Jordan operates through 42 Field Directorates that support schools through two types of supervisors: Educational Supervisors and General Supervisors. Both types provide teachers with coaching on instructional strategies, subjects and pedagogy, and up-to-date mechanisms of responding to professional development needs such as assessing student performance. Supervisors monitor the delivery of the material, provide advice on improvements and update teachers on cutting edge techniques and teaching methods (MOE, 2009:15). Experts think that supervisors should shift to playing the role of mentors instead of the supervision role they undertake at present. According to Walkington (2005), supervising is associated with assessment: that is, supervisors evaluate novice teachers’ performance, whereas mentors do not. Supervisors are thought to have the responsibility of assessing performance, whereas mentors build confidence in novice teachers, provide them with emotional and technical support to face the challenges of the new career along with strengthening their techniques, methods and content knowledge (Hudson & Millwater, 2008). Consequently, Sanford and Hopper (2000) believe that using the expression ‘supervision’ has negative connotations: it indicates that a teacher requires monitoring or that a teacher’s performance is weak and has aspects that need to be fixed. The term also indicates the existence of a hierarchical system where the teacher is in a lower standard than that of a supervisor.

A supervisor follows the guidance of the Education Training Centre (ETC) - one of the MOE’s managements- when deciding the training delivered to teachers and the manner of delivery (face-to-face, blended or online). The guidance is usually given according to strategic goals previously planned by the MOE. It is proven though, that there should be a larger amount of autonomy given to teachers in customizing their own professional learning. In countries such as Canada, Finland and The Netherlands, individual teachers select and customize the professional learning options that suit their needs best (Schleicher, 2016), which holds teachers responsible for their own professional development and the mastery of particular competencies, tailored to their particular needs.

Education in Jordan has gone through various attempts of reform in approaches and programs. Jordanian schools were found to have failed to generate outstanding English graduates due to limited performance of EFL teachers (Al-Momani,

1998:13). A study by Goodwin (2012) indicated the importance of training teachers considering its impact on students. It showed that students taught by first-year teachers achieve poorer academic results when compared to results of students taught by experienced teachers, as experience was found to increase teachers' productivity along with informal on-the-job training (Harris & Sass, 2011).

4. Methodology

The present research adopts the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach as its theoretical framework. The approach can be traced back to the work of Chomsky (1960s) promoting the perceptions of "competence and performance" as a counteraction to other EFL teaching methods that flourished then. The two notions were later developed by Hymes (1989) into the "Communicative Approach" which refers to the "psychological, cultural and social rules that discipline the use of speech" (Hedge, 2000). The communicative method focuses on language as a medium of communication and recognizes that communication has a social purpose (Richards, Jack C. & Rogers, Theodore S., 2001). Therefore, the communicative approach brought a new need for pronunciation to be taught since: (...) "both empirical and anecdotal evidence indicates that there is a threshold level of pronunciation for non-native speakers of English; which if they fall below, they will have oral communication problems no matter how excellent and extensive their control of English grammar and vocabulary might be" (Celce, Brinton & Goodwin, 2010:8).

Harmer (1993) believes there is a necessity for enhanced students' competence that enables them to be comprehended and to say what they intend to utter. To achieve such communicative competence, Seferoglu (2005) believes that students should be taught the suprasegmental features of pronunciation rather than the segmental ones. Celce and colleagues (2010:8-10), believe teachers should use a variety of techniques and teaching methods to enhance students' communicative competence, among which are: "listening and imitating, minimal pairs drills, phonetic practice, tongue twisters, practicing vowel shifts related to affixation, reading aloud or reciting, and recordings of learners' production".

4.1 Population and Sample

4.1.1 EFL Teachers

The number of English teachers employed by the MOE in public schools in Jordan is 11,536 (MOE, 2019a), all of whom work in Jordanian public schools and teach different levels of students. The sample was calculated using the Robert L. Mason, Gunst and Hess (1989) equation below. It included 372 teachers, 229 of whom were females and (143) were males.

$$n = \frac{M}{\left[\left(S^2 \times (M-1) \right) \div pq \right] + 1}$$

Teachers in the sample ranged between novices and teachers with more than 10 years of teaching experience. All teachers in the study are non-native speakers of English. The similar profile of participants of the survey should make the process of research consistent, coherent and feasible.

4.1.2 Supervisors of English

The MOE has a managerial directorate named Supervision and Educational Training. This unit is responsible for following up on teaching methodologies used by teachers in schools, providing training for teachers on pedagogical topics and classroom management, and supporting teachers in continuous coaching and mentoring. The unit also works as a monitoring and evaluation entity and is responsible for generating follow-up reports on teachers' performance in the classrooms to monitor the teaching process and to reflect the performance of teachers on their incentives and salaries (MOE, 2019b).

Six supervisors of English were interviewed for the purpose of this research. They were selected using The Snowball Sampling method and were geographically representing their directorates. Due to restrictions imposed by the Covid 19 pandemic, face-to-face meetings were replaced by virtual interviews.

4.2 Research Instruments

4.2.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was used to gather data from teachers. It was developed with inspiration from the work of Yolanda Joy Calvo Benzie, researching the Teaching and Learning of English Pronunciation in Spain (Benzie, 2015), then the items were modified to better suit the context of Jordanian teachers. The questionnaire had seven items that addressed teacher training.

4.2.2 Semi-Structured Interview

A semi-structured interview that included three main items, was used to investigate EFL supervisor perceptions about the teaching of English pronunciation in public schools in Jordan. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as an instrument by the researcher due to the flexibility they offer compared to questionnaires. Interviews are “the most effective way to enlist the cooperation of the respondents, as it places less of a burden on the language skills of the respondents and helps to clarify unclear and incomplete questions and answers” (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1993:372).

Open-ended questions within the interview provided space for opinion expression and sharing of data. On the other hand, semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to generally control the access and outcome of the questions compared to other types of interviews.

4.3 Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews

All interviews were conducted online using Skype or Zoom as precautionary measures to minimize potential spread of Covid 19. Supervisors interviewed were two males and four females. They were chosen from a list of supervisors representing the MOE in the field directorates. Two supervisors were chosen randomly from the North, two from the Center and two from the South of Jordan.

The purpose behind each interview was explained to the participants before initiating the interviews. The participants were also informed that interviews were conducted in a safe space, where they can express themselves freely. Their consent to record the interviews was taken, as all interviews were audio-recorded to maintain the integrity of the content. Supervisors added value to the research because they were aware of a number of important issues: the methodologies of teaching, the actual level of implementation of those methodologies in classrooms, the difficulties facing teachers and students, teachers' qualifications, and system and managerial constraints.

4.4 Data Analysis

4.4.1 Quantitative Analysis: Questionnaire

The statistical package SPSS ver. 21.0 was used to analyze data gathered through the questionnaire. Four different ways of data analysis were used for this purpose:

1. Descriptive Statistics: such as mean, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages.
2. Independent Samples (t) test.
3. One-way ANOVA analysis.
4. Sheffe' comparison analysis.

4.4.2 Qualitative Analysis: Semi-structured interviews

The interviews with English language supervisors were transcribed and analyzed using a qualitative analysis approach, specifically through utilizing the Grounded Theory method in order to highlight developing themes as identified by the participants.

5. Results

5.1 Teachers' attitudes towards the training they receive concerning the teaching of speaking and pronunciation in EFL classes:

Means and standard deviations of teacher responses to the questions of the questionnaire were computed. The results

are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of the teacher responses on the capacity of the teacher

#	Items	Mean*	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	I have gone through training on how to teach English as a Foreign Language.	3.16	1.140	7
2	The training I have gone through was provided by the Ministry of Education.	3.60	1.073	4
3	I have gone through courses on how to teach English as a foreign language while I was at the university.	3.24	1.192	6
4	The training I have gone through concentrated on improving students' oral skills, speaking and pronunciation skills.	3.80	0.994	2
5	I think English teachers should aim at obtaining a near- native pronunciation if they want to teach EFL.	4.18	0.747	1
6	As an EFL teacher, I could be fluent in English but have problems with pronunciation.	3.30	1.071	5
7	I need further training on how to teach English Pronunciation.	3.74	0.991	3
Total		3.57	0.434	=

*Out of (5).

Table 1 shows that item # (5): "I think English teachers should aim at obtaining a near- native pronunciation if they want to teach EFL" ranked first with a mean of (4.18), and standard deviation of (0.747). Item # (4): "The training I have gone through concentrated on improving students' oral skills, speaking and pronunciation skills" ranked second with a mean of (3.80), and standard deviation of (0.994). Item # (1): "Have you gone through any training on how to teach English as a Foreign Language?" ranked last with a mean of (3.16), and standard deviation of (1.140). The grand mean of the teachers' responses on this domain was (3.57), and the standard deviation was (0.434).

5.2 Supervisors' perspectives towards teachers' training and performance concerning speaking, oral skills and pronunciation in EFL classes:

The supervisors were asked three main questions to elicit their perspectives regarding the training of teachers on skills and techniques related to the instruction of speaking and pronunciation:

1. Do you think that English language teachers get enough training on how to teach English as a foreign language?

All supervisors interviewed agreed to the fact that current training hours are insufficient for adequate preparation of teachers for their role in teaching a foreign language. The supervisors believed teachers in MOE public schools require further intensive training to provide them with up to date, cutting edge knowledge regarding methods of teaching.

It goes without mentioning that the role of supervisors entails the recommendation of need-based training for teachers they support. Supervisors may recommend specific training for the teachers based on gaps they notice while monitoring education delivery, but it is up to the teachers to follow or ignore their recommendations.

2. Do you think that English language teachers get enough training on Speaking, Oral skills and pronunciation?

The in-service training is 150 hours of pedagogical training, 60 hours of which are subject specific. The training aims at introducing a novice teacher to the curricula accredited by the MOE at the time of employment, with a general objective of "familiarizing trainees with all the components of the Action Pack series" (Ayash et. al, 2017:3).

The 60 hours that are subject specific are divided between the four skills of the language: listening, speaking, reading and writing. If the 60 hours are divided equally between the four skills, then speaking and oral skills get only 15 hours of training, which is an extremely limited amount of time for training teachers on these essential skills. Furthermore, the material of the training aims at introducing the teacher to the curriculum used by the MOE. Therefore, the training on oral skills does not tackle methods of teaching pronunciation. It discusses the objectives of the curriculum in regard to speaking and outlines general outcomes for the various grades, which could be used by the teacher in the planning of the class but not in the actual practice inside the classroom.

All supervisors agreed that the training provided is not enough and should be followed by specific need-based training that is tailored in accordance with the needs of each teacher and that is based on practice rather than theoretical lecturing. Furthermore, teachers should be involved in learning communities that can enhance their knowledge and broaden their perspectives.

3. Do you think that English language teachers have sufficient speaking skills to be able to teach pronunciation?

The supervisors agreed that although teachers in the field vary in their levels of mastering the English language, they lack sufficient speaking skills that would enable them to teach pronunciation to their students. The supervisors agreed that measuring teachers' phonological capacity using interviews should be a decisive condition of employment as that the current employment system depends only on written tests. The interview helps set a baseline of a teachers' oral capacity, based on which, a tailored training for that teacher could be planned.

6. Discussion of Results

6.1 Discussing the results of the questionnaire:

EFL teachers in Jordan have a limited opportunity of receiving sufficient specialized training on how to teach speaking and pronunciation through the pre- and in-service training programs conducted by the MOE. This aspect of the language is generally neglected due to its difficulty and the MOE's tendency to focus attention on receptive skills rather than productive ones and on written production rather than oral ones. The MOE, however, provides novice teachers with induction training (IPNAT) that aims at familiarizing novice teachers with the curriculum taught at MOE schools. Although the training is obligatory, only 72% of teachers in the sample indicated receiving training by the MOE, which implies that the remaining 28% of the sample did not receive any training, although employed and practicing teaching. This agrees with the findings of a survey done by the QRF, according to which 28% of teachers said they never received any training before starting their jobs (Qarout et al., 2014).

The content of the induction training is broad and general and constitutes a 150-hour introduction to EFL instruction. It aims at familiarizing the novice teacher with the curriculum, highlighting general in-class standards and projecting outlines of classroom management. However, the training does not build the capacity of teachers in specific areas, which explains why 74.8% of teachers in the sample indicated needing more specialized training on how to teach English pronunciation.

The material of the induction training incorporates 60 subject-specific hours that provide a closer insight into the sections of the curriculum. After completing the subject-specific training, 63.2% of the teachers in the sample gained a false perception of having gone through sufficient training on how to teach English, and 76% of them were misled into believing they have gone through concentrated training on oral skills, speaking and pronunciation. To assume that the 60 hours of the induction training are concentrated on speaking skills is an overstatement, because those 60 hours are divided between the four major skills and aim at familiarizing the teachers with the curriculum (Ayash, Hamdeh, & Olayan, 2017:3). Such an exaggeration in describing the training by the teachers in the sample indicates that teachers had a shallow knowledge of oral skills and pronunciation techniques.

The lack of knowledge of detailed pronunciation teaching techniques could be attributed to lack of instruction on speaking skills of teachers at the university level, which was revealed by 35% of teachers in the sample and agrees with the results of Al-Jamal and Al-Jamal (2014) who found 566 university students to have 'low' speaking proficiency levels due to negligible instruction of speaking within university courses. Abu Naba'a and colleagues (2009) went even further in claiming that "graduates from programs of educational sciences in Jordanian universities lack the appropriate subject-matter knowledge and the pedagogical skills to teach effectively" (2009: 273). The finding also agrees with the findings of Alshirah (2012) that highlight various problems concerning the teaching of English in Jordan, including teacher competency and proficiency along with general weaknesses in using the English language.

83.6% of the teachers in the sample believed they need to obtain a near native English pronunciation if they are to teach the language properly, which indicates that EFL teachers acknowledge the level of capacity they should be reaching in order to provide students with the best learning experience possible.

66% of teachers in the sample have also indicated that they could be fluent in English but have problems with pronunciation. Since the Communicative Language Teaching approach was recently adopted by the MOE, the majority of teachers still link fluency to grammatical knowledge. "In CLT the notion of fluency is used to assess how well learners use their knowledge to achieve their linguistic and communicative purpose. Whereas in the psycholinguistic perspective, fluency depends mainly on grammatical knowledge, in the CLT definition fluency widens to communicative competence" (Chambers, 1997: 537). Consequently, 66% of teachers think that it is acceptable for them to have problems with pronunciation if they show grammatical competence. A notion that contradicts Wong (1987), who pointed out that even when the non-native speakers' vocabulary and grammar are excellent, if their pronunciation falls below a certain threshold level, they are unable to communicate effectively.

The MOE has already taken steps towards the full implementation of a teachers' career path based on merit. Teachers should go through a test conducted by the MOE and the Civil Service Bureau to validate their competence and suitability for the teaching profession. However, supervisors in the sample indicated that the computerized test held by the Civil Service Bureau failed to measure the productive skills of graduates as it concentrated on reading comprehension, grammar and listening and ignored writing and speaking. Having been recently implemented, the computerized test failed to test the capacities of old teachers who have been practicing regardless. Supervisors suggested the test should be followed by an Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPIs) that measures the spoken productivity of teachers-to-be.

The problem increases knowing that negative evaluation of teachers does not affect the stability of their work nor the incentives they get. Teachers are granted career security due to the need for staff even if they do not build their capacities nor address their weaknesses. Supervisors play a coaching role that excludes them from the evaluation process of the teacher. Principals, on the other hand, have "no influence over the hiring and firing of teachers (this being the responsibility of the Civil Service Bureau) and are effectively unable to discipline them" (Karmel et al., 2015:10). Furthermore, reports of the Ministry of Education back in (2015) showed that only 24.9% of graduates of English language majors have passed the teaching-profession entry examination (Alhababha, Pandian & Mahfoodh, 2016). The majority of which were hired anyway, due to the increasing need for EFL teachers and lack of interest in the teaching profession.

Answering the first research question, and taking into consideration results outlined above, the researchers believe that EFL teachers do not receive adequate training on teaching English speaking and pronunciation, and that many factors contribute to this finding. Factors range from programs at the university level that ignore speaking courses to vague methodology of choosing teachers by the Civil Service Bureau, incoherent pre- and in-service training programs, limited monitoring and evaluation of teachers and ultimate career security.

6.2 Discussing the results of interviews with supervisors

The supervisors who were interviewed were asked three questions to elicit their perspective towards teachers' training on English pronunciation. Overall, supervisors brought up various discussion points, provided comments and offered recommendations concerning the training and performance of EFL teachers in Jordan. They agreed that the current training was insufficient, and that EFL teachers in Jordan had limited lingual and pedagogical competence.

The supervisors indicated that EFL teachers in Jordan lacked sufficient speaking skills needed for teaching English oral skills and pronunciation. They pointed out that an interview should follow the Civil Service Bureau test that teachers take as a requirement of employment, to assess the oral competence of teachers before they are allowed to practice the profession. Supervisors warned that Jordanian students depend mainly on their teachers to learn the pronunciation of words and that limited capacities of teachers might result in teachers passing their fossilized errors to their students. Limited exposure to the language and lack of learning communities with peers and mentors limits the practice of teachers and mitigates the chances of learning the correct pronunciation of old errors.

Furthermore, the supervisors criticized the traditional and limited methods that teachers used to teach English oral skills and pronunciation. They indicated that teachers could have used songs, videos or games to teach pronunciation if they have been trained to do so. Weak teaching techniques reduced teachers' tendency to integrate the teaching of pronunciation into

other skills and led often to the entire neglect of the skill, allegedly consuming more time than teachers could afford.

Generally, the supervisors in the sample harshly criticized EFL teachers. They have constantly pointed out the weak skills teachers have and their lack of motivation to self-build their capacities. Their negative criticism of teachers reflects their attitude towards those teachers and the attitude supervisors have towards the role they play in the field, which agrees with Dweik and Awajan (2013:37), who found that “the first thing most of the supervisors do when attending an English language class is to talk about the shortcomings of the lesson instead of thanking the teacher for the work that has been done.” The criticizing nature of supervisors resulted in teachers’ “over-reliance on themselves and other peers in addition to the internet” and “less reliance on supervisors” and senior instructors for knowledge and consultation (Asassfeh, 2019:72).

To address the rigid relationship between teachers and supervisors, the MOE has considered the capacity building of supervisors as a reform necessity. Several training programs were aimed at supervisors and principals to qualify them for becoming a resource of knowledge for teachers in their community of practice and to build their capacity in human resources management that enables them to deal with teachers of all types.

7. Conclusion

Data gathered through the questionnaire could be used in identifying capacity building needs of teachers in the area of teaching speaking and pronunciation. When identified, needs could be the basis for future planning and design of training material. The results provide better understanding of the teaching of speaking and pronunciation in schools in general. Supervisors could use the results to highlight the need for remedial programs for both teachers and students. They can also propose a plan for training teachers on using new technologies that facilitate the teaching of the skill.

The Civil Service Bureau could use the results of this paper in changing the methodology of teachers’ testing. The results recommend the addition of an interview following the written test to verify the phonological capacity of teachers and their speaking competence.

Linking the evaluation of teachers to the status of their contracts is another point of discussion that was brought up by supervisors. The Civil Service Bureau could amend the regulations concerning teachers’ contracts in a way that keeps teachers motivated to improve and filters weak teachers due to their negative impact on the outcomes of the learning of students in the country.

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