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**GROUP TRAINING AND INDIVIDUALIZED COUNSELLING
IN THE RESOLUTION OF NON-SPECIALIZED TEACHERS'
PROBLEMS**

THESIS

Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements
For M.A. in Education



370.7122

F.L

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1986

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my deepest thanks and gratitude to my advisors Dr. **Zeinab El-Sherbini** and Dr. **Zeinab El Naggat** - whose help, guidance and encouragement have paved the way for the appearance of this study.

I am indebted to Dr. **Abdel Messih Daoud** and Dr. **Asma Ghanem** for their advice, guidance and encouragement.

My final word of thanks is to the **CDEL** people, teachers of English who kindly answered the questionnaires, and who took part in the experiment, and to my family who had always been patient and helpful.



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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM

Introduction:

Egypt has schools and students in abundance, but few highly qualified specialist teachers of English. These two contradicting facts led to a low standard of English instruction in Egypt.

In addition, Egypt is constantly sending great numbers of teachers of English to many Arab and African countries. This situation makes the acute shortage of teachers, demanded for the local needs of teaching increasing numbers of our Egyptian students more acute. It also makes the problem more difficult to solve.

Egypt, like other developing countries all over the world, is faced with an acute shortage of teachers in all fields. This problem stems from both political and economic factors.

The open-door policy, adopted recently in Egypt, has encouraged foreign investments that offer high pay and other benefits to graduates of the University who master

foreign languages. Accordingly, the best graduates of the English departments refuse to work as teachers.

To face the problem, Egypt resorts to the expansion of Faculties of Education. So far, there are twenty one Faculties of Education with a total body of about 45,000 student (3rd National symposium 1983). Concerning Foreign Language Teaching, Egypt resorts to recruiting non-specialist teachers to teach the language in the Prep. stage. These non-specialists are graduates of departments other than English, namely, history, geography, philosophy or library sciences. These non-specialists have constituted more than 60% of the teachers of English in the Prep stage (3rd National symposium 1983).

In 1985, the Ministry of Education renewed the aims and objectives of language teaching in Egypt. These new objectives do not only stress the importance of the communicative performance and the skills profile, but also stress the bad need for training the non-specialized teachers of English who are responsible for teaching the language in the basic stage. The English language should be taught as a living and creative means of communication, not as a body of knowledge. Rote learning is not enough.

By the end of this basic stage, pupils should be able to communicate to meet their everyday needs, they should be able to identify with other people, to adopt various interactive roles and develop a systematic understanding of their points of view and of other cultures. They have to develop their own strategies for learning and acquiring the language. This should be seen attainable and valid, by pupils, teachers, parents and society.

This communicative approach requires an efficient teacher who has to be flexible, imaginative, supportive and encouraging in his role as a facilitator of learning. His influence should extend beyond the classroom. (The Ministry, 1985). (see Appendix IV) to reach such ends, great care should be given to teacher training.

Realizing the importance of the basic stage for subsequent stages, English language teachers should be adequately prepared to be good models for their pupils.

However, as it was mentioned earlier, the Ministry of Education is obliged to recruit non-specialists. The result is a complaint regarding the low proficiency of most pupils of English at the end of the basic stage. It is fair to say that unless some changes take place, the

above objectives for teaching English will never be realized. Teachers need some training programs.

However, there are three kinds of programs offered to English language teachers.

1. Refresher courses for master teachers to make them aware of the latest trends in Language learning and teaching.
2. Compensatory programs for non-specialists to upgrade their linguistic and pedagogic proficiency.
3. New book courses to train teachers to teach new books.

Ghanem (1979) evaluates these programs saying that "their objectives are too general to develop the competencies of the trainees. As for planning she points out that there is no comprehensive plan for training English teachers through in-service group training programs". Such programs are not co-operatively planned. They are sometimes conducted in the local directorates without any participation from other institutions. Definite behavioural objectives are not clear, although the clarity of the programs objectives is essential for both trainers and trainees.

As for the trainees, they are obliged to attend such courses as they are compulsory and the most important element of evaluation is attendance. The intrinsic motivation of the trainees is rarely appealed to. They are not chosen according to any particular criteria, but they are randomly chosen to complete the required number of participants for training, or according to the date of appointment for the job. Some trainees are intermediate school graduates and others are graduates of the different faculties of the University.

Inevitably, such groups of trainees must show a range of competencies and deficiencies; yet, one single training program is applied to all these kinds of trainees.

Matters of follow-up rarely exist, although mere corrections without further teaching or follow-up is unlikely to help in the eradication of persistent errors.

Faculties of Education in Egypt prepare Egyptian teachers of English. These teachers need constant in-service training in the English language and its methodology as this language is foreign both to them and to their

students. The other type of teacher of English in Egypt is the non-specialist teacher who knows neither the language nor its teaching methodology. Thus, it is quite difficult for a non-specialist teacher of English to teach a language which he doesn't master.

Consequently, teachers of English in Egypt need a special kind of preparator so as to make it easy for them to teach and for their students to learn. Therefore, there must be a strong link between preservice and in-service education.

Bush (1972) in his article on "Curriculum Proof Teachers" wants to clarify the reason behind the low standard of English instruction; he says, "Teacher preparation has changed, but in-service education has not. It now needs to be brought into harmony with the current competence of teachers".

This study deals with the field of in-service training. It is an attempt to survey, and study the different techniques of in-service training programs for the non-specialized teachers, to identify the modern pertinent literature in the field of in-service education and to find out which techniques can be applied in Egypt for training the non-specialized teachers of English. It also aims to assist such teachers in providing the most

effective possible teaching to upgrade the pupils' efficiency.

This process requires answers to basic questions about the needs of the trainees, i.e. non-specialized teachers of English, about their problems as teachers, whether these problems -in fact- differ from one person to another, whether different persons have different perceptions of their problems and needs, and whether the different problems perceived or identified need different solutions.

Context of the Problem:

In-service training centres in Egypt are officially responsible for making up any professional deficiency detected in the teachers. This is achieved through group training courses, i.e. programs in which the in-service training is provided to a group of teachers simultaneously.

However, such programs are not diversified in order to meet the different needs of the trainees, and their objectives are not based on a survey of the actual perceived needs of the non-specialized teachers of English. Group training objectives, it is suggested, are too general to satisfy all individual needs. They inevitably ignore the fact that different teachers have different problems and needs, and that these different problems need different treatment.

In-service language training needs, therefore, to take account of an analysis of the trainees' perceived needs. This needs to be reliable and valid i.e. job-related. Training will-it is argued-be more effective, if the teachers are trained in what they see as their actual needs.

Although no specific questions of research explain what is meant by group training, it is always preferred and followed whenever there exists a need for in-service training programs. Most teacher education throughout the world is of this kind; but its adequacy is questioned. Alternatives do exist and can be exploited. One alternative for training is through individualized counselling. Both approaches are valuable & acceptable and their use is undoubtedly compatible.

The first approach, i.e. group training, is economic and easier in administrative terms; but we have to ask if it is sufficient to meet the different needs and solve the different problems encountered by the different non-specialized teachers of English. If we find that teachers' problems are common and can ^{be} handled in common, then this approach of group training is appropriate. But if we were to find that the needs and the problems of

non-specialized teachers are not common, then we would have to conclude that group training is not sufficient and should be supplemented by some form of individualized counselling.

Training institutions in Egypt are making so much effort to remedy defects detected in specialized teachers of English. They have much greater efforts to do to remedy defects detected in the non-specialized teachers of English who nowadays form the majority of teachers teaching English in the Prep schools in Egypt, and of whom the ministry is in great need to make up for the shortage of well-qualified specialized teachers of English.

The ministry of education is obliged to appoint non-specialized teachers who are not qualified neither professionally nor accademically. This is the main reason of the low standard of English language instruction in our schools. Hence in-service education and training becomes an urgent need for those teachers.

The committee of pre- and in-service teacher education in the conference of the Inspectors and Senior Masters of English (1970) recommends the following: