An Evaluation of Jordanian EFL Teachers' In-service Training Courses Teaching Techniques Effectiveness

Yazan Abdel Aziz Semreen AL-Wreikat
School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia
11800 Penang, Malaysia
Tel: 60-1-247-45014 E-mail: werikat@usm.my

Muhamad Kamarul Kabilan Bin Abdullah
School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia
11800 Penang, Malaysia
Tel: 60-4-653-2966 E-mail: kabilan@usm.my

Abstract

This study aims to evaluate and investigate the influence of teaching techniques on the performance of English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers by evaluating the techniques' effectiveness and actual implementation, as well as to examine the role of teachers in influencing the effectiveness of in-service training courses. A total of 798 questionnaires have been distributed to teacher-respondents. Qualitative and quantitative approaches have been adapted to aid in the evaluation. The findings of the study, taking into account the teaching techniques' effectiveness in the in-service training courses and their impact on EFL teachers' performance, have revealed that EFL teachers' in-service training courses did not emphasize good and effective teaching technique.

Keywords: Training, Techniques, Effectiveness, EFL Teachers, Evaluation

1. Introduction

English language teaching and learning in Jordanian schools have an urgent need for reforms and innovation. The Jordanian Ministry of Education changed the English language curricula and established new departments related to English language learning and teaching. These changes appear to be heading in the same direction: toward a more efficient teaching of practical English. However, inasmuch as the Jordanian Ministry of Education remains hesitant on appropriately meeting the need for reforms, it is crucial to identify the specific problems that these teachers currently face. The reforms would be appropriate and should lead to a more successful English language teaching and learning environment through the identification of the problems of teachers (Kailani, 2004; Alkhawaldeh, 2005; Bader, 1992).

Many educators have asserted the need for a comprehensive policy reform that takes into account the different dimensions of effectual reform (Karsou, 2005). In other words, "Comprehensive policy reform of the educational system should be geared in improving quality, standards, relevance, efficiency, and access. In this regard, any mechanisms and terms of reference built into the policy framework should include identifying regional needs and priorities; mobilizing human and financial resources within the region according to needs and priorities; and setting up collaborative mechanisms that allow countries to share and exchange information, experiences, and expertise in the planning and implementation of the needed reforms" (Billeh, 2002:31).

Several international initiatives in the Middle East, such as those done by the United Nations Development Program, have sought to help Arab countries embrace modernization by effecting reforms in their educational systems (Samak, 2006). This is because education has become a serious issue in the wake of neglect in many Arab countries.

2. Research objectives

This study is designed to evaluate and examine the effectiveness and the extent to which in-service training courses influence the performance of English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, as well as to identify their needs in these courses. There is a need for a research that can evaluate EFL teachers' in-service training courses on teaching technique and their effectiveness to clarify the relation between the effectiveness of teaching techniques and performance of EFL teachers. The results can contribute to EFL teachers' professional development. The evaluation will also provide the developers of EFL teachers' in-service training courses with a better understanding of the current issues in the teaching techniques of EFL teachers. This understanding will assist in the development, implementation, or dissemination of in-service training courses, or in adaption and improvement if they have not yet achieved the intended goals (e.g., improving the performance of EFL teachers). This article will mainly focus on the effectiveness

of EFL teachers' in-service training courses on teaching techniques in Jordanian schools. The study attempts to answer the following questions:

(1). To what extent are the Jordanian EFL teachers' in-service training courses techniques adequately organized to upgrade EFL teachers' performance?

(2). What are the needs of EFL teachers in the in-service training courses in Jordan in terms of teaching techniques?

3. Review of literature

Yamamori et al. (2003) define techniques as learning strategies or actions that teachers use to obtain, keep hold of, store, and recover new information. They consider it as steps or actions that learners use to enhance their own learning. This definition implies that successful learners should not be distinguished by their use of particular techniques (i.e., those not used by others), but by their ability to coordinate techniques with task demands (Chamot and O'Malley, 1994) and their own learning style preferences (Ehrman, 1996).

Many researchers have argued that the research on EFL teaching has changed from the search for an ideal teaching method to how successful teachers and learners actually attain their objectives. The responsibility of the learner as a vigorous contributor in language learning experience has led to substantial research into the field of language learning techniques (Cohen, 1998; Horwitz, 1999; Schmitt, 1997).

According to Oxford (1990:8), "foreign language or second language, learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, or more transferable to new situations." Moreover, "language learning techniques are considered as special ways of processing information that enhance comprehension, learning, or retention of information" (Chamot and O'Malley, 1994:1).

Additionally, according to Cohen (1998:5), "linking the notion of consciousness to the definition of techniques states that language learning strategies include strategies for identifying the material that needs to be learned, distinguishing it from other material if need be, grouping it for easier learning (e.g., grouping vocabulary by category into nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and so forth), having repeated contact with the material (e.g., through classroom tasks or the completion of homework assignments), and formally committing the material to memory when it does not seem to be acquired naturally (whether through rote memory techniques such as repetition, the use of mnemonics, or some other memory technique)."

One of the pivotal purposes of in-service training courses is to equip teachers with the most relevant techniques that can be used in their daily classroom practices. Intelligent multimedia tools can be deployed to meet the challenges of accurately representing the highly multifaceted proficiency of the knowledge base, and in assisting the learning processes of through highly interactive and non-linear access to precise and obvious proficiency (Shen, Li, and Deng, 2001). The concerted use of multimedia technology would lead to a more successful education and training (El-Bibany, 1996; Eberhart, 1998) because multimedia is considered a valuable technology to educational programs and has increasing functions in the area of education and training. The most important benefits of using the system (multimedia) are the high degree of interaction between the schema, which motivates learning, and the promotion of flexible learning (Shen; Li and Deng, 2001). For several years, drama techniques have included significant features of FL teaching techniques. Drama techniques are beneficial because the learner is provided with opportunities to express himself in less controlled and more creative ways within the classroom setting. They bring learners closer to what real-life use of the target language involves (Scheutz and Colangelo, 2004). Some scholars offer priceless information for colleagues who aspire to do the techniques in a smaller scale (e.g., in class objectives relating to drama) (Dodson, 2000) while others talk specifically about using them in larger scale (e.g., out-of-class theatrical production goals) (Bancheri, 1996; Moody, 2002; Savoia, 2002; Schultz and Heingk, 2002).

Other techniques such as the use of collaborative learning are crucial aspects in realizing good communication skills in FL (Shrum and Glisan, 2000). Collaborative teaching also provides a model for collaborative learning of students, facilitating the development of learning communities in classrooms (Bakken, Clark, and Colarulli, 1998) and more integrative thinking (McDaniel and Colarulli, 1997).

The training courses of EFL teachers must emphasize the importance of focus-on-form techniques in meaning-based classes. Previous research has clarified the different types of focus-on-form techniques used by FL teachers, and have investigated the outcome of those techniques on language learning (Mackey, Poilo, and McDonough, 2004). Focus-on-form is defined as any planned or supplementary instructional action that is proposed to encourage language learners to pay attention to linguistic form (Ellis, 2001).

The frequency and characteristics of supplementary focus-on-form occurrences varied significantly depending on learners and classes (Loewen, 2003). EFL teachers have provided a considerable amount of feedback in response to the EFL students' production despite the age of their learners. In turn, these feedbacks can provide useful information on their subsequent production (Oliver, 2000). In-service training courses of EFL teachers should clarify the means by which feedback-giving can be a successful strategy in different classroom situations (Brown, 2001). The feedback discussion between teachers and trainers can also provide moral and physical support and is significant to the teachers' development.

Casual peer education and self-reflection also provide significant feedback (Greany, 2004). Research has confirmed that EFL learners can profit from an understanding of text constructions and the use of text-mapping techniques that highlight text structures and their purpose (Hu and Nation, 2000). More recently, there have been growing anxieties over the recognition of suitable evaluation practices and effective instructional techniques for English language learning. Minimal research has focused on examining effective teaching techniques for English language learning (Sa'enz, Fuchs, and Fuchs, 2005). Reducing this gap in literature is significant given the low educational accomplishment of English language learning and the growing importance of selecting techniques that are scientifically based.

Researchers in Jordan thoroughly discussed many areas of EFL teachers' low performance. They include Al-Noman (2002) who stated that the performance of EFL teachers' in Jordan is low in terms of the use of instructional media (i.e., wall pictures, cassettes, and flash cards). Abu Sirhan (2003) also found that there is no guidance in the teacher's book for the first secondary class on how to use the Metacognitive strategies in teaching reading comprehension. There may be occasional hints in the teacher's book; however, there are no specific strategies defined and there is no adequate guidance provided on how to use them in actual classroom discourse (Alkhawaldeh, 2005).

According to Al-Momani (1998:13), "education in Jordan is at a crossroad for the last ten years. Studies have revealed that the Jordanian schools have failed to produce top quality graduates due to the low performance level of EFL teachers." EFL teachers' training courses do not also focus on teaching techniques for the different text genres. The overall level of proficiency for English teachers is low, average in language structure, and low in both reading comprehension and vocabulary (Moshira, 2001).

4. Method

The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods has caught the attention of numerous researchers (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Gay and Airasian, 2003; etc.). According to Senn (1985:73–74), "analysts use a variety of methods to gather facts about an existing situation-interviews, questionnaires, record studying (on site review), and observation. Each procedure has its particular advantages and disadvantages. Generally, two or three methods are used to complement each other to help ensure a thorough investigation." In fact, researchers increasingly utilize both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to gain in-depth picture of the subject matter, the respondents involved and the efficacy of programs (Steckler et al., 1992).

Qualitative and quantitative approaches were used in this research based on reviewed literature, as well as and to gather facts that will aid in the evaluation of the effectiveness of in-service training courses and their influence on EFL teachers' performance. The study also aims to sharpen the course stipulations. In which the accurate continuing program evaluation is the sequence that join and grasp all the elements of the evaluand (Brown, 1995). As evidenced by reviewed literature, there lacks EFL in-service training courses that adopt both approaches (quantitative and qualitative) based on the perspectives of Jordan-based EFL teachers. Therefore, the study attempts to use both quantitative and qualitative approaches to answer the research questions. The advantages of both these approaches are elucidated in the next paragraphs.

The questionnaire was designed and distributed to the teacher-samples. The items in the questionnaire consist of specific information related to the research questions. The questionnaire aims to evaluate EFL teachers' in-service training courses from a developmental perspective in an attempt to identify the extent of their effectiveness and influence on the performance of EFL teachers. Questionnaires are the most commonly used procedure for data gathering in the research field (Stone, 1978). A questionnaire was developed to address the outlined shortcomings of existing instruments and circumstances and evaluate the effectiveness of training from the perspective of EFL teachers. The questionnaire focused on the factors influencing the effectiveness of training, which eventually reflects on the performance of EFL teachers.

The researcher followed three steps to identify outstanding examples for the questionnaires. First, the new material adopted by the Jordanian Ministry of Education (Action Pack) was examined with special reference to some of the researchers' efforts on this area (Alkhawaldeh, 2005; Abu Sirhan, 2003). This understanding provided the researcher

with a clear picture of the adopted material (Action Pack) and a firm base in which to launch or construct the questionnaire items.

Second, the theories on which the scale was based on were also examined and cross-validated with the objects and purposes of measurement. The theories were discussed in Markees (1997), Strevens (1976), Brown (1995), Colquitt (2000), and Kirkpatrick (1994).

Third, there is a need to establish the content validity of the instrument and pre-test the instrument (pilot study) to give the reliability coefficient and detect if the proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated. The following steps were implemented:

(1) Creation of a group of items.

(2) Conduct of a fieldwork that involved cross-sectional pretest with a small group and modification of the questionnaire based on the inputs.

(3) Longitudinal administration of the revised survey with a larger group.

(4) Conduct of statistical analysis to provide a statistical system for the creation of combination and data reduction. These steps are described in Section 3.5.

The researchers first reviewed several sources of related items, including available surveys (Samak, 2006; Karsou, 2005; Zughoul, 2003; Jaradat, 2006; and Alruba'e, 1999; etc.), to identify items and constructs. The selection of constructs and items was based on previous empirical findings and applicable theories of training effectiveness, mainly those of Markees (1997), Strevens (1976), Brown (1995), Colquitt (2000), and Kirkpatrick (1994).

An item inventory of 109 Likert-scale questions and one essay-type question was created, iteratively categorized, and classified into 11 categories, such as course organization, course content, motivation, duration, and teachers' needs. There are overlaps across items so the researcher ensured consistency in wording and response choices for similar items. Using this information, the initial pretest version of the measure was drafted. It included 102 items focusing on the following constructs (identified a priori): course organization (approach, techniques, and material construction), course content (instructional planning, language skills, general linguistics, classroom management, and syllabus design), motivation (salaries, training place, job stability, job safety, and the role of the Ministry of Education), duration, and teachers' needs.

"A questionnaire is an instrument for the collection of data, usually in written form, consisting of open and/or closed questions and other probes requiring a response from subjects" (Nunan, 1992:231). Interviews were used as a second method to collect additional information and cross-validate data obtained from questionnaires distributed earlier. The interviews also provided opportunities for clarification and explanation of questionnaire findings and served as a counter-checking mechanism against the findings of the questionnaire. They also provided helpful supplementary and in-depth information.

The researcher gathered the qualitative data through face-to-face (individual) structured interviews. The interviews allowed "the elicitation of data by one person from another through person-to-person encounters" (Nunan, 1992:231).

The researcher did not use group interviews because he was cautious about the fact that the report among participants may affect the quality of the information in focus group sessions (Debus, 1988). This technique was used instead in evaluating and discussing EFL teachers' in-service training courses and their effectiveness and influence on the performance of EFL teachers in Jordan.

The study used this technique because it provides in-depth answers and higher chances for the generation of answers from the participants (95% or more have responded). Human beings also prefer face-to-face contacts (Nunan, 1992, 2004): "It is difficult to determine how many people will be interviewed in qualitative studies" (Waites, 1999:71). Moreover, "to obtain the desired depth of information required by such topics, qualitative researchers must almost always deal with small samples. The experience and the insight of the researcher are also used in selecting a sample" (Gay and Airasian, 2003:116).

Interviews are used as one of the methods in data collection because it allows the researcher the opportunity to acquire additional information if the responses on the questionnaires seem incomplete or not entirely relevant. Interviews also help the researcher to solve problems on missing data, provide clarifications and explanations on the findings. Interview was the method employed in data gathering. It aimed to seek the opinions and perceptions of the respondents. It also generated an account on their careers and lives. The interview questions were as follows:

(1). In your own opinion, how do you view the organization of in-service training courses that you have attended or are currently attending?

(2). How do you view the activation of the content in the in-service training courses that you have attended or are currently attending?

(3). How do you view the duration of in-service training courses that you have attended or are currently attending?

(4). How do you view your motivation to attend in-service training courses?

(5). What more do you need in these in-service training courses to improve your performance?

The sample of the study was randomly chosen from the aforementioned population during the school year (2004–2005). The study employed random stratified sampling technique in order to represent the characteristic of the whole population. According to Bluman (2004:677), "a stratified sample is a sample obtained by dividing the population into subgroups called strata, according to various homogenous characteristics and then selecting members from each stratum for the sample." Apart from this, the population of the study was stratified into sub-population. The researcher determined the number of the participants in each sub-population (10%) after identifying the sub-population from the whole population. The sub-samples were then selected to determine the size of the sample (i.e., selection of samples as a sub-percent of the sub-population against the whole population).

The samples selected for the study were involved 809 EFL teachers (10%) from different educational districts in Jordan. Only 798 (331 males, 467 females) were accepted for data analysis because the remaining 11 respondents failed to return complete questionnaires. A total of 798 copies of the questionnaires were handed over by the researcher to the subjects. This technique is consistent with the specifications cited by Borg and Gall (1979) and Nunnally (1978). Table 3.2 below shows the distribution of the participants in the sample according to the three variables, namely, geographical location, sex, and academic qualifications.

5. Findings

The total sample comprised 798 teachers; there were 331 (41.5%) male and 467 (58.5%) female EFL teachers. Seventy-seven (9.6%) of EFL teachers (males and females) had less than 3 years of teaching experience while 721 (90.4%; males and females) had more than 3 years of teaching experience. Twenty-seven EFL teachers (3.4%) have a diploma in English; 735 (92.1%), BA in English; 25 (3.1%), Higher Diploma in English language; and 11 (1.4%), MA in English. The sample was a cross-section representing the EFL teachers in Jordan.

5.1 Results from and analysis of the quantitative data

Table 1 shows that EFL teachers' in-service training courses did not highlight most of the issues related to the in-service training courses' techniques category. Clearly, the application of techniques in teaching language skills is not given importance in EFL teachers' in-service training courses (mean rating: 4.16). This rating implies that EFL teachers are basically uncomfortable in applying unfamiliar techniques, such as giving of drills in classrooms. This feeling negatively influences their performance in classrooms. The courses did not also highlight the implementation of drama techniques (mean rating: 4.14).

Even though feedback discussion between trainees and trainers are important in the training development process, they are neglected as a technique (mean rating: 4.23). Situational dialogues were also not thoroughly discussed in terms of their implementation in classroom situations (mean rating: 4.09). One of the most important hallmarks of teachers and students' educational success is the use of effective and scientifically based techniques, which give teachers the confidence in teaching different areas in a language classroom. However, scientifically based techniques are not discussed in the in-service training courses (mean rating: 4.30).

The Ministry of Education emphasized the importance of education multimedia technology and application but the current in-service training courses did not emphasize the importance of these features. Jordanian EFL teachers then find it difficult to cope with the use of technology in classrooms (mean rating: 3.58). Every task has its own demands, which it can be easily addressed and clarified if it is discussed and coordinated well by using of suitable techniques. Unfortunately, coordinating techniques on task demands are not emphasized in EFL teachers' in-service training courses (mean rating: 4.07). This, in turn, results to a negative effect on teachers' performance in explaining related tasks. Moreover, the focus-on-form techniques are also given negligible attention (mean rating: 3.97).

The courses also neglected to highlight the need for coordination between techniques and learning styles of teachers (mean rating: 4.23). The need for critically thinking teachers capable of analyzing and enhancing their own performance, as well as that of their students, is also not given due importance through the in-service training courses (mean rating: 4.19). The results also show that the in-service training courses did not discuss brainstorming elicitation technique even though it is stipulated as a subject in these courses (mean rating: 4.20).

Moreover, problem solving tasks (mean rating: 4.09) and text mapping discussion (mean rating: 4.18) are not given due attention in the in-service training courses. This neglect of techniques in training causes a negative impact on the performance of EFL teachers because they would not be able to apply effectively these techniques in classrooms.

The obtained data indicate that the in-service training courses did not equip EFL teachers with key techniques and techniques of language teaching (i.e., they should be implemented in the daily classroom situations). Consequently, teachers are ill equipped to apply the appropriate and requisite techniques in the learning environment thus impeding the transmission of these techniques to their learners. This has a negative impact on learners' performance, as they are not properly trained to apply the appropriate techniques by their teachers. Learners' performance is then negatively impacted because successful learners are not characterized by their use of special techniques that others do not use but rather by their ability to coordinate techniques with task demands (Chamot and O'Malley, 1994) and their own learning style preferences (Ehrman, 1996).

Meanwhile, the teachers perceived that the in-service courses highlighted role-playing in classroom situations (mean rating: 2.23). However, the time allotted for discussion is insufficient even if the in-service training courses focused on role-playing in classroom situations. This is shown in the teachers' responses on Item 22 (mean rating: 3.77). This indicates that EFL teachers do not fully understand the issues discussed in the techniques category. The findings are consistent with the findings of Abu Sirhan (2003), who found that EFL teachers lack many needed techniques.

5.2 Results from and analysis of the qualitative data

This section presents the results from and analysis of the qualitative data gathered during the face-to-face (individual) interviews. Teachers who were selected for the interviews were sought on an individual basis to supplement the quantitative data gathered through the questionnaire.

The researcher, by analyzing the teachers' responses during the face-to-face interviews, was able to cross-validate the quantitative data obtained through the questionnaires.

The teachers' responses in the face-to-face interviews were recorded bases on the following order: gender (Male = M or Female = F); experience (More than 3 years = M3 or Less than 3 years = L3); and Qualification (Diploma = D or BA = B or Higher Diploma = H or MA = A). A selection of representative teachers' responses is shown in this chapter (repeated responses are no longer shown).

Table 1 shows a high percentage of EFL teachers who expressed dissatisfaction with the techniques activation in the in-service training courses they attended. The results of the interviews supported the quantitative data taken from the questionnaires covering different areas. An M-L3-B respondent expressed that he had *attended many in-service training courses but that the teacher argued that the in-service training courses are not leading to the results they expect because of many reasons such as on organization. They feel that there are many courses with titles discussing approaches and materials but the titles do not really match the content. As a trainee, he did not know which technique to implement in what situation and, most importantly, how to implement it. He also said that the in-service training courses do not discuss how to deal with the new materials that the Ministry of Education had adopted.*

The qualitative data also expressed the negative perceptions toward in-service training courses in terms of training on teaching techniques. They also highlighted other areas that are helpful in filling the gap in the current in-service training courses.

The results of the qualitative analysis revealed the following:

The interviewed teachers expressed their dissatisfaction towards the organization of in-service training courses they have attended or currently attending. The qualitative data supported the quantitative data taken from the questionnaires. The results highlight the following:

(1) The courses did not discuss the implementation of the different techniques. These findings support the findings from the quantitative approach in terms of techniques category and are shared here: First, the courses did not highlight the implementation of drama techniques (Item 9, mean rating: 4.14). Second, feedback discussion between teachers and trainers is neglected as a technique (Item 10, mean rating: 4.23). Third, situational dialogues were not discussed in terms of their implementation in classroom situations (Item 11, mean rating: 4.0965).
(2) The courses did not discuss the proper methods, which are in line with the new adopted materials. The findings are consistent with the responses of teachers to the questionnaire in terms of material construction category.
(3) The courses did not take into account the teachers' educational level.
(4) The courses did not match the different techniques with the different materials. This result is consistent with the teachers' perception on Item 15, which emphasized that the in-service training courses did not match the techniques with task demands (mean rating: 4.07). This, in turn, leads to a negative effect on the teachers' performance in explaining the related tasks.

(5) The style of the textbook did not encourage self-learning, critical thinking, or problem solving techniques in classrooms.

6. Findings and Discussion

The combination of quantitative and qualitative data shows that EFL teachers feel dissatisfaction toward the techniques category. The EFL teachers value the following issues: importance of applying techniques for teaching in the four language skills (i.e., listening, reading, writing, and speaking); drama techniques; feedback discussion between teachers and trainers; situational dialogues in classroom situations; multimedia technology and application; focus-on-form techniques; selecting techniques that are scientifically based; coordinating or matching strategies with task demands; problem solving tasks; mind mapping; text mapping; self-report discussions; and debates.

The findings are consistent with the different findings of several other studies, which emphasized that learning strategies are specific techniques or actions that are used to acquire, retain, store, and retrieve new information. They are steps or actions that learners use with some degree of consciousness to enhance their own learning (Yamamori, Isoda, Hiromori, and Oxford, 2003).

Moreover, successful learners are not characterized by their use of special strategies that others do not use but by their ability to coordinate strategies with task demands (Chamot and O'Malley, 1994) and their own learning style preferences (Ehrman, 1996). Al-Noman (2002) also added that the performance of EFL teachers in Jordan is low in terms of the use of instructional media (i.e., wall pictures, cassettes, and flash cards).

Abu Sirhan (2003) said that there is no guidance in the teacher's book on how to use the Metacognitive strategies in teaching reading comprehension. He also discussed that there is no special focus on teaching techniques for the different text genres. He proposed that teachers should be trained on the implementation of effective strategies. The in-service training courses did not equip EFL teachers with teaching techniques that they can use in their daily classroom practices. This can deter their performance, as learners in these courses do not have the opportunity to discuss their ideas creatively.

Teachers will face difficulties in facilitating learning in classrooms because the in-service training courses they attend do not emphasize the importance and the effect of these techniques on language learning and teaching. This gap in the in-service training courses highlights the importance of techniques in upgrading the performance of EFL teachers. This gap can be addressed by selecting strategies that are scientifically based and implemented. This study indicates the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of EFL teachers' in-service training courses (i.e., through teachers' perceptions) and their influence on the performance of EFL teachers in Jordan.

The concerned parties and readers were given an orientation during the start of the study so they will have a deep understanding of the status and role of EFL in-service training courses in upgrading the performance of EFL teachers in school settings in Jordan. They were also encouraged to understand the need to go through the EFL in-service training courses and the importance of such courses for the improvement of the performance of EFL teachers in Jordan.

The study discussed the qualitative data obtained from the face-to-face interviews in which their responses were cross-validated with the date derived from the questionnaire. The other areas that the questionnaire did not cover were also highlighted.

The interviewed teachers expressed their negative perceptions toward the in-service training course techniques in terms of implementation. They also highlighted the areas that are helpful in filling the gap in the current in-service training courses.

6. Educational Implications and Recommendations

The results of the study and the identification of the factors that influence EFL teachers' in-service training courses led to relevant suggestions on how best the decision makers can enhance the effectiveness such training courses and improve the performance of the English language teachers in Jordan. Moreover, a needs assessment should be carried out when developing and organizing any in-service training courses. A needs assessment provides training organizers with the actual background on the EFL teachers' problems, which must be addressed so that they can become effective teachers.

A needs assessment assists the in-service training organizers and planners in identifying the kind of knowledge and skills that EFL teachers must possess and ensure their inclusion in the training curriculum. Teachers who attended or are currently attending in-service training courses must be given some role in determining the training topics and activities that they actually need. The study highlighted the following recommendations for the Jordanian Ministry of Education:

(1). The Ministry of Education should approach the Departments of English Language in Jordanian universities so that the EFL trainers and teachers can be deeply trained on teaching techniques.
(2). The Ministry of Education should put on an end to the policy of selecting EFL trainers regardless of their EFL professional competence and qualifications.
3. Special focus should be given on various teaching techniques for the different text types. The EFL teacher in-service training programs should also deepen the focus on the effective implementation of language strategies.

7. Directions for Further Research

Clearly, the professional development of Jordanian EFL teachers is an important issue that is influenced by many factors. Unfortunately, there is still limited research on this issue. We believe that further research is needed on EFL teachers' in-service training courses, as well as their influence on the professional competence and adequacy level of teachers. There is a need to examine the means by which the performance of Jordanian EFL teachers can be improved. The professional qualification and competence of the trainers should also be assessed. After all, the improvement of the skills and competence of the students mostly rely on the quality of education that they are receiving.

Researchers can also conduct in-depth studies on teacher-supervisor relationships and their impact on the success of the teachers' in-service courses, as well as on the skills and competence level of students.

References

Abu Sirhan, O.E. (2003). English Language Teachers' Use of Metacognitive Reading comprehension Strategies in Jordanian Secondary Schools. PhD Dissertation. Amman Arab University, Jordan.

Alkhawaldeh, A.H. (2005). Jordanian English Language Teachers' Awareness of Language Learning Theories and Teaching Methods. Mu'tah Lil-Buhuth Wad-Dirasat, Vol.20.No.7.2005.

AL-Momani, N. (1998). An Evaluation of EFL Textbooks (AMRA) for the First and Second Secondary Class in Jordan. Students', Teachers' and Supervisors' Perspectives, Unpublished M,Ed, Thesis, Yarmouk University ,Irbid, Jordan.

Bakken, L., Clark, F. & Thompson, J. (1998). Collaborative teaching: Many joys, some surprise, and a few worms. *College Teaching Journal*, (4), 46: pp 154-157.

Bancheri, S. (1996). Inscenare Goldoni: Un esperimento sociodidattico Veltro: *Rivista della Civilta' Italiana*, (3-4), 40: pp 443-47.

Borg, W. R. and Gall, M.D. (1979). Educational Research. New York: Longman.

Brown, H. D. (2001). Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.

Brown, J.D. (1995). THE Elements OF Language Teaching Curriculum. A Systematic Approach to Program Development. University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Chamot, A. & O'Malley. (1994). Language learner and learning strategies. In Implicit and Explicit Learning of Languages. Nick C. Ellis. (ed.): pp 371-392.London: Acadimic Press.

Cohen, A.D. (1998). Strategies in Learning and Using a Second Language. London & New York: Longman.

Colquitt , J.A., LePine, J.A.(2000).''Towards an integrative theory of training motivation: a meta-analytic path analysis of 20 years of research''. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. (85): pp 678-707.

Dodson, S. L. (2000). FAQs: Learning languages through drama. In M. Carpenter (Ed.), Proceedings for the Texas Foreign Language Conference: Texas Papers in Foreign Language Education, University of Texas at Austin, 5(1), 129-141.

Eberhart, R. C. (1998).''Computational Intelligence" Roles in Multimedia'', in Selvaraj, H. and Verma, B.(Eds),International Conference on Computational Intelligence and Multimedia Applications, World Sceintific,Singapore.pp3-8.

Ehrman, M. (1996). Second Language Learning Difficulties. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

El-Bibany, H. (1996)."Multi-media development software: object-oriented interface-based simulation'', *ASCE Journal of Computing in Civil Engineering*, (10), 4:pp295-9.

Ellis, R. (2001). Investigating Form-Focused Instruction. Language Learning. (51)1:pp1-46.

Gay, L.R and Airasian ,P. (2003). Educational Research. Competencies for Analysis and Application. Columbus: Charles Merrill publishing Company.467.

Greany, J. S. (2004). Collaborative Teaching in an Intensive Spanish Course: A Professional Develop…Academic Research Library: Foreign Language Annals. (37), 3.P417.

Horwitz, E. K. (1999). Cultural and Situational Influences on Foreign Language Learners' Beliefs about Language Learning: A Review of BALLI Studies. System, 27/4, pp. 557-576.

Hu, H.M. & Nation, P. (2000). What Vocabulary size is needed to read unsimplified texts? *Reading in a Foreign Language* (8):pp689-696.

Kailani, T. Z. (2004). *A Synthesized Pedagogical Methodology for English Classroom Interaction.*

Kirkpatrick, D. L. (1994). Evaluating Training Programs: The four levels. Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco.

Loewen, S. (2003). Variation in the frequency and characteristics of incidental focus on form. Language Teaching Research, (7): Pp 45-315.

Mackey, A., Polio, C. & McDonough, K. (2004). The relationship between experience, education and teachers' use of incidental focus-on-form technique. Language Teaching Research, (8), 3:pp.301-327.

Markee, N. (1997). Managing Curriculum Innovation. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McDaniel, E. & Colarulli, G. (1997). Collaborative teaching in the face of productivity concerns: The dispersed team model. *Innovative Higher Education*. (1), 22:pp19-35.

Moody, D. (2002). Undergoing a process and achieving a product: A contradiction in Educational Drama? In G. Brauer (Ed.), Body and language: Intercultural learning through drama. Westport, CT: Ablex: pp135-160.

Nunan, D. (1992). Research Methods in Language Learning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Oliver, R. (2000). Age Differences in Negotiation and Feedback in Classroom and Pair Work. *Language Learning*, (50):pp51-119.

Oxford, R. L. (1990). Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know. New York, NY: Newbury House /Harper & Row.

Sa'enz, L.M., Fuchs, L. S., & Fuchs, D. (2005). Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies for English Language Learners With Learning Disabilities. Exceptional Children, (71), 3: p 231.

Savoia, F. (2002). Teaching Italian language, literature, and cultural through performance: The Italian theatrical workshop. Italica, (4), 77: pp 509-522.

Scheutz, C.R.& Colangelo, L.M. (2004). Full-Scale Theater Productive and Foreign Language Learning. Academic Research Library: *Foreign Language Annals*, (37), 3:P374.

Schmitt, N. (1997). Vocabulary Learning Strategies. In: N. Schmitt & M. McCarthy(Eds.), Vocabulary: description, acquisition and pedagogy. Cambridge:Cambridge University Press. pp. 199-277.

Schultz, K. & Heinigk, P. (2002). Magic on stage: Urfaust and other great plays for educational pleasure. In G. Brauer (Ed.), Body and language: Intercultural learning through drama.pp233-240.Westport, CT: Ablex.

Shen, Q., Li, H. & Deng, Z. (2001). Intelligent multimedia for expertise-intensive training in construction. Logistics Information Management. (14), 5/6:p386.

Shrum, J. & Glisan, E. (2000). Teachers' handbook: Contextualized language Instruction. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Steckler, A., McLeroy, K.R., Goodman, R.M., Bird, S.T. & McCormick, L. (1992)."Towards Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: An Introduction." *Health Education Quarterly*, 19:1.

Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. (2003). The past and future of mixed methods research: From data triangulation to mixed model designs. In: A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook on mixed methods in the behavioral and social sciences* (pp. 671-701). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Waites, K. C. (1999). The Professional Life-Sycles and Professional Development of Adult Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). A dissertation in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of New South Wales.

Yamamori, K., Isoda, T., Hiromori, T. & Oxford, R. L.(2003). Using cluster analysis to uncover L2 learner differences in strategy use, will to learn, and achievement over time. *IRAL, International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, (41), 4: p 381.

Table 1. Mean of teachers' responses to the questionnaire items

	Techniques The in-service training courses discuss the following techniques:	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	Mean
	Degrees of teachers' responses	**Freq**	**Freq**	**Freq**	**Freq**	**Freq**	M
1	Applying techniques for teaching language skills.	4	109	54	217	414	4.16
2	Highlighting the implementation of drama techniques.	8	22	99	383	286	4.14
3	Feedback discussion between trainees and trainers.	14	21	115	260	388	4.23
4	Applying situational dialogues in classroom situations.	23	118	45	185	427	4.09
5	Selecting effective scientifically based techniques.	3	78	33	240	444	4.38
6	Multimedia technology and application.	39	167	48	374	170	3.58
7	Role-playing in classroom situations.	141	494	36	91	36	2.23
8	Coordinating techniques with task demands.	6	122	51	249	370	4.07
9	Emphasizing the implementation of focus-on -form techniques.	17	112	88	240	341	3.97
10	Coordinating techniques with teachers own learning style.	7	99	41	202	449	4.23
11	Developing teachers' skills of critical thinking.	14	92	45	217	430	4.19
12	Brain storming elicitation.	18	107	29	185	459	4.20
13	Problem solving task.	13	111	48	238	388	4.09
14	Text mapping discussion.	7	91	48	255	397	4.18
15	The time given for discussion is sufficient.	49	154	44	230	321	3.77