CHAPTER-ONE

EDUCATION IN IRAQ
1.1. BACKGROUND

Iraq, which was in ancient times known as Mesopotamia, is an independent country in the Middle East. Iraq has a long cultural history, going back to 4000 B.C.

Historical records show that the civilization of Sumeria and Babylon was developed and continued for a long time three thousand years before Christ. The Sumerians were the first to begin teaching and learning.¹

In the early Islamic era, during the Abbasid dynasty (750-1258), Iraq reached the zenith of its civilization. This civilization lasted for about five hundred years, during this period “Bait el-Hikma” – House of Wisdom- was established in Baghdad, the capital of Iraq. It was a combination of an academy, a library and a translation bureau which had a great influence on language learning.

The Greek, Persian and Hindu foreign Languages were studied by scholars and translation into and from Arabic was carried out from this house.²

In addition to its political, religious and cultural importance, Baghdad became the centre of intellectual activities and remained so until its destruction by Mongols of central Asia in 1258. The light of civilization went out from Iraq by this destruction. Thousands of people, among them the elite, students and scholars were killed, and libraries were destroyed. Iraq was conquered by the
Ottoman Turks in 1638 and became a peripheral province of the Turkish Empire for nearly three centuries.

The only education available during this period (1638-1914) was provided in traditional mosque school in which the main emphasis was on memorising the Quran. Reading and writing received secondary attention. Mosques always served as the basis for religious education and socialization. Within Islamic society the mosque traditionally represented the centre of the community, transcending its religious and even social role by becoming the earliest educational institution in Islam. Here scholars would congregate and discuss the Quran. Religious sciences, especially *Hadith* (Sayings of the Prophet Mohammed) were taught. As a result of the expansion of Islam, these centers of religious education were quickly established in the newly acquired territories, and mosques became centres of socialization and religious education. Three thousand mosques were established in Baghdad within three centuries.

One form of mosque education was *Mulla* or *Kuttab* instruction, which was mainly the study of the teachings of the Quran. Mosque school was the typical form of Islamic education and it persisted throughout Iraq during the Ottoman era (1538 until the First World War).

Mosque schools provided the only education available in most parts of the country until about the mid-nineteenth century, when the first secular public
schools were established under the Turkish rule. Mosque schooling, Mulla or Kuttab instruction, took place in mosque or in places near mosques. It provided individualized teaching and was conducted in a simple but unsystematic way by semi-religious men and sometimes by women. The subjects taught included arithmetics, penmanship, reading and memorization of the verses of the Quran. The Quran was the only textbook used in these schools.

Thus, the lights were not lit again until the break up of the Ottoman Empire in World War 1 by the British who set Iraq on the way to self-government. It was not until the mid-nineteenth century that a secular system of public education was established throughout the Ottoman Empire, of which Iraq was a part. Turkish was the language of instruction. Arabic was taught as a second language.

Although Iraq is rich in natural resources, but its society is characterized by the features of an underdeveloped economy, and its natural and human resources are very poorly utilized. In this context, the educational system developed in Iraq during the British occupation evolved slowly and with difficulty. Even after the formation of national government in 1921 under British mandate, its scope remained very restricted. Nevertheless, it was a significant starting point and it formed the basis of the Iraqi educational system and the consequent
educational work carried out by the British played an important role in laying the foundations of present educational system in Iraq:

English, the only compulsory foreign language taught in Iraqi schools at present, was taught for the first time in state schools in 1873. However, both English and French had been taught and used as medium of instruction by few private schools before 1873.³

French was the first foreign language to be introduced in intermediate schools late in the nineteen century. The reason was that the Turkish educational system was influenced by the French because of the strong relationship between the two countries. Besides, the activities of French missionaries, who had settled in the country and had established their own schools, had great influence in popularising the French language and culture. There were very few schools in Iraq when it was colonized by Britain after the First World War. Arabic was substituted for Turkish as the official medium of teaching. It was also decided to confine the teaching of English to the towns, because it was thought that teaching English in every public school, even if it were possible, might cause discontent. So it was decided that many primary schools should be opened and be with at least one trained English teacher. At the beginning of the British administration i.e. during the first year, English was taught as a second language, introduced from the first primary year, but later was started in the
fifth year, reducing the period of teaching English by four years and making it as a foreign language rather than the second language.

The major development in educational activity in Iraq took place after the Revolution of July 14, 1958. When the government started to reform its education policy. It adopted an open-door policy in education and provided more opportunities for free education at all levels—primary, secondary (intermediate and preparatory stages) and higher education.

Education has been given special attention in Iraq during recent years. The expansion of educational opportunities since 1958 has led to many social changes. Many children from the low income families have become university graduates, doctors, engineers and scientists. This has been possible because of the system of free education. No tuition fee is charged from any pupil. Nor is any charge levied for participation in social and sports activities. In addition, textbooks and stationery items are provided free. Primary education was made compulsory for the first time for all children who had attained the age of six years at the beginning of the school year 1978-79. According to the Compulsory Education Law which was passed in 1976,

School attendance is from six to fifteen years of age
or until the completion of the primary stage,
whichever is earlier.⁴
There is no selection at any stage, except the requirement to pass the prescribed examination; this allows guaranteed quality of access to education of all types and at all levels to all Iraqi citizens without discrimination on ground of sex, ethnicity, religion, caste, or any other affiliation.

The state of Iraq was created in 1921. The Ministry of Education, which came into existence and replaced the British. The Ministry of Education since its inception became responsible not only for the training and appointment of teachers, but also for prescribing the curriculum and text-books for public schools, and in 1929 it became responsible for the formulation and grading of public “Baccalaureate” examination. In other words, the school system become largely centralised and controlled directly by the ministry in Baghdad.

1.2. THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Iraqi education follows a 6-3-3 system: primary education secondary education (intermediate: class 7, 8, 9 and preparatory: class 10,11,12), and higher education (see figure No. 1), primary and secondary education being under the direct supervision and administration of the Ministry of Education in Baghdad, and the universities being under the control of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. These Ministries issue regulations, instructions, orders
of appointments teachers and are also responsible for promotion, foundation, financial support, determination of curricula and textbooks, the training of teachers, formulation and grading of public (baccalaureate) examination. Examinations are given immense importance, and the pupil’s record and academic success depends entirely on the results of the nation-wide baccalaureate examinations administered by the Ministry of Education at the end of the primary, intermediate secondary and preparatory stages. The last type serves as the entrance examinations for the university or institute. This examination is probably the most valid credential, indicating an Iraqi student’s competence.

The years of compulsory schooling are from 6-12 years old, involving a 6 years primary school and a three year secondary intermediate level. The transition from primary to secondary education is made between 12 and 13 years old, and transition from secondary education is made between the ages of 18-19. No fees are payable at any stage and free books and health service are provided. Most children under six years old can go to kindergarten.
Figure No. 1 Structure of the education system in Iraq

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- **Pre-compulsory**: Compulsory
- **Past-compulsory**: Intermediate, Preparatory, Vocational, Teacher training institute (5 years), Institute of Fine Arts (5 years), Primary Teacher Training, Teacher Training Institute

Compulsory (public) examinations at the end of stages 1, 2 and 3.

1.3. PRIMARY EDUCATION

The educational system in Iraq is based on primary school, which children enter at the age of six and attend for six years. Primary education is compulsory and free for all children who have reached the age of six years. The primary course ends in special public primary examinations which are set by the Ministry of Education for all Iraqi schools.

The public primary examinations require examinees to sit for papers in six subjects.

Historically, during the Ottoman era, Iraq had few primary schools, and education was used by rulers as an instrument for preparing officials for government service:

The history of modern school establishment in Iraq is as follows: In 1907 in Baghdad, during the Madhat Bash Vali era, the first primary school for boys was opened, and the first primary school for girls in the city was opened in 1908 during the era of Namek Bash Vali.5

During the British Mandate the villagers’ requests to government to take responsibility for schools met with objections from the British Chancellor of the Exchequer who said:
The budget of the state would not allow for this increase; the people who wanted schools more than anything should allow them to be established from their own budget.\(^6\)

In 1920 the number of official primary schools in Iraq was 88, 15 of whom were for girls. The total number of pupils was 8001, of whom 462 were girls. With the establishment of the Mandate in 1921 the public school system, organized under Turkish rule, began to expand slowly under the British supervision.

Meanwhile, the British initiated a dual system of primary education in Iraq which was similar to their education policy in Egypt:

By 1928, Iraq had only 55 full six-year course schools out of 264 primary schools. However, this duality in primary education was abolished in 1930, thus raising the standard of all primary education to the complete six-year course, leading to secondary education.\(^7\)

When Iraq attained Independence in 1932 there were about 300 primary schools, located mostly in towns. By 1956 the number of co-educational schools was 425. This number increased to more than 1700 in 1965:

But in most towns some primary schools, however, are girls only. Virtually all rural primary schools, however, are co-educational. In at least some of these schools, traditional attitudes towards female
Education have tended to keep the number of girl students low. Because of a general shortage of classrooms and the lack of schools and transportation facilities in the countryside, compulsory education is fully enforced only in certain areas designated by the Ministry of Education on the basis of available facilities. Where primary schools are lacking, the only education available to school-age children is offered by the traditional mosque schools.

The (Mulla) schools continued to carry out their educational duties as religious institutions, distinct from public schools. The children who have attended these schools may enter the lower grades of the government primary schools after passing an examination.

The development of the educational sector became very rapid after the 1958 Revolution. Many primary schools were opened in remote places where the requests of the local people had been refused by the former regime.

The number of students enrolled in primary education in 1960s rose to 957,211 students in more than 4000 schools, offering 6-year courses. Girls accounted for about 29 percent of the students in primary education.

But the relatively high number of girls in education stems from the expansion of the educational system. The number of girls in primary education was only 462 in 1921. This figure reached 1,058,695 i.e. 2,292 times more than in 1921 in 1975.
1.4. SECONDARY EDUCATION

The six secondary education courses comprise two stages:

1. Intermediate education for three years. The intermediate course ends in public examination set by the Ministry of Education which requires passing papers in ten subjects.

2. Preparatory education for three years. The average preparatory school, that is the upper part of secondary education, offers the student a choice of two parallel courses, a literary course or a scientific one. The preparatory course ends in public examinations set by the Ministry of Education. The public examinations require passing papers in seven to nine subjects: literary course examinations are taken in: Arabic language, English language, Economics, General mathematics, History and Geography. Scientific course examinations are taken in: Arabic language, English language, Algebra, Geometry, Chemistry, Physics, Biology and Trigonometry.

Having completed his secondary education, an Iraqi student can enter higher education such as colleges or institutes. Most of the students go on with their studies and choose to complete their first degree.

The first secondary classes started in Baghdad, Mosul, and Basrah in 1920s but it was not until 1930s that secondary school for girls were opened in the same cities.
According to the Education Law of 1929, the four-year programme of secondary education was lengthened to a five-year programme composed of an intermediate stage of three years and a senior stage of two years, each stage was to be concluded by public examinations. Iraq had only 15 secondary schools in the 1930s with a total enrolment of 1836 students.\(^9\)

The pressure to expand secondary education increased as the expansion of primary education continued to grow. Rapid expansion of secondary education was a necessity to absorb the ever-increasing flow of primary school graduates.

The demand for secondary education continued to increase and by 1975-1976 the total secondary school enrolment had reached 493, 457 students, which represented a 602 percent increase over that of enrolment in 1957-1958.\(^{10}\)

Similar expansion occurred in the number of secondary schools and teachers.

### 1.5. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Vocational Education is similar in level to secondary education and includes the following studies: technical, agricultural, industrial and commercial. Vocational education is greatly encouraged by the government. It believes that Vocational education prepares skilled persons to participate in development programmes and projects.
1.6. HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education is another area of concern that received little attention during the British occupation of Iraq.

The first school of higher education was established in Baghdad in 1908, with an enrolment of 65 students. Between the first and Second World Wars, three more colleges were established which were College of Law, established in 1919, College of Teachers in 1923, and the Colleges of Medicine, in 1927.\textsuperscript{11}

The growth of higher education began in 1950. Thus, the structure of higher education in Iraq has resulted in ‘a large number of colleges and institutes of different levels. The institutions of higher education are as follows:

The University of Baghdad (1958), the University of Al-Mustansiriyah (1964), the University of Mosul and the University of Basrah (1967), the University of Salah Al-Dien (1968), the foundation for Technical Institute (1972), and the University of Technology (1975). Other institutions of higher education in Iraq were five private colleges which became public in 1974.\textsuperscript{12}

Nowadays there is a university in every governorate of Iraq, some of them even have more than one university. Although higher education in Iraq had developed tremendously during the last two decades, it remains marred by
significant deficiencies, regarding the achievement of national development goals.

In his analysis of higher education in Iraq, the UNESCO consultant A.K. Rybnikov concluded that the problem of planning is central and urgent. According to Rybnikov, the situation of higher education in Iraq could be improved if the functions of higher learning institutes were well planned and coordinated. The expansion of educational opportunities, since 1958, at both the primary and secondary levels of Iraqi education has generated increasing pressure on institutions of higher education. For political and developmental considerations, and because of the view that higher education is one source of essential high level manpower.

Opportunities for girls in higher education have also been increasing with fewer obstacles, than in many other Arab countries. During the same period, the foundation of higher education grew from two universities, consisting of thirteen colleges and the country’s six institutes, to six universities consisting of forty-two colleges, and thirteen institutes (Foundation for Technical Institutes 1977).

Despite the expansion of higher education facilities, the Minister of Planning indicated in 1970 that
the demand by secondary school graduates for university admission was increasing and that the rate of expansion has failed to keep up with the increase in applications for university admission.  

According to the report of the UNESCO mission sent to Iraq in 1971, most students in higher education come from large cities where the best secondary schools are located: Baghdad, Mosul and Basrah.

Most students in rural areas had to move to the closest town if they wished to continue their schooling because most secondary schools are located in urban areas. Also, secondary schools in larger towns always have better facilities and better qualified teachers. Thus, they provide higher quality of education, which enables students to fare well in the baccalaureate examination which determines admission to an institution of higher education. Despite these drawbacks, higher educational facilities have greatly expanded during the last decade, providing more opportunities for students coming from various parts of the country.

As far as the education in general is concerned, below are the details of the duration of each stage and terminal qualifications for the various stages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Duration (years)</th>
<th>Terminal Qualifications</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Six</td>
<td>Certificate/Baccalaureate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.7. **ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT)**

English as a foreign language is a compulsory subject and begins from the fifth grade and the number of hours of English instructions per week varies from four to six. English is used mainly as a medium of study for academic purposes.

In Iraq, the situation of teaching English as a foreign language is dismal and affected by the amount of teaching time, teacher qualifications, methods and textbooks used and class size which is usually between 40 to 60. The emphasis at the secondary level is placed on grammar and reading rather than communication skills.

Students can see little reason to learn English except for passing national examinations, which evaluate only reading skills, thereby increasing the pressure on teachers and educational authorities to concentrate on this ability at the expense of the rest of the language skills. There is almost no chance to use
English. If there is any reason for learning English it is to enhance the students’ social prestige and increase their financial prospects. The best English students go to other professional areas such as medicine, or business for prestige and money, and not into teaching profession.

Teachers of English as a foreign language (especially in elementary schools) are of all sorts. Elementary teachers who teach English are not professionally qualified to teach the English language, and lack training in language techniques and skills. They structure their questions so that their students may respond mechanically, without having to give any thought to what they are saying. As a result, their students are unable to carry on a conversation even after eight years of English study. A few teachers’ English proficiency is good, but the majority have limited aural/oral skills. Their attention is focused on finishing the required and assigned material rather than on the students’ improvement in English language skills. This situation can be improved through a comprehensive restructuring of the entire system of EFL teaching in Iraq. Teacher training institutions should design their methods, curriculum, and course structure so that the importance of meaningfulness and personalization in an aural/oral class is emphasized.
The Iraqi educational authorities consider training programs for teachers to be an effective means of reforming the existing inadequate educational system and in teaching English as a foreign language.

1.8. PERIODS ALLOCATED

The weekly time-table in both intermediate and preparatory schools in Iraq is divided into 33 teaching periods for grades 1-3 (Intermediate) and fifth grade literary; 34 and 41 periods (45 minutes) for grades 5 and 6 scientific respectively, 29 in sixth year literary and 35 in fourth year scientific and literary, each lesson being of 45 minutes duration in both schools. The allocation of periods per subject per week in double-shift schools in both stages follows the study plan mentioned above, with minor reductions and some out of class work. Intermediate students practise particular activities in the technical arts sections of the schools involved in the technical arts experiments.

1.9. SYSTEM OF ADMINISTRATION

The Ministry of Education is the final authority on all major educational decisions. It recruits all teachers to be appointed to schools. Moreover, it organizes and administers public examinations; provides all educational programmes and prepares and distributes all textbooks.
The responsibility for administering the educational system is shared between the Central Government and the Local Administration. The Ministry of Education has direct control over secondary education, general education, vocational and teacher training while the administration of primary education, fundamental and literacy programme is the responsibility of the Local administration. All funds for these programme are administered at the provincial level by the Director General of Education, who is responsible to the Ministry of Education for all technical matters and for the various stages of education. Iraq is divided into 16 areas of education each with a Director-General (who has the authority to take a limited range of decisions without reference to the Ministry), and each with its own educational supervisors (inspectors). There are also three areas of the education which belong to Kurdistan region.

Higher education is administered by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. However, Universities are autonomous in most technical and administrative matters.

Various technical ministries such as Labour and Social Affairs, Health, Communication, Agriculture and Oil also administer vocational training centers for skilled workers.
1.10. SYSTEM OF EXAMINATIONS AND TESTS

Testing and evaluation is an integral part of the educational system. Regular test and evaluation of English courses can enhance the quality of teaching and learning. The purpose of the present educational system is to bring about a desired change in students and it is only through the regular testing and evaluation that a desired change in students and educational objectives can be made. Testing and evaluation has a role in assessing the strength and weakness of the students. Teachers through the testing and after a careful analysis of the evaluation results can study the students’ progress and performance.

Examination is the most important area that needs consideration if we really want closer links between testing and educational objectives and materials to be developed.

The Iraqi system of examinations suffers not from one but many drawbacks. These need to be considered most carefully at an early stage to measure students’ achievements and assess their cognitive skills. The following types of examinations are presently in operation in Iraq.

1. The teacher-made tests - These tests are constructed and executed by the teachers themselves. Educational regulations in Iraq require teachers to hold such tests once a month as well as mid-year and final-year examinations in order to check the progress of their pupils in English.
The only difference between the monthly tests and mid-year and final-year examinations is that the latter are both oral and written, while the forms is of the written type only.

As for marking, it is done by the teacher himself through the year. The marking of the mid and final examinations is done in schools under a round table formula where all the teachers of the subject screen and mark the answer sheets collectively. This process is of a highly confidential nature which to a great extent checks favouritism or subjectivity. A similar procedure is followed for giving an oral test. The percentage of marks is 30% for oral and 70% for written.

2. The Ministerial (Baccalaureate) Examinations

This type of examinations is constructed by the Ministry of Education under utmost secrecy. They are held at the end of intermediate and preparatory stages of schooling. These constitute a check by the Ministry on the standard of achievement of the schools and also serve to keep all the schools in the line with the programmes laid down by the Ministry. The Ministerial examinations, although they do not test a complete profile of the student’s knowledge, but they serve as a passport to promotion for intermediate students. As for the secondary school graduates, these examinations are the only means upon which their selection to higher education is decided.
The services of experienced teachers usually are used for devising questions for various levels. The specialist marking committee are also appointed yearly and attached to the correction centres for the secondary unit level in Baghdad. Correction of intermediate examination is decentralised.

Thus, in Iraq the students’ ability in English is tested through paper and pencil especially in these public examinations. Passing these examinations becomes the main objective of students. Teachers rightly feel also a certain responsibility to get their pupils through these examinations. Consequently, much of their teaching in Iraqi schools is geared to this aim. Since these examinations are in written language, this has led to relatively large emphasis being put on written English and mostly grammar. (see appendix 1)

1.11. EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

Correa has divided the planning process into three main functions:

(a) Decision-making,

(b) Technical preparation of the plan, and

(c) Implementation and control.\footnote{14}

Planning is the only scientific way of making the teacher who desires to control his environment. The purpose of planning is decision-making which is very
much the major goal of the educational system. For achieving these goals, teachers’ buildings and equipment are needed.

The curriculum innovative planning is the way of preparing a relevant curriculum that should be determined according to what students need to learn. So curriculum and programs should be designed while keeping the students in mind.

Before the teacher can start to consider planning his classes he needs to know about his job before he can start to make successful plans. Before he actually writes down the detailed contents of such a plan he will need to think about what he is going to do.

It is the duty of planners, in Iraq, to establish a consistent educational system on which the students can rely on, for school is the strongest institution for fulfilling almost all social objectives and students interests.

1.12. TEXT BOOKS

It is generally agreed that language learning and language use are two distinct phenomena. This Learning may be through so many things such as textbooks. Teaching English in Iraqi schools has always been limited to text-books which are prepared and prescribed for all stages by the Ministry of Education. English as a subject has occupied an important position in secondary education. For instance, in 1931 the number of periods for English was eight per week out of
thirty-two, together with eight other subjects in the first and second secondary years. The textbooks used were imported from Egypt and were based on the grammar-translation method.

In 1932, an American educational committee visited Iraq and it recommended the improvement of English language teaching in Iraq by the use of better textbooks, and the recruiting of qualified teachers. In the hope of improving the standard of the language another attempt was made during 1933-34. New textbooks were imported from Britain to replace the old-fashioned ones that were unsuitable for teaching English to Iraqi students. Unfortunately, this new series entitled: “Reading and Thinking” were adopted for primary schools but did not last more than one year. They proved unsuitable for Iraqi students because they were meant for British children on whose experience, vocabulary and tradition they were based. In 1935 new textbooks of better quality were introduced.

French’s Alternative Books, which were introduced in 1940, were replaced by other books including some of the Oxford English Course books and Oxford Supplement Readers:

So they were dropped and replaced by better ones “Oxford English Course for Foreign Children” Thus, the teaching of
English relatively improved. Additional activities including English Songs and plays were taught.\textsuperscript{16}

The revised English course was classified into literary and scientific. The number of periods (45 minutes) was reduced from eight to seven per week in all secondary education years. A second foreign language, French or German, was introduced. However, the above division was abolished in 1935, and the number of periods was further decreased to six in the final year. In the same year new textbooks of better quality were introduced. The text-books used in Iraqi schools until the introduction of the new series in 1973-74 were entitled “English for Iraq” which followed the same approach followed by their predecessors, the imported British made series of text-books of “Oxford English”. Those were vocabulary-centred and manifested a clear bias towards direct method and aimed at teaching language skills through reading.

In accordance with the 1970 Committee’s recommendations, a series of “The New English Course for Iraq” was produced and it was used in 1973. The first two texts, books 1 and 2, accompanied by Teacher’s guides were designed and written for the fifth and sixth grades of primary schools for children whose ages ranged from ten to twelve years:
Each of these books has twenty-four units. Each unit is supposed to be taught in five class hours. The whole twenty-four units are to be covered in one academic year, which is estimated at 120 class hours. The units contain:

A. – Dialogue
B. – Pronunciation material
C. – Reading
D. – Writing (from unit 6)
E. – Written homework. 17

The writers of the texts have adopted the structural approach, which is thought to be the best method to ensure presentation and adequate choral repetition for a large number of children. This series was introduced in 1981. The textbook VIII for the class 6th secondary level which is recently in use in Iraq, was the last textbook of this series.

A new series was introduced in 2006 by Michael Harris, David Mower and Anna Sikorzy Ska, which started from fifth grade of primary schools, but then was produced from third grade of primary school and was continued till third intermediate (class 9) in 2011.
1.13. TEACHERS

Any worthwhile reform with regard to teaching of English must be at the teacher’s level because it is the teacher who gives a concrete shape to any carefully planned strategy for reform in the classroom.

The teacher’s role is to facilitate the learning process by using different methods depending on the group he works with. The teacher’s role is to help the students to achieve their educational objectives. The teacher must have thorough knowledge of his subject area (s). Education is an applied field and teachers need to be educational workers. The professional teacher is not a technician who is handed a set prescription of what to do. He must be able to demonstrate a high level of proficiency in his subject. Knowledge of the subject is not sufficient to enable the teacher to teach it effectively. He must also be able to analyze it, organize it and present it in an easy to understand way.

The teacher should be aware of the differences among his students’ learning abilities and styles which are mainly associated with differences in personality. Through questionnaires and personal interviews the problems of Iraqi teachers of English as a foreign language were identified. These included: elementary teachers who teach English in primary schools, English is regarded as one of the important subjects in the training institutes. The need for raising the standard of a foreign language like this in the training institutes is necessary. A
department of English was established within each of these training institutions. In order to achieve the rising expectations of English teachers. These institutions were provided with modern electronic teaching and learning aids. The teachers were advised to manipulate the foreign language skillfully to the degree which makes it possible for the pupils to develop a high degree of language understanding. To do this, the teachers could use a variety of techniques. But students saw no reason to learn English except for passing the national examination and these national examinations evaluate reading skills only, which leads teachers to concentrate on this skill at the expense of listening, comprehension, speaking and writing skills.

To improve the situation of teaching English as a foreign language in Iraq, which includes primary and secondary schools teachers, the Ministry of Education recommends and provides the following educational training:

1. Pre-service and in-service training for teachers of English as a foreign language in Iraq.

2. The long-term needs for trained English teachers by training leaders, supervisors, and teacher trainers who will provide quality training on a regional basis.18

The teachers of English in Iraq can be classified under the following heads:
1.13.1. **Primary school teachers** – The foundation for learning English is laid in the last two years of the primary school, i.e., in the fifth and sixth grade. Therefore, the role the primary teacher plays in this respect is more important than that of the secondary school teachers of English. In addition to imparting knowledge and developing attitudes, he is largely responsible for shaping the early linguistic habits of the pupil and paving his way for his future career. The 1973 curriculum for teaching English in Iraqi primary schools emphasises the aim of training and developing the communicative skills of pupils. The teachers are further advised in the Teachers’ Guide that to be able to teach effectively, the teacher should himself be proficient in it.

In order to meet the above needs and to train thousands of teachers needed for primary schools, the Iraqi Ministry of Education offered a variety of training patterns. These patterns have followed two axes, initial training, as part of general preparation of the aspiring teacher, and in-service training for the practising teacher. At present the following two patterns of initial training have so far survived:

1.13.1. (a) **Primary Teachers Training (Dar Al-Mualeemeen)**

It admits the intermediate School leaving students (age 15+) to train them as urban and rural teachers. The programme of study which lasts three years is a mixture of academic, educational subjects and teaching
methods. It requires 32 periods (45 minutes) of study per week in each of the three years.

Intermittently, there has been a section for the preparation of the primary teachers of English. The first attempt was made in 1931-32.¹⁹

1.13.1. (b) Primary Teaching Institute (P.T.I.)

This institution offers a two year course after the secondary school education to train candidates (age 18+) as primary urban teachers. Here also, there is no specialisation in teaching English or in any other discipline. The programme of study includes educational subjects and teaching methods. Below is the weekly time-table of this type of institutions.
Table 1

(Weekly time-table for P.T.I.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>1st Yr.</th>
<th>2nd Yr.</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic Language</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic Language</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>The three periods during the second year are for methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching method</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems Of Arab Society</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Psychology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Methodology</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administration</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Education</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.13.2. (a) Secondary school teachers

A secondary school teacher in Iraq is a subject teacher i.e., he has specialised in teaching a particular subject. Nearly all of them are also equipped with four years’ professional training at one of the national universities of Iraq. The following are the patterns followed in training the teachers of English in Iraq:

1.13.2 (b) College of Arts

Four years after the secondary school certificate leading to the B.A. degree in English with special emphasis on English literature.

1.13.2 (c) College of Education (formerly known as Higher Teacher’s Training College). 20

This offers a four year programme after the secondary school certificate leading to the B.A. degree in English. The programme emphasises English language as well as professional subjects (practical and theoretical). In the final year it is necessary to have training at a secondary school (intermediate and preparatory).

1.13.2 (d) College of Languages

Initially this institution offered a three year course leading to a Diploma. Later, the course was extended by one year. Graduates were awarded a B.A. degree in language. Emphasis was on English and theoretical professional subjects. This college is no longer in existence.
1.14. **In-Service training courses**

As already mentioned, the institute for the development of English language teaching shortly known as I.D.E.L.T.I. is a well established institute that has been functioning since 1972. In 1976 it came under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Education. The institute is responsible for all aspects of the development of English language teaching in Iraq. This includes:

(a) In-service training of primary and secondary teachers and supervisors of English, with the purpose of both improving their competence in the English language and training them in modern methods and techniques of English language teaching;

(b) Production and revision of English textbooks for all educational levels in Iraq;

(c) Reform of the Baccalaureate English examinations;

(d) Advice to the Ministry of Education on the production of other textbooks for use in Iraqi schools;

(e) Advice to the Ministry of Education on pre-service training of English language teachers;

(f) Research in English language teaching;

(g) Training of a limited number of government officials. The main objective of this establishment is to organise in-service training programme for the teachers of English and to introduce them to sound linguistic knowledge as well as up-to-date techniques of teaching English.\(^{21}\)
This situation is markedly different from 1920s and 30s when the teachers were of the following types:

- a. Graduate of Higher Teaching-Training College opened in 1923, which offered courses to prepare primary teachers to teach English or other subjects, and later offered two-years courses to prepare secondary schools teachers.
- b. Iraqi graduates of foreign universities.
- c. Foreign teachers, who were mainly Arab, many of whom taught English although they had not specialized in teaching English.

The establishment of the Department of English at the Higher Teacher-Training College in Baghdad in 1941, with twenty students on the first course, was an important development. However, enrolment continued to be limited and the number of entrants was only 25 in 1944. This fell short of meeting the need, and an increasing number of foreign teachers were recruited from Egypt and Lebanon.

1.15. Supervision

The supervision section at the ministry of education was expanded to include supervision of English. Wallace states
That a supervisor is anyone who has the duty of monitoring and improving the quality of teaching done by other colleagues in an educational situation.\footnote{22}

The Institute for the Development of English Language Teaching (IDELTI) is responsible for all aspects of developments of English language teaching in Iraq. This includes: supervisors of English with the purpose of both improving their competence in English language, training them in modern methods and techniques of English language teaching.

1.16. **METHODS OF TEACHING:**

Teachers of English did not follow prescribed systematic methods of teaching but each teacher did his best to develop appropriate techniques for teaching the language. They mainly trained their students to learn the alphabet so that their students could read and write well.

The Ministry’s policy was always to encourage the oral approach. Instructions and circulars issued by the Ministry emphasized:

- Teacher should not begin the book before doing oral work for at least the first two months in the fifth class.
- This should be based on activities in the classroom without recourse to translation.\footnote{23}
One of the special objectives of secondary education in Iraq was the attainment of an important means of communication in modern life, and as a means of helping the pupils pursue their higher studies. Feeling the dire necessity of imparting methodological training to enhance the capability of English teachers in Iraq, the I.D.E.L.T.I. nowadays has been running courses round the year. The purpose of these courses is to retrain thousands of teachers as quickly as possible to orient and familiarize them with the new syllabus at the primary and intermediate levels.
REFERENCES


2. Ibid; P.4.


10. Ibid; P.26.
11. Ibid; P.33.
12. Ibid; P.34.
17. Ibid, P.29.