CHAPTER 2

Teacher Education through Distance Mode and the Efficacy of Course Delivery: A Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The field of distance teacher education, and within that, distance teacher education in India, has had a fairly long history. Several studies on distance teacher education programmes have been documented in the literature, leading to the development of theories of teacher education through distance mode. Hall & Knox (2009:219) state that ‘There are relatively few published studies that directly examine language teacher education by distance, but a fairly wide spread of studies that have direct relevance. These includes studies of distance education in general, teacher education by distance, and language teacher education in blended learning environments.’ Within the vast spectrum of studies on distance teacher education programmes in India, there is only a modest amount of literature documenting English language teacher education programmes through distance mode, especially those that investigate the efficacy of course delivery.

This chapter reviews the available literature on distance teacher education in general and that of distance English language teacher education programmes in particular, with reference to the pedagogic effectiveness of course delivery. It presents a summary of the main studies in the field that have a bearing on this thesis, and tries to locate within it issues pertaining to the investigation of effectiveness of course delivery of long term ELT distance programmes in India. It, however, ends with a discussion on a general model of language teacher education
that has a bearing on the available models and frameworks of distance language teacher education.

The discussion of distance language teacher education has been organized and presented under the following four conceptual sections on distance education, beginning from a broad perspective on distance education theories and concluding with a critical summary of the studies on English language teacher education through distance mode:

a) Distance education theories
b) Distance education pedagogy
c) Teacher education through distance mode, and
d) English language teacher education through distance mode.

However, as the discussion will show, none of the existing theories, models and discussions on distance education provides an adequate model to measure effectiveness of distance language teacher education. A robust model of distance language teacher education is one in which the programme delivers both content knowledge and pedagogical skills through its course delivery mechanisms, and where these components reflect and build on the learners’ previous (professional) experience. This chapter will conclude with a discussion of a model of language teacher education that most closely reflects effectiveness in terms of the above criteria, and the relevance of this model in distance language teacher education contexts.

2.2 Distance Education theories

Distance education has been theorized by several experts internationally, with focus on different aspects such as self-directed learning and transactional distance. This section looks at the popular theories that focus on academic aspects of distance education. The theories discussed here are the most widely accepted and discussed models and theories that classify distance education in terms of academic aspects.
2.2.1 Independent study

The term ‘independent study’ has been explained by Wedemeyer (1977, 1981) as consisting of ‘various forms of teaching-learning arrangements in which teachers and learners carry out their responsibilities apart from one another, communicating in a variety of ways. Its purposes are to free on-campus or external learners with the opportunity to continue learning in their own environments, and developing in all learners the capacity to carry on self-directed learning, the ultimate maturity required of educated people.’ (1977: 2114) In this definition, any system that empowers the learners to carry on self-directed learning by using any type of communication is considered an alternative to regular face-to-face education, and this is considered one of the primary aims of distance education.

2.2.2 Transactional theory

This theory, developed by Michael G. Moore, was originally a part of independent learning developed in 1972 (Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia). Moore proposed the concept of transactional distance, i.e. “a psychological and communication space to be crossed, a space of potential misunderstanding between the inputs of instructor and those of the learner” (1993: p. 22). In other words, the less minimal transactional distance, the more maximal the learning outcomes of a programme are. The three elements that are important for maximizing learning experience and minimizing transactional distance, according to Moore, are dialogue (interaction between learners and teachers), structure (the ways in which a programme is structured/flexibility of structure), and autonomy (learners’ sense of self-directedness to be affected by the previous two factors).

2.2.3 Guided didactic conversation

Borje Holmberg (1981) talks about the theory of guided didactic conversation which refers to a kind of relationship between an individual learner and a supporting institution. The learners are responsible for their independent study or self-study, but only with the help of a
supporting team including counsellors, administrators, media producers etc. Holmberg (1981) states that the conversation can be both real and simulated, where students and tutors and others belonging to the supporting organization communicate in the two-way traffic through written and telephone interaction, and where students discuss the contents of study materials with themselves in the one-way traffic. What Holmberg means by real conversation is conversation through correspondence (any written or printed communication), telephone, and personal contact programme; simulated conversation is conversation through study of texts. Simulated conversation is caused by the conversational style of material writers. Holmberg further adds that good distance education is characterised by a guided conversation aimed at learning, and that the presence of the typical characteristics of guided didactic conversation will facilitate learning.

2.2.4 Role of intermediary

Another specialist David Sewart (1978, 1981) advises against the notion of seeing distance education as just a materials production process. He believes that teaching at a distance calls for the continuity of concern for students in a system of learning at a distance (ZIFF papers, 1978). A package of materials, however well they are designed, simply cannot perform all the roles of a teacher and cater to the varying needs of distance learners. That is why, according to Sewart, the human element or human support must be added to the system along with the materials in order to facilitate the process of learning. In other words, Sewart regards human support as a vital element in the distance teaching and learning process, so that a continuity of concern for students learning at a distance can be maintained.

2.2.5 Reintegration of the teaching and learning acts

As far back as 1980, Desmond Keegan (1980: 33) presented the main elements that should go into a definition of distance education as:

- the separation of teacher and learner
• the influence of an educational organization
• the use of technical media
• the provision of two-way communication
• the possibility of occasional meetings, and
• the participation in an industrial form of education

Later (1986, 1990), he proposed a theory of reintegration of the teaching and learning acts to find theoretical justification for distance education. Keegan believes that it is important to recreate the link between teaching and learning with the help of deliberately planned interpersonal communication for the distance students. ‘Keegan reasons that the more successfully the distance education programme manages reintegration, the lower the drop-out rate, the higher the quality of learning, and the higher the status of the institution’ (Amundsen, 1993: 67).

Each of these early theories attempting to define distance education emphasizes some particular aspects of distance education. These theories have, however, been continually revisited, revised and modified, sometimes by the proponents themselves and sometimes by other scholars. The table below, adapted from Birochi & Pozzebon (2011) summarizes the aspects relating to the efficacy of distance education. It shows how three of the theories give us some directions to reduce or bridge the distance between course-takers and course-providers, which remains a challenge to the efficacy of any distance education programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Distance-central Concepts</th>
<th>Ways of Bridging the Distance Gap</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michael Graham</td>
<td>Transactional distance</td>
<td>Dialogue and structure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moore (1973)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Börje Holmberg</td>
<td>Non-contiguous communication</td>
<td>Guided didactic conversation</td>
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<td>(1983)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Desmond Keegan</td>
<td>Quasi-permanent separation of teacher and learner</td>
<td>Two-way communication</td>
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Table 2.1: Aspects of efficacy of distance programmes
To conclude, the independent study theory highlights the importance of promotion of self-directed learning in learners by means of any communication. The transactional theory proposes maximizing learning experience by minimizing transactional distance, which can be achieved by working on three elements – dialogue, structure and autonomy. The theory of guided didactic conversation focuses on the importance of student support services on the part of the institution by creating real and simulated conversation for facilitating independent study. David Sewart reinforces the perennially felt need for increasing human support to facilitate learning. All these elements contribute to the effectiveness of a distance education programme.

2.3 Distance education pedagogy

This section discusses some studies that throw light on distance education pedagogy. These studies deal with the following issues:

- Difference between andragogy and pedagogy and its application in distance education
- Three generations of distance education pedagogy
- Pedagogical issues relating to ODL
- Pedagogical possibilities for online learning
- Relationship between pedagogy and technology, and
- Cell phone as a support in distance education pedagogy

The andragogy model proposed by Malcolm Knowles (1980) is based on Knowles’ belief that adults learn differently from children. Considering the origin of the word ‘pedagogy’ (Greek paid meaning ‘child’, agogus meaning ‘leading’), he states that pedagogy means the art and science of teaching children. Knowles defines andragogy as ‘the art and science of helping adults learn’ (Knowles, 1980: 43). However, he encourages distance education practitioners to see pedagogical model and the model of andragogy as ‘two ends of a
spectrum’ rather than as ‘dichotomous’ (ibid). Learning by adults asks for more than mere transmission of knowledge, and assumptions about the characteristics of children’s learning do not fit the adult students. Knowles argues that the two models hold differences in assumptions in terms of the learner, the role of learners’ experience, readiness to learn and orientation to learning.

Some researchers feel that the application of andragogy in distance education will facilitate the promotion of self-direction and autonomy in adult learners (e.g. Fales & Burges, 1984; Taylor & Kaye, 1986). However, not all educators are willing to accept the differentiation between pedagogy and andragogy, because they believe that practically both the two terms are used to mean almost the same practice.

For instance, Keegan (1980: 34) says,

‘The introduction of ‘andragogy’ into educational discussion was unnecessary and its use by distance educators is even more so. What M.S. Knowles meant by andragogy has been good pedagogy for years. Whatever the Greek root of ‘pedagogy’ may have been, the word in English is a generic term for teaching at all levels.’

Anderson and Dron (2011) introduces a typology of three generations of distance education pedagogy – cognitive-behaviourist (when pre-web, one-to-one and one-to-many modes of communication were available), social constructivist (when technology of many-to-many communication became available) and connectivist (focusing on building and maintaining networked connection) pedagogy, and claims that the need for and practice of openness and explicitness in distance education content and process makes the typology of pedagogies especially relevant for distance education. It concludes that high-quality distance education exploits all the three generations to cater to distance learners’ learning needs. Updating this work, Anderson and Dron (2012) highlights the typical learning activities associated with
each of the pedagogies and examines the affordances and potential of new technologies for supporting and enhancing each generation. It also discusses the emerging technologies that are conducive to instructional designs evolving with each generation.

Mikropoulos (2000) looks into the pedagogical issues relating to ODL through a critical review of the published work. Review of articles on theoretical approaches, technological approaches and evaluation studies show that researchers exploit the features of ODL without giving much attention to theoretical models, pedagogical principles and instructional goals. Mikropoulos (2000) proposes that ICT tools need to be exploited in a constructivist environment involving specific didactic goals and learning outcomes for effective ODL environments.

Ascough (2002) examines the pedagogical possibilities for online learning and maintains that putting sound pedagogy before technology ensures effective delivery of online distance education courses. This is investigated under seven areas, i.e. the parameters of online distance education, the purposes of online distance education, the planning of online courses, the pedagogical possibilities in online distance education, the pitfalls, the institutional faculty and student prerequisites for effective delivery, and predictions about online distance education. Though it advocates the use of online course delivery, it also warns that sound pedagogical principles need to drive the use of technology.

Anderson (2009) uses a dance metaphor to explain the relationship between pedagogy and technology, and claims that quality distance education emerges only in a complex dance between technologies and pedagogy. It explains that an important pedagogical issue is control of learning sequence, and that the new generation of distance education can provide learners with opportunities for social interaction and at the same time retain self-paced programming control. It thus explores connectivism as a pedagogical lens to look at both learning activities and technologies in self-paced distance education.
While discussing pedagogy of distance learning which is supportive for distance learners, Makoe (2012) states that though cell phones as a delivery tool by themselves, they should be used to support other forms of delivery (print, online or any other) keeping in mind the popularity of cell phones among young people. It discusses distance education pedagogies in the light of Moore’s student-student, student-content and student-teacher interaction and suggests how cell phones can be used to support students cognitively, affectively and systematically.

The literature on distance education pedagogy thus shows that there are two issues that are especially relevant in distance education pedagogy. First, though there are disagreements about the use of the terms ‘andragogy’ and ‘pedagogy’, researchers are unanimous in taking into account the way adults learn in order to promote learner autonomy in distance education. Second, distance education pedagogy is integrally related to the use of technology, and quality distance education exploits the technological advances to enhance interaction among learners.

2.4 Teacher education through distance mode

The literature on teacher education through distance mode is somewhat modest, but the available studies cover a broad area of topics. These studies range from comparisons between distance teacher education (TE) programmes and conventional ones, and the advocacy of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) to evaluation of distance TE programmes. The first part of this section presents studies relating to

a) Comparison between a distance TE programme and a conventional one

b) Advocacy of ODL in TE at policy level

c) Constructivism in TE with integration of distance learning
d) Disagreement between mentor perceptions and mentoring in a distance TE programme

e) Case studies of distance TE

f) Guidelines for distance TE

g) TE practice through ODL

h) Relevance and legitimacy of distance TE

i) Perspectives on distance TE

j) Evaluation of a distance TE programme on the basis of particular model

k) Examination of evaluative data on distance TE

The second part of this section discusses two documents published by UNESCO, ‘Quality Assurance Toolkit for Distance Higher Education Institutions and Programmes’ and ‘Quality Indicators for Teacher Education’ and their relevance to course delivery of teacher education programmes.

2.4.1 Studies on distance teacher education

Chakwera & Saiti (2002) gives an account of the experience of offering a distance teacher education programme by Domasi college of Education, Malwi. By comparing the programme to a conventional programme in the same college on the basis of examination results, the paper tries to establish that both the programmes are comparable in quality, and that the distance one is no different from the conventional one. It also points out some challenges faced while implementing the distance programme as the programme provider had to deal with several concerns relating to quality, human resource, perception, and so on. However, no stakeholder reactions have been taken into consideration for this study.

Sifuna (2013) discusses the lack of policy focus on teacher education in Africa and advocates that to achieve the twin goals of increasing the number of teachers and improving quality, it
is important to deploy ODL for teacher education. The article stresses that a shift from conventional approaches on teacher education to distance teacher education is needed to make Africa able to meet challenges in the supply of adequate and qualified teachers required to provide quality education for all children. It tries to advocate ODL for teacher education at the policy level in the African context.

Arora and Pandey (1998) also advocates shifting focus to distance mode for teachers’ continuing education in order to meet the challenge of quantity and quality of in-service teacher training in India. It discusses the current scenario of in-service teacher training in India, claiming that the existing training network is not enough to achieve the target of required number of trained teachers. Besides giving a background of national and international review of INSET through distance mode, it analyzes experiments of distance teacher training in India and concludes that the potential of distance training is yet to be maximally exploited in India.

Crotty (1995) describes the use of constructivist principles in design and development of a course for pre-service teachers where distance learning opportunities were integrated. The paper mentions attempts made to empower the learners through distance learning technologies. They were facilitated to design and initiate their own distance learning projects and maintain a portfolio simultaneously with lectures. It was claimed that the integration of distance learning opportunities in the course supported the constructivist paradigm, because students were actively engaged in constructing their own knowledge by mediating input from the outside world. This study throws light on the important issue of promoting constructivism (which is sometimes perceived as a challenge for making distance teacher education effective) in teacher education through integration of distance learning.

Lai (2005) reveals the disconnect between mentors’ conceptions and practices of teaching practice (TP) mentoring for in-service teachers and the university’s expectations in a distance
Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) programme in the Open University of Hong Kong. It suggests that ‘the University should work with school mentors to clarify and attain a shared understanding of what TP mentoring for serving teachers should be and how to go about it to meet their professional development needs.’ (2005:13)

Kangai & Bukaliya (2011) presents a case study of distance teacher education at the Zimbabwe Open University. It addresses questions like the reasons for using distance education for teacher development, the role of distance education in teacher education, the potential of distance education to meet the demand for quantity and quality of teacher training, the challenges and opportunities in distance teacher training programmes and future strategies needed for effective distance teacher training. It states that the issues important for an effective distance teacher education programme are government support, a directorate for coordination and the partnership model in teacher training.

In a summary document of ten case studies, Perraton et al. (2001) explores the method and effectiveness of the use of ODL for teacher education in ten programmes in nine countries, including India. It concludes that the case studies are strong on description, but weak on evaluative data on which to make judgments about effectiveness, due to numerous challenges like short-time scale, an education tradition or structure, lack of funding, etc. However, the case studies demonstrate the role of ODL in the four areas of teacher education – namely, initial teacher education, continuing professional development (CPD), curriculum reform and change, and teachers’ career development. It admits that while judging effectiveness, the case studies fail to provide enough evidence on the extent to which knowledge is translated into ‘knowledge applied in fostering children’ learning’, which is also the case in traditional teacher education. The summary document has other useful information, however. For example, the conclusions of the case studies include findings on the use of media and technology, besides cost, management and funding. While discussing the findings on the use
of media and technology, the authors state that all cases except one use printed materials to varying extents, partnered with radio in two cases and television in two other cases. Finally the document highlights some areas where further studies are required, for example, costs of teacher education, efficiency rates, effectiveness and impact on teaching and learning, policy environment, and evaluation of distance teacher education.

Drawing on the experience of the case studies presented in the document discussed in the previous paragraph, Perraton et al (2002) formulates guidelines for teacher education through ODL, identifying the options available to planners and strategies for choosing between the options by answering questions relating to the following eight areas:

- the problems of teacher education
- the nature of distance education or ODL
- the combination of teacher education and ODL
- planning and organization in an ODL programme
- technology
- funding
- teaching practice, and
- assessment

In addition, in the third chapter of the book ‘What has it been used for’, the study notes that the record of achievement of success in the use of distance education teachers in different stages of their careers substantiate the usefulness of distance education for teacher training.

In the first guide of a series of guides to good practice of models for ODL, Perraton (2003) talks about the way ODL has been used for teacher education, drawing on research carried out by International Research Foundation for Open Learning and UNESCO. It starts with a
policy agenda by framing a policy question in line with the 2015 educational target of quality education for all. Then it discusses society’s expectations, stakeholders’ responsibilities and curriculum. With regard to curriculum, it talks about the balance between four elements (improving general educational background of trainees, increasing subject knowledge and understanding, pedagogic understanding of children and learning, and developing practical skills and competence), between pre-service and in-service training, and about debates between traditional and progressive strands of curriculum. Then it goes on to discuss outcomes and costs involved in ODL for teachers, and exploring the context of using ODL. The guide concludes by looking at accreditation and assessment in such programmes. It presents a comprehensive report on the use of ODL in teacher education. However, it does not talk much about evaluating such programmes.

In a report on the role of open and distance learning in teacher education, Perraton (2010) projects the relevance and legitimacy of ODL for teachers. It says that this is justified by a three-fold case – the studies showing achievement of comparable results of conventional institutions and those of distance institutions, powerful effectiveness of distance education in reaching audience who could not meet their educational demands by attending conventional institutions, and the provision of open-ended dialogue in distance education. On the basis of international experience, the study shows how this makes distance education useful for various forms of teacher education, i.e. initial teacher training, continuing professional development (CPD) for upgrading teachers, to help support curriculum development and for teachers’ individual career development. It also briefly discusses the potential of open educational resources (OER) and technologies for ODL. While discussing outcomes, effectiveness and quality of distance education, Perraton (2010) states that three kinds of measures have been used in practice for evaluation of teacher education programmes – the audience reached, success rates (completion/qualification rates/occasionally measures of
learning gain), and teachers’ performance in the classroom. He admits that there is little evidence on the effectiveness of ODL for raising educational quality, but not without pointing that so is the case with conventional programmes. According to Perraton, theory and practice substantiate that one can expect ODL to raise the quality of education where ODL learning for teachers is successful.

Danaher and Umar (edited, 2010) explores the challenge of ODL in teacher education from many perspectives. After setting the scene for interrogation of teacher education through ODL, the book goes on to discuss contemporary research and educational principles and policies in the context of TE through ODL, ODL for initial and in-service teacher education, and learning and teaching strategies and practices, and explores the use of ICT, media and OER in teacher education through ODL. It also discusses cost-effectiveness and quality assurance in distance education and concludes by deliberating on new perspectives on teacher education through ODL. Though the book highlights the potential and promises that distance education holds for imparting teacher education, it also leaves a word of caution saying that appropriate resourcing, political support and understanding of broader contexts and conditions are indispensable for fulfilling such promises.

Sampong (2009) evaluates a distance teacher education programme in the University of Cape Coast, Ghana on the basis of Provus’ discrepancy evaluation model. The study finds some discrepancies between programme standards and performance, but also finds that the programme is fulfilling its purpose of upgrading the professional and academic performance of a large number of teachers in the public K-8 schools in Ghana. The study tries to give a comprehensive evaluation of the programme without focusing on any particular area (pedagogic, administrative, etc.).

‘Teacher Education through Open and Distance Learning: World Review of Distance Education and Open Learning’ (Volume 3) edited by Robinson and Latchem (2003)
considers experience, strengths, weaknesses, challenges, effectiveness, policy issues and management challenges in distance education for teacher education. In the chapter on evaluation, research and quality, the authors summarize the findings of evaluative data so far and examine the evidence. They offer a framework for judging quality and for planning the evaluation of distance teacher education programme, and point to a need for sound research and evaluation evidence.

As mentioned before, the literature on teacher education through distance mode covers a wide range of issues – from general objectives to evaluation of particular programmes. The literature on teacher education through distance mode in the Indian context is, however, rather meagre. There are hardly any studies relating to the efficacy of course delivery of distance teacher education in India available for consultation.

2.4.2 The UNESCO documents

Research into effectiveness of course delivery of ELT programmes through distance mode calls for consideration of quality issues in such programmes. In the literature, no specific document listing and describing quality indicators for distance English language teacher education programmes were found. However, two documents published by UNESCO, ‘Quality Assurance Toolkit for Distance Higher Education Institutions and Programmes’ and ‘Quality Indicators for Teacher Education’ are of relevance to any research on the effectiveness of course delivery.

Quality Assurance Toolkit for Distance Higher Education Institutions and Programmes

This toolkit was produced by the Commonwealth of Learning in collaboration with the Sri Lankan Ministry of Higher Education and UNESCO in 2009. The Preface to the document mentions the three features of this toolkit – first, that it is a generic document on quality assurance, which accommodates institutional solutions to reflect a range of delivery methods
used by distance education providers; second, that it proposes a set of performance indicators to enable institutions to gauge their own performance trends; and third, that it provides best practice case studies from across the Commonwealth nations.

The performance indicators in the toolkit were developed by the Distance Education Modernization Project of Sri Lanka under the aegis of the Ministry of Higher Education in collaboration with COL and UNESCO. The performance indicators for distance higher education institutions have been organized under ten criteria and those for programmes have been organized under six criteria. As the scope of the present study is limited to a study of effectiveness of programmes rather than institutions, the section below discusses the programme-related criteria rather than those for institutions.

The six criteria used for programmes include:

a) Institutional planning and management
b) Programme design and development
c) Course design and development
d) Infrastructure and learning resources
e) Learner support and progression
f) Learner assessment and evaluation

Some specific criteria standards define the scope of each criterion. For each criteria standard, there are a number of performance indicators. For example, one of the criteria standards that define the first criterion Institutional planning and management, is

‘The Institution has a mission statement that is relevant to its operational context and supported by clearly defined goals and objectives’. (p.103)

This criteria standard has two performance indicators:
(i) ‘The Institution’s mission statement makes specific reference to its commitment to quality across all modes of delivery’ (p.103) and

(ii) ‘The Institution has clearly defined goals and objectives for its distance learning initiatives’. (p.103)

These are further supplemented with evidence and performance measures.

Institutions can use these performance indicators for self-evaluation leading to necessary adjustments and changes in their programme, and for monitoring learning process and improvement. They can be used for assessing ‘a specific practice or process within the distance education programme/institution; an entire programme; or the entire institution’ (2009: 9). Moreover, they can be amended to meet specific institutional requirements.

**Quality Indicators for Teacher Education**

This document is a part of the ‘Toolkit for Quality Assurance in Teacher Education’ developed by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, India in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning, Canada. The other documents in the toolkit are ‘Quality Assurance in Higher Education – An Introduction’, ‘An Anthology of Best Practices in Teacher Education’ and the guidelines for using the toolkit.

The toolkit assumes that the various dimensions of the functioning of any teacher education institution either in face-to-face or ODL systems are represented by the following six key areas:

a) Curriculum Design and Planning

b) Curriculum Transaction and Evaluation

c) Research, Development and Extension

d) Infrastructure and Learning Resources

e) Student Support and Progression

f) Organization and Management
These key areas have been further categorized into a number of quality aspects. Each of these quality aspects is further defined in terms of actual operational tasks which represent the quality of a teacher education institution. These operational features are called quality indicators.

For example, one quality aspect of the key area ‘Curriculum design and planning’ is institutional vision. The quality indicator for this quality aspect is ‘There is a clear statement of the vision and mission, which reflect the teacher education goals and objectives, and are compatible with the regional, national and global expectations.’ (p. 20) This quality indicator is supplemented by statements containing an operational definition and importance of the quality indicator, and sources of evidence of the indicator. In total 75 such quality indicators are identified within the key areas. It is expected that these quality indicators will provide focus on what institutions can do to improve teacher quality and the quality provision of the programme.

Regarding the use of these indicators, the document states that they can be used for assessment in at least three levels – assessing one aspect or practice within the teacher education programme, a whole teacher education programme, or the entire institutional functioning. The document also mentions that users might include teacher educators and TE institutions for quality assurance through self-assessment, external assessors for guidance, and by accrediting agencies in systemizing the assessment process.

The most significant aspect of these two documents is that they are comprehensive and cover all important components of distance programmes. What is even more significant is that the criteria and performance indicators listed in the documents may be used in totality or selectively, depending on the research issues under focus. The structural flexibility of these two documents allows researchers to use selected aspects and the relevant indicators for a particular area of research. The authors also encourage using them in context by modifying
any part or avoiding any repetition as the context demands. Thus they can serve as useful
guidance documents for researchers and can help them to focus on particular aspects that can
measure or judge the quality of an educational institution.

2.5 English language teacher education through distance mode

This section presents a few studies on English language teacher education through distance
mode from a variety of perspectives and on a range of pertinent issues. The discussion covers
the following areas:

Broad perspectives:

a) The UK perspective on distance language teacher education
b) Possible technologies for distance education in ELT
c) Curriculum design issues in a distance ELT programme
d) Mapping of online teacher education
e) Blended learning approach for in-service English language teachers
f) Proposal for a framework for critical pedagogic analysis
g) Teachers’ perceptions of ELT programmes through distance mode
h) Application of ICT in ODL to enhance ELT practices, and
i) E-portfolio application in distance ELT programmes

Perspectives obtained from particular studies:

j) Examination of a pilot programme in Thailand
k) Quality assurance in distance education programmes with particular reference to the
   Surrey MA programme, and
l) Study of a programme from various perspectives like examination of tools and
technology, operational aspects of a synchronous virtual classroom, evaluation,
application of e-learning and practicum component.
Howard and MacGrath (Ed.) (1995) presents the UK perspective on various issues relating to distance education. Some of the key issues discussed include advantages and disadvantages of distance education, exploiting the potential of distance education for teacher education, models of administration of distance education courses, learner autonomy, distance vs face-to-face in terms of appropriateness for language teacher education, print-based materials, modern-language teaching and quality control. Most of the chapters in the collection deal with distance education for teachers of English. However, most of the deliberations have been made keeping in mind the needs and contexts of the UK learners.

Senisrisant (1996) identifies the factors determining the claimed success of a pilot programme for secondary education English teachers through distance mode. The study also discusses drawbacks, and presents an assessment of the possibility of sustainability of such a model. It claims three principal achievements of the pilot project—high success rate, significant improvement in trainees’ teaching skills and knowledge as recorded in an evaluation report, and improvement in English language proficiency of the participants. It attributes the success to attractive and accessible materials, appropriate delivery systems, efficient tutors and trainees’ enthusiasm. The article, however, does not present any evidence based on perceptions of different stakeholders to substantiate its claim about effectiveness of the programme.

Mann (1998: 21) is of the opinion that ‘quality assurance in education is a matter that concerns both conventional face-to-face and distance education systems’. He illustrates this fact by discussing the measures taken at the English Language Institute (ELI), University of Surrey (UK) for monitoring and improving the quality of its MA in Linguistics (TESOL) by distance learning. The discussion is presented in three strands—learner-content interaction, learner-instructor interaction, and learner-learner interaction. In the first strand, the steps taken for improving the quality of instructional materials include topic-focused general
bibliography, the study guide, rewriting and updating modules, and ELI resource centres to furnish students with the contact details of bookshops and database centres. In the second strand, i.e. learner-instructor instruction, the measures include pre-assignment feedback, general tutoring duties and weekly MA staff meetings, pastoral visits overseas, assessment and grievance procedures, assignment feedback, feedback on feedback, dissertation supervision, additional contacts through ELI, and provision for a student representative. In the third strand, i.e. learner-learner interaction, the steps include establishing Tesol-l (a group discussion list) and the Cybercafe (for more private discussions), Penpal circles and group meetings. Other regulatory and self-imposed measures included revalidation of course every five years and independent evaluation of course.

Amiri & Maftoon (2010) discusses potential technologies that can be used for distance education in ELT. The authors also analyze advantages and disadvantages of long distance teacher education besides presenting the limitations of research activities related to distance education in ELT. However, no specific programmes of study are taken into account for the purpose.

Gupta (2005) outlines the key issues behind the curriculum design of the Certificate in Teaching of English (CTE) offered by IGNOU. It suggests a holistic rather than skill-based approach to teacher training in ELT, though it also acknowledges the need of in-service teacher education based on specific needs and interests. It adds that distance education with multimedia support can be a solution, keeping in mind the large population of unreached teachers. The article, however, does not examine the effectiveness of the programme.

Prahlad (1996) proposes the incorporation of a learner training programme in the Post Graduate Diploma in the Teaching of English (PGDTE) programme of EFLU in order to promote self-directedness among the learners. It says that the learner training programme, which consists of four stages reflecting our crucial stages (prior to enrolment, immediately
after enrolment, during the period of distance study, and at the end of the course), requires the learner to reflect critically on the experience of distance study, thereby enabling him or her to find personally meaningful ways of relating learning to his or her own experience. It also recommends some changes in the structure of the Department to enable it to better respond to learner needs and to promote self-directedness. The thesis focuses on this one specific aspect, i.e. self-direction of the distance learners.

Murray (2013) presents a study commissioned by the International Research Foundation for English Language Education on online language teacher education. Through literature review, web search and case studies, she reports on conducting a kind of mapping of programmes on offer at the time of study and the levels of education, and their characteristics. She concludes that online language teacher education is an emerging model of teacher education and training and that programme providers are experimenting with new technologies and ways for delivering content and interacting with participants. The study is a comprehensive document on online English language teacher education, but because it was designed to survey existing programmes, it does not deal at length with course delivery of such programmes.

Kocoglu et al (2011) discusses a blended learning approach for a teacher training program designed for in-service English language teachers in Turkey, and investigates its effectiveness by comparing it with a face to face MA programme in English Language Teaching. With the help of a quasi-experimental study with a small group of participants, it concludes that both blended programmes and face-to-face programmes are equally effective with regard to content knowledge.

Reed (2012) proposes a framework for critical pedagogic analysis (CPA) of distance learning material for designing and redesigning materials as an alternative to reader feedback. She identifies seven elements that might be useful for investigating how mediation of knowledge
happens and what subject positions such mediation offers. The seven elements are content selection, in-text activities – types and purpose(s), illustrative cases, the scaffolding (if any) of readings, linguistic choices, choices of images and other aspects of visual design, and organization and other aspects of layout. She argues that ‘CPA affords designers and evaluators the critical distance needed for evaluating the mediation of knowledge(s) and the constitution of readers’ subjectivities.’ (p.74)

Jayati Roy (2001) presents an exploratory study, based on responses of twenty English teachers from UiTM Shah Alam and its campuses in Kelantan, Kedah and Trengganu; UPM and the International Islamic University in Malaysia on teachers’ perceptions towards an ELT programme via distance and reveals teachers’ apprehension regarding the use of distance education for teacher education. She also deliberates upon some issues in the area of English language teaching in distance mode, and feels that ‘the need for retraining and the creation of a sizeable skilled human resource base necessitates novel ways of improving both the teaching and the learning of English’. She concludes that distance education is undoubtedly one of the many challenging avenues open for consideration and suggests reorientation of distance education and development of new didactical structures of distance education.

Power & Shrestha (2009) highlights the potential application of information and communication technology, particularly of mobile technologies, in open and distance language learning to enhance ELT practices in Bangladesh. They base their paper on the English in Action (EiA) project in Bangladesh that employs mobile technologies for distance English language teaching.

Five papers were found on a single programme called Distance English Language Teaching (DELT) Programme started at Anadolu University, Turkey in 2000. Kose et.al. (2002), Aydin & Yuzer (2006), Biyik (2007), Altunay & Mutlu (2008) and Kecik & Aydin (2011) critically examine the programme from different perspectives and present descriptions of tools and
technology, operational aspects of a synchronous virtual classroom, evaluation based on interviews, application of e-learning and practicum component respectively. The main points that emerge from these studies are:

- An interactive distance education application model in English Teacher Education might be used by considering three main fields – establishment of remote electronic classrooms, development of teaching materials and employing foreign experts
- A virtual classroom facilitates increased real-like interaction and promotes more learner autonomy
- The evaluation of a relatively new distance learning model for training English language teachers in Turkey showed that the programme maintained high quality and adhered to the essentials of foreign language teacher education, though it could not train enough number of teachers in short period as per the need of the country
- E-learning opportunities through the distance English language teacher training programme in Turkey contribute to the right to education
- A model developed for teaching practice component of the pre-service distance English language teacher training programme is dynamic, interactive and reflective and it can provide insight for teaching practice component of teacher education programmes as a model of continuous development.

In another study, Kecik et.al. (2012) evaluate e-portfolio application in the distance teaching practice course of the Distance English Language Teaching program, Anadolu University, Turkey. They report on conducting a study to compare perceived needs of the student teachers and how well they are met according to three groups of stakeholders, namely the student teachers, university supervisors and cooperating teachers. They conclude that e-portfolio applications can meet the majority of the planning, teaching, and reflection needs in the teaching process, though there is scope for improvement.
As can be seen from the above discussion, most documented studies describe distance English teacher education programmes in countries other than India. The main aspects studied include quality, tools, technology, perception, etc. Not many reports on Indian distance English teacher education programmes can be found. Also, among the few studies published, not many discuss the efficacy of course delivery.

The above survey shows that the studies available on English language teacher education through distance mode randomly focus on some aspects like the use technology, teacher perceptions, policy issues, etc. There are few studies conducted with a holistic approach, i.e. by considering the linkages among different components of such programmes.

2.6 Models of language teacher education

This section presents a discussion on attempts to propose an effective model for language teacher education. At the core of such attempts is a holistic approach incorporating of reflection, collaboration, cooperative learning, etc. in the design of a programme.

Hardly any such models have been found which are specific to the distance learning context. However, Y. Wang et al. (2010) reports on an investigation examining the design and implementation of a holistic language teacher training model in a cyber face-to-face learning context (an environment supported by advanced Synchronous Learning Management System). The three components of the model proposed – the PRC (Practice, Reflection and Collaboration) model – are the two-stage practice design (platform training in stage 1 and online teaching practice in stage 2), the reflective cycle and the cyclic design, and the collaborative learning design. The graphical representation of the model has been presented as shown on the next page.
The study responds to the question of what an effective teacher training programme should incorporate in such an environment. It suggests that since teachers face new challenges and demands which are specific to e-learning environment, a holistic model is very crucial for e-teacher training. It claims that mechanisms like various forms of reflection in the model are powerful in responding to the trainee teachers’ needs. Though the whole study proposes a model for language teacher education in distance learning environment, the e-learning environment is very different from that in the context of English language teacher training in India where e-teacher training is not prevalent.

As literature on models of distance language teacher education is scarce, models proposed for other contexts have also been considered for relevant insights. Wallace (1991) suggests that three models of professional education have surfaced historically – the craft model, the applied science model, and the reflective model. In the craft model, trainees learn by imitating the expert’s techniques, and by following the experts instructions and advice. Wallace considers it as a static approach as it does not respond to the dynamicity of the society and to the developments of subject areas. He offers the critique of applied science and reflective models by following the original works of American sociologist Donald A. Schon. The applied science model, on the other hand, describes a one-way knowledge transmission.
process where educators convey scientific knowledge to trainees following which trainees are expected to apply the knowledge in their practice. Wallace considers this ‘the traditional and probably still the most prevalent model’ (p.8). The weaknesses of this model include a separation between research and professional action, a tendency to deny enough value to trainees’ experience, and inability to give a solution to the complex professional dilemmas as promised by the model. Wallace suggests the alternative model for teacher education, which is the reflective model which takes into account various elements to consider the relationship between theory and practice for professional development. He uses the following diagram to represent the model.

![Diagram of The reflective practice model of professional development](image)

**Fig 2.2: The reflective practice model of professional development**

As shown in the figure, the professional development process has been divided into two stages to attain the goal of professional competence – the pre-training stage (whichever stage the trainee is at, prior to the decision to undertake the training) and the stage of professional education or development. Inclusion of the first stage in the model implies that teacher education programmes need to take into account what the trainees bring to the training or development process, as the reflective model acknowledges the fact that trainees do not enter
into the programme with blank minds. The second stage highlights the reciprocal relationship between the two key elements - **received knowledge** and **experiential knowledge** - along with the continuing process of reflection on the knowledge in the context of practice or professional action.

Two key elements in Wallace’s model are **received** knowledge and **experiential** knowledge. Wallace uses the term ‘received knowledge’ as referring to a part of ‘the necessary intellectual content of the profession’ (p.14), and ‘experiential knowledge’ as referring to knowledge-in-action and reflection. These two elements share a reciprocal relation as they inform each other in a teacher education programme for effective learning. Learners can acquire received knowledge experientially and vice versa through appropriate techniques. Instead of ‘teaching’ methodology and expecting learners to apply it in classroom teaching, this model allows learners to reflect on the received knowledge in the light of the classroom experience so that their classroom experience can feed back into the received knowledge. Thus the model proposes a reflective cycle which refers to the continuing process of reflection on received knowledge and experiential knowledge in the context of practice.

Day (1993) examines the intersection of two major aspects of second language teacher education, which are (i) the knowledge base and (ii) the way/s of delivering that knowledge (models or approaches). He claims that the knowledge base of such programmes consists of four types of knowledge – content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogic content knowledge, and support knowledge. He discusses how this knowledge is treated by four different models of language teacher education – the **apprentice-expert model** (the oldest form of professional action consisting of trainee working closely with the expert teacher), the **rationalist model** (involving teaching of scientific knowledge which is expected to be applied in teaching), the **case studies model** (involving discussion and analysis of actual case histories in the classroom), and the **integrative model** (incorporating the strengths of the previous three
models, and a reflective practice as a critical part of the entire programme of studies). Day claims that the integrative model has the potential to integrate experiential and received knowledge in a systematic manner. However, Day refrains from giving a detailed account of the model in an operational manner in his paper, and rather says that specific details on reflective practice activities as part of the reflective practice component are beyond the scope of the paper.

Kumaravadivelu (2012) presents a framework for language teacher education for a global society which he calls a ‘modular model’ (p.123) by collecting insights from the fields of education and TESOL. The model consists of a sub-system of five independent and interdependent components – knowing, analysing, recognizing, doing, and seeing (KARDS) – along with others, which he represents through the following diagram.

![Fig 2.3: The Modular Model](image)

Two basic characteristics of the model are
• Design of holistic module which departs from the traditional way of designing discrete, content-based courses

• Envision of multiple entry points and exit points in a teacher education programme as against the linear path regarding entry and exit

However, Kumaravadivelu admits that the model is ‘no more than a skeletal framework for the development of a context-sensitive language teacher education programme’ (p.125), and it is up to the local practitioners to use the essentials of the model for a relevant language teacher education programme. He also says that the work is ‘no more than a work in progress’ (p.131).

Among the above models of language teacher education, Wallace’s Reflective model can be considered the most relevant one for the present study. The PRC model is very specific to e-learning environment. The Integrative model proposed by Day does not have enough details for being considered as a framework. Kumaravadivelu’s Modular model is still in the progressive stage. Hence, Wallace’s model, which is relatively an established and well-deliberated model for professional development, has been used for designing a framework to analyze data in the present study. The framework has been presented in Chapter 4 (Section 4.9).

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to present a few studies which are directly or indirectly related to the effectiveness of course delivery of English language teaching programmes through distance mode. It has tried to discuss some important theories of distance education that have a bearing on the effectiveness of distance education programmes. In the chapter, a number of studies related to teacher education through distance mode have been discussed to showcase present trends and perspectives in the investigation of distance teacher education
programmes. The section on English language teacher education discussed in the chapter argues that although attempts have been made to study a variety of aspects of programmes relating to English language teacher education through distance mode, there have been few studies on efficacy of course delivery. This section has also tried to point to the dearth of studies on Indian ELT distance programmes, the gaps that would need to be filled to help further research and specifically, the priorities underlying the present area of study. The chapter concludes with a discussion of models of language teacher education which claim to propose effective ways to deliver knowledge along with a justification to use a particular model (Reflective Model) for the present study. In the following chapters, the relevance of some of the studies and documents mentioned in this chapter will be discussed in more detail. The chapter on Methodology will specifically state how the UNESCO documents have helped design research tools for the present study.