UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

A STUDY OF THE PERCEIVED PROFESSIONAL NEEDS OF ESL TEACHER EDUCATORS IN MALAYSIAN TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGES

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By

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UPM

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Chief Supervisor : Associate Professor Abdul Rahman Md. Aroff, Ph. D.

Faculty : Educational Studies

In Malaysia, the roles and responsibility of ESL teacher educators in the development of English language teaching and learning are crucial. The Cabinet Committee Report on the Implementation of National Education Policy (1979) stipulates that teacher educators who fall short of desired professional competence and performance be sent back to their original posts. This is indicative of the high level of professionalism expected of teacher educators. For ESL teacher educators, who are part of the general milieu of teacher educators, this would mean that they have to work towards the upgrading of their professionalism. It is expected that the findings of this study will facilitate efforts at upgrading the professionalism of ESL teacher educators attached to the Malaysian teacher training colleges.

The main purpose of this study is to identify the perceived professional needs of the ESL teacher educators in Malaysian teacher training colleges, as perceived by the teacher educators themselves.

This study seeks to identify the perceived professional needs of the ESL teacher educators as a whole, and according to their qualifications in TESL and experience in teaching at colleges. This study also sets out to identify the relationship between background variables and perceived professional needs of the ESL teacher educators, as well as, the five most important perceived needs of the ESL teacher educators in Malaysian teacher training colleges.

The data were collected by means of on a questionnaire which identifies five categories of needs, i.e., A. Knowledge, B. Training/teaching methods and strategies, C. Classroom-based skills, D. Supervisory skills, and E. Organisational/management skills.

The findings reveal that: 1) ESL teacher educators in Malaysian teacher training colleges perceive needs in all the five categories of needs identified in the questionnaire; 2) among ESL teacher educators teaching pre-service courses, those with Masters perceive the most needs; 3) among those teaching in-service courses, those with Certificate in TESL perceive the most needs; 4) among those who teach both the pre-service and

in-service courses, those with Certificate in TESL perceive the most needs; 5) irrespective of whether they teach pre-service or in-service courses, or both the pre-service and in-service courses, experience in teaching at college does not significantly reduce the ESL teacher educators' perceived needs; 6) the 11 background variables of the ESL teacher educators in the multiple regression computed cannot jointly account for the variances in the perceived needs of the ESL teacher educators, and 7) the most important perceived professional needs were for the following items: (i) E1 How to develop ESL related syllabuses; (ii) E5 How to conduct ESL related research; (iii) E3 How to implement and evaluate coursework based on the process-product approach; (iv) A16 Information on organisational/ management skills; and (v) E2 How to set coursework based on the process-product approach.

Implications for further research are included and a model for staff development is provided.

Recommendations are offered for the upgrading of professionalism among ESL teacher educators in Malaysian teacher training colleges.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Pertanian Malaysia sebagai memenuhi sebahagian daripada keperluan untuk Ijazah Master Sains.

SATU KAJIAN TENTANG KEPERLUAN PROFESIONAL YANG DI AMATI OLEH PENDIDIK GURU ESL DI MAKTAB-MAKTAB PERGURUAN MALAYSIA

oleh

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Di Malaysia, peranan dan tanggungjawab pendidik guru Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa Kedua (ESL) amat penting dalam perkembangan pengajaran dan pembelajaran bahasa Inggeris. Laporan Jawatankuasa Kabinet Mengenai Perlaksanaan Dasar Pelajaran (1979) memperakukan bahawa pendidik guru yang didapati keterampilan dan prestasinya tidak memuaskan hendaklah dihantar balik memegang jawatan asal mereka. Ini memperlihatkan betapa tingginya aras profesionalisme yang diharapkan daripada para pendidik guru. Bagi pendidik ESL yang menjadi sebahagian daripada masyarakat dan semua pendidik guru amnya, ini bermakna mereka perlu mempertingkatkan profesionalisme mereka. Adalah dijangka bahawa penemuan-penemuan kajian ini akan dapat melicinkan usaha ke arah peningkatan profesionalisme pendidik-pendidik guru ESL yang berkhidmat di maktab-maktab perguruan di Malaysia.

Tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji pengamatan pendidik guru ESL di maktab-maktab perguruan di Malaysia terhadap keperluan profesional mereka.

Kajian ini berusaha untuk mengenalpasti persepsi pendidik guru ESL secara keseluruhannya, dan mengikut kelayakan mereka dalam bidang pengajaran bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua (TESL), dan mengikut pengalaman pengajaran mereka di maktab. Kajian ini juga akan mengenalpasti hubungan antara pembolehubah-pembolehubah latar dan pengamatan pendidik guru ESL terhadap keperluan profesional mereka serta lima keperluan profesional yang dianggap terpenting oleh pendidik guru ESL di maktab-maktab perguruan di Malaysia.

Data yang dikumpulkan adalah berdasarkan soal selidik yang mengenal pasti lima kategori keperluan, iaitu A. Pengetahuan, B. Kaedah dan strategi latihan/pengajaran, C. Kemahiran berasaskan bilik darjah, D. Kemahiran penyeliaan, dan E. Kemahiran pengelolaan/pengurusan.

Penemuan-penemuan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa: 1) pendidik guru ELS di maktab-maktab perguruan di Malaysia mempunyai pengamatan keperluan di dalam ke semua lima kategori keperluan yang dikenal pasti dalam soalselidik; 2) di kalangan pendidik guru ESL yang mengajar kurus pra-perkhidmatan, mereka yang berkelayakan sarjana mengamati keperluan yang terbanyak; 3) di kalangan yang mengajar kursus dalam perkhidmatan, mereka

yang berkelayakan Sijil TESL mengamati keperluan yang terbanyak; 4) di kalangan yang mengajar kedua-dua kursus pra-perkhidmatan dan dalam perkhidmatan, mereka yang berkelayakan Sijil TESL mengamati keperluan yang terbanyak; 5) tidak kira sama ada mereka mengajar kursus pra-perkhidmatan atau kursus dalam perkhidmatan, ataupun kedua-duanya, pengalaman mengajar di maktab tidak mengurangkan pada aras yang signifikan keperluan pendidik guru ESL yang mereka amati; 6) didapati 11 pembolehubah latar yang digunakan dalam regresi tidak dapat menerangkan varian-varian keperluan profesional yang diamati oleh para pendidik guru ESL, dan 7) keperluan yang diamati sebagai yang paling penting adalah untuk item-item berikut: (i) E1 Bagaimana untuk menggubal sukatan pelajaran yang berkaitan dengan Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua; (ii) E5 Bagaimana untuk mengendalikan penyelidikan yang berkaitan dengan Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua; (iii) E3 Bagaimana untuk melaksana dan menilai kerja kursus berasaskan pendekatan proses-hasil; (iv) A16 Pengetahuan tentang kemahiran pengelolaan/ pengurusan; dan (v) E2 Bagaimana untuk menggubal kerja kursus berasaskan pendekatan proses-hasil.

Implikasi untuk penyelidikan lanjutan disertakan dan satu model kemajuan staf disediakan.

Syor dan cadangan dikemukakan untuk mempertingkatkan profesionalisme di kalangan pendidik guru ESL di maktab-maktab perguruan di Malaysia.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Asian Programme of Educational Innovation For Development (APEID) document on Teacher Education: Issues, Needs and Plans for Action (1987: 70) states that as the teacher is the linchpin in a system of education, her* preparation should logically be a matter of concern to any society. It is, therefore, important that teacher education and the role of the teacher educator be given more attention. The document makes yet another pertinent comment in the scenario of teacher education. It states that the group of teacher educators, because it is adequately educated in most countries and is quite small in size, has never got the attention that the teachers have been given. Moreover, there is no other group that would criticize the shortcomings of the teacher educators or offer assistance. They are to depend on themselves for their own improvement.

In Malaysia, the roles and responsibility teacher educators have in the development of English language teaching and learning are crucial. The Cabinet Committee Report on the Implementation of the National Education Policy (1979) requires

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*Throughout this study, the feminine pronoun 'she' will be used to refer to the teacher educator, teacher and teacher trainee.

that English be taught as a second language to enable learners: first, to use the English language in the jobs they pursue as well as in situations which call for proficiency in the language; and second, to have a grasp of English as a second language so that they are better prepared for tertiary education. The Malaysian ESL teacher has to be trained to teach pupils who may tend to view the English language as unimportant, partly because a pass in the English language is not compulsory at any of the national examinations, and partly because Bahasa Malaysia is the medium of instruction from the primary school to the university. The ESL teacher educator will have to facilitate and help the ESL teacher to work successfully in the current education system in Malaysia and to cope with new and challenging situations as they arise. In order to do this systematically, the teacher educator must have the capacity and aptitude to produce "an explanatory model of the teacher situation" (Brumfit, 1979: 51).

The teacher educator needs to be sensitised to political, economic and social issues and to all areas related to national development in order to be able to understand and interpret 'teacher situation'. The APEID document on Continuing Education of Teacher Educators; Report of a Task Force Meeting (1976) states that when the function of education is changing and the teacher is assuming a new role, teacher educators also need new orientations. In addition, teacher educators need to be current in their knowledge of educational psychology, sociology of

education and other contributing disciplines, so that they can help teachers acquire appropriate and relevant skills to play their new roles effectively in a society which is experiencing continuous changes as a result of its effort at development. This would mean that, in spite of their qualifications, serving as well as prospective teacher educators would have professional needs which must be addressed to ensure that there is regular updating of knowledge and skills.

Statement of the Problem

In Malaysia, teacher education is undertaken by the six local universities and the Teacher Education Division (TED) of the Ministry of Education.

As a whole Malaysian teacher training colleges conduct two main types of courses. They are the pre-service courses, i.e., the two-and-a-half-year teacher training course and the 'conversion' course, and the one-year in-service course.

Based on the courses that have to be taught, it is apparent that the implementation of the different syllabuses will make heavy demands on ESL teacher educators in Malaysian teacher training colleges.

The 1979 Cabinet Report requires that the selection of teacher educators be not only based on academic qualifications but that it should also take into consideration the personal

qualities of the applicants. It also stipulates that after a probationary period, those who fall short of deserved professional competence and performance be sent back to their original posts. It is quite obvious that due emphasis has to be given to the necessity for a high level of professionalism among teacher educators. This would mean that their professional needs will have to be identified. Fundamentally, this study is concerned with identifying the different perceived professional needs of ESL teacher educators in Malaysian teacher training colleges.

At present, ESL teacher educators in Malaysian teacher training colleges are in possession of different qualifications in TESL. Their qualifications range from a Certificate in TESL to a Masters degree in TESL. Furthermore, the teaching experience of these ESL teacher educators are varied in terms of duration of service, and syllabus components and areas they have to teach. Consequently, it is to be expected that these ESL teacher educators will perceive different professional needs, especially when they are required to respond to ESL syllabus changes, and at times to changes in the teacher education system itself. In order to facilitate the professional upgrading of ESL teacher educators in Malaysian teacher training colleges, this study is concerned with identifying their perceived professional needs.

The identification of perceived professional needs of these ESL teacher educators will make it possible for the Staff

Training and Development Unit of the Teacher Education Division (TED) to address these needs so that there will be more effective and efficient preparation of ESL teachers at the teacher training colleges. Currently, attempts at providing some form of staff development have been based on aspects or areas of ESL teacher education which have been identified by the TED rather than those based on a needs assessment.

Purpose of the Study

In order to attend to the problems stated earlier, this study has the following objectives:

General Objective

The main purpose of this study is to identify the perceived professional needs of the ESL teacher educators in Malaysian teacher training colleges, as perceived by the teacher educators themselves.

Specific Objectives

Specifically, the study seeks:

(1) to identify the perceived professional needs of ESL teacher educators in Malaysian teacher training colleges in the following categories: knowledge; training/teaching methods and strategies; classroom-

based skills; supervisory skills; and organisational/ management skills;

(2) to ascertain the perceived professional needs of ESL teacher educators, teaching different courses, in Malaysian teacher training colleges in the above categories;

(3) to find out if there are significant differences between ESL teacher educators with different TESL qualifications and experience, teaching different courses, in terms of perceived professional needs;

(4) to identify the five most important perceived professional needs of ESL teacher educators in Malaysian teacher training colleges;

(5) to identify the relationship between background variables and perceived professional needs of ESL teacher educators at Malaysian teacher training colleges in terms of the above five categories of needs; and

(6) to identify the relationship between background variables and the overall perceived professional needs of the ESL teacher educators.

Research Questions

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the perceived professional needs of ESL teacher educators in Malaysian teacher training colleges as a whole?

2. What are the different perceived professional needs in particular with regards to professional qualification and experience of the ESL teacher educators in Malaysian teacher training colleges who teach:

   (i) the pre-service courses, i.e., the two-and-a-half year TESL course, and the 'Conversion' TESL course for graduates in subjects other than TESL;

   (ii) the one-year in-service course; and

   (iii) both the pre-service and the in-service courses?

3. What is the relationship between background variables and the perceived professional needs of ESL teacher educators in Malaysian teacher training colleges in terms of:

   A. Knowledge;

   B. Training/teaching methods and strategies;