Chapter 10
Identifying the Target Needs of Non–Native Subject Teachers Related to the Use of English in Their Professional Settings: A Case from Northern Iraq

Ece Zehir Topkaya
Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey
İbrahim Nişancı
Ishik University, Iraq

ABSTRACT

This study primarily explores the target needs of subject teachers from various disciplines who are all non-native speakers of English and enrolled in a training program preparing them to teach their subjects in English. Secondarily, it looks into the key stakeholders’ evaluation of the program to understand its effectiveness to meet the needs of the teachers. For the first question, key stakeholders were interviewed to identify the needs, wants, and lacks of the teachers based on Hutchinson and Water’s (1987) needs analysis framework. Then, the pooled items were converted into a questionnaire which was administered to the teachers in the program. To investigate the second question, open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews were used. Findings revealed that participants were in need of developing productive language skills while they reported satisfaction over the program. It is concluded that a more specifically tailored course both in terms of content and practice is needed.

INTRODUCTION

As English has become the language of international commerce, sciences, business, communication, and technology everywhere in the world, it is now considered as a basic skill that every individual needs to be competent at a certain level. Therefore, governments and educational institutions all around the world are now seeking ways to teach English to the younger generations more effectively in order to provide them
Identifying the Target Needs of Non-Native Subject Teachers

with “some kind of competitive advantage… in the job market” or global economic market (Graddol, 2006, p. 107). Some are doing it through integrating content and language education and thus adopting an English-across-the-curriculum approach while some are launching bilingual education where the medium of instruction (MoI) is English. Following this trend, “many countries in Asia, Europe and Latin America have already experimented with teaching one or more subjects through [English] programmes and national initiatives” (Hodijah, 2012, p.82).

Like all rapidly developing countries, there has also been a great development in every field of life in Iraq, especially in Northern Iraq, including education since 2003. Although Iraqi universities and higher educational institutions have been cut off from progress in educational curricula, resources, teaching methods, modern technology and research for two decades, there is a great demand for integration with the global academic world as well as the economic market. In such a context, the need for learning English has become one of the major concerns of the country giving rise to a rapid growth in the number of institutions conducting most of the instruction in English. This situation, on the other hand, has brought about the problem of finding subject teachers who can teach in English since it is hard to reach them in Iraq or bring them to Iraq.

Feeling this pressure for qualified teachers who can teach in English, one of the biggest educational institutions offering multilingual education in Kurdish, Turkish, Arabic, and English at different levels in Northern Iraq has initiated a year-long teacher training program for non-native teachers from various subjects such as science, mathematics, and primary school education which comprises a language course segment as well. While pedagogy, intercultural issues, general instructional knowledge and skills form the teacher education segment, the language course segment aims at preparing non-native subject teachers to function in school settings using English as the MoI. It includes a general English language course and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course run in two separate academic terms.

This unique program has never been investigated in terms of its critical components such as administrative staff, program staff, course attendees, course materials, assessment procedures, or the syllabus since its start three years ago. Yet, based on the knowledge that needs analysis is the starting point for designing and revising programs of any kind, this particular study aims to identify the language needs of the subject teachers attending the language course segment of the program and understanding whether the current program is able to meet these needs. This study is thus guided by the following two research questions:

1. What are the target needs of the non-native subject teachers attending the language course segment of the program?
2. What is the overall evaluation of the key stakeholders -the subject teachers and course manager- regarding the language course segment of the program?

Before moving on the details of the study, however, a brief literature review on the two core issues of it, English as the MoI and needs analysis, are presented below.

English as the Medium of Instruction

As Graddol (2006, p. 82) states, “learners, their families, teachers, governments, employers, textbook publishers, examination providers” are the major stakeholders of education who have different opinions and beliefs about how English language should be taught and learnt. For decades, there have been two

www.igi-global.com/e-resources/library-recommendation/?id=92

Related Content

Using Authentic Earth Data in the K-12 Classroom

www.igi-global.com/chapter/using-authentic-earth-data-in-the-k-12-classroom/190120?camid=4v1a

Presenting Physics Content and Fostering Creativity in Physics among Less-Academically Inclined Students through a Simple Design-Based Toy Project

www.igi-global.com/chapter/presenting-physics-content-and-fostering-creativity-in-physics-among-less-academically-inclined-students-through-a-simple-design-based-toy-project/121914?camid=4v1a

Identifying the Target Needs of Non-Native Subject Teachers Related to the Use of English in Their Professional Settings: A Case from Northern Iraq
Ece Zehir Topkaya and brahim Nianc (2016). Innovative Professional Development Methods and Strategies for STEM Education (pp. 149-175).

www.igi-global.com/chapter/identifying-the-target-needs-of-non-native-subject-teachers-related-to-the-use-of-english-in-their-professional-settings/139657?camid=4v1a
Learning about the Different Dimensions of Sustainability by Applying the Product Test Method in Science Classes
www.igi-global.com/chapter/learning-about-the-different-dimensions-of-sustainability-by-applying-the-product-test-method-in-science-classes/121862?camid=4v1a