English Language Teaching in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

By
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THESIS APPROVAL

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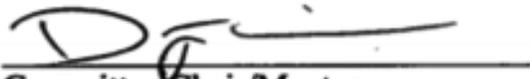
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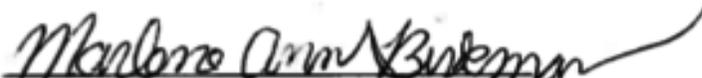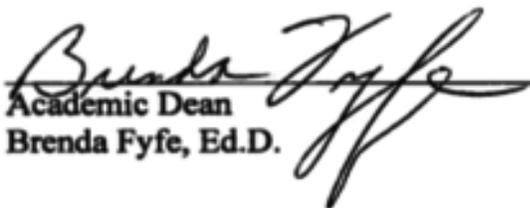
Abstract

In general, the Kurdish people, an Indo-European ethno-linguistic group in Iraq, have a positive attitude towards the English language, and English is more highly appreciated than Arabic. Since achieving autonomy in 1991, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) has taken some dramatic steps toward educational development and reform, including opening a number of new universities and schools, designing new curricula, and passing new educational legislation. However, KRI's Educational system, particularly their English program, encounters some constraints. The *Sunrise* English program, based on Communicative Language Teaching, is presented to promote Kurdish EFL learners. Yet, this program fails to meet the students' needs for various reasons: sociocultural factors of *collecdualism* (a term that I introduce to combine the two extremes of collectivism and individualism), the dearth of English specialized teachers, insufficient English teacher training, deficient infrastructure, and inadequate communicative activities. Students need to attain a good command of English in order to pass a grade and be accepted in engineering, sciences, and medical colleges. Lack of academic and professional publications in the Kurdish language increase the demand for English to Kurdish people. In addition to learning the English language as a vehicle for success in academia, the job market, and personal use, for many Kurdish learners, English is seen through a national and patriotic lens to develop and present the Kurdish national case to the world. Throughout this paper, I offer a brief description of the Kurds and critically analyze the educational system in KRI focusing on factors in English, English language teaching, and the use and status of the English language in that context. Through the implementation of the recommendations in this paper, Kurdish English language learners can attain access to higher quality English language programs in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Keywords: Kurdistan, English, communicative, development, *Sunrise*, *collecdualism*

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Background

English is the most commonly spoken language around the world. The importance of English makes it necessary for speakers of other languages to acquire the English language. Current estimates suggest that one in four of the world's population can speak or at least understand English (Crystal, 2000). Because English is the language of science, aviation, computers, diplomacy, and tourism, mastery in English guarantees success in the academia and the world market. It also gives personal satisfaction and enables one to enjoy books, songs, movies, and television shows. For these reasons, Kurdish learners in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) need to embrace the English language to continue the global development journey. However, there are some constraints that KRI's English language program encounters.

Problem Statement

The achievements and outcomes of the English program in the KRI's context are not as strong as needed. This thesis identifies the problems as the following:

- Unsuitability of the English program the *Sunrise* series in terms of its cultural content, communicative activities, and presentation style.

- Lack of English instructional time for Kurdish English teachers to cover the program.

- Deficiency in the educational infrastructure such as school buildings and English teaching equipment.

- Large class size, which impedes applying the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach.

- Deficiency of teacher training in both teacher colleges and the teaching profession.

- Lack of professional English language trainers and standardized teacher training materials.

- Limited system for educational accountability and incentives.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the insufficient English language proficiency level of Kurdish English learners revealed in their poor performance in the English tests in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). Few graduates of the public high schools are able to communicate intelligibly in English. According to Vernez, Culbertson, & Constant (2014), students' performance on English national tests is below expectations. For example, results of the 2008 grade 9 national tests suggest that about one-third of students did not pass English, receiving grades of lower than the passing grade of 50 percent. Fewer than 5 percent of the students scored higher than 85 percent in English.

The unsatisfactory results of students' performance in the English language in the KRI relates to several micro and macro cultural, social, and administrative factors. Students are not provided with quality English instruction in the classroom because of both physical deficiencies of English teaching tools and unqualified English teachers. The English syllabus *Sunrise* is not effective and fails to meet the needs of the Kurdish English learners in KRI. The curriculum of the English teacher colleges does not provide adequate courses focusing on the English language teaching methods and there is an insufficient number of English teachers trained in real classroom settings.

In this thesis, I analyze the educational and sociocultural constraints that the education system in KRI encounters which hinder both English teacher and student development. The prevailing constraints include the rapidly growing demand for education, the double/multiple shift school model, overcrowded classrooms, the dearth of English specialized teachers, poor quality instruction, insufficient instructional time, insufficient teacher training programs, the high rate of grade repetition, students' poor performance in the KRI's national standardized tests, and limited educational accountability and incentives. I also provide insightful suggestions and recommendations for student needs analysis, material development, and teachers' quality improvement.

Through the proposed effective English language teaching methods and recommendations, the English program will successfully achieve its objectives, which eventually will cause Kurdish English learners to attain the benefits that English offers.

Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations in this study because of the context where the thesis was researched and written – in the United States. Even though many sociocultural, socioeconomic, and administrative aspects have been considered in analyzing the English language program in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq this study lacks data from a sample school for evaluating and analyzing student performance. This was not considered, because it would have gone far beyond the feasible parameters of this study, but will be a valuable, logical future extension. This thesis will provide a useful resource for future research focused on specific schools and learners in KRI and other countries and regions seeking to strengthen their English language teaching.

Chapter 1: Introduction

A Brief Introduction to the Kurds

The Kurds are an Indo-European ethno-linguistic group in the Middle East-Western Asia, a region known as Kurdistan, which borders Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. This is often referred to as the "homeland of the Kurds," whose ancestors appeared on the Iranian plateau around 900 B.C. They speak Kurdish languages, which are a branch of the Median language – an Old Iranian language. The population of the four sections of Kurdistan in present day (Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran) is estimated between 35 and 40 million. The Kurds are the second largest ethnic group in Turkey and Iraq. The greatest proportion with 22.5 million of the population resides in Turkey, 5.2 million in Iraq, 8.08 million in Iran, and 2.2 million in Syria. Other smaller Kurdish populations are found in Central Asia and the post-Soviet states of Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan, in Lebanon, and in Afghanistan.

Ethnically, the Kurdish language and culture are related to the Iranian peoples on the Iranian plateau. Before the spread of Islam in the 7th century AD, the Kurds practiced Yazidism, which is their indigenous religion. Currently, Yazidism, Yarsanism, Judaism, and Christianity are practiced by a minority of Kurds. The majority of Kurds, however, are Sunni Muslims, belonging to Shafi School. There is also a minority of Kurdish Shia Muslims who primarily live in Iran, and central and southeastern Iraq.

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of the World War I led to the emergence of a number of new nation-states, but not a separate Kurdistan (Ghassemlou, 1980). During the early 20th century, Kurdish nationalism grew when the Kurds were promised independence in articles 62 and 64 of the Treaty of Sevres, August

10, 1920 which was not fulfilled ("Treaty of Sevres," 2014). The Kurds were left without

a buffer from the oppressing nationalism of Turks and between the repressing regimes of

Iran, United Kingdom, and Iraq.

The Kurds in Iraq

Iraq became an independent state in 1932. However, it remained under British

control until 1958. The British discouraged and impeded Kurdish independence, which

caused instability and uprisings since 1991. By March 1991, Kurdish forces had taken

large portions of Northern Iraq. Following Sadam's failure in the Gulf War, the Iraqi

Kurds began increasingly to move toward the creation of an autonomous government and

a *de facto* state in the region. In Iraqi Kurdistan (Northern Iraq), Kurds eventually held

the first election for a 105-seat Kurdish National Assembly and a president for the

Kurdish autonomous government.

Chapter 2: English Language in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and Iraq

The Education System in the Kurdistan Context

Since achieving autonomy in 1991, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) has taken some dramatic steps towards educational development and reform including opening a number of new universities and schools, designing new curricula, and passing new educational legislation. The Kurdistan Regional Government's education sector has largely been built from the ground up since the early 1990s, and it has expanded significantly in recent years. Public school education is entirely funded by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). Families pay no fees. After the redesigning of the Iraqi governing system in 2003, funding for public education in KRI comes from the 17 percent budget portion of the Iraqi budget designated to the KRG. KRG's Council of Ministers allocates the budget to the Ministry of Education in KRI (MOE) based on the proposed budget, which is prepared at the district level.

The number of schools in the academic year 1990-1991 was 1,320 schools ("The policy of educational system in Kurdistan," n.d.). This number has increased to 2,641 in 2012. This growth also includes establishing a total number of 165 primary and secondary private schools in the region. In Kurdistan, two ministries address education: The Ministry of Education (MOE) administers primary and secondary education, and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHE) administers university and institute-level education. Public universities do not charge tuition, and they provide students from outer cities with facilities with complimentary dormitories and amenities. The universities face difficulties because they operate within a centralized bureaucratic system on a fixed budget and are pressured to accept ever-increasing numbers of students

("Education Overview, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq," n.d.). Many employers in the private sectors argue that the university graduates do not acquire the in-demand technical skills of the market. Therefore, the MHE has established a number of schools to become technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions. In addition, to encourage international exchange and keep pace with global technologies and development, the MHE has launched its "Human Capacity Development Program" (HCDP), which is designed to send Kurdish public university graduates to high ranking international universities to pursue higher education degrees to further improve their international intelligence, language aptitude, and professional repertoires ("Education Overview, Kurdistan Region of Iraq," n.d.). The HCDP is considered to be one factor in the increasing demand for English in the KRI, since students need to attain a certain level of English competency to be qualified for the program and receive admissions in the English speaking universities.

Since 2009, some steps have been taken to raise primary and secondary education to international standards including implementation of a more rigorous K-12 curriculum and making education compulsory through 9th grade. Previously it was obligatory only through 6th grade. Increasing teacher quality is another focus for improving the overall quality of education by requiring new teachers to have at least a bachelor's degree and to attend teacher training programs ("Education Overview, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq," n.d.). However, the education system in KRI needs more support especially in its physical infrastructure, teacher training system, and curriculum. Lacking educational facilities and new school buildings has resulted in overcrowded classrooms and students who do not have access to adequate educational materials. This has seriously affected

student achievement and their academic level ("the Policy of Educational System in Iraqi Kurdistan," n.d.).

English Language Curricula and Syllabi in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

To analyze the current English language teaching status and its materials used in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), it is essential to highlight teaching English methods used in Iraq's education system. Effective English teaching materials are needed to develop the status of English in KRI. Hamash (1973) declares that some of the dissatisfactions and failures of teaching English in Iraq are attributed to the textbooks used. The same could be said for KRI.

It is necessary to distinguishing between the syllabus and curriculum (White, 1988). Curriculum includes the process of determining the needs of students, designing objectives and assessments intentions (Richards, 2001). This process needs an appropriate syllabus, outlining, teaching methods, materials, and an assessment system to evaluate strengths and areas for improvement. Curriculum determines the *who, what*, *why*, *how* and *how well*; whereas the term syllabus covers a narrower scope. Richards (2001) defines the syllabus as a segment of the curriculum that describes the order and contents of a course of instruction. So, according to Richards, John, & Heidi (1992), a language teaching syllabus may be based on three kinds of syllabi:

1. A Structural Syllabus treats grammatical items and vocabulary.

2. A Situational Syllabus treats the language needed for different types of situations.

3. A Notional Syllabus treats the meanings and communicative functions which the students need to express in the target language (p. 94).

In addition, there are other types of approaches to language syllabi such as communicative and task-based syllabi. Some literature proposes the language syllabus as a product-based syllabus, process-based syllabus, synthetic, and analytic syllabus (Wilkins, 1976). In this regard, there have been continuous attempts to categorize language syllabi. White (1988) classifies syllabi as two types: Type A and Type B. Type A is based on the interventionist approach, giving priority to pre-specification of linguistic or other contents or skills; Type B is based on a non-interventionist, experiential, or natural growth approach, "which aims to immerse the [language] learners in real-life communication without any artificial pre-selection or arrangement of items" (Allen, 1984, p. 65). What has been presented so far for English language in educational system of both Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq can be categorized as Type A or a product syllabus.

The English language syllabi used in Iraq can be described historically in two time periods:

1. Using imported syllabi during 1873-1970s.
2. Locally produced syllabi which have been used since 1970s until the present (Abdulkarim, 2009).

English as a second language was first taught in Iraq in 1873. After World War I, when Iraq was mandated by the British Empire, English was taught in the first year of elementary school. This decision lasted only one year. Later, it was decided that English begin in from the fifth year of elementary school. Since then, the English status has changed from a second language to a foreign language. The textbooks were then imported from Egypt and were based on the Grammar Translation Method or Classical

Method (al Chalabi, 1976). That was used for the purpose of helping students read and appreciate foreign language literature. At that time, the perception was driven from the fundamental principle of the Traditional Method, which was learning the English language to be able to read its literature. The method also focused on helping students to translate from one language into another without paying much attention to the culture of the target language; target culture was limited to its literature and fine arts. Listening and speaking skills (including pronunciation) also received little or no attention and pronunciation. Deductive explicit grammar rules made students conscious of the grammatical rules of the target language. It was also hoped that the method would help students grow intellectually through mental exercises of memorization and comparison between the target language and the native language. Through the study of the grammar of the target language, students would become more familiar with their native language, which would help them to speak and write their native language (Freshman, 2000).

The Grammar-Translation Method was prevalent until the mid 20th century, and the English teaching methods and materials in Iraq were still influenced by this method. Three series of English language teaching courses designed in Britain were used in Iraq until the early of 1970s. The series used were: *The Oxford English Course* by Oliphant, *The Oxford English Course for the Middle East* by Faucett, and *The Oxford English Course for Iraq* by Miller and Hakim (Al-Bettar, 1965). None of the series included a teacher's guide and did not satisfy the students' needs for basic linguistic, sociological, and political factors of the Iraqi society (Abdul-Kareem, 2009). Bruner (1960) stresses that "a curriculum ought to be built around the great issues, principles, and values that a society deems worthy of the continual concern of its members" (pp. 31-32). To improve

English as a second language, the authority relevant to education in Iraq established The

Foreign Language Department at the Higher Teachers Training College in Baghdad,

which marked a new era in English language instruction in Iraq. In 1970, the Ministry of

Education formed a committee to design a new English course, which eventually led to a

series which consisted of eight textbooks and was called the *New English Course for Iraq*

(NECI).

In 1980, NECI was modified to 22 textbooks including a student's textbook, a

teacher's guide, and a handwriting manual. NECI was based on the Structural Approach

(SA) and the Audio Lingual Method (ALM) (Al-Jumaily, 2002), which have their roots

in behaviorism (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). SA applies techniques of the Direct Method,

but translation is often used and focuses more on speaking than reading and writing.

Students learn the English language through activities, emphasizing speech and oral

work. They also acquire standard sentence patterns. ALM is based on the theory that

language can be learned through habit formation, which has its origins in Skinner's

principles of behavior theory; in other words, learning through operant conditioning or

stimulus response and reinforcement (Castagnaro, 2006). Errors lead to the information

of bad habits, so students should be corrected when they make mistakes. A common

feature of ALM is a pattern of practice and memorization of language according to

contexts (Oebel, 2001). Since students should mimic what they hear, teachers should

provide students with a native-esque model. Grammar is taught only through examples,

and students do not need to memorize grammar rules because learning a foreign language

should be the same as the acquisition of the native language. In spite of that, the method

focuses on listening and speaking skills. Students are often found unable to transfer the

skills learned through Audio-lingualism to real communication outside the classroom (Ahmed, Puteh-Bahak, & Sidek, 2015). Contrary to previous courses which were reading centered, NECI includes activities enhancing language skills such as dialogue, oral practice, pronunciation, reading, writing, spelling, and punctuation (Al-Hamash, 1973).

Those methods and approaches failed students with communication skills. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, educators contributed to a shift in the language teaching and learning field from a linguistic structure-centered approach to a Communicative Approach (Widdowson, 1990). This new change was embraced by the Arab world. In late 1980s, the previous Arab Gulf States including Iraq held a conference to discuss unifying English language curriculum in the seven states. It was decided to discuss the project finally in a conference in Kuwait on January 1, 1990, but because of political tension and wars in the region, the project was discarded (Abdul-Karim, 2009).

In 2001, the Ministry of Education in Iraq with the assistance of local specialists in English language teaching curriculum in Iraq designed a new syllabus bearing the name "Rafidain English Course for Iraq" (RECI) based on the Communicative Approach (CA). Because of economic sanctions and embargoes imposed on Iraq, RECI had problems consulting foreign experts and using native English speaking materials (as cited in Abdul-Karim, 2009). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which applies the theories of the Communicative Approach, is strongly in demand. The worldwide market and routine communication in international contexts demand for students with quality language aptitudes and high levels of English language accuracy and fluency. So, students need to improve their command of English, which will lead to success and advancement in many fields of employment (Richards, 2006). Through English literature,

students also learn about the experience of other people from other countries, attain a sense of identity, and become creative in expressing thoughts and criticizing texts. Since its inception in the late 1970s, CLT has had a huge influence on language teaching practices worldwide. CLT aims to teach communicative competence of knowing when and how to say what to whom. There are multiple models of Communicative competence, which can be highlighted in these aspects of language knowledge:

- Competency in the target language to use language for different purposes and functions.

- Competency in varying language based on the setting and the participant, such as knowing about register of language (for example: knowing when to use formal and informal speech or mastering appropriate written language, as opposed to spoken communication).

- Competency to produce and understand different genres of texts such as narrative, reports, interviews, and conversations.

- Competency to maintain communication through the use of different types of communication strategies (Richards, 2006).

- Competency to work with language at the discourse or suprasentential level (Freeman, 2000).

Freeman (2000) points out that "Communicative Language Teaching aims broadly to apply the theoretical perspective of the Communicative Approach by making communicative competence the goal of language teaching and by acknowledging the interdependence of language and communication" (p.121).

Communicative Language Teaching focuses on using authentic language language as it is used in a real context in which students develop competency to figure out a speaker's or writer's intention. Mastery of linguistic forms is important, but the emphasis is on the process of communication in which linguistic mistakes are tolerated and considered a natural outcome of improving communication aptitudes. The social context of the communicative event is crucial to providing meaning to the utterance.

Some language curricula are planned for centrally organized school systems where resources and direct support are provided to guarantee the success of the program. Others take place in settings where there is limited support. The English curriculum in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) falls under the latter circumstance. According to Vernez et al. (2014), the KRI currently has a limited system for educational accountability, which involves monitoring the performance of its education system. The teacher evaluation system in KRI is determined through the supervisory model in which Ministry of Education (MOE) maintains 830 supervisors for basic education. The number of English teachers supervised by a single supervisor is 123. The supervisors conduct three school visits a year. During these visits, they play both roles as teacher evaluators and trainers which creates a potential conflict of interest. Their evaluation criteria are not specific and consistent. Many supervisors do not know the subject area they evaluate, or they do not devote enough time to collect knowledge required to evaluate the teachers' or schools' performances. Decision-making is centralized in the MOE and does not provide school principals with data to compare their students' performance with students in other schools or track their schools' performance overtime. School principals have no input in assigning the teacher, have limited authority, and cannot evaluate teachers. In fact, the

school principals' role is mainly administrative, and they are not expected to be

instructional leaders. The MOE requires establishing a robust evaluation system that

identifies poor teacher performances and implements consequences. This can be achieved

through increasing school leaders' or principals' roles and authority in hiring, evaluating,

guiding, and supporting teachers.

Developing a language syllabus requires cooperative efforts of experienced

teachers, specialists, and educational experts to analyze linguistic, psychological,

pedagogical, sociological, and political principles. A language syllabus is dynamic. It

requires constant needs analysis, which is to gather data and information that can be

interpreted as a profile of language needed of students in order to make essential

decisions about the implementation of the objectives and content of a language course.

This leads to a successful language program. The needs analysis is completed by situation

analysis, which is to investigate political, social, economic, and institutional factors in the

context of a planned present curriculum project (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983).

Realizing the importance of communicative language teaching and English

teaching materials as an essential element of a curriculum, in 2007, the Kurdistan

Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq launched the *Sunrise* program by Macmillan

Publication, a complete English course consisting of the teacher's book, student's book,

the activity book, and CDs produced especially for Kurdish primary and secondary

school students. According to Macmillan, *Sunrise* is based on the communicative

approach, integrating listening, speaking, reading, and writing with an explicit focus on

grammatical structures. The course develops students' English aptitudes through an

enjoyable approach to learning by using interesting topic-based units, adventure stories

that present a new language, and various activities such as role playing and guided

writing tasks. It also contains training packs (training guide for each level for *Sunrise*),

methodology manual (a presentation of the teaching methodology and approaches used in

the *Sunrise* course), study skills (methods and useful tips for students to improve their

language skills and become independent learners), and *How to Test Sunrise* section,

which has a comprehensive set of new tests developed for each unit or each level of the

Sunrise course.

   Despite being autonomous since 1991, the KRI has used the same English syllabi

as Iraq until 2007. In spite of the fact that KRI has been autonomous since 1991. Those

syllabi had several problems because they were designed based on methods and

approaches that did not develop students' communicative competences. Iraq's political

and economic problems hindered designing an effective English language syllabi. The

KRI's *Sunrise* program also fails to meet the needs of Kurdish English learners.

Chapter 3: English Context in KRI

The Use of the English Language in KRI

The primary objective of the *Sunrise* program is to teach English as a foreign language in the Kurdistan Regional Government public schools and to raise Kurdish students' communicative competence to a level of accuracy and fluency. This is to ensure success in future academic experiences and development in a wide range of global fields of employment. In the KRI educational system, English is considered an essential subject, and students are expected to receive good grades in English in order to be transferred to another grade level except for grades 1, 2, and 3, which exclude a grade retention system where students are held back (unless their parents, during a consultant session, insist on grade repetition for their children) (Iraqi Curriculum Framework, 2012).

English is one school subject evaluated in the national examinations. A good grade in English is needed for students to enter into one of the state universities and to guarantee success in (beside English departments) the English medium of instruction majors of engineering, sciences, and medicine, while students of media studies, law, and social sciences have English as a subsidiary subjects. The lack of academic and professional publications in the Kurdish language has increased the demand for English, which is the language of so much material – reference books, the internet, and global communication. In addition to learning the English language as a vehicle for personal success in academia, the job market, and personal use, for many Kurdish learners, English is seen through a national and patriotic lens to develop and present the Kurdish national and ethnic case to the world. Likewise, Salusbury (2014) reports that to the Kurdish people, English is seen as a means to "take its place in the world, not just in the

Arabic-speaking Middle East" (para. 7). However, the outcome of the English program has not been satisfactory. Few graduates of the public high schools are able to communicate intelligibly in English. Students' performance on English national tests is below expectations. For example, results of 2008 grade 9 national tests suggest that about one-third of students did not pass English, receiving grades of lower than 50 percent, which is the passing grade. Fewer than 5 percent of the students scored higher than 85 percent in English (Vernez et al., 2014).

The Status of English in Kurdistan Region of Iraq

In general, the Kurdish people have a positive attitude toward the English language, and English is more highly appreciated than Arabic (Dunlop, 2015; Hasan, 2013; Walker, 2013), even though Arabic is the second official language in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the primary language in Iraq. This might be because of the historical and political conflict background between the Kurdish people and the ousted Arab Ba'athist regime in Iraq and the Iraqi Arab officials. There is a tendency to stay away from the Arabic language and culture. "Many still view Arabic as the language of the occupier" as Salusbury reports (2004, para. 8). However, there is still a strong fervor for the Arabic language in a region that is 94 percent Muslim, and Arabic is referred to as the language of God's speech. The Kurd uprising in 1991 was a turning point both politically and educationally. The education system in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq has been rebuilt from scratch. K-12 school subjects have been taught in Kurdish since then. The Kurdish and English languages are taught beginning in kindergarten while Arabic is taught beginning in grade four. Additionally, more instructional hours are allocated to English

than Arabic. By comparison, English receives more emphasis than Arabic in both basic

(grades 1-9) and secondary (grades 10-12) education (see Tables 1, 2, & 3).

Table 1

Language Curriculum Units, the Kurdistan Regional Government (Grades 1-9)

Languages, literature and communication	Grades								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Weekly hours								
Kurdish (mother tongue)	10	10	10	5	5	5	4	4	4
Arabic	0	0	0	4	4	4	4	4	4
English	3	3	3	5	5	5	5	5	5

Source: On the Basis of the Iraqi Curriculum Framework (2012)

Table 2

School Year Length and Weekly Contact Period (Grades 1-9)

Languages (School Subjects)	Grades						Grades		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	28 Weeks x 6 Days = 168 days a year						32 x 6 = 192		
Kurdish (mother tongue)	280 h/y	280	280	140	140	140	128	128	4
Arabic	0	0	0	112	112	112	128	128	128
English	84	84	84	140	140	140	160	160	160

Source: On the Basis of the Iraqi Curriculum Framework (2012)

Table 3

Language Curriculum Units, the Kurdistan Regional Government (Grades 10-12)

Languages (School Subjects)	Grades		
	10	11	12
	Science and Literary Track (29-35 Weeks/y)		
Kurdish (mother tongue)	4	4	4
Arabic	4	4	4
English	5	5	5

Source: On the Basis of the Iraqi Curriculum Framework (2012)

Iraq's educational system uses the terms *primary* to specify the grades 1-6; *intermediate* (stages 1, 2, & 3) to indicate grades 7, 8, and 9; and *secondary* (stages 4, 5, & 6) to identify grades 10, 11, and 12. The educational system in Kurdistan uses the K-12 designation, and basic education is grades (1-9), and secondary education is grades (10-12). For the sake of consistency, the K-12 designation will be used in this paper. Overall, the educational system in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq emphasizes the English language more than Iraq's educational system does. In the basic education in KRI, English teaching starts from the first grade with three hours a week. In Iraq's educational system, English does not start until the third grade of the basic school. Additionally, in six grades, devoted hours for English in KRI's basic and secondary education exceed allocated hours for English in Iraq's basic and secondary education except for the grade 12 (see Graph 1). KRI's school year length and weekly contact period are more than Iraq's (see Figure 1).

Languages (School Subjects)	Grades																							
	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10		11		12	
English	3	0	3	0	3	3	5	3	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6

Graph 1: Comparison Between Hours Allocated to English Language in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq
Legend: ▣ indicates KRI's educational system
         ▪ indicates Iraq's educational system
Source: On the Basis of the Iraqi Curriculum Framework (2012)

Iraq	The Kurdistan Region of Iraq
32 weeks x 5 days = 160 days	32 weeks x 6 days = 192 days

Figure 1: School Year Length Comparison Between Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq
Source: On the Basis of the Iraqi Curriculum Framework (2012)

English in the Kurdish Social Contexts

Using the English language has been increasing during the last decade in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The affinity for English is reflected in the selection of films, music, and other media. This tendency is supported at both individual and official levels. Businesses and their products often have English names or use English in their advertisements. This might be because of what Masavisut, Sukwiwat, and Wongmontha (1986) state that the English brand names imply superior standards of production and empower their products with credibility. This phenomenon contributes to several discussions and is considered as a developing country phenomenon attempting to resemble the culture and language of some developed nations. Even though, for example, Japanese and German products are globally recognized for high quality and credibility, Friedrich (2002) states that English is a viable choice in many environments and relates this phenomenon of the English language use in most parts of the world instead of other languages for its unique features including "symbolizing modernity, being accessible enough to be intelligible, having [attractive] linguistic properties, having a connection of Westernization, and providing extra linguistic materials, to quench the creative thirst of advertisers and businesspeople" globally (p. 22).

Intellectual debates, dialogues, speeches, and even casual communications especially among the younger generation are embedded with many English terms; some of these terms' pronunciations are localized. In some circumstances, this phenomenon can also relate to what Friedrich (2002) indicates as English having unique capabilities. For example, in terms of lexicons, the Kurdish language may lack several literary words that encourage a writer or a speaker to borrow and employ English words during their

Kurdish written and oral discourses. This may contribute to some conveniences such as being precise, articulate, and meaningful, and crediting the agent as an intellectual, an orator, and being modernized. However, this trend of heavy use of English language terms is often seen as a threat to the national language by some Kurdish language and religious scholars. The phenomenon of the Kurdish Diaspora returning to KRI has been also increasing the number of English speaking Kurds. Some of these Kurds have brought home a native or near-native level of the English language.

A great number of Western-educated Kurds and academic individuals who are supported by the government-subsidized scholarship program Human Capacity Development Program (HCDP) are steadily returning from pursuing different fields of academia abroad. The desire among graduates and government employees to get the scholarship and study or work abroad has sparked awareness for the need to be functional in the English language. Stability of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq encouraged foreign companies to start investing in that region. This steady stream of foreign companies has increased an awareness of the essentialness of learning English and building communication with the outside world. At a macro level, the increasing demand for learning English pushed to open several private or semi-private English-taught schools and institutions such as the American International School in Kurdistan, British International Schools Kurdistan (Nursery age 3-5, basic grades 1-9), the Classical School of the Medes (Kindergarten through 12th grade), and the International School of Choueifat (KG1-12). However, most of these schools are off limits to middle-class local students because of their high tuition fees. Barbarani (2013) reports that despite mushrooming in numbers, in the past six years, these institutions' high tuition fees have

prevented access for students. There are also twelve private universities; seven use

English as the medium of instruction, and four of them are foreign universities (See

Figure 2).

University	Country Background
▪ Ishik University	▪ Turkey
▪ Lebanese French University	▪ France
▪ SABIS University	▪ Lebanon
▪ American University	▪ America

Figure 2: Foreign Universities and Their Country Background in KRI

According to Communicative Approach language is acquired within a social

context. In an EFL setting, this social context provides opportunities for learning the

English language in both formal and informal situations. Formal situations can occur in

school, college, and university settings; informal situations can be any other situation in

which learners are exposed to the English language, and are encouraged to use and

communicate in English. These include media broadcasting in English, institutional and

non-governmental organizations operating in English, and meeting/conferences held in

English. The availability and effectiveness of these situations depends on how much

emphasis a social context places on the English language. The emphasis can be at the

micro level such as individuals in the social context of classroom settings and families. It

can also be at the macro level of language policies in the country, such as government,

legal system, policy-designers, and non-governmental institutions, which either explicitly

(e.g. in the form of policy statement) or implicitly intervene and influence English

language policy.

A government, based on the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, can pass

legislation to enforce English language in that society. However, these actions are

influenced by cultural and religious beliefs of the society. For example in Iran, there is a

dichotomy of attitudes toward English. A trend argues the overemphasized English

language in Iran's educational system and culture (Akbari, 2003; Talebinezhad &

Aliakbari, 2002) on the other hand, advocates a stronger use of English language

(Mojtahedzadeh & Mojtahedzadeh, 2012; Riazi, 2005; Rizi, Siddiqui, Moghaddam, &

Mukherjee 2014). Several research projects view the unnaturalness and threat of an

English-spread phenomenon, applied linguistics, mainstream ELT pedagogy, and

advocates/followers of the mainstream ELT, leads to a devaluing of culture, language,

identity, and the nation's values (Aghagolzadeh & Davari, 2014; Akbari, 2005). Most

people in Iran believe that English belongs to America, and English is considered the

voice of the enemy and imperialism (Akbari, 2005; Dahmardeh, 2009). These viewpoints

are determined by and pregnant with religious, cultural, and political features, which

eventually reflect in the use of English in that society. Both Iran and the Kingdom of

Saudi Arabia (KSA) are Muslim countries, i.e., both governments' legislations are driven

from *Sharia* (Islamic canonical law based on the teachings of the Quran and the traditions

of the Prophet Mohammad *SAW*). However, KSA promotes the English language,

teaching and encouraging students to learn more. The Saudi government established the

Scholarship Preparation School in 1936 and has been sending students, primarily, to the

USA and Britain to learn the English language and study different fields of education

(Abudllahand & Iymen, 2002). In spite of some cultural and religious restrictions and

issues related to teaching and learning English in Saudi's context (Shah, Hussain, &

Naseef, 2013), English as a foreign language is explicitly promulgated in the KSA

educational system through decree regarding English, establishing English language

institutions, and recruiting efficient, effective English teachers around the world

(Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). So, politics and religion are determining factors in applying

the English language in a social context.

Similarly, in the KRI's context of 94 percent Muslim, Islam influences the

education system in KRI, which manifests itself in making educational decisions,

designing curricula, and student-student interaction and teacher-student interactions as

well. These actions, on both micro and macro levels, should be represented in a way that

does not contradict what Islam is teaching. English language teaching and learning in the

classroom needs a communicative and autonomous environment; whereas, Kurdish

cultural merits and conventions, might be extracted from religion and misinterpreted out

of context, could limit opposite gender interaction and communication, and value a high

degree of teacher authority, which would limit active communication and freedom in

what to learn and how to learn. Sometimes, strict disciplines are applied to keep students

on "track" and avoid deviation from the traditional methods of teaching and learning.

These conceptions create a huge gap in both student-student relationships and teacher-

student relationships which hinders developing a positive correspondence in which

teacher and students communicate and interact actively to enhance English language

learning.

The extremes of collectivism and individualism as essential aspects of cultural

beliefs and their influences on the values of education and classroom behaviorism cannot

be underestimated. In spite of the positive elements of collectivism, it also has a negative

impact on students' ideology in terms of the values of education, personal beliefs, and

classroom participation in discussions and the teacher-student relationships. In contrast,

individualism offers some ideologies that will promote education. The reflections of

individualism on education encourage independent learning, student self-centeredness,

and active student engagement in discussions and arguments to learn to think critically.

Therefore, in this paper, I present a new cultural model of *collecdualism* that is a hybrid

of the advantageous perspectives of the two extremes of collectivism and individualism.

Culture tends to shape the mind and is an essential element in education. It

provides individuals with the necessary tools and materials to establish worlds of

conception and power (Bruner, 1997). Collectivism is an ideal value in the Kurdish core

culture. It reflects power in the KRI educational system. Commitment to family,

community, and nation-state tend to be more important than individual success. A student

is expected to achieve success for his or her family whom he or she represents. This

concept of collectivism may negatively impact students' achievements because of family

and cultural pressure. Kurdish literature also cultivates this concept from an early age

through children's morality stories. For example, the famous story "*H'ez le yeki'eti daie*"

"in unity there is strength" narrates the tale of seven brothers given practical advice by

their father, stressing the Kurdish idiom "*Bra la psht brabet magar qaza laixwabet,*"

which literally means "no power defeats brothers backing up each other unless it is

divine." This emphasizes the interdependence of every human being, the priority of group

objectives over individual objectives, and the importance of cohesion within social

groups.

This concept varies according to different societies. For example, in this regard,

James and Cherry (2009) explain that this concept of culture is quite different from

American students who are educated based on individualism. A student is expected to

achieve success solely through hard work and his or her own efforts. Literature also cultivates this conception through fictional characters such as the bildungsroman *Ragged Dick* by Horatio Alger. He overcomes life hurdles and attains success by valiantly overcoming poverty and adversity. From the vagabond life of a shoeshiner, he becomes an administrator in a mercantile firm. The idea of individualism is epitomized in the story. When someone does not succeed, it is because of the person's own inadequacies such as idleness, lethargy, and indifference. Failure is a personal fault. The belief of individualism originated from the Protestant work ethic which considers hard work as righteousness and laziness as sin (Bellah, 1985).

I always feel proud of being a part of a collectivistic culture. In spite of the beauty of collectivism as a building block of Kurdish society on the basis of including every individual, caring for each other, and being unselfish. However, collectivism does not help develop effective language interactions, communications, and logical debates in English classrooms. Kurdish children are raised according to the proverb "speaking is silver, silence is golden." Kurdish students are reticent when it comes to speaking or standing out and often will not speak in class unless personally invited by the teacher. Meanwhile, students from more individualist countries tend to participate more readily in class discussions. This collectivistic perspective in KRI impedes the improvement of students' spoken English. In order for students to foster their English speaking competence, they need to actively participate in class and group discussions. Culture is subject to change and adaptation. Through modifying KRI's classroom situations and having an appropriate number of students in English classrooms, Kurdish teachers can

provide a communicative environment in which students can promote English speaking skills and expressing themselves.

Autonomy, as a sociological concept, is one of the principles of individualism. To develop student autonomy through which they control over their language learning, individualism should be developed in Kurdish culture. This should start from educating children at school on the beneficial principles of this ideology. I argue that neither of these two extremes of individualism and collectivism can alone comprise a healthy society because each of them has some critical concepts that are absent in the other. For example, collectivism lacks self-independence, self-sufficiency, and striving for one's own goals/desires, uniqueness/idiosyncratic qualities, and strong self-identity. On the other hand, individualism lacks harmony, care for community, and corporatism. A hybrid of these two extremes of collectivism and individualism comprises a version that develops and harmonizes the robust and convenient principles of the two, which I presented *collecdualism* as a new model of socio-cultural beliefs. Throughout applying this new model, students in different societies will be educated to embrace the values that promote education and community.

Chapter 4: Education and School Structure in KRI

Administration and Decision-making Authority in the KRI's Education System

Decision-making and supervising of education policy are highly centralized in the Kurdistan Regional Government's MOE which is autonomous and completely independent of Iraq's Ministry of Education. There are 12 Directorates General of Education (DGs) in KRI through which KRG's MOE manage the curriculum, generate the national and ministerial tests, employ and assign teachers and principals to schools, determine criteria for teachers and principals, and establish or renovate schools. Teacher and principal autonomy is limited. They are not authorized to make essential decisions. The school principal's role is mainly administrative including assigning teachers to classrooms, designing class schedules, interacting with student and parents, and dealing with DGs about school supplies and needs. The school leaders and principals are not given enough authority to become "instructional leaders. They have a minimal role in supervising and assessing the performance of teachers and providing guidance on teaching methods. Their role is mainly administrative" (Vernez et al., 2014, p. 29).

An English language program is conducted in an institution where partners communicate, make decisions, and form relationships, both personal and professional. Components of a school: teachers, groups, and departments should create a positive climate to support change and innovation. Morris (1994) defines this interaction of setting "culture," which provides favorable or unfavorable ethos or environment to encourage change and the implementation of innovations. This hope is developed in a relatively open climate school where there is teacher collaboration and support from principals and experienced teachers. By contrast, in a school where administrative

matters receive the fundamental focuses, and teachers function in isolation in narrow subject-based groups or sometimes in a confrontational relationship with no mechanism to discuss and solve educational issues, change and innovation are unlikely.

School Capacity and Double Shift Schools in KRI

According to Vernez et al. (2014), in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the growth in the number of schools did not keep pace with the growth in student enrollment between 2003-04 and 2009-10. In 2008, about two-thirds of Kurdish children were not enrolled in primary grades as they should have been, and the other third delayed their entry into the primary grades (i.e., entered at age 7 or later, rather than age 6). This impedes Kurdish children's acquisition of the English language at the early age, the ideal time window for acquiring language biologically linked to age. The Critical Period Hypothesis claims that language acquisition is regulated by age. Biological functions of a human brain determine a period of life when language acquisition occurs more easily. Outside of this critical period, language learning would become much more effortful and develops neither normally nor sufficiently (Lenneberg, 1967). Several researchers, through different types of evidence, including "Genie" and her counterpart cases, recovering aphasics, and the developmental language in mentally disabled, prove that because of cognitive functions and structural reorganizations that occur within the brain during puberty, this period is essential in language acquisition. In this regard, Scovel (1969), considering lateralization of brain hemispheres, which assigns functions to the hemispheres including language prior to puberty, proposes that when the process of lateralization reaches its very accomplishment it prevents people from ever again acquiring fluency in a second language. This situation is sometimes referred to as language fossilization.

The English language is taught from the first grade of basic education in KRI's educational system. This offers a great advantage to develop the English language of Kurdish children through a more natural acquisition. However, the dearth of school buildings caused the phenomenon of double and multiple shift schools in the educational system. In 2007-08, 25 percent of schools administered in double or more shifts during the daily school program; while 21 percent of the schools shared their buildings with another school. The single-shift schools not sharing buildings consisted of 54 percent (Vernez et al., 2014). In addition, the schools experienced shortages of basic needs such as electricity, water, and access to the sewage network especially in the rural areas. As of 2007-08, approximately 26 percent of the rural and 62 percent of schools had access to electricity (see Figure 3). These deficiencies relate to the socioeconomic and sociocultural factors, which directly affect the English language teaching process and education in general.

The importance of socioeconomic status and sociocultural factors as a motivation to second language acquisition has a long history originating from Gardner and Lambert (1959). However, the role of socioeconomic factors in English language learning is under-researched. Recent research on students' English language learning affected by socioeconomic status has been conducted by Lamb (2012) in Indonesian contexts. Lamb found that students in rural settlements of Indonesia have significantly weaker views of possible future images of themselves as successful users of the English language compared to students in urban areas. They also have weak instrumental goals and international orientation. Research in educational psychology has shown that students from disadvantaged socioeconomic families oftentimes do not develop strong views of

self-efficacy in academic achievements. PISA (2003) reports that European school-age

children who were from advantaged family and with more educated parents performed

significantly better in the language proficiency test. Similarly, Nikolov (2009) argues that

there is a strong connection between families' level of education and student performance

in language learning in Hungary. In the KRI's context, students in rural and suburban

areas are usually from economically disadvantaged families. These students do not have

equal opportunity as the students in city centers to access the means which can improve

their English language such as libraries, computer labs, and private schools, which

usually offer better English language instruction and better educational aids. Moreover,

these students in under-privileged contexts are usually instructed by novice English

teachers who are assigned by the MOE in KRI to mandatory instruction in rural and

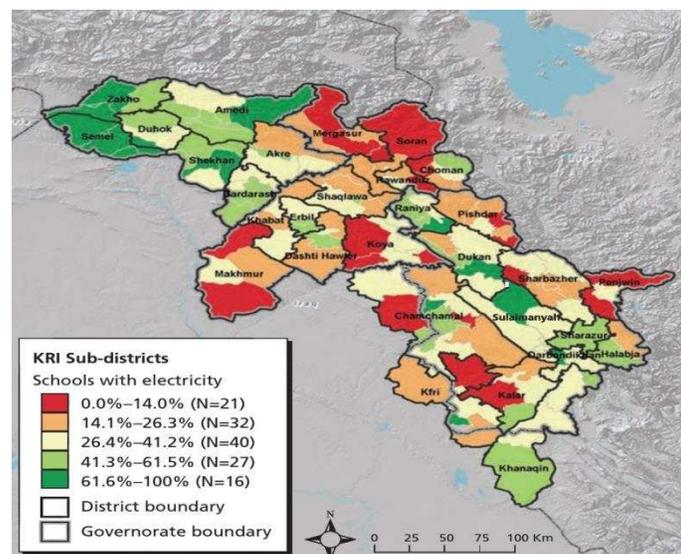suburban areas for about three to five year before teaching in the cities.

Figure 3: Percentage of Schools with Access to Electricity in the KRI, by Sub-District,
2007-08
Source: RAND, On the Basis of the Ministry of Education's Office of Statistics School
Data, 2007-08.
NOTE: Eighty-two percent of schools responded to this item.

The estimations of rapid growth in future enrollment presented the KRG with a

considerable challenge. Grades 7 to 9 will most likely grow the fastest. The average class

size of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) in urban areas is 42 students (see Figure 4),

which is large by international standards. In the Organization for Economic Co-operation

and Development (OECD) countries, the average class size varies between 21 and 24 in

grades 7-9 (OECD, 2009). No country among the 65 countries that took part in the

Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) went beyond more than an average

of 40 students per class in secondary schools. Some of the countries that participated in

PISA were Middle Eastern and/or Arab countries such as Algeria, Tunisia, Israel, Jordan,

Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey.
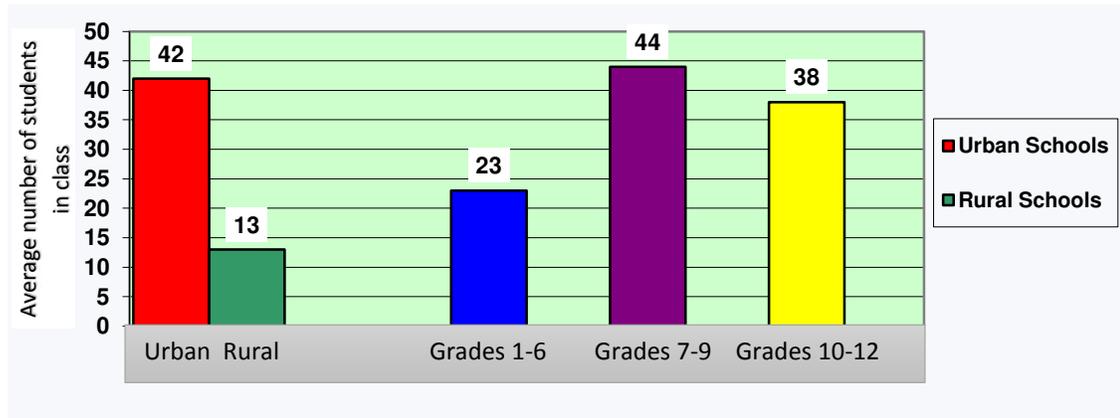
Figure 4: Average of Class Size, by Urbanicity and Grade Level, 2007-08
Source: RAND, On the Basis of the Ministry of Education's Office of Statistics School
Data, 2007-08.
NOTE: Eighty percent of schools responded to this item.

The English program *Sunrise* and the English teachers in KRI, on the basis of new

education policy and reform, need to use Communicative Language Teaching and the

student-centered approach. English teachers in KRI encounter a real challenge to do so in

a crowded classroom of about 42 pupils where the teaching materials are markers, a

board, a textbook, and a CD. Inundated with desks, students sit packed, without even having access to a basic need of electricity to play the CD. In order for English teaching activities to be effective, engaging, and to develop the student's language competency of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, multimedia and modern pedagogical devices such as a computer, projector, the internet, and language laboratories should be present.

Language teaching and learning needs a certain class environment different from other teaching-learning subjects. English language teaching and learning in classroom context needs extensive teacher-student and student-student interaction to enhance language learning, and students require extensive English exposure, especially in the EFL context of KRI where the language classroom is the only real means and exposure for students to experience the English language. In overcrowded classrooms, English language teachers spend a large amount of instructional time on management and control of the classroom, rather than on working toward the achievement of lesson objectives, which can be considered lost time. The dearth of time, poor seating arrangements, lack of activities and space for moving around, and the overwhelming number of students adversely affects the quality of English teaching and forces English teachers in KRI to apply the teacher-centered approach. Research shows that Teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language is not effective when the teacher-centered approach is employed. According to the National Capital Language Resource Center of the United States (NCLRC, n.d.), there are two major drawbacks to the teacher-centered model of language teaching:

- It involves only a minority of students in actual language learning.

- It provides students with knowledge about language, but does not motivate them

  to use it purposefully.

An average class size of 35 students is estimated to be the number of classrooms

needed to meet future student enrollment in KRI; twenty five percent of the current

classrooms in the KRE are overcrowded. This issue varies with geography and grade

level. The schools in urban areas are significantly more overcrowded (65 percent) than

the schools in the rural areas (only 5 percent). The schools offer grades 7-9 and 10-12 are

more frequently overloaded than the schools offering grades 1-6 (Vernez et al., 2014)

(see Figure 5).
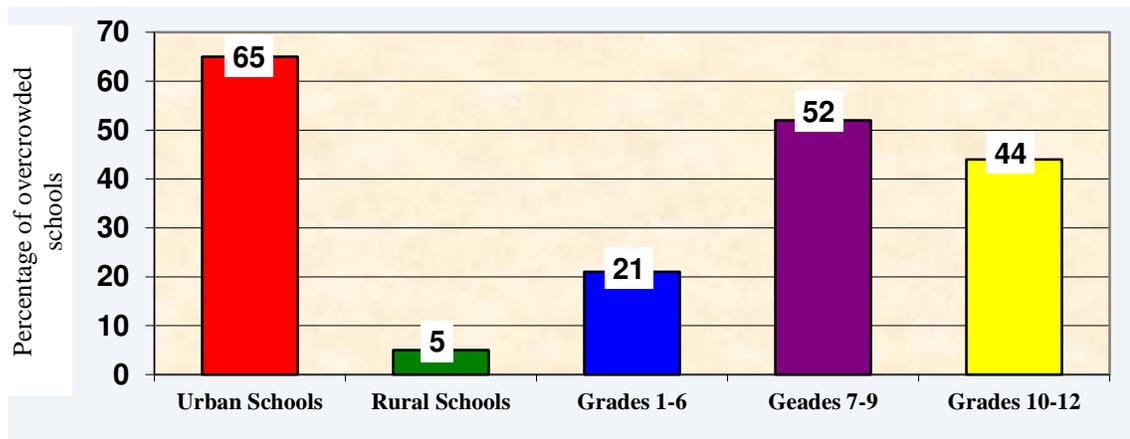
Figure 5: Average of Overcrowded schools, by Urbanicity and Grade Level, 2007-08
Source: RAND, on the Basis of Ministry of Education's Office of Statistics School Data,
2007-08.
NOTE: Overcrowding means 35 students or more per classroom.

Language Policy in KRI

Teaching languages as a second or foreign language becomes standard practice in

most countries. Yet, the role of foreign or second languages varies in those countries

based on the status of the curriculum, the educational traditions, the experiences in

language teaching, and the attitude and the expectations toward language and teaching (as

cited in Richards, 2001). For example, the Netherlands, a country that is strong in foreign

language instruction, views teaching and command of one or more foreign languages as a

necessity. So, a wide range of foreign languages are offered in their educational curricula.

In the United States, the case is completely different. There is a great interest in

literature-based teaching methods; however, the status of foreign language in the

American school curriculum is neither strong nor secure because it is not required.

Societal factors impact language teaching philosophy. They include: "policy makers in

government, educational and other government officials, employers, the business

community, politicians, tertiary education specialists, educational organizations, parents,

citizens, and students" (Richards, 2001, p. 93).

Since achieving autonomy in 1991, the Kurdish language, along with Arabic,

are the official languages in the KRI for governmental purposes. The Kurdish language

also includes the two dialects of Central Kurdish (commonly known as Sorani) and

Northern Kurdish (also known as Kurmanji). These two main dialects, in fact use

different alphabets. They also have huge differences looking like two different languages

in terms of aspects of language and lexicons. Central Kurdish *Sorani* uses an adaptation

of Arabic script, while the Northern Kurdish *Kurmanji* writes in the Roman alphabet.

Turkmani, Assyrian Neo-Aramaic, and Chaldean Neo-Aramaic are also spoken by their

respective minority communities. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) promotes

the two main dialects in the educational system ("The Kurdish language," n.d.). There is

a language learning overload for Kurdish learners because they need to study their native

language, a different Kurdish dialect, Arabic, and English language. Comparatively, the

educational system in KRI spends more time on languages than do most OECD countries ("MOE's office of statistics," 2009; OECD, 2009). Multi-language instruction needs adequate time, effective materials, and effective language teachers.

The education system in KRI experiences difficulties targeting multi-language teaching. When students invest in a second language, they expect or look forward to having a good return on that investment – "a return that will give them access to hitherto unattainable resources" (Norton, 2000, p. 10). Stotz (2008) states that "a basic competence in English as a commoditized *lingua franca* is seen as sufficient to all but the elite graduates of upper secondary schools" (para. 2).

Dispersion of focus on multiple languages and lacking enforcement of main principles of language teaching such as, teaching facilities, teaching materials, language teachers, student needs, and effective evaluation impede the English program in the KRI's education system. In this respect, *Sunrise* as an EFL program fails to fulfill its objectives for various reasons such as unsuitable textbooks, deficient teacher preparation/training, overpopulated classrooms, heavy student load, and student diversity of intellectual capability, social background, motivational level, and prior access to educational resources. No matter how effective the curriculum or how excellent the English language teacher, the syllabus cannot be successfully delivered in a class of 40 to 50 students (Lie, 2007). Numerous research projects have investigated the negative impact on student achievement, behaviors, attitude, and educational outcomes (Monks & Schmidt, 2010), and indicate that class size reduction (CSR) leads to improved student achievement (Finn & Voekl, 1992; Glass, Cahen, Smith & Filby, 1982; Robinson, 1990). Through a comprehensive meta-analysis of class size reduction research project, Glass

and Smith (1978) found that achievement scores increased significantly when classes

were comprised of twenty or fewer students. CSR appears to be more effectual for low-

achieving students and students from low socioeconomic status (SES) (Angrist & Lavy,

1997; Fidler, 2001).

Time Influence in Students' Achievement

The basic notion that increasing instructional and school time is closely related to

effective learning and better student achievement as a central concept in education is

widely accepted (Berliner, 1990; Brown & Saks, 1987; Carroll, 1963, 1985; Hargreaves,

1997; NEA, 1987; NECTL, 2000). There is a positive and statistically significant

relationship between increased instructional time and academic achievement (Bellei,

2009; Cerdan-Infantes & Vermeersch, 2007; Jez & Wassmer, 2011). Research has also

found that more instructional time results in remarkable achievement especially for

students with initially low academic achievement (as cited in Bellei, 2009). According to

a World Bank policy paper (1990), increasing the amount of time teachers spend actually

teaching, expands student learning. Increasing instructional time is particularly essential

for low-income students with limited opportunities for learning in out-of-school time.

Such a case is identified in several research projects: for example, in Bellei's (2009)

study of mathematics and language achievement, he evaluated the impact of a two year

exposure to a program conducted by the Chilean government started in 1997 to increase

public primary and secondary school students' achievement through lengthening the

school day. He found that the significant number of municipal and rural students who

were positively affected by the program implied that the program had a significant impact

on disadvantaged students and those with fewer educational resources at home (Bellei, 2009).

Some evidence indicates differences in students' achievement in developing countries are related to both length of the school day and length of the school year. Interestingly, students between the ages of 7 and 14 in OECD countries typically receive an average 6,898 hours of instruction, (breaking down to 1,586 hours for ages 7 and 8, 2,518 hours for ages 9 to 11, and 2,794 hours for ages 12 to 14) (OECD, 2007). However, there is no definitive answer regarding how much instructional time is needed to acquire an assigned amount of knowledge or an assigned set of reasoning aptitudes. Millot & Lane (2002) explain this issue based on three dimensions: amount, dispersion, and intensity of time allocation.

The amount of time is the actual number of hours allocated to learning by the education policies. This macro dimension of time encounters several constraints that hinder effective application of the official time determined to learning and the actual classroom time interaction. The problems manifest themselves in various forms of routine administrative work, teacher or student absenteeism or strikes, the number of holiday or semi-official holiday events and the amount of time planned for extracurricular or non-academic activities. The second dimension, dispersion of time and schooling, spreads out across subjects and plays a significant role in students' academic achievement. The last dimension, intensity, can be measured at the micro level of classroom, since it is related to teachers' attitudes and strategies.

The huge differences of education quality and economic growth in the developed countries compared to the developing countries results from proper management of time

and well-established administrative and management structure, rather than educational

expenditure. According to the The World Bank (1999) Report on Education in the Middle

East/North African (MENA) Region, it is noticed that "public financial commitment in

MENA is stronger and higher than the world average" ("Education in the Middle East

and North Africa," 1999, p. 13). However, the report also stated that "what is known

about the quality of education – described as academic achievement – is not

encouraging" (as cited in Millot & Lane, 2002, p. 217). Study into the area suggests that

increasing the amount of time in school will boost academic achievements. In addition to

increasing time in class, other factors affect student achievement relating to the students'

intelligence and beliefs, classroom methodology, teaching materials, teacher ratio and

teacher skill, and educational infrastructure (Millot & Lane, 2002).

Educational reform is still needed to develop strategic priorities and access to

quality education in Kurdistan (Vernez et al., 2014). Millot & Lane (2002) argue that in a

production of education, the different dimensions of time such as amount (actual number

of hours allocated for learning), dispersion (allocated time for school subjects), and

intensity (teacher management of time in classroom) need much attention to contribute to

efficient access to education. Time remains a vital factor in the educational process.

Policymakers could benefit from a more accurate measure of timely input in developing

educational legislation. Spending for and investing time in Kurdish learners at school is

much lower than that of students in the developed countries. According to Vernez et al.

(2014), schools in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq offer little instructional time with 539

hours of instruction per year in double-shift basic schools and 693 hours of instruction

per year in single-shift schools. Both are well below the OECD average of 985 hours

(OECD, 2007). Kurdish English teachers also reported concerns about inadequate coverage of the new English curriculum material during the course of an academic year. In 2010, RAND Corporation and Kurdistan Ministry of Education survey of teachers (63 percent of English teachers surveyed) reported being unable to cover the English material within the school year. They disagreed or strongly disagreed that it is possible to complete the new curriculum during the course of a year.

The lack of school buildings and instructional time hinder the English teachers in KRI from offering effective teaching. In a classroom of 40-50 students, Kurdish English teachers cannot apply the student-centered approach, and students cannot participate effectively to improve their English competence. They have 40-50 minutes that does not allow each student to speak for a minute.

Chapter 5: Teachers and Teacher Training in KRI

The Role of English Language Teachers in English Language Education

Many studies draw attention to the importance of the teachers' roles in the process of language learning. It is worth pointing out what the successful teachers or effective teachers look like. Studies have different definitions for effective language teachers. Through the essence meaning of the line in Saint-Exupery's *The Little Prince* which reads "That which is essential cannot be seen with the eyes. Only with the heart can one know it rightly," Miller (1987) defines characteristics of an effective teacher in 10 categories:

1. Enthusiasm for teaching: effective EFL teachers' passion for teaching can motivate learners and set the tone for instruction.

2. Creativity in teaching: Effective teachers forgo simply following the textbook..

3. Adding pace and humor to the class: teachers' skillful humor has the effect of alleviating students' nervousness. When students are not afraid of making mistakes and have a good time, they make progress in language learning.

4. Interest in the student: Effective English language teachers always challenge their students by speaking to them in English. This shows confidence in them, challenges them to speak in English, and activates their English channel, which prepares them to think in English.

5. Being patient and persevering with students: When the teacher demonstrates incredible patience with all of the students and "is positive – encouraging initial and repeated attempts – the students will apply themselves more diligently. Motivation thrives on success" (Miller, 1987, p. 37).

6. Taking an interest in students as a person: Effective language teachers discover discussion topics that interest students: hobbies, family, past employment, and travel, to name but a few.

7. Knowledgeable at grammar: language teachers need to know the target language grammar well and can explain grammatical points without further consideration.

8. Teacher availability: effective teachers should take a few minutes to answer student questions or talk to students after class. This will encourage students to apply themselves and do extra work.

9. Equal treatment: Teachers need to treat students equally and avoid biases.

10. Leaving emotional baggage outside the classroom: Students' concentration should not be interrupted by anxiety from a teacher does not conduct himself/herself professionally. (See Appendix 1 for the detailed characteristics of an effective teacher.)

In the Kurdistan Regional Government public schools, the *Sunrise* course is prescribed, and teachers do not supplement the course as they see fit. Teachers pursue the teaching profession as a part-time job because they are not paid well enough to make a decent living. The majority of teachers work additional jobs, preventing them from dedicating additional time to strengthen their teaching through material development and professional development. This distract them from becoming quality teachers who deliver excellent lessons.

Teachers play vital roles in successful implementation of any language program. English language teachers vary based on their typical background, training and qualification, morale and motivation, English language proficiency, teaching experience,

skill and expertise, teaching style and methods, beliefs and principles, and openness to change. Quality language teachers can evaluate resources and language materials to compensate for the poor quality of the sources. Insufficiently trained teachers, however, leave a program's objectives to chance. This does not allow the program to successfully achieve its goals no matter how effective the materials.

Novice English language teachers should particularly be supported and guided through the process because teachers' first-year experiences fall under the influence and manipulation of their institutional environment and educational background. In their study on teachers' first-year experiences, Richards and Pennington (1998) found that teachers are closely restricted by textbooks and do not follow the principles of the communicative approach. They rather move toward the concept of the teacher-centered approach in which language content is the focus and students are not actively involved in a communicative language learning. Therefore, they make little use of English (as cited in Kang & Cheng, 2013). Similarly, in KRI many English teachers need stronger English skills to be more effective teachers in the new English course program and continue teaching the traditional curriculum. According to Vernez et al. (2014), this deviation in teaching method is a result of inadequate training of English teachers in teacher colleges and after graduation as well.

Teachers should be extensively consulted to see if changes need to be made, and they should be vigorously involved in designing new curricula rather than imposing the outcomes on them. They need to be provided with adequate educational and professional training, and the new curriculum should be piloted first to recognize the demands it creates for teachers and students (Richards, 2001). Teacher cognition and behavioral

changes continue through the process of teaching. Kang and Cheng (2013) define teacher cognition as "the psychological constructs of teaching which teachers use as a frame of reference to understand the language teaching context and to guide their classroom behaviors" (p. 171). They recommend that supportive, nurturing, and favorable workplace conditions such as appropriate workload, collegial assistance, and in-service learning opportunities are provided to facilitate teacher learning. Teachers will eventually foster their classroom practices and students' language learning. Teachers themselves should also assume a vigorous role in their own professional development which will lead to success of the curriculum objectives.

The new curriculum in KRI calls for students' autonomy in language learning and transforms them from the passive role of receivers to active constructors of knowledge. In this regard, context and cultural factors play a significant role that influence individual thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Such factors include identity, ethnic values, face (as a sociological concept), family/kinship structure, power, race, religious beliefs, and taboos. Education and language as social actions occur in a context of strictly related sociocultural factors. In this regard, Freeman & Johnson (1998) argue that sociocultural context determines the teacher-student relationship and the success or failure of pedagogical process.

Kurdish educational culture values a high degree of teacher authority in the class. This often impedes the curriculum from fulfilling its objectives. Kurdish English learners still have limited freedom in deciding what to learn and how to learn. English teachers still have a belief that they can play the role of a dispenser of knowledge and students should listen and follow the pace during the 40-50 minute instructional time. This model

of teaching develops an instructional principle which is closer to the Traditional Method and Audio Lingual Method in which English learners do not improve their communicative competence which they need to successfully use the English language in various discourse settings. Sometimes, strict rules and disciplines are applied to make sure students do not divert from the traditional methods of teaching and learning, which often creates an antagonistic teacher-student relationship in an anxiety provoking environment. Kurdish students do not develop English acquisition in this context. According to the fifth hypothesis of Krashen (1982), the "affective filter," is one of the obstacles manifesting itself during language acquisition. This is influenced by emotional variables of anxiety, defensiveness, and stress, which prevent language input from reaching the language acquisition hemisphere of the brain. Free of anxiety contexts or low "affective filter" environments provide students with the best acquisition (Krashen, 1982).

It seems that the ability to control and have a calm class is considered as a core qualification of a successful teacher. Many of these beliefs are rooted in cultural values and conventions. Teachers are often considered masters and authorities of knowledge. This creates a huge gap between students and teachers in developing a positive relationship in which students communicate and interact actively to enhance language learning. The English language classroom should cultivate students' abilities to use English free from anxiety and losing face. Teachers should have high expectations of ELLs and provide them with meaningful activities that require high-level thinking and language processing.

In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in an EFL setting, the English teaching materials used do not reflect the students' needs (Hassan, 2014). In such a scenario, teachers should interact with students in a wider social context (Hall, 2011), provide for student needs, and make local and immediate decisions beneficial for the students. Cummins and Swain (1986) and Swain (1993) stress that to progress in language acquisition, teachers should provide students with a variety of class activities, methods, and attention to learning styles. This will encourage students to use language beyond the classroom in various contexts and natural settings. Additionally, acquiring a second or foreign language as English needs to be a positive experience for students. Negative attitudes toward English minimize learners' motivation and causes unsuccessful attainment of English proficiency (Brown, 2000). Social psychologists also affirm the importance of students' attitude toward the target language, its speakers, and the learning context in succeeding or failing that language. In this sense, Krashen (1982) highlights that comprehensible teaching is not enough to ensure language acquisition. Hence, English language learners also must be receptive to the language provided. When English learners are bored, frustrated, angry, nervous, stressed or unmotivated, they are not receptive to the English language, so they increase the "affective filter," which hinders effective English language learning.

Oxford (1990) states that the psychological factors are probably the most essential factors that cause students to succeed or fail second language learning. These psychological aspects include students' emotions, motivation, self-esteem, attitude, empathy, and anxiety. Language learning is a complex task. Spielberger (1983) states that in English language learning, students are susceptible to nervousness, frustration, apprehension, and self-doubt. These psychological situations influence "affective filter,"

which control language learning. Therefore, English teachers should avoid unnatural classroom procedures that may arouse student anxiety, such as stressing student errors (Young, 1994). English teachers should provide a safe and welcoming classroom atmosphere in which students can feel secure volunteering their answers. English teachers must keep in mind that overemphasizing students' evaluation turns the classroom into a discouraging or testing climate that provokes anxiety. Therefore, English teachers should play more as language learning facilitators not language evaluators. They should promote a supportive English classroom where learning can easily and effectively occur. Speaking English in public is oftentimes anxiety-provoking because, unlike children, adults are sensitive about losing face. In other words, they become cautious about how they will be judged when becoming lost for words, making errors, and failing to express themselves.

Teacher Preparation in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the teacher institutes, administrated by the Ministry of Education (MOE), are in a slow process of being closed as part of a reform implementation of the education policy made in 2008-09 that requires new teachers to hold at least a bachelor's degree. According to Vernez et al. (2014), at present, the majority of in-charge teachers were prepared by these institutes. Students enrolled in teacher institutes had to have a secondary-school (high-school) diploma. They were then trained for a period of two years after secondary school. The institutes also admit that some enrolled students who only held primary-school certificates and trained for a period of five years after primary education. Teachers for primary basic schools (grades 1-9) were also recruited from university education programs and other academic programs such as industry, commerce, and fine arts institutes. Basic-education teachers (grades 1-9

teachers) are prepared by the teacher colleges, of which there are currently four: three teacher colleges in Sulaimaniayh, Erbil, and Duhok, and one teacher college in the Garmian province. These colleges are administrated by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHE) and their graduates receive a bachelor's degree. Secondary teachers (grades 10-12) are recruited from colleges of education and other academic university programs. Teachers are generally not offered adequate standard training.

Minimal in-service training and professional development is provided. Because of a lack of trained experts, the MOE and Directorates General of Education (DGs) alternatively use unprofessional trainers such as MOE supervisors and institute professors. At present, the MOE does not have any on-going in-service capabilities. This produces a negative influence on about 89,000 teachers and principals in KRI. Moreover, the teaching materials in English departments at universities do not successfully prepare teacher students. Hassan (2014) argues that the current university materials, as an important source of input on the process to learning English, are not suitable and are of limited help.

The content of teaching English materials does not focus on teaching English language as much as it focuses on English literature, and the elements of language. For example, in most English departments, English literature, English poetry, and English drama course modules are taught in the first and second year. The literaryism and language fashion of some of these materials are complex and include, for example, the works of William Shakespeare, old British literature and history, and the Renaissance era. Freshmen and sophomores do not have enough language aptitudes to grasp the content of

these courses. This contradicts the "comprehensible input" hypothesis of Krashen that language is acquired when the student understands what is heard and what is read (Krashen, 1982). Teacher students need to develop their language competency, and it is argued that learners of English language should first be taught the language and then the knowledge of the language. This pedagogical perspective is reinforced by Harmer (2007) who argues that language learners may feel intimidated and discouraged when they first encounter the knowledge of the language about which they know little.

English Teachers in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

The English program in the KRI educational system faces a variety of challenges related to improving its quality. These include teachers' insufficient knowledge of the content of the new curriculum, English teachers who do not hold an English specialization degree, insufficient teacher training, high rate of teachers possessing lower than a bachelor's degree, insufficiently prepared English teachers, and inadequate instructional time to cover the new curriculum presented in 2007. These factors contribute to student achievement with its high rate of failure in annual school assessments, high rate of retention, and poor performance on KRI's national standardized tests.

The current system in KRI of assigning students to the teaching profession does not select high achievers. High-school graduates pursuing post-secondary education do not choose their academic programs. The Ministry of Higher Education assigns high-school graduates who apply for university or institutes in a field of study according to their overall score on the national high school exit exam. Vernez et al. (2014) state that students assigned to become teachers in university education programs and teacher

colleges are among the lower scorers on the national high school exit exam. This current

method of student recruitment is unlikely to enhance the high quality and strong

motivation in the teaching profession.

As noted earlier, the deficit of English-specialized teachers is compensated

through assigning other specialized teachers to teach English language. This irony is an

educational calamity. Hassan (2014) argues that even English specialized student

teachers are not well prepared by teacher colleges or institutes. This makes the issue go

from bad to worse. A teacher student who does not graduate from an English department

is less likely to have enough knowledge or competence to effectively teach English.

Studies have revealed that students' achievement is lower if they are instructed by

teachers who lack training in the content area in which they are teaching (UNESCO

Institute for Statistics, 2006). In this regard, in KRI, the dearth of the English specialized

teachers makes MOE compel teachers of other specialization to teach English. On the

basis of 2010 RAND Corporation For Research and Analysis and KRI's MOE Survey of

Teachers, 25 percent of teachers surveyed reported that they teach English language,

which is not their subject specialization, meaning they are not qualified to teach the

subject. Approximately 18 percent of these teachers held a "general specialization"

degree which is equivalent to a preparatory or high school degree. Therefore, a

considerable number of new English language teachers are required to meet the deficits

in the KRI's teaching force. Under the medium estimate of RAND Corporation For

Research and Analysis, KRI's education system requires to recruit 8,100 new English

teachers in the next decade (2010-2020) (Vernez et al., 2014).

According to Vernez et al. (2014), 70 percent of the KRI's teaching force consists of primary grade teachers. Between 2007 and 2008, only two percent of the primary grade teachers held a bachelor's degree, 24 percent held a preparatory certificate, and 73 percent held a diploma (see Figure 6). In contrast, the vast majority of teachers in upper grades (7-9 and 10-12) held a bachelor's degree. Twelve percent of primary school teachers specialized in English (see Figure 7). Within the changes of the education policy, the Ministry of Education in 2008 required new teachers to have at least a bachelor's degree.
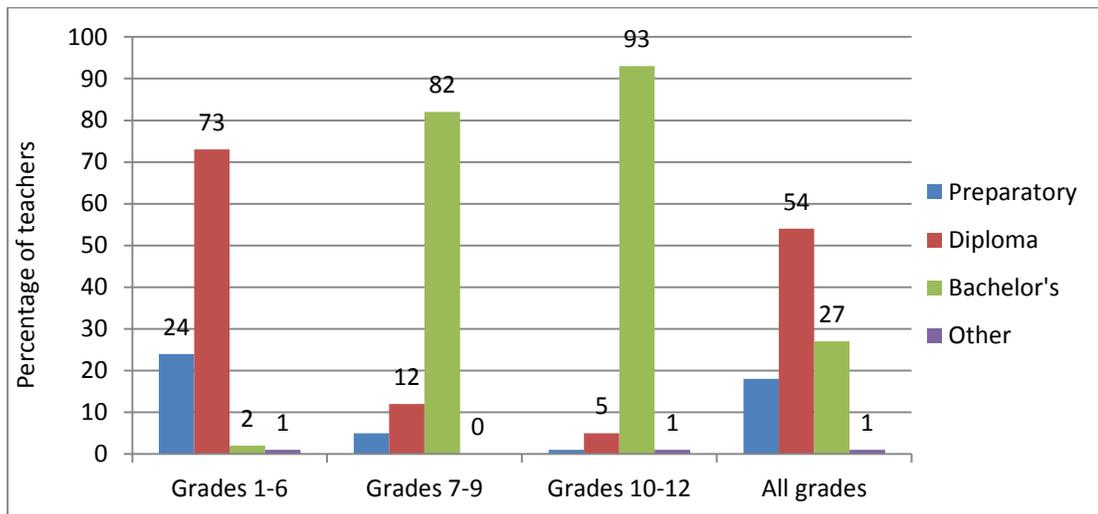

Figure 6: Education Level of KRI Teachers, by Grades and Total, 2007-08
Source: RAND, On the Basis of the Ministry of Education's Office of Statistics School Data, 2007-08.
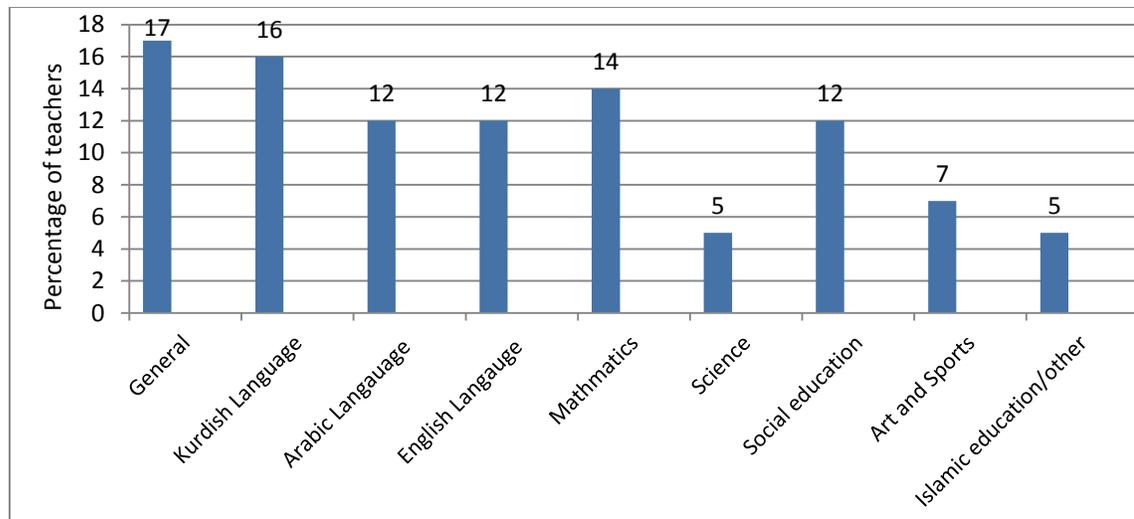
Figure 7: Academic Specializations of Primary Teachers, 2007-08
Source: RAND, On the Basis of the Ministry of Education's Office of Statistics School Data, 2007-08.

Need For Better Training and Preparation of English Teachers in KRI

The dearth of teacher training in KRI constitutes a serious issue that pertains to both experienced English teachers and new candidates. English language teachers are not adequately prepared to teach the new English curriculum, which requires sufficient knowledge and application of the student-centered learning method. Vernez et al. (2014) state that many practicing teachers in KRI lack the required knowledge to successfully apply the new curriculum and are accustomed to teaching the traditional curriculum for which they were trained during their years of preparation.

Currently, The MOE does not have any evaluation system to assess the English language proficiency level of English teachers in KRI. The only criterion to become an English teacher is holding a bachelor's degree from one of the teacher colleges in KRI. In a 2010 teacher survey conducted by RAND Corporation and KRI's MOE, fewer than 40 percent of teachers surveyed rated themselves or their teacher colleagues as well-prepared or very well-prepared to use the new curriculum materials and frameworks,

adapt the new curriculum to meet their students' needs, and manage/evaluate/change the

scope or sequences of the new curriculum contents to correspond with the students'

learning needs (see Figure 8). Many teachers also reported that they are not provided with

sufficient guidance to teach the materials accompanying the new curriculum. This issue

manifests itself in inefficient daily lesson plans and weak teaching techniques. They also

reported concerns about the content of the new curriculum, insufficient textbooks,

supplies, and other learning materials. Teacher access to training in the KRI's educational

system is limited which impedes successful implementation of the new English

curriculum. In this regard, only 58 percent of English teachers received training during

2008-10. However, 57 percent of the English teachers reported that the training received

was insufficient in terms of in-depth quality training and time. They require more

training. Practicing English teachers also receive too few training courses. The training

courses which last between 5-10 days familiarize teachers with the new English

curriculum. The teachers generally reported that they require additional in-depth and

quality training sessions. Yet, about half of the English teachers reported that they had

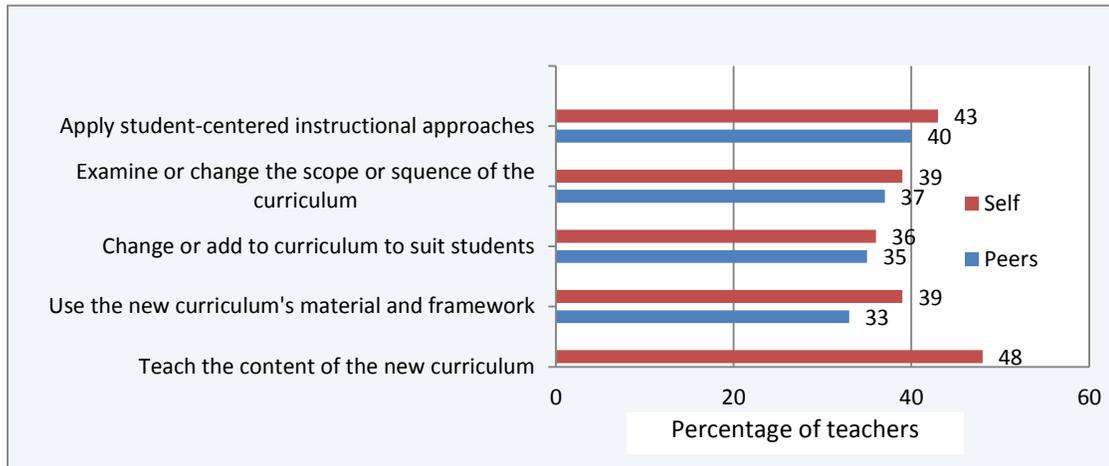not received any training courses at all.

Figure 8: Percentage of Teachers Reporting to Be Well or Very Well Prepared, by Selected Instructional Activities Related to the New Curriculum, 2010.
Source: RAND and the MOE Survey of Teachers.
Note: Ninety-five percent of surveyed teachers responded to the question about how prepared they thought they were, and 80 percent responded to the question about how prepared they thought their peers were.

Challenges of the English Program in KRI's Educational System

Effective implementation of the new curriculum is as important as designing an effective curriculum. English language teachers in KRI need better continuing education courses, not a one-shot teacher training program. Moreover, education courses need to develop an understanding of the different elements in the new English curriculum, which is based on communicative and learner-centered approaches. The courses also need to address and meet the objectives and the students' needs. Likewise, Nunan (1988) suggests that teachers should be vigorously involved with the "planned curriculum" in order to create "implemented curriculum" (p. 136). The planned curriculum refers to what has been determined in the curriculum documents and procedures. The implemented curriculum refers to what actually takes place throughout the teaching/learning process.

Teaching and education is a continuous process. English teachers need daily support to keep pace with the fast development of quality around the world. According to

Brown (2001), at the American Language Institute, educators and curriculum supervisors are in daily communication and consultation. English teachers are provided with constant assistance with lesson design, textbook adaptation, effective teaching strategies, pedagogical innovations, and providing practical tools. In this way, English teachers make creative change.

According to their study conducted on *Strategic Priorities for Improving Access to Quality Education in the Kurdistan Region—Iraq*, Vernez et al. (2014) state that the Kurdistan education system currently encounters a number of challenges regarding promoting a quality education such as students' high rate of failure in annual school assessments, especially in the upper grades, and poor performance in the KRI's national standardized tests. The analysis indicates that one factor contributing to this educational issue is the lack of knowledge and training to effectively teach the new curriculum presented in the school year 2007-08. The Directorates Generals (DGs) administrate short in-service training courses (INSET), which are inadequate to professional upgrading of programs. The effectiveness of these courses in generating long-term change in the education process has been disputed in previous research (Lamb, 1995; Pacek, 1996; Tomlinson, 1988). Upon completion of an INSET course, trainers were praised and received positive evaluations and warm tokens of appreciation. These teachers felt renewed and willing to promote changes in their classrooms, which leads to professional development. The teachers were enthusiastic and eager to apply the skills and the new stimulating ideas (Widdowson, 1987). However, they failed and got disappointed in transferring the utopian world of a teaching experience in the INSET courses to the reality of teaching in the classroom settings (Nicolaidis & Mattheoudakis, 2008). INSET

courses are not supported by subsequent follow-up courses, which make the effect of

these courses as Tomlinson (1988) calls "disastrous" because teachers lack motivation,

stimulus, and inspiration; they are nullified by the disorientation and dissatisfaction they

experience in trying to implement what they learned during the engrossing and

compelling courses.

The constraints cause confusion and frustration in applying the new ideas related

to "the existing parameters of syllabus, materials, official expectation, class size, and

examination" (Tomlinson, 1988, p. 18). Lamb (1995) states that mental parameter is

another serious constraint within which English teachers conceptualization as the

teaching and learning process. To a great extent, what is taught in INSET courses can be

vaguely perceived and conceptualized and later interpreted into practice in classrooms in

a way that the tutors never designed; for example, communicative approach or student-

centered instruction approach might be perceived and applied in classroom by teachers in

a way that the trainer never meant. This might be for deficit explanation within the short

time sessions. The "importance of teachers' conscious or unconscious beliefs" is the hub

of several research projects (Lamb, 1995, p.73). Ramani (1986), for example, explains

the negative influential and determining effect of wrongly perceived ideas between the

"research theory," the academic knowledge presented by researchers, and the "individual

teachers' theory" (p. 117).

Teachers' resistance or rejection of new ideas is another issue which relates to

teachers' beliefs, personal attitudes, or cultural values in contexts. Any new program or

plan introduced to teachers, is often met with resistance and criticism because the

teachers are happy and familiar with the current curriculum (Richards, 2001). Thompson

(1992) states that teachers' beliefs, their roles, and their assumptions about students' learning largely relate to experience shared within their culture and are not easy to change. Teachers in KRI often implement new ideas that do not satisfy their basic concerns. For example, a teacher might be initially enthusiastic about communicative language teaching, but it turns out that based on his or her perspective to what would happen in the classroom defies cultural values and classroom disciplines. Such situations are considered a threat to teachers' self-esteem and security and widen the gap between student-teacher's social status and social distance (level of social or psychological distance) (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Tomlinson, 1988). Teachers realize that several activities in a classroom are defined as feeble and dull. Yet, they satisfy other basic concerns such as maintaining traditional classroom disciplines and perspective of the teacher as the bank of knowledge conveying quantities of information about the language to students (Lamb, 1995).

Throughout focusing on teachers' beliefs, long-term change in education can be accomplished. Therefore, the teacher training system in KRI needs to concentrate on this aspect by providing teachers with the opportunity to reflect on teaching, developing critical awareness, updating their knowledge, and sharing accountability in learning (Schön, 1983; Kennedy, 1987; Ramani, 1987; Ur, 1992; Kennedy, 1993). Similarly, Lamb (1995) argues that teacher training courses should involve teachers in learning and awareness-raising activities that promote teachers' skills to implement positive change in their own teaching contexts. At present, there is no connection between schools or teachers in KRI (Vernez et al., 2014). Creating a network and having English teacher colleagues organize group meetings in their schools and establish a strong contact among

the school English teachers should be taken into account. Creating online school

discussion is also necessary through which English teachers can share their ideas,

viewpoints, experiences, and address any educational issue. These group meetings and

discussions will establish a cooperative English teacher community which prolongs the

effectiveness of training courses (cf. Sandholtz, 2002) and leads English teachers to

change, adapt, or develop their own materials corresponding to needs and expectations of

English language learners. Eventually, English teachers will become autonomous.

Several articles insist that in the brevity of INSET courses, teachers' beliefs,

teaching contexts, students' beliefs, and the new ideas should be scrutinized and analyzed

thoroughly to discover possible conflicts or contradictions with each other. Only then will

the teacher be able to accommodate the new methods, appreciate their underlying

theories, realize their practical manners, and evaluate effectiveness of the new methods.

In the current teacher training system in KRI, characterized as temporarily insufficient, it

is strongly recommended that INSET courses should begin with awareness-raising

activities in which teachers challenge their own usual practice and the values intended to

be persisted (Lamb, 1995). This can be implemented, for instance, through analysis of

classroom activities, videotaped lessons, and questionnaires for teacher and learner roles

(Ramani, 1987; Nunan, 1989). For example, when English teachers are required to use

one approach or a technique instead of others, e.g., Communicative Approach or Total

Physical Response, they can videotape the classroom as a reflection of self-assessment or

use anonymous student questionnaires to see the effectiveness of the activities. Lamb

(1995) suggests that instead of presenting ready-made solutions for predetermined

dilemmas, throughout elaborating on their awareness of teaching practice, teachers

themselves should determine specific areas of development and design their own agenda

for improvement and change. In this way, besides being an intense learning experience,

the short INSET courses can also increase the learning value of many events in which

teachers are exposed to new ideas, such as in the classroom, at teacher meetings, and at

educational conferences.

The Lack of Professional Trainers in KRI

Training courses are implemented in a train-the-trainers approach in which MOE

occasionally employs external trainers, usually from Lebanon, with companies affiliated

with the Macmillan Publication – the designer of the new English curriculum. These

trainers train a limited number of select staff members with the new curriculum including

teacher supervisors, teachers considered to possess positive aptitudes, and occasionally

college professors. Then, the trainees train a large number of English teachers during

short training courses. Overall, in the KRI educational system, there is no professional

and standardized teacher training program designed to meet the teachers' needs to

implement the new curriculum successfully. There are also neither standardized training

materials nor a standardized approach. Thus, trainers design their own training materials

and present training according to their own experiences and potentials, which is often not

effective.

As part of the educational policy reforms of 2007-08, the new English curriculum

Sunrise requires English teachers in KRI to apply the student-centered approach, which is

referred by Leu and Price-Rome (2006) as a model of teaching in which teachers offer

minimal lecturing, small group activities, engagement through problem solving. Frequent

questions and discussions take place. However, researchers and practitioners on the

global level, find that student-centered instruction involves some ambiguity in its definition and its implementation as well (Lampert, 2000; Holt-Reynolds, 2000; MacKinnon & Scarff-Seatter, 1997; Richardson, 2003). Likewise, Vernez et al. (2014) state that there is little understanding in the K-12 KRI's educational system about this approach and its application. The KRI's classroom circumstances make applying the student-centered approach almost impossible and impractical. Overcrowded class size hinders teachers giving adequate individual attention. Students sit packed at small desks that do not allow small-group activities featured in student-centered learning. According to Vernez et al. (2014), over 60 percent of surveyed teachers reported concern that overcrowded class size inhibits implementation of student-centered instruction. Furthermore, teachers indicate that there are other constraints to implementing this approach such as inadequate training, deficient class time, and dearth of teaching guides which contribute to the weaknesses of the program.

The Teacher Colleges in KRI

There is general consensus across OECD and other countries that the essential way to prepare future teachers in teaching methods is through providing them with practical classroom experience (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2008; Morey, Bezuk, & Chiero, 1997; OECD, 2005; Stoel and Thant 2002). Student teachers in KRI's teacher colleges are not well prepared in a variety of instructional classroom areas, such as applying different techniques to respond to varying student learning needs, employing the student-centered approach, and engaging students in activities to foster multiple intelligence skills and critical thinking. Methodology and psychology related to pedagogy are studied superficially. On the basis of 2010 RAND

Corporation For Research and Analysis and MOE Survey of Teachers, over 60 percent of

the KRI surveyed teachers reported that they are not prepared to successfully address the

new curriculum. In this regard, Vernez et al. (2014) compare relative amounts of

preparation in pedagogy and teaching methods between KRI teacher colleges and the

USA teacher colleges. The unit requirements in the KRI teacher programs are greater

than in the U.S. Yet, the findings indicate that there are some major differences:

- Students in KRI teacher colleges study little about teaching methods and practice,
  with about 8 percent of the program units focusing on pedagogy and teaching
  methods; while students in the U.S. teacher colleges spend about 24 percent of the
  units on teaching methods.

- Students in KRI teacher colleges spend little time, if any, in actual classroom
  teaching practices. Teacher colleges in KRI require no or only half a semester of
  teaching practice in a classroom setting. In contrast, the U.S. teacher colleges
  require a year or three quarter of a year of full-time, supervised teaching in a
  classroom setting.

- Students in KRI teacher colleges spend about half of the program units on subject
  specialization, which may not be relevant to what they will be teaching. They
  must study advanced contents, although they will be teaching basic contents in
  basic schools. By contrast, U.S. teacher college programs devote only about one
  fourth of the units on subject specialization. They devote additional time on
  training.

Teachers are an essential component of the education process. At present, a large

number of the English teachers in KRI hold a low level of education. These teachers are not qualified to teach English because they are not well prepared in the teacher colleges and there is no system to assess the English level competency of these teachers. This allows teachers to teach the English language without having English teaching specializations. Additionally, the training system in KRI is limited to a very short training session in which English teachers are only familiarized to the new English program.

Chapter 6: English Materials and Resources in KRI

Communicative Language Teaching in Cultural Contexts

Prior traditional methods before Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) failed to strengthen students' productive operation of the target language and to raise their competency to communicate effectively in the many different social contexts. This is because the methods conceptualized teaching and learning in the context of how language is acquired (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Richards, 2006; Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Savignon, 2002). To compensate the unsatisfactory results, in several EFL settings, material designers incorporate CLT in their published materials (Clarke, 1989). Likewise, as a result of substandard results of previous methodologies for teaching English, the educational system in KRI turned to CLT by presenting the *Sunrise* coursebooks.

On the basis of CLT's foundations, ELLs promote communicative competence if they are engaged in activities which require negotiation, interpretation, and expression of meaning in both speaking and written discourse (Harmer, 2007; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Harmer (2007) also argues that in order for classroom activities to be communicative, they should focus on meaning and real world-like communication. If the aim of foreign language teaching is to apply the language in various discourses, it seems that CLT is an ideal model of teaching. Al-Hawar (2014) argues that concerning types of language learning activities (mechanical, meaningful, communicative), most presented activities in the *Sunrise* are confined to mechanical and meaningful type activities without offering adequate communicative activities to produce language simultaneously. In other words, it was found that the activities presented do not engage English learners

in negotiation, expression, and interpretation of meaning, but rather tend to promote a more teacher-centered than student-centered approach.

Liao (2004), states that in Asian cultural contexts, the teacher is considered the central, honored, omniscient figure to whom the students must passively listen and follow. The students must obey and receive the teacher's explanation. In this sense, Ahmad (2015) states that teacher-student relationship in KRI context compares with the feudalism system in which logical argument and exchanging ideas are relegated to the margins. Obedient, shy, reticent, and taciturn students are more appreciated than curious, extroverted, expansive, and questioning students. Such communication patterns do not encourage the expressing of opinions, nor interrupting of the teacher, making it a hindrance for genuine communicative interactions in language learning and for CLT application (Koosha & Yakhabi, 2012). Teachers should perform as organizers, counselors, researchers, managers, and facilitators to create a student-centered environment and engage students in meaningful and authentic-like communications in which students are provided with more comprehensible language input. Consequently, they are expected to produce more output (Breen & Candlin, 2001; Huang & Liu, 2000; Littlewood, 1981; Richards & Rodgers, 2001); students should perform as communicators, negotiators, discoverers, collaborators, and contributors to knowledge (Hu, 2002).

A Description of the *Sunrise* Series

The *Sunrise* series provides each level of 1-12 of the teacher's book, the student's book, the activity book, and CD. The teacher's book explains the aim of the lessons in the textbook and the instructions to conduct the activities in the lessons. The student's book

consists of nine units including the *Welcome Unit* and *Farewell Unit.* In terms of a level

review, the *Welcome Unit* provides students with an overall brief revision of language

knowledge of the previous level textbook, and it also presents the new textbook

characters. While the *Farewell Unit* presents the accumulation of lesson studies for that

particular level textbook.

Each unit offers four lessons in addition to a review of that particular unit and a

reading section at the end of the unit. The fourth lesson does not represent linguistic or

grammatical English knowledge; yet, it functions as a buildup of development of

language knowledge of previous lessons. Each lesson includes some activities

supplemented with the audio version in the CD. The activity book provides learners a

range of different activities to practice new studies of language knowledge. In his

expository analysis of the *Sunrise 9* textbooks, Al-Hawar (2014) critiques that though the

course claims to be based on CLT, the textbook presentation is based on the cycle of

Presentation, Practice and Production (PPP) and that "the format and sequences of the

coursework within each unit follows the same order and every lesson starts with a

presentation of new knowledge and is followed by practice of the new items. This cycle

is repeated in every lesson" (p. 30). He also argues that the activities are confined to

meaning and mechanical practice without offering sufficient meaningful communicative

activities to enhance students producing language spontaneously. Lacking

communicative activities leaves students incompetent to use language for different

purposes and functions (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Savingon,

2002).

Communicative activities are essential in which students are engaged to negotiate, express ideas, and interpret meaning. This includes information gap, information gathering, jigsaw, task completion, opinion sharing, information transfer, role play, and reasoning-gap (Richards, 2006). This prepares students to successfully vary use of language based on setting and audience with different kinds of communicative strategies in spite of having language limitations. Communicative activities are also necessary to provide student competency to understand and produce different types of literature such as narrative, reports, interviews, and conversation.

Each lesson of the text book is embedded with the language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, the time frame allocated to a lesson is 40-45 minutes. This limits teachers and students as well to be able to effectively do all these language skills simultaneously. Thus, teachers then divert from CLT methodology to the Direct Approach and teacher-centered approach. This type of methodology presented in the textbook is more based on of PPP, emphasizing focus on accuracy, rather than fluency and is not in accordance with the main principle of the CLT methodology.

The grammar explanation of each lesson is found in Kurdish at the end of the textbook. However, some of these grammar explanations are inaccurate, vague, and confusing for learners. For example, *present simple* functions are stated in a single sentence; its translation in English is "*present simple* is used to identify routines and the actions that always happen" (*Sunrise 9*, 2008, p. 98). This explanation is insufficient to clarify the *present simple* tense functions for English language learners, especially for Kurdish English learners whose native language does not differentiate between the *present simple* and the *present continuous* tenses, unless adverbs of time are used which

is not always the case. When presenting the functions of the *present continuous* tense, translations are: "(a) to identify those things that are happening now. (b) To identify those things that will happen in the future" (*Sunrise 9*, 2008, p. 99). These explanations do not completely identify the multiple functions of the *present continuous*, and the second point confuses students about the future aspect. These kinds of oversimplifications do not fit in with the competency level of a 9th grader and underestimate their cognitive abilities. Identifying the functions of the *present continuous* tense requires a more detailed explanation. Moreover, the *passive voice* description does not explain when to use the *passive voice* or the importance of the passive voice. In presenting tag questions, the term "low voice" in Kurdish was used to explain falling intonation when seeking for agreement (*Sunrise 9*, 2008, p. 102). Rising intonation of the tag question is missing in which students realize the differences of melodic patterns and intonations. Only two activities of filling-in-the-gaps are devoted to such an important pronunciation topic. Filling-in-the-gap activity focuses on form, not meaning (*Sunrise 9*, 2008, p. 81).

On the basis of (Azar & Hagen, 2000; Carter & McCarthy, 2006; Hewings, 2005; Murphy, 1994; Quirk, 1985), the *present simple* tense functions could have been categorized as:

1. Permanent and long lasting situations: *She lives in New York. Where do you work?*
2. Regular habits and daily routines: *I get up at 7:00.*
3. Facts (a general or scientific truth): *The earth revolves around the sun.*
4. Feelings: He *loves swimming.*
5. Opinion and states of mind: I don't *agree with you. I think you are wrong.*

6. Timetables and schedules: *The plane leaves at 2 P.M.*

7. A newspaper headline or reported event: *Professor Melvyn Fenwick Gives Talk on Moon.*

8. A habit: *Sam smokes 10 cigarettes a day.*

9. A warning: *Don't you ever talk to me like that.*

10. A fact about the present: *David shares a house with his mother at the moment.*

11. A Suggestion: *If you anyone calls, tell them to leave a message.*

12. Order, instruction or directions: *You walk for a hundred meters, then you turn right.*

On the basis of (Azar & Hagen, 2000; Carter & McCarthy, 2006; Hewings, 2005; Murphy, 1994; Quirk, 1985), the *present continuous* tense functions could have been categorized as the following:

1. To describe an action that is going on at the moment: *I am watching TV.*

2. To describe an action that is going on during this period of time: *She is still working for the same company.*

3. To describe an action in the future that has already been planned: *We are moving to New York.*

4. To describe a temporary event or situation: *She usually plays the violin, but she is playing the guitar tonight.*

5. To describe or emphasize a continuing repeated action by using some adverbs such as "always" and "constantly": *John and Mark are always complaining.*

Theses more detailed descriptions demonstrate how the *Sunrise* series

oversimplifies grammar. This extends students' lack of English knowledge and makes their language skills insecure.

Social and interpersonal contexts lead students to successful acquisition of language. English language learners must attain strategies and "the knowledge of how native speakers use the language in the context of structured interpersonal exchange, in which many factors interact" (Shumin, 2002, p. 204). In order to provide English language learners with effective guidance and skills, it is fundamental to analyze those situations and elements influencing especially adult ELLs' communicative competence. Diversity of social interactions involves not only verbal communication. Hence, besides linguistic elements, English learners need to acquire non-linguistic or pragmatic elements such as gestures, body language/posture, and facial expressions. Mastery of these competencies assists ELLs to use English appropriately in various social interactions with a high level of clarity, intelligibility, and comprehension. These competencies involve visual processes; i.e., in order for learners to acquire these competencies, they need to be visually exposed to situations which involve social interactions and enhance non-linguist and pragmatic competencies, or students need to experience them in the normal course of daily life.

In KRI's context, students do not have enough chances to develop these experiences through real-life situations. The only way students acquire non-linguistic and pragmatic competence is through visual media. However, the *Sunrise* program does not provide students with any visual media to promote these competences. Moreover, public schools in KRI do not supply televisions, video players, computers, projectors, or the internet in the classroom so that Kurdish English teachers would be able to expose

students to visual media for developing non-linguistic and pragmatic competencies and language components.

Furthermore, suprasegmental elements of pronunciation such as sound pitch, stress, and intonation (melody patterns) are another essential segment in mastery of language learning. In this regard, it is widely believed that listening comprehension plays a central role in English language acquisition (Shumin, 2002). In the language acquisition process, listening precedes speaking and plays an extremely essential role in the development of speaking ability. In fact, during interaction, an interlocutor becomes a listener and a speaker as well. When an English learner listens s/he processes the speech and responds based on what s/he hears. If s/he does not understand, s/he cannot respond. So, speaking and listening skills are interwoven. Therefore, in order for English learners to implement effective and successful interaction, they should be exposed to and familiar with natural language that may involve "fleetingness of speech, together with the features of spoken English – loosely organized syntax, incomplete forms, false starts, and the use of fillers" (Shumin, 2002, p.205). However, the English program in the educational system in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq does not stress communication competences and oral competence.

Speaking and English pronunciation is not as high a priority as grammar and reading, because English tests do not assess students' speaking and listening skills. Hence, these important areas of the English language receive less focus. Students mainly need to succeed in the unitary English examination, which is a paper based test and does not include speaking (oral) or listening tests. A small portion of the test, usually 5-10 percent, might be devoted to assess pronunciation skills in which students are required to

recognize some sound patterns. For example, *"Circle the word that has /ʃ/ : measure,*

mission, science, ache." Nevertheless, the English program in the KRI educational

system needs to consider pragmatic elements, suprasegmental elements of pronunciation,

listening, and speaking skills. In this way, Kurdish English learners will attain a high

level of proficiency (fluent and intelligible) to communicate successfully and celebrate

the joy of understanding and networking globally. This proficiency will also assist them

to acquire good grades in the speaking and listening models on the well-known

international English language proficiency tests such as internet based TOEFL, IELTS,

Cambridge English, and Pearson Test. Kurdish students will also be equipped with skills

which make them appealing candidates for the local and world job market and for KRG's

scholarship program, Human Capacity Development Program, for sending students

abroad which requires high English language competency.

Since language and linguistic communication are forms of social interaction that

occur in the context of structured interpersonal exchange, meaning and nuances are

socially regulated (Dimitracopoulou, 1990). There is a variation cross-culturally and

cross-linguistically, a difference in using and interpreting language speech acts such as

thanking, requesting, warning, inviting, promising, apologizing, and complimenting. In

this pragmatic perspective, cultural characteristics of ELLs' native language affect

communicating in English social situations. For instance, in the Kurdish culture,

complimenting someone's ability/performances/skills oftentimes obligates him or her to

give a negative answer (such as "it is not that good") or s/he may discount the

compliment in order to show humility and modesty. In addition, if someone compliments

someone else's small possession, the complimentee may offer him/her the object;

whereas, for example, in the American culture such responses might be both inappropriate and embarrassing. These negative language transfers or what is sometimes called L1 interferences involve not only paralinguistic and non-linguistic elements, but also graphology, syntax, semantics, and morphology which enlarge the language distance between English and Kurdish language. Therefore, to communicate effectively, Kurdish English learners require more than mastering English language grammatical and semantic rules.

The status of English as a foreign language in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) belongs to what Kachru (1992) calls the "Expanding Circle," where English does not function as a formal or administrative language and is not spoken usually in the normal courses of everyday life; it is rather seen as the most useful channel of international communication. In such contexts, English as a foreign language is commonly learned at school with limited opportunity to practice or for a productive use of it outside the classroom, which discourages students to learn English. By contrast, the motivation and chance to learn and use English is likely to be far greater in countries which are categorized as the "Outer Circle" representing non-native varieties of English in the multi-lingual settings that have experienced a protracted period of colonization. In such settings, English has become a part of their central institutions and plays an official role.

The model of English presented in KRI is largely based on the Inner Circle, to which the traditional cultural and linguistic bases of English refer. The model is particularly from Great Britain. Although Macmillan Publication purports the *Sunrise* series to be developed as a modern EFL course specifically designed for the context of KRI; the *Sunrise* program in KRI fails to meet the students' needs in that region, and its

topics are inundated and dominated by British-related themes and culture, especially the

history of the UK and Scotland in particular, with almost no regard for a Kurdish cultural

context. For example, the salient theme that runs through the whole grade 9 coursebook

of *Sunrise 9* is about a musical festival in Edinburgh and a musical band whose members,

mostly from English speaking countries, represent the characters in the dialogue and

stories of the coursebook. The reading topics are inundated with British history and

essential figures such as Elizabeth I, Mary Queen of Scots, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and

Sean Connery, Deacon Brodie. The textbook characters discover them and get familiar

with British culture through a tour of Edinburgh city and castles. An absence of

appreciation of Kurdish culture and heritage is obvious through the dominance of British

culture. The activities seem to be of historical content embedded within British history

and culture, and alienate Kurdish learners discouraging them and undermining their

active engagement in the communicative approach. Therefore, the course book is worth

intensive investigation in terms of content as well as students' perception of their content.

  The content of the *Sunrise* coursebooks is not suitable for the target audience. It is

necessary to take measures to localize or globalize its contents. The focus should be on

linguistic and cultural content and being sensitive to the target audience to present

English as a foreign language. This leads to a suitable, applicable, and sanitized cultural

content of materials (Gray, 2002; Kilickaya, 2004; Melliti, 2013; Michael, 1993; Riches,

1999). To motivate English learners and avoid potential resistance or rejection, it is

crucial that contents of English coursebooks include local topics and students' cultural

identity. This also avoids alienating English learners or giving them a sense that their

culture or heritage is inferior. As an English teacher, I have five year experience of

teaching in the KRI context. In KRI, I experienced that this resistance could be

manifested in several forms and attitudes. For example, learners' distortion of their

Sunrise textbooks through turning the pictures and contents of the textbooks into a satire

and mockery genre as a simple example of their psychological resistance turned into an

explicit reaction. Culture is an essential aspect of English language learning, particularly

the culture of the target language which assists ELLs to interact successfully, although it

should be presented impartially, so as not to alienate the learners and marginalize their

culture (Alptekin, 2002; Gray, 2002). Material designers should avoid idealizing certain

dominant cultures in their materials, which is the case in the *Sunrise,* and impose them on

the target audience. Block and Cameron (2002) suggest that material designers should

manifest the cultural identity to be a *modus operandi* of learning, not a cause of learners'

refusal. Harmonizing the local and global contents is what Gray (2002) calls

"*glocalisation*," a crucial concept to be considered (p.166).

Additionally, this issue of resistance to the content of materials does not relate

only to the learners, but also to the teachers. Researchers argue that teachers are not

satisfied with the content and are pressured to incorporate culture into their classrooms

and supplement the textbooks with cultural components (Allwright, 1982; Gray, 2002;

Rinvolucri, 1999). The *Sunrise* coursebooks, produced in the Inner Circle, United

Kingdom, (Kachru, 1985) not only fails in representing the Kurdish culture in content,

but also fails in reflecting native cultures and cultures of non-native speaking countries.

Melliti (2013) questions the materials produced in the inner circle being able to represent

different local cultures.

The dearth of Kurdish cultural content and representation of British orientation in the *Sunrise* coursebooks can be interpreted as a cultural imperialistic motivated or Anglo-centric language ideology, especially by critical readers and learners. On this subject, Phillipson (1992) argues that the global spread of the English language has been pregnant with the political and economic purposes of the United Kingdom and the United States of America, which endangers cultural values, folklores, lifestyle, and inherent languages of other countries. Similarly, Pennycook (1994) refutes the traditional perspective of applied linguistics and English language teaching having nothing to do with politics. He accentuates how language is always taught in a political context. With complex moral, social, and political implications in ELT, some researchers find the relationship of values with politics in ELT inevitable. Johnston's (2003) book "*values in English language teaching*" delves into this relationship and defines politics as "anything that has to do with power and the control of resources of every conceivable kind" (p. 53). However, such an approach to the politics of ELT still requires certain ethical alternatives and implications, which some may not find appropriate.

The Role of Materials in Teaching and Learning English

The issue of choice of educational material is a central concern of English language teaching. There is not a general consensus among educators as to whether to use commercially prepared teaching materials, teacher-made materials, or no texts, the anti-textbook view (Crawford, 1990; Kramsch, 1987; Walz, 1989). Within this framework, Harwood's (2005) research distinguishes anti-textbook literature and strong and weak anti-textbook points of view. From the perspective of the strong view advocates, any kind of commercially prepared material in language classes should be abandoned. The weak

view principally found no problems within the textbook. However, they did admit that

the current EFL/ESL market materials are unsatisfactory in various ways, so they should

be thoughtfully selected and be evaluated through the rationales of effective language

teaching, learning, and practical experience. In the process of evaluation/selection of

teaching language materials, several key aspects should be considered: language program

objectives, language learning theories, student needs, contexts, and cultural issues

(Cunningsworth, 1995; Garinger, 2001; Robinett, 1978).

I have already argued that the English program presented in KRI is not authentic,

communicative, or culturally appropriate. Therefore, English teachers in KRI need to

seek alternative materials that prevent offering the fabricated unnatural language of

platitudinous textbooks and pedagogical dialogues, as found in the *Sunrise* series.

Teachers need to prepare authentic materials of language teaching supports the approach

English is used in natural communication in various daily-life contexts. These authentic

materials can be designed with the assistance of authentic texts and discourse by

extracting materials from the internet, magazines, newspapers, or recoding of real life

conversations. According to Little, David, Devitt, & Singleton (1995), authentic texts are

produced in a language community to fulfill social purposes of that community including

"novels, poems, newspaper and magazine articles, handbooks and manuals, recipes and

telephone directories… and so too radio and television broadcasts and computer

programs" (p. 45).

In designing alternative materials, Kurdish English teachers should keep some

criteria in mind to make the material effective. Alternative materials should be obviously

attractive and comprehensible and consider Kurdish students' levels of proficiency, ages,

genders, and fields of interest. The materials should also be tried out before them using in

the classroom. To achieve this, colleagues, friends, and students can be asked to discover

if there are drawbacks or mistakes. Finally, evaluation is a key aspect to improve the

designed materials for future use or creating new, sharp ideas for other materials.

The Significance of Authenticity in Communicative Language Teaching

The Communicative approach emphasizes exposing second language learners to

spoken and written discourses that are authentic. That excludes fabricated language

which is produced for pedagogical purposes. This better prepares students to perform

authentic communication and gain understanding of the speaking conventions and ways

of life in the target countries (Kramsch, 2000). In this way, students raise their pragmatic

competence to use language appropriately in different social circumstances. The *Sunrise*

activities neither promote communicative language nor use authentic language (Al-

Hawar, 2014). The *Sunrise* series may provide students with knowledge to raise their

linguistic competency, i.e., student may acquire English language codes, its system, and

its component parts such as graphology, lexis, grammar, and, phonology. Yet, students

need to acquire a broader competency of language, for example, language functions,

which is the purpose for communicating, e.g., when and how to apologize, request,

suggest, invite, thank, and compliment, and what register to use. That is to say, words and

expressions that are appropriate in a certain set of circumstances. For example, when to

use formal, neutral, or informal slang, directness, or jargon based on cultural norms and

the contextual factors of social status, social distance, and level of acquaintance, and

intensity of action. The KRG's scholarship, Human Capacity Development Program,

annually allocates US $100 million to send students to study in Northern America,

Europe, Australia, and Asia ("KRG-Scholarship program," n.d.). These students require competency in all aspects of the English language in order to successfully interact and communicate in both academic and social contexts.

Material Design and Material Adaptation

Throughout this paper, I argue that Kurdish learners are not provided with a proper English teaching educational system. One of the reasons of these unsatisfactory outcomes is the *Sunrise* syllabus; the *Sunrise* program also fails to fulfill its objectives to raise Kurdish students' communicative competence to a level of accuracy and fluency. Strong communicative skills are necessary to guarantee success in future academic experiences, development in a global level of fields of employment, personal use, and build a wide range of global communication. English teachers in KRI follow the top-down curriculum design model. In this model, teachers play passive roles and implement the instructions of the curriculum that confine them to the employment of artificial teaching materials. While there is a time advantage in such a system, which allows quick, centrally-authorized changes in the curriculum, teachers as an essential agent involving manufacturing teaching material, feel neglected, which results in being a passive follower and lacking in self-confidence. To compensate for the insufficiencies in the syllabus, English language teachers in KRI need to construct their own teaching materials. They must consider factors in design or adaptation of English language materials and the advantages and disadvantages of teacher-produced materials.

Chapter 7: Recommendations for Developing the English Program in KRI

Throughout this paper, I analyzed several constraints that affect English language teaching and acquisition in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. These constraints generally manifest themselves in teacher college syllabi, teacher training, textbooks, class overcrowding, and physical infrastructures. I present recommendations to strengthen ELT in KRI. The recommendations are at both the macro and micro levels. At the macro level, my first recommendation is addressing the overcrowding issue in the KRI's schools. Solving this issue paves the way for the application of the other recommendations.

Overcrowding in the KRI's Schools

English language teachers in KRI have responsibilities and tasks which are impossible to accomplish in the overcrowded classrooms. This inevitably presents difficulties for English teachers. They cannot provide students with feedback in such circumstances. Time cannot be devoted to each student to evaluate language skills and address individual needs. The more time students are involved in language learning, the more language is contributed. Individual attention affects motivation, attitude, and anxiety. An English teacher will not be able to devote enough attention to each student to interact. Overcrowding does not allow students to share ideas. English language teachers will perform better and teach language effectively in small classes using effective English language teaching approaches and techniques such as communicative teaching, student-centered approaches, and Total Physical Response. These require space and time, otherwise they cannot be applied. In his research, Blatchford (2003) concludes that "while small classes will not make a bad teacher better, they can allow teachers to be more effective" (p. 150). The MOE in KRI needs to take quick measures to minimize the

overcrowded classes by building modern prefabricated school edifices, which will lead to better English language teaching and learning processes.

   According to the MOE statistics office (2012), the total number of basic education and secondary students in Kurdistan increased from 534,963 in 1990 to 1.7 million in 2012. To meet growing enrollment and reduce overcrowding over the next decade in KRI's school classrooms, the Kurdistan Regional Government will need to make space available for 183,000 more students. This means that KRG needs to add the equivalent of between 21,400 and 34,700 new classrooms during these 10 years. Tackling the problem in urban schools would require creating about 5,200 additional classrooms, at an average of 35 students per class (see Table 4). On the basis of low estimate of future student enrollment, a minimum of 134 new 18-classroom schools will be needed to be built each year until 2021. On the basis of high estimate of future student enrollment, a maximum of 202 new 18-classroom schools will be required to be built each year. With the current KRI method of construction, the cost of building an 18-classroom school would average about $1.5 million. This requires the total capital investment of $201 million annually at the low end and $303 million at the high end. Urban areas will need 94 percent of these additional classrooms; 75 percent will be needed in grades 1-6. This is because a number of schools for grades 1-6 is more than any other grade level (Vernez et al., 2014). A quick strategic plan must be taken to solve this issue by building modern and educational schools using advantageous prefabricated technologies that will accelerate the process of construction and diminish the negative influences of manufactures on the environment through advanced methods of construction. I recommend that the MOE should use

prefabricated method as a quick measure to minimize the phenomenon of overcrowded classrooms in KRI.

Catalonia, an autonomous region in northeastern Spain, which has a population, governing, area, and annual budget similar to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, can be taken as a comparable example. According to Pons, Oliva, & Maas (2010), because of migration movements and demographic redistribution, the Catalan population in 1998 increased from six to seven million inhabitants. The Catalan autonomous government constructed hundreds of modern prefabricated schools which met the best requirements and quality standards in the way that was intrinsic architecturally – shape, modulation, rhythm, spatial size and flexibility cooperate with pedagogy influencing students' psychological well-being and educational activities. In addition to resolving the lack of school buildings, prefabricated school structures serve as models of well designed architecture respecting landscape, social, and cultural context, and arts and crafts.

Table 4

Number of Classrooms Needed to Reduce Overcrowding, by Location and Grade Level, 2010-2021

Grade Level	Urban	Rural	Total
1-6	3,575	259	3,834
7-9	786	31	817
10-12	585	6	591
Total	**4,946**	**296**	**5,242**

Source: RAND, on the basis of MOE's Office of Statistics School Dada, 2007-08.

Figure 9 displays the sub-districts across KRI where the overcrowding and the

need for new classrooms is the greatest. Typically, 75 percent of the schools in the urban

sub-districts of Erbil, Sulaimani, Semel, Duhok, and Soran are overcrowded. Investment

in classrooms in these areas might be a priority for KRG (Vernez et al., 2014).
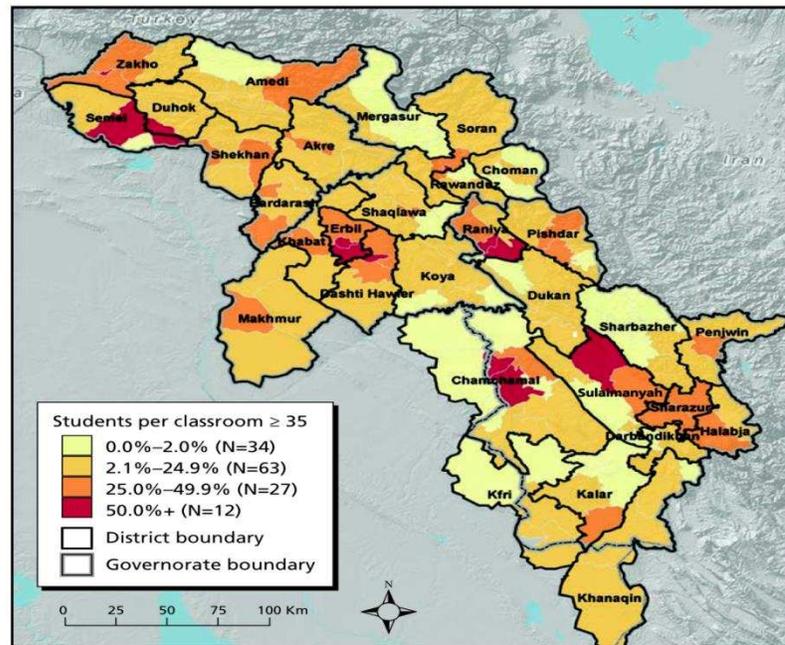
Figure 9. Percentage of Overcrowded Schools, by Sub-district, 2007-08
Source: RAND, on the basis of Ministry of Education's Office of Statistics School Data,
2007-08.

My second recommendation at the macro level is a set of measures to improve the

teacher training system as follows:

1. **Establish teacher training centers**. These centers can be associated with English

    teacher colleges where full-time and professional English language trainers offer

    thorough and consistent courses on teaching methods and techniques empowered

    by standardized training materials.

2. **Recruit full-time professional EFL trainers** from local and global teacher

    colleges to ensure that English teacher training is taking place in a consistent

    manner across the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

3. **Provide an extensive focus on pedagogy training**, applying standardized training materials that focus on teaching methods and skills that will equip English teachers to successfully adapt and design their own materials and communicative activities.

4. **Provide systematic ongoing support** to English teachers through consistent visits by their supervisors, who will give guidance and feedback.

Improvements to Teacher Preparation

My third macro recommendation relates to the KRI's Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research—implementing these measures to ameliorate the new English teacher student quality.

1. Assign highly qualified school graduates to teacher colleges, and grant privileges to them. The teacher's career track should be raised to attract high achievers to engage in the teaching profession.

2. Upgrade the teacher college curricula, which will prepare a quality future teaching force with knowledge, teaching methods and practice. The English teacher college curricula will upgrade the preparation of new teachers by increasing the number of courses on teaching methods, techniques, and skills which assist English teachers in designing materials and minimize the negative effects of KRI's crowded classroom settings.

3. Extending actual classroom teaching practice with full-time supervision before graduation.

Addressing Instructional Time

In addition to addressing the quality of teacher preparation, I recommend increasing the quantity of time allotted to English language instruction. The following macro level recommendations will help with this:

1. Increase the annual school days to a number so that both single and double shift schools get annual instruction time equal to that in OECD countries. Students between the ages of 7 and 14 in OECD countries typically receive an average 6,898 hours of instruction, (breaking down to 1,586 hours for ages 7 and 8, 2,518 hours for ages 9 to 11, and 2,794 hours for ages 12 to 14) (OECD, 2007). This way, additional instructional hours can be allocated to the English language since students perform poorly in English standardized national tests.

2. Increase the hours in the school day: starting school at 8:00 instead of 8:30. This adds nearly three hours of instruction time per week, which can be allocated to English classes. This way, English instruction increases by about 75 percent. Thus, students annually get about three quarters of additional English hours than before.

Educational Accountability and Incentives

According to Vernez et al. (2014), the evaluation system is not sufficiently robust to identify poor teacher performances, and there are few to no consequences for poor performing instructors. Several teachers expressed feelings of isolation and being overwhelmed with unreasonable expectations. During the 2009-2010 academic year, 28 percent of teachers reported that their supervisors did not observe their classes or meet with them. Also, an additional 29 percent reported that supervisors met with them or

observed them only once or twice during the year and more than half of the teachers indicated that the interactions were not helpful. This contributes to the idea that many supervisors lack sufficient qualifications to perform effectively in their supportive role. This current system of sporadic and brief visits from supervisors causes an inaccurate evaluation. Out of more than 89,000 teachers about 2 percent received poor ratings without providing follow-up for those teachers. At present, the only consequence of under performers is to transfer them to another school, which shifts the problem from one school to another. I recommend the following macro level measures to strengthen the educational accountability and provide incentives to further develop in the English program:

1. Upgrade the teacher supervisory system through recruiting a large number of professional supervisors and trainers to balance out the lack of supervisors. Also, school leaders/principals would be trained, granting them authority to supervise the teachers.

2. Use the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) to assess English teachers' language proficiency. Currently, the MOE in KRI does not apply any evaluation system to measure English Teachers' levels of proficiency. The only criterion to become an English teacher is holding a bachelor's degree from teacher colleges – English department or education colleges – English department. The CEFR was developed by the Council of Europe with extensive support from University of Cambridge-English for Speakers of Other Languages. CEFR breaks down language proficiency into six levels A1 to C2. The starting point is A1, which describes a basic language level, and C2 is the advanced proficiency level.

Through implementing CEFR, the MOE in KRI is able to control what level of English language proficiency is required to become an English teacher.

The CEFR is widely used internationally, and several national English proficiency tests are mapped to the CEFR. It is often used by policy-makers to set minimum language requirements for various purposes. The purposes include: setting realistic language goals for a particular group of students, determining the language ability needed to do a particular activity, designing language tests, comparing language qualifications for different countries, and reflecting on teaching practices. In other words, the CEFR is used by employers, governments, universities, teachers, and learners to explain what level they are at, and what level of English they need.

The CEFR is not the only a seal of approval. It can also be used as an effective tool to track progress in English programs. The CEFR scales are not exhaustive and meant to be adapted or added to according to different situations. For each level, the CEFR describes the in-depth language knowledge, skills, and competencies needed for effective communication. The six levels are named as follows:

C2: Mastery

C1: Effective Operational Proficiency

B2: Vantage

B1: Threshold

A2: Waystage

A1: Breakthrough (Trim, 2011, p. 4).

Students in secondary grades have reached a high level of cognitive maturity. Their levels of English should deal with materials that are academic and cognitively demanding. They need to be exposed to English knowledge that involves advanced texts, vocabulary, grammar, oral discourses, and abstract topics. Therefore, they need an English teacher with a high level of English proficiency who can teach those materials. Hence, I recommend that Kurdish English teachers of grades 10-12 should have the level C1 or C2 on the CEFR, that is mastery – the two highest scales on the reference. Since students in grades 6-9 need to deal with English in a general way that does not involve very high level of English proficiency, I recommend that Kurdish English teachers should have the level C1 on the CEFR, which is the scale of effective operational proficiency. Students in grades 1-5 should be exposed to English at a very basic level which involves simple, straightforward information of English. Therefore, I recommend that English teachers who have B1 or B2 on the CEFR should be assigned to the basic grades of 1-5.

It is worth pointing out that the CEFR does not guarantee that if an English teacher has a particular level on the reference scale will be an effective English teacher. Kurdish English teachers still require a robust teacher training system. The CEFR can be used to assess English teachers' proficiency not to assess effectiveness.

3. Strengthen the evaluation process for teacher performance.
4. Increase school leaders' or principals' roles in evaluating, guiding, and supporting teachers.

5. Provide stakeholders with information on school performance through establishing a department responsible for reporting and sending statistics and information through digital or traditional means.

6. Increase the involvement of parents through meetings and workshops.

Reforming English Teaching Materials

The Kurdistan Regional Government and Ministry of Education in KRI are the two main official authorities responsible for critical remedies to the deficiencies of the *Sunrise* program. Some practical implications at the macro level need to be taken to create counter-hegemonic materials and to balance integrating local culture content and global content in the ELT materials. The following are known as the most essential aspects:

(a) **Using culturally global topics**: The rise of globalization and different ways of cross-culture interaction makes cultural intelligence and cross-cultural communication skills necessary. Along with developing students' language competency, to be truly effective, ELT materials should raise students' awareness of the global issues and cultures through impartially providing harmless topics such as travel, shopping, national festivals, holidays, and ways of life, and values in other cultures around the world. Through this critical approach of providing suitable content for language instruction, students' awareness and competency of intercultural communication is fostered and could lead to peace, respect, tolerance, and understanding of the ways cultures can differ. Based on differentiating levels of proficiency, integrating sociocultural concepts into classroom instruction develops students' intercultural skills (Seelye, 1988).

(b) **Incorporating local cultural content**: Gray (2002) states that most current

Center-produced ELT materials (materials produced by the traditional cultural

and linguistic bases of English such as the UK, the USA, Canada, and Australia)

are not appropriate and do not satisfy cultural concepts and unity of theme. Since

most commercially produced textbooks disregard the local cultural context, in

addition to integration of the global topics and cultures, the EFL materials must

compensate for this inefficiency. Aside from the positive psychological impacts

of self-identity and raising nationalistic feelings of Kurdish learners, cultural

content facilitates English language learning. According to sociocultural theory,

students extract meaning from texts based on their cultural and social

backgrounds (Vygotsky, 1978). Most students are familiar with the local topics in

their native language, and have sufficient knowledge about their culture. These

"schemata" are the original connections of cognitive structures allowing and

facilitating new experiences and knowledge to be coordinated with earlier

information in the long term-memory (MacCarthy, 1991, p. 168). In other words,

this cognitive development of background knowledge is a huge assistance on

which new information is built. Through prior knowledge stimulations, students

are immediately engaged, using English, and prepared for more comprehension.

Therefore, activating background schema of students is essential especially in

developing their receptive skills (listening and reading) (Murtagh, 1989; Smith,

1994).

(c) **Maneuvering one's own culture as an asset**: Analyzing English language

materials in EFL settings is necessary to take precautions to prevent students

sensing that their culture is somehow inferior. This may result in learning

resistance and rejection of other cultures. Local learners should be empowered

through critical awareness of, and respect for their own culture. Through the ideal

Center values and living standards, the Center-produced materials provide the

perception of a superior target culture (Gray, 2000). Incorporating the source

culture in the ELT materials can be considered an alternative method to avert the

hegemonic ideology of language in the mainstream ELT materials. Imperative

familiarity and learning norms/conventions of the target culture, to perform a

successful communication, has greatly been a misconception. As reported by

Akbari (2008), the expanding English usage scope both communicatively and

geographically causes most of the interactions and communications performed in

English to be among the non-native English speakers with definite cultural

identities.

Local Material Design

My first recommendation at the micro level for English teachers in KRI is to

employ the Do-It-Yourself approach. Failure of the commercially-designed English

language teaching materials in response to the cultural and geographical context of the

English learners leads to the emerging Do-It-Yourself (DIY) approach in creating English

language materials. Block (1991) states that the DIY approach of designing English

materials allows teachers to supplement or replace the English coursebook with their own

contributions, responding to topical events and students' geographical and cultural topics.

In spite of the fact that currently teachers rely heavily on a diverse array of

commercially-built English language teaching material, there are, however, teachers who

continue to design their own materials for classroom use (Howard & Major, 2004). Designing materials requires some procedures: finding materials, selecting appropriate materials, evaluating them, and making or adopting them. Based on recent literature on this topic (Altan, 1995; Block, 1991; Harmer, 2001), some reasons or themes can be distilled for teacher-produced materials which can be compared to the disadvantages of the coursebooks to evaluate the advantages of the DIY approach.

Contextualizing English Materials

To compensate for the drawbacks of the *Sunrise* syllabus, I recommend English teachers in KRI to apply the DIY approach and create their own English teaching materials, which have several advantages such as contextualization, individualization, personal touch, and timeliness.

The first critical advantage of teacher-generated materials is contextualization. Many commercially produced materials provide contexts that do not directly relate to students' lives and their interests. This makes these materials platitudinous and monotonous for students (Block, 1991). This is one of the key criticisms that commercial materials encounter, especially those materials that are produced for the world-wide EFL market. These types of materials are characterized as generic and not focused on specific groups of learners in a certain educational environment or cultural context. Altan (1995) explains the deficiency of "fit" between teaching contexts and coursebooks:

Our modern coursebooks are full of speech acts and functions based on situations which most...students will never encounter…[globally] designed coursebooks have continued to be stubbornly Anglo-centric. Appealing to the world market as

they do, they cannot by definition draw on local varieties of English and have not

gone very far in recognizing English as an international language, either. (p. 59)

Designing or adapting English teaching materials enables teachers to take into

account their particular learning environment and infuse their materials with current

events and content relevant to students' culture and their prior knowledge.

To explain how an English teacher can design material that is contextualized

based on his/her teaching environment and incorporated with sociocultural content,

O'Neill's argument about the actual language that textbooks contain is considered. Some

example topics from *Sunrise 9* regarding contextualization is also considered. O'Neill

(1982) claims that "almost always a textbook can be found which will provide the core

language which is necessary and useful for a group whose needs may at first sight seem

unique" (p. 106).

Regarding O'Neill's claim, Block (1991) states that he does not question his

claim about core language and its relative usefulness, but he critiques contexts which are

irrelevant to geographical and cultural context of the students. The trend of English

teacher-designed materials or Do-It-Yourself (DIY) design of ELT materials has been

growing because of the lack of contextualization which causes world-wide teacher and

learner frustration. The theme of English materials should typically relate to students'

needs, interests, and lifestyles. By contrast, EFL materials often lack the idea of realness,

provide no controversial material, do not encourage students to think critically, and make

the material topics of athletics, arts, entertainments, pop culture, and celebrations from

inaccessible countries blank and boring. Such material has no positive language influence

on students or their way of lives. In this sense, Gray (2002) argues that students will

improve their language aptitudes by using their textbook materials as a practical effective

mechanism for enhancing meaningful debates, exchanging ideas, and cultural

discussions.

As an example of contextualization, I evaluate the presentation of the *past simple*

verb tense and the *prepositions of direction* in unit two, lesson two and lesson three of the

Sunrise 9 pages 22-25. I taught this textbook (which is assigned the MOE) for five years.

These two English grammar elements are explained together, and two lessons (*Lesson 2*

and *3*) are devoted to explain the *past simple.* The lesson starts with a *listen and read*

activity, which includes an article *The Royal Mile*, which mentions Edinburgh Castle,

Holyrood Palace, Gladstone's Land, the Bakehouse, and Scottish cabinet-maker and

burglar Deacon Brodie. Similarly, *lesson three* reviews the *past simple* tense by

presenting activities embedded with information of the Scottish history and culture, for

example the *listen and read* activity is integrated with the history of the Scottish King

James IV, Mary Queen of Scots, Earl of Bothwell, Elizabeth I, and Sir Arthur Conan

Doyle. The *prepositions of direction* is presented in a *listen and speak* activity, which

explains the *prepositions* through a dense map and a bus tour of The Mound in Central

Edinburgh.

The problem with this is that Kurdish students are not familiar with Scottish

history. Kurdish learners in grade 9 have not been to Edinburgh, which provides some

hints about the geography of, for example, The Mound in Central Edinburgh. The

argument is that there are no schemata or background knowledge on which Kurdish

English language learners can build the new English knowledge. In this situation,

Kurdish ELLs are overwhelmed with Scottish history rather than providing English

knowledge through a context with which they are familiar. In other words, Kurdish

students have to learn the names of the Scottish aristocracies, elites, locations, and places

in order to communicate the English language in classroom activities. This burdens

Kurdish learners with processing information cognitively beside the English language

knowledge. They have to process both foreign language aspects and foreign content,

which slows down the progression of learning the language easily and effectively.

Moreover, Kurdish ELLs are not emotionally linked to such topics, and they often are not

interested in them.

How can Kurdish English language teachers solve this issue of contextualization?

The *Sunrise* coursebooks designers claim that the *Sunrise* is specially designed for

Kurdish English learners. However, it does not present Kurdish culture and the real world

of Kurds in Kurdistan; it is primarily focused on the history and culture of the United

Kingdom and Scotland. Thus, Kurdish English teachers should design their own

materials to engage localized tastes, embedded with interesting and relevant topics about

Kurdish history, culture, heritage, and geography. So, a Kurdish English teacher should

present materials explaining King Sheikh Mahmud Barzinji, instead of the Scottish King

James IV, Mir Xanzad, Hapsa Xani-Naqib, and Leyla Qasim instead of Elizabeth I and

Mary Queen of Scots, and Muhamed Amin Zaki and Ibrahim Ahmad instead of Sir

Arthur Conan Doyle. A map of local destinations can be used as a context to present the

prepositions of direction instead of using the map of The Mound in Central Edinburgh.

Prior knowledge is an invaluable asset for learning new information. Based on

this perception, Kurdish ELLs should be exposed to English language materials that are

familiar and that promote the process of English learning. In this sense, MacCarthy

(1991) argues that the original connection of cognitive structures facilitates new experiences and knowledge because it is coordinated with earlier information.

Since the *Sunrise* series also fails to address the global cultures and global topics, and its topics are more Anglo centric, English teachers in KRI, in addition to integrating local topics, need to embed materials that focus on global issues to compensate the deficiencies in the program. It should not be forgotten, however, that Kurdish English teachers require a robust extra training system and a high level of autonomy to equip and allow them to create effective materials for remedying the deficiencies. The trend "global issues" in English material development is now gaining increasing attention as a branch in English language teaching. The global issues need to be presented in English materials to engage student in thinking, discussion, and learning the English language through global issue topics.

Globalism makes every corner of the planet inevitability being exposed, interconnected, and influenced by "other world issues," which makes it a necessity for students to discuss and understand other cultures and issues to open the local perspectives to a broader outlook of the world. In this way, English language learners are provided with communicative trends of language in which they empower their knowledge to solve issues and improve their language skills as well. English language learners oftentimes have already attained knowledge about a topic in their native language. When they use English, their cognitive facilities only engage in processing language, not content. This way, their English language skills develop further. Global issues can no longer be neglected in English materials because they have close connection with students' lives and are the topics that students care about and are interested in. Sampedro and Hillyard

(2004) state that marginalizing global issues as the Alterity can no longer be accepted because they are very much "in here." Therefore, English language learners require familiarity of global cultures and issues to become potent effective English users in both local and international settings. The overlap of local and global contexts might be a source of enhancing English materials. In developing materials, it is also suggested that Kurdish English language teachers harmonize global cultures, global issues, and Kurdish culture/local topics to make *glocalized* materials.

In practicing the DIY approach, teachers should take authentic use of English language into account. In this sense, Masuhara & Tomlinson (2008) argue that teaching materials should offer students appropriate authentic language in cogent and purposeful ways, which offer opportunities for negotiation and supportive feedback. English teachers should put enough effort into producing their own materials that interest and engage the learners effectively and cognitively through stimulating discovery and achievable challenges. In this way, the educational materials sustain a positive impact on students to become effective users of the English language outside the classroom.

Individualizing English Materials

Individualization is another advantage that can be promoted through teacher-designed materials. Identifying and teaching individual needs of students places an emphasis on modern teaching methodology. This increasing emphasis relates to the diverse English classroom not only in terms of contexts but also in terms of diversity of students in a particular classroom in a particular context. Students' diversity in an English classroom, for example, can be explained through diverse levels of English competency of students, their styles of learning, their cognitive differences for different demands,

their interests and personalities, and their different levels of English language aptitudes of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. An English teacher in a classroom is the only agent who can effectively identify these differences for which she/he can produce materials that can be responsive for a diverse class and to differentiate based on their needs.

It is necessary to take into account the similarities and the differences among linguistic aspects of the English language and students' native language in terms of syntax, phonetics, morphology, and semantics, and to build new English knowledge upon which students' attained levels in their native language (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008). Throughout the perspective that prior knowledge facilitates and on which new knowledge is built, English teachers should appreciate students' first language through incorporating elements of their language, culture and what is relevant to them. The activities designed through the DIY approach should also be at definitely the right level for a specific group of English learners to administer Krashen's "comprehensible input" hypothesis that offers an appropriate level of challenge and ensures language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). To take more control over material production, English teachers should develop activities that go beyond an "unrelenting format" or "unengaging" presentation of elements of grammar and the PPP (presentation, practice, production) English teaching models (Harmer, 2001, p. 6). To support students' language acquisition, students should be engaged in meaningful cooperative activities through which they promote corporatism and have ample opportunities to think, speak, read, and write in English. In applying the teacher-designed activities, it is also important to take into consideration the:

Preview or frontload, information, ideas, and activities with them in small groups

before they join the whole group for a lesson in English. This front-loading in

small-group discussion gives English language learners the opportunity to

develop knowledge about a subject, discuss the topic in a safe setting where they

can question, and even use their primary language to discuss the lesson so that

they have a foundation before receiving the main lesson in English. (Taberski,

2014, p. 24)

In addition to that, teacher-made materials allow contextualization and

individualization; they also allow English teachers to manifest their personal touch. There

is a wide range of scope for spontaneity and freedom of choice in teacher-designed

materials. Counter to Sheldon's (1987, 1988) perception about the unprofessionalism of

teacher-generated materials, Block (1991) argues that home-made materials supplement a

"personal touch" to teaching what students appreciate (p. 214). To achieve this, English

language teachers should develop class materials that give clear and tangible evidence of

preparation, and go beyond the coursebooks. In this way, students appreciate that their

teacher has put sufficient attention and endeavor in the creation of materials to meet their

needs, interest them, and relevant to their way of lives. This kind of material Block

(1991) calls "for your own eye only" materials, and he explains this concept through an

example that focuses reformative activities relating to students' native language and how

language works. For example:

The teacher might, once a week, put together a 'greatest hits' list of the most

frequently made mistakes, using this list as a prompt for a weekly discussion

about grammar. Dealing with language problems specific to native speakers of

their language (or languages) is particularly fun for local students. (Block, 1991,

p. 215)

In addition to the important advantages of contextualization, individualization,

and personalization, the last essential feature of teacher-made materials is timeliness.

English teachers should embed their materials with topical events that interest students.

Commercially-produced materials do not have this feature and are often outdated or

practically unusable (Block, 1991). In regard to up-to-date materials, English teachers can

produce contemporary English teaching materials for classroom use that can respond to

the local and international events. English teacher-designed materials should include

current high interest topics and tasks that increase motivation and engagement in

learning.

Issues with Teacher-made Materials

In addition to the advantages of the home-made materials, some literature

studying teacher-produced and commercially produced materials argue the contraposition

influence of the teacher-made materials. For example, teacher-produced materials might

not be as organized as coursebooks, which are designed in a way that are more organized

and focused on identifiable principles and discernible patterns. While this can be dull and

boring, it makes the task easier for both teachers and students in terms of a "coherent

body of work to remember and revise form" (Harmer, 2001, p. 7). By contrast to

coursebooks, teacher-produced materials may lack overall coherent and clear direction of

development. For English learners, this may cause frustration and may not allow them to

organize their learning or assess their English skills development.

In addition to the issue of reasonable coherence, organization also involves physical management and storage of materials. Teacher designers need a well-organized system to store their materials for ongoing use; otherwise, teacher-made materials will turn out to be a haphazard pile of documents, which diminishes their genuine quality.

Most critical literature about teacher-designed material has to do with quality. In this sense, Harmer (2001) argues that teacher-produced materials are poorly constructed in terms of clarity, durability, print quality, and physical appearance. He states "if the alternative is a collection of scruffy photocopies, give me a well-produced coursebook any time" (Harmer, 2001, p. 7). Material quality does not only relate to physicality but also to content quality. Lack of this kind of quality is related to teachers' ability in generating their own materials, which sometimes are labeled as unprofessional and inferior material including errors and flaws. Relating this trend to English teachers designing their own materials, it is argued that lack of experience among English teachers may result in inadequate coverage or even leaving out essential elements of the English language. Therefore, English teachers need special instruction on how to create effective teacher-made materials and how to make effective use of authentic materials in a reasonable amount of time. Without clear criteria for guidance, English teachers may not be able to take advantage of authentic educational materials, or they may make poor choices of materials.

Another drawback of teacher-designed materials is time consumption. This might be the most influential reason why some teachers are inhibited to practicing DIY approach. Most teachers in KRI spend few time at school, and they peruse other professions, which distracts them from investing enough time in designing their own

materials. Sheldon (1988) argues that teacher-designed materials are not worth the time

devoted, the labor, and the money. In contrast, Block (1991) states that the amount of

time and effort spent on designing a material is well deserved it, and the prepared

materials can be used several times in one year.

Teachers' close collaboration might assuage the feeling that designing materials

requires too much effort and time. Teachers can cooperate to produce their own

materials. This cooperation may be formal, or teachers can get together to design the

material more informally. For example, during a recess, teachers may share their ideas

about a certain class subject, and they may discuss, for example, what book,

magazine/newspaper article, song, movie, and game can serve a subject best. This kind of

discussion is the brainstorming that may inspire the teachers to create effective and

interesting educational materials to serve local needs. Finally, one might be persuaded by

the bright side of the teacher-designed language materials and "does it himself/herself,"

or one may say "we haven't got the time" or it is not viable – at least not all the time.

Material Development to Supplement the Gaps of the *Sunrise* Series

At a micro level, to compensate for the lack of activities in the *Sunrise* series

about Kurdish history, heritage, and culture and global cultures, I recommend that

English teachers in KRI create communicative activities on the basis of the following.

1. **Local topics that interest students:** appealing topics can be chosen to meet

   students' needs and interests affecting and relating to students' lives.

2. **Global topics and cultures** which enhance English learners' competency of

   linguistic elements, pragmatic elements, and suprasegmental elements of

   pronunciation. These competencies assist ELLs to use English appropriately in

various social interactions with a high level of clarity, intelligibility, and

comprehension.

3. **Kurdish history and culture** through which students have their culture and

identity appreciated, attain a positive attitude towards the English language, and

eventually promote their English language skills through schemata.

Autonomizing **Teachers and Students in English language Teaching and Learning**

The concept of autonomy has different definitions based on context. Benson

(2006) defines autonomy as control over lives both individually and collectively.

Autonomy in learning can be defined as taking charge of teaching and having control

over it. Autonomy in *language* learning is control over the purpose of languages that

people learn and the way in which they learn. Autonomy also involves ability and

attitude. Learning through self-study, self-education, or distance learning does not imply

having autonomy in learning. So, learning by yourself does not mean having skills and

capacity to learn by yourself.

(Benson, 2001) claims that autonomy education movement in Europe and North

America dates back to the late 1960s. This concept of learner autonomy in language

learning shifts language education from teacher centeredness to learner centeredness.

Thanasoulas (2000) and Yang (1998) argue that changing the traditional ideas about

teachers' and learners' roles in language classrooms is one of the major outcomes of this

transition. Based on this perspective, Benson (2001) also points out that learners are

expected to be responsible for their own learning and have the capacity to monitor their

own learning, whereas, teachers assist "the learners in the process of setting up goals and

plans for self-directed learning, raising awareness of learning styles and strategies, and increasing learning engagement" (as cited in Yildirim, 2013, p. 17).

Several researchers have conceptualized this notion of learner autonomy in language learning and teaching contexts based on the aspects of "technical" (Benson, 1997, p. 25), "psychological" (Benson, 2006, p. 23), and "sociocultural" (Sert, 2006, p. 184). Defined from a sociocultural perspective, Holliday (2003) argues that students' social worlds not only influences autonomy but also drives language learning, "which they bring with them from their lives outside the classroom" (p. 117). This suggests that "autonomy is not a universal and neutral concept and that it encompasses a critical awareness of one's own possibilities and limitations within particular contexts" (Schmenk, 2005, p. 115). Considering the development of learner autonomy in the KRI educational system, English teachers need to become autonomous. Thavenius, (1999) states that to inspire learners become autonomous, it is required for teachers to be autonomous. In the KRI context, there is a centralist tendency of the structure of the educational system, which does not allow choice of textbooks and staff development, does not provide sufficient resources, and sufficient amounts of instructional time. Traditional teaching methods are widely used with teacher-centered education that prolongs the passive learning and impedes Kurdish learners from attaining skills to take responsibility for their own learning and to monitor or evaluate themselves. Classroom activities involve memorization of facts that mistakenly substitutes for training, critical thinking, and practical knowledge. Likewise, classroom discussions and meaningful debates are replaced by monologue, listening, and writing. Mhamad & Shareef (2014) describe that "from child education all the way to university level, the curriculum in the

Kurdistan Region, as well as the rest of Iraq, is outdated" (para. 2). Poor quality and sub-standard academic institutions substantially impact performance of so many outstanding and excellent students in the KRI, where educating individuals through a spoon-feeding teaching culture is highly regarded and practiced via pursuing dated academic materials that do not teach students to comprehend, analyze, critique, or become creative thinkers.

Language teaching experiences in recent years call for the concept of language teacher autonomy in an educational system. That is teachers' professional independence in school; this independence includes making autonomous decisions about what material to teach and what method, approach, or technique to apply. A teacher's ability to implement autonomy in the classroom also has an obvious impact on learner autonomy. Language teacher autonomy fosters authority, professionalism, responsiveness, creativity, and effectiveness. Little (1995) argues that teachers need "the nature of pedagogical dialogue," which is probably a protracted process of negotiation to have learners accept accountability for their learning. Teachers also:

> need to determine the extent to which it was possible for learners to set their own objectives, select learning materials and contribute to the assessment of their progress, taking account of factors including the institutional framework and the age, educational background and target language competence of the learners. (Little, 1995, p. 179)

Autonomy, as an educational dimension, is the principal requirement to enable teachers to practice these aspects that Little presents. Autonomous teachers develop educational awareness, and they reflect on their roles and teaching practice to change in ways that meet student needs and interests, and enhance student autonomy as well.

Thavenius (1999) states that to successfully implement autonomy, besides requiring recurrent in-service training, it is a necessity for teachers to align toward "a radical change of attitudes and a good insight into introspection" (p. 161). Accordingly, one of the main dimensions of teacher-college programs should focus on orienting teachers toward autonomy. Language teachers are more likely to attain success in developing autonomy and learner autonomy, if their own education has inspired them to be autonomous. In this sense, Little (1995) proposes that in order for teacher students to be professional they should experience autonomy within teacher education programs. Therefore, I recommend that KRI teacher-colleges should establish intensive courses focusing on teacher training, pedagogy, teaching methods, and real teaching practice in classroom settings that make teachers successful in practicing teacher autonomy.

To become long-life philosophiles, division-makers, and effective teachers, teachers need a great amount of autonomy. However, there is also a trend that considers teacher autonomy a double-edged sword. Teachers who desire autonomy must have good intentions; otherwise, it can be misused to meet self-seeking personal desires. Allowing autonomy needs cautiousness, and teachers need to be constantly monitored to utilize their autonomy for the good of their students, and should not utilize it as a shield to hide themselves from progress.

Learner Autonomy

Autonomy, as an educational concept of moving the focus from teaching to learning, empowers students to go beyond the routine learning in the classroom and enables them to bring the outside world into the classroom. Student autonomy is a gradual process that involves both teachers and students (Camilleri, 1997) and there is no

"one-size-fits-all" approach (Smith, 2003, p. 256); this is because students are different in

their learning capacity, style of learning, beliefs about the process of learning,

interpretations, willingness, and enthusiasm for autonomy.

There are some guidelines which help teachers implement autonomy in the

classroom and combine autonomy as a theory with classroom teaching as a practice. In

this framework, Cotterall (2000) presents five principles for language course design,

targeting the development of student autonomy and transforming decision accountability

from teacher to students:

1. The course reflects learners' goals in its language, tasks, and strategies.

2. Course tasks are explicitly linked to a simplified model of a language learning

   process.

3. Course tasks either replicate real-world communicative tasks or provide rehearsal

   for such tasks.

4. The course incorporates discussion and practice with strategies known to facilitate

   task performance.

5. The course promotes reflection and learning. Cotterall (2000, pp. 111-112)

Students' awareness and reflection increase their capacity to be more self-reliant

and independent. Learners' motivation is enhanced through activities related to their

goals in which they value discussion and practice solving language problems and

applying course strategies outside the classroom. This way, learners will become

independent and evaluate their past learning and plan for future actions.

To help students develop into autonomous and responsible learners, I recommend creating productive learning climates in which students' voices are heard. When teachers offer students choices they empower them with intrinsic motivation and self-determination, which leads to autonomy. These choices should be through the student-centered approach and task-based language teaching through which students are offered freedom and realize the role of self as an agent in the language learning process. This way, students are engaged in negotiation, self-appraisal, and self-management of thoughts and feelings. I also recommend English teachers provide students with skills and different strategies through which students can foster their autonomy. These strategies include: metacognitive strategies (e.g., planning, evaluating, monitoring), cognitive strategies (e.g., repetition, guessing, translation, resourcing, note taking), and social strategies (working with other students).

Using the English language locally and globally as a powerful tool for many purposes can no longer be marginalized. Throughout this chapter, I explained and presented several recommendations, through their application, the English language teaching and learning in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq will take a huge step towards keeping pace with global developments, empowering Kurdish individuals, and progressing the Kurdish national and ethnic cases. The recommendations are at two levels. The macro level includes: building new schools by using advanced prefabricated technologies as a quick measure, strengthening teacher training system and teacher-college curricula, recruiting English language trainers and teachers, empowering supervisory system which promotes educational accountability and incentives, addressing instructional time, using the CEFR to assess teachers' level of English proficiency,

autonomizing teachers which leads to student autonomy, designing a new English syllabus incorporating Kurdish history, heritage, and culture, culturally global contents, and communicative and pragmatic competences. The micro level recommendations include: applying the Do-It-Yourself approach which allows Kurdish English teachers to contextualize their English materials and incorporate the materials with topical subjects for provoking debates and discussions in which Kurdish students develop their English skills.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

The hegemony and importance of the English language around the world

encourages the speakers of other languages to learn English. English is the most

commonly spoken language globally. Estimates show that one in four of the world's

population people can speak or understand English (Crystal, 2000). In view of the fact

that English is the language of science, technological innovations, economic

development, aviation, diplomacy, and tourism, embracing the English language opens

the door to success in academia and in the global job market. Mastery in English also

provides psychological and emotional satisfaction for learners to take pleasure in books,

songs, movies, and TV shows. Because of English studies Kurdish English learners in the

Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) would benefit from what English can offer. However, the

English program in that region is not robust and faces several challenges.

KRI has been an autonomous region in Iraq since 1991 with a current population

of 5.2 million. The Kurds speak the Kurdish language with two very different dialects of

Central Kurdish (or Sorani) and Northern Kurdish (or Kurmanji). Arabic, English, and

the two Kurdish dialects are taught in the public schools in KRI, which causes language

learning overload. Even though Arabic is the second official language in KRI and the

primary language in Iraq, the English language is more highly appreciated and valued

than Arabic. This might relate to the historical and political tension and conflict between

the Kurdish people and the ousted Arab Ba'athist regime in Iraq and the Iraqi Arab

officials.

English in KRI is generally learned at school with limited convenience to practice

it outside the classroom. English in the KRI setting refers to what Kachru (1992) calls the

"Expanding Circle" where English is not dominant or does not function in the normal daily communications. The outcomes of the English program in KRI are not satisfactory. The unsatisfactory results of students' performance in the English language relate to several socioeconomic, sociocultural, and administrative factors. These include school infrastructure, English teachers, training systems, supervisory systems, instructional time, teacher-student relationships, and the English program *Sunrise*.

To reform the outdated English language syllabus and cultivate the Communicative Language Teaching method in KRI's English language program, the Ministry of Education in KRI launched the *Sunrise* program in 2007, produced by the Macmillan Publication especially for Kurdish school students enhancing listening, speaking, reading, and writing through the communicative approach. However, most of the activities are confined to mechanical and meaningful activities with little focus on communicative activities.

The lack of communicative activities makes the situation worse for Kurdish teachers and students whose culture encourages keeping a huge distance between teacher and students which impedes developing logical argument skills and an exchange of ideas. The *Sunrise* course books fail to meet the Kurdish learners in terms of culturally and pedagogically appropriate teaching topics. Its topics try to develop the English of Kurdish learners through British culture and history, as I argued in the contextualization section. I also analyzed some content and grammatical concepts of the *Sunrise 9* book, which turned out to be both inappropriate and inadequate to meet the needs of 9th grade Kurdish English learners. For example, the explanations of *present simple* tense, *present*

continuous tense, *passive voice*, and speaking and pronunciation skills are inadequate and to some extent wrong.

The *Sunrise* program does not provide English learners with any visual media to promote students' non-linguistic and pragmatic competences. I argued that this leaves Kurdish English learners incompetent to appropriately communicate in various social contexts because social interactions extend beyond verbal communication. In order for English language learners to successfully communicate, beside English linguistic elements, they require non-linguistic and pragmatic elements. In the case of KRI as an EFL setting, Kurdish learners can acquire these competences through visual exposure of media, but the *Sunrise* program neglects this perspective. In addition, the public schools in KRI do not supply technology devices such as televisions, video players, computers, projectors, or the internet to classrooms through which English teachers are able to foster these competencies in students.

Suprasegmental elements of pronunciation are another critical competence in language learning. Speaking and listening skills are interwoven. In order for English learners to successfully interact, they need to be exposed to and familiar with natural spoken language that may involve using fillers, incomplete forms of sentences, loosely organized grammar, and, false starts. However, the English program in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq does not assess communicative or oral competencies of students.

The *Sunrise* program does not promote communicative competence. It may provide students with linguistic competence. Yet, Kurdish students need to acquire when and how to use the language functions, and what register to use. Theses competencies are attained through communicative activities. Lack of communicative activities in the

Sunrise leave Kurdish English learners unequipped to discover when and how to use appropriately the speech acts, and what register to use according to a certain set of circumstances. For example, when to use formal, neutral, or informal slang, directness, or jargon based on cultural conventions and the contextual factors of social status, social distance, and level of acquaintance and intensity of action.

Since the *Sunrise* program fails to meet Kurdish English learners, English teachers in KRI should apply a Do-It-Yourself approach in creating English language materials to supplement or replace the course book with their contributions acknowledging topical events, global cultures, and students' geographical and cultural topic. This way, students will be familiar with other cultures which improve their non-linguistic and pragmatic competencies and also appreciate their own culture and heritage through which they also foster their English and avoid resistance.

The *Sunrise* is not the only side to blame. The poor performance of students in English in the public schools is contributed to some other administrative and infrastructural factors. Overcrowding in the KRI's school classrooms in the urban areas with the average class size of 42 students does not allow English teachers to apply student-centered approaches, communicative teaching, and language learning group activities. Lack of school buildings in KRI causes the phenomenon of sharing school buildings, double shifts, and multi-shift schools. The growth in the number of school buildings does not keep pace with growth in student enrollment. In addition to overcrowding, this also deprives a great number of Kurdish children from enrollment in a critical time of learning English language. To tackle the enrollment problem and overcrowding in KRI in the next decade, the Kurdistan Regional Government will need

to provide space available for 183,000 more students and build a minimum of 134 new

18-classroom schools each year until 2021 (Vernez et al., 2014).

Students, curriculum, and teachers comprise a triangle in which each component

influences others. English teachers are a key factor to make a program achieve its

objectives. At present, the MOE in KRI does not have any evaluation system for

assessing the English proficiency level of English teachers. On the basis of Rand

Corporation and KRI's MOE Survey, 25 percent of teachers reported that they teach

English language, which is not their subject specialization. Approximately 18 percent of

these teachers held only a high school diploma. Thus, KRI needs to recruit 8,100 new

English teachers in the next decade (2010-2020).

In addition, the practicing teachers who are assigned by the MOE in KRI are not

qualified to teach the English language. Even a great number of the English teachers

reported that they are not well prepared because of the lack of training courses. The

teacher training courses occur in a very short period of time which ranges from 5-10

days, and the courses are taught by unprofessional trainers without using a standardized

training curriculum. The dilemma of unqualified English teachers in KRI may be traced

to the process of preparing the English teaching force. The teacher colleges accept low

qualified high school graduates and do not provide them with sufficient courses focusing

on effective teaching methods/techniques and real training in classroom settings before

graduation.

To enhance the English program in KRI's context, the KRG, MOE, and MHE

should take some measures including building new schools, designing a new curriculum,

promoting a teacher training system, upgrading English courses in teacher colleges,

recruiting highly qualified English teachers and trainers, applying the Common European

Framework of Reference (CEFR) to assess teachers' level of English, and strengthening

the supervisory and accountability system. At the micro level, I recommend employing

the Do-It-Yourself approach, autonomizing teachers, and developing *collecdualism*. I

analyzed these concepts and offered several recommendations; however, analyzing

education and English as a foreign language in KRI's context may need more research

especially in terms of the psychological well-being and motivation of Kurdish

individuals.

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Appendix 1: Characteristics of an effective English teacher on the basis of Miller (1987).

1. Enthusiasm for teaching: effective EFL teachers' passion for teaching instills a passion for learning in the participants; and the most crucial characteristic in effective teachers is their action in the classroom which influences the way the students react toward the target language and, therefore, their accomplishment in acquiring it.

2. Creativity in teaching: Effective teachers surpass the traditional teaching method of opening a book, doing exercises, and following an outline designed by someone else. Yet, effective language teachers employ a myriad of pedagogical techniques such as games, songs, jazz chants, problem solving, and other techniques to engage the student's mind and allow the students to apply the skills they have already developed in their first language.

3. Adding pace and humor to the class: teachers' skilful humor has the effect of alleviating students' nervousness. When students are not afraid of making mistakes and have a good time, they make progress in language learning. The affective filters of the students were low, facilitating acquisition; "a mental block, caused by affective factors ... that prevents input from reaching the language acquisition device" (Krashen, 1985, p. 100).

   Another typical quality of an effective teacher is that s/he maintains an excellent pace in the class and is always prepared. The events move so quickly that nervous students do not have time to worry about it.

4. Interest in the student: effective English language teachers always challenge their students by speaking to them in English. This shows confidence in them,

challenges them to speak in English, and activates their English channel, which

prepares them to think in English. No reason can be found why a teacher should

use any language other than the target language except possibly for expediency

purposes. When a teacher reverts to the native language, that ignores the

importance of the students' struggles in the target language. Additionally, Miller

(1987) argues that switching codes confuses students, and she draws an analogy

between the switching codes and going off a diet – "once you cheat a little, then

you want to cheat a little more" (p. 37).

In addition, English teachers should maintain a level of difficulty high enough

to challenge the students, but not so high as to discourage them.

5. Being patient and persevering with students: student levels of intelligence vary

and some students struggle in learning language and need more practice. When

the teacher demonstrates incredible patience with all of the students and "is

positive – encouraging initial and repeated attempts – the students will apply

themselves more diligently. Motivation thrives on success" (p. 37). Contrary to

this, a teacher who loses confidence in the students' ability to progress results in

students losing their incentive and then becoming unsure of themselves.

6. Taking an interest in students as a person: effective language teachers discover

discussion topics that interest students: hobbies, family, past employment, and

travel, to name but a few. Since language students, most of the time, feel rather

incompetent expressing themselves adequately, as they are accustomed to doing

in their native language, they need the easiest and the most accessible area of

conversation that fosters pleasure and pride.

7. Knowledgeable at grammar: language teachers need to know the target language grammar well and can explain grammatical points without further consideration. They also need to be realistic and possess the simple courage to admit that they really do not know a concept. For adult language learners, the intricacies of grammar should be given more attention.

8. Teacher availability: effective teachers should take a few minutes to answer student questions or talk to students after class. This will encourage students to apply themselves and do extra work. Students need their teachers' encouragement not only to achieve the requirements, but also to pursue and foster their areas of interests. "Acquisition is facilitated when it concerns information that we need or are interested in" and when students' efforts are appreciated (Miller, 1987, p. 37).

9. Equal treatment: effective teachers should treat students equally regardless of status, gender, race, or a student's need for language. They should also be certain that they include everyone equally in their class. It is hard to avoid been guilty of bias toward the brighter and more energetic students. Nevertheless, teachers need to be aware of treating students equally.

10. Leaving emotional baggage outside the classroom: the classroom is like a stage on which a teacher performs. Students' concentration should not be interrupted by worrying about what might be pestering the teacher nor by a teacher who sustains himself/herself "through ridicule or sarcasm, playing havoc with the emotions of [his/her] students, and thereby blocking any learning/acquiring that might take place" (Miller, 1987, p. 38).