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# Iraq – Understanding English language teaching and learning

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# Contents

# Acknowledgements

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# Executive summary

This report is the culmination of desk-based and in-country research about English language teaching (ELT) in Iraq. The education system in Iraq has suffered from decades of conflict which has resulted in thousands of internally displaced people migrating to different parts of the country as well as large influxes of refugees from neighbouring Syria fleeing their own civil war. Tens of thousands of children and young adults have missed years of school or have experienced interrupted or incomplete schooling. To enable Iraq to move forward with its formal and non-formal education, the British Council wishes to engage with governmental and non-governmental departments and agencies to bring about changes in the quality of ELT in the country. The purpose of this report is, therefore, to map the current state of English language education (in 2022) in the Kurdistan Region (KRI) and the Central and Southern Regions (CSI) of Iraq and to provide recommendations on which the British Council can forge national and local collaborations in the formal and non-formal settings in which English is taught.

The themes explored in the report are defined at the outset. These include the status of English, provision for learning the language, its teaching workforce and profiles of learners, teacher preparation and professional development, the outcomes of learning English, and the challenges and support that affect ELT. Background sections follow on Iraq generally, and education and English education more specifically (with a brief overview of ELT projects run by various international agencies and donors, including the British Council). The impacts of conflict on education and employment are also covered.

The methodology for the study is also described. The reach of the project includes formal government-run mainstream education as well as non-governmental provision of English, and the provision that falls in between where formal school teachers provide English to marginalised communities or catch-up classes to internally displaced learners. Empirical data was collected (online and in-country) from over 2,000 respondents through interviews, workshops, discussions, surveys, field visits and lesson observations; reviews of the

literature were also carried out to identify where the project is situated in relation to the wider context of relevant work in ELT.

The core of the report consists of the results, through which we provide detailed accounts of English in the formal sector in CSI and KRI, followed by English in the non-formal sectors in those regions. We take this approach given that KRI and CSI are marked by such linguistic and administrative differences that we choose to say what is happening in English in each region before being able to look across both regions in our list of 28 recommendations (14 each for the formal and non-formal English education sectors).

In our recommendations, we seek to address a wide community of practitioners and policymakers whose work touches on English in either a profound way, such as Ministries of Education who are responsible for delivering English as a subject across the entire country, or in a more instrumental way, such as the non-governmental agencies who teach English as part of their short courses delivering psycho-social support. Whichever stakeholder we address, our aim is to draw on recognised international good practice in ELT to highlight what is known to work elsewhere in the world while explaining this practice in relation to the local context in Iraq.

One overarching conclusion from this report is that the teaching of English in Grades 1–12 in Iraq is not significantly affecting the proficiency in English that students achieve by the end of secondary school. Substantial investments in English curricula have been made in different parts of the country in the recent past which have resulted in communicative textbooks for many thousands of learners, while other parts of the country have seen little investment in English. However, investment in curricula has not been supported with effective opportunities for the continuing professional development of teachers. The limited competence for teaching English achieved by graduates from English departments in Colleges of Education is also a significant cause of the modest quality English teaching in schools in Iraq. The evidence we analyse in this report suggests that, despite the best efforts of Ministry officials and teachers alike, the teaching of English in primary, secondary and non-formal education in Iraq is still defined by features of teacher-centred approaches where learners are often passive. Reading aloud, our findings suggest, often receives more attention than speaking, and teachers make frequent use of their mother tongue without understanding contemporary approaches to multilingual pedagogy which help them harness the rich linguistic resources of their learners. Based on this evidence, many of our recommendations argue that improvements in the quality of English education and the effective implementation of new curricula must be supported by effective pre-service training and in-depth professional development opportunities for teachers of English. For these improvements in quality to take hold, it is vital to look at educational reform holistically and to understand and address the various factors that limit change.

# 1 Introduction

This report provides detailed insight into the teaching and learning of English in Iraq in 2022, with a particular focus on children and young adults in formal and non–formal education sectors. It is based on extensive research involving both deskwork and primary data collection from a wide range of stakeholders in the Central and Southern (CSI) and Kurdistan (KRI) regions of Iraq. Box 1 lists the range of issues relevant to English education that the study sought to address. The overall purpose of this research was to deepen understandings of these issues and to identify particular areas of English

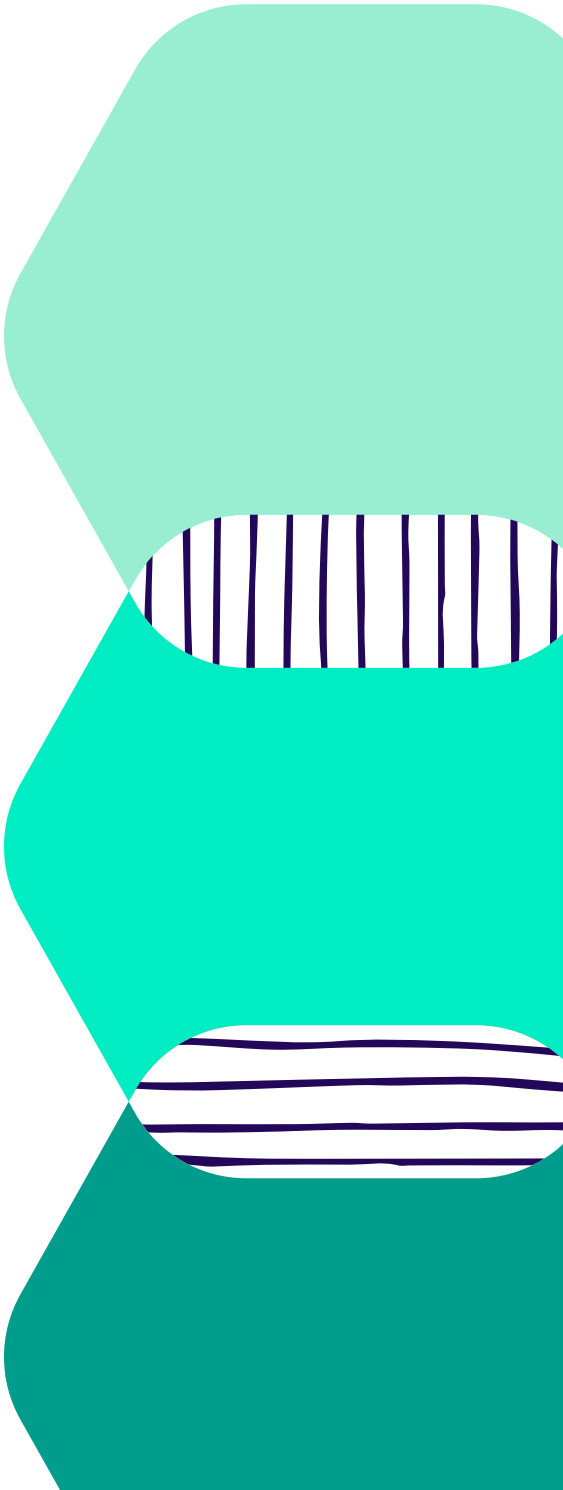
**Box 1** English in Iraq: Key themes

- *Status of English*: What is the status of English in the educational system and labour market? What policies regulate English education? What are the national aspirations and target outcomes regarding English of the Ministry of Education? What are the perceived links between English and employability?
- *Provision*: How do children and young adults access English language education and what are the characteristics of this? This will involve (for the formal and non-formal sectors separately) an analysis of teaching and learning, curriculum, materials and resources, learning environment (such as class size), inclusion and assessment.
- *Teachers*: What is the profile of teachers of English, what pre-service teacher education is available and what access do teachers have to opportunities for professional development in formal and non-formal settings?
- *Learners*: What are learners' attitudes to English, their experiences of learning the language, the value they attach to learning it and the advantages that they feel a knowledge of English does or can provide?
- *Outcomes*: What evidence exists (for example, official statistics) regarding the levels of English that children and young adults achieve at the end of secondary and tertiary education respectively? What about outcomes in non-formal contexts? What do stakeholders feel about the outcomes of English education?
- *Inclusion*: To what extent is education generally, and English education specifically, inclusive? Are females, those with disabilities and other marginalised groups appropriately supported? How do multilingualism and displacement affect language learning and employability?
- *Challenges*: What, according to key stakeholders, are the main challenges that work against quality outcomes in English education in formal and non-formal contexts and for children and young adults?
- *Support*: What support (including through systematic interventions) would enable English education in Iraq to contribute more effectively to inclusive education, equitable outcomes and productive pathways to employment and academic opportunities?

education in Iraq where scope for development exists. The research team consisted of two international researchers (Simon Borg and Tony Capstick) and two local researchers (Muayyed Jum'a and Nazar Jamil Abdulazeez).

In this report, *formal education* covers mainstream education in governmental institutions at primary, secondary and tertiary level. *Non-formal* education (which is in turn distinct from *informal* – i.e. self-directed – education) takes place outside mainstream schools in, for example, youth centres or community-based organisations. Non-formal education is often provided by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and may or may not lead towards a formal qualification. We also include the teaching of English to marginalised communities within our definition of non-formal education.

Section 2 provides background to Iraq and its educational context, while Section 3 describes the methodology for the empirical component of the study. Section 4 presents the results for English in formal education and Section 5 for English in non-formal settings. Key findings are summarised in Section 6, followed by recommendations for developing English education in Iraq in Section 7.



# 2 Deskwork

Deskwork was conducted to identify existing research into English education in Iraq and to provide an overview of the social, cultural and educational landscape that English education is part of. This broader context is discussed in Section 2.1, followed by an overview of English education in Iraq in Section 2.2. Literature related to non-formal education is discussed in more detail in Section 5.1.

## 2.1 Country background

Key country indicators for Iraq are shown in Box 2. Iraq is a federal parliamentary republic consisting of 19 governorates, four of which make up the autonomous Kurdistan Region.[1] Over 70 per cent of the population live in urban areas.[2] More than 30 per cent of the female labour force are unemployed compared to around 10 per cent of males.[3] Iraq is an upper middle-income country,[4] but according to a recent World Bank analysis, the country's economic situation has been seriously affected by Covid-19[5] and lower oil prices, with severe consequences for poverty and unemployment. Iraq continues to be seriously affected by humanitarian crises as a result of military conflict, with an estimated 1.2 million internally displaced people.[6]

### Displacement and security in Iraq

Iraq experienced very high levels of displacement as a result of the conflict between coalition forces and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS/Daesh). Of the more than 6 million Iraqis who have fled their homes since 2014, 1.2 million remain internally displaced in Iraq (NRC, 2021). Over 4.8 million Iraqis have returned to their areas of origin, though humanitarian agencies believe that many of these returns have been premature or involuntary. The conditions in which internally displaced persons (IDPs) live and go to school lack basic infrastructure, utility services, and educational or livelihood opportunities. Challenges include lack of security, community acceptance, housing, property, civil documentation and education. The humanitarian community estimates that more than 4.1 million Iraqis will need assistance in 2021 (HRP, 2021). With military operations against ISIS largely over, the Iraqi government faces new challenges ranging from managing civil unrest, mitigating the impacts of Covid-19, reduced oil prices and economic productivity, all of which affect education.

**Box 2** Iraq country indicators

| | |
|---|---|
| **Official name** | Republic of Iraq |
| **Capital** | Baghdad |
| **Area** | 438,317 km$^2$ |
| **Population** | 40.2 million[7] |
| **GDP per capita** | US$ 5,114[8] |
| **Official language(s)** | Arabic, Kurdish |
| **Unemployment** | total 13.7%;[9] youth 25.6%[10] |
| **Internet penetration** | 75%[11] |

1. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:Iraq
2. data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS?locations=IQ
3. data.unwomen.org/country/iraq
4. idea.usaid.gov/cd/iraq/education
5. www.worldbank.org/en/country/iraq/publication/economic-update-april-2021
6. www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/fact-sheets/2021/factsheet_iraq_may2021.pdf
7. www.worldometers.info/world-population/population-by-country/
8. www.worldometers.info/gdp/gdp-by-country/
9. www.statista.com/statistics/327328/unemployment-rate-in-iraq/
10. www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/iraq/
11. datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-iraq?rq=Iraq

## Education and employment

Iraq's economy suffers from a lack of diversification as the country's revenues are still very much dependent on an unstable oil sector. Iraq's share of human capital is the lowest in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region (Lahire et al., 2021). According to the World Bank, investments in human capital and education reform are urgent if the economy is to prosper. The World Bank suggests that Iraq's human capital crisis is due to a crisis in learning which is being exacerbated by the effects of Covid-19. An example based on current enrolment rates shows how an Iraqi child can expect to complete only 6.9 years of schooling (ibid). Moreover, 40 per cent of this limited time spent in school fails to translate into productive skills when this child enters the workforce. The impact of Covid-19 on this bleak outlook is far-reaching. Since February 2020, the pandemic has led to full and partial school closures across Iraq affecting more than 11 million Iraqi students. With schools being closed over 75 per cent of the time during the 2020–21 academic year, and only limited and unequal opportunities for remote learning, children are facing another reduction of learning-adjusted years of schooling, likely amounting to a 'lost year' of learning (Azevedo et al., 2021). This leads to limited opportunities to gain job-relevant skills and high unemployment, which were important factors behind the 2019 countrywide protests that took place before the pandemic.

According to recent International Labour Organisation (ILO) figures, the unemployment rate for Iraqi youth aged 15 to 24 stands at 25 per cent (ILO, 2019). This figure is higher than both the average for the region (22 per cent) and the average for its income group (22 per cent) (ILO, 2020). These alarming employment outcomes for young Iraqi men and women are largely the result of an education system that is not aligned with the skills demanded by today's labour market.

In response to these indicators, the Government of Iraq Reform White Paper (GOI, 2020) recognises that, in addition to continued and increased education infrastructure investments, more attention needs to be paid to learning and aligning skills with labour market needs. The White Paper emphasises the need to develop a national strategy for education and training that is rooted in evidence-based analyses of key education sector inputs that contribute to learning and skills development. In response, the World Bank has proposed actionable reforms for key education sector inputs to lead to better learning and skills development (2021).

Iraq's educational system was at its peak between 1970 and 1984[12] and before 1991 'was widely regarded as one of the best in the Middle East region'.[13] It has, however, since declined as a result of the instability caused by military conflict. The Ministry of Education (MOE) is responsible for school education while the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHE) regulates higher education. The governments in Baghdad and Erbil (for the Kurdistan Region), though, have separate independent[14] Ministries and educational policies and systems across these may differ. Thus, for Iraq excluding KRI,[15] education is structured as follows: pre-primary (4–5 years of age), primary (6–11, which is compulsory), secondary (12–17) and tertiary (18–22). For KRI, basic compulsory education lasts nine years (ages 6–14), secondary education three years (15–17) and tertiary from 18.

According to UNESCO,[16] a 2021–30 education strategy for Iraq is under development. There is also an Iraq Vision 2030 strategy document[17] in which developing a 'high quality and inclusive education system' (p. 18) is one of the goals. This strategy plan highlights 'the devastating impact on educational services' (p. 19) of conflict; for example, about 50 per cent of school buildings require reconstruction and those that are functional are used in separate shifts (there is evidence that students attending evening school shifts perform worse than those attending in the morning[18]). While primary enrolment rates are high (almost 93 per cent[19]), only 32 per cent complete secondary education.[20] It is also estimated that over three million children in Iraq are

12. www.campaignforeducation.org/docs/HLPF/Iraq%20Spotlight%20Report%202019.pdf
13. www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Iraq/pdf/Publications/UNESS_2011%20English%20(compressed).pdf, p.22
14. www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Iraq/pdf/Publications/UNESS_2011%20English%20(compressed).pdf, p.23
15. uis.unesco.org/en/country/iq
16. en.unesco.org/news/developing-iraqs-next-national-education-strategy-2021-2030-ines
17. planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/iraq_vision_2030_en.pdf
18. www.unicef.org/iraq/what-we-do/education
19. idea.usaid.gov/cd/iraq/education
20. idea.usaid.gov/cd/iraq/education

out of school.[21] To support children whose schooling has been interrupted, as well as to address illiteracy, a non–formal education sector also exists in Iraq.[22,23]

Educational curricula in Iraq are defined through textbooks, as explained further for English below. Various national examinations take place at the end of different stages of education;[24, 25], for example, the Primary Certificate (also called Primary Baccalaureate) is taken at the end of primary education, while the Secondary School Certificate is taken by students who complete that stage of education. There is no separate examination for university study and admission depends on students' school leaving certificate results.

Initial teacher preparation typically takes places in Colleges of Education, which offer four-year degree programmes, but a shortage of teachers in certain subjects means that the qualifications held by practising teachers will vary, particularly in primary schools. Training for practising teachers is offered either by the Ministry of Education (with a focus on the curriculum) or (often to help teachers respond to the humanitarian crisis) by external agencies working in Iraq, such as UNESCO[26] and NGOs.

## 2.2 English education in Iraq

English is a *foreign* language in Iraq – it is taught as a school subject and does not (in contrast with contexts where English is a second language) play a central role in daily life. English is taught as a compulsory subject from Grade 1. The curriculum is defined by the textbook series used – *Sunrise* in KRI[27] and *English for Iraq* elsewhere.[28] These textbooks seek to be communicative in their orientation, though implementation varies and insufficient teacher training has been noted as a contributing factor here.[29] The *English for Iraq* and *Sunrise* series include coursebooks, workbooks, teacher's books and audio resources. In CSI, Grades 1–4 have three lessons a week (reduced to two where two schools use the same building), Grade 5 has four lessons, Grade 6 five lessons (four where two schools use the same building) and Grades 7–12 have five lessons. In KRI, Grades 1–3 have three lessons of English a week, Grade 4 has four and Grades 5–12 have five.

Teachers of English typically graduate with a degree from Colleges of Education, though graduates from Colleges of Arts and Colleges of Languages are also able to work as teachers of English. The curriculum followed by Colleges is established by the MOHE. The first two years are dedicated largely to English language improvement, while during the final year of the programme student teachers complete a period of teaching practice in schools.

In terms of CPD, teachers of English have access to training provided by the MOE. For example, to support the new *English for Iraq* textbooks, thousands of teachers have received five days' training. MOE Supervisors also provide periodic workshops for the teachers they are responsible for. Additional CPD opportunities for teachers have been occasionally provided by external agencies (often working through the British Council). Overall, though, CPD for teachers of English in Iraq is not regulated by a systematic framework. In the non-formal sector, where English education also takes place, insights into the kinds of support teachers receive is currently limited.

In terms of levels of English nationally, according to the global EPI ranking,[30] in 2021, Iraq placed 107th out of 112 countries, with a rating of 'very low proficiency'.

The teaching of English in Iraq has been supported by various external organisations. The US State Department supports teachers of English in Iraq through the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program (FLTA). This scheme focuses on developing teachers' classroom teaching skills as well as helping them to improve their English language proficiency. The scheme also aims to develop teachers' awareness of US culture and customs, as does the Fulbright Visiting Scholar

21. www.unicef.org/iraq/what-we-do/education
22. www.unicef.org/iraq/stories/learning-fun
23. education.stateuniversity.com/pages/689/Iraq-NONFORMAL-EDUCATION.html
24. www.nuffic.nl/sites/default/files/2020-08/education-system-iraq.pdf
25. wenr.wes.org/2017/10/education-in-iraq
26. See, for example, en.unesco.org/news/unesco-and-ministry-education-iraq-train-teachers-ninewa-pve-e
27. For a critical analysis of Sunrise, see www.kurdipedia.org/files/books/2016/97345.PDF
28. See also www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S259029112030036X?via%3Dihub for evidence that in Iraq the curriculum is equated with the textbook.
29. bearworks.missouristate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3364&context=theses
30. www.ef.com/wwen/epi/

programme for junior Iraqi scholars, who are encouraged to develop links with US faculty through weekly mentoring sessions. IREX,[31] a programme funded by the US Embassy in Baghdad, has included a focus on developing the English teaching skills of university staff in Iraq. In 2017, IREX published a Labour Market Report based on interviews and surveys with private sector organisations across KRI, Baghdad and Basra. IREX sought to identify qualifications most desired by employers, the perceived gaps in the preparedness of recent Iraq graduates and the types of training opportunities offered. The following findings relating to ELT were identified across each region surveyed and were cited as crucial to building the labour market (2017, p. 5).

1. English language skills are seen as the 'most needed' – more than twice as much as any other knowledge or skills.
2. Computer skills are highly valued by employers but are not always adequate in recent Iraqi graduates.
3. 'Critical thinking' and 'problem solving', described as soft skills in the report, were cited as lacking.

The British Council has also supported education and English education in Iraq in various ways, including:

1. Master Training Project (2015–19), a three-year cascade programme which aimed to develop a national system of in-service teacher training for teachers of English (Lee & Mackay, 2019)
2. Research into English in higher education in KRI (2014–15), resulting in four reports (Borg, 2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2016) examining English policy, practices, student perceptions and EMI
3. Research into language and resilience,[32] including a focus on Syrian refugees in KRI
4. EU Schools Program,[33] which aims to improve the quality of, and access to the Iraqi education system.

Appendix 1 summarises reports relevant to English education in Iraq that have been commissioned by the British Council.

Interviews with previous British Council English language programme staff revealed that in response to 3. above (the global *Language for Resilience* programme), British Council Iraq embarked on its own resilience-related work with a youth education programme with the Norwegian Refugee Council 2016–2018 and an *English for Resilience* project with Mercy Hands 2016–2018. For the British Council Iraq English team at that time, *Language for Resilience* was understood as a means to help vulnerable people to withstand and recover from the effects of conflict, instability and displacement – by equipping them with the language tools they need to lead the life they planned or hoped for.

The Youth Education pilot programme was funded by British Council Iraq and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA). Its focus was to improve learning outcomes and employability of conflict-affected youth in Northern Iraq from IDP, refugee and host communities and targeted the most vulnerable youth in those communities. During the pilot, NRC worked with 60 female youth and 60 male youth (aged 18–25) in Dohuk. The beneficiaries received computer literacy training and English language tuition with integrated employability skills training such as CV writing and guidance about job application procedures in Iraq. The course was delivered in partnership with the Directorate of Vocational Training, Dohuk and British Council Iraq. This strategy looked beyond providing support for immediate needs and was centred on developing the capacity of recipient populations and governments to ensure they have resilience in unstable political and economic contexts via a cascade system of delivering training.

The *English for Resilience* programme was similar, in that the focus was working with displaced youth and refugee youth populations, though the aim of this initiative was to increase opportunities for employability. While the unemployment rate decreased in Iraq from 2017, unemployment among youths aged 15–24 years remained high. The unemployment rate at that time was even higher among youth with higher educational achievements. To improve the livelihoods of youth within the country, the British Council and Mercy Corps teamed up to provide English language Training of Trainers

31. www.irex.org/project/iraq-university-linkages-program
32. www.britishcouncil.org/research-policy-insight/research-reports/language-resilience
33. iraq.britishcouncil.org/en/programmes/education/capacity-building-primary-secondary-education

© photograph: Mat Wright

(ToT) courses to English Language Mentors for coaches in Adolescent and Youth Friendly Spaces (AYFSs). The programme drew on the expertise of both organisations to improve English teaching and youth programming in Baghdad, Erbil, Salah-Al-Din, and Sulaymaniyah governorates of Iraq. The programme was piloted in the AYFSs run by Mercy Corps and engaged vulnerable youth from the IDP, refugee, returning, and host communities, encouraging interaction between the groups. By the end of the collaboration, 67 coaches had received training in the British Council's Training-of-Trainers curriculum. Following a cascade model, these coaches in turn taught English language classes to 1,294 students. The curriculum included structured lesson plans, interactive teaching methods, and applied activities. Training courses were interactive and participatory, encouraging coaches to outline the main objectives of the lessons as well as their methods for teaching and developing the material. Lesson plans included classroom organisation and material preparation. The courses also incorporated activities for coaches and youth leaders to use, to encourage students to speak and engage with each other.

# 3 Research methodology

The empirical component of the study ran from mid-October until mid-December 2021. It involved both remote data collection as well as fieldwork in Iraq (which took place between 26 October and 6 November). Table 1 and the subsequent paragraphs summarise the range of data collected in each of the two regions and for the formal and non-formal sectors respectively. Thus, in this mixed-methods study, a substantial volume of data was collected from two education Ministries (MOE and MOHE), plus the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA). Within the MOE, the stakeholders we engaged with were officials responsible for curriculum and training for English, English supervisors, teachers of English and their learners. For the MOHE, data was also collected from academics in English departments and university teachers of English. At the MoLSA, officials were interviewed to learn about the role of English in employability. For the non-formal education sector, various NGOs also contributed data via workshops, interviews and field visits which were made in CSI and KRI to collect data from NGO staff, teachers and learners as well as formal sector teachers and supervisors working with marginalised groups (who are included in the non-formal sections of this report). In terms of data collection methods, a wide range were used both online and face-to-face: individual interviews, meetings,[34] group discussions, surveys, workshops, written communications and lesson observations. Additionally, a range of documents were accessed and analysed, such as English textbooks, evaluation forms (used with student teachers during teaching practice) and the curriculum used in English departments that prepare teachers of English. More detail on each form of data collection will be provided in the relevant results sections below. In total, over 2,000 individuals contributed data to the study.

| Region | Stakeholders | (O)nline/ (F)ace-to-face | Methods | Sample |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| CSI | MOHE | O | Discussion | 7 academics |
| | MOHE | O | Interview | 1 academic |
| | MOHE | O | Discussion | 6 academics |
| | MOHE | O | Written comments | 1 academic |
| | MOHE | O | Survey and Discussion | 6 university teachers of English |
| | MOHE | O | Discussion and Survey | 7 university teachers of English |
| | MOE | O | Interview | 1 MOE official (Training) |
| | MOE | O | Discussion | 2 MOE officials (Curriculum) |
| | MOE | F | Meeting | 3 officials |

34. 'Meetings' (typically in face-to-face settings with Ministry officials) were more formal than group discussions.

| Region | Stakeholders | (O)nline/ (F)ace-to-face | Methods | Sample |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| CSI | MOE | O | Discussion | 8 English supervisors |
| | MOE | O | Online survey | 960 |
| | MOE | O | Discussion | 15 teachers |
| | MOE | F | Workshop | 41 teachers |
| | MOE | F | Lesson observations | 11 lessons |
| | MOE | F | Survey | 310 learners |
| KRI | MOHE | F | Workshop | 9 university teachers of English |
| | MOE | O | Discussion | 9 supervisors |
| | | | | 12 lessons |
| | MOE | F | Meeting | 4 MOE officials (Curriculum and Printing) |
| | MOE | F | Meeting | 3 MOE officials |
| | MOE | F | Workshop | 20 teachers |
| | MOE | F | Lesson observations | 12 lessons |
| | MOE | O | Online survey | 297 |
| | MOE | F | Survey | 267 learners |
| | MoLSA | F | Meeting | 2 officials |

**Table 1** Data collection in CSI and KRI: Formal education

For the non-formal sector, data collection took place through a range of research workshops, in-country interviews, field visits and lessons observations.

In CSI, the following activities in non-formal contexts took place:

- research workshops with invited stakeholders from NGOs and formal school staff
- follow-up interviews with NGO staff and formal school staff
- field visits by the national consultants to schools and NGO centres (including lesson observations).

In KRI, the non-formal context activities were:

- research workshops with invited stakeholders from NGOs and formal school staff
- follow-up interviews with NGO staff and formal school staff
- field visits by the national consultants to schools and NGO centres (including lesson observations)
- field visits by the international consultant to one refugee camp and one IDP camp (including lesson observations and interviews with teachers and learners)
- group interviews at the Ministry of Education (with officials from the Directorate of Curriculum and Printing) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

The MOE teacher surveys also included some questions about internally-displaced learners and teacher support for them, and the relevant responses are discussed with the results for the non-formal education sector.

Responses in the following section were gathered in a workshop with NGOs (including INGOs and local NGOs) in Erbil on 27 October 2021, and in follow-up interviews with stakeholders soon after the workshops. The data generated by each of these procedures are summarised below and then discussed in Section 5.

In KRI, workshops took place in the Erbil International Hotel, Erbil, on Wednesday 27 October,

Thursday 28 October and Monday 1 November 2021. In CSI, workshops took place in the Hotel Babylon, Baghdad, on Wednesday 3 November and Thursday 4 November 2021.

Each workshop followed the following format:

- welcome by the British Council
- introduction by the research teams
- brief presentation on the research aims and research questions by the international consultant
- discussion among stakeholders (in small groups)
- plenary discussion with group presentations
- summing up by the research team.

The workshops were recorded in several different ways: audio recording, detailed written notes and poster presentations. Individual interviews with several stakeholders were carried out soon after the event to capture additional comments and reflections (these are described below). It was therefore possible to triangulate across these different sources of information when the collated summaries of each of these procedures were being prepared.

Workshop with KRI-based NGOs and INGOs: There were seven stakeholders present, two from the same NGO:

1. Barzani Charity Foundation (1 participant)
2. Amidist (1 participant)
3. KORHW (1 participant)
4. Intersos (2 participants)
5. Save the Children, Kurdistan (1 participant)
6. Public Aid Organisation (1 participant).

Workshop with CSI-based non-formal teachers from marginalised communities: There were 39 teachers present:

- 15 teachers from Baghdad, Al-Sdir city
- 3 teachers from Basra
- 2 teachers from Karbala
- 2 teachers from Dhi-Qar
- 2 teachers from Slah Al-Deen, Samarra
- 3 teachers from Salah Alddin/Aduluiyia
- 1 teacher from Al-Muthanah/Rumaithah
- 1 teacher from Babel
- 6 teachers from Baghdad
- 4 teachers from Anbar.

Workshop with CSI-based non-formal education supervisors: There were 27 Education Supervisors present.

Workshop with CSI-based NGOs and INGOs: There were 15 NGOs present:

- 13 NGOs based in Baghdad
- 1 NGO based in Anbar
- 1 NGO based in Thi-Qar.

During the workshops, the facilitators guided participants' small group work and plenary discussions based on the questions in the Appendices. In the group work, participants were provided with the questions tailored to their specific areas of expertise and were asked to produce responses to each question either in note form or as poster presentations which were then presented to the whole group. Some of these small group activities were audio-recorded. These audio recordings were collated and transcribed by the national consultants. The transcriptions and notes from these sessions were prepared for analysis by the international consultants. They were coded using the eight key themes outlined at the beginning of this report: status of English, provision, teachers, learners, outcomes, inclusion, challenges and support.

Throughout this study, interpretation in either Arabic or Kurdish was provided for respondents where necessary.

### Data collection for the non-formal sector in KRI and CSI: Field visits

Field visits were carried out in the CSI and KRI regions by one of the international consultants and/or the national consultants. Ten lessons were observed in total, teachers and learners were interviewed and, on several occasions, academic managers and NGO staff were interviewed about their roles and the role of English in formal and non-formal settings. Follow-up interviews were also held over the telephone and by email.

# 4 English in formal education

This section presents the results of the research conducted into the teaching and learning of English in formal education in Iraq. CSI and KRI will be discussed separately.

## 4.1 Central and Southern Iraq

### 4.1.1 Ministry of Education

Perspectives on English education in Iraq were obtained through MOE stakeholders in the form of MOE officials, MOE English Supervisors, teachers of English and their learners. The results for each of these groups are now discussed in turn.

#### 4.1.1.1 Ministry of Education officials

Various officials from the MOE in CSI took part in a number of online and face-to-face discussions about the teaching and learning of English in Iraq. Appendix 2 lists the range of issues that were discussed across the different meetings. Online meetings were recorded, with permission, while during face-to-face meetings, notes were made by the interviewees, and/or participants wrote out their answers to specific questions and handed these in. Key insights from these sessions with MOE officials are summarised below.

In 2013, the MOE embarked on the process of producing a new curriculum for English to cover Grades 1–12. The work was carried out in partnership with Garnet publishers. The introduction of the new curriculum, which took the form of a textbook series called *English for Iraq*, was carried out in stages and was completed in 2018. According to MOE officials, the textbooks originally produced by Garnet were further revised by local experts to make them more appropriate for the Iraqi context:

> English for Iraq *replaced* Iraq Opportunities *in order to move from a structural to a communicative approach to language teaching (with authentic language content). The new series consists of a student book, activity book and teacher's guide. The final books in the series were introduced in 2018. The new series was also motivated by the decision to introduce English from Grade 1. The instability in the country meant that producing the textbooks locally was not feasible. The Ministry selected authors from Iraq to make adaptations to the original text.*

To support the introduction of *English for Iraq*, teachers were sent (mostly to Beirut) for five days of training provided by Garnet. Over 12,000 teachers received this training, which was last held in 2018 but which is expected to resume (this time in Erbil) early in 2022. The training follows a cascade model and the trained teachers are expected to further train their colleagues once they return home.

> *We decided to make groups of teachers being trained by Garnet, we decided to take teachers to two places … Erbil, two weeks, we gave them information about the new curriculum … more than 600 teachers … then after they went back home we told them to share the knowledge they got with other teachers in their provinces*

Doubts were expressed about how effectively this cascading had taken place. Concerns were also expressed about the effectiveness of the five days of training given the significant shift in approach that the new curriculum involves:

> *We need to prepare our teachers for such a transformation, not in five days, because it takes time to move from the old to the new … the result is that the majority of teachers go back to the old method …*

The new curriculum does not seem to be aligned with any particular MOE standards which define, for example, what level of English students should reach by the end of primary school. One official noted that, previously, such standards did exist but they were written at a time when English started in Grade 5 and had not been updated.

Despite the new communicative curriculum, it was generally recognised by MOE officials that the approach followed by teachers of English in primary, intermediate and preparatory classrooms has not changed significantly. Four reasons for this were suggested, related to (1) pre-service training, (2) in-service training, (3) assessment and (4) expertise more generally within the MOE. These are now discussed in turn.

Pre-service training takes place in English departments at Colleges of Education (or, in a minority of cases, Colleges of Basic Education). Colleges are regulated by the MOHE and input from this sector is discussed separately (see 4.1.2), but it was generally acknowledged that graduating teachers of English lack both the English language skills and pedagogical competences to teach English effectively. Both the curriculum followed in English departments and the teaching methods used there remain traditional. Regarding content, it was noted that Colleges 'still follow the old curriculum which does not suit the new orientations of English for Iraq'. In terms of teaching approach, another MOE official described the situation as follows:

> *Our students in the Colleges they don't get the opportunities to express themselves in English … they are still using the lecture method in our universities … grammar, grammar and grammar … students are going to sit on their chair and they are going to listen and write only.*

As a result, 'our primary teachers fear to speak in English … even the secondary school teachers they are afraid of speaking'. Also commenting on primary teachers' levels of English, another official noted that, when they are addressed in English, 'some of the English teachers do not understand what you are saying or how to answer'.

Admission to and graduation from English departments is not regulated by an English test of any kind, which means that student teachers of English often start and end programmes with low levels of English, especially speaking. This in turn makes them reluctant to speak English in class, resulting in the over-use of Arabic, as one MOE official noted: 'Arabic is always used in the teaching of English either to enable learners to understand the material or as an avoidance strategy on the part of teachers of low qualifications'.

Newly graduated teachers (who must serve in the suburban or rural areas for 2–4 years before being allowed to work in a city) are supposed to attend courses at the MOE's Institute for Teacher Training for one month, but information about what exactly these induction courses involve was not available. For example, it is not clear whether they are subject-specific or generic for all teachers.

In-service training is provided by the MOE (through the Directorate General of Teachers Training and Educational Development). Official statistics for the number of teachers of English in CSI were not available, but estimates can be derived from the number of schools. According to official statistics,[35] there were just under 18,000 primary schools in 2019–20 and just over 8,000 high schools in 2017–18. Assuming two English teachers per primary school and three per high school thus suggests a total of around 60,000 teachers of English in CSI. If we estimate proportionally for KRI (population 5 million out of 40 million in total), then the number of English teachers would be around 7,500 for KRI. According to the MOE official from the Directorate of Training we spoke to, around 11 in-service courses are provided for teachers of English each year, with each attended by some 30 teachers. This suggests that fewer than 400 teachers of English in CSI each year (fewer than one per cent of the total) receive any CPD from the MOE.

35. www.cosit.gov.iq/ar/2013-02-25-07-39-31

In planning CPD provision, the Directorate General of Training collects feedback from supervisors about teachers' needs and uses it to choose the topics that will be addressed. Training is scheduled throughout the year (apart from the summer holidays) and normally lasts five days. Courses take place in Baghdad and teachers are released from school to attend. In the past, the five-day courses provided for teachers of English addressed a wide range of issues; more recently, though, an attempt had been made to provide more focused courses, for example, five days on the teaching of skills or on assessment:

> *I need to change the annual plan for training … the kind of training courses, because the old one is really classic, we are just doing some developmental and some refresher courses and this is really old-fashioned because nowadays we are training in specialised, so English language teachers … so we need more specialised courses, for example, instead of giving five days of general information about English language and methodology we need to give five days on how to teach listening or reading or writing, also teaching and assessment.*

Generally, improving the quality of in-service training available to teachers of English in CSI was recognised as a major issue for the MOE to address and where they require support. One official noted that 'we need quality training courses, not quantity' while another explained that:

> *the main point, in our educational system concerning the English language, the lack of training, our teachers need quality training. What the MOE offers is good, but this is their standard they cannot go over. If anyone can help we are ready to co-operate.*

Assessment was also noted as a factor that had limited the impact of the new curriculum. High-stakes national examinations in English (called the Baccalaureate) take place at the end of Grade 6, Grade 9 and Grade 12. For Grade 6, the final result is based 50 per cent on the result of school-based assessment and 50 per cent on the national examination. For Grades 9 and 12, the results are based entirely on the national examination. The Grade 6 examination is also administered slightly differently; the MOE recruits supervisors and teachers to design the papers, while for Grades 9 and 12 this process is managed by two separate expert committees. Overall, though, concerns were raised about several aspects of the process of these formal English examinations. First, the role of officials in Directorate General of Examinations (which does not have a unit specifically dedicated to English) is largely administrative, i.e. they are not assessment experts and may also have limited knowledge of English. Second, the design of examination papers, which is based on content in the textbooks, often relies too heavily on a particular unit from the book; as one MOE official noted, 'sometimes you find that half of the examination paper is based on one unit'. And finally, quality control for the English papers more generally is often lacking, with the result that 'you will find them full of errors, even spelling mistakes'.

While the content of the national English examinations has changed to reflect the new curriculum, the assessment of oral skills remains absent from the process. As one official noted, 'we need to shed light on the oral test, here in Iraq we never follow the oral test in the Baccalaureate exam', while another explained that 'speaking and oral performance are not given actual consideration due to large classes, electricity and time limitations'.

Expertise within the MOE was also seen as a factor that has limited change in the teaching of English. As just noted, staff in charge of examinations within the MOE may lack knowledge of both English and assessment, while similar gaps may exist for some officials working in English in other Directorates. For example, one MOE official noted that 'even those who are working in the MOE, especially who are working in the General Directorate of Curricula, they need courses in English'.

One additional point to note here is that it was also recognised that there is a shortage of teachers of English, especially in primary schools and particular in villages and rural areas. As a result, primary English is often taught by generalist teachers or graduates from other disciplines who may know some English but who have had no pedagogical training.

Taken collectively, the above factors provide insight into the gaps that exist in CSI between the ambitions of the new communicative curriculum and the outcomes of English education in primary and secondary schools.

#### 4.1.1.2 Ministry of Education supervisors

An online meeting took place with eight supervisors of English working in CSI. These supervisors were nominated by the MOE to attend the meeting. Discussion questions (see Appendix 3) were

circulated in advance of the meeting, which lasted 70 minutes. An additional face-to-face meeting with 27 supervisors also took place in-country.

In CSI, overall responsibility for supervisors lies with the Directorate General for Supervision at the MOE. Each district then has its own sub-Directorate, each with its own head of supervision. With experience (at least ten years), supervisors can be promoted to the higher grade of Senior Supervisor. The number of supervisors varies across districts as do the number of schools and teachers they are responsible for. A poll among the supervisors attending the online meeting indicated they were responsible for 65 to over 400 teachers. In one case, a supervisor explained that she and two colleagues had to cover over 800 schools, while in another seven supervisors were reportedly responsible for over 2,700 schools. Thus while, in theory, teachers were supposed to receive supervisor visits at least twice a year, in practice 'the number of visits depends on the number of supervisors in the Directorate'.

In terms of their role, supervisors described in a fairly consistent way the range of ways in which they were expected to support teachers, as the quotes illustrate:

> *we should observe the teachers in their schools, we should direct them how to teach and train them or make model lessons in order to go through the right schedule in teaching.*

> *we are responsible for directing our teachers, for supervising them, for observing them in their schools and giving them so many training courses on how to teach and what techniques they should use inside the classrooms … during Covid-19, we have trained our teachers on how to use the online or virtual learning and what techniques they should use to teach the students and keep on directing our teachers, even if we have vacation, we are continuing with them in our groups, with a large number of teachers, to help them in putting solutions to any problems they may face.*

> *we visit them in their class and support them, when we find one of them very very excellent teacher I ask him to make training lesson for all the teachers.*

> *role of supervisor … to cooperate, facilitate and engage them to be familiar with the best way of teaching and solve all problems they may face. Also, he may make sessions to train teachers, for every skill.*

Visiting teachers in schools was a core supervisor responsibility. The examples in Box 3 provide a fairly consistent narrative of the process such visits involve; they also show an awareness of the need to provide support and encouragement and to avoid criticising teachers publicly. Supervisors tend to provide group feedback, unless there is something negative that is best discussed privately with a teacher; head teachers are also involved in the process of communicating supervisors' reports to teachers.

**Box 3** Supervisor school visits

### Example 1

When we select the school that we are going to visit no one knows about that. So from the morning, maybe 0800 or 0830 we go there and go directly to the head teacher and ask him to ask his teachers to get ready, that the supervisor will visit them. And then collect the daily plan notes from them in order to see if they are going according to the plan that is planned by the Ministry of Education. Then, give a note to who is going to be starting with, then we go into the class, then we are going to sit either at the end of the class or sometimes there is a table aside, we can use it. And then watch the teacher, ask him to be free in his behaviour and teaching. We don't give our notes in front of the students and we don't correct faults we note from the teacher, but indirect way sometimes, but we have our notebook we can use it. Then after we finish the 45 minutes we thank the teacher for his effort in front of his students and then after we finish all the teachers visiting, four or five sometimes, then I held meeting and speak in general about the things I have seen or the advice I am going to give them, but if there is something serious and embarrassing I am going to speak to the teacher alone. Then we are going to write our instructions and information in a note that the head teacher keeps in the administration. Then the head teacher will inform them what their instructions are and the teachers are going to sign on it.

### Example 2

I start visiting the schools in the morning at the beginning of the school day and I ask the head teacher about the number of teachers of English in his school or her school and to see their yearly plan. And I meet the teachers of English, I greet them and ask them about the materials they present and the stages they are responsible for. Then I ask them which one of them would like to be visited first, in order not to embarrass them and if they are not prepared very well, I give them time to prepare themselves before visiting them inside the classroom. And when I go to the classroom, at the beginning, in front of the students, I ask for the teacher's permission to allow me to visit him, and to greet the teacher and students as well. And then I sit at the end of the class and start looking at the teacher and to see his personality, the way he presents his lesson, and I focus a lot on the act of learning and how he treats his students and how he prepares his blackboard if he focuses on group work and pair work, if he focuses on being a lecturer, helper, motivator, guide, so you know that in teaching English in our schools we follow the communicative method in language teaching, so we focus a lot on the strategies of a communicative method. And if we see the teacher is weak in such techniques we help him but in front of the students we thank him and encourage him, but if he has mistakes or something that he needs to be advised, so after finishing the lesson, again we greet the students, and I make a meeting with the whole teachers' group and I ask them to exchange ideas and experiences and if I have something that will embarrass the teacher so I tell him alone. I give them my mobile number and ask them to be free to ask any question and I will be available to help them.

Supervisors were asked about the criteria they used in evaluating teachers of English. They confirmed that 'we have certain criteria from the MOE' and explained that these criteria cover teachers' personality, skills, knowledge appearance and communication. The evaluation criteria, though, are not specific to English and the same generic form is used by supervisors across subjects. A copy of the evaluation form was obtained (Box 4) and it is indeed generic in nature. It is divided into three sections focusing in turn on knowledge (6 criteria), skills (8) and values (6). Each criterion is rated out of 5, for a maximum score out of 100.

**Box 4** Teacher evaluation for use by CSI supervisors

### *Knowledge*

Knows the subjects he is studying

Knows and understands the curriculum requirements for the subject being taught

Knows and understands how to present the topic of the lesson to the students

Knows and understands how students learn and develop

Knows and understands modern teaching methods

Knows and understands the methods of assessment, testing and evaluation

### *Skills*

Can explain the topic clearly and make it interesting for the students

Can develop an appropriate plan for learning activities for students

Can communicate and interact effectively with students

Can motivate students to learn

Can effectively manage the classroom

Can use modern teaching methods that enable students to participate and develop learning skills effectively

Can evaluate students' performance efficiently and accurately, and uses evaluation results to enhance students' performance

Can enable students to learn effectively, taking into account their individual differences

### *Values*

Committed to the teaching profession and promotes student learning to enable them to achieve a high level of good performance

Committed to consolidating and instilling national and moral values in the hearts of students

Committed to positive relationships with students, co-workers, families, and society

Committed to participating in school activities

Committed to self-evaluation of his job performance and improving his performance through professional development

Committed to ensuring that students with mental and physical learning difficulties can achieve the best of their abilities

Given their extensive experience of observing English lessons in CSI, the supervisors were asked to comment on areas where teachers needed to improve. Box 5 illustrates their responses; the overall perception conveyed here is that teachers do not teach communicatively and remain attached to more conventional approaches to teaching English.

**Box 5** English teachers' development needs (according to CSI supervisors)

'how to be more communicative'

'they need to know more about active learning'

'we need to improve our teachers' use of technology'

'some of our teachers need to improve their English'

'they are weak in choosing the techniques'

'most of the teachers don't read the teachers' guide'

'the teachers' level of language and teaching skills is another barrier'

'teachers concentrate on grammar not on communication'

'I think some teachers are not ready to accept change'

'most of our teachers teach the students deductively, this leads to memorisation'

'courses on summative assessment and ongoing assessment, teachers are weak'.

'most of the teachers don't accept the change because some of them are unable to teach communicatively so they reject the idea of following the communicative method'

'teachers find it easier to use the grammatical method because they use less English with their young learners but in communicative approach they have to speak more English'

'many teachers present their material in forms of rules written in Arabic'

In commenting on the teachers' adherence to more traditional forms of teaching, the supervisors also acknowledged factors that were external to teachers, such as 'lack of technological aids', 'large classes and limited time, because two or three schools [work] in one building, and the lesson is just for 25 or 30 minutes maximum' and 'not all the schools have a suitable environment for learning'. Also, examinations (which are not communicative in nature) were seen to be a powerful influence on instructional practices in English lessons, as these comments illustrate:

*Most of our teachers nowadays are teaching our students to succeed not to learn.*

*We have to concentrate on how to use English language in our daily life not to study or teach it just for exam.*

*They do not encourage students to communicate … their aim is to help students only to pass the exam.*

*Most of teachers teach students to pass the exam not to learn a new language, especially 6th Preparatory, the main aim is how to pass the exam and get high marks.*

Some supervisors also felt that Colleges of Education did not prepare teachers sufficiently for life in the classroom. One noted that 'The [school] curriculum was changed many times but in the College the same curriculum for at least 20 years'; consequently, 'those who graduated from the Colleges got the traditional ideas so when they start teaching they find it very difficult to teach their students communicatively'.

### 4.1.1.3 MOE teachers: Meetings

Teachers of English from primary to secondary levels took part in two meetings, one online (15 teachers) and one face-to-face (41 teachers). The questions discussed are listed in Appendix 4 and teachers' responses are summarised below.

**College training**

Teachers expressed mixed views about quality of their pre–service studies at College, but generally they were critical of the degree to which they were

prepared to teach in schools. They felt that the curriculum followed at College was not aligned with the skills graduates need to teach English. For this reason, teachers 'had to depend on ourselves … to find the most appropriate method of teaching'. Additionally, teachers did not feel that Colleges gave them sufficient opportunities to develop their own English, especially their speaking skills.

**Materials and resources**

Teachers were consistent in the view that they had limited access to materials and resources to support the teaching of English. Some had access to mp3 players and data shows, but, in the majority of cases, teachers had little other than the textbook provided (*English for Iraq*). Teachers' views about this text varied; some felt it was good, though several concerns were raised about how well aligned it was with students' ability ('I think the textbook materials are higher than the students' level of comprehension'). The textbook for Grade 4 was singled out as being particularly difficult and substantially harder than those used in earlier grades. The textbook determined to a large extent what and how teachers taught English and they generally reported having little autonomy ('we don't have freedom to decide, delete, or add anything').

**Activities and assessment**

Teachers were asked to describe some of the activities they typically used to teach English. Listening to mp3 recordings (typically textbook audio) was mentioned several times, along with role play, songs, flashcards and storytelling. Grammar was mentioned once ('when teaching grammar, I write the structures on the board'). In terms of how teachers assess students' English, both formative ('daily assessment') and summative ('monthly exam that is used to collect marks not to assess progress') were mentioned.

**Languages in the classroom**

Various opinions were expressed about the use of Arabic during English lessons. While some teachers felt it should be minimised ('I don't use Arabic in the classroom', 'it's not good to use the native language'), others felt it was necessary to use Arabic to help students understand; for example, one teacher explained that 'Arabic is important to be used because our students cannot understand especially in primary school' while another added that 'I must use both Arabic and English as my students' level in English is very weak'.

**Student motivation**

Teachers were asked to comment on how their students felt about learning English. Box 6 lists a range of responses that highlight examples of both motivated and less motivated students and some factors that affect how students feel.

**Box 6** Teacher perspectives on student motivation

'Students are interactive especially when we do some activities, though they are not highly motivated.'

'Students' feelings depend on the teacher, if they like their teacher, they like the class.'

'Students like the new textbook because it is full of different activities.'

'They like the group work in the new textbook despite the shortage in the school resources.'

'They like learning the new vocabulary and when I make the class more entertaining.'

'Students in my school find English very difficult especially in pronunciation.'

'My students have a negative attitude towards learning English because they feel hesitant in using the second language in front of their colleagues.'

'I teach at primary school; my students are very excited to learn English.'

'Only few students interact and feel happy with learning English.'

'Most of my students like learning English. I believe because they like their teacher.'

'Yes, they like English because its more excited than learning math and science.'

Without suggesting that such views are generally true, it should be acknowledged that some teachers' comments on training were not positive, for example:

'Never have been training courses for the 12 years of teaching.'

'I've been in many training courses arranged by Department of Training. They weren't so useful.'

'I have been in some other training courses of DoT. The courses were repetitive and monotonous.'

Limited information emerged during the teacher meetings regarding supervision. Some teachers said they were visited by supervisors twice a year but perceptions of the usefulness of these visits varied; for example, one teacher noted that 'they don't help me. I depend on myself to develop my methods' while another felt that supervisors 'help a lot' and are 'very cooperative'.

**Online teaching**

In the meetings, teachers were also asked about online teaching. Some teachers said that they have used online tools in their teaching during the pandemic and that 'online teaching was so difficult in the beginning, but we are used to it now'. Platforms that were mostly commonly mentioned by the teachers were WhatsApp, Telegram and Facebook.

#### 4.1.1.4 MOE teachers: Survey

Teachers of English in primary, middle and high schools in CSI were invited to complete an online survey[36] which asked a range of questions about the teaching and learning of English, and teacher support and professional development. The link to the survey was disseminated through the Department of Training and by MOE English Supervisors who shared it with the teachers they were responsible for. A total of 1,074 teachers started the survey, though 62 were not eligible to proceed (i.e. not state school teachers of English in CSI) while another 114 exited without answering any questions. This left a sample of 960, though the numbers completing each question decreased progressively as indicated below (the completion rate was 43 per cent). Teachers typically spent about 12 minutes on the survey.

Figure 1 shows that in terms of experience, the respondents were varied, though almost 90 per cent had five years' experience or more. Almost 72 per cent of the teachers who answered the question about gender (N=868) were female and just under 28 per cent male. Teachers represented 16 provinces in CSI, though almost 85 per cent of respondents (N=826) came from three provinces: Baghdad (61.1%), Al-Basrah (13.9%) and Al-Anbar (9.6%). In terms of qualifications (N=775), over 82 per cent of the teachers said they had graduated from a four-year College of Education degree programme while 9 per cent said they had completed a two-year College Diploma programme. Just over three per cent said they had no teaching qualifications. Respondents worked (N=754) in primary schools (27.6%), middle schools (38.6%) and high schools (43.9%).

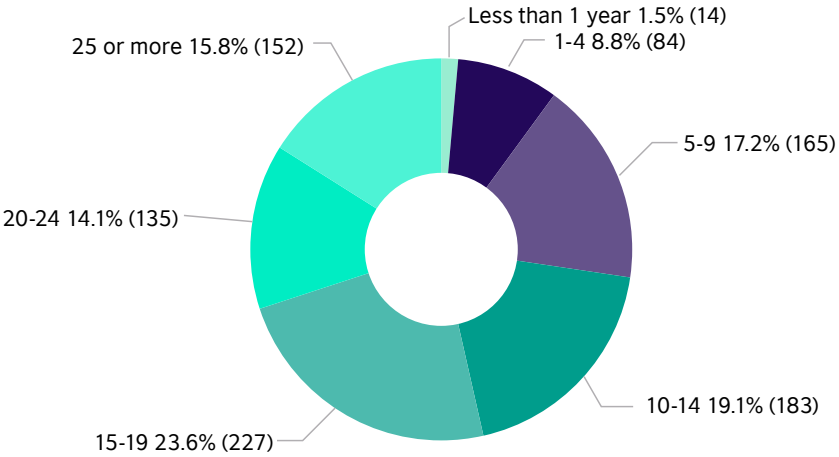



**Figure 1** CSI survey respondents by experience (N=960)

36. The survey is available at www.surveymonkey.com/r/Preview/?sm=s_2B8kLiZ_2BBiUvmtwTm8wEJsXE_2B9s8VNX3rEKrn3qnvSDwGzDGoyzxsQs2RURP6WAy

Teachers were also asked about their workload and, as Figure 2 shows, this ranged from fewer than ten lessons a week to 20 or more, with the latter being the option chosen by almost 55 per cent of respondents. Class sizes (Figure 3) also varied, though 58 per cent said their classes had 40 or more students.

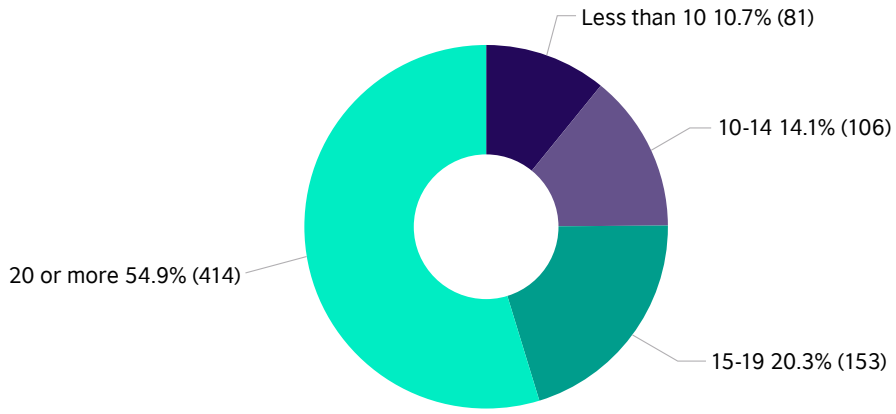



**Figure 2** Number of English lessons per week (CSI) (N=754)

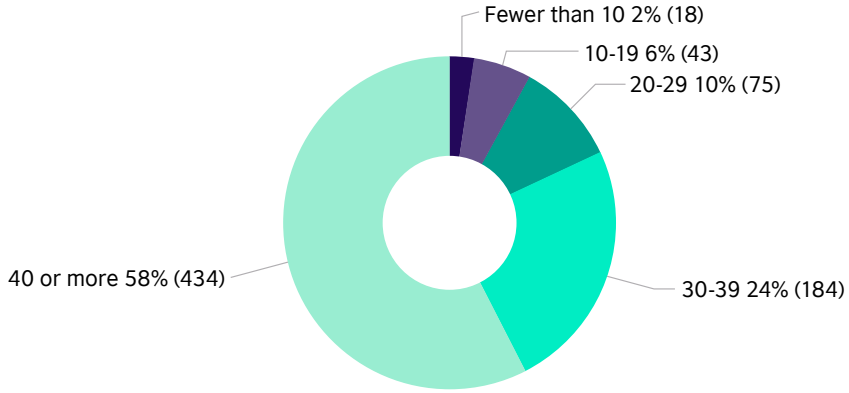



**Figure 3** Number of students per class (CSI) (N=754)

Teachers of English in CSI follow the *English for Iraq* series of textbooks and one of the survey questions asked about the use of this text and other materials. Figure 4 shows that while the prescribed textbook is the source most frequently used (almost 90 per cent said they used it often, i.e. in all or most lessons), other materials were also used often by 30 per cent or more of teachers. For example, over 42 per cent said they often use materials they design themselves, while 30 per cent said they use online materials often too. At the same time, over 37 per cent of teachers said they infrequently (i.e. rarely or never) design their own materials, while over 50 per cent said they used materials they find online infrequently.

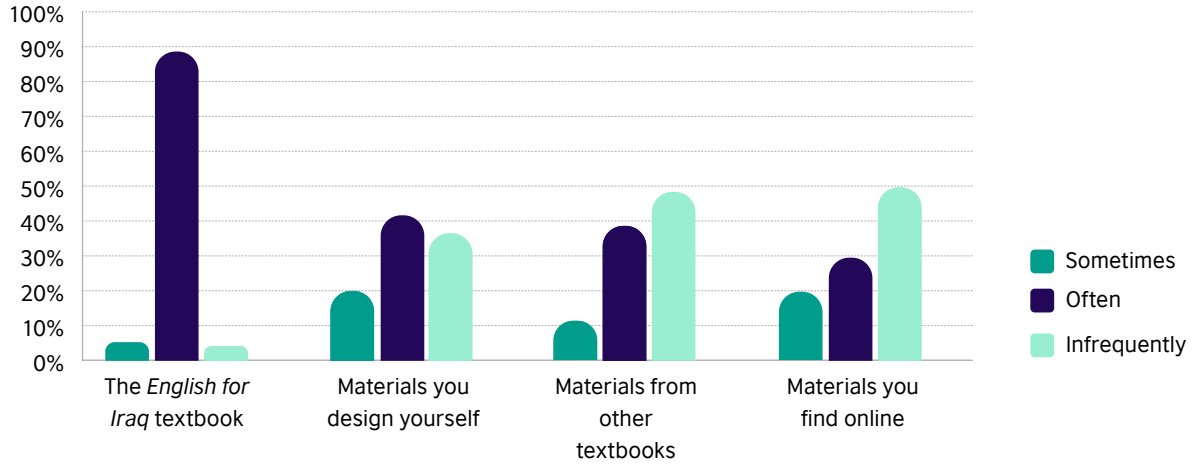



**Figure 4** Sources of material in teaching English (CSI) (N=672)

On a related matter, teachers were also asked about the additional equipment available to support their work and Figure 5 shows the percentage who said specific items were available in at least some of their classrooms. Thus while 96 per cent had access to a board and almost 70 per cent had sufficient seating and desk space for students, technology in the form of computers, projectors and related software, and internet connections were not available to the majority of teachers here.

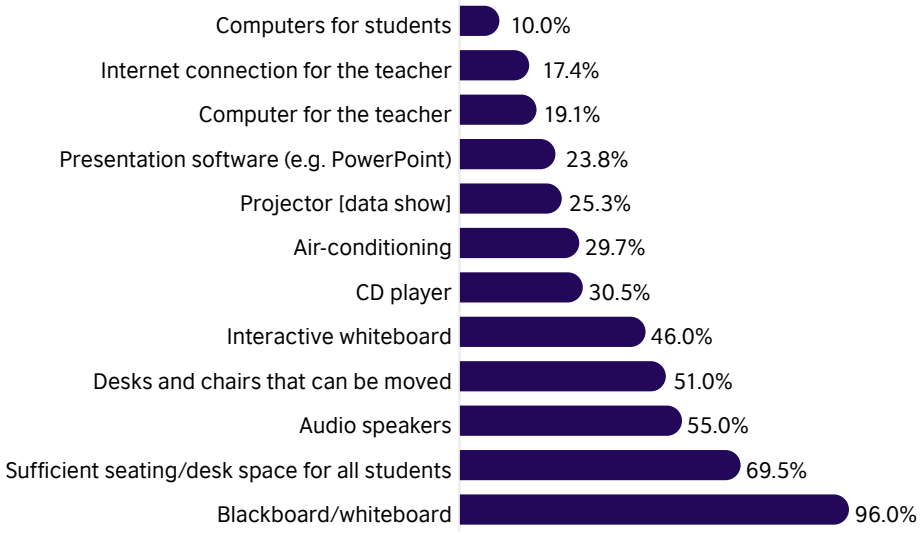



**Figure 5** Availability of equipment (CSI) (N=580)

The use noted above by teachers of materials other than the textbook suggests they are able to exercise some autonomy in making decisions about their teaching. Teachers were asked about this and Figure 6 summarises their responses. Almost 50 per cent felt they had little autonomy and had to follow the official textbook, but the other half of the sample reported higher levels of freedom in deciding what to teach, including almost 21 per cent who felt they had quite high levels of autonomy.

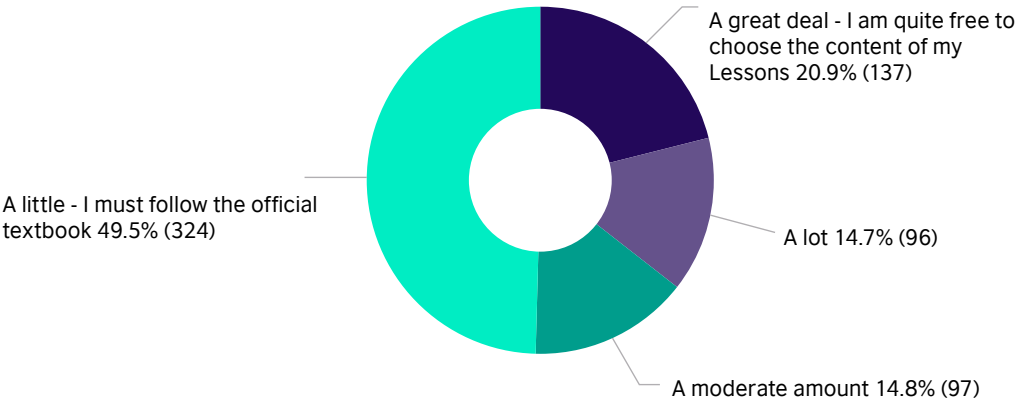



**Figure 6** CSI English teachers' autonomy in deciding what to teach (N=654)

In the survey, CSI teachers were given a list of classroom activities and asked to indicate how often their students did them (on a five-point scale of 'in most lessons' = 5 to 'never' = 1). Figure 7 lists the activities in order according to their average frequency of reported use (higher average scores equate with greater use). According to this, the four most common activities that students in these teachers' classrooms do are studying grammar, reading aloud, doing vocabulary exercises and speaking English. At the other end of the scale, the least used activities are watching videos in English, singing songs and playing games.

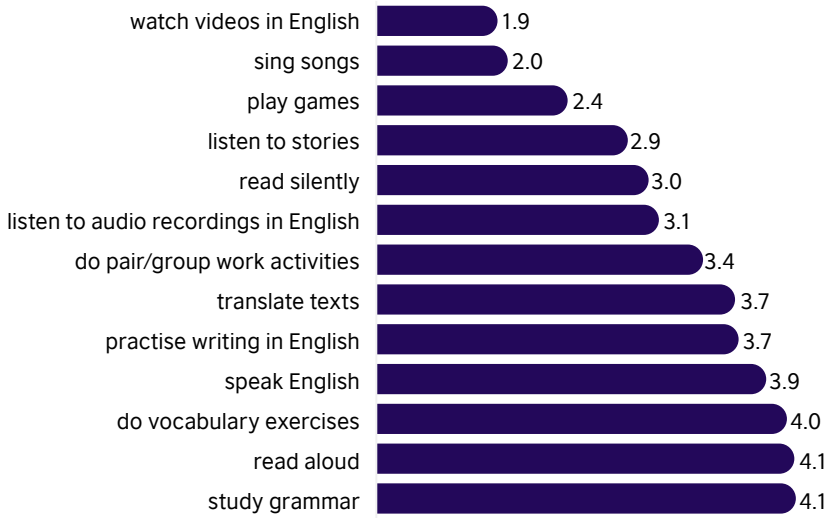



**Figure 7** What CSI students do during English lessons (1=never and 5=almost every lesson) (N=626)

We were also interested in teachers' views about their students' motivation to learn English and Figure 8 summarises these. Just under 50 per cent had no strong opinion either way, but of the remainder, almost 37 per cent felt their students' motivation was high or very high, while for almost 14 per cent it was low or very low.

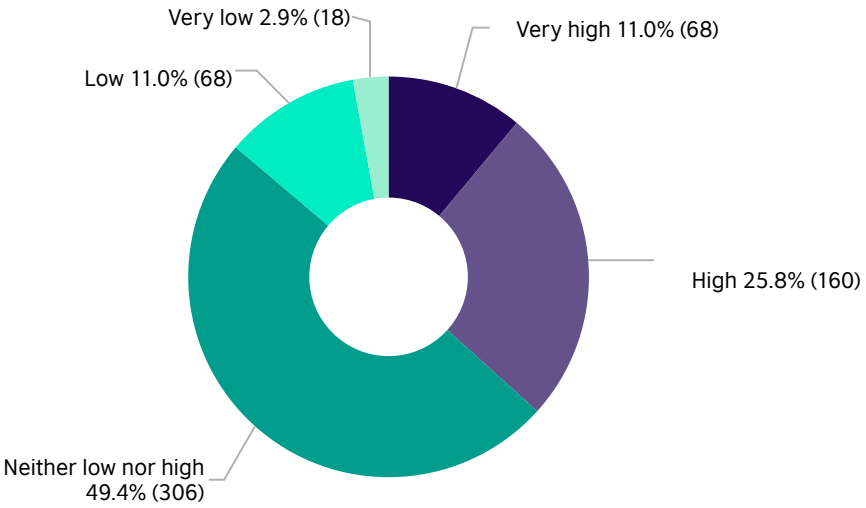



**Figure 8** CSI student motivation to learn English, according to teachers (N=620)

In terms of professional development, Table 2 summarises what teachers said about how often they engage in certain activities. The responses here point to reasonably high levels of participation; for example, almost 94 per cent said they reflected on their teaching and close to 90 per cent also said they ask students for feedback and read books and articles about teaching English.

| | More Often | Less Often |
|---|---|---|
| I reflect on my lessons and try to improve them | 93.9% | 6.1% |
| I ask my students for feedback on my English lessons | 88.6% | 11.4% |
| I read books and articles about how to teach English | 88.4% | 11.6% |
| I use social media to support my professional development | 86.8% | 13.2% |
| I discuss my teaching with colleagues | 86.0% | 14.0% |
| I use on-line resources for my professional development | 82.5% | 17.5% |
| I participate in training sessions offered by the Ministry of Education | 75.7% | 24.3% |
| I take courses to improve my level of English | 69.3% | 30.7% |
| I ask my colleagues to attend my lessons and to give me feedback | 62.9% | 37.1% |
| I visit the lessons of my colleagues who teach English | 57.9% | 42.1% |
| I attend events for teachers run by other organisations (not MOE) | 48.5% | 51.5% |

**Table 2** Participation in professional development (N=544)

Almost 70 per cent of the teachers also said they take courses to improve their English. There was in fact a separate question about how confident they are in their own ability to speak English and, as Figure 9 shows, almost 20 per cent expressed low levels of confidence. The remaining teachers were either quite (53.9%) or very (26.2%) confident in their spoken English.

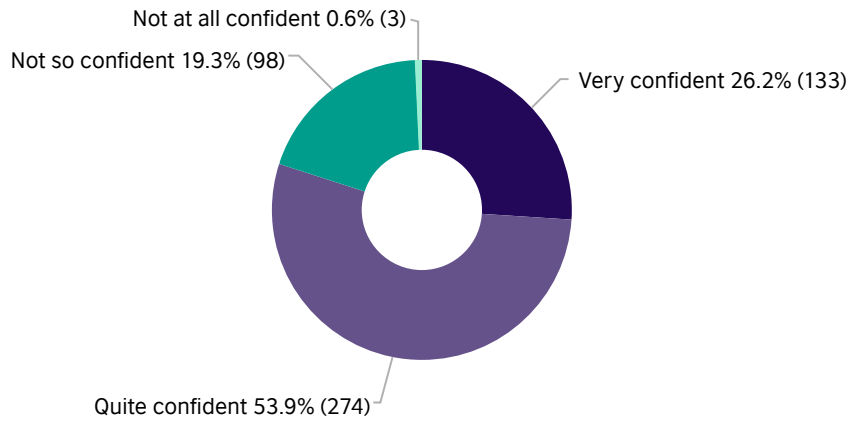



**Figure 9** CSI teacher confidence in their spoken English (N=508)

When asked if they would like more opportunities for professional development, almost 89 per cent (N=539) said they would. Over 400 teachers made suggestions; many of these referred to improving teachers' own language skills (for example, 'I would like to develop myself in oral skills generally like listening, speaking and reading') though most focused on areas of teaching they wanted to develop, for example:

*Best strategy to teach my students how to write.*

*Make students speak English easily and fluently.*

*Teaching four skills according communicative approach.*

In many cases teachers provided short answers such as 'writing' or 'speaking' and it was not clear if they were referring to the development of their own language skills or to ways of teaching them to students.

English Supervisors (see Section 4.1.1.2) also play a role in the professional development of teachers and Figure 10 shows how often teachers said they had been visited by a supervisor in the previous 12 months.[37] The most common responses were once (27.7%) or twice (30.9%), though over 15 per cent had received three of more visits and almost 26 per cent had received none.

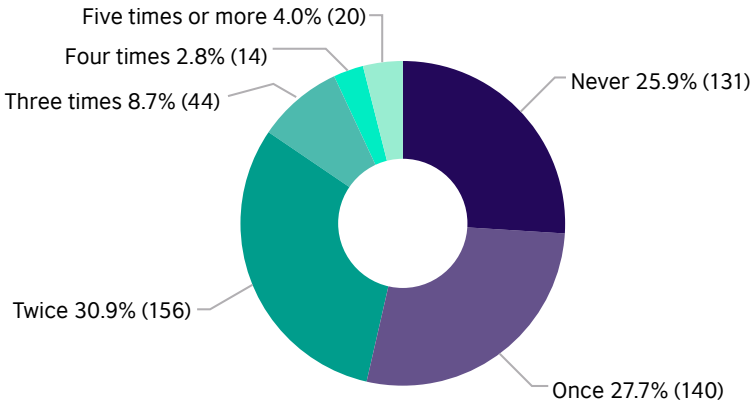



**Figure 10** CSI supervisor visits in the previous 12 months (N=505)

There were also two questions about teachers' online activities. One asked about the devices they used to get online. As Figure 11 shows, mobile phones were by far the most popular option (chosen by 93.3% of respondents). Almost 36 per cent used laptops but the figures for computers and tablets were low.

37. Covid-19 may have of course impacted on how often supervisors were able to visit teachers in 2020–21.

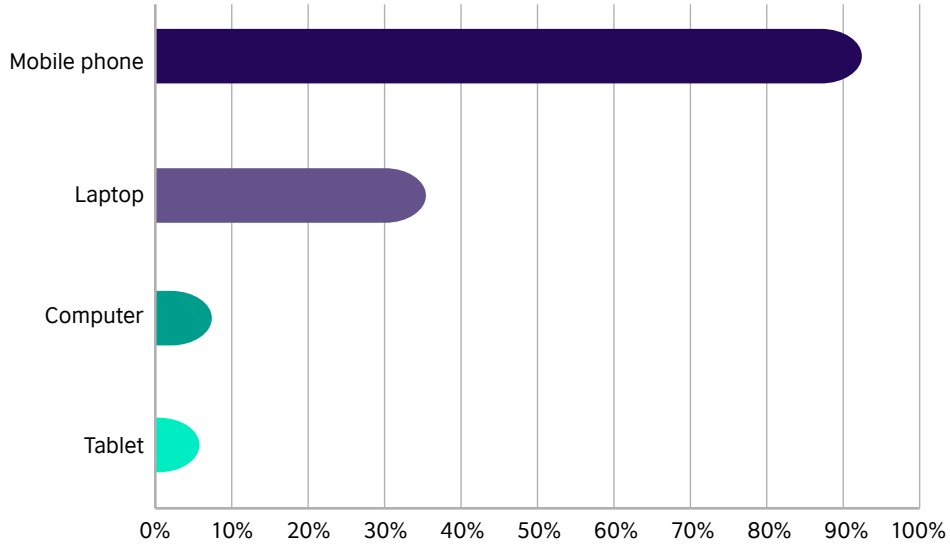



**Figure 11** How CSI teachers get online (N=491)

The second question about online activities asked about the social media platforms teachers use. Figure 12 shows the percentage of respondents who said they use a particular platform every day. WhatsApp is clearly the platform most often used, followed by Facebook.

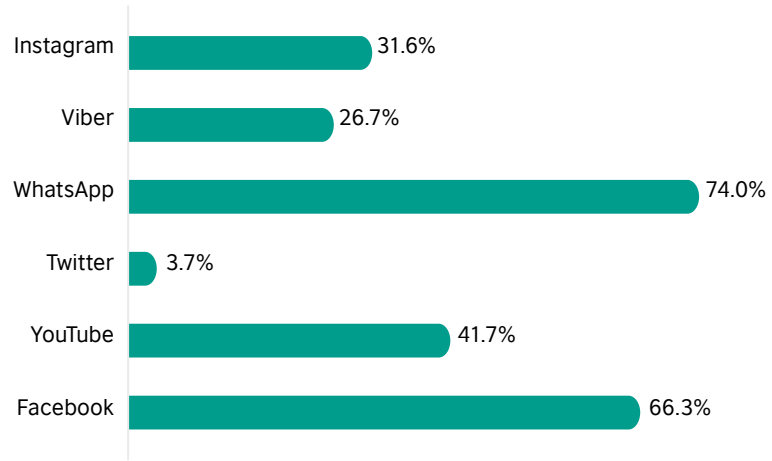



**Figure 12** Daily use of social media platforms by CSI teachers (N=484)

Finally, teachers were invited to make any further comments about the teaching of English in Iraq. Box 7 presents a selection of the wide range of responses that were provided by 280 teachers. Recurrent themes in these comments were the negative impacts on the teaching and learning of English of crowded classrooms, lack of resources and equipment, insufficient training for teachers, a heavily loaded curriculum and a focus on accuracy-oriented examinations. The teachers' comments remind us, too, that the challenges for English education must be seen in the broader context of Iraq, where civil instability and war have had severe consequences for education generally, including for the availability of a sufficient number of appropriate school buildings.

**Box 7** Further comments by CSI teachers of English

- 'There are many troubles in our curriculum … one of them is the sixth grade curriculum is very intense and not suitable for the conditions of Iraq.'
- 'I hope from those who responsible on education in Iraq to improve the fact of teaching especially English curriculum. We need more training, flashcards, data show … As well as build new schools.'
- 'State schools in Iraq is very bad because of the great lack of school services first and the chaos in the classroom due to the presence of large numbers. This is why it is difficult to teach English correctly in most schools in Iraq.'
- 'Our big problem is the large number of students in each class because we don't have enough schools in the area.'
- 'They should put into their considerations (ministry and the government) that teachers in Iraq must be given the right to teach in their own way. The curriculum must not be loaded with topics, rather it must be simple so we can improvise and teach them by using different activities.'
- 'The system of English teaching is bad because there is no means to use in teaching process for example; since 2016 I have never seen any computer or data show in English class. Most of supervisors want us to follow only the official textbook and so on.'
- 'English language teachers need more training to develop their abilities in teaching.'
- 'The classrooms are not suitable for learning. The students' level is very low. The number of the students in each class is very big. All these things make the teacher unable to do well.'
- 'I wish there would be training courses for teachers, at least twice a year. We really need professional training in modern teaching strategies and as well as testing.'
- 'People in that region suffer from extreme poverty, and this is reflected in one way or another on the situation of the students, especially since many of the students' parents are uneducated, and this exacerbates the problem and makes the teacher's task difficult.'

### 4.1.1.5 MOE teachers: Observations

Twelve classroom observations in different schools in CSI were conducted by Muayyed Jum'a and Table 3 summarises information about locations, grades, students and lesson duration. Thus five provinces were covered, with an equal split between primary (Grades 1–6) and secondary/high schools (Grades 7–12). Seven of the schools were for girls, four for boys and one was mixed. The average class size was just under 27 students and all observed lessons lasted 45 to 60 minutes.

| Province | Grade | Students | Gender | Duration (mins) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Anbar | 5 | 54 | Girls | 60 |
| Anbar | 10 | 29 | Boys | 60 |
| Baghdad | 3 | 20 | Girls | 60 |
| Baghdad | 6 | 18 | Girls | 60 |
| Baghdad | 7 | 18 | Girls | 60 |
| Basra | 10 | 30 | Boys | 45 |
| Basra | 8 | 21 | Girls | 45 |
| Basra | 6 | 27 | Boys | 45 |
| Karbala | 5 | 22 | Mixed | 45 |
| Karbala | 10 | 30 | Girls | 45 |
| Salahaldeen | 4 | 26 | Girls | 45 |
| Salahaldeen | 9 | 27 | Boys | 45 |

**Table 3** CSI classroom observations

Notes about the lessons were made using an observation tool (Appendix 5). This was designed by the international researchers, who then briefed the local researcher on its use. The aim of the tool was to capture descriptive information about the lessons (such as what the teacher and students were doing) as well as to make some judgements about overall quality. Evaluating individual teachers, though, was not our goal. Rather, the observations, when considered collectively, provide insight into aspects of English teaching and learning which may (though we cannot claim this is the case) reflect trends in CSI more generally, and which provide concrete evidence that can be triangulated with the range of other data we are presenting.

One common risk associated with one-off observations of teachers is that rehearsed lessons are delivered for the benefit of the observer. In this case, it was the observer's judgement that only one of the 12 lessons observed appeared somewhat rehearsed and the other lessons all seemed natural.

Table 4 summarises the notes that were made about the materials used during lessons and the areas of English that were focused on. The *English for Iraq* textbook was used in every lesson and in the majority of cases it was the exclusive source of material. All teachers used the board, but technology was rarely used apart from two cases (both primary classes) where audio mp3 files (part of the textbook materials) were played via the teacher's mobile phone connected to a loudspeaker and another where a projector (data show) was used. In terms of focus (the observer identified up to two areas per lesson), grammar was the most common (6), followed by vocabulary (5) and speaking (4). Pronunciation was also a focus three times, while listening and reading featured only once (and writing not at all).

| Lesson | Textbook used | Other materials used | Technology | Focus 1 | Focus 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Yes | Realia; flashcards; audio mp3 | Mobile phone; speaker | Grammar | Vocabulary |
| 2. | Yes | No | No | Vocabulary | Pronunciation |
| 3. | Yes | Magnetic numbers and letters; flashcards | No | Speaking | Pronunciation |
| 4. | Yes | No | No | Grammar | – |
| 5. | Yes | No | No | Grammar | – |
| 6. | Yes | No | Data show | Grammar | Vocabulary |
| 7. | Yes | No | No | Speaking | Pronunciation |
| 8. | Yes | No | No | Grammar | Vocabulary |
| 9. | Yes | No | No | Speaking | Listening |
| 10. | Yes | Flashcards; charts; audio mp3 | Mobile phone; speaker | Vocabulary | – |
| 11. | Yes | No | No | Speaking | Reading |
| 12. | Yes | No | No | Grammar | – |

**Table 4** Materials and focus on English lessons in CSI

The observer made narrative notes about what teachers and students did during the observed lessons. From these it can be concluded that typical teacher activities included:

- explaining grammar (in Arabic)
- writing grammar rules and vocabulary on the board
- asking students questions about grammar
- reading out a reading passage and translating the meaning into Arabic
- correcting students' pronunciation errors
- asking students to explain the meaning of words in a reading passage
- instructing students on which textbook activities to do
- whole-class checking of students' answers to the textbook activities.

Typical student activities included:

- reading aloud
- answering teacher questions
- completing textbook exercises
- writing answers on the board
- listening to audio and repeating pronunciation
- translating sentences from English to Arabic
- listening to the teacher.

Particularly in the younger classes, students sometimes had opportunities to participate in lessons by giving answers and examples, working in groups and taking part in ice-breakers or brief activities requiring movement. Generally, though, there was infrequent evidence in the observed lessons of English being taught and used for communicative purposes. Boxes 8 and 9 summarise two lessons that are illustrative of the approaches more widely observed.

**Box 8** Summary of a Grade 4 English lesson in CSI

The teacher starts by asking some questions to the class and individuals, such as *What's your name? How old are you? Where are you from?* Students answer chorally or individually by raising their hands. The teacher introduces the topic of 'greetings' and tells the students that when you greet somebody you say 'hi' or 'hello'. She asks the students to open their books and starts explaining in Arabic what the phrase 'new friend' means. She also explains in Arabic some words the students will meet in the reading passage in their books. The teacher asks individual students to read aloud from the text and interrupts them to explain difficult words in Arabic. The teacher also asks the students about the meaning of words in the text, but only the students in the front row put their hand up to answer. Reading aloud around the class continues till the end of the text. The teacher then starts to explain (using some Arabic) comparative adjectives, such as 'I'm older than …'. Two students are called out to the front and the teacher uses them to explain 'taller' and 'bigger'. The teacher ends the lesson by talking about colours and asking some students about their favourite colours.

**Box 9** Summary of a Grade 9 English lesson in CSI

The teacher writes the structure of the present continuous tense (sub+ v.ing+ complement) on the board. He writes examples below the structure, such as 'He is writing a book'. He gives students examples and asked them to choose the correct answer. For example, 'The students ..... reading at the moment' (are reading/will read/was reading). The teacher explains that such questions will appear in the national examination. The teacher asks the students to give their own examples. The teacher now explains in Arabic about negation with the present continuous. For example, 'Layal (not/watch) TV now' and 'They (not/play) football now'. Now the teacher writes on the board the structure of interrogative sentences with the present continuous tense. For example, 'Is Ali writing the homework now?' and 'Are they playing tennis now?' The teacher asks the students to create their own sentences (questions with present continuous tense) and some respond orally with examples. To conclude the lesson, the teacher asks the students to copy into their notebooks the grammatical explanations and examples he has written on the board.

Observations also examined how often English was spoken by teachers and learners and Figure 13 summarises the results from the 12 lessons. Only four teachers were observed speaking English often or very often, while in most cases (8/12), learners rarely spoke English. Together these conclusions point to a classroom environment where learners have limited opportunities to speak English and be exposed to teachers' spoken English. Additionally, it was noted that in only one lesson was English used all the time by the teacher and that, in most cases, teachers would benefit from opportunities to further develop their own speaking skills in English (including formal features such as pronunciation).

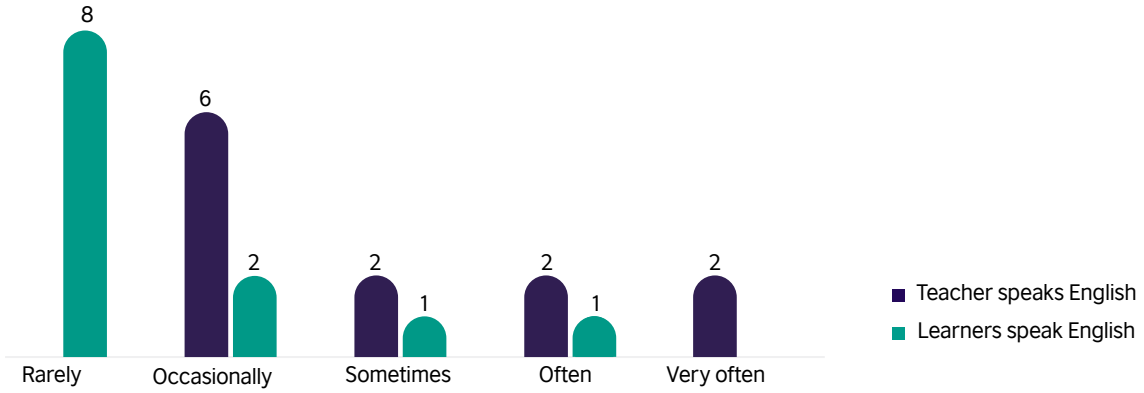



**Figure 13** Use of English in CSI lessons

On scale of 1–5, where 1=very poor and 5=excellent, the 12 lessons were given an average rating of 2.4 and the more detailed narrative notes made by the observer highlighted aspects of teachers' work that were strengths and others that could provide a focus for developmental support.

Strengths observed included:

- positive relationships between teachers and students
- a motivating teacher attitude
- creative use of additional resources by teachers
- some (though limited) use of games and group work
- teachers using questions to keep students engaged
- some use of technology to support teaching and learning.

Various areas for development can also be noted:

- improving teachers' own command of English and confidence in speaking it
- encouraging learners to read silently (reading was often done by students aloud or by the teacher)
- achieving a more appropriate balance between teachers' use of English and of the L1 (for example, vocabulary and grammar rules were often explained in Arabic)
- supplementing the textbook with additional materials
- particularly in higher classes, focusing less on grammar and the memorisation of rules; in one lesson the observer wrote that the 'the teacher spent 90 per cent of the lesson explaining the structural rule of the past tense and disregarding all other related dialogues and activities in both the student and the activity book'
- effective strategies for starting and ending lessons
- strategies for motivating learners
- giving students opportunities to participate in ways which go beyond answering the teachers' questions (in one lesson, student activity consisted largely of putting their hands up to answer the teacher's questions)
- developing in students a wider range of skills, including speaking and listening
- giving students sufficient time to complete activities (lessons were often rushed)
- balancing the requirements of formal examinations with opportunities for students to develop some communicative ability in the language (in one secondary class, for example, the whole lesson was based on grammar and reading questions that appear in the national exams).

We appreciate that many of these issues stem from broader factors beyond the teachers' control, such as limited opportunities to develop these competences at pre-service and in-service level, a very challenging learning environment in schools, lack of infrastructure and technology, and an assessment-oriented approach to learning which dominates education in Iraq generally. Improving the teaching of English in Iraq does require, therefore,

positive changes in these broader factors that influence what teachers do.

### 4.1.1.6 MOE learners

Students in six CSI primary classrooms (six different schools in five provinces) responded to five short survey questions about their attitudes to English and learning English. The questions were read out in Arabic by a local researcher and students responded by standing in one of three groups to give their answer – yes, no, don't know (pictures were also used to clarify what each group represented – for example a 'thumbs up' picture for 'yes'). The number of students in each group was then tallied and written down before the next question was asked. Figure 14 shows the responses for these students. Almost 80 per cent said they like learning English and a high percentage (76.3%) were also positive about wanting to become good at English. Almost 75 per cent said English lessons were fun, though just over half of the students stated that English was their favourite subject. Only just under 46 per cent said they played and sang when they learned English.

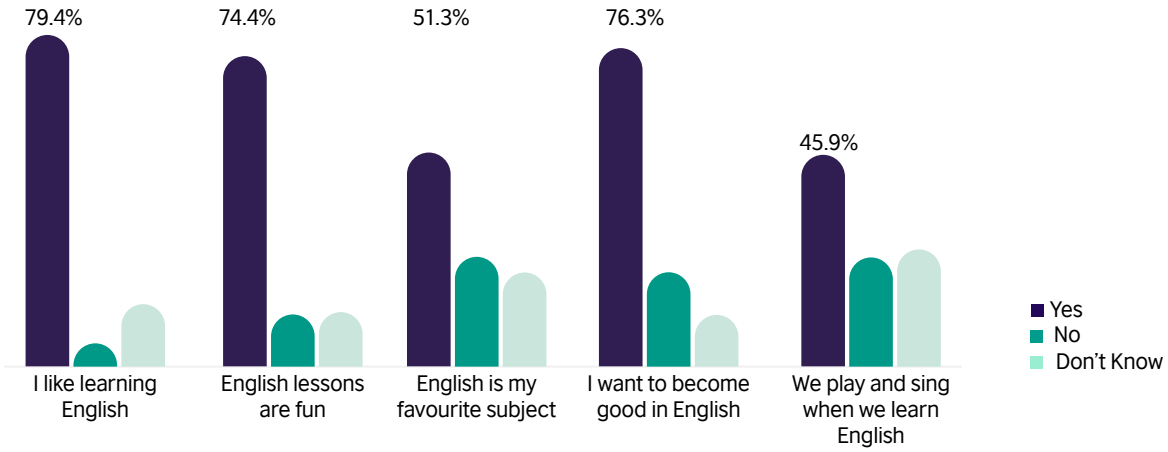



**Figure 14** Attitudes to English among primary school CSI students (N=160)

Students in six middle and high school classrooms (again, different schools in five provinces) also responded to seven short survey questions about their attitudes to English and learning English. The survey administration procedure was the same as described above for the primary schools. Figure 15 shows the responses for these students. The percentage of 'yes' answers was high throughout, though noticeably lower for the statement 'English is my favourite subject', which just over 54 per cent agreed with. These responses indicate that these middle and high school students felt English was important both for future work and study. According to over 76 per cent of the students, too, Arabic is used in English classes.

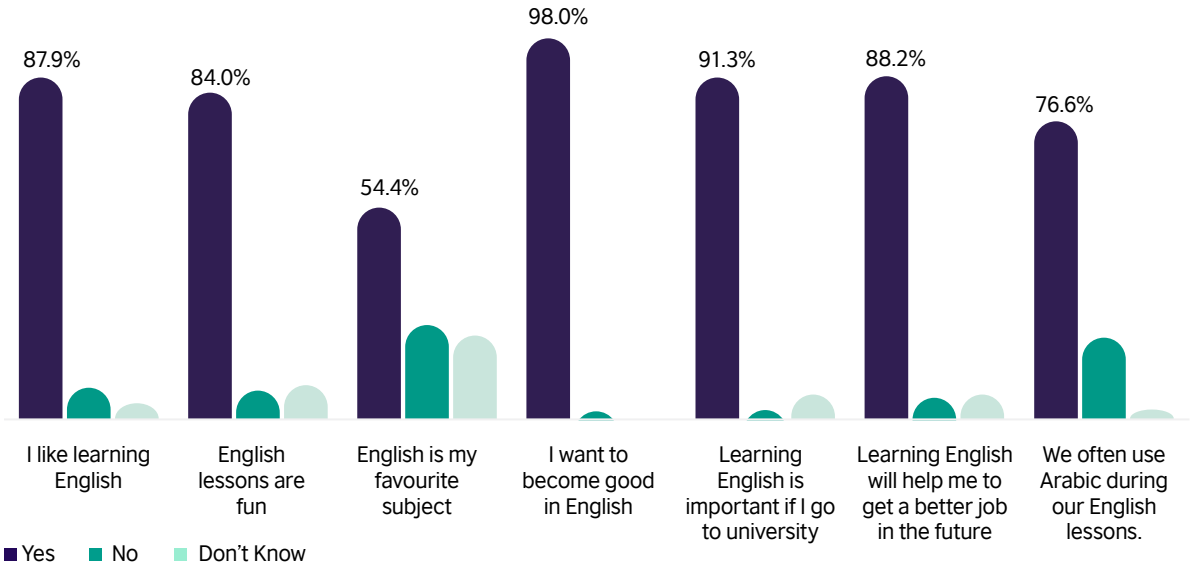



**Figure 15** Attitudes to English among middle and high school CSI students (N=150)

### 4.1.2 Ministry of Higher Education

MOHE perspectives in CSI were obtained through a series of online and face-to-face meetings with two categories of stakeholder. The first is referred to below as *College of Education lecturers*. These are academic staff working in English departments at Colleges of Education. The second category is *university teachers of English*. These are university staff who teach English across non-English departments (what is also known as *non-departmental English*), mainly at undergraduate level though in some cases for postgraduates too. University teachers of English are often part of English departments, but they play no role in teaching pre-service teachers of English.

#### 4.1.2.1 College of Education lecturers

College of Education lecturers provided their perspectives on the teaching of English in CSI via a series of three online meetings (one introductory meeting followed by two smaller and more focused discussions) and one in-country meeting. In total, 20 individuals contributed to these meetings, which collectively lasted around three hours. Several participants were in senior positions – Professors and/or Heads of Department – with many years' experience of English in Iraq. The meetings focused mainly on the work of Colleges of Education in preparing teachers of English and the challenges facing the teaching and learning of English in Iraq (see Appendix 6 for the questions discussed). Key points emerging from these meetings are summarised below.

Teachers of English graduate largely from English departments in the Colleges of Education and it was generally agreed that the quality of these graduates is not high. The two most significant factors behind this were seen to be (a) the lack of quality control measures that regulate admission, progression and graduation and (b) the inadequate curriculum which English departments in Colleges of Education follow.

In terms of how the quality of entrants to English departments is managed, there is no formal admission test and applications are assessed on the basis of students' secondary school results (overall Baccalaureate score, with at least 80/100 on the score for English). One respondent stated that in 2006, an entrance examination for Colleges of Education was set up, but this was cancelled after two years. It was suggested that one reason why admission requirements to universities in Iraq are not stringent is the political drive to maximise the number of secondary school graduates who enter university. As students move through the four years, a passing grade (50%) is the requirement for

progression; failing students are given at least one opportunity to retake failed courses, meaning that the majority of students do eventually graduate. Assessment consists largely of written examinations ('all the marks are given for written tests, and this is one of the defects in our policy at the Colleges of Education'), where passing calls for the memorisation of content. For English departments, there is no exit graduation test, such as an English proficiency examination.

The curriculum followed in English departments at Colleges of Education was also seen to be in need of updating. It had been established by the MOHE many years previously (the MOHE is responsible for 'unifying the subject and courses taught all over the country at all Colleges of Education') and was problematic in several ways. One was the relative weight allocated to language development, teaching methodology and literature and linguistics courses. For example, according to an analysis provided by one respondent, in the first year of the course (where the focus is on developing students' English language skills), 'An Introduction to English Literature' is allocated more time than 'Listening and Speaking'. In the fourth year, of 23 hours, 'Test design and assessment' are allocated two, the same number as 'Translation', while eight hours are dedicated to the study of modern literature (novel, drama and poetry). Reflecting on this distribution of hours, one respondent noted that 'we are preparing prospective teachers not linguists or writers or translators' and this should be reflected in the courses students take. Another respondent also noted that the 'curriculum of departments of English does not qualify students to be efficient teachers of English due to the lack of courses related to English teaching'. Students also take several courses related to education more generally, such as psychology of education. While these have a role to play in the formation of novice teachers, it was felt that they are given too much weight compared to core subjects related to the teaching of English ('we suggest reducing such subjects and concentrating more on English'). Another respondent reflected similar views: 'we need revision and standardisation of the core courses. The weight of the English courses is not in favour of English language training'. Many general courses are taught in Arabic (such as 'democracy' and 'human rights') and it was felt 'these should be university requirements not department requirements'. This point was further emphasised by the respondent who said that 'there are so many courses that are not related specifically to the objectives of the department … we don't have specific objectives for these departments'.

It was generally agreed that there is a significant gap between the curriculum that pre-service programmes for English teachers follow and what teachers are required to do in the classroom. The general sentiment was that newly qualified teachers do not have the practical skills needed to teach the new curriculum for English. It was also felt the objectives of English departments in Colleges of Education needed to be redefined by the MOHE so that they were more focused on preparing graduates for classroom realities.

In the fourth year of their programme, student teachers complete a period of teaching practice (around 45 days) 'during which they are visited by their instructors to watch them teaching and evaluate them'. The evaluation forms used during teaching practice were obtained (Appendix 7); there is one for school principals and a second form for the 'scientific' supervisor (presumably someone from the College of Education) and the educational supervisor. Both forms include ten criteria which are not subject specific and which cover a range of issues from 'personality' to 'the skill of using different teaching methods'. The criteria are often somewhat vague (for example, 'The extent to which he/she is apt for teaching'), combine distinct issues (for example, 'Voice clarity and language correctness') and overlap (three of the ten criteria on the supervisor form refer to lesson planning).

During Covid-19, school visits were not possible and teaching practice was organised remotely 'by asking our students to record videos to a lesson they present from their homes using young people (brothers, sisters, etc.) and sending them to their instructors to be evaluated'.

The instructional techniques used in English departments were also, but less widely, noted as another area for development. Lecturers must hold an MA or PhD in English, but they often lack pedagogical training, meaning that lecture-based methods are typically followed and, additionally, that many course are taught in Arabic. One respondent felt that 'the MOHE should renew the Colleges curriculum and train the teachers for new teaching methods. Most of the teachers still stick in traditional methods'.

### 4.1.2.2 University teachers of English

An online meeting was held with seven teachers of non-departmental English (NDE) in CSI. As explained earlier, NDE refers to the English courses that university students (other than those majoring in English) must take. Before the meeting, participants were sent a list of conclusions (Appendix 8) reached by previous research into NDE in Iraq (Borg, 2015a) and asked to comment in writing on the extent to which they felt these conclusions remain relevant today in CSI.

Table 5 summarises the written responses that were submitted. These indicate that respondents generally agreed that the statements applied to NDE in CSI, with one exception. This was statement 2, where it was noted by over half the respondents that NDE was now taught for one hour a week in each of the four years of undergraduate courses. For statement 3, regarding class size, although four respondents disagreed, they did so mainly to emphasise that class sizes were often much higher than 30.

| Statements | Yes | No | Partly |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. University language centres play no role in non-departmental English courses. | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| 2. English language courses are typically taught only in the first year of study and most commonly for two hours a week. | 3 | 4 | 0 |
| 3. English classes typically have at least 30 students. | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| 4. Over 62% of the teachers stated that first year students' enter university with a beginner (A1) or elementary (A2) level of English. | 6 | 0 | 1 |
| 5. non-departmental English courses are very basic in level, with a primary focus on mechanics (e.g. punctuation, grammar, reading and writing). | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| 6. Universities identified a long list of challenges they are facing in relation to the teaching and learning of English. These include limited numbers of trained teachers, limited access to resources and facilities, the lack of clear policies on English, and curricula that very often do not motivate students. | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| 7. Technology is lacking in the classrooms where English is taught. Over 87% of teachers, though, said they make regular use of technology on their courses, often using their own personal equipment. | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| 8. The English language teaching workforce is predominantly local, relatively inexperienced, and, in a substantial proportion of cases (over 42%), untrained to teach English. | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| 9. Fewer than 20% of the respondents felt their students' motivation to learn English was high while over 27% felt it was low or very low. | 6 | 0 | 1 |
| 10. Teachers participate in a range of professional development activities; fewer than 50%, though, agreed that their university supports their professional development. | 5 | 2 | 0 |

**Table 5** Teachers' views about NDE in CSI

These issues were discussed further in an online meeting lasting 45 minutes with the seven respondents. Key points emerging from the meeting are summarised below.

- NDE is commonly taught in all four years of undergraduate courses, for one hour a week

Each year is referred to as a 'level'. The *New Headway* series of coursebooks is widely used on NDE courses. In the first year, teachers begin from the Elementary level book – five chapters in Semester 1 and five chapters in Semester 2. 'All students are subjected to the same way of teaching, the same material.'

- English for General Purposes is normally taught at undergraduate level, but some departments use subject lecturers (who are not qualified teachers of English and whose English proficiency may not be high) to teach students texts and materials in English related to their discipline. There are no actual ESP materials; students are given 'idiomatic expressions [and told to], go and memorise it, that's all, there is no book or syllabus under the title ESP'. In Medical Colleges they approach ESP more systematically.
- Student levels vary across faculties and tend to be better in the sciences. As one respondent explained:

  *Through my experience in teaching NDE in University, i.e. teaching different colleges, College of Medicine and College of Education for women, I found that it depends on the type of students. NDE is completely different when it is taught in the Faculty of Medicine from Faculty of Education. Background of English is absolutely differ between these different groups.*

  In fact, it was almost accepted that Humanities students will not have good levels of English and this affects the decisions teachers make:

  *since it is a College for Humanities, we don't expect that our students are well qualified in English. Poor students are there all over the way. It is not an easy task for the teacher to cover all the chapters and sections and sub-sections of the book. Usually because of the time limits, because of the large number of the students, and the lack of facilities and equipment, teachers usually focus on the most important points and they select from the book things that are most suitable and do not require the use of certain equipment.*
- MA and PhD students are also required to take English classes (one or two hours a week), but the syllabus they follow is quite similar to that taken at undergraduate level. For example, MA students follow the Intermediate book from Headway (which will also be covered in Year 3 or 4 of the undergraduate programme).
- Writing is not addressed in NDE; the focus is on grammar and vocabulary, particularly due to the low levels of the students.
- Students on NDE courses are assessed in different ways: projects, quizzes, monthly or mid-term exams and final exam. The final exam carries 60 per cent of the total mark. Exam papers are set by NDE teachers and 70 is the pass mark. 'Each teacher is responsible for her own assessment.' Speaking and listening are not assessed; in some cases, respondents said, these skills are not taught either ('Neither in the teaching nor in the final exam'). Test questions are also limited, to true/false, matching, multiple choice (see Appendix 8 for an example) and thus, respondents noted, students can pass the exam easily. In fact, most students pass their English courses; as one teacher put it, 'there is no failure of the English language in most Iraqi universities'. Another noted that 'usually teachers are flexible and they do not ask the students to have heavy demands as far as English is concerned'.
- Respondents identified several challenges they faced in teaching NDE (especially at undergraduate level):

a. Large classes are a particular challenge, with respondents citing numbers of up to 60 in some cases ('60 students in a class is not workable').

b. Lack of time to cover the syllabus ('Do you think that one hour is enough to cover the chapter, to give them time to participate, to complete the activities?').

c. Lack of equipment ('the whole department shares two data shows').

d. Students' low levels of English ('students who come from high school to university are not qualified enough to take classes and to learn something').

e. For postgraduate students, there is a lack of materials related to the students' area of specialisation.

f. In some departments, 'they think that because it is non-departmental, they do not care about learning this subject'. There is thus often low student motivation to take English courses: 'our students are studying in Arabic and they are always ask this question, why they are studying English'.

g. Generally, the policy of making NDE compulsory at undergraduate level is not seen to be supported by a clear rationale.

One final point that emerged regarding the teaching of English in Iraqi universities is that this had been one of the issues addressed by the IREX project funded by US Embassy in Baghdad.[38] For example, in 2020, University teachers of English working in Science departments attended a five-day training workshop where the purposes of NDE were discussed along with teaching methods, learning objectives and assessment rubrics.

# 4.2 Kurdistan Region of Iraq

## 4.2.1 Ministry of Education

### 4.2.1.1 Ministry of Education officials

A face-to-face meeting at the Ministry of Education directorate lasting two hours was held with three members of staff from the Ministry of Education in Erbil.

In attendance:

Director MoE Special Needs Education and Non-formal education (with responsibility for children with special needs)

General Director Basic Learning and Kindergarten (Head of Committee English Language Programme; guides the Minster of Education on English language projects and improving English language; soon to be promoted to General Director of Planning in the ministry

Adviser to the Minister of Education (responsible for implementation and guidance to minister). He has been involved in several projects including development of English language teaching and trainings.

#### English as a subject in the Ministry of Education

The responsibility for English cuts across all departments at the Ministry (there are no separate language departments). For example, there are English experts within the Directorate of Curriculum and Printing, and English language supervisors at the Directorate of Educational Supervisors. There is also a General Directorate of Training at the ministerial level (MOE office) and at each governate level (general directorate offices) which is responsible for the training of teachers based on the Education Supervisor's evaluations during their supervisions. They provide training workshops when finances allow but there are no trainings at the moment due to financial constraints.

The general directorate (departments) of the ministry in KRI are:

- Basic learning (K1, K2, G1–12)
- Vocational and institutional study
- Planning
- Buildings/infrastructure
- Examination and evaluation
- Supervision/Quality Assurance
- Curriculum and prints
- Turkmani study
- Christian and Armenian studies
- Diwan: financial and administration
- Sports and arts (recreational activities)
- Training institute
- Five general directorates (Erbil, Duhok, Sulaymaniyah, Garmian and Halabja); two new General directorates will be added in the near future (Soran and Zakho).

The directors of each department come together on a monthly basis in meetings known as the Council of the Ministry of Education (members are the minister and his deputy, the GDs of the departments listed above, and the ministry's advisers). This is a coordinating body in which strategies and policies are discussed and issued. During this meeting, coordination occurs between the GDs. If, for example, training workshops for English teachers or officials were to be provided by the British Council, the adviser to the minister would make a request to the Supervision department and oversee the trainings.

#### Overview of English in the formal sector in KRI

*English in Iraq* was considered outdated and replaced by *Sunrise* and produced by Macmillan as part of a 2004 review of English language teaching, which aimed to enhance what was described as 'English as a second language' by taking a communicative student-centred approach. English is taught from kindergarten to Grade 12. However, we were told by ministry staff that learners struggle to use English after twelve years of study due to:

38. www.irex.org/project/iraq-university-linkages-program

- 'inadequacy of teacher capacity'
- 'lesson aims in *Sunrise* not being clear for the teachers'
- class sizes – 'these can reach 40 students and there is not enough time in 40 minutes to help each student practise English'.

As a result, the Minister and his team are looking for a new textbook and/or updating the current version and they envision the following:

- 'English should be considered as a second language in the region.'
- 'Publishers such as Cambridge have offered new textbooks but there is no funding available in KRI at the moment.'
- 'The minister is considering an electronic platform which includes English as a second language.'

### Gaps in the provision of English with recommendations by MoE staff

According to the KRI MOE officials we spoke to, there are several gaps in the provision of English at present. These are listed below with any recommendations for addressing them that were made during the meeting:

- Teacher training at the pre-service stage needs development. 'The British Council could support MoE and MoHE to prepare graduates from universities and Colleges of Education to teach English.'
- Teacher Training Department: 'the British Council could help Training of Trainers (ToT) at governate levels to be able to train teachers drawing on high quality approaches and materials'. There were previous trainings for Education Supervisors. However, these trainings need to focus on improving teachers' classroom techniques and strategies, not only focusing on how to deliver the new curriculum.
- 'There are gaps within the MoE itself as ministry staff do not receive training about English, nor do many of the educational supervisors or teachers.' For example, 'during one of the training courses for English language teachers and educational supervisors by an English teacher trainer, the organiser had to stop the training to bring in a translator'.
- 'Teachers find it difficult to develop their own teaching expertise on their own.'
- 'A more culturally appropriate textbook is needed' (e.g. 'teachers do not understand the story of Robinson Crusoe') – 'they need a new curriculum built on local cultural practices.'
- 'Experts in the curriculum development department at the MoE are not qualified to design a new curriculum. MoE has approached MoHE but they are not able to design a new curriculum at this point in time.' Similarly, we were told regarding the situation in CSI that there is a desire to design a curriculum for English. It was suggested that the British Council supports the MoE to create a group of leaders in designing a curriculum for English by bringing in experts or taking experts to the UK and training them on curriculum design.
- 'A 'cultural centre' of the British Council which provided training and scholarships' is needed and was requested by the interviewees.
- 'More time devoted to English in the curriculum is needed (5 hours per week is not enough).'

### Existing agreement between the MoE and the British Council

There is an existing MOU between the British Council and the MoE funded by the European Union. The project, 'Capacity building in primary and secondary education', seeks to develop capacity building for teachers of primary and secondary schools across Iraq with the aim of increasing enrolment and decreasing drop-out. The pillars of the project include supporting education counsellors working at schools to develop teachers' competencies in psycho-social support and human rights principles to improve social cohesion.

Recently, the MoE in the KRI developed a new structure of supervision, assessing teacher performance and school evaluation.

Under this programme, Education Supervisors evaluate schools as (1) a whole body by seeing their role as that of 'external evaluator; (2) the headmaster of the school and assistant heads are responsible for assessing the performance of teachers; and (3) the Education Supervisors work as a 'Critical friend' with the school to address the recommendations of the external committee. Following this approach, the relationship between the specialised educational supervisor (English) and the English language teacher are enhanced. New indicators have been developed for this new approach of school evaluation which are used by supervisors,

schoolteachers and headmasters (see 4.2.1.3 for more on supervision in KRI). All the data generated during these evaluation processes are documented in a database which will identify gaps in the provision. The fight against ISIS has delayed this work.

### 4.2.1.2 Directorate of Curriculum Planning and Printing

An interview was carried out at the Directorate of Curriculum and Planning.

In attendance:

Director of Programmes

English Experts x3

The following structure of the general directorate of printing and curriculum was provided:

1. Directorate of programmes
- Experts of religion
- Experts of Kurdish language
- Experts of Arabic language
- Experts of English language
- Experts of mathematics
- Experts of science (chemistry, biology, physics, earth sciences) Grades 1 to 9
- Experts of science (chemistry, biology, physics, earth sciences) Grades 10 to 12
- Experts of social sciences (geography, history, economy, philosophy; human rights, genocide of Kurds; social skills)
- Experts of vocational programmes (trade, industry and tourism)
- Experts of sports
- Experts of arts

2. Directorate of printing and media
- Building design of basic schools
- Building design of high schools
- Building design of vocational schools and institutions

3. Directorate of library
4. Directorate of teaching aids and laboratories
5. Directorate of accounting and finances
6. Directorate of training
7. Directorate of evaluation (assessment)
8. Directorate of administration

In the group interview, we were told that the curriculum is known by the name of the textbook, *Sunrise*. In addition to *Sunrise*, teachers often use additional material including some of the following which were described as *Oxford, Family and Friends, English Times, First Friends*. Interviewees explained that the MoE has translated all teaching materials at the schools into the following languages: English, Kurdish-Sorani, Kurdish- Badini, Turkmen, Arabic, and Assyrian.

There is a desire to replace *Sunrise*. This project is known as 'Changing the English curriculum'. The Directorate has approached several publishers with 15 points that they wish their proposals to address. Of these 15, one important aspect is the customisation of the textbook to the local context. Other important points that the interviewees stressed were: (1) the level of English be 'simple'; (2) 21st-century skills are included; (3) training on how to use the textbook will be included for approximately 100 master trainers from across KRI. The interviewees would prefer the training be delivered by a UK trainer. This project has now been sent to the Council of Ministers KRI and three publishers will go through to tender.

#### Teachers' qualifications

Decisions about the criteria KRI school teachers must meet are the responsibility of the MOHE. These are as follows:

- to teach Grades 1–6, a Diploma is required
- to teach Grades 7–9, teachers must graduate from the College of Arts or College of Education or a (new) Basic Education College
- to teach Grades 10–12, teachers must graduate from the College of Arts or College of Education English Language Department
- exceptional cases are made for teachers who hold MAs or PhDs.

The MoE initiated a project with the College of Basic Education and MoHE to develop a new curriculum, but it was not successful as, we were told, 'the MoHE do not have expertise in curriculum development'.

The College of Basic Education and the MoHE suggest that at Grade 12 school leavers should reach B2 on the CEFR[39] scale but 'realistically the level is A2' according to the interviewees.

#### English Exams

National Exams in English are taken at G9 and G12. These are overseen by the Assessment Directorate. All exams are based on *Sunrise*.

#### Recommendations to the British Council

As can be seen from the interview responses above, the Curriculum directorate has already started to implement changes to the curriculum for K1–G12. When asked what collaborations they would like to see with the British Council, they suggested the following:

- Support with how to design a curriculum: Interviewees requested 'a document which sets out the vision/mission for English'. Interviewees explained that they have seen these documents in other countries. It would cover what content to include for reading, writing, speaking, listening and grammar and would start with Kindergarten (K1 and K2) and go right through to Grade 12.
- Support setting up a Teacher's Association and helping connect KRI to ELT practitioners in the rest of the world: Members of the directorate would like to attend regional and international conferences, workshops and events to develop their professional networks and learn from others. Attendance at IATEFL 2022 was suggested.
- Support with the professional development of the directorate team: The individuals that make up the team would like training on curriculum development.
- The governate staff would like to be part of the British Council's networks in Iraq. At the moment, they find out from schoolteachers when events are running. They would like to be included in British Council events.

### 4.2.1.3 Ministry of Education supervisors

An online meeting lasting over 90 minutes was held with nine supervisors (nominated by the MOE) from four provinces in KRI. While our focus here is on government schools, two of the participants were working with international and private schools, though they had prior experience as supervisors in the state education system. The issues discussed were the same as those covered with CSI supervisors (see Appendix 3) and below is a summary of the key issues that were highlighted.

1. In the last two or three years, and supported by an EU-funded project delivered by the British Council,[40] educational supervision in KRI has been reformed to focus more on schools than on individual teachers and subjects.
2. Before this reform, subject specific supervisors visited schools and evaluated teachers, similar to the system in CSI (see 4.1.1.2). As one supervisor explained, 'in old times, we go to schools two times each year for each teacher and then we give them some notes about the lessons and we give them some recommendations to be better. And then we make some seminars to them'.
3. In this new system, a set of 25 standards have been defined for evaluating schools. The evaluation involves both self-evaluation and external evaluation. For self-evaluation, one supervisor explained the process as follows: 'you have 25 standards and the school makes a committee. This committee starts to evaluate the school and also the headmaster, the teacher, everyone in the school evaluate himself according to a form'.
4. To support the school, a 'critical friend' is appointed. This is a supervisor whose role (especially in the early part of the school year) is to help the school make progress against the evaluation standards. Describing their work as a critical friend, one respondent explained that 'we are supportive to a school and to its staff, we are supportive to them in raising the quality of education. We can give them advice, for example, how to use their techniques in teaching as a whole in many subjects'. As this explanation indicates, this whole-school approach to educational supervision means there is less direct focus on individual subjects; critical friends support the school holistically.
5. For evaluation purposes, schools are visited by an evaluation team of three supervisors. This team includes the critical friend, who, though, now adopts a more evaluative role. The school

39. www.cambridgeenglish.org/Images/126130-cefr-diagram.pdf
40. iraq.britishcouncil.org/en/eu-schools-program

evaluation covers 'the whole school as the staff, the headmaster, assistants, the building, everything, for all subjects'. The process was described as follows:

*We visit schools in a group of three supervisors. Of course we divide the details between us. So one of them will be responsible of checking the records at that school, one of them making questionnaire or survey at the school and one of them asking the teachers about the stuff they have at the school and every detail. Maybe the visit will be for a couple of days or three days and after we finish that we have a form, we fill the form, and we give grades … and if they have anything that is not normal or that's not going according to the regulation of education, we tell them to adapt it or how to use it, some instructions, and at the end we raise our reports to our directorate, to our supervising units.*

In the past members of the evaluation team would have been subject specialist supervisors, but in the new system they are responsible for all subjects:

*Before this system, we used to go to the schools and visit only English language teachers and we evaluate them, but in the new system we go to the school and at that school maybe I go to a teacher who is a history teacher or a chemistry teacher and I evaluate them in general and maybe another supervisor who is not English language supervisor evaluate them. In general, when we go to a school we evaluate all teachers, including the English language teachers.*

6. Subject-specific supervisors still exist; as one explained, 'as English supervisors we sometimes make seminars for our English teachers and at the same time when we visit school as a critical friend we make meetings with the English teachers, we visit them in the classroom and make some recommendations'. Also, if the evaluation team identifies teachers who need more support, they are referred to their subject supervisor.

During the meeting with KRI supervisors, they were also asked for their views on the Sunrise textbooks that are used by MOE schools.[41] The following points were made:

1. Particularly in Grades 10–12, the books contain too much content and it is difficult for teachers to cover everything.
2. The textbooks include a large volume of reading texts, and other skills are neglected. As one supervisor noted, 'our students can't speak English … there is so much reading at every level, so that's what teachers focus on'.
3. Although the textbooks are meant to promote communicative teaching and learning, teachers do not implement them as intended:

   Sunrise *focuses on communicative approach but the teacher he doesn't apply the communicative approach inside the classroom. All the time, inside the class, he doesn't leave time for pupils to speak. English grammar is presented, I am talking about primary classes, the teacher does not give time for the student to speak, he maybe asks them to repeat chorally but he doesn't give them time to speak in order to learn the language … the old traditional way of teaching, he presents grammar, he doesn't ask the students to give examples.*

4. Various reasons for this situation were suggested. One was assessment – 'most of the examinations are written, especially for Grade 12, so they neglect the speaking skill'. However, limitations in teacher competence was seen to be the main reason why teaching was not communicative:

   *The bigger problem here is the teacher himself. He teaches English in Kurdish not in English. He doesn't encourage the students to speak English … because the teacher said the students cannot understand easily when I speak English, it is better to translate it into Kurdish … the whole lesson, the teacher only talks, doesn't let the students speak or participate, that is why very few students, when they pass these 12 years of learning English, very few students can speak English..*

Also, it was noted that many teachers of English in primary schools 'are not graduated from English departments … we need to start from the beginning, we need staff graduated from English departments to teach English in elementary school'. In addition, it was felt that more generally there was a lack of training for teachers of English in KRI; one supervisor said that 'some teachers haven't participated in any training courses' while another's view was that 'we lack training courses in Kurdistan, maybe in the last ten years, there is no training course in teaching English language'.

41. Mahmud (2018) studied teacher and student views about Sunrise 9 and found that, while teachers had negative opinions about the book, students were positive.

#### 4.2.1.4 MOE teachers: Workshop

A workshop was organised in Erbil for 20 primary and secondary teachers of English in KRI. During the workshop, teachers were asked for their views on a number of issues and the prompts that were used are listed in Appendix 4. The teachers worked in groups of 4–5 and produced posters on which their collective responses to various prompts were summarised (often in Kurdish). Key points noted on these posters were the following:

1. Key challenges faced by teachers of English in KRI are large classes, lack of teaching aids and classrooms that are not suitable for the teaching of English.
2. The curriculum provides teachers with the teacher's book, student textbook, student activity book, and the audio CD. Teachers also have access to a board and markers, but the availability of technology (such as data shows) is limited and varies from school to school.
3. The textbook (Sunrise) is seen to be at the right level, but more time is needed to cover all the material it contains.
4. The content of English lessons is determined by the prescribed textbook but teachers are able to make choices about how to teach.
5. English is assessed through the formal state examination and through teacher assessment; the latter involves various activities, such as the teacher asking questions in class and asking students to complete a written task at the end of each unit of the textbook.
6. Students were reportedly motivated to learn English but relied heavily on the teachers' translation of the textbook to understand lessons.
7. In terms of collaborating with one another, teachers do visit each other's lessons to learn about new teaching techniques, but this does not happen very often.
8. During Covid-19, teachers have been able to maintain some contact with students through Viber.
9. Teachers generally felt that they did not learn enough about practical teaching methodology while they were studying in English departments at Colleges of Education.
10. Teachers also stated that after graduation there are no further opportunities for them to receive any training.

#### 4.2.1.5 MOE teachers: Survey

Teachers of English in primary, secondary and high schools in KRI were invited to complete an online survey[42] which asked a range of questions about the teaching and learning of English, teacher support and professional development. The link to the survey was disseminated through MOE Supervisors who shared it with the teachers they were responsible for. Just over 460 teachers started the survey, though 50 were immediately disqualified as they were not government school teachers of English, and a further 166 who were eligible exited without answering any questions. This left a sample of 297. Teachers typically spent about five minutes answering the questions. The KRI survey covered the same core questions as that for CSI teachers, though the original CSI instrument was shortened in an attempt to secure more complete responses. In the KRI version, demographic questions were also placed at the end. These changes, though, did not seem to make a big difference; while KRI teachers took less than half the time of those in CSI to answer the questions, the KRI completion rate was 37 per cent (against 43% in CSI). We suspect that varying English language levels among potential respondents will have affected response rates (a questionnaire in the local language would therefore be advisable in future); also, only respondents who were able to get and stay online for the time required were able to participate.

Figure 16 shows that in terms of experience, the respondents were varied, though almost 90 per cent had five years' experience or more. Almost 63 per cent of the teachers who answered the question about gender (N=181) were female and just under 33 per cent male. Teachers represented four provinces in KRI, though almost 64 per cent of respondents (N=117) came from As-Sulaymaniyyah, with almost 20 per cent from Erbil, just under 10 per cent from Dohuk and almost 8 per cent from Halabja. In terms of qualifications for teaching English (N=177), the two that were most often mentioned by teachers were a College/Basic College of Education Degree (44.6%) and a College of Arts/Languages Degree (27.7%). Almost 17 per cent said they held an Institute of Education Diploma and 2.3 per cent said they had no relevant qualifications. Respondents worked (N=191) in Grades 1–6 (34%), Grades 6–9 (34%) and Grades 10–12 (48.2%).

42. The survey is available at www.surveymonkey.com/r/Preview/?sm=GrpevJ3wvBMsHLuPgzNepZIQfJvydOazMp0fXW4PV5SGkrWJzQBszdnCFQyJQb9k

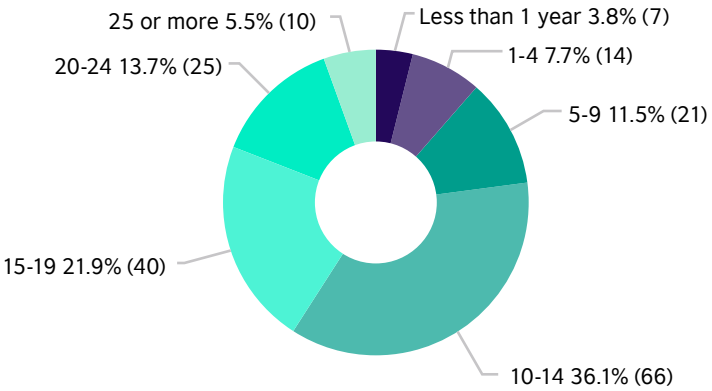



**Figure 16** KRI survey respondents by experience (N=183)

Teachers of English in KRI follow the *Sunrise* series of textbooks and one of the survey questions asked about the use of this text and other materials. Figure 17 shows the responses. These indicate that while the prescribed textbook is the source most frequently used (almost 87 per cent said they used it *often* – i.e. in all or most lessons), other materials were also reportedly used frequently; for example, over 58 per cent said they often used materials they designed. At the same time, over 12 per cent of the teachers said they never design their own materials and over 16 per cent reported never using materials they find online.

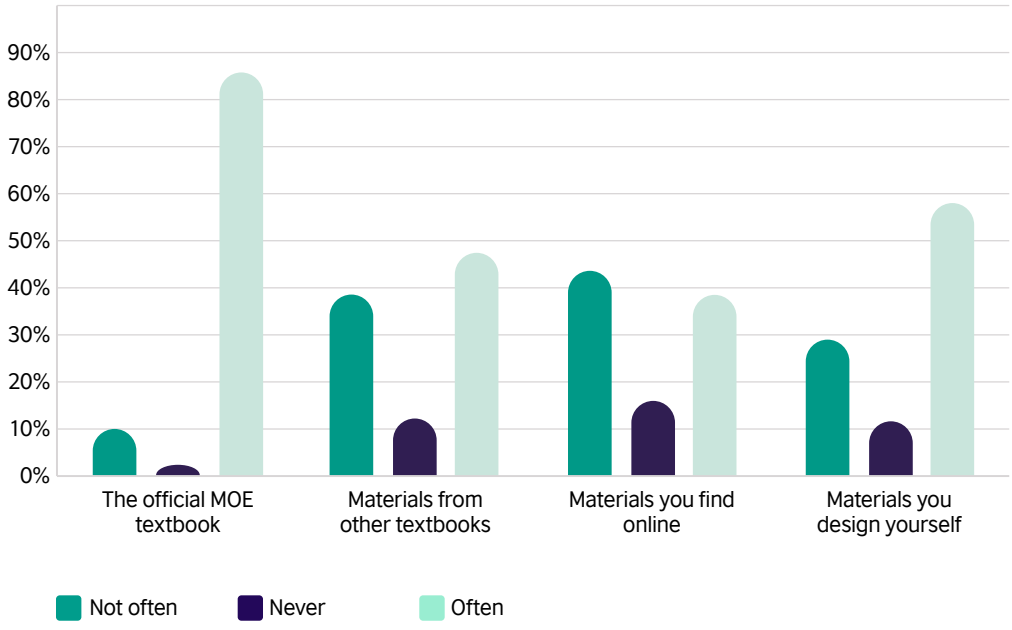



**Figure 17** Sources of material in teaching English (KRI) (N=297)

The above responses suggest that teachers have some control of the materials they use in their lessons, and to explore this issue further they were asked to comment on how much autonomy they had in deciding what to teach. As Figure 18 shows, almost 45 per cent felt they had little autonomy but more than half of the sample reported higher levels of freedom in deciding what to teach, including over 23 per cent who felt they had quite high levels of autonomy.

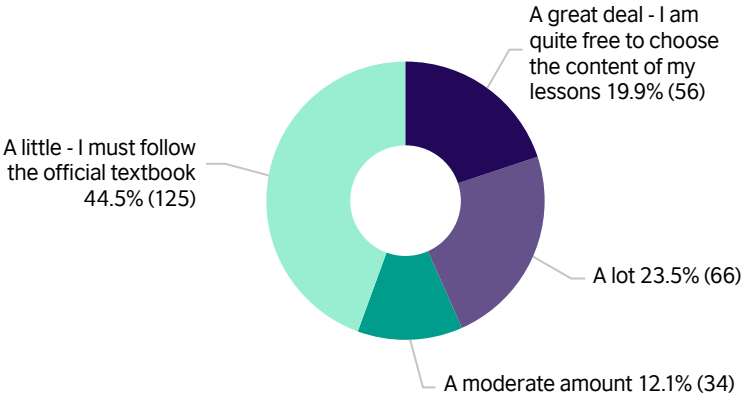



**Figure 18** KRI English teachers' autonomy in deciding what to teach (N=281)

To obtain insight into what happens during English lessons, we asked teachers to choose, from a list of eight activities, up to four they did regularly with their learners. Figure 19 summarises their responses. The activities most commonly chosen by teachers were grammar exercises (66%), reading aloud (57.6%) and speaking activities (51.5%). The activity chosen least often by teachers was reading silently – fewer than 10 per cent of the respondents said this happens regularly.

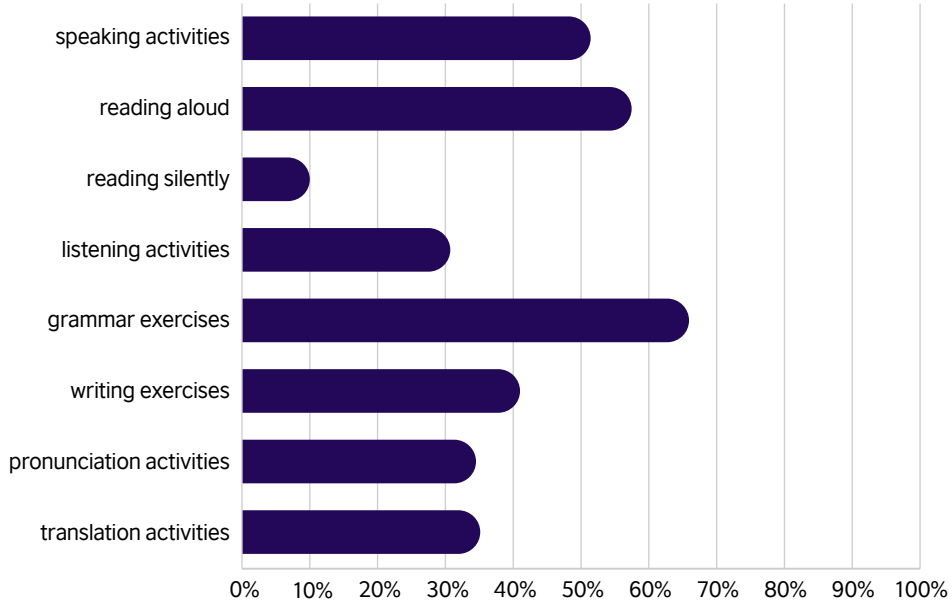



**Figure 19** Regular classroom activities during KRI English lessons (N=262)

In an additional question about activities during English lessons, teachers were asked to indicate (on a binary scale of 'happens often'/'does not happen often') the frequency of another set of teacher and learner behaviours. Figure 20 summarises their answers. Copying information off the board was the activity in this list that most teachers (85.3%) said happened often in their classes, followed by students speaking Arabic or Kurdish (79.9%) and students working in pairs (72.1%). Over 63 per cent said the teacher often speaks Arabic or Kurdish and over 54 per cent said group work occurs often too.

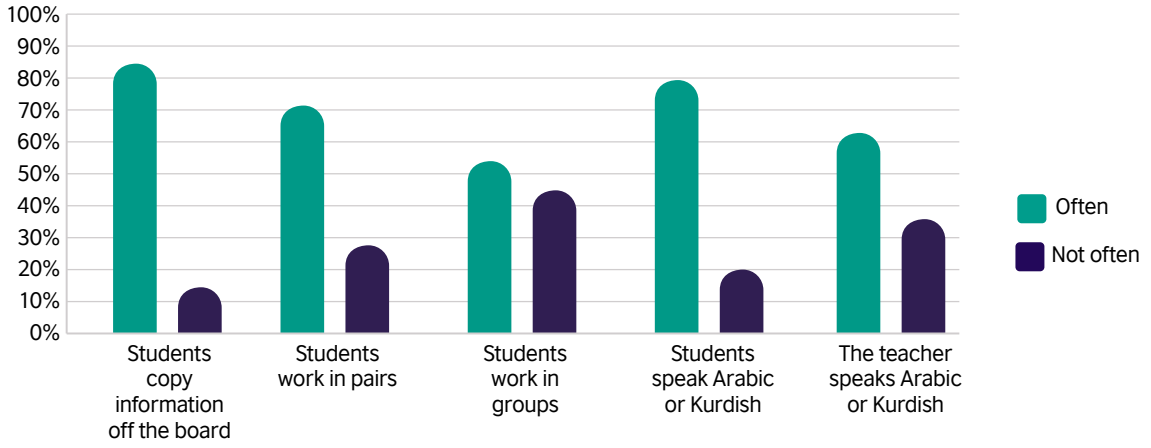



**Figure 20** Regular classroom activities during KRI English lessons (N=244)

Further insight into the views about their work held by teachers of English in KRI emerged from their responses to six statements, which they were asked to respond to on a five-point scale of agreement (strongly agree to strongly disagree). In Figure 21, responses have been collapsed into three groups (agree, neither agree nor disagree, and disagree). Teachers tended to agree with the statements, though levels of agreement ranged from a high of 84.1 per cent for 'speaking skills should be assessed in the national English examinations' down to 63.1 per cent for 'I do not have access to modern technology in my classrooms'. Over 71 per cent of responses agreed that their students had no exposure to English outside the classroom and over 77 per cent felt their students were motivated to learn English.

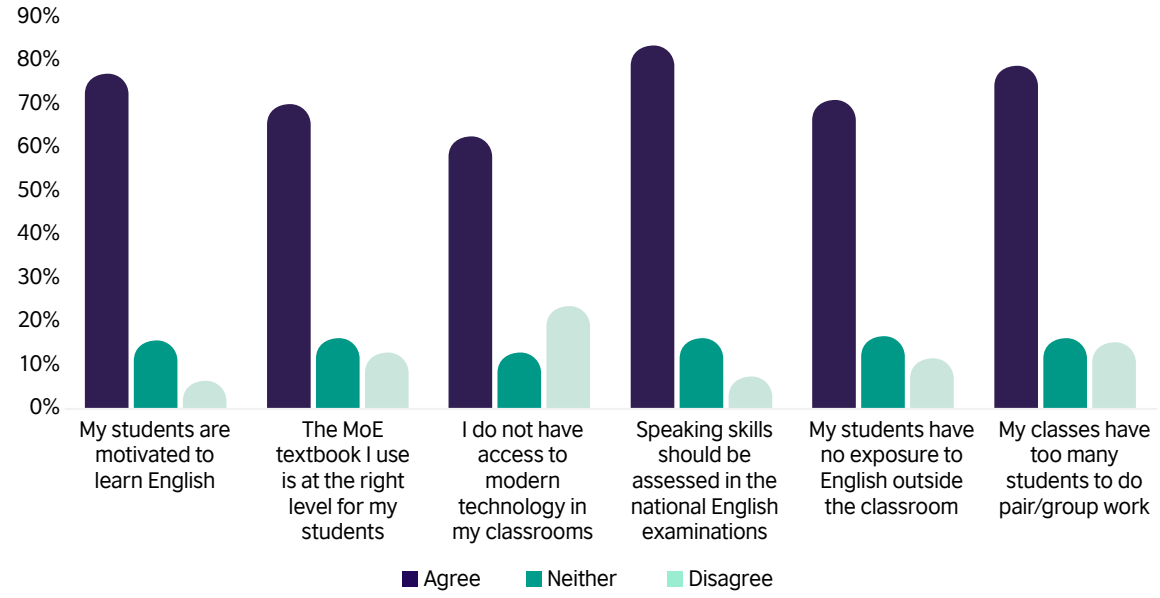



**Figure 21** Views of KRI teachers of English about six aspects of their work (N=214)

The survey also included questions about professional development and support from supervisors. Of 208 respondents, 76.4 per cent said they had not attended any training sessions or workshops in the previous 12 months. Over 85 per cent, though, did state that they would like more opportunities for professional development and 166 teachers commented on areas of English teaching where they would like to develop. The single dominant topic noted in these responses was speaking. It was not always clear whether this referred to teachers' desire to improve their own

proficiency or to learning about new ways of teaching speaking (many just wrote 'speaking' or 'speaking skills'), but it most likely included both these issues, as these examples illustrate:

*I would like to develop speaking skills by reducing the marks given for written tests and increasing the area of speaking and oral activities.*

*Taking courses and seminars for English teachers in order to learn modern strategies teaching English and speaking more fluent.*

*I like to develop my language and to know a new way of teaching and method to can make a new generation be able to speak and use the English language in the life.*

*I like do something for teacher like English course every year until every teacher better with English language.*

In terms of supervisor visits, the majority of respondents (60% of 193) said they had not been observed by a supervisor in the previous 12 months, while just over 23 per cent said they had been observed once.

The final two questions on the survey asked teachers about their online activity. The first asked which devices they normally used to get online; as Figure 22 shows, mobile phones, chosen by over 91 per cent of respondents, were by far the most common choice, followed by laptops (35.1%).

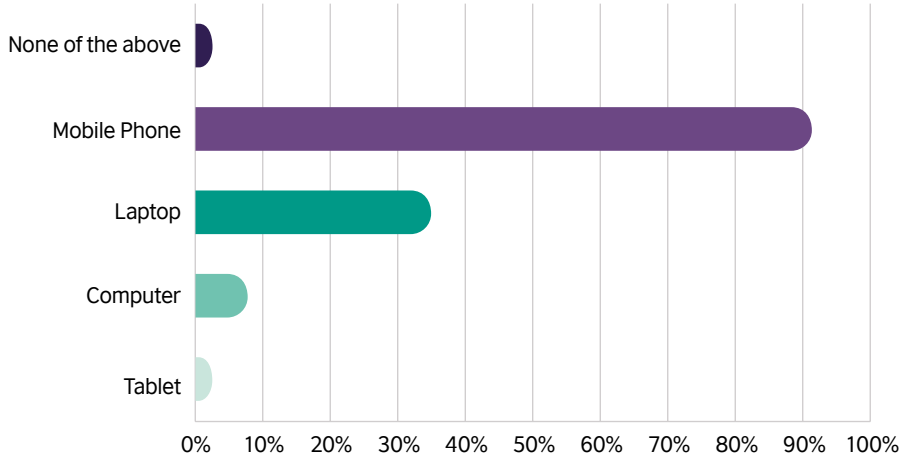



**Figure 22** How KRI teachers of English get online (N=191)

The second question asked teachers about the social media platforms they used (generally, not just for teaching) and responses are summarised in Figure 23. Facebook (63.9%), YouTube (60.2%) and Viber (46.1%) were the platforms most commonly chosen by respondents.

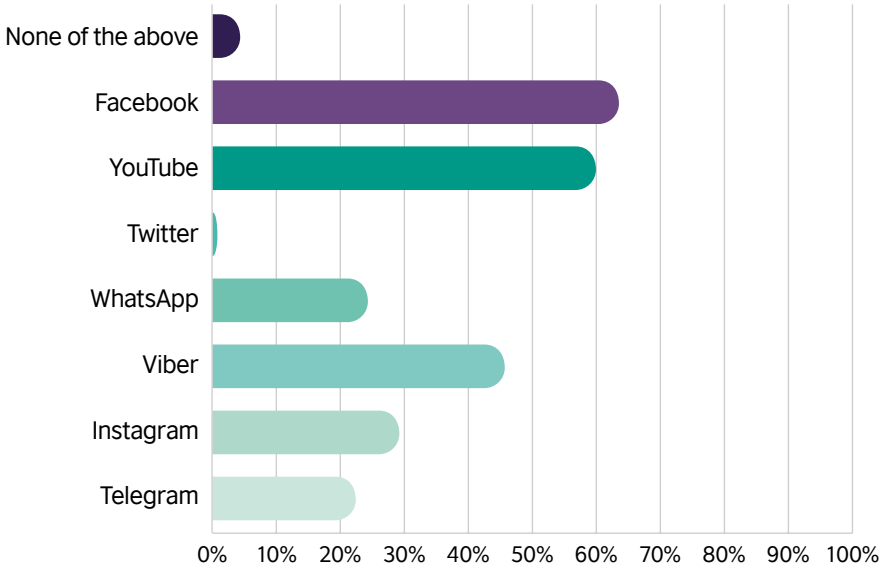



**Figure 23** Platforms used by KRI teachers of English (N=191)

Finally, teachers were invited to make any further comments about the teaching of English in Iraq. Box 10 presents a selection of the wide range of responses that were provided by 76 teachers. Various concerns are noted here related to the challenging physical environment for learning, lack of materials and a need for further training for teachers. The influence of examinations on teaching and learning is also noted, particularly how they limit the attention paid to speaking during teaching. Teachers also felt that the volume of material they are required to cover in their English books is too high.

© photograph: Poyraz Tütüncü/Pinhole Istanbul

**Box 10** Final comments by KRI English teachers

- 'I would like school buildings to be built modernly so that students can have a pleasant environment.'
- 'Teacher's life is not a good because in Iraq general government does not care about teachers.'
- 'We need more materials but we do not have.'
- 'We need one or two courses yearly for teachers to develop ours way of teaching.'
- 'Numbers of students is important in the classroom. If they are few we can teach them perfectly but in my class there are many students.'
- 'One of the most important points is that students don't study to learn, try to get high marks.'
- 'Unfortunately after 12 years of learning English in a state schools, students cannot learn English perfectly.'
- 'Teachers are not fully trained in modern methodologies of language teaching, one may sit in a few days course just hearing someone regurgitating the theories of language teaching but out of use.'
- 'Teachers opinions should be regarded concerning curriculum and examinations.'
- 'The English books are useful but they are so long and teacher and students cannot do more things so the teachers often go fast on subjects and we cannot do everything in a 40 minutes of a lesson.'
- 'I hope the government of Iraq look at schools, sources and students because now schools in Iraq like prisons children and students hate schools and study.'
- 'As English teacher I don't have enough time in the class to do all activities. I mean the period of lesson.'
- 'This type of teaching which is applied in Iraq is not helpful at all for the students to learn the language. They just learn the rules which are taught to pass the exam and they will forget it straight after the school finish.'
- 'I strongly recommend to change the style of final exams to include 15% for speaking and 10% for listening to let the student pay attention to these skills.'
- 'In our schools we almost try to help our students just to pass the examinations, so that we often neglect speaking skills and emphasise on grammar and dictation. I suggest we should add oral exams.'

#### 4.2.1.6 MOE teachers: Observations

Twelve classroom observations in six schools KRI were conducted by Saad Mahmud[43] and Table 6 summarises information about locations, grades, students and lesson duration. Three provinces were covered, with an equal split between basic education (Grades 1–9) and high schools (Grades 10–12). Five of the schools were for boys, four for girls and three were mixed. The average class size was 25 students and all observed lessons lasted 45 minutes.

Notes about the lessons were made using an observation tool (Appendix 5). This was designed by the international researchers, who then briefed the local researcher on its use. The aim of the tool was to capture descriptive information about the lessons (such as what the teacher and students were doing) as well as to make some judgements about overall quality. Evaluating individual teachers, though, was not our goal. Rather, the observations, when considered collectively, provide insight into aspects of English teaching and learning which may (though we cannot claim this is the case) reflect trends in KRI more generally and which provide concrete evidence that can be triangulated with the range of other data we are presenting.

43. Mr Mahmud was an additional local researcher recruited specifically for the KRI school visits.

| Province | Grade | Students | Gender | Duration (mins) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Duhok | 11 | 33 | Girls | 45 |
| Duhok | 12 | 23 | Girls | 45 |
| Duhok | 6 | 25 | Mixed | 45 |
| Duhok | 4 | 30 | Mixed | 45 |
| Erbil | 10 | 24 | Boys | 45 |
| Erbil | 11 | 15 | Boys | 45 |
| Erbil | 6 | 28 | Mixed | 45 |
| Erbil | 9 | 19 | Boys | 45 |
| Sulaymaniyah | 11 | 23 | Boys | 45 |
| Sulaymaniyah | 12 | 18 | Boys | 45 |
| Sulaymaniyah | 7 | 33 | Girls | 45 |
| Sulaymaniyah | 8 | 29 | Girls | 45 |

**Table 6** CSI classroom observations

One common risk associated with one-off observations of teachers is that rehearsed lessons are delivered for the benefit of the observer. In this case, it was the observer's judgement that four of the 12 lessons observed appeared somewhat rehearsed or otherwise unnatural. Nonetheless, even rehearsed lessons provide insight into what teachers believe good instructional practice is.

Table 7 summarises the observations were that made about the materials used during the observed KRI lessons and the areas of English that were focused on. The *Sunrise* textbook was used or at least referred to in every lesson (though in some cases no activities from the textbook were actually completed). The textbook was also the exclusive source of material in most lessons and technology

| Lesson | Textbook used | Other materials | Technology | Focus 1 | Focus 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Yes | No | No | Reading | Pronunciation |
| 2. | Yes | No | No | Grammar | – |
| 3. | Yes | Poster; audio | No | Speaking | Vocabulary |
| 4. | Yes | No | No | Grammar | Spelling |
| 5. | Yes | Flashcards | No | Reading | Grammar |
| 6. | Yes | No | No | Grammar | – |
| 7. | Yes | No | No | Speaking | Reading |
| 8. | Yes | Audio | No | Reading | Grammar |
| 9. | Yes | No | No | Grammar | – |
| 10. | Yes | No | Projector | Grammar | – |
| 11. | Yes | No | No | Reading | Grammar |
| 12. | Yes | No | No | Grammar | Vocabulary |

**Table 7** Materials and focus on English lessons in KRI

was rarely used (twice for mp3 audio and once to show a reading text on a data show). In terms of focus (the observer identified up to two areas per lesson – 20 in total), grammar was the most common (9), followed by reading (5) and speaking (3). Vocabulary (2) and spelling (1) were also the focus of some lessons.

The observer made narrative notes about what teachers and students did during the observed lessons. From these it can be concluded that typical teacher activities included:

- reading out a textbook passage and translating the meaning into Kurdish
- correcting students' pronunciation errors
- asking students to explain the meaning of words in a reading passage
- explaining grammar, orally and on the board, mostly in Kurdish
- asking students questions about grammar.

Typical student activities included:

- reading aloud
- answering teacher questions
- completing textbook exercises
- writing answers on the board
- copying information from the board
- listening to audio and repeating pronunciation
- translating sentences from English to Kurdish
- listening to grammatical explanations (in Kurdish)
- listening to explanations and translations of vocabulary from reading texts.

There was, thus, little evidence in the observed lessons of English being taught and used for communicative purposes; the focus was largely on the explicit study of language systems (especially grammar and pronunciation). In the high school classes especially, teachers often referred to the examinations students would be taking and these examinations seemed to exert a significant influence on the focus of lessons (i.e. reading and grammar). Boxes 11 and 12 summarise two lessons that are illustrative of the approaches more widely observed.

**Box 11** Summary of a Grade 10 English lesson in KRI

The teacher asks the students to read out loud a reading passage from their textbooks. Students nominated by the teacher take it in turns to read out a few sentences. When the text had been completed, the teacher asks the students to take out their notebooks and to copy what he writes on the board. For the next 15–20 minutes, the teacher writes out four sentences from the reading text and students copy these down. The teacher then asks the students to reads these sentences out loud and to translate them into Kurdish. The teacher corrects the translations as needed. The teacher asks the students to read out the four sentences one more time. The teacher now explains that in the examination students will have to answer multiple choice questions only and he writes an example on the board. He now writes the rule for the past continuous on the board, followed by multiple choice questions related to this rule. He explains the rule and asks students to read aloud the rule that is written on the board. He then asks students to read out the pronouns *he*, *she*, *it*, *I*, *you*, *we* and *they*. The teacher then explains the difference between singular and plural.

**Box 12** Summary of a Grade 8 English lesson in KRI

The teacher starts by reviewing the previous lesson, which focused on the pronunciation of regular past tense forms in English (such as /d/ and /t/) and writes some examples on the board. Students are asked for further examples, which the teacher writes on the board. The teacher now asks the students to read aloud a passage from the textbook. As individuals read, the teacher corrects their pronunciation. The teacher then translates each paragraph of the text into Kurdish. The teacher moves on to explain the rules for the past simple, writing on the board. The students open their textbooks and review some irregular past forms there. The teacher then explains the rules for providing short answers to past simple questions. She also writes on the board the rules for the negative form of the past simple and explains briefly. The rules for question forms in the past simple are also written on the board and explained.

Observations also examined how often English was spoken by teachers and learners and Figure 24 summarises the results from the 12 lessons. Five teachers were observed to speak English often and four rarely, while there were only two lessons where learners spoke English often. Together these conclusions point to a classroom environment where learners often have limited opportunities to speak English and be exposed to teachers' spoken English.

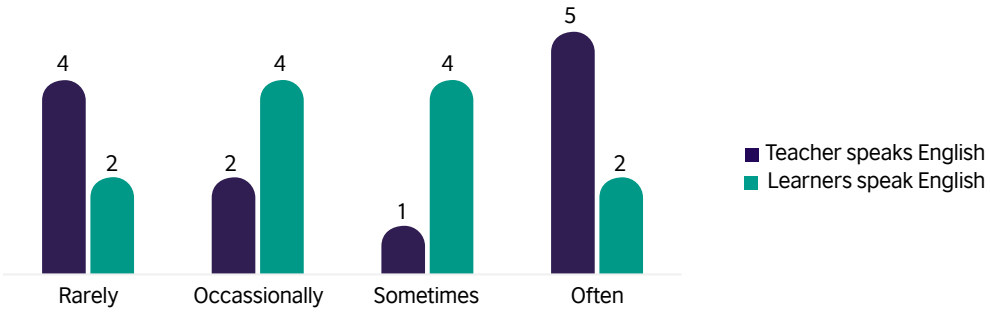



**Figure 24** Use of English in KRI lessons (N=12)

On scale of 1–5, where 1=very poor and 5=excellent, the 12 lessons were given an average rating of 2.9 and the more detailed narrative notes made by the observer highlighted aspects of teachers' work that were strengths and others that could provide a focus for developmental support.

Strengths observed included:

- positive relationships between teachers and students
- well-organised lessons
- energetic teachers
- some (though limited) use of group work
- teachers using questions to keep students engaged
- opportunities for students to write on the board
- some speaking activities
- teachers using the activities in the textbook.

Various areas for development were also noted:

- establishing a more effective balance between teacher talking time and student talking time
- developing more student-centred and communicative ways of teaching grammar
- focusing more on developing skills for using English and less on formal knowledge of grammar and other language systems
- reducing the time students spend reading aloud and making more use of silent reading
- making reading a more purposeful activity
- identifying ways of involving all students during lessons, not only those who are motivated

- particularly in high school, achieving a more productive balance between preparing students for examinations and helping them develop skills for using English
- using additional materials to complement the prescribed textbook.

As for CSI, many of the issues noted here stem from broader factors beyond the teachers' control, such as limited opportunities to develop these competences at pre-service and in-service level, a very challenging learning environment in schools, lack of infrastructure and technology, and an assessment-oriented approach to learning which dominates education generally in the country. Improving the teaching of English in Iraq does require, therefore, positive changes in these broader factors that influence what teachers do.

### 4.2.1.7 MOE learners

Students in primary and high schools in three provinces in KRI responded to a short survey about their attitudes to English and learning English. Questions were read out in Kurdish by a local researcher and students responded by standing in one of three groups to give their answer – yes, no, don't know (pictures were also used to clarify what each group represented – for example a 'thumbs up' picture for 'yes'). The number of students in each group was then tallied and written down before the next question was asked. There were two versions of the survey; a shorter version with five items that was used with students up to Grade 6, and a second version with seven items for Grade 7 onwards.

Figure 25 shows the responses for the younger students (83 respondents in one Grade 4 and two Grade 6 classes). These are very positive across all statements; over 90 per cent said they like learning English and all students said they want to become good at English. Almost 80 per cent said English is their favourite subject and over 71 per cent also said they play and sing during English lessons.

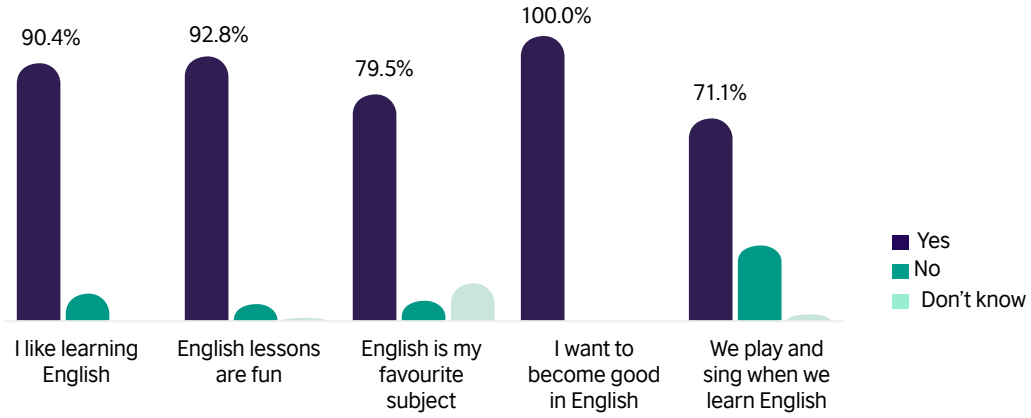



**Figure 25** Attitudes to English among Grade 4-6 KRI students (N=83)

Figure 26 shows the survey results for the sample of 184 older students who came from 9 classes (one each from Grades 7 to 10, three Grade 11 and two Grade 12). Responses here were also positive, with 100 per cent agreeing they wanted to become good at English and over 96 per cent saying they enjoyed English lessons. High percentages also agreed with the two statements regarding the importance of English for their study and job prospects. Just over 54 per cent said English was their favourite subject. Almost 64 per cent of these students also said that Arabic is used in English classes.

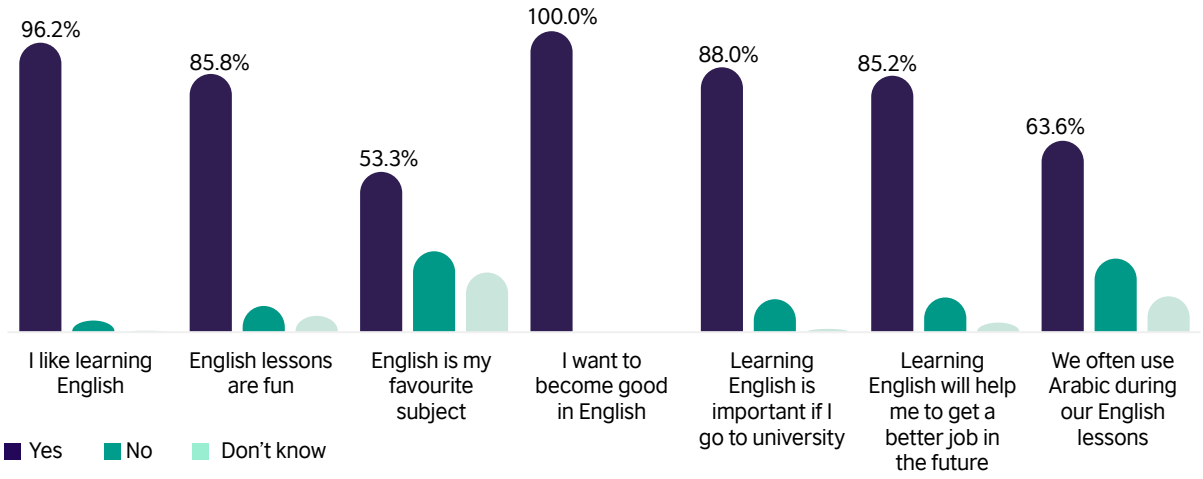



**Figure 26** Attitudes to English among Grade 7–12 KRI students (N=184)

### 4.2.2 Ministry of Higher Education

Only one group of MOHE stakeholders were accessed in KRI – a group of NDE teachers who attended a face-to-face workshop during the country visit of one of the international researchers. Attempts to organise meetings with academic staff from English departments in Colleges of Education were unsuccessful.

#### 4.2.2.1 University teachers of English

Nine NDE teachers from four universities in KRI attended a workshop. They were asked to comment on ten conclusions from previous research on the teaching of English in universities in KRI (see Appendix 8) and their responses are summarised in Table 8. There was general agreement with most of the statements, apart from the first two. For statement 1, some respondents explained that the language centre at their university is involved in NDE; for example, one wrote that the 'language centre plays role in setting up placement test, reviewing the curriculum for non-departmental English courses and unifying final examinations'. For statement 2, various examples of how often NDE was taught were given and it seems that this varied across KRI universities and departments. In some cases it was reported that undergraduate students studied English for eight hours a week in their first year, then for two hours a week in Year 2. In other cases, NDE was taught for four years. In response to statement 5, some teachers also noted that while General English was taught in Year 1, in subsequent years the focus was on ESP. Overall, the responses of this group of teachers suggested that, while the conclusions from the earlier research on NDE in KRI remained largely valid, the details of how often NDE was taught, for how many years, and what the content of NDE was, varied across universities and departments.

| Statements | Yes | No | Partly |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. University language centres play no role in non-departmental English courses. | 4 | 4 | 1 |
| 2. English language courses are typically taught only in the first year of study and most commonly for two hours a week. | 3 | 5 | 1 |
| 3. English classes typically have at least 30 students. | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| 4. Over 62% of the teachers stated that first year students' enter university with a beginner (A1) or elementary (A2) level of English. | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| 5. Some non-departmental English courses are very basic in level, with a primary focus on mechanics (e.g. punctuation, grammar, reading and writing). | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| 6. Universities identified a long list of challenges they are facing in relation to the teaching and learning of English. These include limited numbers of trained teachers, limited access to resources and facilities, the lack of clear policies on English, and curricula that very often do not motivate students. | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| 7. Technology is lacking in the classrooms where English is taught. Over 87% of teachers, though, said they make regular use of technology on their courses, often using their own personal equipment. | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| 8. The English language teaching workforce is predominantly local, relatively inexperienced, and, in a substantial proportion of cases (over 42%), untrained to teach English. | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| 9. Fewer than 20% of the respondents felt their students' motivation to learn English was high while over 27% felt it was low or very low. | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| 10. Teachers participate in a range of professional development activities; fewer than 50%, though, agreed that their university supports their professional development. | 5 | 2 | 2 |

**Table 8** Teachers' views about NDE in KRI

### 4.2.3 Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

A face-to-face meeting at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs directorate lasting two hours was held with the General Director.

#### The teaching of English in vocational centres in KRI

English is run in the vocational education centres of which there are eight in KRI (in Erbil, Sulaimaniyah, Dohuk, Germian, Soran, Zaho and Halabja) in addition to the Swedish academy, which is the main vocational centre, so-called as it was funded by CIDA in 2011 with the aim to develop a high-quality vocational training centre. This initiative was developed into a partnership between CIDA and the vehicle manufacturer, *Scania*. English language classes were provided in this centre, we were told, 'given the importance of English in understanding international manufacturing terminology'. The academy is now managed entirely by the government of KRI while certification is recognised internationally.

Many teachers of English have been working to deliver English language programmes in this centre and the quality is regarded as high. These teachers are outsourced across the KRI to work on other projects that include an English component. Currently, the eight vocational training centres run 30-day English courses. The teachers on these courses come from outside MoLSA. Teachers were previously trained online by *EF* in the UK. *Scania* funded this training until 2020. There are 16 levels of English with some graduates achieving all levels.

Since the economic crisis in 2014, most graduates, we were told, go into the private sector in the following fields:

- oil companies
- five-star hotels
- cafés and restaurants
- international and local NGOs
- Communication companies (e.g. Zain; Korek; Asiatel).

There is no set curriculum approved by MoLSA and the teachers are free to use their own materials. There is no funding at the moment to develop a curriculum. However, there is a significant demand for English in the areas where these centres are located.

The Swedish Centre has been authorised to run as a training of trainers (ToT) centre though it is officially known as 'Directorate of Training Trainers'. Such is its reputation that Baghdad-based MoLSA staff wish to take English courses at the Swedish Academy.

The vocational training centres do not have a basic curriculum – should the British Council wish to work with MoLSA on this kind of initiative, we were told that teachers and trainers would need to be trained on how to deliver this curriculum. These initiatives could be brought together with training on mentoring and coaching should funding allow. In the past UNESCO provided funding on coaching.

Since the arrival of refugees and IDPs over the past ten years, the aim has been to integrate learners into education. Vocational training is a good example of where IDPs, refugees and the host community come together to learn. However, though the MoE is responsible for catch-up classes in many settings, very few catch-up classes are provided by MoLSA.

There is also a need for curriculum development at the DOLSA (Directorate of Labour and Social Affairs) centres. These are child-friendly spaces teaching non-professional 'English for capacity building'. These curricula, we were told, could be used across the whole of KRI.

# 5 English in non-formal education

This section presents the results of the research conducted into the teaching and learning of English in non-formal education in Iraq. CSI and KRI will be discussed separately initially, while the results of the lesson observations in both regions are combined.

### Definitions

**Core skills** are defined by the British Council as: critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, creativity, imagination, citizenship, digital literacy, personal development and leadership. **Life skills** are often described in a similar way but usually include health and well-being, psycho-social skills, and interpersonal skills, particularly for displaced or marginalised learners.

**'Education in emergencies'** treats education as a basic need in emergency situations and is closely associated with humanitarian relief to individuals and families affected by conflict, displacement or disaster. It includes safeguarding (child protection and schools as safe places), facilitating learners' return to familiar routines, providing catch-up classes, life skills and core skills.

**Internally Displaced People** (IDPs), unlike refugees, are forced migrants who have not crossed a national border to escape conflict or disaster. IDPs stay within their own country and remain under the protection of their government.

**Marginalisation** is a process by which vulnerable individuals, groups and communities become socially excluded.

A **refugee** is defined by the 1951 Refugee Convention as an individual who, 'owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail [oneself] of the protection of that country'.

**Resilience** is 'the ability of individuals, households, communities and institutions to anticipate, withstand, recover and transform from shocks and crises' (Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2015–2016).

## 5.1 Literature review

This literature review begins with a brief review of source material relating to the teaching of refugee learners in formal and non-formal settings. In the literature reviewed for this report, few studies have examined the role of teachers in refugee contexts. There is a much wider literature about refugee children and adolescents. Richardson et al. (2018) found that there is a gap in the literature regarding how teachers of refugees are trained, retained, compensated and managed in specific country contexts. Furthermore, there is little research on national teachers who are teaching refugee children as most of the literature focuses on refugee teachers (i.e. teachers who are also refugees). This lack of understanding of the context of teaching of refugees and IDPs hinders project design and delivery and the extent to which refugees can contribute to education in their host countries and, in the future, to their home countries. More research is needed on teachers of refugees to make it

possible to design and reform effective educational systems (including language education) to support teachers working in refugee contexts (Richardson et al., 2018). In short, as refugee and IDP populations grow, there is an urgent need for an evidence base to guide policies and support governments and non-governmental partners in providing a quality teaching for refugees (INEE, 2011).

The aim of the remainder of this short review is to highlight what evidence is available on teachers of refugees and identify how this relates to non-formal education in Iraq. The review surveys a selection of secondary source material on teacher development and management of teachers for refugee and marginalised populations, as well as research on refugee education, both classroom- and school-based, that provides relevant information about teachers. As much as possible, the review focuses on Iraq and its immediate neighbours and occasionally includes other post-conflict contexts and refugee populations which are relevant to the discussion of ELT in Iraq.

In the remainder of this section, 'teacher of refugees' refers to both national (host country) and refugee individuals who hold teaching positions. Specifically, 'refugee teacher' refers to refugees who teach refugee students. This includes refugees who were teachers before their displacement. 'National teacher' refers to teachers who are from the host country and who teach refugee students. In both cases, teachers of refugees include previously unqualified individuals who have taken up the teaching profession to teach in classrooms where there are refugees.

### Marginalisation and resilience

In their paper, *No More Excuses: Provide Education to Forcibly Displaced People*, UNESCO (2016) advocates that nation states take the initiative to include displaced children and youth in their education systems. They stress that states should enable accelerated education programmes to offer flexible and alternative pathways to education. *This project report emphasises that it is essential that displaced children and youth have trained teachers and that governments need to ensure teachers are paid appropriately and have access to professional development opportunities.* This has a significant bearing on English language teaching in Iraq since quality education is often in short supply for the national student population and refugee students can be perceived as placing an additional burden on an already weak or strained system. In the wider Middle East region, there have been significant efforts to coordinate governments and partner collaborations to manage the influx of millions of Syrian refugees in five host countries: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. UNHCR (2016) has found that, in the Middle East, governments and NGOs in countries hosting refugee populations have each adopted different practices and strategies on several policy areas regarding teaching. Recognising the enormous challenges facing host countries and communities when hosting Syrian refugees, in 2015 the international community instituted a new comprehensive approach. This approach went beyond emergency assistance by combining humanitarian and development responses to the Syria crisis into a single coherent plan in line with national plans and priorities, under the co-leadership of UNHCR and UNDP. The 3RP has led the way in terms of the international community's support to national efforts to deal with the impact of the crisis. Since this time, the 3RP has been at the forefront of policy and programmatic innovations including support to national and local systems and supporting the resilience of refugees and host communities.

The British Council responded to the 3RP in 2016 with a four-country research programme known as Language for Resilience (Capstick & Delaney, 2016). The key findings are:

- Every language used by the refugees helps them to build resilience at the individual, family and community levels. Both home language and their additional languages matter. Proficiency in additional languages provides new opportunities for education and employment.
- Proficiency in key languages gives people a voice to tell their story in various contexts.

- Language-learning can bolster social cohesion and intercultural understanding.
- Language-learning activities can be supportive interventions to address the effects of loss, displacement and trauma.
- Building the capacity of language teachers can strengthen the resilience of the formal and non-formal education systems in host communities.

### Teacher education and teacher development in refugee and marginalised communities

The UNHCR Global Education Strategy (2016) acknowledges that teachers matter more than any other single factor to learning, and focuses on the instructional role of teachers and the training they need to be effective in student learning processes. Teachers fulfil several critical roles in providing education to refugee children and youth: as a source of continuity and normality for children, helping restore a sense of stability and confidence, helping support recovery and transition post-conflict and after emergencies, and finally, promoting security, peace and human rights (Richardson et al., 2018). For these reasons, the INEE Minimum Standards (2016) suggest that teachers should be ideally selected from the affected community because these teachers will understand the political, social and economic context of their learners. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has also suggested that some refugees feel that host community teachers do not know how to teach them, regardless of their qualifications, and that host community schools may refuse access to national exams unless trained teachers have taught the children. Richardson et al. (2018) cite the example of Syrian refugee parents who prefer non-formal schools that teach the Syrian curriculum, because they feel Syrian teachers will not only better understand refugees' needs but also be less likely to discriminate against refugee children. Capstick and Delaney noted similar tendencies in their 2016 research, where refugee teachers, they were told, were better able to adapt curricula to the refugee context by aligning these curricula with the socio-cultural goals of the learners. However, UNESCO and UNHCR (2016) note an absence of clear national or international guidelines about how teachers should respond to newcomers other than being told they must accept them in their classrooms. Teachers are often unaware of the specific curriculum needs of newly arrived refugee or IDP learners, and are often unclear about what to teach and how to address the initial language development needs of learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds (Capstick & Delaney, 2016). It seems that dealing with language diversity has largely been left to individual school principals and staff. Moreover, support is often offered on an ad hoc basis as individual needs arise. What this means is that decisions about how to address learners needs and what to teach are often left to individual teachers. Finally, refugee and IDP induction can also vary from school to school, which means that procedures for welcoming newcomer refugees and IDPs into school vary considerably.

While there are clearly gaps in induction guidance for teachers, the INEE's *Minimum Standards Handbook* provides guidance for setting the standards necessary for recruiting and selecting teachers, outlining their conditions of work and ensuring they are trained and given professional development and support. In the *Minimum Standards* document, guidance notes are provided on teaching and learning. The language of instruction and selection of curricula are central here. The INEE *Minimum Standards* advocate for the recruitment of teachers who speak learners' mother tongue and, where necessary and appropriate, it is recommended that intensive courses in the national or host country language(s) be provided. This alternative approach to the one set out above advocates that national teachers who have the familiarity with local and/or national language(s) and curricula are better placed to enable refugee learners into national education systems. What this means is that, despite refugee and IDP communities' desires for their children to learn from teachers of the same or similar backgrounds, it is essential to consider what is best for children's learning. In the context of Iraq, given the protracted nature of its past conflicts, Syrian refugee children will need to

learn Kurdish and Arabic in KRI, and IDP learners will need to learn Arabic there so they can continue their education and pursue economic opportunities when they return. The consequences for teacher development here lie in the fact that, regardless of the choice of language of curriculum, both national and refugee teachers need support to help their students navigate different languages of instruction and different language subject lessons, such as English.

Finally, Richardson et al. (2018) note a lack of research on teacher retention and the working conditions and well-being of teachers of refugees. In particular, Richardson et al. focus on how teachers are entering the classroom often with inadequate preparation but also are coping with their own psychological, emotional and/or physical challenges, and how this affects how long they stay in the profession. To this end, research is needed on teacher retention and what services are available to refugee teachers, including whether teachers are accessing these. Richardson et al. note that it is important to better understand challenges to teacher retention, specifically related to how teachers in refugee settings are managed and their reasons for leaving, and staying, in the profession.

## 5.2 Central and Southern Iraq

### 5.2.1 NGO providers

Perspectives on English education in Iraq were obtained through NGO stakeholders in the form of NGO officials, NGO teachers of English and their learners. Data was collected through centralised workshops, individual interviews and field visits to NGO centres, refugee camps and IDP camps as well as formal sector schools for marginalised communities. The results for each of these data collection procedures are discussed below.

#### 5.2.1.1 NGO workshop and interviews

Box 13 lists the NGOs who contributed to research activities we conducted in CSI.

**Box 13** NGO participants – CSI

Zad Al khair Charity
Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
Public Aid Organization
Iraqi Flower association for Relief and development
Ethar Humanitarian Foundation
Iraqi Flower association for Relief and development
Be A Helper Organization for Relief and Development
Mercy Hands for Humanitarian Aid
Mercy Hands for Humanitarian Aid
Peace country organization
Peta for Cultural Services
Wadq Foundation for Relief and Development
DMACO organization
Ethar Humanitarian Foundation

Table 9 summarises key insights obtained from these NGOs.

| NGO (name in full) and overall mission | Location of education activities | Target learners | Education activities | Contact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)**<br><br>Assist internally displaced Iraqis, Syrian refugees, returnees and host communities, focusing on those in protracted displacement in camps, informal settlements and areas of return, with a particular emphasis on hard-to-reach populations–early recovery programming, aiming for sustainable development, providing integrated and localised services to assist the displacement-affected populations, and responding to emergencies. | The north of Iraq, especially in Anbar, Salladin, and Mosul<br><br>**Locations of support in Anbar:**<br><br>Fallujah district and sub-district<br><br>Amiryat Al Fallujah district and BZBZ sub-district<br><br>Ramadi district and sub-district (Kilo 7)<br><br>Qaim district and sub-district | IDPs and returnees in refugee camps in various areas–PSS, BLP and TLM schools, students | Ensure that children and youth have access to quality education and skills development opportunities which are critical for building personal and community-level resilience of displacement affected girls, boys and youth<br><br>Hire teachers for schools in camps<br><br>Provide teachers' kits e.g. loudspeakers, other materials<br><br>Rehabilitation for destroyed schools<br><br>Provide catch-up and remedial classes<br><br>Follow up with teachers, teachers' reports<br><br>Strong links with DOE and MOE<br><br>Links with vocational training centres, including English centres<br><br>English assessment follows MOE procedure<br><br>Online teaching using WhatsApp and Telegram | Website: https://www.nrc.no/countries/middle-east/iraq/ |

| NGO (name in full) and overall mission | Location of education activities | Target learners | Education activities | Contact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Al Ethar Foundation**<br><br>Al Ethar Foundation was founded in June 2005 due to the community's needs to help vulnerable people by providing the necessary needs to preserve their lives and conditions, especially widows and orphans as well as; education, health, youth care, and urgent relief. | Baghdad, Anbar | Students with a low academic level, failing students, dropout students, orphans, marginalised students, IDPs, returnees | Established training centres<br><br>Teachers have been trained before starting (psychological support and how to deal with children and teaching in a crisis)<br><br>Provide required tools for teachers<br><br>Teacher evaluations<br><br>Teach English through using Arabic in primary level<br><br>Online teaching through various platforms<br><br>Projects supervised by MOE<br><br>Previous projects – UNESCO Literacy project 2014, Improve access to education 2019–20, British Council build the capacity of primary/secondary education 2019–20<br><br>New education project with UNESCO/UN-OCHA September 2021 | |
| **Reform-Islah**<br><br>(Al Ethar working with Reform) | | Students from marginalised sections of society | Teachers were found to be qualified as they were subjects to various tests and trained in how to deal with marginalised societies<br><br>Have English teachers who have been involved in several projects with UNICEF and UNESCO<br><br>Continuous supervision support of teachers<br><br>Use both Arabic and English in classes<br><br>Cooperate with various directorates within MOE<br><br>Exchange visits with Ethar group NGOS | |

| NGO (name in full) and overall mission | Location of education activities | Target learners | Education activities | Contact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Be Supportive-Kun Awna**<br>(Al Ethar working with Be Supportive) | | Primary and secondary school students, young people, women, IDPs, returnees | Currently no full-time trainers, however, cooperate with trainers who are experts in dealing with IDPs with new methodology<br>Qualified to train teachers and trainers and arrange workshops<br>A network of supervisors who follow the training and write reports<br>Exchange visits with Ethar group NGOs<br>Have a specialised trainer in online training<br>Cooperates with MOE | |
| **Public Aid Organisation (PAO)**<br>Helps provide relief to IDPs and refugees in Iraq. Has programmes in gender-based violence, business innovation, capacity building of CSOs, across Iraq | | IDPs, young people (9–18), adult women, prisoners, people with disabilities, older people | Connection with the MOE and the directorate of training and development<br>Exchange visits with "Sham" and "Tamooz" NGOs<br>However, they do not implement English language teaching, appear unqualified and less experienced in this area | Webpage: www.pao-iq.org |
| **Mercy Hands**<br>Mercy Hands is a humanitarian organisation working in emergency and recovery, education, community development, protection, livelihoods, research, health, WASH | Baghdad, Basrah, Dohuk, and other parts of Iraq | IDPs, returnees (if available), refugees (if available), youth, children, women, other NGOs, newly emerging Iraqi NGOs, Government actors (local), private sector | Capacity building courses (that covers many topics including English language courses) have been provided to youth and children as well as women, host communities, and other groups of beneficiaries<br>Select highly qualified teachers, experts in their major to provide lectures for the beneficiaries<br>The centres are equipped with necessary equipment and materials to help facilitate provision of the courses to the beneficiaries, as well as providing a safe place (in terms of security and accessibility)<br>Certificates provided in the training centres are officially recognised by the government. A pre- and post-course assessment is undertaken | Webpage: www.mercyhands.org/ |

| NGO (name in full) and overall mission | Location of education activities | Target learners | Education activities | Contact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **PETA Center for Cultural Services**<br><br>Launched in 2014, formally registered in 2017 | Baghdad | At the beginning (2014) most students were writers; in 2015 beginner and intermediate level classes were given for groups of 12–18 students | English conversation classes – lessons are held in an NGO complex, every three months on average, some disruption due to Covid-19 and security issues | |
| **Marshes South** | Thi-Qar Governate | IDPs and returnees | | |
| **Bilad Al-Salam Organisation for Human Rights**<br><br>Founded in 2012, with headquarters in Baghdad, the organisation has spread to most of the governorates of Iraq<br><br>In co-operation with the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice, Bilad Al-Salam has organised several courses for beneficiaries in relation to human rights, provides rehabilitation for returnees from Isis, and education | | IDPs | Educational courses for male and female students at all levels, including catch-up workshops, especially in relation to learning English for the finished classes<br><br>Since 2014, the organisation has visited many camps for the displaced and provides educational courses in many fields | |

**Table 9** Key insights from CSI NGOs

### 5.2.2 Formal sector providers to marginalised communities

Perspectives on English education in Iraq were also obtained from teachers in marginalised communities and their learners. Data was collected through centralised workshops, individual interviews and site visits. The results for each of these data collection procedures are discussed below.

A workshop was held in Baghdad at which formal sector teachers working with marginalised learners from across the CSI region attended. The teachers worked in small groups to discuss a series of questions (Appendix 4) relating to their teaching, curriculum, materials, assessment, opportunities for professional development, their learners and both the challenges they face and the support they need. Teachers were asked to identify three priority areas for enhancing the provision of English for marginalised learners.

**Group 1**

- Support for teachers – 'training courses from native speakers of English who provide methodology sessions to help teachers improve their classroom techniques'
- 'Advice about how to deal with the problem of large classes'
- Guidance about 'reducing the amount of Arabic that is used to explain English'.

**Group 2**

- Training for teachers 'on methodology – not just language improvement'
- 'Improving the facilities, e.g. media, technology, smart boards'
- 'Remuneration for teachers – there are low levels of motivation because of low salaries'.

**Group 3**

- 'The syllabus needs adapting so that teachers can cover everything they need to cover in the time that is available.'
- 'In primary there is only three hours of teaching for English for Grade 4 and only four hours for Grades 5 and 6 in some schools.'
- 'Many teachers skip activities in 'English in Iraq' because there simply isn't the time to cover everything.'

**Group 4**

- 'Ongoing training for teachers – ideally two workshops per year: materials and language'
- 'Support with designing and using visual aids'
- 'Huge numbers in classrooms outside the cities' – double shifts sometimes triple up to 80 students in a class: teachers need guidance on how to teach this many students.

**Group 5**

- Support with teaching 'very mixed-ability classes'
- 'Little focus on speaking/oral as its not included in the national exams – more training needed'
- 'Students lack confidence – how can teachers help them feel confident about using English?'
- 'Teachers forced to use Arabic language in the classroom.'

**Returnees: A refugee teacher from Fallujah at the Baghdad workshop explains the disruption to their teaching of English during the conflict with Daesh.**

Because of the conflict with Daesh, the whole city of Fallujah moved to Sulaymaniyah and entered school there for three years. They have now returned to Fallujah. Many students had missed a great deal of school while others had been accommodated in temporary schools. The teacher explained:

> *Life is normal now. The students don't need catch-up classes anymore but there is still teaching in caravans with no water and no electricity in some cases. The same curriculum is being used, English in Iraq, but there is a shortage of textbooks. Although the internet connection is very weak, the teachers share textbook material using WhatsApp.*

# 5.3 Kurdistan Region of Iraq

## 5.3.1 NGO providers

Perspectives on English education in NGO settings in KRI were obtained through NGO workshops, interviews and field visits with NGO officials, NGO teachers of English and their learners. The results for each of these data collection procedures are summarised below.

### 5.3.1.1 NGO workshop and interviews

A face-to-face workshop with seven NGOs working in KRI was held in Erbil. Participants from these NGOs provided details of their organisations' work as well as details about their English programmes. Follow-up interviews with each NGO were carried out over the following two months to identify additional information relating to their work. Details are provided in Table 10.

During the face-to-face workshops, participants were asked about specific aspects of their English language provision. The following sub-sections, which include the questions that participants were asked, summarise the discussion.

#### English language provision

**How do children and young adults access English language education and what are the characteristics of this?**

**Teaching and learning**

- 'English lessons are accessed through both online and offline settings since the Covid-19 pandemic began' (an example of an online course is the Barzani Foundation's project with Arizona State University).
- Access to English classes focuses on urban settings in Erbil, Dohuk and Sulaimaniya or in camps on the outskirts of these urban centres.
- Large-scale catch-up classes include English subject for Grades 10–12.
- UNHCR partners with NGOs working with refugees to provide English classes for Syrian learners.
- IDP and refugee learners attend English for psycho-social support programmes which are linked to child protection.
- 'Capacity building for teenagers and youth' programmes increasingly include 'English for life-skills' courses as English is both seen as an attractive subject to young adults and adolescents as well as being a valuable skill to employers.
- English courses are used to attract children and young adults from IDP, refugee and host community backgrounds for social cohesion programmes.

| NGO (name in full) and overall mission | Location of education activities | Target learners | Education activities | Contact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Barzani Charity Foundation** | Across the KRI region | Classes are mostly for IDPs and refugees, with some host community provision | Partners with training centres and draw from mostly volunteer teachers with qualifications. When recruiting English language teachers, they ask applicants to take a proficiency test (designed by senior staff) and then carry out interviews in English.<br>Vocational training centres are located in the IDP and refugee camps across the KRI region, which include English courses.<br>Currently running online English courses for refugees with Arizona State University<br>Catch-up classes use the government curriculum<br>Face-to-face classes are held in a private language centre; English courses are at three levels. They include an ESOL exam and focus on conversational English rather than grammar.<br>Assessments are designed in-house, but as with all participants in the workshop, the certificates are not externally accredited. | Senior Education Officer |
| **Amedist** (previously NRC in Ninawa ) | Ninawa | Remainees, those who are not displaced, but living in conflict-affected areas | The majority of teachers are recruited from the host community and the courses they teach include general English language training.<br>Works with government stakeholders leading on international initiatives with a particular focus on primary and secondary education | English Programme Manager |

| NGO (name in full) and overall mission | Location of education activities | Target learners | Education activities | Contact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INTERSOS** | Sulaymaniyah and Erbil | Refugees from G1–12 | 'Education cannot wait' (ECW) funded by the Education Cluster and UNICEF<br><br>Provides catch-up classes which include English for Grades 10–12 with UNHCR in refugee camps in Erbil<br><br>Provides activities inside formal schools that includes catch-up classes<br><br>Works with refugees on English in upper secondary in Sulaymaniyah and Erbil (since August 2021)<br><br>English is used as part of a social cohesion programme, planning to run catch-up classes including English<br><br>Currently drafting a plan to include a theatre competition<br><br>Teachers are trained by DoE specialists and the curriculum is taken from formal schools. Those teachers are supported by volunteers (teacher assistants) who have lower qualifications.<br><br>The 'self-learning' materials run for Grades 1–12 in Sulaymaniyah are designed by the national Education Cluster (MoE and UNICEF).<br><br>Pre-tests and post-tests are carried out before and after courses, (used mainly to evaluate the success of the course for internal purposes than for external recognition of the learners' level–Note: this was agreed by all of the workshop participants)<br><br>When recruiting teachers, INTERSOS make an announcement to camp and community leaders. The technical advisor at INTERSOS has produced an in-house test which is taken by all applicants followed by an interview in English. | Education Manager<br>Education Officer |

| NGO (name in full) and overall mission | Location of education activities | Target learners | Education activities | Contact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Kurdistan Save the Children (KSC)**<br>KSC's main office is in Sulaymaniyah with offices in Duhok, Erbil, Garmian and Kirkuk. KSC is working on several projects, among them are the youth centers, education is one of the main sectors of the organisation. Also, the organisation used to work with street/working children through creating safe spaces in the cities and provide them with PSS and recreational activities during their off-days. Also, the organisation used to support health sector in the KRI. | Sulaymaniyah, Halabja, and Garmian | Youth | The organisation has around 23 youth centres.<br>The youth centres provide training to the youth, including computer classes, catch-up classes, as well as English language courses. | |
| **Public Aid Organisation (PAO)**<br>Helps provide relief to IDPs and refugees in Iraq. Has programmes in gender-based violence, business innovation, capacity building of CSOs, across Iraq. | Sulaymaniyah, Dohuk and Ninawa | Students in the affected areas in IDP camps as well as IDPs living outside camps, returnees | Establishing a new centre for non-formal education. English is included as a 'pedagogical method'.<br>They work in vocational centres which provide business courses that help small organisations with start-up training. There is no English course included in these programmes but they do use English when teaching marketing.<br>Using English for child protection, as an incentive to encourage children and youth to join their psycho-social programmes. They refer to their programmes as 'English as a life skill'. English is also a part of 'Capacity building for teenage and youth' programmes. | Programme Director<br>Webpage: www.pao-iq.org |

| NGO (name in full) and overall mission | Location of education activities | Target learners | Education activities | Contact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Programmes include protection and education support for 0–18 year-olds | | from affected areas, and students from the host communities (not affected by conflict but from low socio-economic areas) | In terms of teaching material, the Iraqi education curriculum is used for catch-up classes while the materials for the 'English as a life skill' course were designed by a French partner.<br><br>For their teenager classes, which rely on story-telling, there is no specific course because this is embedded within their psycho-social/life skills programmes.<br><br>As with other members of the group, although certificates were stamped with the MoE logo, they are not provided as evidence of having achieved a specific level in English but rather that a learner had attended the course.<br><br>Regarding the overlap between formal and non-formal, PAO are already using NFE in the formal sector in coordination with the MoE. For example, taking the approaches to teaching young people in their youth centres and expanding these to formal schools as part of capacity building programmes. PAO and Barzani Foundation were both working on this initiative and welcomed this as a way forward for supporting other NGO partners.<br><br>Selection and recruitment of teachers– PAO interviews applicants in English rather than provide a written test. These tests were designed in-house.<br><br>Over the last three years, PAO has implemented several education projects funded by the IHF (international humanitarian Funds in Ninawa), jointly with UNICEF and Intersos, implemented the ECW education in Sulaymaniyah and Kirkuk. In partnership with UNESCO, PAO implemented a back to school campaign, school rehabilitation and teacher training in Salahdeen and Anbar. In partnership with Caritas, PAO implemented school feeding in Kirkuk.<br><br>Additionally, as part of its protection sector, PAO has implemented several projects with UNICEF. | |

**Table 10** Key insights from KRI NGOs

### Curriculum

- Partnerships exist between the Federal Government of Iraq as well as the Kurdistan Regional Government and the NGOs in which the Government selects the appropriate curricula (e.g. the textbook *Sunrise* is used widely) for catch-up classes.
- Projects in the technical and vocational institutions help teachers to develop their own curricula but there are no specific courses for helping English teachers develop a curriculum for teaching English.
- 'English for life skills training course' has been developed by Save the Children KRI and is being delivered in its centres with a specially designed curriculum which links English with other communication skills.
- 'For catch-up classes, the education curriculum is drawn from the government-mandated curriculum relating to that group of learners.'

### Materials and resources

- English courses were often described as 'general English' courses and the materials were not always designed in-house for a specific group of learners which meant that materials were 'generic'.
- 'If [materials are] just using English as a life skill in the community centres, for that we have different levels – for children 3–6 years old we just use some simple basic English starting with the alphabet and play activities – designed by French partner who supports field staff with content.'
- 'For adolescents we use storytelling, but we don't have a specific English course that we can apply because the goal is to provide the children with psycho-social support and child protection services and English as a life skill and English inserted to encourage others to join our centre.'

### Learning environment (such as class size)

- English is taught in camp settings to IDPs and refugees usually in small temporary cabins which have desks and seats in rows, with a small space at the front for the teacher.
- English is taught in non-camp settings such as NGO centres where the rooms are larger and the buildings more spacious.
- English is taught in vocational training centres in camps and non-camp settings.
- Class sizes range between very small classes (6 learners) to catch-up classes of 40 learners.

### Inclusion

- Inclusion is spoken about primarily in terms of getting conflict-affected youth back into school.
- Good parenting programmes are part of some inclusion projects.
- Education programmes are provided to those host communities who have been exposed to humanitarian crises and 'need to understand the inclusion of girls and women'.
- Save the Children KRI gave the example of 'using English for child protection purposes' which they run inside and outside camps and where 'through English, children are also provided with psycho-social support and protection services as well as educating girls'.
- Non-formal education programmes follow strict gender compliance procedures, and girls and adolescent women are a bigger target group than males, in terms of teachers as well as learners.
- It is not always possible to provide teaching roles to women when many women find that there are transport and security issues related to where teaching takes place, e.g. in camp settings or in NGO centres.
- 'Finding refugee and IDP women for roles as teachers is a priority but not always possible so often beneficiaries begin working as volunteers or assistants and then take on roles as teachers after taking in-house training courses.'

### Assessment

- 'Pre-tests and post-tests are carried out before and after courses but as with other group members, these are more important internally to evaluate the success of courses and for internal monitoring and evaluation rather than being used by those outside the organisation as an indication of the learner's level.'
- 'In previous years, the Norwegian Refugee Council had struggled with its social cohesion projects in West Mosul when trying to do placement tests of English proficiency as learners who were less conflict affected usually scored higher in their English proficiency than more marginalised groups or more conflict-affected groups who scored lower.' 'Thus, when trying to place learners according to their proficiency level in a language, some of the stratifications will be reinforced and the desire to have socially mixed groups to run social cohesion projects will not be achieved. '

### Teachers

**What is the profile of your teachers of English?**

- Teachers of English are required to have formal qualifications in English and are ideally graduates from Colleges of Arts or University BA programmes which include English Language Teaching.
- 'Not all teachers of English in non-formal settings have English Language Teaching qualifications but often they are recruited because they can speak English well.'
- For the selection and recruitment of teachers, NGOs interviews applicants in English rather than asking them to complete a written test of their English. These tests are designed in-house.
- Non-formal education programmes often include professional development opportunities such as 'how to teach a non-formal teaching programme in a more effective way' including pedagogical methods for all lessons but nothing specifically tailored for language teachers.
- Teachers from host communities are often used to help displaced learners 'integrate more', e.g. most of the teachers of English from the Barzani Foundation are taken from the host communities.

**What access do teachers have to opportunities for professional development?**

There is little access to English-specific or language methodology-specific professional development for teachers in non-formal English education. Teachers listed the following areas as topics for CPD:

- How to teach English and other second languages, i.e. language teaching methodology
- How to move away from rote-learning methods
- How to organise participatory learner-centred methodology
- How to organise task-based learning
- How to create learner-centred materials
- How to take a multilingual approach
- How to teach different learning styles and mixed abilities
- How to include practical techniques and models for integrating core skills across the curriculum.

For professional development through mentoring and coaching, the NGOs explained in the workshop that they relied on internal experts and international partners, e.g. for non-formal education, teachers were sometimes coached by international experts. None of the workshop participants was able to recollect whether language experts had been involved in coaching and mentoring programmes. The focus was normally on methodology, e.g. 'the DoE gives training about classroom management and volunteers receive capacity training'.

There seemed to be some confusion about the role of a mentor whereas it was clear that the role of a supervisor is to evaluate and rarely to provide mentoring. It was agreed that mentoring and coaching are not part of supervisors' roles. There are no Education Supervisors in the non-formal sector.

### Learners

Who are the learners and what are their attitudes to English and their experiences of learning the language?

- Refugee, IDPs and community learners are taught separately or together depending on the programme.
- Learners were broken down into primary school age, secondary school age and 18-25 year-olds though there were examples of heterogeneous classes made up of different age groups.
- Learners are primarily from conflict-affected areas, e.g. IDPs in camps and in host community setting as well as returnees.

**How do multilingualism and displacement affect language learning and employability?**

- 'Learners use their mother tongue in the classroom, but teachers generally try to dissuade them from doing this or, worst, punish them for not speaking English.'
- Teachers don't know how to use their learners' first languages to introduce English – they feel that they don't know when and how to do this.
- Teachers in other parts of the world use English as the main classroom language – why can't teachers in Iraq?
- 'I'd like to know more about how to teach using mother tongue.'

### Support

What support (including through systematic interventions) would enable English education in Iraq to contribute more effectively to inclusive education, equitable outcomes and productive pathways to employment and academic opportunities?

1. Supporting formal sector teachers to deliver English.
2. 'English should have a greater role in the humanitarian response – youth in the camps desperately want English but they have very few opportunities to develop English language skills. English would make a significant difference to their lives inside and outside the camps.'
3. 'English language courses for NGO workers – there is a significant amount of English being used in camp coordination.' English is used in refugee camps whereas Arabic dominates in IDP camp coordination. English is therefore a barrier to local NGOs attending meetings as it takes a long time to translate.
4. A bridge between the 'native' language and English is needed: teachers need to know how to use both languages in the classroom to pedagogic effect and to help learners advance through the different levels.
5. How to teach English to large classes. 'There are sometimes up to 50 students in a class.'
6. Help the government to build schools, provide scholarships, pay teachers and run free classes for formal sector teachers of English – none are qualified enough.

### NGO participants provided additional information about their English provision:

***Save the Children, KRI*: English and child protection**

> We usually use English for child protection purposes for example we have community centres in different camps and outside of camps so English is one of the most incentive ways that we can bring children, and through teaching them English we can also provide them with some psycho-social support and child protection services. This is the first one. The second one is that we can always use English as life skill – so in our centres we are running life skills training courses which includes English language. Through teaching them English we also teach them how to communicate, how to build your personality and also capacity building for the teenagers and youth, as you know nowadays many youth are attracted to learning language and communicating with the world especially now that it has become much more easier by using social media, so English is one of the tools that we use to increase their level of self-esteem and self-confidence, to be more accessible and to be more communicable to others.

***Intersos:* English and life skills for social cohesion**

During our life skills courses we try to bring together different groups in society for example refugee, IDP and host community altogether to build social cohesion and integration. Also, we've also developed some activities with the formal schools and the informal schools for catch-up classes for the IDP and host community. We are planning these activities including theatre and competitions between two schools, for example, IDP and refugee schools: drafting plan for integration and social cohesion.

***Amideast:* Assessing learners' level of English**

In our social cohesion projects in West Mosul, when trying to do placement tests of English proficiency you start differentiating beneficiaries based on English level, that is, people who were less conflict affected usually scored higher in their English proficiency and more marginalised groups or more conflict affected groups scored lower. So, if trying to place people according to their proficiency level in a foreign language then it can start separating groups in ways that the conflict already did. We were able to run different levels of English so the placement test needs to come as part of the enrolment – so they could establish which groups the learners needed to go into.

***Intersos:* Resources**

If it is a catch-up class, then the best resource to use is the government curriculum itself as it focuses on the school career. If it is just using English as a life skill in the community centres, for that we have different levels. For children 3–6 years old we just use some simple basic English starting with the alphabet and play activities. This was designed by French partner who supports field staff with content.

For adolescents we use storytelling, but we don't have a specific English course that we can apply because the goal is to provide the children with psycho-social support and child protection services and English as a life skill and English inserted to encourage others to join our centre.

***Intersos:* Running catch-up classes for English – between formal and non-formal**

Intersos provides catch-up classes for English for Grades 10–12 with UNHCR in refugee camps in Erbil. It is also providing activities inside formal schools that includes catch up classes, for example with refugees learning English in upper secondary in Sulaymaniyah and Erbil since August 2021. Teachers are trained by DoE specialists and the curriculum is taken from formal schools. Those teachers are supported by volunteers, teacher assistants, who have lower qualifications. For the 'self-learning' materials run for Grades 1–12 in Sulaymaniyah, the materials are designed by the national Education Cluster with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF.

Pre-tests and post-tests are carried out before and after courses but as with other group members, these are more important internally to evaluate the success of courses and for internal monitoring and evaluation rather than being used by those outside the organisation as an indication of the learner's level.

English is also used as part of social cohesion programmes. We also plan to run catch-up classes including English as part of social cohesion programmes. We are currently drafting a plan to include a theatre competition.

***Public Aid Organisation (PAO):* Using English to attract marginalised learners**

PAO works with marginalised learners in the affected areas of KRI that is, with IDPs in camps as well as IDPs living outside camps in Sulaymaniyah, Dohuk and Ninewa. They also work with returnees from affected areas. Their programmes include protection and education support for 0–18-year-olds. They provide education programmes for host community not affected by the conflict but are from low socio-economic areas.

PAO is currently putting together a new centre for non-formal education. English will be included. They work in vocational centres which provide business courses that help small organisations with start-up training. There is no English course

included in these programmes, but they do use English when teaching marketing.

English is used by PAO to attract beneficiaries for child protection, or as an incentive to encourage children and youth to join their psycho-social programmes. They refer to their programmes as 'English as a life skill'. English is also a part of 'Capacity building for teenage and youth' programmes. In terms of teaching material, the Iraqi education curriculum is used for catch-up classes while the materials for the 'English as a life skill' course were designed by a French partner. For their adolescent classes, which rely on storytelling, there is no specific course because this is embedded within their psycho-social/life skills programmes.

PAO provides certificates to their alumni, stamped with the MoE logo. Certificates are not provided as evidence of having achieved a specific level in English but rather that a learner had attended the course.

Regarding the overlap between formal and non-formal, PAO are already helping learners transition from non-formal classes to formal schools in coordination with the Ministry of Education. An example of this collaboration is PAO's work expanding their courses in (non-formal) youth centres to include learners' formal schools as part of capacity building programmes. PAO and Barzani Foundation were both working on this initiative and welcomed this as a way forward for supporting other NGO partners.

For selection and recruitment of teachers, PAO interviews applicants in English rather than providing a written test. These tests were designed in-house.

***Public Aid Organisation (PAO):* Working together**

Over the last three years and in Education sector, PAO has implemented several projects funded by the IHF (international humanitarian Funds in Ninawa). Jointly with UNICEF, Intersos have implemented the Education Cannot Wait initiative in Sulaymaniyah and Kirkuk. Also, in partnership with UNESCO, PAO implemented a 'back to school' campaign, school rehabilitation project and teacher training in Salahudeen and Anbar. In partnership with Caritas, PAO implemented school feeding in Kirkuk. Additionally, as part of protection sector, PAO implemented serval projects with UNICEF.

Education cannot wait, funded by Education Cluster and UNICEF, is a US$48 million multi-year resilience programme will reach almost 200,000 displaced, refugee and returnee children and youth in response to protracted crises in Iraq and neighbouring countries. We all try to work together on this.

### 5.3.1.2 Field visits to JINDA (NGO) office and Yazidi IDP camp in Dohuk

**Safe spaces** are places where displaced people are respected, develop trust, and, over time, feel increased levels of safety. Personal or sensitive information is kept confidential, and learners trust the skills of the teachers as there are codes of conduct that govern institutional practices. Those working and learning in safe spaces promote resilience and inclusion. Safe spaces encourage displaced people to voice their stories and, with trained and qualified staff, can help them to address the traumatic experiences relating to their displacement.

The field visit began with a 90-minute interview with two representatives from the NGO JINDA in their Dohuk offices. After a brief introduction to the research aims and research questions for the ELT in Iraq project, the two participants responded to questions from the research team.

#### Yazidi displacement

In 2014, Islamic State (ISIS) militants attacked the Yazidi community in Sinjar, northern Iraq. These attacks were recognised as genocide by the United Nations in 2016. Hundreds of thousands of Yazidis are still displaced and living in camps in the KRI region of Iraq. Thousands of Yazidis went missing,

including the enslavement of women. An estimated 7,000 Yazidi women and girls were enslaved and forcibly transferred to locations in Iraq and eastern Syria.

### The NGO

JINDA has been providing long-term assistance to women and girls who have escaped, or have been rescued, from ISIS captivity. The JINDA centre in Dohuk provides **a safe space** for survivors of displacement and conflict. The support provided by JINDA includes psychological assistance as well as legal and social support. Awareness training on women's rights and women's health includes strategies to cope with traumatic experiences. At the centre in Dohuk as well as in the Yazidi IDP camp outside Dohuk, women and girls can access vocational courses which include crafting, sewing, agricultural skills and English.

JINDA also works with refugees and host communities. Since 2017, the NGO has worked with Qubahan (NGO) to support 6,000 Syrian students and 400 teachers in a total of 16 primary and secondary schools in the KRI region as part of the *Access to inclusive quality primary and secondary education for IDPs and refugees in KRI* programme. JINDA has also supported host community families. Working with the German agency GIZ, JINDA has run projects to rehabilitate nurseries and provide face masks to host communities.

### English at JINDA

In 2020, an online English course was run for women and girls by Jinda NGO. The course was held during August 2020 targeting ages above 15 years old. The course was managed through Zoom and targeted 65 learners from Dohuk Governorate. The course provided basic English language skills, mainly speaking, which most of the women requested and was delivered by volunteers.

These courses ran alongside the psycho-social support programmes that JINDA runs, when Covid-related social restrictions allow, in which they bring women and girls from the IDP camp to the centre by bus. An example of one of these programmes was the *Tahawer* project run with British Council Iraq. This was a two-year programme run across the whole of the country designed to develop peacebuilding skills for 15–25-year-olds. Activities included solving problems related to political and religious differences.

The demand for English from the Yazidi community continues to grow. Interviews with JINDA staff revealed the following attitudes to English in the lives of Yazidi women and girls:

- English skills are an important part of developing IT skills.
- English is needed to be able to study at university.
- English is crucial for NGO management and administration.
- Parents want to send their children to schools where English is taught.
- Jobs in private sector companies require English.

When asked how the British Council might help support JINDA with their English language provision, the following points were raised:

- Teachers need support with teaching methodology.
- Language support is needed at the higher levels (few teachers speak advanced English).
- More teachers are needed.
- Help is needed to support girls to transition from non-formal to formal English lessons at schools.
- Many Yazidi girls can access financial support to go to university, but they lack the English language skills to study in higher education.

### Visit to Yazidi IDP camp

As JINDA classes were not running the day of our field visit, we were invited to observe an English lesson for Yazidi men and women run by the NGO *Better World Organisation* (funded by IOM). The lesson observation was followed by interviews with the teacher and two learners. The teacher and learners wished to be referred to by their real names.

**Box 14** Ahmed's lesson

Ahmed began teaching by welcoming us to the class. He told the learners what they would be studying that day and reminded them not to be shy about talking in English. The small temporary structure was brightly decorated with pictures by previous learners and the 11 learners (eight women, three men) sat in a horse-shoe formation with the teacher standing in front of a whiteboard. I was seated towards the back of the room between two learners on the only empty chair. I was wearing a mask as were several of the learners.

The lesson was a beginners' class and Ahmed had written some of the target language on the whiteboard including greetings and telling the time in English. It is likely that this was revision of vocabulary that the learners had been introduced to previously, but they enjoyed practising using different words to greet each other and, later in the lesson, to talk about the weather. After some whole-class practice, Ahmed invited volunteers to come to the front of the class in pairs to ask and answer questions using the target language. The learners found this fun and though they struggled with beginner level English, they were very engaged with the topic and keen to try out what little English they knew.

Ahmed appeared to know exactly what he wanted to teach that lesson and used the whiteboard to write up important vocabulary and some examples of grammatical forms such as 'I am fine' and 'How are you?' He focused on giving feedback on fluency in the mini-dialogues that the students held with each other and did not correct grammatical inaccuracies as, he told me after the lesson, grammar was not the aim of the lesson.

Towards the end of the lesson, Ahmed invited me to ask and answer some questions with the learners. They told me they had never spoken English with a 'native speaker' before and that they were very pleased to meet me. I told the learners that I had never been invited to join an English lesson with Yazidi learners before. Ahmed ended the lesson with a revision of the target language and reminded the learners that they needed to practise this vocabulary at home.

### Interview with Ahmed

Ahmed is 25 years old and from Sinjar. He studied English at the University of Dohuk's College of Arts for four years even though he explained that his English was very poor when he first started there. Ahmed remembers studying about the teaching of reading, writing, speaking and listening during his first and second years at the college but that most of the programme focused on literature, such as the novel, drama and poetry, rather than teaching methodology. He explained that there was no teaching practice at any point in his studies which he said 'was the worst thing about studying in the College of Arts'. In his fourth year, he learned some methods of teaching about how to deal with students of different ages and levels but would have liked to have developed this further and felt unprepared for classroom teaching when he graduated in 2019 and started work at *Better World Organisation* in 2021.

Ahmed is aware of another NGO, *MFI*, in the K2 IDP camp which is teaching English. This NGO provides training for teachers of English. These courses are very popular, and the English classes fill up quickly. They have more opportunities for professional development for teachers, which he currently doesn't have, and each level is six months long. The classes are mixed, male and female, and different kinds of English courses are provided, several of which include leadership skills and problem solving. He believes these courses are very good because these use English in the lessons to deliver the content such as leadership skills.

In terms of resources, an overhead projector is available for his teaching if he wishes to use it and a printer is also available, though he doesn't give his learners too many handouts. He produces all his teaching materials himself as there are no coursebooks or handouts provided by the NGO. He rarely uses art or drama in the lesson as he has never developed the skills for teaching English using

these strategies. When asked about his use of Kurdish in the classroom, Ahmed acknowledged that he needs to use the first language of his learners a great deal as they do not know any English before coming to him. He feels that using Kurdish helps him develop a good rapport with his students as many of them have had very difficult lives and he tries to be their friend as well as their teacher.

### Interview with Fatima

Fatima is 23 years old, Yazidi, and from Sinjar. She had been rescued from ISIS and was now in the second year of her BA mathematics programme at a College of Education. She plans to become a teacher of mathematics in high school or possibly continue to study outside Iraq. She had previously studied English for 20 days (1 hour per day) which she felt was not enough. English is a compulsory subject on her university degree programme, but she explained it was not taught well and she struggled to understand. Her mathematics textbook is written in English, which makes it difficult for her to understand the content. Her mathematics examinations will also be in English. Her teacher at the university uses Kurdish to teach but reads the questions out in English. Fatima would like to study English to a high level to help her in her professional and academic life.

### Interview with Tanya

Tanya is 25 years old, Yazidi and from Sinjar. She has been studying English at the Translation Institute in Dohuk for two years but feels she is still at beginner level. Like Fatima, she chose to carry out the interview with the help of an interpreter. When Tanya completed her high school studies, she was accepted on an accountancy programme at the University of Mosul but was not able to travel that far and she felt that her English was not good enough at that time. She has since been learning English by taking courses offered by NGOs and is sponsored by a family in the UK. In her NGO classes, the teachers speak in English and all the materials are in English. She explained that JINDA's English courses are good, but she needs a higher level of English to be able to understand her programme at the Translation Institute.

**Humanitarian aid** is temporary, rapid-response emergency relief provision of basic services. It is most provided through international aid agency structures rather than host governments.

**Development aid** builds long-term host government services well beyond the time of an initial emergency. Development takes longer than humanitarian aid and is less responsive to external shocks common in conflict-affected settings. On the continuum between humanitarian aid and development, education is more likely seen as 'development' other than **Education in Emergencies** (see *Definitions*) which sees a closer relationship between aid and education.

### English for humanitarian, development and governmental staff

The field visit to JINDA included a discussion with staff about the importance of English for communicating with other humanitarian and development actors. Staff described a month-long course run by the NGO *Crosspoint Europe* which was delivered to JCC staff from across the KRI.

Joint Crisis Coordination (JCC) of the Kurdistan Regional Government was established in 2014. The JCC Crisis Response and Management Network consists of the JCC Council, and the Crisis Responses Offices in the Governorates of Erbil, Slemani and Duhok. The JCC head office is a directorate general within the Ministry of Interior and headed by a Director General under the direct supervision of the Minister of Interior. The governorate offices are directorates within the offices of their respective Governors. English is a very valuable skill, we were told, across all these offices as the JCC's primary functions include information management, crisis response and management, coordination and co-operation, and resource mobilisation. Information management includes collecting, collating and analysing information through research and follow-up about crises and humanitarian developments and to provide information to support decision making and policy formulation. It is not clear how much of this information is produced or translated into English, but NGO staff felt that English is used across these activities.

The JCC had requested English courses for all NGOs where English is needed for approvals and coordination as well as research and policy formation. JINDA recruited a teacher of English to deliver this course, which included 'basic business English' and 'office English' (e.g. how to write emails in English). The teacher created the materials for this course herself.

### 5.3.1.3 Field visit to Kawrgosk Syrian refugee camp on the outskirts of Erbil

The field visit to the Syrian refugee camp began with a brief introduction to the research aims and research questions for the ELT in Iraq project, one of the international researchers was then shown to a catch-up class of Yazidi adolescent women who were learning English. It was followed by interviews with the learners and then an interview with the teacher.

The interview with the head teacher revealed that Intersos has been supporting this school for three years by:

- providing teaching and learning materials
- encouraging students who have dropped out to re-enrol
- opening catch-up classes for students who have dropped out.

This year Intersos is targeting its support to learners with disabilities to transition from non-formal to formal education across all subjects.

For English, Intersos supports:

- two teachers of English teaching 280 high school students
- five hours per week of English
- all 280 students at the high school classes in the camp to learn English
- 35–40 students per class
- teachers to use Sunrise for English – all students have a copy of the textbook.

The two English language teachers both have BAs in English from Colleges of Art. They have attended short courses/workshops called 'classroom management' and 'teaching methodologies'. These workshops last 1–2 days and are delivered by different NGOs.

The head teacher commented that they are struggling to find qualified teachers as teachers soon find better paid work. In the past UNICEF helped fund these teachers' salaries but that is not the case now.

#### Focus group discussion with nine adolescent women (16–17 years old) learners

The girls have been learning English for eleven years having started in Grade 1 in Syria and, having been forced to migrate due to the conflict there, have been learning in Erbil for four years. Their schooling had been interrupted for six months as they travelled from Syria to the KRI and settled in Erbil. There had also been several interruptions to their face-to-face schooling due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The main reasons these young women gave for studying English were:

- It's one of their main high school subjects.
- They need to be able to speak English nowadays to communicate with people from inside Iraq, from Syria and in case they wish to travel outside Iraq.
- It's an important language.
- It's in the national exam.
- It can be used abroad.

Challenges facing young women at school:

- Their Syrian school certificates need authenticating. Their peers are unable to enrol at university in KRI as they either don't have their certificates from Syria or their certificates haven't been authenticated.
- There is no audio or listening practice in their current English courses, so they are not very good at understanding English.
- They are not able to ask the teacher many questions as there are many students in the class and the teacher doesn't have time to speak to every student.
- Their parents worry about their safety travelling across the camp.

All nine students reported in the group discussion that they wished to go to university the following year after their high school studies were over. They explained that they needed English to study pharmacy (1 girl), medicine and engineering (4 girls).

### Interview with the Intersos coordinator

The coordinator explained that he coordinates between Intersos, the relevant ministries and the school in the camp. Intersos operates in different geographical areas targeting refugee and IDP communities. In this school, they work with five courses: Arabic, Kurdish, English, Mathematics and Physics.

Intersos carries out needs analyses in the local communities and reviews learners' school marks to select the subjects they will provide catch-up classes for. They have been running English courses for three years. He also acknowledged that it is difficult to recruit teachers as those with good qualifications leave the country. They advertise for teachers both inside and outside camps.

As coordinator, he is responsible for: child protection, psycho-social support, identifying and referring issues such as violent children/youths, non-attendance, and safety in the camp. He also works with refugees from Iran who are living in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah.

### Interview with the teacher of English

The teacher graduated from the College of Education English department, Salahaddin University, Erbil. He was not able to carry out any teaching practice as there were Covid restrictions in place. He also teaches some (different learners) online.

For the catch-up classes, he uses the *Sunrise* textbook and explained that, '*Sunrise* is good because the students start with a reading passage', which he feels he can then work with throughout the lesson. He explained that he uses a lot of Kurdish in the lesson even though he's not always sure how best to do this. All students also use Arabic as they are from Syria where Arabic is the national language. He has a group chat on social media with his students in which they use Arabic to communicate.

The teacher explained that he has been observed while teaching by a member of the Intersos staff. The feedback tended to focus on how much English was being used by the teacher. He explained that he is not part of any professional networks, but he uses WhatsApp with his learners to share movies and other media which might help them improve their English. His main challenge is the mixed ability of learners in his classes.

## 5.4 Non-formal lesson observations in KRI and CSI

In total, ten classroom observations took place: five in CSI and five in KRI. In the first stage of the analysis, a profile of the English language classes is provided including number of learners, the gender composition of learner groups, the type of class and the main language/skills focus for the lesson. Duration of lessons, grade/level of learners, background of learners, description of the class (including equipment), topics, stages of the lesson and materials are then discussed. Table 11 provides an overview of the types of classes and main foci of the lessons observed.

### Duration of lessons

On average, lessons last for 50–60 minutes, but members of the research team noted some variation. For example, one lesson was only 40 minutes, which the teacher explained was not enough time to carry out everything that he wanted to cover. At the other end of the spectrum, three classes lasted 1.5 hours.

### Grade or level

The level is beginner (sometimes referred to as 'basic' by observers) or specialised classes such as a Business English class run by one NGO. The remainder of the non-formal provision was catch-up classes for learners who had been outside of education and were completing their studies at Grades 11 and 12.

| Class | Female | Male | Total | Type of class | Main focus |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| KRI 1 | 8 | 3 | 11 | IDP English for psycho-social support (camp) | Vocabulary and speaking |
| KRI 2 | 9 | 0 | 9 | Grade 11 catch-up classes (camp) | Grammar and speaking |
| KRI 3 | 7 | 3 | 10 | Youth (focus on gender-based violence) (youth centre) | Speaking and grammar |
| KRI 4 | 8 | 5 | 13 | Grade 12 catch-up classes (mixed) | Reading and pronunciation |
| KRI 5 | | | 10 | Child protection programme | Speaking and vocabulary |
| CSI 1 | 5 | 1 | 6 | English for business | Speaking and writing |
| CSI 2 | 3 | 2 | 5 | English conversation courses | Speaking and pronunciation |
| CSI 3 | 11 | 5 | 16 | Youth and community project | Speaking and grammar |
| CSI 4 | | | 11 | Business English | Speaking and vocabulary |
| CSI 5 | 35 | | 35 | Grade 12 catch-up classes | Grammar |

**Table 11** English classroom profile in non-formal settings

### Learners

Most classes were made up of learners affected by conflict (IDPs or refugees) as well as English classes for marginalised host community learners. IDP classes included those for survivors of ISIS from the Yazidi community who were learning English as part of their psycho-social support programme, while refugee classes were always made up of learners from Syria. There were several classes which aimed to bring together learners from different backgrounds such as IDPs, refugees and host community learners, although most of the classes were homogenous in terms of having a clear focus in mind, e.g. catch-up classes for learners who had dropped out.

### Description of class including equipment

Classrooms in camps were housed in temporary cabin structures which were small with little space for learners or the teacher to move around the room. This lack of space restricts both the teacher and the learners and limits the amount of movement that can realistically be achieved for group work and monitoring by the teacher. In many classes, teachers and learners were wearing masks and keeping as much distance as possible, which restricts learners to working with the same peers throughout the lesson. Social distancing may also explain why teachers remained at the front of the class throughout the lessons.

Lessons which took place in NGO centres were, overall, better resourced than camp settings. For example, in one non-formal centre in Erbil (KRI), learners were seated at round tables with chairs in a circle with a good view of the electronic data show which projected the materials to the class from a laptop used by the teacher. These learners had colour pens and copybooks provided by the NGO. However, that is not to say that camp settings are lacking in resources. While classroom equipment is often in shorter supply, observers did note that in some camp settings where catch-up classes were being run for Grade 12 learners, there were instances of data show, laptops and whiteboards in cabins. In one classroom in Kawrgosk camp, the teacher had provided a summary which he had made himself of the English textbook, Sunrise, and had distributed this to learners.

Occasionally, chairs were arranged around the sides of the classroom with a small space in the centre which the teacher or learners could move into. However, in very small rooms, the tables and chairs were arranged in rows with almost no available space for movement once everyone was seated.

Almost all the classrooms had whiteboards, with one of the more well-funded NGOs using an electronic board. However, there were classes which had no resources at all other than the whiteboard and markers.

### Topic

The observed lessons focused on the following topics:

KRI1: Greetings, time, classroom objects, the weather, parts of the body

KRI2: The present continuous

KRI3: Coordinate conjunctions

KRI 4: Catch-up from Sunrise

KRI 5: The alphabet in English

CSI 1: Using Microsoft Xcel

CSI 2: Likes and dislikes

CSI 3: Daily habits

CSI 4: Using email and writing a CV

CSI 5: Using the passive voice.

### Stages of the lesson

Although topics of the lessons were clearly identifiable, it was not always clear from the observation what language item or skill the teacher wished to present or practise. This was apparent from the lack of clear staging of the lesson for almost half of the lessons. However, some of the NGO teachers divided their lessons into three stages which, rather than resembling a 'traditional' ELT PPP lesson (Presentation, Practice, Production), was largely (1) warm up, (2) presentation of vocabulary and topic (and occasionally some grammar), and (3) production, with little time for learners to practise among themselves as most 'production' occurred as a whole class activity.

### Materials (including textbooks)

The materials that were being used fell into two categories: handouts produced by the teacher for distribution to the learners at the beginning of each lesson, and the textbook used by the relevant Ministry of Education (e.g. Sunrise) for the catch-up classes. Where the regional curriculum was being followed, only one teacher commented that they had access to curriculum guidelines or teacher's books.

In one of the non-formal NGO classes in Baghdad (CSI), the teacher used books and magazines which were kept in the classroom to engage the learners. This teacher supplemented these resources with a snakes and ladders board game and flashcards.

The amount of English used in the classrooms by teachers, the level of teachers' spoken English, the amount of English used by learners, whether teachers and learners used languages other than English in the classroom, and finally the quality of the lessons are presented in Figures 27–30.

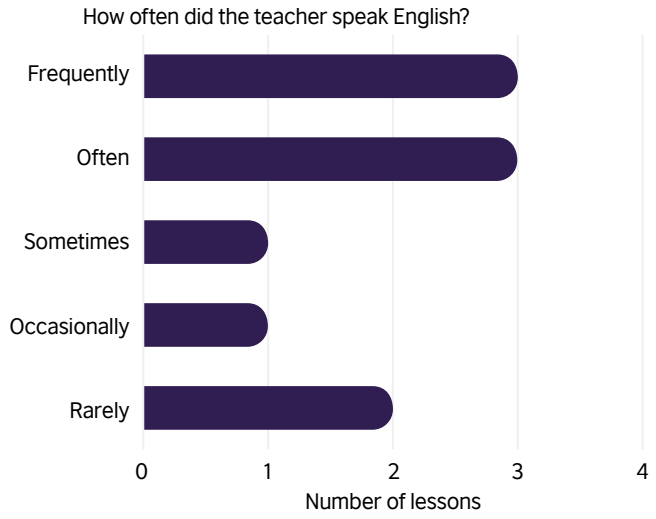



**Figure 27** Amount of English used by teachers

Teacher-talk dominated all ten lessons. The frequencies above illustrate that most of this talk was in English although two teachers spoke English 'rarely', which suggests a lack of proficiency in English by the teacher, the learners or both.

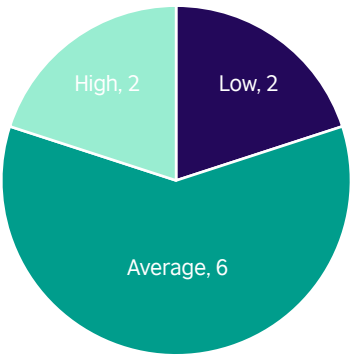



**Figure 28** Level of teachers' spoken English

While the amount of English spoken ranged from 'rarely' to 'frequently', only 20 per cent of teachers' level of English was deemed 'low' by observers, with the majority of teachers (60%) described as 'average'.


**Figure 29** Amount of English used by learners

Learners appear to use a lot of English in whole class talk, with learners described as using English 'often' then 'occasionally', and only in one class were learners described as using English 'rarely'.

Across the ten lessons, teachers used their first language, or their learners' first language, to scaffold the teaching of English in nine cases, while the use of the first language by learners was observed in all ten lessons.

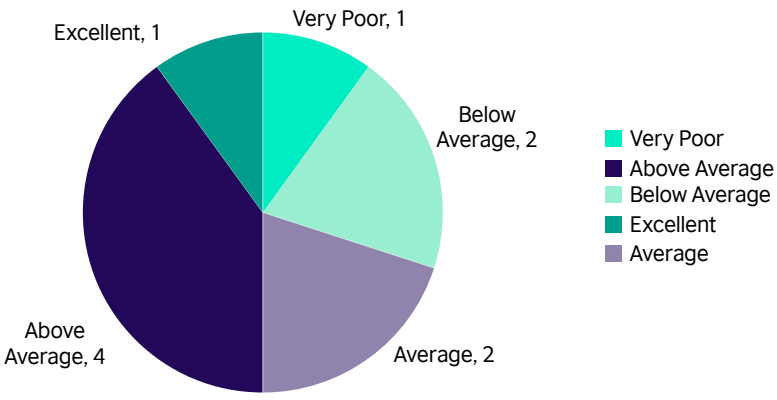



**Figure 30** Overall quality of non-formal education English lessons

Figure 30 shows that, according to the observers, the overall quality of the non-formal education English lessons observed varied. Lessons which were described as excellent by the observers were always those lessons where there was a high level of participation from learners in English. Other examples of excellent teaching noted by the observers included:

- printed handouts with 'agendas' provided to each learner
- teacher created 'very friendly environment in which learners socialise freely'
- 'learners are active all the time'
- 'lesson is well-planned'
- 'learners learn from each other'
- 'good use of video'.

Weaknesses that were noted included:

- 'lack of clear methodological approach'
- 'lack of clear plan that connects the different activities in the lesson'
- 'teacher lecturing the students'
- 'little to no pair or group work'.

### Summary of what teachers and students did

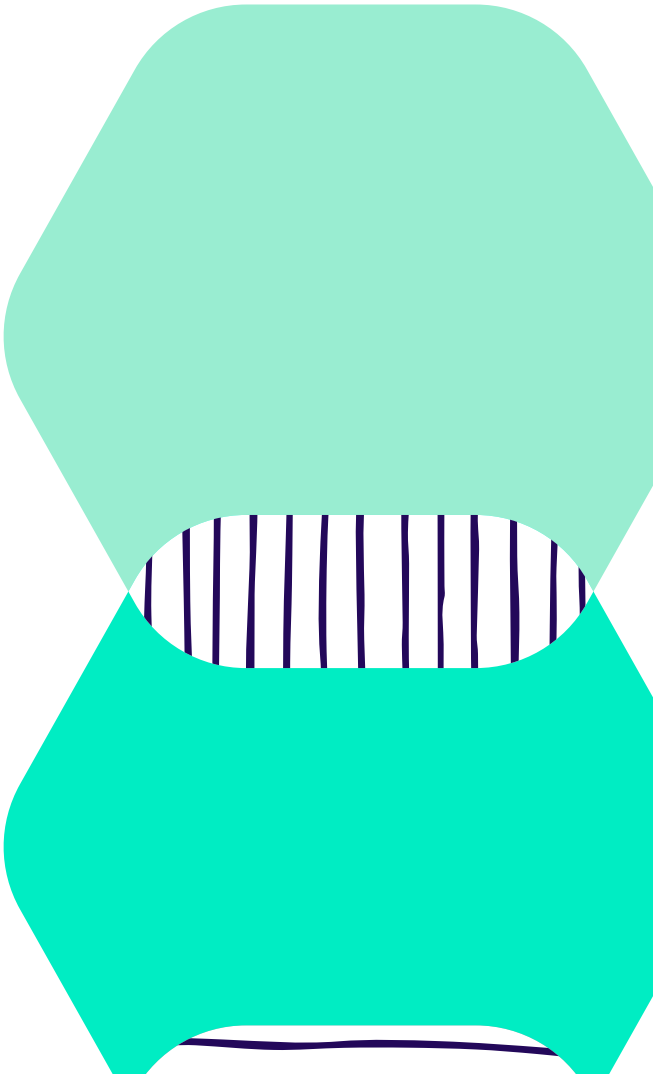
The observers made narrative notes about what teachers and learners did during the observed lessons. From these it can be concluded that typical teacher activities included:

- explaining grammar, orally and on the board, mostly in Kurdish or Arabic
- correcting students' pronunciation and grammatical errors
- asking learners to explain the meaning of words in a reading passage
- explaining grammar, orally and on the board, mostly in Kurdish or Arabic
- asking learners questions about grammar rules.

Typical learner activities included:

- providing answers to the teacher's whole-class questions
- reading aloud
- answering teacher questions
- writing answers on the board
- copying information from the board
- listening to the teacher and repeating pronunciation
- translating sentences from English to Kurdish or Arabic
- listening to grammatical explanations (in Kurdish or Arabic)
- listening to explanations and translations of vocabulary from reading texts.

In Tables 12–14, examples are taken from the observers' narrative notes which reflect some of the different teacher and learner activities listed above:



| Teacher saying/doing | Students(s) saying/doing |
|---|---|
| 1. T explains the difference between (too) and (enough) | 1. Sts listen |
| 2. Elaborates on the structural rule of changing (enough) to (too) | 2. Sts listen |
| 3. Asks students questions related to subject/topic being studied | 3. Sts answer to whole class |
| 4. Asks students about adjectives and how adjectives are recognised | 4. Sts answer to whole class |
| 5. Writes students' answers on the whiteboard | 5. Sts watch |
| 6. Further explains the topic/subject being studied with sentence examples and writes them on the whiteboard | 6. Sts listen |
| 7. T alone did all the explanations and most of the topic/subject was explained by him | 7. Sts listen |

**Table 12** Examples of teacher-fronted lessons where learners listened quietly

| Teacher saying/doing | Students(s) saying/doing |
|---|---|
| 1. Introduction, welcoming learners | 1. Sts introduce themselves to the class |
| 2. T talks about what they are going to learn today | 2. Sts listen to T |
| 3. T explains a group exercise by first dividing the Sts into three groups, each group has one colour (blue, red and green) | 3. Sts listen to T |
| 4. T gives the instruction to how make the exercise (fun and learning). T hides coloured paper and the students need to find them (in groups) in the training hall | 4. Sts work in groups |
| 5. T corrects mistakes – whole class | 5. Sts feedback to whole class |

**Table 13** Teacher-fronted lessons where the learners answered questions in front of the whole class

| Teacher saying/doing | Students(s) saying/doing |
|---|---|
| 1. T uses flashcards with pictures of emojis introducing vocabulary (adjectives) and feelings | 1. Sts repeat vocabulary all together |
| 2. In unit 6, Lesson 1, before explaining the verbs, T shows flashcards (e.g. a boy playing football) and asked what is he doing? | 2. Sts guess the vocabulary |
| 3. T asks Sts to talk in pairs | 3. Sts work in pairs |
| 4. T uses flashcards multiple times while teaching the verbs | 4. Sts listen |
| 5. T asks sts to read the verbs out loud and repeat after her | 5. Sts repeat verbs |
| 6. (Listening) T played the audio two times and asked the Sts to listen carefully | 6. Sts listen |
| 7. T acts the verbs and asks Sts to act verbs in pairs | 7. Sts act out verbs in pairs |

**Table 14** Teacher-fronted lessons where students were very occasionally asked to speak to their partner

The results of the analysis of these classroom observations highlight the challenges most teachers face when attempting to meet the requirements of a 'communicative' approach without sufficient teacher education or teacher development: they do not know how to set up and manage participatory ways of working for learners nor do they fully grasp the importance of providing opportunities for learners to practise speaking, reading, writing and listening in English. Added to this is the challenge of overburdened schools and centres unable to cope with the influx of IDP and refugee learners, a lack of resources to cope with double shift systems, increases in the number of classes to teach, and lack of classroom resources or technologies. The lack of methodological skills in using learner-centred activities and classroom management strategies makes for a challenging classroom environment for teachers of English in non-formal classes.

# 6 Summary of key findings

The analysis of English teaching and learning presented in this report must be interpreted within the broader economic and social-cultural context within which education in Iraq is situated. The country's recent history is characterised by political instability, military activity and humanitarian crises, and education has been severely affected by these factors. School buildings, for example, have been damaged and remain in disrepair, and education often takes place in makeshift structures or in buildings which are being used by several schools working in shifts. Investment in education has also decreased significantly, and in many contexts social life has been disrupted and communities displaced internally. The challenging conditions in which education in Iraq often unfolds will inevitably affect the morale of educators and on learners' experiences. Various other factors noted by teacher respondents here, such as large classes, content-heavy textbooks and limited access to equipment, will also affect their morale and motivation and, potentially, teacher retention in the formal sector. It is important to highlight these factors as they impinge on many of the challenges that have emerged here in relation to English education. And while our focus here has been educational, it is clear that long-lasting solutions that will contribute to more effective education in Iraq must also address the broader challenges that the country is facing. With this in mind, we will now summarise key findings that have emerged from this research project, focusing on formal education and non-formal education in turn.

## 6.1 English in formal education

Our analysis of formal education in Iraq has examined teaching and learning English in MOE schools (Grades 1–12), the preparation and professional development of teachers of English in these schools, and the teaching of English as a compulsory subject for non-English majors at university. Key findings in relation to these areas are as follows:

1. In both CSI and KRI, English is taught as a compulsory subject from Grade 1 to Grade 12 and students receive between two and five English lessons a week.
2. The curriculum is enshrined in the series of textbooks used in each region (*English for Iraq* and *Sunrise* respectively) and no separate curriculum document exists. The textbooks are the primary source of materials used by teachers of English.
3. In both cases, the textbooks are described as being 'communicative' in nature; i.e. they are meant to develop in students the ability to use English functionally. In both cases, too, though, it is widely believed that the way English is typically taught does not reflect these principles; there is, thus, a gap between the intended curriculum and the enacted curriculum.
4. The analysis of teachers' reported and actual practices presented in this study supports this view that the teaching of English is not

communicative. In CSI, the teacher survey suggested that studying grammar, reading aloud, doing vocabulary exercises and speaking English (this will often be limited to repeating what the teacher says) were the most common classroom activities; in KRI, they were grammar exercises, reading aloud and speaking activities. The observations carried out in CSI found that typical classroom activities included studying grammar (often explained in the L1) and reading aloud. In most cases, too, teachers and learners did not speak English often. In KRI, typical activities observed in English lessons were reading aloud (with translation and correction of pronunciation) and grammar work. In most observed lessons, learners did not speak English often.

5. In general terms, the key contributor to the lack of communicative English teaching was seen to be limitations in teacher quality. In other words, teachers often lack the competence – linguistic and pedagogical – to teach English communicatively. As a result, after 12 years of learning English, students graduate from secondary school with low levels of English proficiency; in particular, their speaking skills and motivation to speak English are insufficiently developed.
6. Challenging conditions in schools, such as large classes (often over 40 students) and lack of resources and equipment (including technology) were also felt to hinder developments in the teaching and learning of English in Iraq. Technology in the form of computers, projectors and related software, as well as internet connections, were not available to the majority of teachers.
7. Stakeholders were asked to comment on reasons for the modest teacher competence that is seen to be the major factor limiting students' learning of English. One consistent factor that was highlighted were limitations in teacher training, especially at pre-service level but also regarding in-service training and teacher professional development.
8. English departments in Colleges of Education are the main provider of pre-service teacher education for teachers of English in schools in Iraq. The four-year curriculum followed by these departments is regulated by the MOHE, but is has not been updated for many years. It does not prepare future teachers of English adequately for many reasons:

- Admission to the programme is not controlled (for example, through an English admission test).
- Graduation from the programme does not require students to reach a particular level of English proficiency.
- The way English is taught on the programme is not communicative and does not emphasise the development of student teachers' spoken English.
- Many of the subject courses that are taught in English departments are not taught in English and are not related to the teaching of English.
- The weight allocated to key subjects in teaching English is inadequate compared to the focus on linguistics, literature and translation.
- The instructional techniques used by lecturers are often lecture-based.
- Assessment is largely written and relies on the memorisation and reproduction of information.
- While teachers spend some time in schools during the final year of their programme, the links between their training and schools are limited, and the way student teachers are evaluated during teaching practice relies on a generic set of often vague criteria.
- Overall, the curriculum followed in English departments is not aligned with the curriculum teachers of English must work with in schools.

Graduates from English departments consequently lack the English language skills, pedagogical competences, and understanding of the MOE English curriculum needed for them to teach English effectively.

9. Limitations in the CPD available to teachers of English were also widely noted. In CSI, thousands of teachers have in recent years had access to short-term training designed to support the introduction of the English for Iraq textbook series. Each trained teacher was expected to cascade what they learned to another 100 teachers in their district, but serious doubts were expressed about the extent to which this cascade model had been implemented. The MOE in CSI, through its Directorate General of Teachers Training, also provides a range of courses each year for a relatively small number of teachers (c. 400). The intensive and short-term nature of the CPD available to teachers in CSI, though, is seen to be insufficient in enabling teachers to transition from a teacher-centred and structural approach to one that is learner-centred and communicative. In KRI, it was reported that there has been a severe lack of training for teachers of English for many years and over 76 per cent of the KRI teachers surveyed did in fact report not having attended any training courses or workshops in the previous 12 months. Just under 90 per cent of CSI teachers surveyed and over 85 per cent of those from KRI said they would like more opportunities for professional development. Areas where teachers expressed a need for most support were improving their own English language skills and developing strategies to teach skills such as speaking and writing more effectively.
10. Assessment is another factor that explains the continuing emphasis in English on rote-learning, the study of grammar, and reading. High-stakes national examinations take place at the end of Grade 6, Grade 9 and Grade 12 but these do not contain an oral component. As a result, speaking and listening skills are often neglected in the classroom, particularly in grades that are preparing for the national examinations. Among MOE officials, expertise in the assessment of English is lacking, and this is another factor that has limited change in this aspect of English education.
11. Teacher shortages, particularly in primary schools and in rural areas, and the recruitment of candidates who are not sufficiently qualified, are other factors which contribute to the problem of quality in English teaching. Primary school graduates are often generalists rather than English specialists; they may have graduated with a two-year Certificate rather than a four-year Diploma; others may have graduated from non-educational disciplines such as economics and subsequently (because they speak some English) secured a position teaching English. Teachers of English may also be graduates of Colleges of Languages and Colleges of Arts; in such cases, they will have a degree in English but no pedagogical training.
12. Educational supervision in CSI and KRI follows two different systems. CSI relies on subject supervisors who are each responsible for visiting, observing, evaluating and providing training for individual teachers. One supervisor may be responsible for hundreds of teachers, meaning that teachers receive supervisor visits infrequently (in the CSI teacher survey, over 25 per cent said they had not been visited in the previous 12 months). In CSI, supervisors evaluate teachers of English using generic criteria that apply to all subjects. In KRI, supervision focuses on the whole school. Specialist supervisors still provide some subject-specific support, but the focus is on supporting the development of schools more holistically. This new system had been introduced as part of an EU-funded project delivered by the British Council.
13. The study also provided some insight into learner motivations towards English. In the survey, 37 per cent of CSI teachers felt their students' motivation to learn English was high or very high; in KRI, over 77 per cent of respondents also felt their learners were motivated to learn English. In their surveys, almost 80 per cent of primary and almost 88 per cent of middle and high school students in CSI said they liked learning English. The

corresponding figures for KRI were just over 90 per cent (Grades 1–6) and over 96 per cent (Grades 7–12).

14. In relation to their online activity, mobile phones were by far the device most commonly used by teachers. In CSI, WhatsApp and Facebook were the platforms most commonly used while in KRI they were Facebook, YouTube and Viber.

15. Non-departmental English (NDE) is a compulsory requirement for non-English major undergraduates across universities. The research found that the conclusions of a previous study into NDE in Iraq remained largely true today. One major difference is that English (typically General English) was now taught in all four years of undergraduate programmes rather than just in Year 1. Generally, NDE students had low levels of English (though these were better in Science disciplines), the syllabus followed was subsequently basic, and assessment was limited to written tests involving multiple choice, matching and similar kinds of closed questions. Variations were reported across departments regarding how many hours of NDE students receive. In some cases, NDE was supplemented by subject-specific English support, though this often took the form of lists of technical words and expressions which students were asked to memorise. Overall, a clear rationale supporting NDE was felt to be lacking as undergraduate studies were conducted in the L1.

## 6.2 English in non-formal education

Our analysis of non-formal education in Iraq has examined the teaching and learning of English in a small sample of NGO centres and formal sector schools providing mainstream education to marginalised communities. We asked teachers and NGO staff about the preparation and professional development of teachers of English in these settings, and the teaching of English as a vehicle for psycho-social support, life skills, core skills and child protection. Key findings in relation to these areas are as follows:

1. In KRI but much less so in CSI, English is used as a vehicle for psycho-social support, life skills, core skills and/or child protection initiatives run by NGOs in non-formal settings. Rarely do English curriculum documents exist as NGOs focus more on the non-English language goals of the course (e.g. psycho-social competencies). Also, rarely are textbooks used as teachers are encouraged to produce their own materials for teaching. Teachers interviewed for this project often describe their lessons as being 'communicative' in nature, i.e. they are meant to develop learners' ability to use English functionally. However, based on the lesson observations carried out by the international and national consultants, we feel that the way English is typically taught does not reflect these principles; there is, thus, a gap between the intended curriculum and the enacted curriculum.

2. In KRI and CSI, catch-up English classes are provided by NGO and formal sector schools for IDP learners displaced during conflicts inside Iraq. Government curricula and textbooks are used (i.e. *English for Iraq*). No separate curriculum document exists for IDP catch-up classes. The textbooks are the primary source of materials used by teachers of English. As in 1. above, teachers interviewed for this project often describe their lessons as being 'communicative' in nature, i.e. they are meant to develop learners' ability to use English functionally. However, based on the lesson observations of IDP catch-up classes carried out for this project, we feel that the way English is typically taught in these classes does not reflect these principles; there is, as with other English classes in formal and non-formal settings, a gap between the intended curriculum and the enacted curriculum.

3. With these limitations in communicative approaches informing classroom practices in mind, the key contributor to the lack of communicative English teaching in these non-formal settings appears to be the limited nature for professional development opportunities based on international best practice in ELT. The small sample of NGO teachers observed for this project do not lack the competence – linguistic and often at a basic pedagogical level – to teach English communicatively, but rather are struggling to develop their existing practice to harness the communicative opportunities of their lessons. As a result, teachers in NGO settings are frustrated with the lack of these opportunities to develop their teaching skills particularly when understanding the link between language use, language learning and psycho-social support. An additional consequence is that these teachers' learners may complete their English language course without being better able to communicate in English beyond restricted situations such as 'describing the weather', 'telling the time' or 'using the passive voice'.
4. NGO managers rarely have a background in education and even more rarely have a background in ELT. This means that they are not able to guide the teachers of English whose professional development they are responsible for in procedures for recruiting, teaching and assessing learners that align with international best practice in ELT. The main consequence is that the quality of English teaching is sacrificed for the non-English outcomes of the course (e.g. psycho-social support).
5. English is not the only language used in English lessons. Arabic and Kurdish varieties were also heard during classroom observations. In some

cases, these languages were heard more frequently than English. It seems that teachers in these classrooms are open to using and allowing their learners to use more familiar languages in addition to the language which is being learned. An open attitude to the use of multiple languages in the language classroom is likely to be more effective than a strict insistence on the use of the target language alone. Such practices appear to maximise the learners' linguistic resources and those of the teachers in the process of learning English in, for example, psycho-social interventions.

6. For the formal sector teachers teaching English to marginalised communities, a similar finding has been reached regarding assessment. The continuing emphasis in English (and education more generally) on rote-learning, the study of grammar, and reading are very much related to the modes of assessment in place in formal schools. High-stakes national examinations take place at the end of Grade 6, Grade 9 and Grade 12 but these do not contain an oral component. As a result, speaking and listening skills are often neglected in the classes for marginalised communities, particularly when in grades that are preparing for the national examinations. Among NGO officials, expertise in the assessment of English is lacking, and this is another factor that limits the mixing of classes of learners from host, IDP and refugee backgrounds as, although these are very heterogeneous groups, levels of English will vary from community to community.

7. Developing learners' core skills and/or life skills were often reported as the key learning outcomes of non-formal programmes. English lessons are often seen as a useful vehicle for developing these outcomes. However, participants in this project focused on the popularity of English as an attractive subject to 'draw in' learners rather than being able to describe why an English class or proficiency in English might align with these other learning outcomes. Mapping English language competencies or even classroom language learning activities to these other learning outcomes appears to be missing from NGO English language courses.

8. There is a lack of coordination among NGO providers of English language courses. Moreover, there is a tendency to operate in parallel systems that may lack alignment with government education systems, though not always. There are also examples of good practice of NGOs working closely with other NGOs and/or with the MoE. The Education Cluster coordinates humanitarian/development agencies working in education but currently British Council Iraq is not active in this network.

9. There are technical issues that limit the range of technologies that NGO teachers can draw on in their English language classes. Teachers experience unstable internet connections and interrupted power supplies. This not only limits teachers' opportunities for expanding learners' digital literacy skills but it also makes professional development training courses difficult to deliver online.

10. Cascade models for delivering training courses appear to be a popular choice of delivery mode for NGOs looking to reach many teacher participants. The British Council has often used cascade models for teacher development initiatives but as these interventions move away from using international experts as master trainers, and with plenty of research suggesting that cascade models without significant classroom supervision of participants have limited impact in classroom teaching, cascade approaches need careful consideration when planning teacher development initiatives that aim to build or rebuild an English language teaching force.

# 7 Recommendations

The recommendations that follow emerge from the summary of findings above and are once again divided into two sections for formal and non-formal English education respectively.

## 7.1 Formal English education

1. The results of this project suggest that the teaching of English in Grades 1–12 in Iraq is not significantly affecting the proficiency in English that students achieve by the end of secondary school. It is essential that this be acknowledged by the educational authorities from the outset and that systematic efforts to *understand* why this is the case take place before any further reforms are implemented to improve the quality of English education in the country. Reform that is not based on understanding is unlikely to lead to improvement.
2. English in Iraq is taught as a school subject and a foreign language and for most students English lessons are their only exposure to English. Improving the quality of English in Iraq, then, can only be achieved by raising the quality of English teaching and learning in schools. Positioning English as a second language does not reflect the role of English in Iraq and should not be the focus of English reform.
3. In CSI, substantial investment has been made in recent years in a new curriculum for English. New communicative textbooks for Grades 1–12 have been implemented and thousands of teachers have received training to prepare them to use these new texts. The evidence we have analysed here, though, suggests that despite these efforts, the teaching of English in primary and secondary education in CSI (and Iraq generally) is still defined by features the new curriculum was meant to eliminate: lessons are teacher-centred, students are often passive, grammar and reading aloud receive much more attention than speaking, and teachers and students make frequent use of their mother tongue. Based on this evidence, it is recommended that the educational authorities in Iraq recognise that introducing a new curriculum does not guarantee improvements in quality; it is also vital to look at educational reform more holistically and to understand and address the various factors that limit change.
4. Assessment is one such factor. At present, there is a mismatch between the way English is assessed in Iraq (especially in high-stakes examinations) and the communicative intentions of the curricula that are used. Given the important role that formal examinations play in the educational system in Iraq, how English is assessed has a powerful washback effect on teaching. Thus, for example, since oral skills in English are not formally addressed, teachers, particularly those teaching classes that are preparing for national examinations, neglect such skills and focus instead on reading and grammar. It is recommended that the MOE (in both CSI and KRI) review how English is assessed and introduce changes that signal the importance that should be allocated to communication in English and particularly to speaking. Teachers will need support in

understanding and implementing such changes and appropriate training and continued support will be required.

5. To support reform in the teaching of English, it is also recommended that the MOEs seek to align the competences of staff responsible for English in the various Directorates with the tasks they are expected to complete. This project suggests that MOE officials entrusted with key tasks relevant to English often lack relevant specialist knowledge and this limits the quality of their work. For example, MOE officials responsible for English assessment should have good theoretical and practical knowledge of contemporary issues in the field of assessment generally and English assessment specifically; the same applies to officials working in the areas of curriculum and teacher training. MOE officials need to be supported with appropriate training and this will also include opportunities to improve their own English proficiency, which may often be basic.

   The English proficiency of MOE officials can be most directly addressed through direct instruction. Priority skills (for example, reading, speaking) and target levels should be established (for example, B1 on the CEFR) and baseline testing of selected officials conducted, after which they can be assigned to (ideally face-to-face) English language courses of an appropriate level. This should be seen as an ongoing initiative which recognises that it takes some 200 hours for learners to move up one level on CEFR bands (though improvement on specific skills may take less time).

   Improving the theoretical and practical knowledge of MOE officials in relation to specific areas of ELT should also be based on an initial analysis of roles and target competences from which appropriate forms of training can be identified. Training, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are four key areas to examine, though others, such as educational technology, may also be relevant if corresponding roles exist within the MOE. So, for example, what do MOE officials responsible for the in-service training of English teachers need to know and be able to do? The British Council CPD Framework for Teacher Educators can provide useful guidance on the competences required and on how these can be developed in the MOE officials responsible. Similar exercises can be conducted in other areas of ELT, ideally with support from specialist consultants. It must be acknowledged that it may be difficult for MOE officials to benefit from training related to their areas of expertise unless their English is already at a certain level (or unless this training is delivered in a local language).

6. English teacher competence is another critical factor that has limited change in what happens in classrooms. Although short-term training to support the new CRI curriculum has been provided to many teachers, there are several features of this training that has limited its impact; it has been delivered in a short intensive block (typically five days), has not included any follow-up components and has focused very specifically on the new curriculum without addressing the deeper shift in practice and thinking that teachers are being asked to undergo as they change from a structural to a communicative way of teaching English. The intended cascade element of the training (where trained teachers in turn train many more) has not worked effectively. It is recommended that the MOEs reconsider the nature of the in-service training that teachers of English receive so that it reflects more of the features that, as recognised in international good practice, make teacher professional development effective (see

Borg, 2022 for a recent analysis of effective approaches to large-scale in-service teacher training).

7. Given the widespread use by teachers of English in Iraq of mobile phones and various online platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp and Viber, it is recommended that ways of exploiting these platforms be part of any revised strategy that MOEs develop for supporting teacher professional development.

8. More generally, it is recommended that MOEs seek to move away from a model of teacher professional development that relies exclusively on training courses and that systematic mechanisms for school-based, collaborative and teacher-led approaches to professional development are established. For example, community of practice models of professional development are being increasingly used worldwide (see, for example, Borg, Lightfoot & Gholkar, 2020).

9. Additionally, the in-service training provided for teachers of English in support of the new CRI curriculum has not addressed another significant barrier to change: limitations in teachers' own spoken English proficiency. Communicative curricula require teachers to speak English frequently, to provide a model of spoken English for students and to encourage students to speak English frequently, too. However, when teachers have limited spoken skills and lack the confidence to speak English in class then lessons become characterised by teachers and students using the L1 and a focus on receptive rather than productive skills. The evidence examined here suggests this is the case in Iraq and it is recommended that improving the English proficiency of teachers of English be made a priority for MOEs as they contemplate ways of improving the quality of English education. Generally, it is recommended that teachers of English be at B2 level on the CEFR.

10. It must also be recognised that the conditions in which English education in Iraq takes place are often very challenging. Various factors such as large classes, limited equipment, limited time, and buildings and classrooms that are in disrepair will inevitably negatively affect teacher morale. While it is appreciated that there are no immediate solutions to such problems, it is recommended that the challenges teachers face be acknowledged and that providing teachers with strategies for coping with such challenges (for example, ways of working with large classes in low-resource environments) be a focus of in-service initiatives for teachers of English.

11. Teacher quality has been identified here as a critical factor in the quality of education that students receive. While limitations in the in-service training available to teachers of English in Iraq has undoubtedly limited teacher quality, inadequacies in the pre-service preparation of English teachers is most likely the root of the problem. As our analysis has argued, English departments in Colleges of Education do not produce graduates who are sufficiently qualified (in terms of English proficiency, teaching skills and theoretical knowledge) to teach English effectively in schools. It is strongly recommended that a review of all aspects of the programmes delivered in English departments be undertaken with the goal of launching revised programmes by 2024–25. Without substantial improvements in the quality of graduates that English departments produce, sustained progress in the teaching and learning of English in Iraq is not possible. Graduates who lack the language and teaching skills required will not be able to deliver communicative curricula effectively (and to a certain extent, introducing new curricula without addressing the root causes of limited teacher quality will most likely not lead to any visible change).

    Updating pre-service teacher education in Iraq would be a substantial initiative for which a

minimum of 24 months would be required. The project would need to include (a) a review of current policy regarding pre-service teacher education and Colleges of Education; (b) an analysis of English departments with reference to admission procedures, content, structure, teaching methods, resources, assessment and staff; (c) proposals for changes in all of these areas and to any relevant MOHE policies; (d) consultation with the MOHE and English departments on these changes; (e) preparation for change, for example, through training for English departments; (f) implementation; and (g) review after one year. The project would ideally be supported by an experienced specialist consultant, working with committees or working groups drawn from the target sector.

12. Teacher shortages may mean that it is necessary for the MOE to recruit teachers of English who have not graduated from Colleges of Education. It is recommended that the induction course available for such candidates be reviewed to ensure that it allows them to achieve an appropriate level of English and pedagogical skill for teaching English. This would minimise the negative effects on learning that result from the deployment of teachers who lack the competences to teach English effectively.
13. In CSI, the supervision of English teachers is often hampered by the large numbers of teachers that individual supervisors are responsible for. It is recommended that the effectiveness of the current system of English teacher supervision in CSI be reviewed and that changes be considered which allow teachers to receive more regular support from their supervisors. The shift to whole school supervision and evaluation that has been adopted in KRI may have some potential for use in CSI, though it must also be noted that evidence of how effective the KRI system is in increasing the quality of English teaching is not available. Overall, though, this system does relieve the substantial pressures faced by English supervisors who are responsible for large numbers of individual teachers spread across many schools.
14. Across Iraq, the policy of the MOHE is that all non-English majors must study non-departmental English (NDE), often for all four years of undergraduate programmes. The evidence we have assessed here, though, suggests that NDE is not taken seriously, operates at a very basic level, is not underpinned by a clear rationale (which explains *why* NDE is a requirement) and does not contribute to undergraduates' academic studies. It is recommended that the MOHEs review further the status of NDE in Iraq, leading to updated guidance on its purpose, teaching, learning, assessment and relevance to undergraduates' disciplinary studies and future careers. Without such steps, NDE will continue to be a largely perfunctory activity which does not contribute positively to levels of English among graduates.

## 7.2 Non-formal English education

1. The results of this project suggest that the teaching of English by non-formal NGO providers is delivered in short, ad hoc courses which have goals other than developing the proficiency of learners as their main goal. Providing psycho-social support or enhancing learners' 'life skills' are prioritised over planned improvements to learners' competence in speaking, listening, reading or writing English. This means that non-formal NGO English provision in Iraq is not significantly affecting the proficiency in English of these NGOs' learners. It is essential that this be acknowledged by the NGOs from the outset and that coordinated

efforts to understand the role of English in NGOs' work take place before English projects are developed.

2. To respond to the needs of the non-formal sector outlined above, English project managers will need to position their approach at the interface ELT and development education. This will enable English language teachers in the non-formal sector to be able to deliver English lessons which combine psycho-social support, life skills or core skills with English language pedagogy. This integrated approach to ELT programmes will need to clearly set out the relationship between language learning outcomes and the psycho-social competencies, life skills or core skills that learners or teachers need to develop in each English project.
3. The British Council has a wealth of expertise planning, designing and delivering ELT projects in post-conflict settings or settings which are experiencing high levels of displacement and migration. Existing English language teacher development projects include resources which would enhance English projects with a strong psycho-social or life skills component, such as *Understanding Special Educational Needs, Multicultural influences, and Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties* in the *British Council's Teaching for Success* material. Drawing on these existing resources would enable British Council Iraq to develop ELT projects with NGO providers which bring together language learning with:
    - enabling conflict-affected teachers and learners to use storytelling, drama, music and art to learn English and develop psycho-social competencies
    - managing conflict-affected learners and challenging classroom situations
    - dealing with mixed-ability classes
    - dealing with large classes.
4. In KRI, region-wide NGO programmes include English teaching, while the findings from this project suggest that few of these teachers have opportunities for enhancing their professional skills based on international best practice in ELT. Communicative activities are often the focus for these teachers' lessons, yet few teachers were able to describe training that has prepared them to use these materials in class. The evidence we have analysed here suggests that, despite good intentions, the teaching of English in NGO settings is still delivered using teacher-centred approaches (teachers did most of the talking in most of the lessons we observed), while learners are often passive and find themselves in a similar situation to their formal sector peers, where grammar and reading aloud receive much more attention than speaking, and teachers and learners make frequent use of their mother tongue without knowing how best to maximise the use of the mother tongue to scaffold the learning of English. Based on this evidence, it is recommended that NGO providers of English in Iraq recognise that introducing 'communicative activities' does not guarantee improvements in how teachers use these activities. It is vital that NGO providers of English include professional development opportunities for staff delivering English classes which enables those staff to enhance their classroom teaching strategies.
5. To support NGO teachers of English with professional development opportunities such as those described above, it is also recommended that NGOs seek to align manager competences with teachers of English competencies, such as those identified in the *Language for Resilience* competency framework. Our findings suggest that NGO managers entrusted with activities relevant to the provision of English in NGO settings often lack relevant specialist knowledge of even basic ELT, and this limits their ability to guide teachers, select resources and administer testing and assessment. For example, NGO staff responsible for placement tests when selecting students for 'English for social cohesion style' courses need practical knowledge of contemporary issues in the field of assessment

generally and English assessment specifically; the same applies to NGO staff working in the areas of curriculum and teacher training. NGO managers need to be supported with appropriate training and this will also include opportunities for their own professional development relating to ELT.

6. English teacher competence is closely related to mechanisms for observation and feedback within NGO centres delivering English. While the short-term training workshops that we were told about in this project provide insights into good practice, they do not provide opportunities for teachers to observe their peers or for managers to observe their teaching staff. Thus, any training that is in place has limited impact as it is not backed up with ongoing lesson observations, and denies any deeper shift in practice that comes about when teachers are presented with feedback from an experienced peer or manager. As teachers move from grammar-translation or teacher-centred methodologies, they need to try out new teaching techniques and strategies to be able to move from a structural to a communicative way of teaching English. It is recommended that NGO managers explore the nature of peer observation and manager observation as part of the in-service support that teachers of English require.

7. As with formal sector teachers of English, the conditions in which English education in Iraq takes place are often very challenging. Various factors such as large classes, limited equipment, limited time, and classrooms that are in disrepair will inevitably negatively affect teacher morale. While it is appreciated that there are no immediate solutions to such problems, it is recommended that the challenges teachers face be acknowledged and that providing teachers with strategies for coping with such challenges (for example, ways of working with

large classes in low-resource environments) be a focus of in-service initiatives for teachers of English.

8. Given the widespread use by teachers of English in Iraq of mobile phones and various online platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp and Viber, it is recommended that ways of exploiting these platforms be part of any revised strategy that NGOs develop for supporting teacher professional development.

9. Care must be taken with cascade approaches to training. Interviewees mentioned this approach on several occasions and while significant numbers of teachers can be reached via this approach, there are equally significant challenges. The quality and quantity of trainers' training and trainers' notes are central to a cascade model, as are in-depth master training and detailed guidance notes and handbooks to enhance each level of the cascade. Classroom research now challenges the impact of cascade models at the classroom level as short-term 'quick-fix' solutions at the expense of progressively building a cadre of teachers through in-depth training. Qualifications should be recognised to keep teachers in the profession and avoid a multitude of short ad hoc trainings.

The following recommendations are project suggestions for working with non-formal providers of English in Iraq.

10. **ELT for marginalised communities: combining ELT with psycho-social support and multilingual pedagogies**

    This approach will require an investment in human resource development within the British Council Iraq team to enable staff to work closely with colleagues elsewhere in the MENA region who have been working on British Council global products. In addition to English language teaching expertise, the approach recommended here will also require expertise in education in emergencies, development education and multilingual pedagogies.

    For example, if resources from *Teaching for Success* can be adapted for low-level English learners or teachers who have access to limited technology in marginalised communities, then the British Council Iraq English team will need to work together to pool their skills from across ELT and education in emergencies. This is necessary if ELT projects are to include methodology training for teachers in low-resource settings. Furthermore, these projects will need to include curriculum design initiatives which describe learning and teaching outcomes (what teachers and learners in marginalised communities need to know, understand and be able to do) which cover the target language and skills relating to English as well as any learning outcomes for psycho-social competencies, core skills, or life skills. See Capstick & Ateek (2021) for examples.

11. **Extending ELT for marginalised communities to include citizenship education**

    In addition to the embedding of psycho-social support, core skills or life skills in ELT projects, participants in the NGO research workshops described their courses which bring together language learning and citizenship education. An approach to ELT project design which includes citizenship education (with or without the psycho-social competencies mentioned above) would also serve the non-formal sector NGOs well. ELT and citizenship education curricula could include non-violent communication, human rights, gender and education, and well-being components. These skills can be taught in separate modules or integrated across the whole curriculum.

12. **Drawing on existing British Council programmes in *Language for Resilience* and *English for Empowerment***

    For over ten years, the British Council has been developing interventions and carrying out research in the MENA and SSA regions which is designed to support individuals, communities, and education systems affected by conflict and

displacement to use language learning in efforts to enhance resilience (see *Definitions*). UNICEF (2016) has recently argued that language is a factor in conflict because it is both a tool for access to cultural and material resources and an expression of identity. The *Language for Resilience* framework suggests that, for very similar reasons, language is a factor in strengthening resilience and is very much a factor in preventing conflict and strengthening communities. The British Council Iraq English programme team will need to be able to describe to NGO partners and colleagues how *Language for Resilience* interventions relate to English in non-formal settings given that *Language for Resilience* cuts across work which includes education in emergencies, education in development and language education.

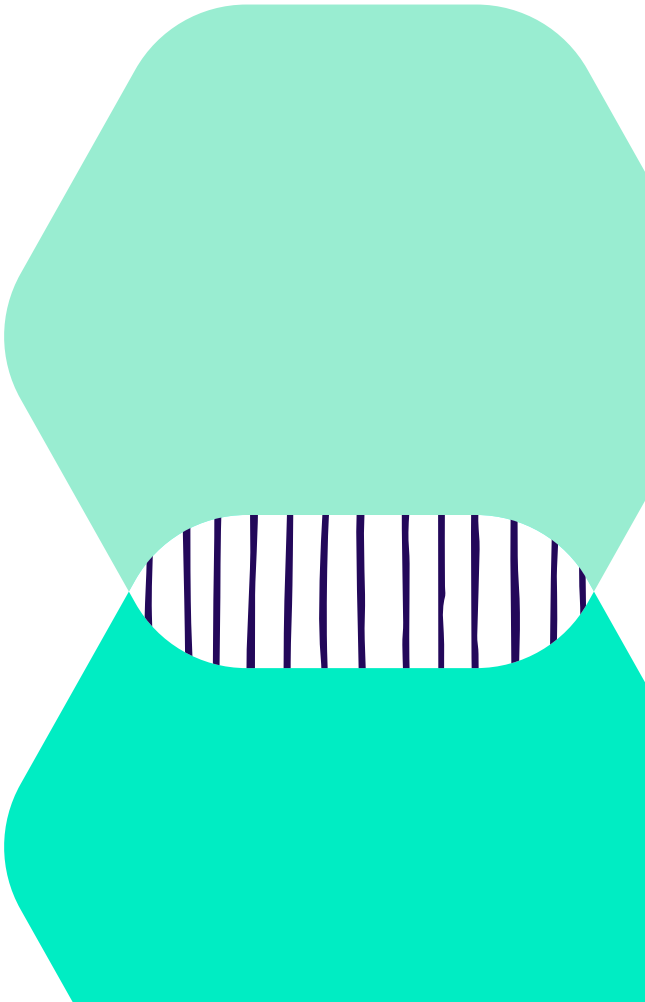
13. **Non-formal, community-based English language teacher development projects for teachers of English in marginalised communities**

    Access to English for higher education has left a substantial legacy of best practice in the MENA region (e.g. Jordan's LASER project). These access-to-higher-education projects for refugee youth include adolescent displaced learners with lower academic and language skills. Similarly, British Council staff elsewhere in the region have expanded their areas of expertise to embrace pedagogies which also address trauma and psycho-social issues in the (language) classroom.

14. **Non-formal, community-based English language teacher development projects for teachers of English in marginalised communities**

    Working with national and international NGOs to provide community-driven teacher development for catch-up classes for marginalised groups will enable NGO/non-formal English language teachers taking part in British Council teacher development initiatives to integrate good practice from other non-formal, NGO or donor-funded programmes.

    Working with multiple agencies in this way will help forge alliances and develop professional networks that teachers can turn to once their training programme is over [see 5.3.1.1 for examples from Barzani Foundation and Save the Children KRI]. ELT trainers can play a significant role in supporting English language catch-up classes for IDP learners. Where marginalised groups from host communities come together with IDP or refugee learners, British Council Iraq support to catch-up classes can draw on pedagogy which embeds English language learning outcomes in catch-up class curricula, and teacher development which goes beyond ELT to include digital literacy, numeracy, second languages, life skills, citizenship skills, study skills, citizenship education and gender equality. See British Council's *English and Digital for Girls' Education* (EDGE) programme as an example of good practice.



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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: British Council reports on English in Iraq

| Source | Focus | Key Findings |
|---|---|---|
| Borg 2014. ***Overall perspectives on English in State universities in Kurdistan*** | ELT in Higher Education; EMI | • although all universities reportedly provided English-medium courses, these were most likely delivered through a mixture of English, Kurdish and possibly Arabic too<br>• the most common form of undergraduate provision was two hours of general English a week, typically only in the first year of study<br>• resources and facilities across the universities were not conducive to high quality teaching and learning<br>• a number of universities did not have an explicit policy on English. |
| Borg 2015. ***Survey of English language teachers in state universities in Kurdistan*** | ELT in Higher Education; EMI | • the English language teaching workforce in HE was predominantly local, relatively inexperienced and often untrained<br>• teachers indicated that first year students entered university with a beginner (A1) or elementary (A2) level of English<br>• technology was lacking in the classrooms where English is taught<br>• a large majority (85%) of teachers felt that their approach to teaching English is communicative<br>• fewer than 50%, agreed that their university supported their professional development. |
| Borg 2015. ***Undergraduate students' perspectives on learning and using English*** | ELT in Higher Education; EMI | • while 74%of the students said they listened to lectures in English, only 31.2% said that they spoke English during lectures<br>• over 94%of respondents said they wanted to improve their English (with females expressing a desire to improve significantly more than males)<br>• there was widespread agreement (over 93%) that better English would contribute to better performance at university; but 64% also agreed that they could still get a good job even without good English<br>• around 30% of the students said they would definitely be willing to pay for courses or on-line materials to help them improve their English<br>• reported levels of internet use among students was modest. |

| Source | Focus | Key Findings |
|---|---|---|
| Borg 2015. ***English Medium Instruction in Iraqi Kurdistan: Perspectives from lecturers at state universities*** | ELT in Higher Education; EMI | • just over 63% of EMI lecturers were satisfied with their current level of English<br>• just under 30% said they spoke English all the time or almost all the time during lectures<br>• a large majority of lecturers believed that EMI enhances their own English and that of their students<br>• EMI seemed to occur through a combination of English and/or Kurdish and Arabic and in many cases English was used less frequently than these other languages<br>• the main challenge for EMI lecturers was students' levels of English (typically beginner or elementary), which were seen to be inadequate for the purposes of academic study in English. |
| Lee & Mackay 2019. ***Evaluation of the Iraq Master Trainer programme, 2015–2019*** | Trainer Training | • 'The programme was successful. Interviews with Ministry of Education officials, Master Trainers, Teachers and Supervisors were highly complimentary of the programme and noted a range of positive impacts in teachers' approach to the teaching and learning of English language. The surveys of Master Trainers and Teachers indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the programme, and reported changes in teaching and Learning' (p. 3).<br>• Limitations in the administration and monitoring and evaluation of the programme were noted. |

# Appendix 2: Questions for MOE officials

The precise nature of the discussion will vary depending on the stakeholders' responsibilities and it will be necessary to follow up on interesting points that arise. Overall, though, the conversation will follow the direction outlined here.

1. The stakeholder's role — what responsibilities do they have in relation to English?
2. Details of the kind of work they and their staff do in relation to examinations, curriculum, supervision or training.

**For Curriculum**

- Describe the process through which the new 'English for Iraq' curriculum was introduced [assumes it was introduced for the whole country].
- What motivated the introduction of the new curriculum?
- Does the MOE have standards for English that students are expected to reach by certain stages of education?
- Have the national examinations for English changed to reflect the new curriculum?
- What support have teachers received to allow them to teach the new textbooks?
- People from universities we have spoken to have expressed concerns that by the end of high school Iraqi students are still unable to communicate fluently and accurate in English. Do you agree and if so what challenges are responsible for this situation?
- There are also concerns that graduates of English are not prepared to teach in schools. What are your thoughts on how well the curriculum followed by Colleges of Education prepares teachers for the classroom?

- Are there enough teachers of English or are there shortages in certain areas such as primary school?
- What support is given to refugee or IDP learners (or teachers) who have missed education or are suffering from trauma?
- How are languages other than English (e.g. Arabic or Kurdish) used in the teaching of English?
- Are there any kinds of support, for example from the British Council that would assist the MOE in its work with English education in Iraq?

**For Examinations**

- How is English assessed in formal education?
- When are the key national examinations taken by students?
- Who designs and marks the examinations?
- Apart from the formal examinations, how are students assessed at school?
- According to the result of national English examinations, how do students perform at the end of each stage of education?
- Are there any kinds of support, for example from the British Council, that would assist the MOE in its work with English education in Iraq?

**Supervision**

- What is the role of supervisors in the MOE?
- How are supervisors selected?
- What kinds of training do they receive? What kinds do they need?
- How often are teachers visited by supervisors? What happens during these visits?
- What criteria are used in appraising (supervising) teachers? Is there a specific form that is used?
- Do head teachers take part in the appraisal process and if so, what do they do?
- Do teachers' appraisal results have any consequences for their career? For example, what happens if they receive a low appraisal?
- Do supervisors or head teachers have a policy about the use of languages other than English (e.g. Arabic or Kurdish) in the teaching of English?
- Are there any kinds of support, for example from the British Council, that would assist the MOE in its work with English education in Iraq?

**Training**

- What kinds of training does the MOE provide for teachers of English?
- What topics are covered and how are these chosen?
- When and where does the training take place?
- How are teachers chosen for the training?
- Who delivers the training, and what 'trainer training' have they received for this purpose?
- How is the training evaluated?
- Are there any kinds of support, for example from the British Council, that would assist the MOE in its work with English education in Iraq?
- Is there any training to help teachers understand how to help refugees or IDPs in the learning?

# Appendix 3: Discussion questions for MOE supervisors

The aim of the meeting is for supervisors to explain the kind of work they do within the MOE and their views about English teaching. We will discuss these questions as a group.

- Brief introductions; each supervisor can mention how many schools and teachers of English they are responsible for.
- What is the structure for the work of supervisors within the MOE (departments and people responsible)?
- How does one become a supervisor?
- What are the responsibilities of supervisors? Visiting teachers and writing reports, delivering training, other responsibilities?
- Visiting teachers is a key responsibility for supervisors:
  - How often do supervisors visit teachers?
  - Do teachers know beforehand if the supervisor is visiting?
  - What normally happens during these visits?
  - What criteria are used to evaluate teachers?
  - Are these specific for English or general?
  - What happens after the observations (for example, discussion)?
  - What happens to teachers who are not performing well?
  - Do teachers receive written reports?
- Do supervisors also deliver any training to teachers? If so, please describe some examples of this.
- What about training for supervisors themselves – what is provided by the MOE?
- How is the quality of supervisors' work monitored?
- Based on your observations of teachers, what are your views about the strengths of English teachers in Iraq – things they do well?
- And what are your views about areas of their work that teachers of English need to improve?
- How far are teachers able to teach the new communicative textbooks effectively?
- What are your views on how students in Iraq feel about learning English and English lessons?
- Do supervisors play any role in the writing of national examinations for English?
- The national English tests do not include an oral component. Does this affect how much attention teachers give to speaking in the classroom?
- Any other comments you want to make about the teaching of English in schools in Iraq and how this can be improved?

# Appendix 4: MOE teacher questions

- How well do teachers feel that their Colleges studies prepared them for the reality of working in the classroom? For example, was there enough focus on practical teaching skills?
- What kinds of resources do they have in their schools to support their teaching?
- What materials do they use? The textbook, and anything else?
- How do they feel about the official textbook? For example, is at the right level for their learners?
- How much freedom do they feel they have in deciding (a) what to teach and (b) how to teach?
- What kinds of activities do they typically use during their lessons?

- How is English assessed, formally and informally?
- How do they feel about languages such as Kurdish or Arabic being used to teach English and is there an official policy about this or training about how to use these languages to teach English?
- How do their students feel about learning English?
- What kinds of training have they received since they graduated (in-service training)?
- Do they receive visits from supervisors? If so, what happens and how useful are the visits and any feedback?
- To what extent do teachers of English in schools work together, for example, to plan lessons or observe each other's lessons?
- Outside schools, how often are teachers online? What devices do they mostly use and do they use any particular social media platforms?
- Are they members of any teacher groups or associations?
- Are there any programmes that are run to help refugees or IDPs access education?
- What are the main challenges that teachers of English face in their work?
- What kinds of support do they need from the MOE to help them with their work?

# Appendix 5: Iraq classroom observation tool

| BRITISH COUNCIL IRAQ RESEARCH 2021 – SCHOOL OBSERVATION FORM | |
|---|---|
| Name of teacher | |
| Male/Female | |
| Years' of Experience (ask the teacher) | |
| School name | |
| Level – primary, middle or high school | |
| Location | |
| Urban/Rural | |
| Duration of lesson (mins). | |
| Grade: | |
| Number of learners (boys/girls) | |
| Physical description of the classroom, including any equipment | |
| Layout of desks and chairs | |
| Topic of the lesson | |
| Materials used, such as textbook (name, unit, pages) and other resources | |
| Lesson aims (ask teacher if necessary) | |

## DESCRIPTION OF LESSON

| WHAT THE TEACHER DOES AND SAYS | WHAT THE LEARNERS DO AND SAY |
|---|---|
| | |

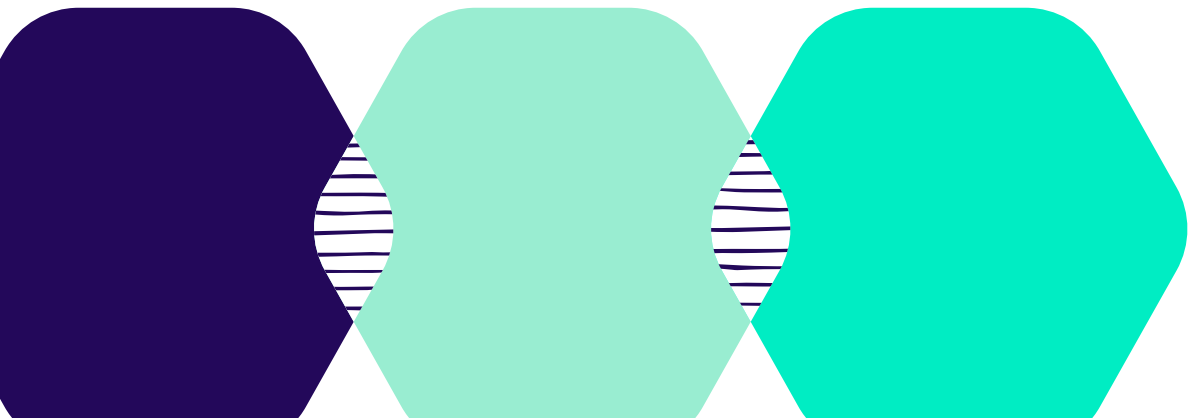
| | |
|---|---|
| Tick up to two areas of language that were the MAIN focus of the lesson. | Speaking Listening Reading Writing<br>Grammar Vocabulary Pronunciation |
| Did the lesson seem natural (not rehearsed)? | YES or NO |
| How often did the teacher speak English? | 1 = Rarely 2 = Occasionally 3 = Sometimes<br>4 = Often 5 = Frequently |
| What was the teacher's level of spoken English? | 1 = Low 2 = Average 3 = High |
| How often did learners speak English? | 1 = Rarely 2 = Occasionally 3 = Sometimes<br>4 = Often 5 = Frequently |
| Did the teacher use Arabic or Kurdish to scaffold the teaching of English? | YES or NO |
| Did the learners use Arabic or Kurdish to scaffold the learning of English | YES or NO |
| The overall quality of the lesson | 1 = Very Poor 2 = Below Average 3 = Average<br>4 = Above Average 5 = Excellent |

**OVERALL COMMENT**

| |
|---|
| Comment on how student-centred and communicative the lesson was and what changes would improve it in these respects. |

# Appendix 6: Questions for academic staff in English departments

- What levels of English do students have when they join the College?
- Do they have to meet particular entry requirements for English (for example, on their high school leaving examination)?
- How many students typically join the English department each year?
- What proportion of students who start the programme graduate and become teachers of English?
- Is it easy for graduates to find a job teaching English?
- Are they required to work in the state system for some time after graduation?
- We understand that the first two years of the College programme focus on improving students' English. Could you tell us about the kinds of courses they do?
- What kinds of resources are available in the department to support English courses – for example, internet, libraries, equipped and furnished classrooms?
- To teach in the English department, what qualifications do staff need to have?
- Are College courses evaluated in any way? If so, how? Do students provide feedback? Does the MOHE supervise the quality of work in Colleges of Education?
- Some College staff we have spoken to feel that the curriculum provided by the MOHE does not prepare students to teach English in the classroom – for example, there is not enough focus in the curriculum on practical teaching methods. Do you feel that is the case?
- Is there a policy about using Arabic or Kurdish by teachers or students in the teaching of English?
- Tell us about the teaching practice course that students take in their 4th year. How does it work and how are students assessed?
- Has the work of the department been disrupted by Covid-19? Has teaching been conducted online? What about the 4th year teaching practice?
- Are there any programmes that are run to help refugees or IDPs access education?
- Do you feel that the MOHE curriculum for English needs to be revised? If so, in what ways?
- More generally, what support do English departments and College generally need to improve the quality of their work?
- Is there anything else about the current situation in Iraq regarding the teaching of English that you would like to tell us about?



# Appendix 7: College of Education teaching practice evaluation forms

**School Principal's Form**

| S | Criteria | 0 | 1 | 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Personality | | | |
| 2 | Scientific competence | | | |
| 3 | His/her behaviour with the students | | | |
| 4 | His/her collaboration with the students | | | |
| 5 | His/her commitment to school attendance | | | |
| 6 | His/her writing of a daily plan | | | |
| 7 | His/her behaviour and general manner | | | |
| 8 | His/her activities at school | | | |
| 9 | The extent of his/her ability to maintain order in the classroom | | | |
| 10 | The extent to which he/she is apt for teaching | | | |
| **Total final score** | | | | |

**Scientific and Educational Supervisor's Form**

| S | Criteria | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Voice clarity and language correctness | | | | |
| 2 | Preparation and organisation of the lesson plan | | | | |
| 3 | Verification of lesson plan implementation | | | | |
| 4 | Presenting the scientific material in a coherent and accurate manner | | | | |
| 5 | The skill of using different teaching methods | | | | |
| 6 | Taking care of activities and homework | | | | |
| 7 | Efficiency of distributing lesson activities upon the time schedule | | | | |
| 8 | The skill of formulating thought-provoking questions during the lesson | | | | |
| 9 | Good distribution of questions and activities upon the students in the lesson | | | | |
| 10 | Preparing the teaching plan and benefiting from the teaching aids | | | | |
| **Total final score** | | | | | |

# Appendix 8: Discussion sheet for NDE teachers

**Non-departmental English (NDE) in Iraq**

Dear Colleague

Thank you so much for assisting with this project. The focus of this meeting will be non-departmental English (NDE) in universities in CSI/KRI. Please read the ten conclusions below from some work the British Council did in KRI in 2015 and comment on each statement in the boxes provided. During the meeting we will discuss these points and any others relevant to NDE in CSI/KRI. At the end of the form there is space to write any additional comments about NDE.

**Conclusions from research into non-departmental English in KRI in 2015. How valid are these today in CSI/KRI?**

1. University language centres play no role in non-departmental English courses.
2. English language courses are typically taught only in the first year of study and most commonly for two hours a week.
3. English classes typically have at least 30 students.
4. Over 62% of the teachers stated that first year students enter university with a beginner (A1) or elementary (A2) level of English.
5. Some non-departmental English courses are very basic in level, with a primary focus on mechanics (e.g. punctuation, grammar, reading and writing).
6. Universities identified a long list of challenges they are facing in relation to the teaching and learning of English. These include limited numbers of trained teachers, limited access to resources and facilities, the lack of clear policies on English, and curricula that very often do not motivate students.
7. Technology is lacking in the classrooms where English is taught. Over 87% of teachers, though, said they make regular use of technology on their courses, often using their own personal equipment.
8. The English language teaching workforce is predominantly local, relatively inexperienced, and, in a substantial proportion of cases (over 42%), untrained to teach English.
9. Fewer than 20% of the respondents felt their students' motivation to learn English was high while over 27% felt it was low or very low.
10. Teachers participate in a range of professional development activities; fewer than 50%, though, agreed that their university supports their professional development.

| Item in the above list | Is this conclusion still valid today in NDE in CSI/KRI? (Write Yes/No/Partly) | If 'No' or 'Partly', what is different or has changed? |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | | |
| 2 | | |
| 3 | | |
| 4 | | |
| 5 | | |
| 6 | | |
| 7 | | |
| 8 | | |
| 9 | | |
| 10 | | |

**Any additional comments about NDE in your University?**

# Appendix 9: Sample NDE test paper

***Note: Answer four questions only***

**Q1: Make negative sentences with There isn't or There aren't. (15 marks)**

1. _____any posters on the walls.
2. _____ any flowers in the garden.
3. _____ a PlayStation in the living room.
4. _____ any people in the living room.
5. _____ DVD player.

**Q2: Write the years in numbers below in words. (15 marks)**

1. 1999
2. 1980
3. 1976
4. 1963
5. 2005

**Q3: Complete the sentences with *did* or *made*. (15 marks)**

1. Exercise I was easy, so I _____ exercises 2 and 5.
2. Bruce Lee _____ a lot of films.
3. I _____ dinner last night. It was delicious.
4. You _____ a lot of mistakes in your homework. DO it again.
5. I _____ a lot of work yesterday. I'm very tired today.

**Q4: Match the opposite adjectives. (15 marks)**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Good | Boring |
| 2. | Fast | New |
| 3. | Dangerous | Quite |
| 4. | Interesting | Slow |
| 5. | Busy | Safe |

**Q5: Complete the sentences with an adverb below. (15 marks)**

(Always, never, sometimes, often, usually)

1. I _____ check my emails in the evening.
2. I _____ get up early at the weekend.
3. I _____ go out with my friend on Sunday afternoon.
4. We _____ go jogging in the park
5. I _____ get up at 7.00.

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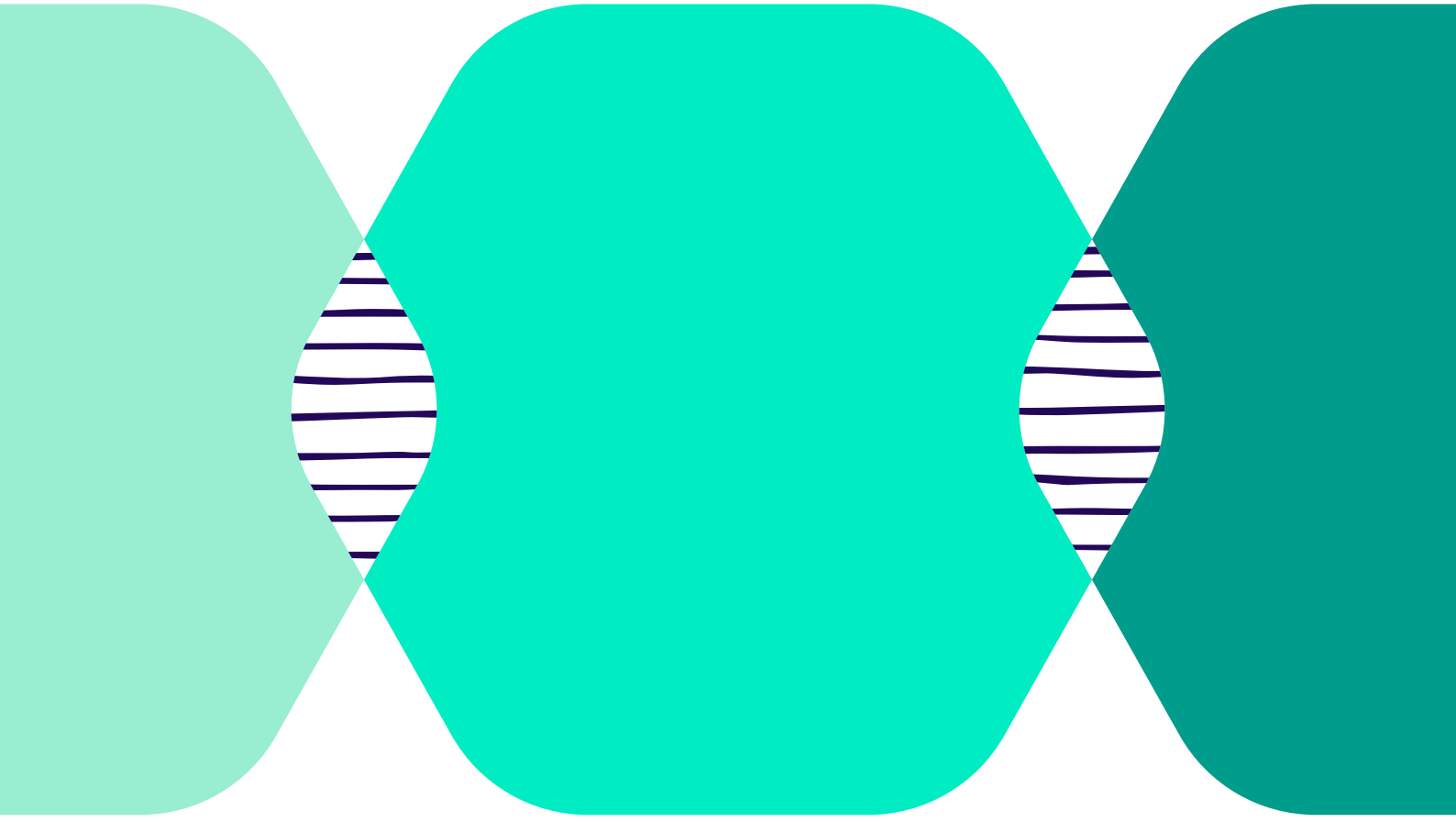

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