

University Teacher-training in Change: The English and Iranian Experience, English Language Teaching in the Two Systems with ESL/ESP as a Case Study

By

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VOLUME 1

Contents

<u>Title</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
General Introduction	
1. Introduction:	3
Chapter 1: Teacher Education in the UK	
1.1 Introduction	6
1.2 A Background to the Study	7
1.3 The History of Initial Teacher Education in England and Wales	10
1.4 In-service Teacher Education	22
1.5 The Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET).....	31
1.6 Summative Reflection	37
Chapter 2, Part 1: Teacher Education in Iran	
2.1.1 Introduction	60
2.1.2 Background to University Teacher-training: Tarbiat Modarres University	63
2.1.3 Critical Issues in Iranian Teacher-training:.....	68
Part 2: A Comparison Between Teacher Education in the UK and in Iran	
2.2.1 Introduction	75
2.2.2 A Concise Comparison of Teacher Education in the UK and Iran..	76
2.3 Summative Reflection	78
Chapter 3: Research Methodology	
3.1 Introduction to Research Methodology.....	82
3.2 Background to Educational Research Methodology	92
3.3 Limitations and Opportunities in Educational Research.....	96
3.4 Literature Review.....	103
3.5 The Method Used in This Study: Action Research	105
3. 6 Sampling Procedure.....	111
3.7 Data Collection Methods	112
3.8 The Field Study Data Analysis.....	112
3.9 Questionnaire validity	113
3.10 The formulation of the students' questionnaire	114
3.11 Analysis and Interpretation of Qualitative Data.....	116
3.12 Sampling Procedure.....	116
3.13 Summative Reflection	117

Chapter 4

4.1 Introduction	124
4.2 Towards Defining Discourse and Discourse Analysis.....	124
4.3 The Nature of Language Teaching.....	130
4.4 The Components of Discourse analysis.....	134
4.5 The Purpose of Discourse analysis.....	145
4.6 Discourse analysis and Teaching Approaches.....	149
4.6.1 Discourse analysis in the 1960s	149
4.6.2 Discourse analysis in the 1970s	155
4.6.3 Discourse analysis in the 1980s	172
4.7 Views on Input.....	189
4.8 Views on Structure.....	195
4.9 Students' Questions.....	196
4.10 Views on Optimum Learning.....	198
4.11 Discourse analysis and English	200
4.12 Testing Oral Discourse.....	202
4.13 Purposes of English Students Oral Testing	203
4.14 Critical Issues in Oral Testing	204
4.15 Context Effectiveness on English Oral Testing	206
4.16 Instrumentality in Testing	206
4.17 Unit of meaning	207
4.18 Testing Chart.....	207
4.19 English Oral Discourse Test Scale	209
4.20 Good Speaker.....	210
4.21 Poor Speaker.....	211
4.22 Analytic Test	211
4.23 Holistic Test	212
4.24 Result of English Students Speaking Testing	213
4.25 Summative Reflection	213

CHAPTER 5

English Language Teaching (ELT) in Iran 159

5.1 Introduction	218
5.2 Background to the Study	224
5.3 A Brief Review of English Language Teaching in Iran.....	230
5.4 Teaching Methods in Iran and their Problems	239
5.5 The Purpose of Learning English in Iran	243
5.6 The University English Language Teaching/Learning Process and the Cultural Revolution.....	243
5.7 English Textbooks in Iran	244
5.8 The Situation of English Language in Iranian Universities Today	247
5.9 Arguments against the other approaches.....	249
5.10 Summative Reflection	250

CHAPTER 6

ESL and ESP as a Case Study

6.1 Definitions of ESL/ESP	252
6.2 The Nature of ESP Literature.....	257
6.3 Purposes of ESP.....	260
6.4 Context of Situation	261
6.5 ESP Teaching/Learning Process	267
6.6 Contents of ESP Textbooks in Iran	271
6.7 The Teacher of English.....	281
6.8 Teachers' Awareness of English Context	283
6.9 Summative Reflection	289

CHAPTER 7

Fusing Theory to Practice

7.1 Introduction	291
7.2 Background.....	292
7.3 Class Initiatives.....	303
7.4 Analysing Content: Meaning	303
7.5 Analysing Educational Technology	311
7.6 Analysing structure.....	312
7.7 Level of effective and purposeful input.....	317
7.8 Level of use and practice : question and answer strategy	320
7.9 Level of simplification use	323
7.10 Level of synonymous use	329
7.11 Level of silent persuasion and activities	331
7.12 Silent students' persuasion activities	332
7.13 Analysing question/answer techniques in group work	339
7.14 Level of the available resources: instruction and use	343
7.15 Level of prior knowledge use: out of class exercises	346
7.16 Level of the use of underlining	348
7.17 Level of pastoral contact	349
7.18 Level of integration: culture, and contexts	352
7.19 Use of Paralinguistic and Prosodic elements, stress, intonation, and body movements	354
7.20 Use of rules: ways of expressions	356
7.21 Turn-taking.....	359
7.22 Use of Games and Exercises	361
7.23 Summative Reflection	363

CHAPTER 8

Field-Work: Practice: Interviews & Teaching Sessions

8.1 Introduction:.....	367
8.2 The general aims of the field-work.....	369
8.3 Background	369

8.4 Pre-test.....	369
8.5 Pre-test and post-test conversation analysis: contrasts	373
8.6 Teachers' questionnaires	376
8.7 Teachers' interviews	373
8.8 Key points asserted by teacher subject no.2 are as below:.....	381
8.9 Teacher subject no.3 's assertions on some questions are as follows:	382
8.10 Teacher subject no. 5 contended:.....	383
8.11 Head of English in Teacher Training University : Interview.....	384
8.12 An open interview with five English students:	385
8.13 Simplifying a Text	386
8.14 Teaching Sessions	387
8.15 Reflection analysis.....	398

Chapter 9

Discussions

9.1 Introduction:.....	399
9.2 The system for discourse analyses	399
9.3 Discussion of teaching sessions conversations	402
9.4 Discussion of Achievements.....	408
9.5 Analysis and Discussion of Students' Questionnaire	409
9.6 Analysis: Discussion and conclusion of teachers' questionnaire	416
9.7 Analysis: Discussion of Interviews.....	417
9.8 Investigator's Comment.....	418
9.9 Discussion of classroom teaching/observation.....	424
9.10 Discussion of Teachers' Interviews.....	425

CHAPTER 10

Conclusions and Recommendations

10.1 Conclusions drawn from questionnaires and interviews.....	428
10.2 Conclusion drawn from the classroom teaching and observation	430
10.3 Overall Conclusion.....	444
10.4 Recommendations	447
References.....	451
Appendices	471

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I hope this research contributes to educational system in general and Iranian universities in particular and those who are in the related areas of the study especially ESL and ESP learners and my Iranian colleagues in Iran.

Abstract

This study critically examines teacher education in the English system and in Iran so as to compare the two systems with the aim of identifying effective English language teaching strategies that are applicable to the Iranian system. The reason for examining this topic was the problem that I faced for many years during my teaching in Iranian universities. The main problem was the lack of the use of spoken English by the Iranian university students and graduates. In addition, the context of ESL/ESP in Iranian universities was investigated because little research in Iran has been conducted to explore the influence of oral discourse analysis to improve fluency. The reason is that I believe teacher education, teaching approaches and related issues, such as textbooks and teacher-student relationships, are not separate issues and can be studied as one package. This study includes a critical literature review on methodological elements so as to reach a more practical and effective English language teaching approach in Iran, in particular for the use of English. I was able to identify the central problems of the study, in particular the improvement of speaking skills through oral discourse analysis. The study has shown how university students can make use of effective strategies through oral discourse analysis introduced to improve their English speaking. The students' needs, the English textbooks, context of situation and the relationships between the students and teachers as well as a critical literature review are studied.

Issues such as the need for a more fluent discourse and exchanging views, building on teaching experience, preventing past mistakes, and utilising fully the available resources and the provision of required educational aids are introduced. In this study I shall also present the barriers to innovation and offer suitable solutions.

To facilitate the research I employed two types of questionnaires: an English teachers' and students' questionnaire. Twelve interviews were also carried out as a supplementary research instrument to the nine sessions of teaching. The critical literature review, interviews, and the analyses of questionnaires and the teaching

sessions supported my initial subjective experience regarding how to resolve the problems of Iranian English Language Teaching. This also resulted in significant improvement of fluency of the participant students. The general discussions, conclusion and recommendations are provided at the end of the study.

**University Teacher-training in Change: The English and Iranian
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The aim of this study is to examine the English initial teacher-training programme to extract the oral productive strategies of ESL/EFL, which are suitable and applicable in the Iranian Teacher-training University, Daneshgah Tarbiat Moddaress (DTM). This is important because these strategies can enable Iranian University graduates to use English as and when required efficiently. The majority of the Iranian University graduates are not able to use even simple English expressions.

To this end, a study of teacher education and certain related critical teaching issues in England and in Iran will be identified. A combination of qualitative research methods will be used, with a certain element of quantitative methodology where appropriate. These include questionnaires and interviews with Iranian teachers and graduates together with an analysis of fieldwork teaching sessions.

Each chapter of the thesis follows a standard format. Firstly, there is an introduction, which provides brief information identifying what will be

discussed, the subsections and issues. Secondly, there are arguments and discussions to highlight the propositions and issues of the chapter through the perspectives of the writers on those issues and the author's arguments showing how the issues have arisen, been manifested in practice, resolved or unresolved and at the end of the chapter a summary with a summative reflection/conclusion which closes the chapter. There are 10 chapters covering the whole study. Each chapter consists of an introduction and a conclusion. Chapter 1 is an Introduction; Chapter 2 has two parts: part 1 deals with a critical literature review of Teacher-training in England; part two addresses the Iranian University Teacher-training. In particular after The Islamic Cultural Revolution. Chapters 3 to 8 are about certain related teaching issues. Chapters 9 and 10 are allocated to finding discussion, recommendations and conclusion of the study.

General Introduction

1. Introduction

This section has three chapters. Chapter 1 deals with teacher education in the UK; Chapter 2 has two parts. Part 1 of Chapter 2 describes the Iranian experience; and part2 provides a comparison & contrast of the UK and Iranian teacher education programmes. Each chapter ends with a summative reflection.

In general teacher education has a dynamic and key function in each society, because it is used to train those who are going to teach the next generation. Since teacher education's importance is obvious to everybody it is equally important to plan and implement it correctly. That is, the questions as to by whom and how student teachers are trained must be appropriately answered so as to produce an optimum outcome. It is clear that amongst these questions the question of 'who' (which refers to the trainer of the student teachers, either university lecturer or school teacher as trainer) has the greatest role in teacher education is the most important, because the other elements are dependent upon it. The teachers' contribution to developing the abilities of their students is well recognised world-wide. Bottery and Wright (1997:239) also observe the importance of teacher education for society:

The education and training of teachers are crucial to the quality of any society. Teachers are the gatekeepers of its traditions and culture and facilitators of its education...For teachers, above all professionals, must, almost by definition, be intellectually active, authoritative, lively, critical

reflective, flexible and ever attentive to the constant and changing demands of the young and the society for which they are being prepared.

So, when teachers are appropriately trained they can change their society, whereas ill-trained teachers are not aware of what is going on in their society and can negatively affect the attitude of their learners, as well as preventing them becoming decent citizens. This is also debated and noted by Bottery and Wright (1997:244):

Programmes based on the functional analysis of work roles are likely to produce teachers who are competent yet ill-equipped for further professional development, uncritical of educational change and largely ignorant of the wider cultural, social and political context in which the role of the teacher needs to be located. Such teachers will be neither experts nor reflective practitioners and lacking the background provided by education or training approaches based on the concept of professional expertise, will be professionals in name only.

It is then vital to be concerned with the teacher educators and teachers as trainers if we are looking for a sound teacher education. In other words, if these trainers were under any kind of unnecessary constraints how can we expect them to function appropriately? Trainers have been used to being well treated and respected, otherwise the public's expectations may not be achieved, and the future of the society could be jeopardised. The situation in the UK after the recent education reforms looks like to be of this sort – that is, at risk. The two countries of this study are very different places and their universities and teachers, like their societies, appear dissimilar to foreigners as compared to natives. In other words, the distinct way of life and cultures make for important

education differences. For instance, teachers in eastern countries such as Iran are highly respected, whereas in the West they are treated and positioned differently. This thesis will, therefore, deal with teacher education in the UK and Iran, concentrating on a comparison of the teaching/learning process, with particular emphasis on strategies for oral production in English Language Teaching for teacher education.

Chapter 1: Teacher Education in the UK

1.1 Introduction

In this part of the chapter teacher education and training in the UK education system is briefly reviewed from 1798 onward to the present day. A background to teacher education, issues such as Education Acts, autonomy of the teacher educators, governmental control and intervention in the effectiveness and quality of teaching teachers are debated through the literature and the views of the practitioners and governmental policy makers. Educators, practitioners or writers have considered teacher education vital to education since its early beginning. For example, Curle (1963:147) argued for the importance of teacher education as being:

One of the nerve centres of the educational system. More can be done to raise standards of education at less cost through teacher training. But in the under-developed countries relatively little attention has been paid to this urgent task. Lack of a cadre of trained teachers has lowered university entrance standards, has crammed universities with students unable to follow the courses or attain their degrees.

In fact, the importance of teacher education and training becomes more evident to all those involved in this field or have a connection with it, such as parents or other authorities. Curle is pointing out a very important issue of education in general and in developing countries in particular. This is what we see in Iran; for instance that teacher education has not found its significant and right position. One of the main problems with teacher education in Iran is that many of its courses are still learned theoretically so the practice aspect of it needs more time

and allocations. This point will be developed in the next part of this chapter, part 2, on the Iranian experience.

Teacher training as an essential factor of education in each society requires expertise with appropriate course content, which meets the needs of the trainees. The usefulness of university-based teacher education is well recognised and supported by many of those who have been involved in it such as Stones, Barton, Gilroy and Whitty, Cashdan, DES, HMIs and even the recent Tory government. However, there have been some practitioners who disagreed with this form of teacher education such as 'the Hillgate Group and the Institute of Economic Affairs' (Gilroy, 1992:11). This tension is examined in the next section by analysing the background to UK teacher education, initial teacher education, in-service teacher education, the British Universities Council for the Education of teachers, concluding with a summative reflection is at the end of Part 1.

1.2 A Background to the Study

Teacher education in the UK has a long history. Hencke (1978:227) pointed out that teacher training began in 1798 in Southward, a slum district of London. Gilroy (1996) wrote in fact, that initially there was no formal teacher education and the first pupil-teachers were the older students of the class. In 1846 the national pupil teacher programme began with intelligent pupils aged thirteen and above as apprentices trained and practised for five years. These apprentices were

taught only by a schoolmaster for 1.5 hour's daily instruction out of school hours and teaching and were examined by HMIs. In 1849 the number of female pupil teachers was double that of males. This was due to lower wages of the female pupil teachers. In 1862 the Revised Code Scheme was introduced which was based on results' system. Coppock (1997:172-3) has given a picture of the social situation of the apprentices that is interesting to mention:

At a time when pupil teachers began to predominate at training colleges it is likely to have been the case that the social background of those admitted was predominately that of the lower middle class (e.g. daughters of shopkeepers, clerks, commercial travellers, etc.) or, at the very least, from the respectable working class. ...From its inception, the pupil teacher scheme laid down requirements, about basic age and good health criteria, which had to be satisfied by all candidates. The school managers had to certify the moral character of the candidates and their families, with attention directed at home conditions. This would suggest that working-class pupil teachers had to come from respectable homes.

Coppock further pointed out that in 1881 Pupil Teacher Centres were set up that pupil teachers attended for training. To the writer the teaching of apprentices was without life and point and, in fact, they were in charge of the lower grades. The pupil teachers who passed the exams set by HMIs could sit for a three-year college scholarship. At the same time, there were many pupil teachers with no certificate of any kind. More than one-third of the apprentices were female. During this period only a small number of these pupil-teachers were accepted into religious colleges for a certificate and qualification. Formal teacher education has had two kinds of training: Initial teacher education and In-service training. Teacher education and training include both theoretical and practical

dimensions. Both of these are vital to training, which needs to be completed thoroughly and professionally.

However, some may deem that pedagogical knowledge is considered as a minor factor of improved teaching. More knowledge about teaching practice can increase teachers' initial teaching ability. The Robbins Committee recommended a BEd degree for elevating teachers' qualification, validated by university education departments. This system, in which universities were involved in teacher training, had in fact many advantages such as:

1. To elevate teacher's profession;
2. To satisfy teacher education graduates;
3. To encourage teaching staffs in the colleges and polytechnics by promoting their teaching level and certificate validation;
4. To help Departments of Education in universities to establish close relationships with colleges;
5. To broaden and strengthen the course content.

Coppock further pointed out that toward the end of eighteenth century the Society of Friends in England established the Welsh Circulating Schools and a number of other institutions. At that time in those schools the emphasis was on content rather than method. There were about 30 colleges and polytechnics and 21 universities by 1963. These institutions were called on to collaborate at this time. Consequently, universities applied their quality teaching methods and research

work in order to transfer the excellence of teaching styles in their classrooms. Teaching methods are considered important in all teaching system and I shall examine them in Chapter 4

The relationship between colleges and universities continued until the early 1990s. By this time the government's intervention had created a situation where they had central control of teacher education teachers trained in colleges, polytechnics, and universities and in school-based schedules. This was the consequence of the paper, Teaching Quality, which criticised the quality of teacher education teaching. Gilroy (1991) argued that in 1984, as a result of the report, the government created the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE). Another attack came from the Secretary of State's speech in January 1992 which in effect, supported the snipings of the "New Right".

1.3 The History of Initial Teacher Education in England and Wales :

Historically, initial teacher education, like the other social aspects of a country, such as its economical and political systems has always been affected by the ideology of the government whether of the Right or of the Left. Teacher education indeed can be seen as one of the main aspects to focus on by the whole nation in general, and by those who are involved directly, teachers, teacher educators and the other authorities in particular, because the future will be in the hands of the next generation. The impact of government ideology on teacher

education has been on one of the two main elements, the other being the relationship between theory and practice, with an early inclination to put more emphasis on practice than theory. Consequently, this intention has created challenges between the supporters of theory on one side and that of practice on the other side. In both cases the aim has been to impose governmental principles on the values, motivations and attitudes of the people by giving opportunities such as training for industrial group purposes in order to gain their support to keep the government in power. Thus the change has not benefited those who have been involved in practising teacher education. The implementation of recent teacher education reform is controlled and carried out chiefly by the central government and their supporters who play the most effective role in this scenario.

1.3.1 From 1798-1900

As we saw in the introduction of this chapter, teacher training began in 1798 in London. At that time there was no formal training, but the better pupils taught the rest of the class in a form of apprenticeship. Novices could teach by the age of 12 as a monitor in class. The early training was a monitorial system, which was practical, carried out mainly by students themselves. The first Parliamentary Committee on the state of education was introduced in 1834, but the training colleges were in the hands of voluntary bodies until 1890. By 1861 there were 30 colleges, mainly single sex. At that time religious knowledge dominated the course contents (about 100 hours) and English, school management,

penmanship, reading, history and geography 60 hours. There were also taught the optional subjects of mathematics in the first year and science in the second. The first professional association among teacher educators, the Training College Association (TCA), was set up in 1891, which caused academic standards to rise.

There is evidence provided by other writers that formal initial teacher education was created in 1848, when pupils over the age of 12 were apprenticed to school for about 5 years to become teachers. At the beginning both the primary and secondary teacher education were based on this type of training (Gilroy, 1991). He further argued that this programme failed both teachers and pupils. Following the 1861 Newcastle Commission most elementary school teachers as pupil teachers received only a minimum of on the job training, whereas secondary school teachers had a rather long training course. In 1888 the Cross-Committee assigned university education departments to serve this need (Gilroy, 1993:5). From 1888 onwards, universities, through the Area Training Organisations (ATOs) began to train teachers, which broadened and boosted different aspects of teacher education. Overall, there are a number of astonishing points found in the study of English teacher education and training. One of these points is that, how Britain with such a long history had no formal teacher education and training between 1848-1860. The other one is its development and great progress during this period, from 1860 onwards to date. Still more important is its past decade's drastic changes, despite all its successful past history in education in general, and in particular the former strong and supportive relationship between

the universities and schools for teacher education. It seems to be shifting back to its past, the Victorian era; school-based system and ignoring higher education institutions which have played a great role and had strong influence in making progress from the past. Though a mutual and fit relationship between universities and schools is necessary for teacher education, one should not be sacrificed at the expense of the other. How will this kind of relationship, which seems not to be accepted by both the universities and schools function? If you want to teach at universities should you still participate in school to practise for lecturing? However, perhaps it is trying to imitate countries such as America whereas other advanced countries, for example Germany and France are maintaining and improving the relationship between universities and schools for the purpose of implementing theory into practice. It will be too late and costly to see if it fails.

1.3.2 From 1900-1944

By 1900, more than one-half of all certificated teachers had not been trained. Training colleges were limited and could not take as many as applicants were increasingly needed. There came another reform which resulted from the 1902 Education Act, which abolished the school boards and made the local authorities for education and government controlled the training. By 1913, three-quarters of elementary schoolteachers were women and this ratio is still 74% today (Coppock, 1997:175).

Gosden (1989) argued that the certificated teacher at the time of the Butler Act had to take two years training preferably in grammar school or single-sex colleges rather than in higher education. These teachers were examined by HMIs from 1920s to 1940s and were criticised for accepting low standards. In consequence, there came a closer link between teacher education centres and university in order to improve the quality and the mechanism through ATOs. ATOs' main duty was to supervise all aspects of courses as well as to create close contacts with the universities and colleges so strengthening the professional and academics of training. The McNair Committee was introduced in 1942 and offered the three-year course training and a firmer academic basis rather than the previous two-year one.

By the 1944 Education Act, all new teacher training was accomplished through the ATOs focusing on relating the theoretical issues to class practice. In fact, initial teacher training before 1944 had been offered through a combination of both school and higher education institutions.

The 1944 Education Act presented a sudden increased demand for secondary school teachers. Colleges were to be more integrated with each other and the universities. The committee recommended that universities should set up schools of education for the training their areas, governed by an agency to present training colleges, universities and local educational authorities. One of the The main problem for government policy for teacher training after the war was the lack of

supply of qualified teachers in spite of the increasing number of the students. This created LEA-funded colleges. Colleges were encouraged to become mixed-sex institutions.

1.3.3 From 1944-80

There have been six investigations (Wilkin,1996: 182-4), which indicated that during the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, the curricular of training had shifted to more practice and students spent more time in schools. The research showed that there have been close links between HE and the schools and the quality of the leadership of the institutions was of fundamental importance through the difficult years of the 1970s. The period of two years training changed to three years from 1960. The Robbins Committee began to draw closer link towards universities 20 years after the establishment of a BEd certificate after four years of successful training.

However, in the late 1970s and 1980s the cuts in intakes to teacher education were 'savage'. These cuts caused the number of colleges to fall from 180 to 87 in 1972 and to 57 in 1990, on the one hand, and interprofessional conflicts between different public sector professionals, on the other hand. Surprisingly, women applicants for higher education were in the majority for the first time in 1990. The main battles were among the DES officials, local authorities, universities and college staffs (Heward, 1993:29). She also argued that state control of

teacher education has been in a gender way. That is, since the women pupil teachers had received lower wages, more of them had been employed, but afterwards in university positions fewer women were lecturers.

After the James Report (1972) many public sector institutions asked the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) for their course validation. As a result from 1970/71 to 1980/81 the number of registered BEd trainees increased dramatically to 140, 000 by 1980/81 with 1,703 courses (Wilkin, 1996:159). Nevertheless, in spite of the positive reports of the government's inspectors, the Department of Education and Science (DES) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) the influence of colleges and universities was reduced. The government began to control initial teacher education and the ATOs practically disappeared in 1975.

In the 1980s the government introduced the Licensed Teacher Scheme through which unqualified teachers could fill teaching vacancies and then get on-the-job training: they did not even need to be registered at university, nor be UK graduates. One may then ask what is the responsibility of lecturers if schools are qualified to take over the responsibility of teacher training? Until the late 1980s initial teacher was not of that importance to be criticised in the press. It was about this time that criticism of teacher education by different groups began to surface.

Teacher educators had professional autonomy in the sixties, seventies and early eighties. The Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) created in 1984 was the first educational scheme which threatened the previous paradigm of professional autonomy (Gilroy, 1991). CATE introduced certain criteria to validate initial teacher education course. CATE was used as an instruction for education departments to link with schools in the creation of school-based courses. It was suggested that some teachers needed to be trained for training (CATE 1992b). From this time the teacher training programme became under the control of a governmental agency that was responsible to the Government's Department of Education and Science.

1.3.4 From 1980-88

In spite of this secondary school teachers showed no widespread interest in participating in training classes. Subsequently, the universities gradually increased the number of students in their teacher training courses which turned out some 5000 teachers per year by the year 1984. Among these figures only 13.9% of the trainees held an advanced qualifications beyond a first degree, 3.5% held a master's degree and 1.4% a doctorate as reported by Patrick, Bembaum and Reid (1982). Work experience was a criterion for admission especially for modern language and social science students. The university or college of study and level of certificate and class of honour degree were other criteria for recruitment. Interestingly, a comparatively high proportion of students undertaking teaching practice in colleges of further or higher education

came from working class backgrounds. Trainees normally taught, observed and undertook activities with pupils or visited special educational development or facilities in-groups. Of course, teaching practice was of most concern to the students and their tutors which took some 50 days per year (about one day in a week), and 16 days' observation as well as visits, so averaging 73 days in school a year.

1.3.5 From 1988-98

The Education Act 1988, "the National curriculum" introduced by the government brought in major changes in teacher education with prescribed educational objectives and tests. Apparently, the educators who had long been autonomous and pleased with their success faced difficulties in performing the new agenda offered and controlled by the government.

In fact, the political and social change affected the students' needs and anticipations. Accordingly, the 1988 Education Act states:

The curriculum for a maintained school satisfies the requirements if it is a balanced and body based curriculum which: a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and b) prepares such pupils for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life (Education Reform Act 1988, Section 1, Paragraph 2).

The National Curriculum Council (NCC) introduced in 1989, again lessened the autonomy of teacher educators through its prescribed school context. The NCC,

indeed imposed its dictated educational contents and targets not only on teacher educators, but teacher trainees as well. Teacher educators inevitably had to teach the subject materials identified by the NCC. In other words, the educators lost the opportunity of selection, creation and division and unwillingly began implementing the prescribed agenda so 'following the prescriptions' (Gilroy, 1991:12).

However, the government did not accept all of the ATOs' recommendations. Gosden (1989:17) closes his article by writing:

The sheer bureaucratic tedium of seeking so much approval will surely deter many institutions from ever attempting any significant modification or reform of their courses. In this sense it will lead to stasis rather than adaptability and development.

In this connection, Gosden (1989:2) pointed out that:

The universities/colleges influence on initial teacher education was strong and had the effect of both strengthening and broadening the professional aspects of training. It was the Secretary of State's lack of trust, indeed suspicion of higher education professionals and educators for initial teacher education that damaged the autonomy of the professionals. The colleges' course increased from two in to three years in 1960 and subsequently in 1993 to four years for BEd degree.

There also have been more writers whose work and views have had great influence on teacher education and training in the UK that can enlighten and highlight the issue. For example, Stones's (1993:207) views on teacher education are relevant here:

The view of teaching as transmission of knowledge sees teaching as talking; as explaining; as delivering. It accepts as proof of learning

reciting, answering questions by verbalising, whether orally or in writing, and giving back to the teacher what the teacher dispensed earlier. This is the view of teaching held by many academics, by the public at large and by the majority of administrators and politicians in the field of education. In effect, it forecloses discussion about pedagogical theory almost by ignoring it, or by regarding it as something outside the practice of teaching.

Regarding the difficulties of teacher education, Russell (1993:25) argued that:

Important problems in teacher education will only be resolved when we have a new way of understanding the processes of learning to teach and the nature of professional knowledge of teaching. Courses of initial teacher education do not make clear the interaction between theory and practice.

Talyzina (1993:35) has offered specific effective strategies for learning:

The teacher should actively encourage new ways of reasoning in children and not remain satisfied with those types of thought already found in the early stages of instruction. Bearing in mind the stage which a child's reasoning has reached, it is vital to think at the same time about ensuring stages, towards which the pupil must forge a head with the teacher's help.

She demonstrated three-phase skills for teachers: "the pre-active" (planning skill); "the phase of mutual activity" (activity expansion); and "the assessment phase" (appraising the teaching/learning process) (ibid.: 39).

In fact, what she is emphasising can also be applied to adult learners with different reinforcements. To her programmed teaching has had positive influence on both the theory and practice. She added that this is true when other factors are

suitable to that particular situation such as the kind of teaching materials.

According to Goodson (1993:220) teacher education courses were:

In the history of education, in educational measurement, in experimental educational research, child development and in the philosophy of education. Much that these early students were taught was intellectually exciting and personally stimulating. But it was redolent of its own reality, not that of the school and the classroom.

However, in 1993, in spite of all the dissatisfactions, the prime minister and the Secretary of State suggested the 'first wholly school-based teacher training projects' which included both primary and secondary (ibid.: 10). This was followed by a new funding agency, the Teacher Training Agency, which was to draw finance from the Higher Education Funding Council and devolve it to schools. In the same year, 1993, this new agency took responsibility for in-service education (ibid.: 11).

This was in fact, the second attack on higher education's professionalism. In September 1993, the Teacher Training Agency was created as a new funding agency to draw funds from Higher Education Funding Council. The same agency would become the new initial teacher education accreditation body as well as in-service education funding of research into teacher education (DFE 1993b).

As a result, the major responsibility of teacher education was handed over to schools. Thus, in September of the same year, about 80% of the secondary

teacher education courses would be left to schools. This suggestion caused a great deal of dissatisfaction. For example, research conducted by Loughborough University indicated that only 12% of teachers were pleased with school-based teacher training and no head teacher was in favour of the programme. One head teacher showed his disagreement with the Act and said that school-based training would 'degenerate into an uncoordinated series of experiences within schools' (Gilroy, 1993:8-9). Moreover, there have been more disagreements amongst the teachers, teacher educators and administrators which have not been reflected in the press, or perhaps have been censored by governmental agencies. These reactions and disagreements on the one hand, and on the other hand the school teachers' inexperience regarding the problems of teacher education, coupled to a lack of teaching to work with students, affected the government's decision. As a result, the new Secretary of the State declared a reduction on school-based teacher education from 80% to 60% which he called a 'tough but fair requirement' (Gilroy, 1993:9).

1.4 Conclusive Analysis

Having briefly reviewed the critical changes in the documentary extracts of the English teacher education and training, in particular initial teacher education, it can be seen that the changes consumed a great deal of the time and energy of student teachers, teacher educators and the other authorities involved in the issue of teacher education.

The real value, of these reforms remains unclear. The major change began in 1976 with the Prime Minister, Callaghan's, speech on teacher education at Ruskin College. Callaghan made it clear that he would use political power against those who were directly involved with teacher education – higher education. The other problematic issue of the speech was the first warning of central government and the imposition of their intervention vision of teacher training controlling the educational programming which would eventually damage and limit teaching profession. The speech, indeed, put education in both a restrictive and limiting position such as education for industrial needs or education with less funds, which could not ensure the success of the education process. Consequently, the learning by pupils of the desired skills, competency and knowledge as well as the relations between teachers and the Government were likely to be affected.

When teachers and teacher educators are attacked how can you expect them to produce a successful teaching/learning process? The reason is that teaching is a very complex issue. Teaching is complex, because it involves many of the factors that affect teachers' teaching. Factors such as the emotional, economical, cultural, social and, of course, political condition of teachers' life. Moreover, teachers have the important responsibility, educating the generation of the future those who will run the society in future. The main aim of education first of all is to help produce good human beings. This is fulfilled through sound teacher

education by changing the attitudes and behaviour of the learners to make them decent people.

In fact, we have seen that the previous change was chiefly for two purposes; first to have control over education by the government, and second for financial purposes as were indicated in the above review. In fact, not only in the National Curriculum of the UK, but wherever there have been such prescribed programmes they have not been in the interest of both teachers and learners. For example, in Iranian universities after the Islamic Revolution the new government insisted that some courses had to be taken off the programme, for example the number of English courses were reduced from 12 to 8. It is obvious that teachers and students have their own interests and individual needs that like to be met through the process. Even in such programmes there need to be options and opportunities to select, apply and assess.

Grundy and Hatton (1995) report a critical view of recent changes in teacher education that there is no picture of the teacher as an intellectual element in ethical and knowledge transformation, or in the fostering of democracy, social justice and order. Therefore, the changes are political rather than educational. There are views that initial teacher education should promote a situation to criticise the existing condition. The other view is that teacher education should be integrative and functional to re-produce the current social situation. To them the meaning of such discourses is as follows:

Discourses are about what can be said, and thought, but also about whom can speak, when and where and with what authority. Discourses embody the meaning and use of propositions and words. Thus, certain possibilities for thought are constructed. Words are ordered and combined in certain ways and other combinations are displaced or excluded (Grundy and Hatton, 1995:8).

In fact, discourses are characterised to specific language or signs to express the thought and meaning regarding the social status. The social status subsumes knowledge and power, the dominant social structure with its relationships and functions. The writers concluded that:

It is arguably the case that a central feature of the work of teacher educators should be some form of collective professional development in which matters such as appropriate goals and practices for teacher education are publicly debated. ...We would argue that there is a need for such development to be grounded in the research work of teacher educators and for members of an academic teacher educator community to be interrogating each other's work for its implications for their practice (Grundy and Hatton, 1995:22).

All in all, as a result it can be argued that teacher education in the UK has become a complicated issue with an unknown future (see Gilroy,1993 and Wilkin, 1996).

It is expected that HEIs will keep their role in teacher education, contributing their share by applying theory and research findings in teacher training which will enrich the training. Edwards (1996:5) has supported this expectation and the role played by HEIs by asserting that 'Higher education's contributions to teacher education should be overtly theoretical and research-based, with

qualifying and experienced teachers trained to use research findings in making their professional decisions and judgements. To merit that prominence, educational research has to be focused much more firmly than it is on the process and conditions of learning, and more directly and systematically on the improvement of practice. It would be sensible for a great deal of research to be planned and designed in consultation with potential users, and a professionally representative “national forum” should help to identify priorities. It is not reasonable to expect educational research to demonstrate conclusively that particular practices “work” or would bring certain improvements. A strong research base for professional practice would be descriptive, interpretative and explanatory but not prescriptive’.

Wilkin (1996) reported that analysis of courses for teacher education indicated the aims of the personal intellectual development of the trainees. She added that disciplines were taught as discrete curricular subjects and on a few courses students were encouraged to devise grounded theory and the term ‘teaching practice’ was exchanged with ‘school experience’. Teachers assessed the students but rarely supervised them.

A variety of options for taking courses in English teacher education provides the trainees with a vast range of selection. This has caused problems in the assessment as reported by the same research. Regarding this a student pointed out that:

Chap1: Teacher Education in the UK System

The worst thing about the whole course has been the assessment. We have been given no feedback on any of our written work at all and I was given very little on teaching practice. This is very wrong because on this course students need feedback more than most (DES 1988:142).

Despite this view a small majority of students considered that their course was long enough to provide a satisfactory introduction to teaching. It seems if the number of courses could be limited and focused on the subjects will make the courses easier for the trainees. This is because the students could be working on sharing subjects that can save tutors' time to work with groups rather than individuals.

However, there are reports of success in teacher education, such as the fact that the DES accepts that courses do now 'give more weight to the professional needs of the new teacher in classroom' (DES, 1988b: 1). In other words, it reported that 'schools considered that 95% of the new teachers were adequately equipped for the job which they were required to do'(ibid.: 9). And that more than 90% of beginning teachers themselves felt that they were well, reasonably or moderately satisfied with the courses they had experienced (DES, 1988:25). Or HMI, 1991 reported that in both the university and public sectors, the quality is good or outstanding, and 85% was satisfactory or better.

Tutors used student-centred classes and had close relationship with their students. Tutors played the roles of resource centre, guide and mentor consultant,

careers adviser and counsellor. In some cases for more help some tutors had to be supportive, reassuring as well as giving practical advice. On the other side, the students had been involved in topics, which were interesting and helpful. Activities such as lesson planning, various methods of subject teaching, the material preparation and the aims of teaching help students to deal with them as exercises for their future career. More than half of the tutors have dealt with topics such as interaction analysis, communication skills, micro teaching, discipline, mixed ability teaching, the organisation of school outings and team teaching during their tutorship as their method work. In particular, the language tutors more than any other group emphasised the preparation of teaching materials, the use of textbooks, the use of course materials, lesson planning, questioning skills and the use of AVA. Modern linguists spent a good deal of time on the oral aspects of language teaching.

Obviously, such prescribed programmes usually frustrate the professionals by lowering their self-esteem. Teachers with low esteem would have difficulties in transferring knowledge, values and more than that may not behave appropriately as expected by the society. Reid (1994:4) criticised the Education Reform Act 1988 that caused misunderstandings and placing the future of the education at stake. Some part of the Act stated 'The falling standards of pupils are the result of the low quality of teachers in schools. The cause of poor teachers and teaching lies with the teacher trainers in the universities'. He in response argued that leaving the most time of the trainees with the schools would worsen the matter.

To him the main problem is that there are not enough funds to run the teacher training course appropriately.

The government policy for teacher education provided through schools is further criticised and refuted by many educationalists such as Barber (1994:6) who argued that:

Given the direction of government policy, it is not impossible to imagine policy-makers in 2010 looking back and wondering how, at the very moment in history when the professionalising of teaching was most needed, it was deprofessionalised.

Cashdan 1992, claimed that there is no actual evidence that teacher training is inadequate. The Secretary of State for education himself asserted that 'the training of teachers is now more rigorous than it has ever been' (Guardian, 23rd, Oct. 1991). Despite these assertions a policy maker has announced that teacher education theory is 'outdated educational ideology', and that orthodoxies of the past 'discouraged potential students from joining the profession' (Clarke, 1992).

In this connection Matthews (1992:16) argued that:

Without the opportunity to spend time developing an understanding of their practice, the student's activity of teaching becomes a mechanical apprenticeship to an unquestioned and often highly localised set of practices.

There was a general feeling that students should be introduced to various theoretical principles underlying the practice. An English tutor, for example, introduced different models of English teaching as well as his own. This

Chap1: Teacher Education in the UK System

approach to teaching indeed provided options for students to deal with the models that suit their class situation and has been very helpful. The view that teaching practice should be considered as the main criterion accepted by the majority of teachers more than any other subject especially in languages.

The chair of CATE (Taylor 1993:11) claimed certain principles had to be met for devolving the responsibility to schools as follows, Does the change:

1. Attract good candidates?
2. Produce better-educated and more competent teachers?
3. Provide a sound basis for continued professional development?

And argued that the new proposal failed on all the above counts.

Therefore, teacher education has been an issue of argument for decades in the UK. Much of the argument has been about the scope and boundary of the roles of the training institutions and schools and local and governmental authorities regarding academic and funding allocations. It seems necessary to establish a co-operative partnership between the above organisations, in particular the higher institutions and schools. A collaborative model introduced by some writers seems rational and applicable. The implementation of the model should result in all teacher practices being rational and teachers acting professionally. The implementation procedure can be through the acquisition of theories for conceptual framework application, observation, practice and discussing various teaching approaches.

All in all, this author wonders why in an education system that educationalists and government reports is successful a sudden substantial change seems necessary to some policy makers. Schools exist to teach pupils, universities to educate specialists/professionals. University or other higher institutions have also trained good teachers in schools. Good progress has been made in countries whose teacher education is mainly based on higher education organisations. These countries have significantly improved their standards of education, which is the result of effective teaching and classroom practice. For example, Germany has implemented its teacher education through its universities for a period of four years, which seems a sound time to complete teaching courses. Or in France it is shifting to leave more training of the teachers to their universities and colleges.

1.5 In-service Teacher Education

In-service teacher education before 1987 was financed through the "pool" scheme in which local education authority together with a central government subvention of a local property tax helped to fund INSET expenditure (Gilroy, 1993, 141-156). This scheme was based on the view that the teaching profession was a national resource and required national provision at different level, long and short courses as well as formal and informal school-based INSET. In such a situation teachers had freedom to develop their profession in the way they wished. Universities and colleges' INSET provision was financed through the

"pool", via local education authorities' contributions. In 1987 a new scheme was introduced, The Local Education Authority Training Grants Scheme (LEATGS). According to this scheme higher education began to lose its leading role in the control of INSET. From 1985 INSET shifted to chiefly school-focused programme. In this connection Brown (1989:129) contended that:

This new conception of a deficit model is seen as a straightforward activity, ...making good deficits in a teacher's repertoire and does little to enhance the professional status of the teacher.

In 1987 the Government changed the funding of in-service teacher education. This affected the in-service education for teachers (INSET) which used to meet the subject and professional development needs of the teachers. The result was that the number of in-service teacher educators lost their professional autonomy (Gilroy, 1991). In the same report there is a citation from Carr (1989: 17) that argued that:

Having lost control of what constitutes the appropriate meaning of the professional values, knowledge and practice of teaching it becomes difficult to see how teaching can, even minimally, be represented as profession.

Financial snipings and an ignorance of teacher education may be shown in other countries as was the case in Iran, but it became problematic and resulted in teachers and students' objections. It weakened the teaching/learning process and had to be amended later by an association of university teachers by adding some courses and preparing textbooks (see part 2 of this chapter for the details).

In consequence, teachers had to depend upon their own time and money to gain genuine professional development. Genuine professional development would be what Stones identified as the social nature of concept learning, which stimulates how we learn to think. In other words, it is a type of cognitive learning, which in Stones's term is of 'deep structures' (Smith & Gilroy 1993:14). This kind of learning can provide a basis for knowledge to help teacher education. Or the term 'genuine' is similar to what Russell declared:

When we have a new way of understanding the processes of learning to teach and the nature of professional knowledge of teaching (Gilroy and Smith, 1993:25).

Gilroy and Day (1993:153-5) claimed that there is no alternative for higher institutions, other than to examine all possibilities for encouraging access and planning and working with schools and teachers. The community was encouraged to resist the scheme.

The recent change in teacher education policy imposed by the government has damaged not only ITE, but also INSET. The government has allocated less funds and time for INSET while expecting more outcomes. This has put teacher educators under pressure which eventually affects and reduces students' learning. In this connection, Bottery and Wright (1997) have argued that these changes

result in de-professionalisation. They declared this resembled 'just in time training', an industrial model of training. They believe the government policy in controlling teacher education is not the only cause of INSET damage, as are other factors, which contribute to the loss. They argued that:

While government policies may be contributing to teacher deprofessionalisation, this is not the full story. Instead, there would seem to be a failure on the part of schools and teachers within them to seek a deeper understanding of what being a professional teacher entails, and of schools to recognise and provide appropriate INSET to enhance such discussion and appreciation, and through this to develop and enhance the profession (Bottery and Wright, 1997:239).

1.5.1 Reform in teacher education: the loss of autonomy over two centuries

Teacher education and training worked through a strong relationship between universities, higher institutions and schools until 1970s. This relationship became affected by the intervention of the government and its agencies, which seems to be destroying it. Teacher education then began a dramatic change in UK in the past decades. The change started with the publication of the James Report (DES 1972). Later more reports from the Department of Education and Science (DES) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI), and by self-appointed right-wing think tanks encouraged and enabled the British Government to make a prescribed and controlled teacher education programme and impose it on both universities/higher education and schools. In the following a few works are examined as examples.

Barton et al., (1994) reported that during the 1980s there have been two schemes introduced for teacher education, the school-based Articled Teacher Scheme and the Licensed Teacher Scheme. In the school-based Articled Scheme post-graduate trainee teachers had to spend 80 % of their training in schools whereas they were registered as university student. Apparently this scheme has been created to use various training resources. In 1992 research was conducted to examine the changing relationship between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and schools in the provision of initial teacher education (ITE). The research finding suggested that HEIs created means of integration with schools in designing school-based courses. This was an opportunity given to HEIs to keep their dominance in initial teacher education. The new plan was to make the initial teacher education courses more practical and school-based (Furlong, 1996, p. 39). The new project funded by the UK Economic and Social Research council (ESRC) was a collaborative project and by researchers from four higher education institutions to study change in ITE over a five-year period. The project continued in 1992 to 1995 as a case study involved interviews with course leaders, teachers and students. The study indicated that the relationship between HEIs and schools was developed. The government underlined this development as Circular 9/92 states:

The government expects that partner schools and HEIs will exercise a joint responsibility for the planning and management of courses and the selection, training and assessment of students. The balance of responsibilities will vary, schools will have a leading responsibility for training students to teach their specialist subjects, to assess pupils and to manage classes; and for supervising students and assessing their competence in these respects. HEIs will be responsible for ensuring that courses meet the requirements for academic validation, presenting courses

for accreditation, awarding qualifications to successful students and arranging student placements in more than one school. (DFE, 1992, para. 14).

McIntyre 1993, pointed out that the ethos in collaborative partnership is to develop a training programme in which students are exposed to different forms of educational knowledge supplied by schools or HEIs.

In 1993, government introduced a pilot “ school-centred” training scheme (SCITT) through which student teachers could go directly to training schools rather than to higher education. This scheme like the previous ones was designed to wrest power and funding from higher education to schools, which means more loss of autonomy for higher education. Barton et al., concluded that the nature of recent reforms of teacher education has many flaws and abused professionalism both in theory and practice. These recent reforms indeed limited and narrowed the scope of profession in training. In other words, these changes have split school teachers from HEI by applying only a limited vision rather than broad thought in teacher education. In fact, government with its agencies has been seeking to justify and support their views against institutions from teacher educators.

There was the integration model prior to partnership through which the majority of the courses were based on a kind of integrity between the HEIs and the schools. In the integration model HEIs had the leading role in all aspects of

course, planning, implementation and assessment. Afterwards, in 1995 the partnership model was introduced. Students are expected to use what they learn and criticise it in order to improve their profession. The "collaborative model" seems to be the most effective one among the introduced co-operation between the higher organisations and schools. In this model trainees are exposed to different forms of educational knowledge, from school and from higher education. In other words, trainees learn their theoretical knowledge from the assigned lecturers and university tutors and practise it in the school with the help of the teachers. Collaboration between teachers and lecturers is on a regular basis. Both lecturers and teachers observe the practice process and provide help when required. The procedure of the process is systematic and structured. Key features of this model are as follows:

- a. Planning emphasis on giving all tutors and teachers opportunities to work together in small groups.
- b. Lecturers' visits to school: collaborative work between lecturers and teachers and discussing the related professional issues together.
- c. Mentoring: defined as giving students access to teachers' professional knowledge-mentor "training" as professional development, learning to articulate knowledge embedded in practice.
- d. Assessment: collaborative, based on theory and practice and commitment.

It is also essential that teachers and lecturers collaborate and work to succeed.

The key features of the collaborative model are as follows:

Table 1. Collaborative partnership-key features

Planning	Emphasis on giving all tutors and teachers opportunities to work together in small groups
HE visits to school together	Collaborative to discuss professional issues
Documentation Content	Codifies emerging collaborative practice schools and HE recognise legitimacy and difference of each others' contribution to an on going dialogue
Mentoring	Defined as giving students access to teachers' professional knowledge-mentor 'training' as professional development, learning to articulate embedded knowledge
Assessment	Collaborative, based on triangulation
Contractual	Negotiated, personal relationship
Legitimation	Commitment to the value of collaboration in ITE

(Furlong et al., 1996:45)

The features of this model are different from HEI-led partnership in which schools are considered as resources in setting up learning opportunities for students. Quality control is the main aim of this model and some schools do not warmly accept it. Key features of HEI-led partnership are shown in more detail below:

Table 2. HEI-led partnership-key features

Planning	HEI led with at most some consultation of small group of teachers
HE visits to school	Strong emphasis on quality control; monitoring that school is delivering agreed learning opportunities
Documentation	Strongly emphasised, defining tasks for schools
Content	HEI defines what students should learn in schools
Mentoring	Mentors trained to deliver what course defines as necessary
Assessment	HEI led and defined
Contractual relationship	Directive with lists of tasks and responsibilities
Legitimisation	Acceptance of HEI defined principles of ITE

(Furlong et al., 1996: 46)

The other model of partnership is a separatist one where schools and HEIs have separate and complementary roles. Students are expected to achieve integration of the learning-principles and practice themselves. The surprising point in this model is that schools themselves have ownership and professional responsibility for postgraduates – wresting autonomy from universities and higher education and devolving it to schools.

Whiting et al., (1996) reported that schools and HEI had worked in partnership in the provision of initial teacher education. Teachers were more involved than in the past in training the student teachers, but their role was limited to supporting and assessing students and had little role in leading, designing and management. There were fewer opportunities for HEI and school staff to support the students. The course leaders believed that school-based programmes were more costly than traditional ones. The HEI-led model was dominant. Nevertheless, mixed models were common. The research has also indicated that the collaborative model provided the participants with:

A recognition of the importance and difference of the contribution to be made by both schools and HEIs as well as (b) an emphasis on collaboration and integration as key principles in course organisation (Whiting et al., 1996:72).

In the collaborative model both partners, school and HEI, have their role to play as is shown:

When it works well, the schools and the HEIs recognise that training is a shared responsibility. Schools, with HEI guidance and exemplars, provide a programme of training within subject departments and the whole schools, which builds on and supports other aspects of the student's training (ibid.: 72).

In fact, here again schools are sharing autonomy with higher education. In other words, higher education is losing partially the autonomy that once owned the whole of it. The research conclusion indicated that current partnership models of teacher education noted by OFSTED and others have weaknesses such as financial constraints, modularization and semesterisation. This model can be effective when both schools and HEI keep their role in teacher education, otherwise other models that suggest other than this would place teacher training at risk. Indeed, deep and broad provision by both HEI and schools are essential for effective teacher education if that is the demand.

This is detailed by Day (1997:193-4):

- Education is key to the economic and social well-being of all countries.
- Schools and schooling make a significant contribution to education. They represent a value process.
- Teachers are the schools greatest asset. They stand at the interface of the transmission of knowledge and values.
- Since teachers are concerned with the transmission of knowledge and values, professional development must pay close attention to teachers' moral purposes and the quality of their thinking as well as content knowledge and pedagogical skills.
- Support for the well being and professional development of teachers is therefore crucial to the educational, economic and social well being of all countries, and the single most important challenge facing schools and university departments of education today.



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Content	Separate knowledge domains, no opportunities for dialogue
Mentoring	Mentoring comes from knowledge base of school
Assessment	School responsibility for teaching assessment
Contractual relationship	Legalistic, finance led with desecrate areas of responsibility
Legitimation	Either principled commitment to role of school or pragmatic due to limited resources

(Furlong et al., 1996:48)

Furlong et al., continue that some aspects of the HEI-led model was dominant in practice because of principle and constraints influence in implementing the models of partnership. Many opportunities are lost for the students and it is difficult for them to catch up the course. HEIs and schools have been under pressure and constraints in executing collaborative models. HEIs have been under financial pressure and schools under staffing and professional ones. Although these schools were well funded, they have faced two difficulties: first, an insufficient number of qualified teachers to teach; second, was lack of professional qualifications by those who were teaching the teachers. The reason was that teacher educators who used to teach from universities and higher

institutions were not teaching like before. Such schools were unhappy with their position, as is indicated by (Furlong et al., 1996:52) that:

To be frank a lot of schools are not particularly happy with the level of support. They respond one of two ways –to hold their hands in the air and say ‘yes we are sorry we have not been doing what we should’ and the other is to say ‘well, we’re not going to have students any more’. (Secondary 2-year BEd course leader).

The same writer asserts a general view of the outcome:

In these circumstances, designing a course based on principles of collaboration would seem to be almost impossible. Work in schools had to be fitted into an institution wide academic programme led and taught by lecturers with no necessary experience of schooling. As a result there were major constraints on developing genuine collaboration (ibid. p.53).

The future of the programme is unknown. However, the researchers indicate that so far there have been conflicts and dissatisfactions amongst the lecturers, schools and students as well.

Agreeing with this, in such an atmosphere the teaching of concepts, facts, attitudes and skills are taught and learned together. This programme prepares the learner for real life, which needs to match theory and practice or conception and execution. Accordingly, though the circular believed that the development of relationship was neutral, many in higher education found it different (Gilroy, 1996: 41). Many believed it was to wrest autonomy and power from higher education for more pragmatic and less principled form of professionalism as part of “New Right” (Moore, 1994; Barton et al., 1995).

Nevertheless, there is a generally accepted agreement that the ultimate criteria for evaluation of a teacher are the effects of the teaching behaviour on the performance of the students, as discussed by Furlong, et al., (1996). Therefore, teacher education in UK is moving toward a new trend under the influence of the UK political and social new demands. This can be research-based to match with the needs of the society and especially to access the benefits of all the experienced and available manpower and resources.

Goodson (1997) observed the effectiveness of theoretical knowledge and education research in improving the teacher profession. He believes that these two, theoretical knowledge and research, are indeed central to the development of teacher professionalism and confirm the public perception of teaching as a profession. Goodson addresses the government to reconsider the role of these two fundamental elements as effective factors in enhancing teacher education. He declares that research is a useful tool for improvement, not a waste of time or money. He argues that after the McNair Report of 1944 through which universities were involved in teacher professionalism teaching became more attractive to its participants. Regarding this he asserted:

The standard of work achieved by the students was sound if academic. Classroom teachers were taught how to reflect on their teaching, on pupil learning, on the structure and organisation of schools, to question educational assumptions and to understand how sexism and racism operated in the classroom (Goodson, 1997:8).

In fact, the author emphasised theory can also be strengthened for new school-based training to maintain and establish a collaborative and strong theoretical function. He puts more emphasis on this in relation with practice by citing:

Any profession whose essential theoretical and practical knowledge does not have a high place in universities and other institutions of higher education, must count itself deprived and, in the long run, be diminished in status (ibid.: 21).

He, however, put more emphasis on theory than practice and argued that the attachment to theory can change the status and importance of teaching as a profession. In this connection, he has cited Carr & Kemmis on the efficacy of research on clarifying the teaching as follows:

A range of practices have been studied by educational action-researchers and some examples may suffice to show how they have used action research to improve their practices, their understandings of these practices, and the situations in which they work (Goodson, 1997: 20).

What he is pointing out here is supportive and encouraging as it is already proved in the education system, educational research is for the development of educational practices for learning improvement in its final aims. Otherwise all the advances in teaching would not have been achieved.

Jones, et al., (1997) have observed that the new government apprenticeship in the form of collaborative model for ITE has reduced the contribution of higher education to the theory of teaching and learning. This reduction caused concern amongst teacher educators. The authors concluded that: 'Newly qualified teachers, it is argued, need training not only in their role as classroom managers, but also in their wider professional commitments' (Jones, et al., 1997:253). They

also argued that separating theory from practice contributed to the 'mis-education' of trainees and it was felt that there is a need for the full range of teaching courses rather than just one. To overcome this problem Sachs (1997) declared that Australian teacher training has been implementing the training with the aim of revitalising teacher professionalism since the early 1990s. Teachers are expected to be skilled practitioners with the ability to solve practical and theoretical problems, reflect on their practice to develop quality teaching and to cope with social and technical change. The author concluded that reclaiming professionalism could be achieved with the support of unions, university academics and education systems. Of course, achieving this aim requires energy, commitment and the ability to think strategically.

As a result, we have seen that from the beginning of the teacher education in the UK up to now, universities and higher education had autonomy and better relationships with schools from the 1940s to the 1970s. In fact, the fall of the autonomy began from 1972 by Callaghan's speech and reached to its peak in 1988. In other words, universities and higher education that should have more share in teacher education because of the profession and qualifications that teacher educators have gradually lost their autonomy and are placed at risk.

1.6 The universities council for the education of teachers (UCET)

UCET has been a great help to teacher education since its creation, in 1967. To writers such as Gilroy, Stones and Russell this council is not as well recognised as it should. It has been organised and operated by senior and retired professors. It was initially organised in an exclusive meeting by a group of senior professors from different universities education departments who had control over teacher education in September 1967. At that time there was only the Association of Teachers in Colleges and Department of Education (ATCDE) which had a different nature from UCET. That is, UCET was purely and literally educational whereas ATCDE was both educational and a trade union. UCET was formed of a combination of two groups, the Conference of Heads of Institutes Directors and the Conference of Heads of University Departments of Education. UCET in its inception consisted of five and later of six committees:

One dealt with the BEd and related issues, one with the PGCE and other associated issues, one with advanced award bearing in-service courses, one with advanced non-award bearing in-service courses and one with research and development (Gilroy and Stones, 1995:121).

It was at the end of the 1970s in Callaghan's Ruskin College speech that the government turned its attention to teacher education which was felt harmful as a trigger to begin arguments against government. The effects of Callaghan's speech resulted in the 1988 Education Act through which 80% of the teacher education would become school-based. Russell, as the facilitator of UCET, declared that:

The government ought to pay heed to our considered advice before they put things in place rather than after (Gilroy and Stones, 1995:131).

The main purposes of UCET were:

- a) to promote high standards in the education system;
- b) to develop teachers' expertise;
- c) to expand research in teacher education.

UCET held all education professors as its members, which became a large number in 1991. It was too large to manage; hence the policy of its membership changed to one representative from each education department of each university. The members amongst its candidates selected the Chair and Vice-Chair. UCET has had regular meeting with the Secondary Heads' association and the National Association of Headteachers. The relationship between UCET and government has been dependent upon the individuals in UCET, as explained by the UCET facilitator, Russell.

There are more experienced practitioners who disagreed with the Education Act 1988, to name only a few, Knight, 1990, Lunt, Mckenzie and Powell, 1993; and Gilroy, 1992; 1994). After all teacher education would not be as satisfactory as each individual programme expected. This is because of the ever-changing situational and contextual conditions. Context plays a major role in the whole teaching/learning process. This is argued and supported by a number of educators in the field of education, who have a great deal of experience in this field, for example, Gilroy (1991:1) who pointed out that:

It would be a mistake to argue that all aspects of the detail of something as complex as initial teacher education was and is in all respects satisfactory.

The writer added that teacher educators had 'professional autonomy' decades before this. In the decades previous to this teacher educators themselves based on their professional experience planned and implemented teacher education without being told what or how to do such scheme.

UCET's main responsibility was threatened by Clarke's speech to the North of England Education Conference of 1992 (for more on this see 1.1 & 1.2). UCET has had difficulties with the vice-chancellor's Committee in refuting the school-based teacher education. The vice-chancellor's Committee has not been in agreement in saying no to the suggested programme by the government. The facilitator further argued that then UCET had to work with the committee at the university and national level. It was also suggested that the campaign against government policy should be political rather than educational and rational.

The study of teacher education in the UK reflects that what professionals and educators are offering for teacher education is aimed at the betterment and quality training of teacher trainees. Thus the government and its agencies should not consider it as a hostile measure against government. These professionals look at a much wider set of aims to be achieved in the society, which will continue to evolve at a faster pace than the government has planned for educational objectives. The study has also shown that the governmental control and policy

caused a great deal of arguments and hostility amongst different groups. These conflicts resulted in wasting a tremendous amount of time and energy of the best professionals, whereas this could have been spent in a much more fruitful task such as conducting research on teacher education and the related issues. The governmental imposition has been acted in a way that it has considered these educators as strangers to their people and society. It seems possible that the government for economic reasons would return to an easier form of teacher training that would cost less, but whose failures have already been proved.

In fact, I believe the educators, teachers and students are putting their efforts in to convince the government to change its policy regarding teacher education are indeed supporting the government so as to pick out the programme which suits the education system in improving classroom practice and learning in general. However, this can work out when the government and its agencies think of the people in a way to serve them sincerely. Otherwise, if the government is seeking for the provision of special groups of people, allocating education to their industrial or other needs, but not of the society as a whole: or making efforts to solve governmental economical or political or any other problematic issues and not of those whose primary needs and urgent benefits are involved in education.

These are the real beneficiaries of the education: teachers, educators and students. In this case the government is not fulfilling the educational programme for the general purpose of education in which the whole society should benefit it.

The educators, teachers and other involved educationalists are striving to promote education through improving classroom practice, learning standards and change of learners' behaviour whose outcome will be reflected on the whole society. It is surprising how the government with its agents' limited view can ignore those professionals who have been so long theorising and practising education. In other words, if the government's programme fails it is not the government who is going to pay for it, but the people. When wresting autonomy and power from the professionals, those for whom lots of time and money have been spent and who have acquired all that experience, and put them under pressure how can they concentrate and contribute to the system?

The debates by these professionals and educators need support, especially through the mass media to become more evident to all. This is because apparently the government is simply ignoring the debates and demands of the professionals. Another effective element would be uniting educators, teachers and student teachers so as to improve classroom practice with higher standards.

1.7 Summative reflection

In conclusion, this chapter reflects that teacher education in the UK, despite its long history of about two centuries has been virtually constantly changing since its inception. Teacher education in its wake has been based on practice more than anything else. There is little research about the teaching styles used in teacher

training until recently. Teacher education has become a complicated issue and it is believed that government intervention has created many conflicts, especially by the Conservative Thatcherite victories in 1979 and even more conflicts in 1983, as argued by Judge (1994). In this connection Wilkin (1996:182) concluded that:

All governing elites of whatever political persuasion will attempt to intervene in a whole range of social institutions in the hope that if social structures can be reconstructed to reflect their beliefs and principles then this will encourage people to witness how those principles are successfully implemented in reality and thence willingly lend them their support.

Apprenticeship has been a weak system in which no real teacher trainer existed, but the pupils themselves strived to help their peers. The literature review, however, indicated that there have been times within which teacher education gained sound progress especially during 1944 to 1984. Apparently, the main reason for this has been the autonomy given to teachers, teacher educators and sound relationship between these practitioners. On the other side there had been less governmental control.

Throughout the history of teacher education, there are two factors that are essential and fundamental elements, theory and practice. The practitioners have made their best efforts to balance these two. The outcome of these efforts is manifested as the advancements in different disciplines of education in the UK. In spite of these developments there have always been conflicts between government and its agencies and HMIs on one side and teachers and teacher

educators from another side. However, the recent reform, the 1988 Education Act, which emphasised practice and the moral development of students whereas the reform in reality is negatively affecting teacher educators because it has put a lot of pressure on teachers and even more on teacher educators. As the importance of teacher education and consequently teacher trainers discussed in the chapter became obvious then it is expected that both the government and public should be appreciative and discern the importance of them.

This has shifted the balance between the theory and practice and has moved toward centralisation. In this way teacher education and teacher educators have been placed in situations that many teacher educators, such as Barton, Gilroy and Judge, feel create de-professionalisation. In other words, though there are still battles going on between government and teacher education authorities it seems that teacher education after such a long history with all its important developments is placed at risk. It has been argued by some writers that one of the reasons for this has been the weak political presence of the teacher educators on the political scene. This seems rational, because teacher educators could represent a strong political wing in the UK where they are given freedom of expression, which then can influence those in power. However, this opportunity does not exist for teacher educators in many of the other countries and teacher educators are struggling for it. This is well summarised by Judge (1994:239):

There is no question that by 1994 the aggressive external attacks had surprised most of the English teacher education community. Teacher educators had misjudged the critiques of their work, the strength of their

connections to universities and, like almost everyone in higher education, the autonomy and invulnerability of the universities themselves.

Although teacher educators worked daily with great thoughtfulness and energy to support the learning of their students, through these miscalculations and their passive political stance, they gave their implicit assent to severing the preparation of teachers from institutions of higher education. In 1944, however, wrenched from its home of a century in higher education yet unwelcomed by those whom the government hoped would adopt it, teacher education in England appears to be on the verge of becoming homeless.

This is argued by a number of teacher educators as mentioned earlier in the chapter such as Judge (1994: 251) who argued that:

Teacher education necessarily reflects profound changes in society: and above all changes in ethnic balances as well as in the economic strength of the nation in an increasingly competitive world.

In fact, how can people and government can expect a real and constructive training from trainers who are under competing and conflicting circumstances?

The circumstances of unqualified and uncoordinated intervention imposed by government and its agents has been so unwelcome that it has been called 'attacks', 'rape', 'savage' and 'provocative'. Nevertheless, if teacher education is a national priority then it should insist to be brought to the attention of both government and public. This can be achieved by employing the resources and expertise of all involved in teacher education.

One of the consequences of the recent reform, the 1988 Education Act, by the government was the creation of the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) in 1994.

The TTA began to function in 1995 and wrested funding from universities. In the

process the Secretary of State Education controlled the standards, financing, place of training and even the content of teacher education. This has been criticised by a number of teacher educators and writers who believe that this change has damaged teacher education by putting unnecessary pressure on its practitioners. For example, Bottery and Wright (1997:235) argue that:

Public professionals of all kinds will recognise the symptoms of this spectrum of distrust, and teachers as forcefully as any. The stress, the overwork, the early retirements, the nervous breakdowns, the financial cutbacks, the lack of recognition of their worth, the lower morale, the reduction in their role, the legislative and managerial impositions.

HEIs, schools and government itself with its agencies have faced difficulties due to governmental intervention, particularly in the past three decades. The governmental intervention on teacher education has apparently revealed for the specific aims, mainly economical and industrial. The intervention has been imposed under the title of more practice and school-based which has caused certain constraints for most of those involved in teacher education, teacher educators, teachers and student teachers. For the government and its agency teacher education is now practice and school-based. Thus the influence of theory has weakened to emphasise practice. However, most teacher educators (see Gilroy, 1989, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995 and Barton, et al., (1994), Furlong, et al., (1996), and Bottery and White, (1997) believe that the government's scheme has damaged the profession of teacher education. In other words, the latest change has de-professionalised teacher education.

The literature review of English teacher education indicated that teacher and teacher educators can not work effectively when they are under pressure. This pressure is increasing, which is overtly asserted by the Chief Inspector when defining teacher professionalism, academic autonomy and the role of HE that 'I believe our inspectors must keep up the pressure' (Graham, 1997: 7). Obviously, such statements make the teaching learning environment unbearable, in particular in teacher education, which is believed by all to be a prominent issue, which needs more justice and better treatment. It is in peaceful and friendly environments that participants of teacher training can concentrate and create an encouraging and supportive climate for learning. Contrary to this, a hostile education environment provides the participants with despair and disappointment. In this connection, Graham (1997: 8) reported of a survey that:

Recently has there been a very welcome joint UCET/Ofsted seminar to begin the process of explicit exemplification of grade boundaries to enable providers to train HEI and school staff in such judgements. But even this raises the question of fair and consistent treatment between those who have had the advantage of some exemplification in the current round, and those who were working in the dark in the previous inspection and in all the whole system needs help and encouragement and not a culture of name and shame.

The same survey indicated that there are much more dissatisfaction than satisfaction with the inspection and inspectors, 1 satisfactory 8 unsatisfactory and 15 don't know by the 25 respondent institutions. This implies that HMIs need to revise their inspection policy for consistent prospective inspections. Inspection dissatisfaction is even confirmed by a senior HMI as Graham has observed:

Senior HMI acknowledged the problems publicly at the UCET Autumn 1996 conference, and the secondary inspection team set about providing clarification and reassurance (ibid.: 9).

Moreover, the survey showed a general and justifiable concern about the process that some inspectors were not familiar with the framework, and also there is little trust in the validity of the outcomes. There is more evidence of dissatisfaction with school inspectors by other writers. For example, Gilroy & Wilcox (1997) declared that:

The failure to construct professional consensus about grading, or about any other standards for that matter, constitutes a serious professional error rendering the whole inspection process even more unreliable (Graham, 1997: 11).

Dissatisfaction is not only with inspection but also with a predicted fall in teacher supply, a TTA responsibility. The survey concluded that:

Members think that in the detail of their implementation, arrangements for measuring quality and the inspection process are frankly failing. They appear to be poorly managed, ad hoc and inconsistent. The sector needs to build an alternative and workable vision around consensus and consent if the partnership in raising educational achievement set out in Excellence in Schools is to be realised.

In fact, the provocative conflicts have already caused much waste of time, energy and distress. Returning to practice is surprising because the apprenticeship system, at the inception of teacher education has shown its failures. The government may justify it as a national priority and devolving teacher education to the Teacher Training Agency (TTA). Apparently, the TTA is now on probation. The DfEE, may well take over teacher education if the TTA fails in its function. The experience has shown that in both cases, when theory was dominant in the 1960s or in 1980s that practice became dominant the profession

appeared to be reasonably flexible. At the same time we have seen that HEIs opposed government prescribed curriculum as the government ignored HEIs. In other words, the relationship between government imposed and a teacher education curriculum has been one of continuous battle. These writers are indeed warning the professionals of their future and recommend that they should be critical of these radical changes.

Thus critical review of teacher education in England and Wales, has provided me with a rich source of information about teacher education in England and in particular the changes that have happened during the past two centuries. However, the educational changes have not been satisfactory to the majority of the teacher educators and many teachers. The changes chiefly have been wresting power from the universities and devolving it to schools. In other words, these educational reforms have ignored the importance of the role of the teacher educators and have weakened teacher training's professionalism. As a result, teacher education in UK has become more practice and school-based and in recent years it has appeared to be provocative and placed at risk in a way that it is expected for more change to reverse it and put it on track. Having offered a review of English teacher education I will now examine how teacher education has been operating in Iran in the following chapter as well as a comparison and contrast of the two systems.

Chapter 2

Part 1: Teacher Education in Iran

2.1.1 Introduction

Teacher education and training in Iran began nearly eight decades ago. The first teacher training institution was established in 1920 called the 'Central Teacher Training school' with very limited courses in pedagogical principles, philosophy of education and logic. 9 years later the school changed its name to 'Advanced Teacher Training School' and in 1970 the school changed again to 'Teacher Training University' and moved to its current location, Saadi Street in Tehran. The new university began its function under the Ministry of Science and Higher Education devolved from the Ministry of Education. At this time the number of courses also increased to: intermediate pedagogical principles, history of education, educational psychology as well as chemistry, physics, natural sciences and general psychology. Teacher education in Iran subsumes initial teacher education, which embodies the main part of the teacher education programme, and in-service training, which is a limited scheme. There are two separate centres for teacher education: teacher training universities, colleges and higher institutions for teachers to teach at schools. These institutions educate teachers in three echelons for:

Elementary level in which students start at age seven as first year school student and study for five years. Second level is guidance, which is a three-year course, followed after succeeding the elementary years. Level three is high school or secondary education, which is four years.

At present there are 8 universities and 12 training colleges and training institutions located in all big cities and some small ones as well. These centres award either Higher Diploma (H & D) or BA/BSc to their graduates. The normal H & D course is two years with some 36 units or 12 courses and BA/BSc four years with about 140 units. Each course normally is 3 and some 2 units (credits). The students are usually residing in dormitory and residential halls during their study (as stated by the university prospectus, 1997).

There is only one university, the University of Tarbiat Modarres (Daneshgah Tarbiat Modarres, DTM) for university teacher training established after the Islamic Revolution and this is located in Tehran. The graduates from this university are awarded MA/MSc or PhD. All training universities, colleges and institutes are public and there are no private institutions for this purpose. The students studying in training centres do not have to pay tuition or any other fees, but sign agreements to work as teachers wherever needed after their graduation. The students are also paid an allowance or given loans to help their personal needs

during the study. An MA/MS normally takes three to four years and PhD between three to seven years in DTM. Student teachers are trained for almost all disciplines. Therefore, there are a big variety of courses and areas to study and is not possible to list all of them here.

I prefer to limit the study to university English language student teachers, because these student teachers are my main targets to focus on. Another reason for this option was that English teachers have had difficulties in their classes especially in the use of English language. I shall search to find suitable teaching strategies for oral skills and will introduce them to the current teaching process. These students after graduation teach either in the Faculty of Letters and Humanities to teach English students only (English language and literature or linguistics). The other place to teach English is in language centres, which are located in the universities. These centres are not always separate and independent as in some universities they are combined with the Faculty of Letters and Humanities. English instructors at the centres teach two types of English: ESL as English general language or ESP to students of various disciplines, except English. There is of course in-service training for teachers of schools, but not for university instructors. I shall discuss them in detail later.

Due to not having a training centre for university teacher training in the past regime the majority of the Iranian English teachers in Iranian universities have not received any teacher training, unlike the training given to teachers in the UK

system. In fact, we do not have many teacher educators and teacher trainers for university student teachers. It has also been shown (see appendices C & D for English teachers' interviews) that English teachers urgently need specialised and professional training for their expected and successful teaching methods with appropriate techniques, if successful teaching/learning is expected. Training teachers will be more effective if these teachers are exposed to an English environment even for a short period after being trained locally. Other facilities such as the use of a native-speaker voice through educational technology aids will be influential for natural use of language. These recommendations are argued and agreed by some Iranian English teachers and writers such as Rabie (1978).

As background, a brief discussion on teacher education centres with certain related issues will now be dealt with in this chapter and a summary will close it.

2.1.2 Background to university teacher-training: Tarbiat Modarres University

This University was founded under the guidance of the Islamic Revolution Leader (late Imam Khomeini) and the High Council of Cultural Revolution in 1982. Later, in 1983 the University was thoroughly approved by the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education.

The University of Tarbiat Modarres commenced with the enrolment of 123 students with 11 majors in Humanities and later expanded to other areas such as

Agriculture, Art, Engineering, Medical Science and Natural Resources. At present, there are some 2,670 students studying in 80 Master degree programmes and about 30 in PhD programmes. The University has planned to provide facilities for research schemes in schools and with outside institutions and industries to develop research independence. It is also providing opportunities to improve relations with other national and international higher education institutions; to send Iranian students to study in foreign countries as well as preparing higher education research centres.

The chief aim of the University is to prepare its students to graduate with the ability to instruct at any Iranian university or higher education institute. It seems necessary to mention here that there are of course other universities and higher institutions that train teachers for schools; elementary, guidance; and high schools. Only the most eligible candidates are chosen through a selection process. Candidates for master's programmes must be under 35 years of age and hold a bachelor's degree certified by the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education, and for the PhD. must be under 40 and holding a certified master's degree. There is an oral examination as well as an interview after a written exam, in which the candidates are required to fulfil certain conditions. Both degrees' programmes are of course work and research. The master's programmes include 13 general credits 32-38 core subject credits (each credit involves 17 hours per semester) and 4 to 8 credits of research to a total of approximately 2.5 years. After the completion of the required courses and research, the students defend their theses in the presence

of a formal Evaluation committee. The PhD. students take 12-30 core subject credits and two years of research work. These students are also required to publish at least two articles concerning their theses. This degree normally takes 4 years full-time. Students are required to take 13 course credits in Education, Teaching Methods, Logic and Methodology, and Islamic Ideology. This combination of study provides the students with the opportunities to expand their intellectual capacities and broaden their perspectives in teaching. Finally, it allows them to specialise in an area in which they will be responsible for teaching in the future. The students are presently accommodated within the campus. Education at university level needs to be more practical to make a balance between theory and practice in Iran. This is what is expected in Iranian universities so as to enable the graduates to develop their intellectual power and practise what they learn.

In this section I have introduced some critical issues of teacher-development in Iran. The viewpoints of a few writers such as Brumfit and Widdowson have been discussed because these writers have worked on ESL/ESP, which strongly relates to the Iranian teaching/learning processes. There are some related comparative arguments to highlight the issues. The arguments show that teacher-training is necessary in particular for ELT classes because of their specific needs regarding the use of language in Iranian universities. The need for this was emphasised and agreed in the interviews by Iranian English teachers and students as well as being supported by my own personal teaching experience to university students. Virtually all Iranian University English teachers' experience would support the

belief that the students, particularly ESP (English for specific purposes) students, have neither been taught in, nor practised, their oral skills. Therefore, the provision and introduction of a new approach is necessary and will help the Iranian English teachers to succeed in their profession. To this end, I also believe that certain teaching materials containing necessary and interesting topics to students with relevant activities need to be attached to the present English course books. These need new techniques to process and a new way of assessment for both Iranian English teachers and students. The main problem with Iranian teacher training is a lack of practice in the English language and the link with theoretical course work accomplished by student teachers. These students need to be involved with a number of practising classes during their training and before their real class handling. This is a vital missing part of training, which is not fulfilled in Iran at the present.

The year 1963 is considered as the era of a drastic change in teacher education in Iran. Trained teachers themselves can use the target language and make students use the language as well. In general, Iranian English teachers have two basic needs in training:

- a) The art of teaching and operating a classroom handling English students with particular characteristics, such as having a prior knowledge of specific English and background of professional matter to use the learned language themselves and teach the English language students how to use it;
- b) The need to learn the content meaning of English (material knowledge).

Accordingly, Iranian English teachers possibly need guidance for both 'a' and 'b' needs mentioned above to follow procedures in the process of teaching. Not all teachers and teaching would have one unique guide to act accordingly. Each particular classroom situation demands a special need, which may be fairly different from other ones. For example, English classes in Iran require a special type of English that meets their subject and/or English use opportunity in accord with the Iranian culture and societal customs. Each particular area of teaching in each discipline requires a specific guidance flexible for an eclectic model. This is true of English teachers; that is, they need to be flexible. This is supported by writers such as Widdowson (1979:218) when he argues that:

All kinds of factors come into play in actual teaching and no one approach can be imposed on all situations. Teachers need more than approach, which they can adapt; they need a set of underlying principles, which will allow them to adapt particular approaches to meet the requirements of different circumstances. Without such a set of explicit principles the teacher will be imprisoned within a methodological orthodoxy.

Therefore, teachers can choose their specific situational needs. English teachers can use suitable strategies amongst the opportunities provided in the proposed teaching approach for English use.

In fact, it seems that these key elements work effectively in many countries across the world. The nature of teacher education, its purpose and educational objectives in general have a certain common features in all the countries around the world, but there are some characteristics which differ according to the conditions of the

various societies. These characteristics are determinant for teacher education and the nature of education takes root from them. There can be common solutions for common educational problems and issues of different societies.

Judge (1994) has given a sound detail of teacher education in which he pointed out that two-year teacher training had been provided through the colleges before 1960s. As it is indicated in the previous chapters and in the interviews with the Iranian English teachers and graduates studying in UK (appendices C & D) there has not been enough oral performance activity in English teaching process nor in testing it in particular for ESP students because it has been neither recognised nor recommended by the programmers. This was why I introduced the approach for the use of English to English teachers. Certain related issues such as in class and out of class exercises, testing charts for oral performance and a summative reflection will be presented in this chapter.

2.1.3 Critical issues in Iranian teacher-training

Teacher education has been a fundamental issue in the history of the education system. Teacher education differs in different countries and is characterised according to the specifications of those societies. Most Iranian English teachers are not professionally self-assured, or independent, and many of these teachers have no peace of mind and feel insecure in their classroom, especially when they have students who have been abroad and are fluent in speaking English. This is due to the lack of training. These English teachers who lack the abilities

to use an effective applied approach inevitably follow the teacher's guide-lines, if any, and have no ability in most cases to go further or deviate from them. Therefore, they cannot be flexible in the use and selection of their teaching style or materials for English classes. All English teachers in Iran need to know and strive to be an efficient teacher and know more than just what is in the textbook. All this indicates the urgency of training for the majority of these teachers. Great changes need to be focused on teaching/learning attitude towards routine and technical English use for the meaning of subject matter such as meaning of specific symbols, expressions, and relevant formulae. To this end, an appropriate approach to teaching as well as the teacher-student relationship seems necessary, because this prepares the teacher to be a motivator, assured, patient, frank and friendly and to feel sympathy towards students.

Consequently, teacher training is an essential factor in particular when training courses contain the content of students' needs. That is, teacher trainees learn how to teach the subjects after their training. Teacher training has been considered vital to teaching by writers such as Curle (1963:147) who defined teacher training as:

One of the nerve centres of the educational system. More can be done to raise standards of education at less cost through teacher training. But in the under-developed countries relatively little attention has been paid to this urgent task. Lack of a cadre of trained teachers has lowered university

entrance standards, has crammed universities with students unable to follow the courses or attain their degrees.

In fact, teaching is based on specific qualifications to be learned and are not a natural gift to anyone. Teacher trainees need to produce required changes from existing textbooks through effective teaching to develop the oral skills of the students. These issues are also argued by Brumfit (1980:8); who summed up the qualities of teachers of English as follows:

- 1) Teachers should be on good terms with their students.
- 2) They should fully realise why their students are learning English.
- 3) They should be aware of the nature of language learning and teaching.
- 4) They should discuss things with their colleagues, seniors and juniors openly and straightforwardly.
- 5) They should be aware of their professional duties and tasks.
- 6) They should be neither strictly dogmatic nor superficially fashionable.
- 7) They should not stop trying to improve and grow professionally.
- 8) They should realise both the merits of the past and the present. Additionally, they have to be tolerant of criticism.

These are vital encouraging points, but still there are other relevant issues to discuss such as the familiarisation of the English teachers with their environment and societal norms. These issues are influential in learning as well, because cultural and societal norms are rooted in the learning/teaching process. This is also argued by Whitty, Barton and Pollard (1987:171) who assert that students on courses of initial teacher education will:

Need to have a basic understanding of the type of society in which their pupils are growing up, with its cultural and racial mix, and of the relationship between the adult world and what is taught in schools, in

particular, ways in which pupils can be helped to acquire an understanding of the value of a free society and its economic and other foundations.

It is preferred by some practitioners in teaching/learning process that the teacher is from the same region that the students are. This is because the teacher is familiar with the norms and habits of those learners which makes for a better relationship, which encourages the learners. Otherwise the teacher has to become familiar with environmental norms to be efficient in practice. For example, Popkewitz (1987:335) wrote that the organisation of teacher education is involved with interrelating three concerns:

1. problems and paradoxes of knowledge ;
2. the institutional quality of schooling ; and
3. Social and cultural interests that influence school knowledge. These concerns raise issues about the social functions of the intellectual, the meaning of 'rationality' and the politics that underlie the sciences and discourses of professional life.

Teacher education concerns professional skills, knowledge and adaptability of teachers. The process of teacher education promotes trainees' personal practical knowledge and skills, but the emphasis is on practical preparation in handling a class. It is believed that the best education for learners comes from providing the best education to their teachers. An effective teacher education programme should include basic qualifications, that is, having credits both in professional educational subjects such as principles of education, pedagogical psychology, teaching methods and teaching practice; and in the subject to be taught. Teacher training in Iran can be pre-service programmes for student teachers or in-service programmes for untrained current ones under qualified trainers' supervision. I believe teacher

trainees should be selected and the best students be chosen because these people create the future of their society. Student-teacher selection has been talked about and agreed by a number of teacher education researchers such as Tisher & Wideen (1990).

Regarding teachers' awareness of diverse teachings methods Stones (1992) has given his perspectives, which would help teachers improve their teaching. In Quality Teaching, he has categorised teachings as 'rote learning '(memorising,)' concept learning (concept of abstractions), 'problem-solving' (learning to tackle problems effectively necessitates giving particular attention to activities mostly by learners), and 'the learning of motor skills' (demonstration or physical activity). Teacher education content can include information about: the discipline, teaching knowledge, skills, techniques, competencies, and ideas of relevant texts as well as curriculum materials. However, emphasis is given to specific topics. These topics are taught in a process through a variety of activities such as observation in classes, fieldwork, practice or student teaching, modelling simulation, direct instruction, discussion groups and seminars.

In fact, Stones has introduced and recommended the points, which are encouraging and can work effectively in Iranian universities as well. Stones has even provided the details of course content and teaching strategies which are suitable for more practical teaching which we are in need of in Iran. His work

extends to more than this and more teaching/learning, and the unrelated issues, are discussed by him that can be referred to here.

Not only trained teachers of English, but also trained staff no doubt play a commanding role in the supply and growth of education. Certain experiences can be gained through the use of appropriate technological apparatus such as tape recordings and videotapes in order to enable English teachers to teach the oral discourse classes efficiently. English teacher-trainees need to develop their view of a specialised field, to use their prior knowledge in class discussions to get their peers' points of view. In addition, they need to share their educational and technical findings with their peers. In oral discourse classes it is recommended that trainers talk for not more than fifteen percent of the total talking time and English trainees should consider what they are good at and what they are weak at in order to strengthen these aspects to reach a desired level. English teacher-trainees' contributions in discussions can be fairly judged perhaps through reflections provided by their trainers or peers who are adult and have experience of the class topic.

Therefore, the process of education promotes teachers' personal practical knowledge and teaching skills, but emphasis is put on practical preparation and use. However, teachers need to be under a special type of education to train them in the particular area or subject they are interested in teaching. An effective teacher education programme should include basic qualifications.

The course of English teacher-training is demanded to be designed to prepare student teachers to teach English for its use to the Iranian university students as discussed earlier. Students under teacher-training will train in one particular curriculum area for example, in Basic Science or in Humanities. Basic Science may include biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics; and Humanities consist of geography, history and law. The university-based elements of the course can be as follows:

- 1) Lesson planning, including the selection of content;
- 2) Motivating English students of different abilities;
- 3) Selecting and creating appropriate resources for learning;
- 4) Introducing the new techniques of teaching such as lesson analysis;
- 6) Ensuring equality of opportunity for both girls and boys;
- 6) Matching work to the capabilities of the students;
- 7) Teaching the whole assigned topic;
- 8) Gathering feedback on the students' progress.

The purpose of the course is to develop the English student teacher to be able to: understand the ways in which their potential can be developed. Accordingly, there are certain inter-related components of the course:

- a) Curriculum work;
- b) Understanding classrooms and universities;
- c) Practical work in university classes.

To familiarise the teachers with a process, a few examples of lesson analyses are provided here to enlighten these views and more are given later (Chapter 8). The findings of this then can help both English trainees and trainers to develop a research-based programme rather than non-examined intuitive views.

Judge (1994) with his colleagues has researched a comparative study on teacher training education, which is mainly of USA, France, and the UK education. Judge argues that: 'How teachers are educated, and where and by whom, reflect beliefs about what teachers are for and why society employs them' (ibid:9), a point that certainly applies in Iran.

Having reviewed the teacher education systems of both countries, the UK and Iran, I will now compare and contrast these two systems. My intention is to identify those positive points of teacher education that help learning and classroom practice which are applicable to the Iranian system. My main concern will be on training course structure and content which provide the teachers with better opportunity of using effective teaching strategies especially for oral skills.

Part 2: A comparison between teacher education in the UK and in Iran

2.2.1 Introduction

The examination of teacher education in the UK and Iran showed that there are more differences than similarities, so as you may find it easier to entitle a contrast

rather than a 'comparison'. In fact, a reflective conclusion captures some sense of the differences in the two societies whose teacher education system were examined in the previous two chapters. The contrasts illuminate the analysis of the relationships between HEIs, schools, government and local authorities. In England teacher education has been based on the reports by governmental agencies or HMIs in form of committees and commissions, whereas the real task, training the teachers has been carried out by other groups directly involved with teachers and teacher educators. This is indeed completely different from teacher training in Iran. There are also differences in the basic characteristics of the teaching force and of the schools where teachers have been taught and trained. There is an overt distinction between the institutions providing academic education with more practical tasks, though both systems shared a common purpose, teaching student teachers. There has been a relationship between UK HEIs and schools in the form of collaboration and integration for teaching material assimilation in English while there has never been such collaboration or relationship in Iran. There has also been a balance between theory and practice in England and more emphasis on practice. This is quite lacking in Iran, that is, there is no balance between theory and practice. In fact, there is more theory than practice. There is much more flexibility of courses in England than is in Iran. The common point is that both systems have been employing their social, cultural and, more important than all, political features in teacher education, though not in the same way. The basic common point is that both systems have been educating teachers for their nations. These

Chapter2: Teacher Education in Iran and a Comparison Between the Two Systems

differences and much more can be provided in brief in a table to make these points clearer, below:

2.2.2 A concise comparison of teacher education in the UK and Iran

	UK	IRAN
1.	Rich Literature	Poor Literature
2.	Long history - some two centuries	Rather short history – some seven decades
3.	Has always been public and private	Has always been public only
4.	Has been taught by HEIs and schools	Has been taught by HEIs only for B Ed and Higher Diploma (H & D) by higher institutions under the Ministry of Education
5.	Has been taught on contract	Public service, no contract
6.	There has always been a blend of theory and practice	Almost all theoretical
7.	There has been a balance between theory and practice	There has never been a balance between theory and practice
8.	Less prescribed by government	Full prescribed programme
9.	Government political intervention	No political intervention
10	Teachers and teacher educators have opportunities for course content selection	Full prescribed programme designed by HEIs or by teacher trainers of the Ministry of Education

Chapter2: Teacher Education in Iran and a Comparison Between the Two Systems

11	Student teachers have opportunity to select courses for individual activities	Almost all courses are obligatory – only a few optional and individual activities
12	Teacher educators have had collaborative task with teachers	Teacher educators have had no collaboration with school teachers
13	Teacher educators visit schools	Teacher educators have nothing to do with schools
14	Teacher educators and teachers have the opportunity to express their views and criticise the programme	Neither teacher educators nor teachers have the opportunity to express and criticise overtly
15	Is moving toward centralisation	Has always been centralised
16	There has always been conflict between government and teaching staff	No conflict overtly between teaching staff and government
17	Drastic cuts in funding	Increasing funding
18	Unknown future, mostly provocative and pessimistic	Progressing and optimistic

Note: Teacher education in Iran, as I mentioned earlier, has two divisions:

1. Nursery, elementary, guidance and high school teacher education characterised as compared in the table above.
2. Teacher education for university teachers which is accomplished in the only university teacher training, DTM. Student teachers in this university graduate with a MA/MSc or PhD degree (more details at 2.1).

As the conclusion for this chapter I will now provide a summative reflection.

2.3 Summative reflection

The outcomes of teacher education which affects the classroom practice can change the status quo, social functions and relations. Moreover, the appraisal of outcomes is vital. That is, the inspectors should be fair and trusted to provide a true and real assessment. Thus the role of inspectors becomes prominent and if it does not work fairly there will be a tragic consequence. It can be tragic because it ruins all efforts made in the teacher education process. As a result, that kind of appraisal disappoints the participants and puts the future of the teacher education at risk. Unfortunately, this situation seems to be happening in the UK as reported by Graham (1997:3):

It also begins to deliver the remit handed down by members at the inspection evaluation seminar mentioned above, which was to mount a critique of the assumptions and the detailed practice of inspection within the current quality framework, based on the detailed accounts given by participants, as the basis for moving towards a better system. But much of the evidence and opinion considered here has been supplied in confidence with specific requests that the individuals (including HMI) and institutions involved should remain anonymous. That, in itself, is a grave indictment of the climate of distrust and fear of potential victimisation which this whole process now engenders, and goes to the very heart of open and democratic government.

Teacher education is a major dynamic function and national programme in each society, because it prepares teachers who inculcate the theory of teaching in the minds of the future generation through practice. It is obvious that the future is in the hands of this generation and they are likely to behave as they are educated. Thus the importance of teacher education is clear to every individual in all societies. So it becomes essential to establish how, by whom, what and why

teacher education is carried out. Consequently, it is important to all government and nations to consider, treat and provide their best to fulfil this in a way to achieve an optimum outcome.

Amongst the four fundamental elements mentioned above 'by whom', teacher trainer plays the key role indeed, because the other elements are greatly dependent upon it. Hence, teacher trainers should be well respected, treated and provided by each government and the whole nation. However, if teacher trainers are treated badly how can the society expect an optimum achievement from them, and how can trainees be taught to be open-minded so as to affect their society? This is of course the normal way of carrying out teacher education, but if a government is seeking for some specific purposes not in the interest of the public, or the public have no recognition of what should be in the teacher training programme, then the result will be different.

In the present chapter I have examined teacher education in the UK and in Iran. The viewpoints of writers such as Barton, Gilroy, Furlong and Judge have been discussed and some related arguments have been provided to highlight the issues. The arguments conclude that teacher-training is necessary in particular for English classes in Iran because of the lack of English use in class and their specific needs in the use of language. The majority of the current English language courses are not operated in an effective teaching approach as were

indicated in the interviews by Iranian teachers and graduates (appendices C &D). Students have had no, or only a little, opportunity to practise and use what they have been learning.

The importance of teacher education was also argued by writers who have examined teaching/learning process such as Judge (1994:251) who pointed out that:

Teacher education necessarily reflects profound changes in society: and above all changes in ethnic balances as well as in the economic strength of the nation in an increasingly competitive world.

In fact, how can people and government expect a real and constructive training from trainers who are under-qualified and facing competing and conflicting constraints, as well as uncoordinated governmental and its agencies' interventions such as the interventions recently imposed in the UK? These interventions have been extremely harmful. As a result, teacher education in the UK seems to be in a very difficult situation. Teacher trainers despite all their expertise and experiences are not welcome and are almost ignored, which is really surprising to both foreigners and the majority in the UK. It is difficult to discern and justify this treatment as a national priority.

Chapter2: Teacher Education in Iran and a Comparison Between the Two Systems

The study of teacher education in the UK and Iran and their comparison/contrast provided us a sound knowledge and useful insights. First of all, we have learned how different the systems are and second; how they can benefit from each other's experiences. Teacher education in all was planned chiefly for the improvement of classroom practice. As we found teacher education in Iran badly needs to balance theory and practice. That is, much more practice is needed. Therefore, what is now required is an investigation into the teaching methods used in the two systems in the same way as teacher education for the convention of positive and applicable teaching strategies mainly from the English system to Iranian system. In order that I may do so, I have limited the English teaching to oral skills so as to be able to control and argue it in detail so as to reach reasonable conclusions. However, before examining this as part of Iran's teacher education, educational research methods in general and the research instruments used in this study in particular need to be discussed. Thus the next chapter deals with educational research methodology.

Chapter 3

Research methodology

3.1 Introduction to research methodology

This chapter, Chapter 3 will examine a selection of the research methods used in educational research. The sub-sections of the chapter include: introduction of methodology, a background to methodology, limitations and opportunities in educational research. Research procedure, literature review, sampling procedure and action research as the most commonly used method in educational research and in this study, are discussed. A summative reflection concludes the chapter.

There are various methods of conducting research, though the traditional positivist approach has been generally rejected in favour of a variety of modern qualitative methodologies. Qualitative method is descriptive based on interpretation with techniques such as interviewing, observation and audio-recording. Methodologies in general provide the researcher with specific techniques for data gathering depending upon the needs of the question, hypothesis or any other research proposition. Choosing appropriate techniques necessitates the clarification of the question or hypothesis under study. For this reason I need to make the research problem of this study clear first.

I am mainly concerned with a problem concerning the use of spoken English – the lack of oral production and the lack of ability in interactive skills by Iranian university students even after their graduation. The problem in Iranian universities was as I found it when I began my teaching there and still exists, as is indicated by Biria and Tahririan (1994). There is no standard and up-to-date teaching approach used in the current English teaching being practised by the teachers at university

level in Iran. University students have had no opportunity to practise their learned English language in or outside the classroom. Almost all English classes are still teacher-centred in Iranian universities.

One major deficiency of English language classes in Iranian universities is that students who can use the most complex scientific discourse in their native language often find themselves in the situation where they cannot comprehend the academic lectures given in English or interact with others in the English language. This is true particularly for ESP students whose ability to communicate is minimal, and their oral expression poor. This was what I have been encountering during my years of teaching in Iranian universities, which is supported by Iranian university teachers such as Biria & Tahririan (1994) and university graduates who I have interviewed and are continuing their study in the UK (see Appendices C & D).

Consequently, my main aim in this thesis is to propose a new approach, suitable to the needs of an English programme for Iranian English teachers and learners to use English. Such an approach might provide a solution to this critical problem of lacking effective communication. This is critical, because arguably the main purpose of any language is to interact with others in that particular language, to convey information and exchange views. This view is supported by writers mentioned earlier, in addition to the interviewed English teachers and graduates. In studies of English, according to writers such as Widdowson (1978), Robinson (1980), Brumfit (1984), and Biria & Tahririan (1994) many key issues remain unresolved. One important deficiency is the limited use of oral discourse analysis in the majority of classes, especially in Iranian universities. The main problem this study will address, then, may be summarised as follows:

If the UK approach in teacher education courses to oral discourse were to be applied to teaching English courses to Iranian university students, will this improve the students' oral production, in particular their fluency?

Towards this end, this study concentrated on the following issues:

1. Lack of English use; that is, in Iranian universities students have had no opportunity to practise and use the learned language where they wanted or needed it. This is especially the case for ESP learners who normally comprise the majority of the university students. Consequently, these students are not able to use English language or say what they want to say. The influential barriers to this are untrained teachers, unsuitable textbooks, lack of educational technology and particularly the method/s of teaching which I shall discuss in detail later. For example, teacher training as an urgent issue will be discussed later in one separate chapter. Iranian university students do need to use English language in pursuing their education at home and in their own country, particularly abroad where they have to participate and run presentations in English at international conferences, as well as exchange perspectives with their future colleagues from abroad.
2. The oral discourse analysis approach may help improve the use of English when employed to teach English in the Iranian universities (that is, by the use of an utterance in the form of a complete thought, independent from other utterances). In other words, utterance is a relevant meaningful episode, separated from others by content, and we can have diverse tones in one utterance which are taken as units of that utterance. That is, the process of clarification is not accomplished all at once.

The research problem then is clear: it is now essential to have a review of research methodology for selecting suitable techniques to be employed for this study.

Educational research has diverse definitions depending on its remit and scope. Woods (1986: 16) defined research as 'An enquiry, a quest for new knowledge and new understanding'. This definition of research needs more explanation because research does not always produce 'new knowledge', but often a refinement or elaboration of what exists. Yet still there are cases that research findings are not new in one place, but are new in another. For example, research on a modern technology which is already existing in an advanced country could be seen as completely new in a country which was not so advanced. Therefore, newness of knowledge is a contextual matter and not absolute.

As a natural event, it is a fact, in a sense, that knowledge (theory) and practice are the basic professional and pedagogical requirements of a teacher. Thus, a teacher can function as an efficient researcher on classroom practice improvement. The method of research which a teacher would use could be different: depending on the objectives of the research an ethnography approach or action research method would be employed. This is supported by writers such as Woods (1986: 4-5) who wrote:

Ethnography is derived from anthropology which means literally a description of the way of life of a race or group of people. It is concerned with what people are, how they behave, how they interact together. It aims to uncover their beliefs, values, perspectives, motivations, and how all these things develop or change over time or from situation to situation. It tries to do all this from within the group, and from within the perspectives of the group's members. The ethnographer is interested in what lies beneath – the subject's view, which may contain alternative views, and their views of each other.

In fact, an ethnographer can be a teacher as a researcher who would achieve the best outcome through their experience and practice orientation. However, the

result of the research depends greatly on the perception, method, insight and interpretative analysis of the teacher researcher.

Until relatively recently quantitative methods were dominant in the social sciences. Recently, researchers have striven to employ qualitative methods rather than the previous methods. However, each approach has its own specific advantages and disadvantages which determine a preferred method for the research project. This is supported and argued by Bell (1987: 13) who points out that:

Each approach has its strengths and weaknesses and each is particularly suitable for a particular context. The approach adopted and the methods of data collection selected will depend on the nature of the inquiry and the type of information required.

Qualitative research has no sharp boundaries. It can include a variety of approaches with suitable tools and interpretations specifically required by researchers. Indeed, the choice of research practices depends greatly upon the central questions of the research. It is believed that the achievement of qualitative research represents the researcher's understandings, insight, observations, interpretation of the world, data collected and also the social processes under analysis. Quantitative research, however, usually applies mathematical models, statistical tables, graphs, and is often impersonal.

Hammersley (1992: 2) argued that 'The origins of all social research methods lie in the ways that people gain information about their world in everyday life.' Qualitative method uniquely possesses certain fundamental assumptions about the true nature of humans and understanding of cultural aspects, to explain human actions in both familiar and unfamiliar societies. It is through such method that a general theory can be replaced by a scientific perspective on an event, or a practical problem narrowed and refined along with a growing theory.

Hammersley (1992: 8) argues that qualitative methods are equivalent to ethnography by asserting 'I use the term ethnography in a general sense, that is broadly equivalent to qualitative research', but can equally be taken as synonymous with interpretative research, case study, participant observation or action research. This wide use of the term illustrates the evolving status of the qualitative approach.

He also claimed that practitioners can be the best researchers because:

- a. practitioners have access to their own intentions and motives in a way that an observer does not, and so have a deeper understanding of their own behaviour than an outsider could ever have;
- b. the practitioner will usually have long-term experience of the setting being studied, and will therefore know its history at first hand, as well as other information that may be required to understand what is going on. It would take an outsider a long time to acquire such knowledge, indeed this may never be possible;
- c. the practitioner already has relationships with others in the setting and can use these in order to collect further data. Once again, an outsider would need to spend a considerable time in the field building up such relationships;
- d. because practitioners are key actors in the setting, they are in a position to test theoretical ideas in a way that a mere observer can never do (Hammersley, 1993: 253).

All of these supportive points are encouraging for teacher researchers who need to be aware of them.

Cohen and Manion (1994: 38) defined 'methods' in education as:

By methods, we mean that range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction.

Generally, most writers limit educational research to the issues relevant to classroom practice, whereas in reality the scope of educational research has gone

beyond classroom practice to the philosophy and policy of education. Cohen and Manion (1994: 4) wrote that research is a means to discover truth and have defined research as 'The systematic, controlled empirical and critical investigation of hypothetical propositions about the presumed relations among natural phenomena' and categorised research as 'inquiry; historical; developmental; survey; case study; correlational; Ex Post Facto; experiments; quasi-experiments and single-case; action research; accounts; triangulation; role- playing; the interviews; personal constructs; multi-dimensional measurement and the ethics of educational and social research.'

They have also cited certain characteristics for educational research, that:

Research requires a clear and constant purpose, which both defines and precedes the choice of means; that the means be exactly and consistently followed; and that no revision takes place until the sequence of steps is completed. ...Research cannot interpret the present until it knows the answers to its ultimate questions. ...Research abstracts one or two factors for attention, and holds to a constant definition of the problem until the experiment is concluded. However, in reality most researches overlap in many aspects and share certain features. For example, most educational researches are descriptive and dealing with individual or group, institutions and the like in order to describe, compare, contrast, classify, analyse and interpret the gathered information in the process of research (ibid.: 195-6).

Denzin and Lincoln (1994:2) defined qualitative research as:

Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials.

Methodological perspectives are employed to analyse theoretical concepts and their relationship to the methods used in the research, and proceeds to consider issues such as: using interviews; questionnaire and conducting a participant

teaching/observation study. Finally, the perspectives are used for the best integration of the theory and most appropriate method in terms of the key topic of the research.

I have experimented with what for me were new paradigms in qualitative data collection and analysis techniques. More precisely, this is in the form of teacher/researcher account of both literature review and the implementation process. This qualitative method is more difficult than quantitative because the data analysis was of an "open-ended nature". This type of use is agreed by Alderson who pointed out that quantitative data are both easier to collect and more "amenable" to analysis. The writer adds that:

Although responses to the more qualitative methods were good, their "open-ended nature" made it more difficult to compare the discussions and interviews (1992:53-4).

The research method used in this study is at heart action research. In practice action research is employed as the research method, which is most appropriate for examining and improving teaching, learning and classroom practice. The fact that I was a teacher researcher during my teaching sessions for the study, caused me not to be able to record all the events happening in class accurately. So as researcher teacher participant I missed note-taking following a consistent pattern. However, my experience as a teacher and my understanding of the difficulties will help future researcher/s to be aware of the problems which I observed during my research. This meant I had a completely a new role in class. In spite of this there was an encouraging point in that classroom observations were not regarded with the suspicion that normally happens in other research classes with a teacher and a researcher because of the fear of external assessment. However, for me with my limited facilities this was the most reliable method of recording my observations.

Although researchers with far more experience found that because the classroom is a familiar setting it becomes impossible to record all the events. It is possible to look at the direct relationships between the characteristics of the observable events in the classroom and the characteristics of what students learn, but no time was available.

Foster (1997: 14) defined educational research as 'Activities which involve the systematic collection and analysis of data with a view to producing valid knowledge about teaching, learning and the institutional framework in which they occur.' Furthermore, he declared that educational researchers needs to consider the wide scale and long-term effect of research on knowledge, thinking and practice. His argument meant that educational research is expected to move beyond the classroom so as to consider the nature of educational policy and practice.

It can be seen that methods of conducting research in education are diverse systematic processes to solve a problem, refine, expand knowledge or explore something new. In general research is either qualitative, or quantitative though sometimes a blend of these two is used. Much of today's research in education is qualitative and descriptive. The term research is interchangeable with investigation, study, and inquiry. However, no matter for what purpose research is carried out it proceeds through a systematic procedure. In other words, there is an order in the steps taken throughout the research.

3.2 Background to educational research methodology

Methodology is defined by the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary as the 'science of method' or as 'treatise on method'. In this connection, Bassey (1981: 85-6) had taken the view that:

An important criterion for judging the merit of a case study is the extent to which the details are sufficient and appropriate for a teacher working in a similar situation to relate his decision making to that described in the case study. The relatability of a case study is more important than its generalisability.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) explain that the selection of a method for research is greatly dependent upon the objectives and claims about the superiority of one method to another. These writers, after reviewing the previous methods used in social sciences, concluded that ethnography works as an efficient alternative to the other methods. They claimed that this is because in ethnography the researcher is considered as a part of the research and consequently the researcher can reflect on the outcome of the research. Thus reflexivity is the main characteristic of the ethnography approach, which contributes to the development of theory. However, other advocates of ethnography declare that it is not the unique method for social science research.

Cohen and Manion (1994: 198-9) have supported the procedural stages that can be summarised as follows:

1. Identification, evaluation and formulation of the problem perceived as critical in an everyday teaching situation.
2. Discussions and negotiations – which may culminate in a draft proposal.
3. A review of the research literature to find out what can be learned from comparable studies, their objectives, procedures and problems encountered.
4. A modification or redefinition of the initial statement of the problem at stage one.
5. The selection of research procedures – sampling, administration, choice of materials, methods of teaching and learning, allocation of resources and tasks.

6. The choice of evaluation procedures to be used will need to be taken into consideration.
7. The implementation of the project itself. It will include the conditions and methods of data collection....and the classification and analysis of data.
8. The interpretation of the data; inferences to be drawn; and overall evaluation of the project. Discussions on the findings, ...mistakes and problems will be considered. A general summing-up may follow this in this the outcomes of the projects are reviewed. Recommendations made, and arrangements for discussion of results to interested parties decided.

These are sound sequential stages which can be used when conducting research in the field of education. However, the size of samples or detail of how to face the difficulties is not provided by the writers.

Cohen and Manion (1994: 254) defined methodology as 'The use of two or more methods of data collection in the stage of some aspect of human behaviour'. My own understanding and definition of methodology is: A process through which suitable means of research method are employed to achieve or refute the hypothesis/es or questions for an unforeseen outcome. This process includes: topic selection, theoretical and/or practical tasks and analysing information to gain conclusions, implications and suggestions.

As mentioned above research could be either quantitative or qualitative or a combination of these two. In technical and scientific fields most research is quantitative. Quantitative research deals with facts and their relations, so is involved with numerical figures, statistics and consensus. 'Findings' are the facts resulting from the relations of a series of facts, which then can be generalised. However, qualitative research is based on perception and insights rather than statistical figures. Thus each method of research depends upon the suitability to the demand and nature of the research. For example, the case study approach is useful for the study of one aspect of a problem within a limited time and it is based

on an inquiry into a specified problem. Case study can be carried out as part of an action research. In a case study data are selected and collected for the task required. Since the scope of study is limited and specific to the case studied, the subject under study becomes focal and centralised. Case studies are often qualitative in which a combination of methods, even including quantitative techniques, may be employed. In addition, case studies require a deep understanding of the relevant literature.

Wellington (1996: 39) has cited a definition for case study 'A case study is a detailed examination of one setting, or one single subject, or one single depository of documents, or one particular event'. The case study used in this thesis is a collective one in which a number of different cases sharing a similar theme are studied in order to allow for limited generalisation.

Wellington (1996) observed educational research dealing with humans and their learning organisations and provides researchers with cautionary notes for avoiding unethical practices. He also provided a definition for research as 'public; inquiry; systematic, credible, verifiable, justifiable, useful, valuable and trustworthy', which aims to expand knowledge. He added that education research could be aimed at question/s; hypothesis; an exploration, or educational problem solving. He also stated that 'qualitative research is often concerned with the development or revision of concepts especially in an unstructured, exploratory form' (ibid.: 36).

In fact, if research proceeds systematically, the researcher will follow a linear procedure. For example, a brief outline of the stages for systematically writing my research project is as follows:

1. Abstract or summary

2. Outline or blueprint
3. Literature review
4. Aims of the study
5. Application of research instruments
6. Action research
7. Discussion of the results
8. Summative reflection and conclusion in brief
9. Implications and suggestions
10. References

Therefore, it can be seen that educational research methods are to help understand the scope of research; not the products but the process of scientific enquiry. In other words, methods entail forming concepts and hypotheses, building models and theories, and sampling procedures-techniques and steps used for data gathering. Of course, a study of research methodology helps the researcher how to collect the information and apply it wherever applicable and useful. Indeed, research can play the role of a bridge to connect the past to present and even in some cases to attempt to predict the future. In both cases the role of research is undoubtedly useful and constructive because it broadens and enriches the insight of not only the researcher but also all those who use it, in order to form theory or practice. This is true for research into classroom situations as well. In other words, the choice of research techniques depends on the questions about their context. Context creates the limitations and opportunities which are discussed next.

3.3 Limitations and opportunities in educational research

There are problems in conducting educational research. One of the difficulties, especially for foreign students, is understanding literature scripts in qualitative methods. In addition, in quantitative methods there often is a problem of analysing statistical numbers and tables. Usually these tables are complicated and so are difficult to understand. There are also problems in managing time to follow the research procedure, for example, making appointments for interviews or keeping to a timetable for action research. Another problem is understanding vernacular language for non-English speakers. The use of modern technology by overseas students who have not been using this technology slows down their research at first. Still another problem are short time limits for students to complete their research. Time shortage creates a lot of financial and family distress, especially when it is imposed by the sponsor.

As Bell (1987: 2) observes, it is important to ask, 'What do I need to know and why?' She also argued that:

It is the systematic approach that is important in the conducting of your projects, not the title of research, investigation, inquiry, or study. Where collection of data is involved. (notes of interviews, questionnaire responses, articles, official reports, minutes of meetings, etc).

Research and its methodology is a vast area of study, which is impossible to discuss in detail here. In consequence, some aspects of research methods, which seem to be used in the majority of researches, are examined in the following sections.

To do a research project, first of all the researcher needs to select a topic. This topic can be a problem, assumption/s, question/s, or hypothesis/es. Research depending on the nature of the topic and its demand, uses a series of means

suitable to the research context. These tools can be interviews, which are used to clarify the meanings, concepts and area of confusions in the arguments as research evidence. Interviews as research evidence show the range and types of paradigms of arguments, analysis and diverse conceptions in different perceptions and behaviour. An interviewer should be a good listener and observer, flexible, adaptable and not biased. Some authors such as Wellington believe that interviews and case study are the two main elements in doing a research project. The interview questions are derived from research hypotheses taken from the research theory. A tape-recorder is a useful instrument for this purpose. When an interview is carried out with a tape-recorder, the tapes can be rewound and used as many times as needed for transcription, analysis and interpretation. Views of different interviewees on an event provide the researcher with in-depth insight.

The research conducted in this thesis is chiefly a comparative study, comparing teacher education in the UK and Iran. Furthermore, this study is focused on English language teaching in the two educational settings, the UK and Iranian systems. The main aim was to extract those oral skills teaching strategies from the UK system that can be implemented in the Iranian system. Teaching of oral skills is missing in Iranian English language teaching: this was what I personally found during my teaching years at Iranian university. In so doing, I was a teacher researcher and full participant in the research process. My interviews also were reflexive, directive and related to the research focus.

In a sense the action research approach used in this study is similar to ethnography in which a relatively small-scale case retains the same groups of students and teachers for several sessions. A primary concern in this research was the

description and explanation of what was observed and feedback received from the research participants during the study.

Cohen and Manion 1994: 186) underlined action research as:

Action research should contribute not only to practice but also to a theory of education and teaching which is accessible to other teachers.

In spite of the frequent use of action research Cohen and Manion (1994) have cited that this method interprets the scientific method more loosely, mainly because its emphasis is on a specific problem in a specific setting. However, despite this view action research can be generalised and used in more cases for development. Amongst diverse research methods introduced by Cohen and Manion action research is focal in educational studies. Action research was used for the first time in America in the 1920s and became the most commonly used one in the 1960s as reported by these writers. Action research can be used in a variety of situations for a variety of purposes. The authors observed some characteristics of action research in school and classroom as follows:

1. it is a means of remedying problems diagnosed in specific situations, or of improving in some way a given set of circumstances;
2. it is a means of in-service training, thereby equipping teachers with new skills and methods, sharpening their analytical powers and heightening their self-awareness;
3. it is a means of injecting additional or innovatory approaches to teaching and learning into an ongoing system which normally inhibits innovation and change;
4. it is a means of improving the normally poor communications between the practising teacher and the academic researcher, and of remedying the failure of traditional research to give clear prescriptions;
5. although lacking the rigour of true scientific research, it is a means of providing a preferable alternative to the more subjective, impressionistic approach to problem solving in the classroom (Cohen & Manion, 1994: 188).

In fact, action research is used for classroom improvement. In this case a teacher would conduct research to enhance the classroom learning theoretically and/or practically. This is true for this study where I have used it for improving English classes in Iranian university. Action research has been used to solve a problem that I have faced during my teaching at Iranian university for years (more is outlined in the chapter on theoretical foundations). In this study action research is used with certain research instruments such as questionnaire, interview and observation of teaching sessions. This usage of action research was supported by Carr and Kemmis (1986), and also Hill and Kerber (1967) who wrote:

In education this activity (action research) translates into more practice in research and problem solving by teachers, administrators, pupils, and certain community personnel, while the quality of teaching and learning is in the process of being improved (in Cohen and Manion, 1994: 190).

Cohen and Manion (1994: 197) have given a definition for action research which is especially appropriate to my comparative study:

Action research is subversive in that it brings into question that which is taken for granted. ...If action research is to succeed in achieving educational improvement practitioners will need to be able to regard practice and its contexts as cultural constructions rather than as social givens.

In fact, action research is used chiefly to affect prospective teaching outcomes. Action research, like other types of research in education, has systematic procedural stages. These stages begins with identifying a problem and the importance of it in the teaching/learning process for classroom purposes. A literature review is a norm in conducting research to provide the researcher with a broader insight and orientation to the steps used in research process. Data collection is the next step, which normally proceeds in a suitable way with suitable research tools, such as interviews, questionnaires and case studies, sometimes with some practical field-work. The data gathered through the process then is analysed

and discussed, interpreted and concluded by the researcher and in the final stage offered to readers with its implications and suggestions. In the use of action research, there is an enormously encouraging list of points and features which is indeed useful and practical in most contexts as shown in the quotation below:

1. All teachers possess certain skills, which can contribute to the research task. The important thing is to clarify and define one's own particular set of skills. Some teachers, for example, are able to collect and interpret statistical data; others to record in retrospective accounts the key moments of a lesson. One teacher may know something about questionnaire design; another has a natural flair for interviewing. It is essential that teachers work from their own particular strengths when developing the research.
2. The situation within which teachers work imposes different kinds of constraints. Some schools, for example, are equipped with the most up-to-date audio-visual equipment; others cannot even boast a cassette tape-recorder. Some have spare rooms in which interviews could be carried out; others hardly have enough space to implement the existing timetable. Action research must be designed in such a way as to be easily implemented within the pattern of constraints existing within the school.
3. Any initial definition of the research problem will almost certainly be modified as the research proceeds. Nevertheless, this definition is important because it helps to set limits to the enquiry. If, for example, a teacher sets out to explore through action research the problem of how to start a lesson effectively, the research will tend to focus upon the first few minutes of the lesson. The question of what data to collect is very largely answered by a clear definition of the research problem (Cohen and Manion, 1994: 191).

However, there are opportunities in which action research can be employed as an effective research method for classroom practice improvement. In brief it is argued that action research is used for the improvement of specific knowledge in a specific setting for a specific purpose. For example, finding a set of suitable teaching strategies in a particular situation can be developed in specific context of similar ongoing settings. Cohen and Manion (1994: 194) introduced certain occasions when action research can be used, which are:

1. teaching methods- replacing a traditional method by a discovery method
2. learning strategies – adopting an integrated approach to learning in preference to a single-subject style of teaching and learning
3. evaluative procedures – improving one’s methods of continuous assessment
4. attitudes and values – encouraging more positive attitudes to work, or modifying pupils’ value systems with regard to some aspect of life
5. in-service development of teachers – improving teaching skills, developing new methods of learning, increasing powers of analysis, of heightening self-awareness
6. management and control – the gradual introduction of the techniques of behaviour modification
7. administration – increasing the efficiency of some aspect of the administrative side of school life.

Thus action research can be used in a wide range of classroom researches for new findings. The research is not limited to the teacher and students, but can be applied to different groups involved in the teaching/learning process such as non-teaching staff.

3.4 The Importance of the literature review

Research design and methodology are intended to clarify the objectives, justify, and show the procedure of the research. The research design and aims are relevant to the literature review. For example, the aim of this study was to find suitable teaching strategies for oral production, which has been a problem in Iranian university English language teaching. In most research there is a basic need to find out what has previously been researched and found on that particular topic by others before. This helps the researcher support or refute his/her own arguments.

However, in a literature review it is not possible to read all that has been written relevant to the area of interest, but often a reasonable amount of the most recent writing (for instance, a period of a decade or so) provides the researcher with sufficient information. In my case the literature review certainly helped me to organise and analyse my research with evidence as well as to devise and revise the research project throughout. This was due to the information found in the literature review showing how earlier writers have classified their findings, and explored the relationship between facts and explanations.

In this connection, Bell (1987: 22) pointed out that the literature review is important:

1. To find the most relevant published materials quickly.
2. To avoid getting bogged down.
3. To get into the habit of recording information derived from your reading so that it can be easily found and understood weeks, months or years later.

She has also argued that in any investigation, whether small- or large-scale, there is never enough time to do everything that has to be done and she neglected to include other factors such as funding or other facilities needed for the conduct of the research.

Apparently, it seems that Bell has omitted to mention how far back the literature should be read. In some cases it is difficult to follow the literature of the distant past which may be destroyed or is out of use. Nevertheless, a researcher can continue searching and researching throughout a lifetime if the facilities are provided. In other words, there is always something to be done for further achievement or development. The main purpose of the literature review is outlined by Dane (1990: 62) as:

1. The current research should be placed within a scientific perspective.

2. It can help you avoid duplication of effort.
3. It can be used to avoid or solve problems encountered in other research.

More on literature reviews is argued by Brine (1994: 2) who wrote:

The literature review comes at the beginning of a dissertation and provides the reader with sufficient understanding of the existing state of knowledge and main concepts of theories surrounding the topic of research. The literature review includes the focus of your study and the method of research.

In brief, the author believes that the literature review is a step of selection, categorisation and critique and I have presented mine in this way. In addition I have relied on an extensive literature review to provide information about a particular form of English language teaching in the UK context (see Chapter 4) which then can be connected to my empirical work drawn from the Iranian context so as to provide a basis for a comparative analysis of English language teaching.

3.5 The method used in this study: action research

An action research approach was used in Iran as it allowed for an in-depth study of a relatively small participant sample of teachers and students. A semi-structured interview was carried out to provide both groups (teachers and students) with an opportunity to reflect their views on English language teaching especially oral skills in Iranian universities. In addition to that, questionnaires and teaching sessions with analysis of the transcribed sections of these were the main research tools in this study. As a holistic approach of research Weiss (1968: 345) asserted that:

Qualitative data are apt to be superior to quantitative data in density of information, vividness, and clarity of meaning - characteristics more important in holistic work, than precision and reproducibility.

Action research is the most common approach used in examining the teaching/learning process. The literature review on action research indicated that most changes in education are produced by action research projects. A definition of action research given by Armstrong (1994:2) is that:

Action research is simply a form of self reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social institutions in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out. In education, action research has been employed in school-based curriculum development, professional development, and system planning and policy development.

However, action research is not used in large-scale research in which the necessary features can be employed. For example, in this research one class of year 3 and 4 were selected amongst a large number of teacher training universities of Iran from Tehran Teacher Training University as the sample of the study.

Armstrong pointed out that action research is also called 'a research spiral', because of its cyclical feature and to her action research is used for the aims of:

1. Action research is concerned with bringing about change. The data which it produces is seen as instrumental in bringing about this change rather than as an end product in its own right.
2. It focuses on an actual situation in which a need for change has been identified.
3. The area in which change is needed is specified.
4. The 'action' which is decided upon to bring about the required change is specified and planned.
5. Changes are monitored and evaluated.
6. In the light of this evaluation, the intervention strategy or 'action' is reassessed and modified, if appropriate.
7. Action research is often carried out by a group of people who work in the same setting.
8. Action research may be carried out collaboratively by 'outsiders' – researchers from outside agencies- working with 'insiders, (ibid.: 2).

From her point of view, action research is based on practical experimentation and observation in which outcomes are concerned with improving practice and theory. Moreover, she argues that in action research participants have more participation and make more contributions than in the traditional model. In other words, in action research more collaboration, inclusion and consultation exist which are important advantages of this approach.

In fact, in action research usually the researcher is a full participant who works in close relation with other members in the research project, as happened to me in this study. This close working environment fosters a climate, which produces a better outcome than the other type of research methods. However, there may exist a member, or members, who like to impose control over the rest of the participants.

Armstrong (1994: 3) has outlined action research procedures as follows:

The first stage is for those involved to identify or 'diagnose' the particular problem or issues which need addressing. This is followed by discussion and planning by team members with the purpose of drawing up an intervention plan which is designed to bring about the desired change. The planning stage must include discussion and agreement on:

- (a) the aims of the project,
- (b) the respective roles of those involved,
- (c) the way it will be carried through, and
- (d) the strategies which will be used to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.

As a result of the literature review it is reflected that action research can be carried out in four stages including:

Stage 1. Forming an idea, question, problem or hypothesis through literature review or personal experience that necessitates an urgent and effective study;

Stage 2. Making or formulating an outline draft as a blueprint for implementation with suitable required research instruments;

Stage 3. Executing/implementing and data collection;

Stage 3. Analysis, discussion, conclusion/s, implication/s and suggestions.

These are the stages that I have used in this research as well. In action research emphasis is on practice, problem solving and improvement. In so doing, action research makes its participants reconstruct and transform existing practice. Accordingly, the participants participate in all stages of the research from planning, implementing and observing to reflecting on practice. Such a practice would be theorised and implicated in the larger scale. Personal experience and practice play important roles in action research. This was the rationale for action research being employed in this study. The effectiveness of these two factors on action research is supported by Carr and Kemmis when they wrote:

Personal knowledge is at the heart of the action research process: personal knowledge is the source of the ideas and interpretative categories used by teachers to articulate their experience and bring it under self-conscious control through the action research process. And ... only practitioners have access to the intentions, values and commitments that inform an action as praxis (in Hammersley, 1993: 237).

Action research used in education can be adjusted and suitable to the situation in which it is used via a variety of perspectives. In this way the research on an event is approached from different angles as complementary research. This complementary view is called triangulation by some writers such as Quicke (1994:

11) who wrote:

Triangulation generally involves comparing data relating to the same phenomenon from a number of different viewpoints. This of course does not guarantee that the truth will come out, because all informants will have their own socially located perspective. But this form of cross checking is necessary to fill out the picture and provide a more complete and rounded description of processes.

In general, the interviews are interactions between the researcher and the interviewees. The exact words used by interviewees are important because they reflect the contextual constructs.

Other research tools can be questionnaires, articles, books, official reports, meetings and action research or other resources. Research in education normally commences with a literature review, to action research for data collection, analysing and discussing the data for conclusions, discussion and implications. Diverse ways to research provide the opportunity for a researcher to select the suitable way and appropriate tools to accomplish the research. At the same time this variety broadens the researcher's insight and perception in dealing with research issues.

In action research, interviews play an important role as a major tool. Interviews have many advantages including their adaptability and flexibility, as compared to the possibilities of the questionnaire. In interviews these are verbal and non-verbal clues that indicate that prompting can reveal more clarification, and responses can be developed and expanded at greater length. The clues may also produce more insight into motives and behaviour. Interview can be carried out in singly or groups by structured, unstructured or semi-structured techniques. Analysis can be codifiable into numerical form, or into fully or partially transcribed text. Problems with interviews include time-consuming, nature, with implications for resulting data analysis and for sample selection and hence resources, including funding.

As I have already mentioned this study was conducted on a small scale of participants (see Appendices C & D) due to factors of accessibility, expense and time to gather information from participants. However, this sampling met the

demands of the research, which can be used for specific situations. This type of sampling was supported by Cohen and Manion (1994) who divided sampling techniques into probability and non-probability (for more on this see 2.6).

Action research is preferably conducted by practitioners individually or in groups. In reality, action research usually focuses on research problems or issues about their individual enquiries, with a distinct background and data.

Consequently, I realised through the research methodology review and suggestions offered by my academic supervisor that the qualitative method has sufficient potential to provide me with in-depth analysis and description of the educational world. Qualitative method as mentioned earlier in this chapter covers a vast scope with a large variety of strategies. However, using more than one method in a research project can have several advantages, because the use of more than one method permits triangulation. This is why I have used action research, which is primarily qualitative with a little quantitative method. Of course, a qualitative method was the main method that allowed for an in-depth study of a relatively small participant sample of students and teachers. To achieve reasonable conclusions, the topic of the research required that the main focus be the students' speaking ability and use of English language during and after the teaching sessions as well as teachers' interviews. To do so, interviews, questionnaires, and teaching sessions were used as the means of collecting data required for this research.

3.6 Sampling procedure

Sampling is necessary when the entire population of the study is too large to investigate. Sample selection techniques depend on the factors of time, funding and accessibility to resources for the required data collection. The sample must be

defined for each research project conducted. Having chosen to employ a qualitative method, action research, for this study a sample of teacher-training university students in Iran seemed necessary. The sample as I mentioned earlier was selected from one university amongst many and one class out of many classes. In other words, the participants were representative of Iranian teacher-training universities students. I had difficulty in selecting participant students due to the year of study. In fact, my intention was to have a mixed class of different years for a more complete fulfilment of the research purposes. However, this was not possible because there was no mixed class available and I had to teach, observe and assess one class consisting of 32 year 3 and 4 students. Even arranging such a class had problems of timetable clashes. For interviews the head-teacher of the English group and 15 English language teachers from the same university were the participants as well 6 Iranian university graduates who were studying in UK universities.

3.7 Data collection methods

Proving the necessity of the research for solving the problem (the lack of oral production and English use by Iranian university students) I used various groups through a variety of instrument methods. This variety of data gathering techniques provided the researcher with different sources to cross-check and validate insights. Consequently, I was convinced that preliminary questionnaires and personal interviews could be sufficient methods to clarify the aims of the study. The reason for using a variety of methods was discussed above.

3.8 The field study's data analysis

Analysis of data examines and develops the hypotheses introduced in the study and it is based on the three kinds of data collected: English teachers' and students' questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observation. Two types of questionnaires are provided ; one for English students and the other one for English teachers teaching in Iranian universities at the present time. In both questionnaires a variety of sections which are useful and related to this study which would confirm the validity and reliability of the criteria for the study.

Questions such as :

- How can an approach rightly claim to be in use?
- Does the oral discourse really represent an alternative to and an improvement on previous English teaching?
- How far does the oral analysis cater for the development of the English skills?
- Have the English teachers been provided with the rules of English use in class so they can make reference in their teaching of English in the Iranian university?
- Does the oral discourse provide adequately for the Iranian English learners' needs in the material provided?
- How far do such activities supply opportunities for the use of English by Iranian students?
- To what extent will it be possible for the course designers to develop an oral discourse evaluation system to assess their students' desired oral skills?

To answer such questions and verify the criteria of the proposed approach I have converted them into the English students' and teachers' questionnaires and have posed the related queries in these questionnaires as part of the analysis .

In comparison with the other skills of language the speaking skill is not effective in helping the English students in an Iranian university to obtain a level of language

use. Iranian English language students prefer to be passive in English classes and most of them wish to use Farsi in English classes. Although English is used by teachers, it is rarely used by students themselves. Almost none of the ESP students, for example, use audio-visual aids in or out of class as a class activity.

3.9 My questionnaire design

Questionnaires as one of the research tools represent a useful method of collecting information from individuals which can be structured or unstructured. I found it more useful to distribute the questionnaires in person and collect them after completion, because in this way none are lost and no time spent waiting to get them back. Although the questionnaires had a few general questions, the respondents found them interesting. The questionnaires consisted of two kinds:

a) The Students' Questionnaire: an English class including 32 fourth year students filled out the English students' questionnaires. This selection was based on taking the English courses, because students normally take their general English in their first or second year before taking the English courses. Through general courses English students learn some basic knowledge of English. The students chosen for this purpose had already taken their ESP1 course. They were provided with a Farsi version of the questionnaire for their convenience and to avoid any misunderstanding of the questions.

b) The Teachers' Questionnaire: 15 English language teachers from the same university filled out the teachers' questionnaire.

3.10 The formulation of the students' questionnaire

Interviewing is one of the qualitative research means through which we collect a variety of data, for instance, in this study it is used to produce data for oral discourse analysis. Interviewing is asking questions, usually in a structured or semi-structured way, and getting responses to understand interviewees' opinions on what is asked. It can be used for understanding of an individual's or a group's perspectives in structured or unstructured forms. In structured interviews all respondents receive the same set of questions, asked in the same order, and there is little place for flexibility in the way questions are asked or answered. Interviewing can be face-to-face. The interviewer's behaviour and ethics affect respondents' answers and consequently influence the data collected. Thus the interviewer should make every effort to behave appropriately. That is, the interviewer should be frank, friendly, courteous, conversational, and unbiased to provide an easy-going environment. Besides that they should allow the respondents to express themselves freely and fully. The interviewer should approach the respondent/s in a friendly manner to assert their honest views. Different situations require different interviews which are suitable. A multi-method research such as qualitative uses interviewing as an effective mode to achieve a better result. In addition to interviewing, observation is a technique in which all of the senses are in full function. Observation is usually accomplished through specific instruments for scientific or pedagogical purposes.

This questionnaire was designed to identify students' perspectives as experienced learners. It was also used to find students' feelings and opinions towards the use of oral discourse in and out of English classes. The questions covered areas such as the student's personal and university status (such as gender and age group), marks for English courses, English teaching approaches, and the level of the necessity of

oral discourse in English courses. Due to the shortage of time, piloting was not carried out and I had to clarify a few questions for some students in person.

3.11 Analysis and interpretation of qualitative data

After data collection I reduced the volume of information gathered, identified significant patterns, and constructed a framework for communicating the essence of the data. This means that I left out some peripheral and redundant sections of the data which I thought were not of importance to my required needs based on my experience, skills, insights and capabilities and the analytical intellectual interpretation for the specific purpose of this special context.

First, I organised and then coded the data. After interpreting and analysing the collected categories of data the result shows the following sequenced effects: changes in knowledge; attitudes; behaviours and finally skill uses. The central purpose of oral discourse analysis here is to teach English learners how to speed up oral production/fluency through pedagogically designed settings. This proceeds from simplified forms of utterances to the most lengthy specific discussions in the related discipline.

3.12 Sampling procedure

Sampling is used when the whole population in the study is too large to access and control. Sample selection techniques depend upon factors of time, fund and feasibility to collect data. However, the sample must be defined for every piece of research conducted. Having chosen to employ a qualitative approach – action research – for this study a sample of Teacher-training University students in Tehran became necessary. This was due to too large a population of teacher-training students in Iran which meant I had to limit the study to a sample of

student participants. The participants were representative of all the teacher-training university students in Iran. I had difficulty in selecting a sample of students because my intention was to have a mixed class of different years to show a real picture of students from Y-1 to Y-3. This could not happen because there was no such mix of class available. Consequently, the sample was chosen as a class consisting of 32 students of Y-4 and Y-3. These students became the participants for both teaching sessions as well as filling out students' questionnaires. For interviews I interviewed 15 English language teachers from the same university and 6 graduates from Iranian universities who were studying in UK universities.

As we have seen in this chapter there are great options to researchers to choose their methods according to their needs that meet the requirements of the research demands.

3.13 Summative reflection

Unfortunately, I was not advised to examine research methodologies at the beginning of my studies. It was afterwards required by my current new academic supervisor that I critically study the methodology of educational research, which is indeed necessary for a researcher, in particular if the researcher is a novice. This ignorance caused me a great deal of problems when piloting my research.

In this study I have introduced the problem which I faced during my teaching at Iranian universities. I have attempted to find the solution by utilising a suitable descriptive and explanatory action research. During this process I did a critical relevant review of the literature and considered suitable research tools including

collecting, transcribing, coding and comparing/contrasting data through the questionnaires, interviews, the teaching sessions, observation and the analyses.

In such methods an interpretative and naturalistic approach deals with the subject matter, which provides the researcher with an understanding, insight, observations and interpretation. This type of information collection, triangulation, helped the researcher research the same subject via more than one viewpoint. It allows the researcher to be more confident of the outcome and find new ways of doing research projects. In other words, triangulation provides the researcher with an opportunity to access an enriched explanation of the research problem. Another aspect is that the analysis benefits from the perception drawn from personal experience. It is indeed through triangulation that in addition to scaling, reliability and convergent validation, we can also achieve a more complete, whole, and contextual viewpoint of the topic under research.

However, there is no fixed rule of use of method, as a method is used depending on the specifications and context of the research under study. Currently most common usage of qualitative research especially in the form of action research as opposed to quantitative approaches has brought it sharply into focus as more appropriate for the collection and analysis of data in educational fields. Research methodology studies diverse methods used in conducting research. The opportunity to have access to different methods helps researchers to choose the most suitable one to facilitate carrying out the research. However, research methods are flexible to some extent to fit the situation and context. Research studies are accomplished through research means or instruments. These instruments vary and can be employed depending upon the availability to the researcher and the context in which the research is conducted. Research studies

are mostly either qualitative or quantitative or a combination of these. In educational studies qualitative research is used more than the others for its features and specifications. However, there are a sound variety of research methods amongst which action research is often the most used in educational studies.

This study aims to explore perspectives and strategies to develop insights into the Iranian university English teaching classroom. This is carried out through action research in which the participants are the students and the teacher as researcher. This process is to introduce awareness, improvement and change in practice, setting and system. Research in general brings modifications, adjustments, directional changes, and redefinitions to the topic under study. All these changes help either to refine or develop knowledge. In fact, most of today's achievements in educational research are the outcome of research work fulfilled through different methods.

Nevertheless, an examination of the specific types of approach and methods available, while clarifying the advantages and disadvantages for current research, reveal not so clear-cut and simplistic a division. While each has its recommendations, neither should now be considered as necessarily discrete, and some combination of the two may often be preferable, as such an approach can better inform the research being undertaken.

The system of analysis and presentation in different methods of research is different. For example, in descriptive analysis no special statistical analysis is required to analyse or understand the data or their presentation. Charts, tables and diagrams or the like can be used to discuss the results.

Of course, the findings of research can be applied in the teaching/learning process when teachers are able to adjust their attitudes and behaviour according to those findings. Therefore, not only can action research be flexible enough to fit the situation and context which is considered feature of the research, but also the researcher themselves should have this flexibility to change and adjust. In this case the findings of research will be applicable and function effectively.

Description and interpretation often seem quite familiar to learners; they must make sense. Thus, although pedagogical reality is situationally and artfully constructed, this is performed in relation to concrete interpretative parameters. Coherent order in teaching ELT students produced by a three-stage process - opening; continuing; and closing. The combined concern for interpretative meanings and artful performance in teaching a lesson usually offer a perspective that has been applied to a wide variety of topics. The linkage between the interpretation and the subject matter is the specific concern of the discipline under study, context, and ongoing oral discourse.

Observational data from a class teaching are the main sources of information which acquaint the reader or user with the research setting, and the events happening during the research. Observational data can be collected through specific instruments such as recording or taking notes. These data are carefully transcribed and then described in detail clearly and accurately. All this process throughout this action research is intended to examine and elaborately provide answers to the thesis hypotheses, or questions. The central objective of this study is to remedy the difficulty of English learners' speaking skills, and fluency in particular, which is supported by writers such as Stubb (1983) and Bhaita (1993).

To this end, I have worked on a pedagogical problem to contribute knowledge that will help English learners and teachers to find out the nature of the problem so that they can control their learning and teaching environment and tailor it to the strategies introduced and apply the results to real-life situations. In this study the unit of study is an English class in Iran. This means that the main concern of data collection is focused on what is happening to the English class in an English learning setting and how the learners are affected in this setting. English learners' variation and change in learning behaviour in Iran would be the primary qualitative research outcome which then may be generalisable to other English classes.

In particular, research methods included variations to these approaches, such as adaptations and elaboration to both theoretical and empirical themes on each interpretative resource of recognisable rules, vocabularies, and specific orientations and frameworks for assigning meaning to subjects and materials under consideration in the classroom context. This context of interpretation reflexively supplied meaning to interactions and subjects as the meanings of the students' needs.

The context of learning/teaching is specifically rooted in the Iranian social, cultural, economic and political situation and demands a suitable research approach. Any researcher conducting research applicable to this specific situation needs to be familiar with the context, otherwise the result may not be applicable and useful in that society. The little use of English inside Iran by Iranian university graduates needs to be taken into consideration before introducing an approach for English language teaching research.

In brief, this chapter has examined educational research methodology in general and the methodology I have employed in this study, and described the processes of data collection and analysis. The employed methods through diverse research techniques provided rich information for understanding the issues concerned. The analysis, discussion and conclusion of the research will be included in the last two chapters (see Chapters 9 & 10). In the previous chapter we have seen how teacher training in the UK can usefully be applied in the Iranian teacher training system, and in this chapter it became clear how appropriate research techniques can be used to achieve the desired results. Now I need to go on to study English language teaching in the English speaking system as well as in Iran for a comparative study and to extract positive points applicable to the Iranian system in the next chapter.