A Close Look at Saudi EFL Teachers Preparation in Language Testing

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Abstract:

It is the contention of this researcher and the hypothesis of this study that EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia are in great need for further training on sound practices of language testing and performance appraisal of learners of English. Although most Saudi EFL teachers have received reasonably well structured pre-service training in EFL teaching, many of them have had only scant opportunities to train on language testing practices. This problem is intensified when we know that many Saudi EFL teachers who are serving in schools around the country are graduates of faculties of arts and had never had any training in psychology, teaching methodology or educational measurement of any kind.

This paper has set out to investigate the position and scope of language testing in the pre-service/in-service training and preparation programs of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia as shown by training schemes delivered to such teachers. The paper assessed the scope and nature of the in-service training needs of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia in language testing as perceived by the teachers themselves.

Introduction:

Language testing is generally very closely related to language teaching. As a matter of fact, testing is often viewed as essentially a constructive and practical teaching strategy. Most of those who are involved in language testing are also language teachers. Hence, teaching and testing often overlap (Robinett, 1978).

Teachers, learners and administrators alike realize that testing has important implications on their goals and strategies. In this respect, tests can confirm progress that has been made and help redirect future efforts.

The influence that tests have on teaching and learning has been referred to in the literature as backwash (Hughes, 1993). Test backwash can have an

impact on learners in several directions, ranging from their immediate grades on an exam to their long term psychological states and future life (Baily, 1990).

In any learning situation, learners are apt to feel greatly disappointed if they feel that they are not gaining anything from their learning experience. Tests usually provide learners with a sense of accomplishment that is necessary to create positive attitudes towards the teacher, the classroom, and the learning experience in general. Well constructed tests help students master the language they are learning as they benefit twice, first when they prepare for the test and pull together the work of several class periods, Secondly when correct performance is confirmed and errors are identified and corrected (Valette, 1977).

Furthermore, decisions that will be made about students on the basis of high stakes tests in particular will affect students directly. Decisions such as acceptance or non-acceptance into an instructional program, advancement or non-advancement from one course into another are normally based on test scores and are likely to generate a direct backwash effect (Backman and Palmer, 1996).

Like learners, language teachers are directly influenced by the language test, they construct, adopt or undertake to administer, score and interpret. Teachers involved in second language instructions are generally expected to be accountable for the results of their instructions. They use tests to define their course objectives and stimulate student progress. They also use tests to evaluate class achievement and determine the effectiveness of their teaching and the accuracy of their material selection.

However, tests must be appropriate in themselves to be able to exert such influence. Many language teachers carry a deep mistrust of tests as they too often fail to measure accurately whatever it is they are intended to measure. Teachers know all too well that students' true abilities are not always reflected in the test scores they obtain. The sources of inaccuracy are often identified as, first, lack of validity or failure to use appropriate test content and techniques, as when a test of reading comprehension prepared for native speakers of English is given to adult non-native speakers of

English just because the two groups are thought to have similar degree of proficiency in English. Such test is said to be invalid for the intended purpose (Hughes, 1993).

The second source of inaccuracy is lack of reliability or consistency of assessment as when a test fails to provide equivalent scores on repeated administrations of the same test or its equivalent.

To a certain extent, these sources of inaccuracy of measurement are inevitable. Language abilities cannot be measured with the same level of accuracy as in measurement in physical sciences. But we can expect greater accuracy than is frequently achieved (Hughes, 1993).

Several recommendations have been stipulated in the literature to help teachers achieve better backwash effects and accountability in the teaching-learning process. Brindley (1997), for example, recommends that language teachers attend formal degree courses, enroll in in-service workshops and undertake on-the-job experiences of developing and using assessment tools. Also, teachers need to engage in several moderation sessions that embrace other teachers and colleagues to discuss issues relating to the assessment of language knowledge. Finally, teachers should engage in collaborative test development projects in which they share the processes of developing test specifications, item writing and trailing in a way that ensures the consistency of the testing content and techniques with the teaching practices adopted and therefore increases the likelihood that the tests will have beneficial backwash on teaching.

The Problem:
It is the contention of this researcher and the hypothesis of this study that EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia are in great need for further training on sound practices of language testing and performance appraisal of learners of English. Although most of those teachers have received reasonably well structured pre-service training in teaching, many of them have had only scant opportunities to train on language testing practices. Oftentimes EFL teacher preparation programs in the country offer a course on language testing. However, personal observation has revealed that such a course is handled more theoritically. Student receive classroom instruction on principles of language testing and leave the course full of information about testing, yet when thrown in the classroom they find themselves unable to

function as good test makers and performance evaluators. This problem is intensified when we know that many Saudi teachers who serve as English teachers in intermediate and secondary schools are graduates of faculties of arts and had never had any training in psychology, teaching methodology, or educational measurement of any kind.

Objectives:
The objectives of this paper are two fold:
1. To investigate the position and scope of language testing in the pre-service/in-service training and preparation programs of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia as reported and perceived by the teachers who have enrolled in such programs.
2. To assess the scope and nature of the in-service training needs of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia in language testing as perceived by the teachers themselves.

Research questions:
Specifically, this paper will set out to answer the following questions:

1. Do EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia find competence in language testing important?

2. Have EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia received pre-service and/or in-service training in language testing?

3. What areas and/or skills were covered in training in language testing delivered to EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia?

4. What professionals were involved in training in language testing delivered to EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia?

5. What system of delivery was used in language testing training delivered to EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia?

6. How did EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia find the training they received in language testing?

7. Do EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia find themselves competent in language testing?

8. Do EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia feel the need for training in language testing?

9. What areas and/or skills in language testing do EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia feel the need to train in?

10. What professionals do EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia find most qualified to train them in language testing?

11. What system of delivery do EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia find most effective for the required training in language testing?

The foregoing questions can be grouped under two major areas of investigation: 1. The nature of the previous language testing training programs (questions 1-7), and 2 . The teachers needs in subsequent training and preparation programs (questions 8-11)

Methodology:
A three-section questionnaire was developed for the purpose of collecting the required data. The questionnaire comprised 63 items. The first two sections were to be completed by all participants. Section one aimed at eliciting some personal and demographic data about the participants. Section two investigated several areas such as the importance of language testing, teachers need for training in language testing, areas and/or skills needed, and information on the trainers and the system of delivery. The third section was to be completed by participants who had previous training in language testing. It covered information on the number, date and duration of the courses offered, the qualifications of the trainers, the system of delivery, and the topics included.

Sixty EFL teachers responded to the questionnaire. All teachers came from intermediate and secondary schools of the Al-Hasa, Dammam, and Riyadh school districts in Saudi Arabia. All respondents were male teachers. As shown in table 1, 54 teachers or 90% hold BA degrees in English, 4 teachers or 6.7% hold post-secondary diplomas in teaching English, and only two teachers or 3.3% hold a post graduate diploma in teaching English.

Table (1)
Distribution of respondents by degree

Degree	Number	%
Bachelor	54	90.0
Post-secondary Diploma	4	6.7
Postgraduate Diploma	2	3.3
Total	60	100.0

Data Analysis and Discussion:
I. The nature of the previous language testing training programs:
Research question No. 1:   Do EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia find competence in language testing important?

Table (2)
Importance of competence in language testing

Rate of importance	Number	%
Extremely important	42	71.2
Important	14	23.7
Of low importance	3	5.1
Total	59	100

Table two shows that the majority of teachers involved in the study (42 or 71.2%) find competence in language testing extremely important. Fourteen teachers or 23.7% find it important, and three teachers or 5.1% give it low importance rating. One teacher only failed to respond to this item. Obviously, this result indicates that the large majority of respondents (56 teachers or 94.9%) are supportive of the high importance of ability in language testing and find it a fundamental aspect of their competence as English teachers.

The important value of this and other assessments given by respondents in this study lies on the fact that those teachers are well experienced practitioners who spent a considerable amount of time ranging between 3 to 34 years in teaching English as a foreign language. Their opinions, therefore, should be of paramount importance to Educational planners and administrators in the country.

Research question No. 2: Have EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia received pre-service and/or in-service training in language testing?

Table (3)

Distribution of respondents by previous training in language testing

Type of Respondent	Number	%
With training	37	61.7
Without training	23	38.3
Total	60	100

When asked if they have had previous training (pre-service or in-service) in language testing, only 37 teachers or 61.7% gave positive responses. Twenty three teachers or 38.3% indicated that they have not received any kind of training in language testing. As shown in the table above those who received previous training in language testing constitute a majority among the respondents. However, the percentage of those who have not been trained, almost 40%, is considerably high and is indicative of a significant failure in the preparation of those teachers to meet the requirements of successful foreign language teachers. It also signifies a considerable suffering that those teachers have experienced and are probably experiencing in this important aspect of language assessment and evaluation.

The distribution of those who were trained in language testing is shown in Table 4 which shows that of the total group who were trained, 25 teachers or 67.6% received one training course, 6 teachers or 16.2% received two training courses and 6 teachers or 16.2% had more than two training courses.

Table (4)
Distribution of teachers per training courses

No. of training courses	Number	%
One course	25	67.6
Two courses	6	16.2
More than two courses	6	16.2
Total	37	100

As Table 4 shows, chances to train in language testing were very minimal for the majority of teachers (67.6%) who were provided with such training before.

When asked when these chances to train in language testing were offered, Table 5, 14 teachers or 37.8% said they received their training while they were studying in college, i.e. as part of their pre-service preparation as English language teachers. However, 20 teachers or 54.1% reported having that training on the job. The rest of the teachers (3 or 8.1%) said they were trained before and after they joined teaching in schools, i.e. pre-service and in-service.

Table (5)
Distribution of respondents by date of training

Date of training	Number	%
Pre-service	14	37.8
In-service	20	54.1
Both pre-service and in-service	3	8.1
Total	37	100

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Several implications can be drawn from this last finding. Most importantly, however, more than half of those who were offered some training in language testing (54.1%) received their training after they have graduated from school. This may mean that although they have received their diplomas with a major of English, they may not have been necessarily prepared to be language teachers. Hence, language testing was not a component of the course plan of their preparation program. This is very likely since the Saudi Ministry of Education has long been employing graduates of arts and sometimes science colleges in addition to graduates of colleges of education to teach English in its schools around the Kingdom. What is more worrying, however, is that such teachers comprise a majority (54.1%) as compared to those who had college training in language testing (45.9%). And since this pattern of employment is still valid, it can be safely said, that more than half of the population of the newly employed EFL teachers in the Kingdom are unqualified in the principles and techniques of language learning assessment and evaluation.

The intensiveness of the training in language testing received was reflected by the duration of the courses offered (Table 6).

Table (6)
Duration of training courses in language testing

Duration of the course	Number	%
One day	3	8.2
One week	6	16.2
One month	12	32.4
One semester	11	29.7
Other	5	13.5
Total	37	100

As Table 6 shows, the majority of teachers (21 or 56.8%) reported participating in training courses that lasted for one to thirty days, while only 11 teachers or 29.7% had a full semester program. This, again attests to the limited exposure to training in language testing experienced by the majority

of the teachers. This assumption is strongly supported by the fact that 24.3% of this majority had a training period that ranged between 1 to 7 days only.

Research question No. 3 : What areas and/or skills were covered in training in language testing delivered to EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia?

Table (7)
Areas/skills covered in delivered training

Area / Skill	Number	% *
Stages of development of language testing	5	3.9
Characteristics of a good language test	13	10.1
Traditional techniques in language testing	13	10.1
Modern techniques in language testing	17	13.2
Writing objective test items	21	16.3
Writing subjective test items	9	7.0
Writing language achievement test	13	10.1
Writing language proficiency test	4	3.1
Writing aptitude test	5	3.9
Language test scoring techniques	12	9.3
Managing language test period	6	4.7
Standardizing language test	9	7.0
Other (specify)	2	1.6
Total	129	100

* Percentages calculated against total number of responses.

Table 7 depicts areas of emphasis in the training schemes in language testing already delivered to EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. As shown in the table, eight areas received the highest emphasis. These are : Writing

objective tests (21 responses or 16.3%), modern techniques in language testing (17 responses or 13.2%), characteristics of a good language test (13 responses or 10.1%), traditional techniques in language testing (13 responses or 10.1%), preparing achievement tests (13 responses or 10.1%), scoring techniques (12 responses or 9.3%), writing subjective tests (9 responses or 7%), and standardization of language tests (9 responses or 7%).

It is evident from the distribution above that the area of writing objective tests such as multiple choice, fill in the blank and short answer tests received the heaviest weight in these training schemes, thus indicating a trend towards improving the ability to prepare these highly structured and quickly scorable techniques among teachers. It also reflects the high importance given by EFL teacher trainers and probably teachers themselves to these testing techniques.

Another area which received considerable attention in these training schemes is preparation of classroom achievement test. This finding should not be surprising as such training was aimed for classroom teachers of English and thus was tailored to suit their immediate and most important needs as per the nature of their actual job responsibilities in the school. This conclusion is supported by the low importance given to training in the preparation of general proficiency test and language aptitude test (4 responses or 3.1%, and 5 responses or 3.9%, respectively).

In addition to writing objective tests, two areas received equal weight and probably equal importance in the training schemes.   These are characteristics of a good test and traditional techniques of testing. The important implication of this finding lies in the fact that language testing training schemes in the country are principled on fundamental aspects of language testing such as features of a good test, and their coverage is inclusive of traditional as well as modern techniques of language testing.

Not surprisingly, scoring, an important aspect of language testing (Harris, 1969; Valette, 1978; Madson, 1983; Hughes, 1993), was given a high value in the training schemes, followed by the writing of subjective tests, and standardization of language tests which received equal weight (9 responses or 7%). It is worth noting here that the lower emphasis given to writing subjective tests, though supportive of the tendency to master and

probably propagate objective techniques as indicated above, is not in keeping with recent trends in educational assessment which call for more employment of techniques that provide evidence of actual performance of learners such as essay writing and free discussion and conversation techniques (Hughes, 1993; McNamara, 2000).

As for language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing, information revealed by Table 8 below shows that these four skills in addition to structure and vocabulary were provided for in the training schemes offered to EFL teachers.

Table (8)
Language skills and components covered in the training schemes

Language skill	Number	% *
Listening	15	16.9
Speaking	11	12.4
Reading	18	20.2
Writing	15	16.9
Structure	14	15.7
Vocabulary	12	13.5
Other	4	4.5
Total	89	100

* Percentages calculated against total number of responses.

The figures depicted in Table 8 provide evidence that the four language skills and two components mentioned above received reasonably high attention in the content of the training delivered. However, testing reading seems to have had the highest attention (18 responses or 20.2%) followed by testing listening and testing writing which both seem to have received the same level of interest in the schemes (15 responses or 16.9%). Testing structure which almost had the same level of interest as testing listening and testing writing (14 responses or 15.7%), seems to have been considered a bit

more important than testing vocabulary (12 responses or 13.5%) and also testing speaking which seems to have been the least presented and/or practiced skill in the training schemes (11 responses or 12.4%).

These findings as displayed by Table 8 above seem to reflect a normal coverage balanced against typical situations in foreign language teaching and learning contexts (Harris, 1969).

Research question No. 4 : What professionals were involved in training in language testing delivered to EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia.

Table (9)
Specialties of trainers in delivered programs

Trainers	**Number**	**%**
Highly qualified English language Teaching Specialists	20	54.1
Highly qualified language Testing Specialists	14	37.8
Educational Testing and Measurement Specialists	-	-
English Language Supervisors	3	8.1
Total	37	100

As the table shows, the majority of respondents (20 or 54.1%) were trained by highly qualified English language teaching professionals. Fourteen respondents or 37.8% have been trained by specialists in language testing. The rest of the respondents (3 or 8.1%) were trained by English language supervisors.

Among other important factors, successful educational or training programs are highly dependent on the selection of appropriate personnel to deliver the required instruction or training. Data obtained from table 9 above indicates that such factor has seemingly been accounted for in the schemes of training in language testing delivered to EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. A large majority of the responses (99.9%) assert that those schemes were handled by qualified trainers in English language teaching in general and language testing in particular. Only on a few occasions (8.1%) have their been cases were English language supervisors have been sought for help in those efforts. This is even more significant when we know that

most of these training opportunities have been offered while teachers were on the job (Table 5) thus showing the strong desire by the responsible authorities to recruit effective trainers to fulfill the needs of different teachers with different backgrounds and abilities in language testing.

Research question No. 5 : What system of delivery was used in language testing training delivered to EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia?

Table (10)
System of delivery used in training programs

System of delivery	Number	%
Lectures	23	65.7
Demonstrations, examples and applications	12	34.3
Total	35	100

A total of 35 teachers responded to this question noting that in the majority of the cases (65.7%), training in language testing was delivered through classroom lectures, while in only 34.3% of the cases demonstrations, examples and applications were used. This discloses a serious weakness. Most of the training schemes were presented in the classroom in the form of lectures. Therefore, in most of the cases trainers spent most of their time talking to teachers about language testing instead of availing them of hands on experiences in testing language using live demonstrations, authentic examples, and practical applications.   The significance of this is even more evident when we remember that most of the training was offered on the job, i.e. at a time when teachers were serving in schools and in need of practical answers and working solutions to their most pressing question and problems in this most important aspect of their professional capacity. This is even more so for teachers with little or no previous preparation in language testing.

Research question No. 6 : How did EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia find the training they received in language testing?

Table (11)
Rating of the suitability of delivered training programs

Rating	Number	%
Very suitable	4	10.8
Suitable	25	67.6
Not suitable	4	10.8
Extremely not suitable	4	10.8
Total	37	100

Twenty nine teachers of those who had previous training in language testing (78.4%) held favourable opinions about the content of the training they received. Their answers ranged between suitable (67.6%) to very suitable (10.8%).   Only 8 teachers (21.6%) found that content either unsuitable or extremely unsuitable. It is presumed here that both teams have weighed the content that was presented against their previous experiences, expectations, and immediate needs, hence, their evaluation varied. Most notably, however, inspite of the fact that teachers were not consulted in determining the course content they received (Table 12), results mark a general overall satisfaction with the validity of such content, thus confirming to a certain extent the benefit(s) teachers earned from such training.

Table（12）
Teacher consultation on training content.

Teacher opinion of content	Number	%
Sought	4	13.3
No sought	26	86.7
Total	30	100

Table (13)
Degree of benefit teachers gainnod from training

Benefit from Training	Number	%
Much benefit	10	27
Some benefit	24	64.9
No benefit	3	8.1
Total	37	100

To confirm this last conclusion about the benefit gained from the delivered training, a direct question was posed to teachers. As Table 13 displays the response was encouraging. A high percentage of the teachers trained in language testing confirmed earning some benefit, minimally and/or maximally, from their training. Again, responses to this last question must have been determined against teachers previous experiences, expectations, and immediate needs.

Research question No. 7: Do EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia find themselves competent in language testing?

Table (14)
Teacher views of their competence in language testing

Teacher competence in language testing	Number	%
Yes	32	53.3
No	2	3.3
Not sure	26	43.4
Total	60	100

When asked the important question of whether or not they found themselves competent in language testing, more than half of the respondents (32 or 53.3%) gave a definite "Yes" answer, while two teachers only (3.3%) gave a strong "No" answer. On the other hand a large number of the respondents (26 or 43.4%) were uncertain about their ability in language testing, thus perhaps signifying their need for professional guidance and

expert assurance of the accuracy, effectiveness, and overall quality of the efforts they make to assess students' learning. The two extremes of total confidence and blunt uncertainty as stated by teachers' answers may very much suggest the need for more directed efforts to diagnose the real needs of teachers and prescribe the most appropriate action to fulfill them, an objective this study is trying to reach.

II. The teachers' needs in subsequent training and preparation programs:
Research question No. 8 : Do EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia feel the need for training in language testing.

Table (15)
Teachers perceptions of thier need for training

Perception of need	Number	%
Yes	37	69.8
No	9	17
Not sure	7	13.2
Total	53	100

   Of those who responded to this question (53 teachers), a great majority (37 teachers or 69.8%) said they still feel the need for training in language testing. The rest of the respondents either gave a negative response (9 teachers or 17%) or were uncertain about their need (7 teachers or 13.2%).

   Besides confirming the general hypothesis of this study about the need of the great majority of EFL teachers in the country for further training in language testing and evaluation, this result surely attests to the need for immediate attention by Saudi educational authorities in general and EFL teacher trainers in particular to this loud call for more measures to help teachers improve their ability to assess language learning and equip them with the necessary, recent, and most effective techniques to do that.

   Research question No. 9 : What areas and/or skills in language testing do EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia feel the need to train in?

Table (16)
Areas and skills in language testing teachers feel the need to train in.

Area / Skill	Number	% *
Stages of development of language testing	15	6.3
Characteristics of a good language test	24	10.1
Traditional techniques in language testing	4	1.7
Modern techniques in language testing	48	20.2
Writing objective test items	18	7.6
Writing subjective test items	10	4.2
Writing language achievement test	24	10.1
Writing language proficiency test	13	5.5
Writing aptitude test	25	10.5
Language test scoring techniques	17	7.1
Managing language test period	12	5.0
Standardizing language test	25	10.5
Other specify	3	1.3
Total	238	100

* Percentages were calculated against total number of responses.

Table 16 presents the responses of 56 teachers to the above question. Obviously an overwhelming majority of the respondents (48 or 85.7%) expressed their desire to train in modern techniques in language testing. Not only does this finding confirm the need of EFL teachers to keep on training in language testing but it also asserts their eagerness to keep abreast of and be familiar with recent developments in the field.

Unmistakably, this and other important findings in Table 16 give evidence of the professional maturity of the teachers as well as their conviction that serious changes must take place in the way EFL teaching and evaluation is handled in schools. Surely teachers have not failed to assert in this respect that their main interest is in developing skill in classroom related achievement tests (24 responses or 10.1%). However, not

only did they show equal interest in language aptitude tests (24 responses or 10.1%), thus signifying their value in identifying and meeting learner interest and capability (Valette, 1977), a factor not necessarily catered for in public schools in Saudi Arabia, but they also gave high importance to standardization of language testing (25 responses or 10.5%) which should be regarded as a sign of teachers' desire for more precision and assurance of quality in language assessment measures.

Further evidence of the teachers' consciousness and systematic selectiveness and ordering of training priorities is reflected in Table 17 below.

Table (17)
Skills teachers feel the need to train in testing.

Skill	Number	% *
Listening	36	30.8
Speaking	34	29.1
Reading	12	10.3
Writing	12	10.3
Structure	9	9.4
Vocabulary	11	2.6
Total	114	100

* Percentages calculated against total number of responses.

As the table shows, teachers have given first and almost equal priority to two skills, namely; listening and speaking, 36 responses or 30.8%, and 34 responses or 29.1% respectively. Reading and writing were given equal but lower rating (12 responses or 10.3%) and came second in the teachers' priority list of skills to train in testing. Grammar and vocabulary received lower priority rating with vocabulary rating a little higher than grammar (9 responses or 15.8% and 11 responses or 19.3%, respectively).

Close observation of English language teaching and learning in Saudi schools reveals that listening and speaking do not receive enough attention in the classroom and thus student command of these aural/oral

communication skills is in general less than satisfactory. Though they can easily demonstrate reasonable command of reading and writing skills, learners often fail to express themselves orally and face serious comprehension problems of oral messages. Teachers have therefore stressed the need to promote assessment of these important skills and bring them closer to the center of attention in the language classroom.

Research question No. 10 : What professionals do EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia find most qualified to train them in language testing?

Table（18）
Professionals most qualified to deliver the required training.

Trainers	**Number**	**% ***
Highly qualified English Language teaching specialists	18	23.7
Highly qualified language testing specialists	37	48.7
Educational testing and measurement specialists	14	18.4
English language supervisors	3	3.9
Other experienced English teachers	4	5.3
Total	76	100

* Percentages calculated against total number of responses.

Responses to this question showed high preference for language testing specialists (37 responses or 48.7%) as most qualified personnel to deliver the required training, followed by highly qualified specialists in EFL teaching (18, responses or 23.7%). Specialist in educational testing and measurement came next in this rating (14 responses or 18.4%), while very low values were given to other types of specialist in this respect.

The above result, as displayed in Table 18, clearly reflects a strong desire among concerned teachers to recruite specialist best suited for the job to fulfill their needs in the most effective and meaningful way. In contrast to the situation in the previously delivered schemes (Table 9), teachers here were careful to note that specialists in language testing should come first. They have also shown a mistrust of English language supervisors as able

professionals to do the job.   Their rating came last even to fellow experienced English teachers.

Research question No. 11 : What system of delivery do EFL teachers find most suited for the required training in language testing?

Table (19)
Delivery system preferred for required training

System of Delivery	Number	%
Lectures	4	6.8
Presentations, examples, and applications	53	89.8
Discussions	2	3.4
Total	59	100

Among the 59 teachers who responded to this question, a great majority (53 teachers or 89.8%) expressed their preference for training through demonstrations, examples and applications; in other words they thought training through hands-on and practical experiences was more effective than overwhelming them with information about testing through lectures and formal speeches which was chosen by only 4 teachers or 6.8%. Furthermore, two teachers or 3.4% were careful to include discussion as an important mechanism to be accounted for in the desired presentation methodology.

Conclusion:
This study has presented a detailed analysis and description of the current situation and status of the preparation of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia in the field of language testing. Several important conclusions can be drawn from the preceding discussion, chief among them is the fact that there is still much to be done to prepare Saudi EFL teachers and qualify them to be good test developers who are able to generate positive test backwash and bring about meaningful language learning experiences in their classrooms and equip them with the necessary tools to bear their responsibilities as accountable professionals towards different stakeholders

involved in the testing process including learners, teachers, school administrators, community agencies, and public officials.

EFL teachers in this study have shown a high degree of awareness in assessing their needs and determining their language testing priorities and the ways to fulfill them. Most importantly, they have stressed their desire to be well informed about and experienced in recent and most effective language learning assessment and evaluation techniques and practices which should be presented to them in the most practical and meaningful contexts using the most qualified professionals to do the job.

The numerous and responsible opinions stated by EFL teachers in this study should be highly regarded by educational planners, administrators, trainers and other concerned authorities in the country as they reflect true concerns and authentic needs that should be considered as precise, genuine, and meaningful guidelines for any well structured and rightly targeted preparation or training effort of pre-service or in-service EFL teachers in the most important aspect of language testing.

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نـظرة عن قرب إلى تدريب معلمي الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية السعوديين في التقويم اللغوي

عبدالله بن إبراهيم السعادات

قسم اللغات الأجنبية – كلية التربية – جامعة الملك فيصل

الأحساء -   المملكة العربية السعودية

الملخص:

يفترض الباحث في هذه الدراسة أن معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية السعوديين بحاجة ماسة إلى تدريب أكثر في الممارسات السليمة في التقويم اللغوي وفحص الأداء لدى متعلمي تلك اللغة . فعلى الرغم من أن معظم هؤلاء المعلمين تلقوا تدريباً مناسباً على طرائق التدريس في مرحلة ما قبل الخدمة ، فأن كثيراً منهم لم يحصلوا إلا على فرص ضئيلة فقط للتدرب على مهارات التقويم اللغوي . ويزداد حجم هذه المعضلة عندما نعلم أن كثيراً من معلمي الإنجليزية في البلاد هم من خريجي كليات الآداب ولم يسبق لهم أن درسوا أي شيء عن علم النفس أو طرق التدريس أو التقويم التربوي .

وقد عمدت هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد مكانة التقويم اللغوي في برامج أعداد معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية السعوديين في فترة ما قبل الخدمة وأثنائها كما تبينه الجهود المبذولة لتدريب هؤلاء المعلمين في هذا الميدان .

كما قومت الدراسة مدى وطبيعة الحاجة لدى هؤلاء المعلمين في مجال التقويم اللغوي وفقاً لتقديرهم هم لتلك الحاجة.