

Using the CEFR for Improving Pre-service Teachers' Communicative Competence

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Abstract

The study investigated the effects of implementing "the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages" "CEFR" in the English courses in a teacher education program at one Iraqi public university. An intensive 288-hour CEFR-informed program focusing on communicative language competence was designed. The data collection consists of two phases: pre-CEFR and post-CEFR implementations. A total of 150 fourth-year pre-service teachers participated in the study. The questionnaire was the only instrument used for the data collection, which consisted of two parts: the CEFR Self-Assessment Grid and Bachman and Palmer's linguistic test. The CEFR Self-Assessment Grid was used to assess participants' self-assessments of their English proficiency. In addition, the linguistic test examines 13 criteria of language knowledge: language vocabulary, syntax, phonology/graphology (grammatical knowledge), knowledge of cohesion, rhetorical organization, conversational organization (textual knowledge), ideational knowledge, manipulative knowledge, instrumental knowledge, imaginative knowledge (functional knowledge), knowledge of dialects, registers, and idiomatic expressions. It was hypothesized that there would be an improvement in pre-service teachers' performance after the implementation of the CEFR as a teaching framework. All the participants took the pre-CEFR and post-CEFR tests to examine their English language competency. The questionnaire was used in pre- and post-tests. The pre-CEFR test results showed that a significant percentage of the participants did not have adequate proficiency to be an English teacher (CEFR A2 and B1). Consequently, a course was designed to enhance pre-service teachers' communicative competence level required for them to be effective teachers, which is considered the main goal of teaching and learning English in the Iraqi colleges of education. The results were estimated according to the CEFR self-assessment grid and Bachman and Palmer's (1996) checklist. The results of the post-test proved that the pre-service teachers had made more progress in their language proficiency as a result of implementing the CEFR compared to their levels before.

Keywords: pre-service teachers, communicative competence, The CEFR, language knowledge, language ability

1. Introduction

Iraq is one of the countries that is putting forth significant effort to expand the educational sector and enable it to play a more active role in the overall development of the country. An educator in Iraq is regarded as an important individual in the community, and he/she has the ability to make a substantial contribution to the improvement of the conditions of Iraqis' lives and the development of the country's human resources.

In the Iraqi educational context, colleges of education are the only institutions which are responsible for educating Iraqi learners to be teachers in Iraqi schools after spending four years of studying EFL.

According to Alwan (2004), the general aims of the English departments at the colleges of education are:

- To increase learners' readiness in terms of being able to master the four English-language skills (listen, speak, read, and write);
- To enhance learners' confidence in using the FL in an actual situation.
- To motivate students to engage in long-term learning.
- To supply teaching resources and advising services for the learners

In this regard, Al Jorani (2019) asserts that the two most significant obstacles faced by pre-service teachers in

Iraqi universities are their lack of sufficiently proficient language skills and their lack of exposure to the native authentic language. That has caused teachers to lose their enthusiasm for their ability to teach.

Showing teachers' critical roles in the educational process, Butler (2004) argues that teachers should have more education and experience than students. He added that English language proficiency levels are critical for English teachers; the higher the level of proficiency, the better they will be at their work because language teachers' competence can affect students' interest in using English teaching materials and student motivation, allowing them to succeed in their language learning. Al Khafaji (2015) agree with Butler, she state that, teachers should be given more priority in terms of teacher education programs when thinking of reforming the English language learning process in Iraq to achieve satisfactory results and the opportunity to use English in everyday situations and compensate for the lack of authentic language exposure we mentioned. In this context, Al Jorani (2019) asserted that, the outcomes of students can be influenced by improving teachers' abilities. In other words, for teachers who work in language classrooms, adequate language awareness that enables them to increase the EFL learners' proficiency in the FL is a must.

To achieve that goal CEFR will be introduced in this study, with an emphasis on the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. The CEFR builds on the progress achieved with the communicative approach by taking it to the next stage. It focuses on the communicative approach's achievements by providing a wider and more inclusive view capable of linking teaching and learning expectations and evaluation, the student and society, the classroom and the rest of the world. CEFR, utilized the action-oriented approach that sees language consumers and learners primarily as social agents. It refers to activities as tasks because they are carried out by one or more people in a strategic manner, each with their own set of skills to accomplish a particular goal. As a result, the action-orient approach considers the person's cognitive, mental, and volitional capabilities as well as the wide spectrum of skills that the individual as a relational agent possesses and employs (Trim,2011). In other words, the action-oriented approach encompasses the communicative approach's advancements in language education and the wider aspects of language outside the confines of the classroom. Understanding that all individual competences relate in some aspect or another to the language user's capacity to communicate is one of the major advancements of the action-oriented approach over the communicative approach (Europe, 2001). In other words, the learner is seen as an entire individual with interests, convictions, a personality, and a language or languages that he or she already knows to differing degrees in the action-oriented approach.

The aim of introducing the CEFR is to raise the level of communicative competence already attained by Iraqi pre-service teachers to an extent. CEFR redefines communicative competence; instead of compartmentalizing certain languages and cultures in his or her mind, the learner constructs a communicative competence in which both language awareness and practice contribute and in which languages interrelate and communicate (Europe, 2001). The CEFR's incorporation in an educational sense necessitates significant improvements in the fundamental philosophies and traditions of language education in Iraq. In Iraq, for example, students have traditionally been taught to be receptive and silent in teacher-led classrooms. The CEFR provides consumers and educators with practical guidance and acts as a reference for them to focus on their pedagogical activities (Kanchai, 2019). A framework called the CEFR allows for multimodality and adaptations in different types of classrooms, as well as realistic descriptions of language proficiency standards in real-life situations. In addition, it was to keep giving teachers pedagogical and content skills and knowledge so that they could use them to teach existing teaching materials, figure out what and how to teach students, and start teaching English teachers to learn and grow as professional educators in order to improve student achievement and the effectiveness of instruction.

The CEFR is a set of guidelines for creating resources and tests for language teaching and learning, including textbooks, syllabuses, instruction guides, and examinations. The CEFR outlines the range of knowledge, skills, and abilities that a language learner can acquire in order to properly use a language in all forms of communication (Waluyo, 2019; Kanchai, 2019).

The CEFR has four major domains in which it can be applied. The method that underpins the CEFR, regarded as an "action-oriented approach," is the first domain. Individual capacity to use a target language, rather than mastering linguistic features of a target language, is the subject of this approach. The Common Reference Levels of Language Competence are the second domain. The CEFR divides proficiency in a second language (L2) into six levels: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2. Each of the six reference levels has its own set of descriptors that support an individual's ability to perform in a specific language: A1, A2 (represent the basic level), B1, B2 (represent the independent level), and C1, and C2 (represent the proficient level). Language Teaching and Learning Systems is the third domain, which refers to the application of the Common Reference Levels to teaching applications. The final area of CEFR application is evaluation, which is the application of the CEFR for the purpose of assessment

(Kanchai, 2019).

2. Background

2.1 Communicative Language Ability

Hymes (1972) argues that when a kid learns his or her L1 or 2L, he or she does not learn only how to structure and fully comprehend grammatically correct phrases, but they often gain knowledge about using these phrases appropriately for such sociocultural contexts. The way these skills work together is what lets language users do different things with their speech, take part in communication, and be judged by others.

The difference between communicative competence and communicative performance is made by Canale and Swain (1980). They define the first as the interaction and link between grammatical competence (knowledge of grammar rules) and sociolinguistic competence (knowledge of language usage rules). The second is concerned with how these abilities are used and how they interact in the production and comprehension of statements.

Widdowson (1983) defines communicative language ability (CLA) as "the ability to produce and understand utterances by using the resources of grammar in association with features of context to make meaning or as the ability to exploit knowledge of the conventions of a language and its use for the creation of linguistic behavior" (pp. 8, 9). In a nutshell, competence or knowledge of language and "the ability to use that competence in appropriate, contextualized communicative language use" are two parts of CLA (Bachman, 1990, p. 84).

Bachman and Palmer (1996) propose a model of communicative language ability (CLA) consisting of two constituents. Bachman and Palmer updated Bachman's initial language competence model, proposed in 1990 in their book "Language Testing in Practice." Instead of using language competence, which is first used in 1990, they used "language knowledge, organizational knowledge, and pragmatic knowledge." "Language knowledge," which is described as "a capacity that allows language users to construct and understand discourse" (Bachman & Palmer, 2010, p. 33). Language knowledge in their model was split into two categories: "organizational and pragmatic knowledge. Organizational knowledge is about the formal aspects of language that are important for understanding and writing grammatically correct words, sentences, and texts. Pragmatic knowledge is functional knowledge that has been renamed to incorporate new categories of language features such as ideational, manipulative, heuristic, and imaginative functions.

McNamara (1996) asserted that "For the first time, an attempt has been made to deal clearly in a model of second language communicative capacity with the part of ability for use which pertains to affective or volitional factors." The CLA model of Bachman and Palmer (1996) has been described as "a potentially far-reaching development" (P.74). Similarly, Chalhoub-Deville (1997, p. 7) recognized that Bachman and Palmer's (1996) model "provides an intricate and comprehensive depiction of linguistic proficiency," similarly, Skehan (1998) emphasizes that strategic competence's function in this linchpin role is broad, underlying, and dependable.

2.2 Pre-service Teachers' Teaching Program

A teacher education program's role is to help on pedagogical options, teaching methodologies, instructional strategy, and course book materials. This can help new teachers feel more stable and secure. Clarke (1982) says this is "a necessary step in the development of professionals." (p. 447).

Hamblin (1974) defines teacher training as "any activity which deliberately attempts to improve a person's skills in a job and includes any type of experience assigned to facilitate learning which will aid performance in the present or future" (p. 3).

According to Dean (1991), pre-service training is the first step in becoming a teacher. During their first training, teachers should gain theoretical knowledge to support their teaching and the capacity to connect theory and practice. This should be included in the first training. Teachers in their early training should be familiar with child development, learning styles, and group management approaches. They must also develop problem-solving attitudes when it comes to teaching (Butler, 2004).

2.3 Teaching and Learning English as (FL) in Iraqi Schools

Political and cultural factors have had a significant impact on English teaching and learning in Iraqi public schools in the past and recent years. Cultural considerations have also hampered the efficient implementation of progressive English education at all levels in Iraqi schools. One of the most significant challenges that teachers have in teaching all aspects of English as a language as well as a mode of communication is the diversity of native languages among EFL students. Apart from that, teachers must deal with learners who have varying comprehension abilities in terms of grammar, vocabulary, listening, reading, and other aspects of English learning (Alwan, 2004).

Teaching English as a second language to learners who speak their native language is always a difficult endeavor, and its success is dependent on the teachers' competence as well as the efficacy of the teaching methods (Avci & Doghonadze, 2017). It is noteworthy that teachers chosen for ESOL teaching at Iraqi public high school levels and any other levels where students can engage in learning are usually Iraqi residents. In this regard, Naeimi and Foo (2014) argue that Iraqi EFL teachers, having learned English language teaching techniques from Iraqi universities, where the English language is not a well-established subject as stated in the introduction, have difficulty imparting a proficient understanding of the language to their students.

Teachers of EFL programs have traditionally employed the "repeat after me" methodology to teach English as a second or foreign language. This method is particularly common in Iraqi schools, because kids are not exposed to places outside of the classroom where they can learn new English vocabulary, let alone how to pronounce them. This method of teaching ESL, also known as the Grammar-Translation method, has been found to be the most effective in teaching new English vocabulary and analyzing grammatical rules in classroom settings, primarily because students at various high school levels are not exposed to environments outside of school where they can expand their English vocabulary or apply grammatical rules (Alwan, 2004).

Teachers employ a variety of instructional materials, including government-issued textbooks for each high school level, to provide references to their pupils when using this method. Teachers can employ visual aids in this fashion, which is another ELT approach employed at lower levels of EFL teaching in Iraqi schools during the early stages of English teaching. Outside of public high schools and other institutions of learning, English literacy in Iraq ranges from high-average to low-literacy, with the latter being the case in most rural communities across the country. As a result, the adoption of the grammar-translation technique by Iraqi high school instructors in ELT is and has been not effective teaching tool, as far as the social conditions that most students in this country confront outside of ELT classrooms, and especially outside of school settings, are concerned (Al Jorani, 2019).

According to Al Khafaji (2015) Although most commonly utilized in the lower years, beginning in first grade, when English classes are started, the Audio-Lingual Method has been identified as another important method of teaching EFL to Iraqi public high school students. The Audio-Lingual technique is a way for teachers to teach new English words, grammar rules, and other ELT ideas to students at different levels of their high school education. She added that, the Audio-Lingual ELT technique is particularly ideal for ELT teachers teaching English classes in Iraqi public high schools in overcoming issues related to English word pronunciation, which is one of the most common obstacles in teaching English as a foreign language in most Iraqi schools. The difficulty stems from the fact that the majority of Iraqi students who attend public high schools come from low-to middle-income families. Because of their socioeconomic level, these pupils are more likely to live in communities where literacy, particularly English literacy, is low. As a result of their lack of exposure to an environment where they can listen to or apply particular English vocabulary or grammatical rules in communication concepts, most teachers in Iraqi public high schools employ the Audio-Lingual technique to teach ELT lessons. This is because, unlike when such concepts are given passively, as is the case with English instruction as a first language, the repetitious nature of the method utilized in teaching various ELT topics allows students to store the information in their memory.

Memory methods are another L2 teaching strategy utilized by ELT teachers in Iraqi public high schools to improve learners' grasp of English language curriculum requirements, according to Hamza (2012). This strategy is mostly used to teach L2 English students new vocabulary. This strategy entails the use of words that have the same meaning as words in English vocabularies, as well as the identification of visuals that correspond to these words. Teachers can assist students in developing a better ability to retain the meaning of new English vocabulary by using visuals, which eliminates the difficulty of remembering new English words, which is a common obstacle for L2 teachers. He added that, using a memory method, such as matching new English terms with closely related native words and finding imagery to fit the meaning, improves students' capacity to use the terms in speech and writing. In the instance of Iraqi public-school ELT teaching, where one of the key challenges impacting its efficiency is a mediocre ability to impart English pedagogic skills, this technique is particularly beneficial in enhancing high school students' English language proficiency. The communicative method entails a shift from focusing on grammatical and pronunciation of a particular L2 to the proper and appropriate use of linguistic expressions in that language. It is interested in successful communication and the social purposes of language. This strategy, on the other hand, shifts the emphasis from accuracy to fluency (Cook, 2003, P.35-6). That is, rather than linguistic skill, the approach is concerned with communicative competence. Chomsky (1965) emphasized the importance of linguistic competence by defining it as one's knowledge of one's native language. As a result, theorists and curriculum designers devoted close attention to English grammar, calling for mastery of

the language's formal qualities. CL responds by demonstrating the sterility of such a concept by focusing on how to utilize language effectively in a given situation. That isn't to say that learners don't pay attention to the structure of linguistic expressions; nonetheless, mastering the form of sentences isn't enough for effective communication unless it's supported by the learners' ability to apply them effectively. Furthermore, the instructor should not employ the phrases independently of the context in which they are used in order for the learners to gain the most advantage, because the context in which the sentences are used affects both their meanings and structure.

In reality, this strategy has been regarded as an appealing, peerless, distinctive, and broad-based way. The orientation in this sort of instruction is primarily connected to understanding of when and where L2 sentences are used, as well as mastery of their forms and pronunciation. This technique is very new in Iraq, and it has resulted in a slew of issues.

The study of Dariyan (2018) was to find out what strategies and tactics Iraqi public-school teachers utilized when teaching ESOL classes. The researchers chose 98 volunteers from various cities across Iraq, resulting in a population sample that was effective in answering the research objectives. In terms of the study's major goal, it was discovered that grammar translation and audio-lingual procedures are the most widely employed methodologies by teachers in Iraqi public schools when teaching ESOL. Listening to audio learning materials, matching films, and role-playing were also found to be useful in increasing the efficiency of English L2 instruction. Overall, the study concluded that, despite the prevalence of the two most prevalent ESOL teaching methods, multiple ways should be used to improve Iraqi teachers' proficiency in teaching ELT classes in Iraqi public schools.

3. Research Questions

- 1- What level of communicative competence do the Iraqi Pre-service teachers have?
- 2- Does the implementation of the CEFR on the pre-service teacher have a positive impact on enhancing their communicative competence level?

4. Methodology

A permission letter from the dean of the college of education under investigation was obtained. Then a deep discussion ensued with the participants and the head of the department of English regarding the aim, procedure, participants, and instruments used in this study to clarify the purpose of this study. Before starting the data collection phase, the information sheets and consent forms were distributed to all the participants. The consent form informs the participants of the aim of the study and what they could get from their participation, and they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

4.1 Participants

The participants were 150 pre-service Iraqi teachers in their fourth year at the College of Education for the Humanities, English Department, at one Iraqi public university. The participants were given an intensive CEFR-informed English language program for 3 months. The participants were divided into 6 groups (A-F), i.e., 25 students per group. Each of these groups had a trainer, a total of 6 teachers/trainers involved in this intervention.

The CEFR course lasted 3 months, with 4 sessions a week. The duration of each session was six hours. Thus, the participants were subjected to a 288-hour intensive course. Bachman and Palmer's (1996, 2010) framework of English language knowledge and performance on real-life tasks underpinned the course design. The course focused on general competences and particularly on communicative language competences, e.g., linguistic competences, sociolinguistic competences, and pragmatic competences. Linguistic competences include lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, and orthographic activities. Sociolinguistic competences include linguistic markers of social relations, politeness conventions, expressions of folk wisdom, register differences, and dialect activities. Pragmatic competences include discourse and functional activities.

4.2 Instrument

The data collection consists of two phases: pre-CEFR and post-CEFR implementations.

The questionnaire consists of two parts: CEFR Self-Assessment Grid and Bachman and Palmer's linguistic test. The CEFR Self-Assessment Grid was used to assess participants self-assessment of their English proficiency. In addition, the linguistic test examines 13 criteria of language knowledge: language vocabulary, syntax, phonology/graphology (grammatical knowledge), knowledge of cohesion, rhetorical organization, conversational organization (textual knowledge), ideational knowledge, manipulative knowledge, instrumental knowledge,

imaginative knowledge (functional knowledge), knowledge of dialects, registers, and idiomatic expressions. The questionnaire was used in pre and post-tests

4.3 Procedure

Before implementing the CEFR program in the teacher education program at the college of education at one Iraqi public university, pre-service teachers were given a pre-test to identify their language knowledge. They were given 120 minutes to answer the questionnaire. After the 3-month intervention, the participants were given the same questionnaire for the post-intervention test.

Assessing pre-service teachers was based on their overall knowledge of English language acquired from the last 3 years. Total duration: 120 minutes, Total mark out of 100, the pre-service teachers' communicative competence level was coded as:

A2(60-69)

B1(70-79)

B2(80-89)

C1(90-100)

All instructions were given in Arabic language. The instructions included the purpose of the test, test parts, procedures, and scoring methods. After the test, the results were scored according to the checklist of Bachman and Palmer (1996). In the end, the test results were compared to each other to find out the extent to which the CEFR level C1 course contributed to achieving linguistic development and raising the level of language proficiency of the pre-service teachers.

5. Results

5.1 Pre-test Results

In this phase the questionnaire which consists of two parts: CEFR Self-Assessment Grid and Bachman and Palmer's linguistic test was distributed to the 150 participants.

The results show the total mean of the pre-service teachers' degrees in the pre-test is 71.4333. Thus, the average level of the CEFR is the B1 level. Table 1 also indicated that 25 pre-service teachers were still at A2 (69.3600). None of the pre-service teachers claimed that they have the ability of CEFR B2 onwards (80-90). These results suggest that the existing English-teacher education program producing mostly under-qualified English teachers (CEFR A2 and B1). Ideally, English teachers should have between CEFR B2 to C1. Therefore, there is a need to improve the English courses in the teacher education program.

Table 1 shows the results of the pre-test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
GA	25	74.1200	9.54079	1.90816	70.1818	78.0582	60.00	90.00
GB	25	71.0400	9.99366	1.99873	66.9148	75.1652	60.00	90.00
GC	25	71.4800	8.56894	1.71379	67.9429	75.0171	60.00	89.00
GD	25	69.3600	7.45475	1.49095	66.2828	72.4372	60.00	88.00
GE	25	71.5200	8.95879	1.79176	67.8220	75.2180	61.00	90.00
GF	25	71.0800	9.34933	1.86987	67.2208	74.9392	60.00	90.00
Total	150	71.4333	8.97305	.73265	69.9856	72.8811	60.00	90.00

5.2 Post Test Result

The researcher dealt with comparing all 150 student's language knowledge after the CEFR intensive course. Scoring methods depended on the criterion-referenced ability-based analytic scales based on (Bachman & Palmer 1996) CLA model. The main advantage of criterion-referenced scales is to estimate how much language ability the pre-service teachers have.

Table 2 shows the results of the test of the knowledge of syntax

Knowledge of Syntax						
Tasks	Writing task 1		Writing task 2		Speaking Task	
Levels of Mastery	Ss. No.	Percentage	Ss. No.	Percentage	Ss. No.	Percentage
0 None	0	0	0	0	1	0.7
1 Limited	4	2.6	3	2	3	2
2 Moderate	36	24	40	26.7	20	13.3
3 Extensive	40	26.6	50	33.3	45	30
4 Complete	70	46.6	57	38	81	54
	150	73.2%	150	71.3%	150	84%

Table 2 shows the pre-service teacher's results of syntax knowledge compiled from writing test (task one and task two) and speaking test. The results indicate that 73.2% of pre-service teachers are above moderate level in writing task1, 71.3% are above moderate level in writing task 2, and 84 % are above moderate level in speaking task.

Table 3 shows the results of pre-service teachers' vocabulary knowledge

Knowledge of Vocabulary						
Tasks	Writing task 1		Writing task 2		Speaking Task	
Levels of Mastery	Ss. No.	Percentage	Ss. No.	Percentage	Ss. No.	Percentage
0 None	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 Limited	4	2.7	5	3.3	4	2.7
2 Moderate	10	6.7	7	4.7	13	8.7
3 Extensive	25	16.6	20	13.3	25	16.7
4 Complete	111	74	118	78.7	108	72
	150	90.6%	150	92%	150	88.7%

Table 3 shows the pre-service teacher's results of vocabulary knowledge compiled from writing test (task one and task two) and speaking test. The results indicate that 90.6 % of pre-service teachers are above moderate level in writing task1, 92% are above moderate level in writing task 2, and 88.7% are above moderate level in speaking task.

Table 4 shows the results of the pre-service teachers' knowledge of the rhetorical organization.

Knowledge of Rhetorical Organization						
Tasks	Writing task 1		Writing task 2		Speaking Task	
Levels of Mastery	Ss. No.	Percentage	Ss. No.	Percentage	Ss. No.	Percentage
0 None	1	0.7	0	0	0	0
1 Limited	5	3.3	7	4.7	3	2
2 Moderate	17	11.3	19	12.7	13	8.7
3 Extensive	23	15.3	20	13.3	21	14
4 Complete	104	69.3	104	69.3	113	75.3
	150	84.6%	150	82.6%	150	89.3%

Table 4 shows the pre-service teacher's results of Rhetorical Organization knowledge compiled from writing test (task one and task two) and speaking test. The results indicate that 84.6% of pre-service teachers are above moderate level in writing task1, 82.6% are above moderate level in writing task 2, and 89.3% are above moderate level in speaking task.

Table 5 shows the results of pre-service teachers' knowledge of cohesion

Knowledge of Cohesion						
Tasks	Writing task 1		Writing task 2		Speaking Task	
Levels of Mastery	Ss. No.	Percentage	Ss. No.	Percentage	Ss. No.	Percentage
0 None	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 Limited	6	4	7	4.7	2	1.3
2 Moderate	12	8	18	12	11	7.3
3 Extensive	31	20.7	20	13.3	25	16.7
4 Complete	101	67.3	105	70	112	74.6
	150	88%	150	83.3%	150	91.3%

Table 5 shows the pre-service teacher's results of Cohesion knowledge compiled from writing test (task one and task two) and speaking test. The results indicate that 88% of pre-service teachers are above moderate level in writing task1, 83.3% are above moderate level in writing task 2, and 91.3% are above moderate level in speaking task.

Table 6 shows the results of the pre-service teachers of the knowledge of register

Knowledge of Register						
Tasks	Writing task 1		Writing task 2		Speaking Task	
Levels of Mastery	Ss. No.	Percentage	Ss. No.	Percentage	Ss. No.	Percentage
0 None	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 Limited	0	0	3	2	1	0.7
2 Moderate	7	4.7	11	7.33	10	6.7
3 Extensive	40	26.6	33	22	15	10
4 Complete	103	68.7	103	68.7	124	82.7
	150	95.3%	150	90.7%	150	92.7%

Table 6 shows the pre-service teacher's results of register knowledge compiled from writing test (task one and task two) and speaking test. The results indicate that 95.3% of pre-service teachers are above moderate level in writing task1, 90.7% are above moderate level in writing task 2, and 92.7% are above moderate level in speaking task.

Table 7 shows the pre-service teachers' topical knowledge

Topical Knowledge						
Tasks	Writing task 1		Writing task 2		Speaking Task	
Levels of Mastery	Ss. No.	Percentage	Ss. No.	Percentage	Ss. No.	Percentage
0 None	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 Limited	2	1.3	1	0.7	0	0
2 Moderate	14	9.3	12	8	7	4.7
3 Extensive	25	16.7	17	11.3	22	14.7
4 Complete	109	72.6	120	80	121	80.6
	150	99.3%	150	91.3%	150	95.3%

Table 7 shows the pre-service teacher's results of Topical knowledge compiled from writing test (task one and task two) and speaking test. The results indicate that 99.3% of pre-service teachers are above moderate level in

writing task1, 91.3% are above moderate level in writing task 2, and 95.3% are above moderate level in speaking task.

Tables from 2 to 7 indicate that the average of pre-service teachers who got a complete mastery of language knowledge in writing task 1 of the CEFR level C1 test are 99 (66%) pre-service teachers, 101 (67.33%) have sufficient communicative competence level in writing task(C1), and 110 (73.3) have sufficient communicative competence level in speaking task(C1).

6. Discussion and Conclusion

6.1 Discussion

This section focuses on the results presented in this research by providing answers to the research questions. Compared to the pre-test and the post-test, there is a great deal of development in the pre-service teacher's language knowledge. To indicate the answer to the first question, we have made a pre-test. The pre-test showed that the 150 participants who were all pre-service teachers in their fourth year at the College of Education for Humanities, English department at one Iraqi university—had a diversity between low and moderate levels of communicative competence. From the pre-test results, it appears that the existing teacher education program is not qualified to produce qualified and effective teachers. The results showed that even after four years of teaching and learning English, the pre-service teachers still claim that they are only able to function at B1 level, and some of them claim that they are only able to function at A2 level, which indicates that they are not well qualified to be English teachers.

Therefore, there is a great need to develop the pre-service teachers' communicative competence in order to be in touch with the new methods of teaching the English language. Furthermore, there is a tendency to implement the CEFR in Iraq as the formal language system across all faculties of education. All this aims at developing the communicative competence of the pre-service teachers.

To answer question number two, a post-test has been made to estimate the level of communicative competence as a result of an intensive CEFR course. The means of the pre-service teachers in the post-test were improved; they are between B2 and C1 levels. This is clear proof that the CEFR course has been a success.

6.2 Conclusion

This study investigated the effects of implementing the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in the English courses in a teacher education program at one Iraqi public university. The data collection process consists of two phases: pre-CEFR and post-CEFR implementations. A total of 150 fourth-year pre-service teachers participated in this study. The questionnaire was the only instrument used for data collection. It consists of two parts: the CEFR Self-Assessment Grid and Bachman and Palmer's linguistic test. The CEFR Self-Assessment Grid was used to assess participants self-assessments of their English proficiency. In addition, the linguistic test examines 13 criteria of language knowledge: language vocabulary, syntax, phonology/graphology (grammatical knowledge), knowledge of cohesion, rhetorical organization, conversational organization (textual knowledge), ideational knowledge, manipulative knowledge, instrumental knowledge, imaginative knowledge (functional knowledge), knowledge of dialects, registers, and idiomatic expressions. The questionnaire was used in pre- and post-tests. The pre-CEFR test results showed that a significant percentage of the participants did not have adequate proficiency to be an English teacher (CEFR A2 and B1). Consequently, a course was designed to enhance pre-service teachers' communicative competence level required for them to be effective teachers, which is considered the main goal of teaching and learning English in the Iraqi colleges of education. The results were estimated according to the CEFR self-assessment grid and Bachman and Palmer's (1996) checklist. The post-test results proved that the pre-service teachers had made more progress in their language knowledge as a result of implementing the CEFR (B2-C1) compared to their levels before.

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