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**AN ANALYSIS OF THE TRAINING NEEDS OF ITALIAN  
SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AS A  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

.....

by

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**A Doctoral Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
award of Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University**

**29 January 1998**

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TO

CHRIS



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# **AN ANALYSIS OF THE TRAINING NEEDS OF ITALIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

**BARBARA BETTINELLI**

## **Abstract**

This thesis is concerned with the training of Italian secondary school teachers of English as a Foreign Language. It identifies the training needs and requirements of these teachers and subsequently analyses in-service training courses offered both in Italy and the UK. The aim is to see if these courses meet the requirements and expectations of Italian trainees and, if not, to develop recommendations on how these courses could be improved.

The starting point of this research is the increased recognition of the effectiveness of the non-native speaking teacher. While in the past native English speakers were perceived as the 'ideal' teachers of the language, it has recently been recognised that non-native English speaking teachers have an equal chance of becoming successful teachers. However, there has been very little research focusing on the requirements of

non-native English speaker trainees and similarly there has been minimal feedback on what works and does not work in teacher education programmes. This thesis aims to contribute to the ongoing teacher related research in order to gain a deeper understanding of the specific training requirements of Italian teachers of E.F.L., so that their full potential may be realised.

The thesis illustrates in detail the Italian school system, the Modern Foreign Language undergraduate curricula and the recruitment system for teachers in Italy, three elements which play a crucial role in determining the in-service training needs of Italian teachers of E.F.L.. The thesis also provides a detailed description of the Italian State Special Project for Foreign Languages (P.S.L.S.), a national training project aimed at in-service teachers of Foreign Languages.

The thesis analyses data coming from surveys aimed at Italian teachers of English. One survey devised by the author was carried out among teachers attending training events at the British Council in Milan. A second survey analysed was based on data provided by the I.R.R.S.A.E. (Regional Institute for Research and In-service Training) Lombardy, resulting from a questionnaire completed by a large number of lower and higher secondary school teachers of English working in the region. The results of the analysis of these surveys provide important information about the requirements of these teachers and identify where these needs have not been satisfied in the training courses they have attended in the past.

The thesis subsequently examines the training courses currently available to Italian teachers of E.F.L., both in Italy and the UK. Data coming from a survey conducted among P.S.L.S trainers supply information about the general structure and content of these courses. The thesis also analyses material obtained from UK institutions and illustrates, and comments on, the variety of programmes of study currently available to Italian teachers of English. Suggestions are put forward on how both P.S.L.S. and UK based courses could be improved in an effort to overcome trainees' difficulties and meet their requirements and needs.

The thesis concludes with recommendations for further work which include those areas where the analysis of teachers' requirements would benefit from expansion and where the evaluation process of existing training courses could be refined.



# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

E.F.L.	English as a Foreign Language
E.L.T.	English Language Teaching
E.S.L.	English as a Second Language
I.R.R.S.A.E.	Istituto Regionale per la Ricerca e gli Aggiornamenti Educativi (Regional institute for Research and In-service Training) - Italy
IATEFL	International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language
L1	mother tongue
L2	foreign language
nes	native English speaker
nest	native English speaker teacher
non-nest	non-native English speaker teacher
P.S.L.S.	Progetto Speciale Lingue Straniere (Special Project for Foreign Languages) - Italy
RSA	Royal Society of Arts
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TEFLA	Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

# **Chapter 1**

## **Issues concerning the non-native speaker teacher of E.F.L.**

### **1.1 Background**

The starting point of this programme of research is the re-evaluation of the role, and therefore the training needs, of the non-native speaker teacher of English. English native speaker teachers have traditionally enjoyed a privileged position. The fact that they were native speakers of the language seemed to guarantee that they were bound to be better teachers of the language, when compared to their non-native speaker colleagues. However, in recent years, a number of educationalists and researchers have started to question the assumed superiority of the native speakers, both as models and as teachers.

The importance of learner-centredness in the teaching process has highlighted that non-native speaker teachers can better understand the difficulties that some of their students' may encounter in the process of learning the foreign language. As non-native speaker teachers have been through the same process, they can be more effective in devising strategies to help their students overcome these problems. Although non-native speaker teachers are aware of their linguistic deficit, when compared to native speakers, research has proven that there are in fact a series of advantages in being a non-native teacher. Naturally, native and non-native teachers have different potentials and shortcomings. They may have different educational backgrounds and usually work in different teaching situations. It therefore follows that they also have different training needs.

The first stage of this research is concerned with identifying the training needs of non-native speaker teachers of English, with particular consideration to Italian teachers of E.F.L.. Using data coming from questionnaires administered at the conclusion of various training projects, the author identifies the major reasons for dissatisfaction with existing training courses as well as the training requirements and expectations of this group of teachers. The second stage of the research focuses on the analysis of training courses run both in Italy and the UK. The aim is to determine if these courses meet the training needs of non-native speaker teachers, as they have emerged from the results of the questionnaires. Suggestions will be put forward on how these courses could be improved. These suggestions will cover aspects, such as the components to be included in the course, the role of the native-speaker trainer, and the issue of theory versus practice.



## 1.2 The traditional position of native speaker teachers of English

“The native speaker should become the standard foreign-language teacher within the countries of the European community. They know best what is important in the language teaching tomorrow: the active and creative language use in everyday communication.”

(Freudenstein 1991:2)

“.... the latest ideas in English language teaching. Where best, after all, to get the latest ideas on this than in the leading English-speaking countries?”

(Quirk 1990:8)

The English native speaker has traditionally enjoyed a more privileged position within the E.F.L. teaching profession than the non-native English speaker. This situation has been acknowledged by a number of educationalists and researchers. Widdowson (1992) finds plenty of evidence to substantiate the claim that native English speakers have the more prestigious status and are given preference in employment. When Eayrs (1997) describes the E.F.L. teaching situation in Argentina, he maintains that it is fairly easy for native English speakers, with no experience or qualifications whatsoever, to find work as English language teachers: they can also command disproportionate fees simply because of their ‘prestige’ value. According to Maley (1992), this situation is typical of most non-English-speaking countries, where there is a clear cut division between non-native and native English speaking teachers. The local non-native English teachers, who are often more



experienced and better qualified, work in the state system, while the native English speakers, often having minimal qualifications, are employed in private language schools, where they enjoy higher salaries. This situation can be explained by the pre-conceived notion of the innate value of native English speaking teachers. As Lee (1995) explains, in the past it was widely assumed that English language students should be taught by native English speaker teachers: if they happened to be taught by non-native English teachers, this was seen as a clear disadvantage.

The native English speaker has played a key role not only in language teaching, but also in language teaching methodology and research. According to Widdowson (1993:8), “there is no doubt that native speakers of English are deferred to in our profession: what they say is invested with both authenticity and authority. They have become the custodians and arbiters not only of proper English, but of proper pedagogy as well”. In 1992 he added that he finds it “particularly ironical that Britain should be exporting expertise in the teaching of a foreign language when its own record in this area is one of more or less abject failure”. Phillipson (1992a:15) maintains that “the native speaker has remained as a central part of the conventional wisdom of the ELT profession: there has been a tendency to accept it without question. The ideal can be seen in operation implicitly in the practice of the main ELT publishers which for obvious reasons seek to market their goods globally.” More recently, Kershaw (1996:7) asserted that “what is and is not a Good Thing in English Language Teaching is defined and ceaselessly re-defined by native speakers, and handed down in tablet form to the non-native-speaker teacher majority. To assume that the visions and revisions of these natives are entirely appropriate for

non-natives is clearly wrong-headed, and yet this assumption is central to ELT". He believes that the predominance of English native speakers over non-native English speakers is maintained by the fact that the overwhelming majority of ELT writers and experts are still native speakers. Prodromu (1997:14) firmly believes that "the native speaker, by dint of birth, continues to be the expert in ELT and the ultimate authority in matters of use and usage."

Some methodological approaches, such as the Communicative Approach, reinforce the predominance of native speakers among ELT experts and theoreticians. Ruzsa (1988:47) claims that "a strongly communicatively biased approach to language teaching has been significantly affected by the attitudes it reflects, as a result of its origins and its evolution having been in English-speaking countries, shaped by native-speaker teachers (themselves very often not at home in any language but their own), working in a natural language environment, usually, with multilingual classes". Talking about the several contradictory tendencies inherent in the main principles of this approach, Medgyes (1986:112) highlights the need for non-native language teaching experts who can act as filters between the native speaking theoreticians and the non-native practitioners. He believes that "for all their good will, native speakers are basically unaware of the whole complexity of difficulties that non-native speakers have to tackle. Only non-native go-betweens would be capable of seeing the contradictions [of this approach] clearly".

Some researchers have put forward various reasons which can explain why the English native speaker has gained and so far retained such a privileged position.



According to Phillipson (1992a), the native English speaker ideal can be traced back to the time when language teaching was inextricably linked to the teaching of culture. This ideal was consistent with the attempt on part of the British Government to promote English as a world-wide second language as a means to maintain British influence in the post-colonial era. In his book, 'Linguistic Imperialism' (1992b), he describes the five key tenets of ELT as they were formulated at the Makerere Conference in 1961. One of these tenets was that the ideal teacher of English was a native speaker. Medgeys (1994:1-2) believes that "governments on either side of the Atlantic have long recognised that the English language is their greatest 'God-given' asset. Unlike oil extracted from the North Sea or Alaska, the supply of the English language is inexhaustible. The promotion of the English language is thus an excellent form of investment". He therefore believes that, as ELT is a source of income for thousands of native English speakers, it should not be considered as an educational mission, but rather as a huge industry regulated by strict laws of market economy. The fact that the E.F.L. market plays an important role in the UK economy is confirmed by an article published in July 1997 on Nexus Education News, which states that E.F.L. students were worth one billion pounds to British language schools in 1995. The figure takes into account only students who attended language courses in the UK. However, this is only one of the very many facets of the ELT market. Another important sector of this market is represented by ELT publications, either in the form of text-books or methodology manuals. Prodromu (1997:14) has complained how the predominance of native English speaking teachers and culture is exploited by ELT material writers and publishers. Most textbooks continue to be mostly Anglo-American products aimed at the world market: as a consequence, "the

learners' own culture is peripheralised and learners' autonomy is circumscribed by having to learn a variety of English which is culturally alien".

### **1.3 The native speaker/non-native speaker dichotomy**

Although it is undeniable that native speakers still enjoy a privileged position, in more recent times their superiority, both as models of language users and as teachers, has been challenged. Several researchers and educationalists have started to question the belief that native speakers are better teachers simply because they are better users of the language. In addition, the spread of English and its role as an international language has made it increasingly problematic to define what is meant by 'native speaker'. The following sections of this chapter explore these two issues, which have both led to a re-assessment of the privileged position of the native speaker teacher and to the re-evaluation of the role of the non-native speaker teacher.

#### **1.3.1 Defying 'the more proficient in English, the better the teacher' assumption**

The supremacy of native English speakers over non-native English speakers has been challenged in terms of the effectiveness of the native English speakers as teachers. There are a number of issues which play an important role in the overall effectiveness



of the native English speaker teacher. These include the lack of familiarity with the language and culture of their learners, a limited awareness of their native English language and the fact that many of them have not had the experience of learning a foreign language.

One of the problems with native English speaking teachers, especially those working abroad, lies in their failure of taking into account the different culture of their students. According to Cem and Margaret Alptekin (1984:18) “the use of monolingual and monocultural native English speaking teachers, who are incapable of escaping the powerful influences of their own culture, as pedagogical models for would-be bilinguals is paradoxical and counter-productive”. In their experience, many native English speakers working abroad show ignorance of the host culture and language; however, they expect to be treated as ‘important’ due to the cultural superiority that their status as native English speaker teachers confers to them. Prodromu (1988:76) believes that “many native teachers have failed to take local sensitivities into account and have, as a result, made the learning process more difficult. Ruzsa (1988:46) finds in many native speaker teachers of English “a sophisticated, refined feeling of superiority expressed through linguistic and cultural colonialism: a lack of flexibility, of empathy for other cultures, thinking and ways of life”. Her overall feeling is that they came to ‘conquer’, not to learn.

The fact of being a native speaker does not necessary imply a deep awareness of how the language works. According to Phillipson (1992a:15), many of the products of the British education system recruited into ELT apparently do not know much about

their language. Wajnryb (1988) has highlighted the importance of the language awareness component in a training course: some of the native English speaker trainees with whom she has worked showed a very limited knowledge of their own language. Describing her experience as a trainer of native English speaker teachers, Krysakowska (1990:4) said that she “was astonished how little and how utterly unaware they were of the differences between languages. They had no idea what sounds could be difficult for a learner of English, or how notions of language were slowly built in people’s mind”. Atkinson (1993) argues that the native speaker’s knowledge of the language may not be as good as his/her non-native counterpart. The native speaking teacher lacks the insight into the language which can be achieved only through learning a foreign language. This is why he strongly believes that the native English speaker teachers who have not received formal education in English nor have been through the process of learning a foreign language should have no place in the ELT profession. This view is shared by other educationalists such as Medgyes (1994) and Phillipson (1992b:195) who believes that “it would be a minimal requirement of teachers of English as a second or foreign language that they should have proven experience of, and success in, learning and using a second/foreign language themselves”.

Widdowson has also recently questioned the idea that the more proficient speaker is a more efficient teacher. He (1992:338) recognises that knowledge of the language is more highly regarded than pedagogic expertise. He therefore feels the need to make a clear distinction between the role of instructor and the role of informant. He believes that “the native speaker may have the edge as informant. But the instructor’s role is a



different matter, and here it is that the non-native speaker who has, on the face of it, more natural advantages. For although native speakers obviously have the more extensive experience as language users, the non-native speakers have had experience as English language learners. They have been through the process of coming to terms with English as another language. The native speakers exploit their advantage, encouraging the delusion that a reliable informant makes a good language teacher. But there are several disadvantages as well in being a native speaker of English. You can become closed off by complacency from the language and culture of other communities. For teachers of English, particularly if the subject is defined in terms of language education, this attitude is a severe disadvantage for the development of expertise as an instructor, no matter how serviceable they may be as informants”.

The native English speaker teacher seems to be at a disadvantage also when teaching phonology, one of the most difficult aspects in the teaching of English. Smith and Rafiqzad (1979) have questioned the practice of using native-speaker models in the teaching of English sounds. According to their findings, multinational audiences do not seem to find native-speaker phonology more intelligible than non-native versions. Longeri (1989) shares this view: talking specifically about Italian students of English, she questions the effectiveness of native English speakers in the teaching of pronunciation. She believes that native English speaker teachers fail to fully appreciate the difficulties that some students may encounter when they try to articulate certain sounds in the target language. As these difficulties arise from interference from the sound system of their mother tongue, she believes that Italian

teachers of English can prove more helpful in suggesting ways in which these problems can be overcome.

The problems that native speaker teachers may encounter when working with foreign learners could be overcome if they receive appropriate and specific training. It is, therefore, of paramount importance to identify and address the weaknesses which derive from their being native speakers of the language. The aspects in which this group of teachers need specific training are different from those on which non-native speaker teachers need to concentrate. Issues relating to the different training requirements of these two groups of teachers are further explored in subsequent sections of this chapter.

### **1.3.2 Issues regarding definition**

A secondary issue which has influenced the debate concerning the re-evaluation of the non-native English speaker teacher has been the increased difficulty in defining what is meant by the terms 'native speaker' and 'mother-tongue'. Whilst this does not directly affect the arguments within this thesis, since the main focus is on Italian teachers of E.F.L., it is useful to review the issue here. In the past few years, there has been an ongoing debate about the definition of native speaker and mother-tongue. Medgyes (1994) believes that the native/non-native distinction is one of the most complex areas in applied linguistics. His opinion is shared by a growing number of



researchers who claim that the distinction between the two groups has become untenable.

The spread of English in countries where it is used as a second or third language, or even as a lingua franca, has shifted its linguistic centre far from Great Britain, which now makes up only a small proportion of the English speaking community. Kachru (1985) has put forward a model to group English and non-English speaking countries. He talks of Inner Circle countries, where most people speak English as their mother tongue, Outer Circle countries, where English is the second language for a privileged minority, and Expanding Circle countries, that is the rest of the world where people speak English as a foreign language. Phillipson (1992b) divides the world into 'core-English' countries, where English is the mother tongue, and 'periphery-English' countries, where English is spoken as a second or a foreign language. In all these countries people speak English in different ways: in fact, Lewis (1971) believes that nowadays there are so many 'Englishes' that it is likely that English will evolve into separate, mutually unintelligible, languages. In 1993, Widdowson addressed the question of the spread of the English language and of its ownership. He believes (1993:7) that "how English develops in the world is no business whatsoever of native speakers in English or anywhere else. They have no say in the matter, no right to intervene or pass judgement. They are irrelevant. The very fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it. And yet native speakers continue to claim authority on the assumption of ownership". In addition to the geographical spread of English, increased population mobility has resulted in a growing number of people who speak

more than one language as their mother tongue(s). Kachru (1988) and Lee (1995) provide several examples of situations in which it is impossible to determine which is the speaker's mother tongue.

Attention has also been drawn on the very many ways in which English is spoken. This includes not only local accents, but also dialects and sociolects. Lee (1995) challenges the idea of the native speaker as a good model: what is meant by native speaker in this specific case is usually the 'educated' native speaker. He, however, believes that it is impossible to define the terms 'educated' and 'uneducated' and suggests that they should be dropped. Christophersen (1988) also finds that one cause of fuzziness in defining the native speaker lies in the fact that native speakers may judge differently what is acceptable usage. In 1992, he went on to challenge the privileged position given, perhaps especially by American linguists, to the native speaker as the only truly valid and reliable source of language data. He claimed (1992:18) that "the traditional orthodoxy that the native speaker can do no wrong is no longer tenable; nor can we accept the traditional view that the non-native can never hope to emulate the native". Alptekin (1993:140) shares Christophersen's view and adds that "the idea that native speakers are the only arbiters of grammaticality and appropriacy is untenable". He claims that "some non-native speakers may be more entitled to judge well-formedness and appropriacy than some putative native speakers".

The difficulty in defining precisely native and non-native English speakers has prompted researchers to try to redefine the term 'native speaker' so that it could take



into account the different varieties of the language and of its users. Grundy (1989) believes that the distinction between native and non-native should be dissolved. Paikeday (1985) goes even further and declares in his book that “The native speaker is dead!”: he puts forward ‘proficient user of the language’ as its replacement. Kachru (1985) talks of ‘English-using speech fellowship’ while Edge (1988b) favours the term ‘more or less accomplished or proficient user of English’. Rampton (1990) suggests to replace the terms ‘native speaker’ and ‘mother tongue’ with ‘language expert’ and ‘language inheritance’ and ‘affiliation’. According to Kershaw (1996) the negative term non-native speaker should be dropped and perhaps replaced by ‘bilingual’ teacher.

The spread of English as an international language and the increased cultural and geographical population mobility have made it increasingly difficult to define what is meant by the term ‘native-speaker’. However, the author shares Medgyes’s view (1992:343) that “the native/non-native distinction not only exists, but it plays a key role in determining the teaching practice of all teachers”. Non-native speaker teachers can never equal native speakers in their command of the language: this difference between the two groups has important implications not only for the way non-native speaker perceive themselves as teachers, but also for their training. Whatever view academics may take on this issue, it is certain that Italian teachers of English will always be regarded as non-native speaker teachers. Therefore, whilst the issue of precise definition of native and non-native is of interest, it may be placed in the background in so far as the research detailed in this thesis is concerned.

## 1.4 The re-evaluation of the non-native speaker teachers of English

The recent challenge to the supremacy of the native speaker both as a model and as a teacher has led to the re-evaluation of the non-native speaking teacher. While in the past the privileged position of the native teachers was accepted without question, a considerable number of educationalists and researchers now feel that non-native speaker teachers have an equal chance of being successful: in fact, as Medgyes (1992) claims, being a non-native speaker may have hidden advantages.

The importance given to learner-centredness in the teaching process has highlighted the undeniable advantages that non-native teachers have over native teachers. Non-native teachers are familiar with the culture of their students, are in a better position to understand the difficulties that they may encounter, share their mother tongue and can serve as models of the successful learner. O'Connell (1993) believes that the re-evaluation of the role of the non-native speaker teachers stems from their better understanding of the motivation and psychology of foreign learners as against the native speaker's supposedly better language awareness. Peter Medgyes is the researcher who has contributed most significantly to this debate. He has written extensively on the subject and conducted a world-wide survey on the perceived differences between native and non-native English speaking teachers. His findings and conclusions are supported by similar work conducted by other native and non-native English speaking educationalists.



In his book, 'The non-native teacher' (1994), Medgyes explores both the dark and the bright side of being a non-native teacher of English. One of the main reasons of preoccupation for non-native teachers is the awareness of their linguistic deficit. Non-native teachers are constantly preoccupied with their level of competence in the target language: this situation has worsened with the advent of the Communicative Approach. As he described in 1986, this approach puts especially heavy linguistic strain on the teachers who are not totally confident of their command of the foreign language. In 1983, he spoke of how non-native teachers are constantly pursuing something they do not have the slightest chance of achieving: a native-like command of English. Prodromu (1997) has also talked about how non-native speaker teachers feel constantly disadvantaged, both in linguistic and cultural terms, as they can not aspire to live up to native-speaker models of the language. However, the notion of the native speaker as the ideal language teacher is somehow peculiar to the ELT world. As Howatt (1984:212) reports, monolingual pedagogy is "the hallmark which set ELT apart from foreign language teaching in Britain". Phillipson (1992a:15) shares his view: "in the European foreign language teaching tradition (for instance, teachers of French in Britain) the ideal teacher has near-native-speaker proficiency in the foreign language and comes from the same linguistic and cultural background as the learners".

The perceived poor command of the target language has serious implications for non-native speaker teachers. They include fear of negative social evaluation, high level of stress, and a resistance to change. When Reves and Medgyes (1994) surveyed 216 teachers of English, they found that language proficiency, self-perception and

teaching attitudes were closely linked. Wright (1991:65) shares the view that non-native speaker teachers usually feel insecure about their command of the language; however, he believes that they have “a very well-developed metalanguage born out of a structural/grammatical approach”.

Non-native speakers have, in fact, some advantages when compared to native speakers. Medgyes (1994) believes that they can serve as a model of the successful learner, they have insight into the linguistic and cultural needs of their learners and are generally more empathetic to their needs and problems. In addition, they have a detailed awareness of how the target language works, they share their students' mother tongue and can teach language learning strategies more effectively. Results coming from the survey conducted by Reves and Medgyes (1994) show that non-native speaker teachers have a deeper insight into the English language than their native colleagues. Non-native English speaker teachers are also generally better qualified, they tend to prepare their lessons more carefully and the fact that they share their students' mother tongue makes them better at teaching grammar.

Medgyes is not the only researcher to have highlighted the advantages of being a non-native speaking teacher. O'Neil (1991:304) believes that “fluent non-native speakers reveal strategies that can help other non-native learners to cope better with the target language. Also non-native teachers have one inestimable advantage over native speaker teachers, particularly those who have never learnt a foreign language. They have actually learned the target language as foreigners and have direct insight into and experience of the processes involved for other non-native speakers”.



According to Prodromu (1992:48), “the non-native speaker teachers of English not only can be, and often are, as ‘expert’ in English and ELT methodology as native speakers, but also have the added advantage of being able to draw on the vast reservoir of the students’ first language and culture”. Kershaw (1996) is another author who has written in support of the non-native speaker teacher: he has shown concerns about the issues of environment and culture and has highlighted the important role of the mother tongue in teaching the target language. This importance of the mother tongue is an issue which has also been explored by Murphy (1988) and Atkinson (1993). Atkinson believes that the possibility of resorting to a common language is one of the advantages that non-native speaker teachers have over their native colleagues. Other advantages include a deeper understanding and knowledge of English and familiarity with the students’ culture and environment.

According to Widdowson (1993:8), “non-native speaking teachers are advantaged when it comes to design the language in a way which can engage the students’ reality and activate the learning process”. He believes that “the context of learning contrived within the classroom setting has to be informed in some degrees by the attitude, beliefs, values and so on of the students’ cultural world. The non-native is in a better position to know what is appropriate in the contexts of language learning which need to be set up to achieve such objectives”. Phillipson (1992a:15) claims that “it is arguable, as a general principle, that non-native teachers may, in fact, be better qualified than native speakers, if they have gone through the complex process of acquiring English as a second or foreign language, have insight into the linguistic and

cultural needs of their learners, a detailed awareness of first-hand experience of using a second or foreign language”.

A very clear indicator of the value of the non-native teacher of English comes from a survey carried out by Medgyes and detailed in an article ‘Native or non-native: who’s worth more?’, published in *ELT Journal* in 1992. He asked two groups of ELT specialists and teachers, one attending a conference in London and one in Paris what type of teacher they would employ if they were the principal of a commercial ELT school based in Britain. They were given three options: i) they would employ only native English speakers, even if they were not qualified; ii) they would prefer native English speakers, but would employ qualified non-native English speakers rather than unqualified native English speakers; iii) the native/non-native issue would not be a selection criterion. Nobody voted for the first option. 67% of the respondents in London voted for the second option and 33% for the third. The results in Paris were exactly the opposite: 67% of the respondents voted for the third option and 33% voted for the second. The results of the survey indicate that the native/non-native distinction is still an issue, especially when it comes to recruiting teachers and, as Medgyes reports, a controversial one. Non-native speaker teachers are worth more than an unqualified native English speaker, but when it comes to choose from qualified native English speaker teachers and non-native English speaker teachers, there are still several “categories of consideration” involved (1992: 344).



## **1.5 The different training needs of native and non-native speaker teachers of English**

The author shares the view of many researchers and educationalists that the main issue does not lie in trying to determine who is a better teacher, or who is worth more. Both native and non-native speaker teachers have their own strengths and weaknesses, and as their strengths and weaknesses are different they can learn from each other. Working together, they can help each other identify the difficulties that their students are likely to encounter and find the most effective ways of dealing with them. However, as Willis (1981:41) reports, it is a fact that, even though “non-native speaker teachers of English overseas greatly outnumber native speaker teachers, there is still little on the market to help them, despite the fact that the problems they face are often considerably more daunting than the problems faced by native speaker teachers, both at home and overseas”. This is especially true in the case of in-service training courses. Medgyes (1992:340) maintains that “native and non-natives have an equal chance to become successful teachers, but the routes used by the two groups are not the same. This implies that teacher related research should be increased to gain a deeper understanding of the training requirements of non-native speakers so that their full potential may be realised.

As reported by several educationalists (Peck and Tucker 1973, Richards and Hino 1983, Bernhardt and Hammadou 1987, Medgyes 1992), there has been relatively little research focusing on the training requirements of non-native speaker teacher

students. One of the aims of this research is to identify the in-service training needs and expectations of this group of teachers, with particular reference to Italian teachers of E.F.L.. The research also analyses the structure and content of training courses, both in the UK and Italy, in order to determine if they meet the training requirements of this group of teachers.

As Bolitho reports (1979), an increasing number of non-native English speaker teachers come to the UK to receive further training. Some of them attend short, intensive courses, usually during their summer break. Various institutions, ranging from private language schools to universities, offer this type of courses. Some of these courses lead to a qualification, such as a Certificate in TEFL, others simply award a certificate of attendance. These courses usually cater for multinational overseas teachers, even if native English speakers are welcome, and offer training on specific aspects of English language teaching. There is, however, an increasing number of teachers, both native and non-native English speakers, who embark on longer programmes of education. Some teachers decide to take a year off teaching and follow a full-time course leading to a Master award. Others take advantage of the increasingly popular Distance Learning Programmes which are nowadays offered by many UK universities. In this way, they study to gain a British qualification without having to leave their jobs.

On the vast majority of both residential and Long Distance courses, native and non-native English speakers follow the same programme of study. The fact that the same course is offered to both groups of teachers seems to be based on the assumption that



they also have the same training needs and requirements. However, teachers in the two groups often have different educational backgrounds and great cultural differences.

Information obtained from the British Council (1996) shows that there are various routes that native English speakers can follow to obtain a qualification which will enable them to teach E.F.L. in the UK or overseas. Their choice can range from intensive four week certificate courses to Master courses, depending on the aspirations, academic qualifications and professional experience of the applicants. The British Council document states very clearly that many of these courses do not confer 'Teacher Qualified Status'. This means that certificate or diploma holders can find employment in private language schools in and outside Britain, but they will not be qualified to teach in British state schools, unless they also have a relevant BEd or PGCE. The entry requirements, the period of study and the content of these courses vary greatly.

Describing the E.F.L. teaching situation in the UK, Eayrs (1997) reports that the teachers of English who work in British Council recognised language schools fall into three categories: i) TEFL-qualified, ii) TEFL-initiated and iii) teacher qualified. TEFL-qualified teachers hold a relevant MA, a Cambridge RSA Diploma in TEFLA, a Diploma (Lic) from Trinity College London, or a PGCE in TESOL/TEFL. TEFL-initiated teachers have a Cambridge RSA Certificate in TEFLA, or a Certificate in TESOL from Trinity College London. Qualified teachers have obtained teacher qualified status for teaching other academic subjects than English, after following



one of the training schemes recognised by the Department of Education. Maley (1992:96-97) believes that “one of the features which characterises (or bedevils?) our occupation [as teachers of English] is its sheer diversity. Qualifications in the UK range from zero, through one week ‘taster’ courses, privately-certified one-month courses, the RSA-UCLES Cert. and Dip TEFLA, to PGCEs and MAs in TEFL and Applied Linguistics. Elsewhere in the world a similar variety prevails, ranging from five-year teacher college education for secondary school teachers to near zero for back-packing expatriates”. He describes the divide between native and non-native English speaker teachers and recognises that non-native English speaker teachers have usually undergone longer training and are more experienced than their native counterparts.

Non-native English speakers who intend to work as E.F.L. teachers in their own country usually follow a different route to gain qualified teaching status. Although the educational background of non-native English speaker teachers may vary accordingly to their country of origin, Parrott (1988), Ruzsa (1988), Eayrs (1997) and other researchers report that this group of teachers usually hold a degree in English Language and Literature and are likely to have received a thorough grounding in Linguistics. Di Giuliomaria (1987) reports that in Italy, as well as in many other countries, the undergraduate foreign language curricula is highly theoretical and suffers from an excessive emphasis on literature teaching. In Italy, graduates who intend to enter the teaching profession are required to take further examinations in various subjects such as literature, linguistics, methodology, etc. (the syllabus of these exams is detailed in Appendix 1). One distinctive aspect of the Italian system

is that there is no pre-service training and no teaching practice involved in any stage of the long and difficult process to become a qualified teachers of Modern Foreign Languages. (Chapter 2 provides an extensive description of the Italian education system and of the way in which Italian teachers gain their teaching qualifications.).

The educational background is only one of the potential differences between native and non-native speaker teachers. The following table summarises the differences between the educational backgrounds and the teaching situations of the two groups of teachers, as has so far been discussed in this chapter. The contents of the table are used as a basis for the discussion in following sections concerning the comparative training needs of native and non-native speaker teachers.

Native English speaker teachers	Non-native English speaker teachers
are secure in their command of English	feel insecure about their command of English
are not always aware of how their own language works	have a sophisticated level of language awareness and well-developed metalanguage
have different qualifications, ranging from zero to postgraduate level	are usually graduates with a sound grounding in linguistics
usually teach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• multinational classes</li> <li>• of motivated learners</li> <li>• in English-speaking countries</li> <li>• for short and intensive periods of time</li> </ul>	usually teach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monoglot classes</li> <li>• of variably motivated students</li> <li>• far from English-speaking countries</li> <li>• for 2/3 hours a week over a long period of study</li> </ul>
may not have been through the process of learning a foreign language	have been through the process of learning the same foreign language that their students are acquiring
are from a different culture than their students'	share their students' culture
do not usually speak their students' mother-tongue	speak their students' mother-tongue

Table 1.1 Differences between native and non-native English speaker teachers



### **1.5.1 The training needs of native speaker teachers of English**

It is useful to discuss the training needs of native English speaker teachers in order that the different needs of non-native English speaker teachers can be more clearly appreciated. Native English speaker teachers need training in developing a high level of language awareness. The fact that they are native speakers of English does not necessarily imply that they are aware of how their language works. As their training may have varied in content and length, some of them may be in need of furthering their knowledge of the language. They may not have been through the process of learning a foreign language: as a consequence, they may lack the type of insight that can only be acquired going through that process. In fact, researchers such as Medgyes (1994) and Phillipson (1992b) believe that all native speaker teachers of English should learn a foreign language as part of their training as teachers of E.F.L.. Native English speaker teachers may also find it difficult to fully appreciate the difficulties that some of their students may encounter while learning the target language and they may, therefore, need guidance in devising effective strategies to overcome these problems. This group of teachers usually teach multilingual classes, or, in the case of monoglot classes, are unlikely to speak their students' language: English is therefore the only language of instruction they can use and special training is required to make effective use of it.

Native English speaker teachers have specific training requirements determined by the very fact that they are native speakers of the language they teach. It therefore follows that they need to devote part of their training time to tackle these issues



which are peculiar to this group of teachers. The recognition that native and non-native speaker teachers have diverse needs plays a key role in the design of effective training courses: this is an issue that course designers can not afford to ignore.

### **1.5.2 The training needs of non-native speaker teachers of English**

The different educational background, the type of training previously received, the varying teaching situations and the great cultural differences often mean that it is very difficult to identify the needs and expectations of non-native speaker teachers of English. However, in the recent years, a number of researchers have recognised the key role that a detailed needs analysis plays in the design of effective training courses. This section illustrates the results which have emerged from previous surveys aimed at determining what non-native speaker teachers would like to see included in a training programme.

Berry (1990) investigated the needs of practising secondary school teachers of English in Poland. He administered the same questionnaire to two groups of teachers: the first group (25 teachers) represented a cross-section of teachers, while the second group was composed of 47 participants on an in-service programme that he ran. Teachers were asked to rank three components, "Methodology", "Theory" and "Language Improvement" according to what the teachers thought they needed most.

“Theory” was the least popular component among both group of teachers: according to Berry, this is probably due to the fact that they had already studied sufficient theory while they were at university. Both groups also agreed that what they most needed was language improvement. In spite of the great demand for this component, Berry believes that language improvement is often taken for granted on training courses. In contrast, he claims that it can play a central role in in-service teacher training, when it is integrated with a methodology component. The language of non-native teachers, in fact, has important implications non only in terms of their confidence in using the language, but also for methodology. Certain approaches to language teaching, for example the Communicative Approach, require high levels of proficiency in teachers. Results coming from all the surveys described in this section indicate that non-native English speaker teachers would like to devote a substantial part of their training time to improve their command of the target language. The importance of the language improvement component and the link between language proficiency and teacher’s status are analysed in detail in sections 4.4.5.2, 4.4.6 and 4.4.11.3 of Chapter 4.

Parrott (1990) conducted a survey among 146 non-native teachers of English attending a variety of training projects, both in the UK and overseas. The aim of the survey was to determine what would have been most helpful to them as classroom teachers. Teachers were asked to evaluate 51 possible components, characteristics and objectives of courses for E.F.L. teachers. Although the results which emerged from the questionnaire showed substantial differences, it was possible to draw four general points. Firstly, nearly all teachers put as a major priority their need to



improve their language skills. Secondly, teachers would like to learn methodological skills which will enable them to deal with specific aspects of the syllabus. Thirdly, most teachers do not want to be observed while teaching. Finally, they would like to be taught by English native speakers. All the four issues which have emerged from Parrott's questionnaire have been analysed in depth by the author in Chapter 4. Parrott believes that it is of paramount importance to determine the training needs of teachers and calls on all trainers to take account of those needs when they design the structure and the content of their courses. In contrast, he has found (1990:3) that "teachers of English often find themselves having to adapt their needs and 'wants' to pre-existing programmes of instruction. At best, they may follow programmes based on an objective assessment of needs while ignoring what the teachers themselves want to achieve".

In 1991 Jarvis published the results of a survey that she had carried out among non-native English speaker teachers who had followed a period of study in Leeds in 1989. The survey comprised a questionnaire that the teachers were asked to fill in before their arrival in Leeds, and a subsequent interview. She surveyed 33 teachers, of varying age and experience, coming from 15 different countries. The questionnaire included questions about the teachers' work and teaching situations, their needs and their aims. The results showed that all respondents wanted to improve their teaching techniques as well as to learn up-to-date methodological approaches. They seemed to be looking for solutions to specific problems, such as maintaining their students' motivation, organising classroom activities and producing their own material. They wanted to share their experiences with other colleagues and learn from each other.



18 teachers expressed the desire to improve their English: it was significant that 12 of these 18 teachers were among the most experienced. Although many of these issues have also emerged from other questionnaires, the author believes that there is one point which is especially interesting and relevant to the research she has conducted. As Jarvis reports (1991:6), “it is clear from the responses that the teachers are focused on the classroom and on adding to their stock of methods. One often hears scornful or rueful references to teachers’ desire for ‘tips’ and ‘recipes’, but ... we could as an alternative, consider this as an extremely valuable felt need on the part of the teachers, which we could understand and support”. As she states on page 8, trainers “should cease to condemn teachers’ search for tips for teaching, or additional method”. She also feels that using teachers’ interest in small-scale classroom projects “might have much greater chance of success than larger missions to introduce activity-based approaches, or communicative teaching per se”. It is, therefore, very important that theory should be built on classroom practice, which, according to Jarvis, is the only area in which “teachers have a chance of making informed, responsible choice”. The “theory versus practice issue” plays a particularly important role in the training of Italian teachers of English: this issue is explored in section 4.4.5.1 of Chapter 4 and section 6.4.2.3 of Chapter 6. Another interesting point which has emerged from Jarvis’s questionnaire is the teachers’ desire to share their experiences with their colleagues. Experienced teachers often work in isolation: the training course can therefore be seen as an opportunity to break this isolation and work co-operatively on a common project. The importance of allowing teachers to devote part of their training time to reflect on their practice is discussed in section 3.3.2.1.2 of Chapter 3 and section 6.4.2.1 of Chapter 6.

Kennedy (1993) conducted an interesting survey among teacher trainees studying at the Centre for English Language Teaching, at the University of Warwick. Although her survey is concerned with the needs of E.F.L. trainees on an initial teacher training course, some of her conclusions and suggestions are relevant to the research carried out by the author. Kennedy administered extensive questionnaires to 40 overseas trainees: she then asked a number of students to take part in structured follow-up interviews about issues which had concerned the whole group. One of the areas that she explored was: self-evaluation, supervision, and assessment. The conclusions that she reached on this matter are of particular interest to the author's research. Although this thesis is concerned with the training of experienced teachers, Italian teachers of E.F.L. have usually no experience of supervision and assessment. In Italy, student teachers do not receive any pre-service training and are not involved in any teaching practice. Once they have gained their Qualified Teacher Status and obtained a full-time position, their teaching is never observed or appraised. Italian schools are not subject to regular inspections: inspectors are called in only in cases of serious misconduct. Teachers have, therefore, no experience of evaluation, supervision and appraisal and tend to be fairly reluctant to have their teaching observed. However, following the increased importance of school-based Action-Research projects, Italian teachers are now encouraged to reflect on their teaching practice (Pozzo, Zuchegna, Pavoni, 1990). The position of experienced Italian teachers is therefore not too dissimilar to the position of trainees on initial training. Kennedy believes that trainees need special guidance when they are asked to reflect on their teaching: she has found that it is not always easy to develop skills such as self-evaluation and



intelligent reflection. Another important factor is the age and the maturity of the trainees: in her article she refers to the problems experienced by young trainees, but the author feels that age, maturity and, above all, status are also important factors for more experienced teachers. On page 164 Kennedy states that it is very important for all trainees to develop what she calls “the power of sensitive critique (not criticism)”. This is certainly an important issue for Italian teachers of E.F.L. who have long experience in teaching, but no experience whatsoever in being observed and in observing other teachers. Section 4.4.5.4 of Chapter 4 and section 6.4.2.4 of Chapter 6 explore this issue in greater depth.

Murdoch (1994:254) is particularly concerned with the actual methodology of training itself. He believes that “the methodology of teacher training has a major impact on what is of concern to most language teachers: the development of their own language skills”. He carried out a survey among 208 Sri-Lankan teachers of English who had taught for a number of years in schools. Among the variety of key issues addressed by the survey questions, two are especially relevant to the author’s research: the importance of the language component when compared to the other course components and the perceived relationship between language competence and successful teaching. When invited to rank the four skills according to their degree of importance, trainees indicated clearly that speaking was the most important skill for a teacher of English. It is therefore not surprising that, when asked what percentage of their training time they would like to spend simply developing their language skills, over 77% of the respondents wanted to spend 40% or more of their training time on this component. The importance of the language component is confirmed by the



answers to another question which required trainees to rank the components of a training programme, according to their importance: language improvement came in top position, followed by ELT methodology and educational psychology. The reason why Sri Lankan teachers attach a great importance to the language improvement component can be found in the answer they gave to another question of the survey. The overwhelming majority of the respondents agreed that a teacher's confidence is most dependent on his/her language proficiency. The results from Murdoch's questionnaire show clearly that Sri Lankan teachers of English are very concerned about their command of the language that they are required to teach and consider language improvement as an essential part of training courses. Chapter 4 describes and analyses the replies of the Italian teachers surveyed by the author: in particular, the importance of language work in education programmes and the link between language proficiency and teachers' status are discussed in detail in sections 4.4.5.2, 4.4.6, and 4.4.11.3 of Chapter 4.

Reves and Medgyes (1994) conducted an international survey on the non-native English speaking E.F.L./E.S.L. teacher's self-image. They surveyed 216 teachers, 8.3% native speakers and 91.7% non-native speakers, from ten countries (no Italian teachers took part in the survey). The questionnaire provided information about the teachers' background and experience, as well as their teaching situations. The main aim of the survey was to determine if native and non-native English speaker teachers perceive differences between their teaching and how this perception affects non-native English speaker teachers. Teachers were required to give examples of perceived differences in teaching behaviour between the two groups. They were also

asked how good was their command of the language and whether language difficulties affected their teaching. The results of the study indicate that i) native and non-native English speaker teachers teach differently; ii) the differences in the way they teach derive from their different command of the language; iii) the non-native English speaker teachers' self image is affected by the awareness of these differences. On page 364, Reves and Medgyes claim that "non-native speaker teachers are in a difficult situation because of their relative English speaking deficiencies. A constant realisation of their limitations in the use of English may lead to a poorer self-image, which may further deteriorate language performance, and in turn may lead to a cumulatively stronger feeling of inferiority". Reves and Medgyes, therefore, recommend that "efforts have to be made to improve the non-native speaker teachers' command of English to the utmost, to minimise the deficiencies so as to approximate their proficiency, as much as possible, to that of native speakers teachers of English".

Trying to identify and deal with the diverse needs of non-native English speaker teachers on training course is certainly a daunting task. However, research work carried out so far provides some indications about the varying training requirements and expectations of this group of teachers. One of the major differences between native and non-native speaker teachers lies in their different command of the language. Non-native speaker teachers are conscious of their linguistic deficit and need help not only to improve their command of English, but also in coming to terms with the fact that they will never achieve native-like proficiency. A large number of researchers and trainers, such as Edge (1988a), Berry (1990), Murdoch (1994),



Cullen (1994) and Medgyes (1996) have highlighted the importance of introducing a language improvement component in training courses aimed at non-native speaker teachers of English. This issue is explored in great depth in sections 4.4.6 and 4.4.11.3 of Chapter 4.

Another characteristic of this group of teachers is that they are likely to have followed a theoretical degree course. They have therefore a good knowledge of linguistics and methodological theories, but may lack practical training in specific aspects of language teaching. Teachers are very focused on their classroom practice and would, therefore, like to see the theoretical component of any education programme as stemming from their classroom teaching.

Non-native speaker teachers feel uncomfortable when their teaching is observed: it follows that special attention should be given to this aspect of teacher training and, in particular, to the role of the trainer/supervisor. Teachers are also likely to feel very isolated in their profession, and would therefore welcome the opportunity to share their problems and experiences with other colleagues: this implies that they should play a more active role in the training process.

Whilst the surveys described in this section supply significant information on the needs of non-native English speaker teachers, they are insufficiently specific to provide extensive information on the training needs and expectations of Italian teachers of E.F.L.. It is the aim of this thesis to fill this gap and to gather data about this specific group of non-native English speaker teachers. The author feels that the



identification of the trainees' training requirements is a necessary step in the design of any effective teacher training course. The ultimate goal is to create a basic structure and syllabus that goes as far as possible towards meeting the participants' needs as learners.

## **1.6 Conclusions**

It is increasingly recognised that native and non-native speaker teachers now have an equal chance of becoming successful teachers. However, even if the role of the non-native speaker teacher of English has been recently re-evaluated, there has been relatively little research focusing on the training needs and expectations of this group of teachers. An increasing number of Italian teachers decide either to come to the UK to attend a training course, or to follow one of the distance learning programmes that many UK institutions now offer. These courses are usually open to both native and non-native English speaker teachers. As the training needs of these two groups of teachers differ in many respects, it is very important that course designers bear these differences in mind and plan courses in a way to meet these varying requirements, building on each trainee's strengths and strengthening individual weaknesses.

To conclude this chapter, the main objectives of this thesis can be listed as:

1. determining the reasons for the dissatisfaction of Italian teachers of E.F.L. with existing in-service training courses;
2. identifying the training needs and requirements of this group of teachers;
3. determining if these needs and requirements are met by existing training courses, run both in Italy and the UK;
4. putting forward recommendations on how the content of these courses can be changed in order to meet the requirements and expectations of this group of teachers.

The training needs of teacher trainees depend greatly on their educational background and their teaching situation. The next chapter provides an extensive description of the education system in Italy, with particular regard to the teaching of Modern Foreign Languages. It also illustrates, and comments on, the different stages of teacher education at university level as well as on the recruitment system for Modern Foreign Language teachers.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Teacher education in Italy**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter gives a comprehensive description of the various stages of teacher education in Italy. As the Italian education system differs significantly from its equivalent in the UK, the first section of the chapter outlines the structure of the Italian school system. The aim is to provide a complete picture of the types of schools where Modern Foreign Languages are taught and of the various tasks Modern Foreign Language teachers are required to carry out.

This first section is followed by the description of the Education system at university level, with particular reference to the course of study offered by Departments of Modern Foreign Languages at Italian universities. This section also includes comments from various Italian educationalists on the shortfalls of the present system. The third part of this chapter illustrates the procedure Modern Foreign Language



graduates have to follow to become fully qualified teachers in Italian schools. The section also includes comments on this recruitment system.

The training needs of teacher trainees are greatly dependant on their educational background and their teaching situation. This is certainly the case for Italian teachers of E.F.L.. The Modern Foreign Languages degree curriculum offered by Italian universities, the procedure in which graduates obtain their Teacher Qualified Status and the way in which English is taught in Italian schools are all important factors in determining the future training requirements of this group of teachers.

## **2.2 The structure and organisation of the Italian Education System**

Compulsory education begins at the age of 6 and continues up to the age of 14. At the primary and secondary levels, the school year starts in mid-September and finishes in mid-June. The school day usually consists of 4 taught hours at the primary level and 4 or 5 taught hours at the secondary level for six days a week. While in British schools teaching takes place in the afternoon as well as in the morning, in most Italian schools all teaching takes place only in the morning: school starts at half past eight in the morning and finishes at half past twelve or half past one. However, most primary and lower secondary schools offer optional afternoon activities: it is left to the parents to decide the number of hours that their children attend school in

the afternoon. Students in higher secondary schools have a varying number of contact hours, depending on the type of school they attend. For instance, students at schools similar to English Grammar Schools attend six days a week up to a total of 29 hours per week, while students in vocational and technical schools have up to 41 contact hours per week. The differences in timetable between school types is due to the number and the nature of the subjects they study. Students are expected to carry out additional study and prepare school assignments outside the school period.

All classes in Italian schools of all levels are mixed-ability classes: 'setting' and 'streaming' are not options available to Italian teachers of any subjects. Students belonging to the same class study the same subjects and have the same teachers: they have one classroom allocated to them and it is the teachers who move between classrooms. All students are supposed to achieve a standard level of knowledge of the subject: it is the teacher's task to devise suitable activities to help those who encounter problems in the learning process. At primary and lower secondary school level, pupils take the same number and the same type of examinations. All students attending the same type of higher secondary school study the same subjects and take the same final examinations.

### **2.2.1 Primary Education**

Primary Education in Italy starts at the age of 6 and is compulsory up to the age of 11. As school starts in mid-September, children born between September and

December can either start school before their sixth birthday or wait until the beginning of the following school year. Primary Education is based on a national curriculum. Before the 1985 Primary Education Act (Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 1985), it was divided into two stages, the first lasting two years and the second lasting three years, with formal testing at the end of each stage. In 1987, the two stages were unified into one single five year cycle and pupils are now examined only at the end of this cycle. Pupils' proficiency and motivation are assessed on the basis of teachers' observation throughout the school year and appear in the form of annual written reports on a personal record card designed to offer a thorough profile of the pupil's personality. Pupils are expected to progress from one class to the next one without interruption. However, if a certain pupil appears to have great difficulty in coping with the syllabus of a particular class, teachers may decide that it is in his/her interest to attend the same class for two consecutive years.

Pupils study Italian, Geography, History, Mathematics, Science, and Physical Education. Although the teaching of Modern Foreign Languages was made compulsory in 1990, the practical implementation of the new directive is still in process and not all primary schools are in a position to offer this subject. This is due to a shortage of teachers in certain geographical areas: the Ministry of Education is currently re-training a number of primary school teachers in an effort to overcome this shortage and ensure adequate teaching provision. The Ministry of Education leaves it up to each school to decide which language to teach: however, as Pulcini reports (1994:49), "the authorities have had to face an almost unanimous demand for English". In fact, the primary school national curriculum itself stresses the



importance of English as a lingua franca in international exchanges and as the main language used in technological fields, with particular reference to computer language.

### **2.2.2 Lower Secondary Schools**

After the five year period at a primary school, pupils must complete their compulsory education at a lower secondary school. At present, this consists of three years, but the Italian Parliament is currently examining an Education Reform Bill which would extend compulsory education up to the age of 16, thus bringing Italy in line with the other European countries. All subjects of the national curriculum, with the exception of Religious Education, are compulsory. The compulsory subjects are: Italian, History, Geography, a Foreign Language, Mathematics, Natural Science, Arts, Music, Technical Education and Physical Education (Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 1977). Pupils spend between 25 and 30 hours per week at school. Each school is left free to divide the school year into either two semesters or three terms. Pupils take at least two oral and three written tests in all subjects per semester or term. They receive a written report on their achievements and behaviour twice a year. If a pupil fails to achieve certain standards in a number of subjects, s/he will be required to retake the whole year.

At the end of the final year, pupils are required to take a number of written and oral examinations. They are assessed by a panel composed of all their school teachers and

presided over by an external examiner. Pupils have to take written examinations in Italian, Mathematics, the Foreign Language, and Science and be orally examined by the panel in all subjects. It is important to point out that all final oral examinations in Italy are open to the public: school-friends, parents or in fact anyone interested in listening to the examination, have the right to sit through it. Successful pupils are awarded a *Diploma di Scuola Media* which gives them access to any Higher Secondary school. They also receive a final assessment comprising a written description of their aptitudes, behaviour and achievement.

### **2.2.3 Modern Foreign Language Teaching in Lower Secondary Schools**

As described in the previous section, the teaching of a modern foreign language is compulsory in all lower secondary schools. The Ministry for Education leaves schools free to choose which languages to teach. All schools usually offer at least two foreign languages. For the vast majority, these will be English and French. German is extensively taught in the north-east of Italy, while Spanish is available only in a very limited number of schools. English has become increasingly the language favoured by most pupils and parents. Although the Italian educational policy promotes the diversification of language provision, Pulcini (1994) reports that 60% of Italian students in state school education choose to study English as a foreign language. The demand for English has increased steadily since the 1960s and the

Ministry for Education had to intervene officially in order to prevent the suppression of teaching posts for French.

The teaching of the foreign language is closely linked with the teaching of the pupils' mother tongue: both subjects are seen as contributing to the development of the learner's overall ability to communicate successfully in everyday life. The main goal of foreign language teaching is to promote the ability to use the target language effectively for purposes of practical communication. Teaching initially concentrates on developing speaking and listening skills while reading and writing are introduced at a later stage, gradually reaching equal weighting for each of the skill areas. Teachers are also encouraged to use cross-curricular themes as the best way to make the teaching of the foreign language relevant to the teaching of the other subjects of the curriculum. Considerable time is also devoted to familiarising pupils with the history, geography, traditions and way of life of the countries where the language is spoken. As Pulcini (1994:49) reports, "in Italy there is widespread agreement over the notion that the 'Italian way' to study foreign languages should be based on a close link between language and culture. The aim is to encourage positive attitudes to speakers of foreign languages and a sympathetic approach to other cultures and civilisations". The importance of the teaching of culture and its implication for the training of lower secondary school language teachers is discussed in detail in section 5.4.3.1.1 of Chapter 5.

At the end of their three years, pupils are required to take a written and an oral examination. The written examination usually involves some form of narrative, for



instance writing a letter to a foreign pen-pal. The oral examination consists of a conversation in the target language between the pupil and his/her teacher. Pupils may be required to prepare a short talk on a topic which is somehow linked to other subjects of the school curriculum or to participate in a sustained, unrehearsed conversation.

#### **2.2.4 Higher Secondary Schools**

All students who have been awarded a Diploma of Lower Secondary Education have access to any higher secondary school. Higher secondary schools are non-compulsory and their courses generally last five years, with pupils leaving at the age of 19. There are about 25 different types of higher secondary schools: each type of school follows a specific national curriculum. Students choose the type of school they wish to attend, where all subjects studied are compulsory. The syllabus varies according to the type of school, but the following subjects are studied in all Higher Secondary schools: Italian Language and Literature, a Foreign Language, History, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, and Physical Education. The total number of subjects studied varies between 13, in schools similar to English Grammar Schools, and 30, in technical and vocational schools. Some subjects are studied for five years, while others only for two or three years.

Similar to lower secondary schools, each school is left free to divide the school year either into two semesters or three terms. Students take at least two oral and three written tests in all subjects per semester or term. They receive written reports on their achievements at the end of the first semester in those schools which have opted for a two-semester school year, and at the end of the first and the second term in schools with a three-term school year. At the end of the year, the class teachers and the headmaster meet to award final assessment marks to the students. To progress from one class to the next, students must have reached the minimum required mark in all subjects included in the curriculum. There are no specific criteria regarding failure, and the decision to pass or fail is at the discretion of the teachers and the headmaster. Typically, if students have failed one or two subjects they are asked to attend special courses organised by the school during the summer holidays before being allowed to join the next class. If they have failed a considerable number of subjects they must retake the whole year.

At the end of the five years, the class teachers decide which students have reached an acceptable degree of preparation which would enable them to take the final examinations. The final examinations consist of two written examination and an oral examination. In their first written examination, students are required to write an essay on one of the following topics: Italian literature, Italian history, current affairs and a topic related to the specific type of school they have attended. Students must also take a second written examination on a subject selected by the Ministry of Education on 15th April each year and which varies according to the type of school. The oral examination deals with two subjects, one of which is chosen by the candidate and the

other by the Examining Panel of external examiners from a choice of four subjects specified by the Ministry of Education. One of these four subjects is always Italian Language and Literature. Similar to lower secondary schools, the oral examination is open to the public. All students who have been awarded a Diploma of Higher Secondary Education can enrol for any university course without further assessment.

### **2.2.5 Modern Foreign Language Teaching in Higher Secondary Schools**

The Modern Foreign Language syllabuses differ greatly according to the type of school. The National Curriculum for Higher Secondary Education states that each school must offer at least one Modern Foreign Language. However, certain schools require students to learn a second or even a third foreign language. In most schools, the first two years are usually devoted to forming a sound base of the skills and language required for further and more specialised study of the language. In the last three years of Higher Secondary Education, Modern Foreign Language syllabuses reflect the specialisation of the school in which they are taught. Modern Foreign Languages are regarded as key subjects and are likely to be one of those subjects chosen by the Ministry of Education on the 15th April for the final examinations which take place in June, at the end of Higher Secondary Schools.



As far as English is concerned, syllabuses in schools similar to English Grammar schools place great emphasis on the study of English and American Literature and History. In other schools, students specialise in Business English, English for Tourism, English for Computer Studies and Technical English. The term 'Technical English' is used to describe the English taught in Technical schools, such as Aeronautical and Marine Schools, as well as more vocational schools which train students in a variety of fields, such as Agriculture, Industry, Handicrafts and Trade. Apart from learning the language, students also study the culture and civilisation of the major English-speaking countries.

The national curriculum for higher secondary schools has not undergone any major change in the past thirty years. In 1985 Pozzo reported the increasing dissatisfaction of many foreign language teachers with the existing syllabus. She put forward a number of reasons which could explain this dissatisfaction. The curriculum requires that languages are taught *ab initio*, even though students have studied them for three years in lower secondary schools. In some cases, absolute beginners are in same class as students who have studied the language in primary or lower secondary schools. The emphasis of the curriculum is on the written form of the language and on the teaching of literature: the curriculum has failed to take on board new methodologies, such as the Communicative Language Teaching approach. The content of the curriculum is perceived as obsolete and unable to equip students with the knowledge and skills that the job market requires of them. Teachers have increasingly distanced themselves from the requirements of the curriculum. Although they can not change the syllabus content, they are free to choose their course-books and the way in which

the language is presented and taught. However, they are faced with the problem of reconciling the importance that the curriculum places on the more formal aspects of the language with their desire to adopt a communicative approach to language teaching. The dissatisfaction of Italian teachers of E.F.L. with the existing curriculum is discussed in section 4.4.8 of Chapter 4 and sections 5.4.3.1.5 and 5.4.3.2.5 of Chapter 5.

Students take written and oral tests throughout the school year: the type and the content of both written and oral tests depend on the curriculum of the school that the students attend. Students are usually required to take three written tests and at least two oral tests every term or semester. Individual teachers are responsible for devising all written and oral tests that the students take before their final examinations. This is a very sensitive aspect of language teaching and one which requires special attention. Dawson (1996) has reported the difficulties that teachers encounter when faced with the arduous task of designing appropriate tests. The great majority of teachers consider testing as an administrative obligation rather than as a useful way of ensuring that learning has taken place. The fact that teachers experience a degree of difficulty in finding effective ways to test their students has also emerged from the author's research. This issue is discussed in section 4.4.5.5 of Chapter 4 and sections 5.4.3.1.2 and 5.4.3.2.5 of Chapter 5.

## **2.2.6 Outlines of the proposed reform of the Italian Education System**

The proposed reform of the Italian Education system has been under the examination and study of the Italian Parliament for more than twenty years. The original reform plan has undergone considerable changes and it is still under review. However, agreement seems to have been reached on a certain number of issues.

According to the proposals for the new Education Act (1992), compulsory education will be extended up to the age of 16, thus bringing Italy in line with the other European countries. Higher Secondary schools will still last 5 years. However, whilst they are currently non-compulsory, the first two years will become compulsory with all schools following the same national curriculum. As Bertoni Del Guercio reports (1991), the proposals do not rule out in principle the possibility for students to complete their compulsory education in private, vocational institutions. After the first two years, students who decide to continue their studies will probably have a choice of 16 different courses. As far as Modern Foreign Language teaching is concerned, the study of at least one foreign language will be compulsory throughout the five year course.

The proposals put forward by the committee in charge of preparing the new National Curriculum for higher secondary schools (A.A.V.V. 1987, and Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 1992) have been piloted in a number of technical schools. The



committee intend to take on board the suggestions coming from students and teachers involved in these pilot projects and amend the syllabus accordingly, before it is discussed and voted in Parliament. As far as foreign language teaching is concerned, the project involves the teaching of two foreign languages for the first two compulsory years of Higher Secondary Education. At the end of the two years, students who decide to continue their education will be able to study at least one foreign language for a further three years. However, most experimental projects involve the study of a second and sometimes a third foreign language, depending on the specialisation chosen by the students during their final three years. The new proposals will also make substantial changes to the actual content of the syllabus for Modern Foreign Languages. One of the main objectives will be the development of communicative competence, while less emphasis will be placed on the written form of the language. The new curriculum will also provide teachers with clearer guidelines as far as teaching methodologies and testing are concerned.

Another aspect of the education system which is under revision and is likely to be modified is the type of examinations that students have to take at the end of higher secondary schools. The proposals, which are currently awaiting to be discussed and voted on in Parliament, will modify both the number and type of examinations that students will have to take and the composition of the Examining Panel. Students currently take two written and two oral examinations, whilst under the new system they will sit four written examinations and will be examined orally in all subjects studied during their final year. The Examining Panel will be composed of all of their final year teachers and presided over by an external examiner.

## 2.3 Education at University Level

The Italian university system includes:

- State universities;
- Polytechnics or Technical Universities;
- Libere Università, i. e. non-State universities
- University Institutes;
- Universities for Foreigners;
- Higher Schools under special legislation.

The very great majority of universities are run by the state. A few non-State universities have been legally recognised by the Italian State, and award qualifications which have to correspond to the official qualifications granted by State institutions. Following the 1990 Reform Act, universities are organised to provide education on three different levels: i) University Diploma courses, ii) Degree courses, iii) Specialisation Schools which offer postgraduate courses.

A 1993 document published by the Italian Ministry for Universities and Scientific and Technological Research states on page 10 that Italian degree courses “are intended for students to acquire cultural, scientific and methodological knowledge at a high degree so that, by deep theoretical investigation of the most varied questions and initial training to research, they may subsequently take up greater professional responsibilities”. The Italian degree is a non-professional, academic qualification

which confers the final title of 'Dottore'. Professional qualifications, that is the titles legally required for the practice of professions, such as architects, engineers, lawyers, physicians, and teachers, are gained through further special State examinations.

All students who have successfully completed Higher Secondary Education can enrol at Italian universities. In principle, access to degree courses is not subject to any restriction. However, in recent years a number of universities have introduced '*numerus clausus*' combined with selective examinations. These restrictions have been made necessary by the increasing number of students who apply for undergraduate courses. Each university decides the maximum number of available places and, if enrolment applications exceed this number, applicants are selected according to the mark they obtained in their final exams at higher secondary school. Applicants may also be asked to sit selective examinations.

There is no specific duration for a degree course. However, students are expected to progress through the taught element in between four to six years. The number of modules a degree course involves varies according to the type of course or the university department which offers it. Students sit a number of written examinations, but they are mostly assessed through oral examinations open to the public. To be awarded their degree, students are required to carry out research under the supervision of a university lecturer. The aforementioned document from the Ministry of Education states on page 14 that "this research work is to provide an original contribution to scientific knowledge in a specific discipline". The choice of the subject is left to the student and the topic of the research agreed with his/her



supervisor. The time spent on this research varies greatly according to the effort put in by the student and by the nature of the research. In some instances the thesis may be completed to coincide with the final exams. However, in extreme cases the thesis may take several years to complete. The thesis is submitted and then 'discussed' in front of a panel composed of the student's supervisor, an internal examiner and nine other academics. This final oral examination is open to the public. The thesis is awarded a mark which combines with the examination marks to give a final degree grade. On successful completion of a degree course students obtain the title of 'Dottore' in the chosen subject or subjects.

### **2.3.1 The degree course in Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures**

The curriculum of a degree course in Modern Foreign Languages requires students to take exams in subjects including Literature, History, Philology, Glottology and Linguistics, as well as the foreign languages themselves. The main emphasis, however, lies on Literature which is studied for the whole length of the course and constitutes the main bulk of examinations which students are required to take. Very few universities offer vocational courses in subjects which are relevant to future teachers, even if the teaching profession is the most popular choice among graduates in Foreign Languages. Modules such as Language Teaching Methodology or Applied Linguistics are on offer at some universities, but they do not involve any teaching

practice. As Bresadola, Frascari and Pantaleoni explain (1979:96), Italian graduates in Modern Foreign Languages “obtain one type of degree which entitles them to undertake academic research, take up jobs in industry, or become secondary school teachers”. This implies that the degree course has a general nature and does not provide specific training, except possibly for academic research.

A number of Italian educationalists and researchers have called for a major change in the content of Modern Foreign Language curricula. According to Di Giuliomaria (1987:26), “Italian foreign language curricula suffer from an excessive emphasis on literature teaching”. He would like universities to provide students with curricula which might direct them to the teaching profession: subjects connected with applied linguistics and language teaching should be given a special place in courses aimed at future teachers. This view is shared by D’Addio Colosimo (1980) who also draws attention to another problem area: the low level of competence in the language achieved by students at the end of their degree course. Zagrebelsky (1983) conducted a survey among 300 practising teachers of Modern Foreign Languages and asked them whether university studies had equipped them with the professional knowledge and skills they needed in their jobs. 64% of the respondents gave a partially negative answer and 28% said that they had been inadequately prepared for their profession. There were two major causes for dissatisfaction: firstly, teachers were not happy with the level of language competence they had reached at the end of their degree course. Secondly, they thought that they had not received sufficient preparation in areas related to teaching methodology. According to Zagrebelsky, undergraduate curricula attach disproportionate importance to literary studies when compared to the teaching



of the language itself: this is proven by the number of staff involved in the teaching of literature, compared to those who teach the language. Pozzo (1985) shares her view: according to her research, in 1985 there were 119 chairs in Glottology and Romance Philology compared to 15 chairs in Applied Linguistics and related studies. Pulcini (1987:5) also reported that teachers “complain about the inadequacy of the linguistic training which is imparted at university. In Italy, modern language degrees leading up to the teaching profession are in most cases based on the study of literature and leave little or no room to the study of language itself and of other areas of great relevance for the prospective language teacher.” The relatively limited importance attached to the study of the language itself has serious implications for the training of Italian language teachers. These implications are detailed and discussed in sections 4.4.5.2, 4.3.6 and 4.4.11.3 of Chapter 4.

Antonetti, Baione, Bresadola et al. (1990) draw attention to another area of teacher preparation in need of urgent change: the lack of any form of pre-service teacher training. In fact, graduates who wish to enter the teaching profession are not required to follow any postgraduate course to be trained as teachers. In contrast, they have to follow a fairly long procedure involving more written and oral exams. They are expected to further their theoretical knowledge, but they are not involved in any teaching practice, nor receive any vocational training. The combination of a highly theoretical programme of study and the lack of any pre-service training involving teaching practice has serious implications for the in-service training of Italian language teachers. The role of theory and practice in training courses will be discussed in section 4.4.5.1 of Chapter 4 and section 6.4.2.3 of Chapter 6.



The Ministry of Education has recognised the need to develop the field of pre-service education, as the starting point of any project concerned with teacher preparation. In 1973 an Act of Parliament sanctioned that the responsibility for pre-service teacher education lies with the universities. However, the act was never acted upon. In 1980, another Act of Parliament put pressure on universities to design different university curricula for students who intended to enter the teaching profession. A national commission was set up by the Ministry of Education to consider initial teacher education and it was specifically asked to make recommendations on how to promote initiatives in this field. The final report produced by this commission called for major changes in the content of university courses.

The report stressed the importance that future teachers should follow the same degree course on offer to other Modern Foreign Language undergraduates. However, it recognised the excessive emphasis placed on literature teaching and recommended that more importance should be given to language teaching. It also stated the importance of pre-service teacher education and suggested that universities should set up postgraduate courses for all future teachers. These courses should be strictly full-time, should last two years, and should have only a limited number of places available. They should offer a number of subjects common to all future teachers, as well as subjects aimed at future teachers of specific disciplines. The report stressed the importance of introducing a practical teaching component in the form of work placement at a school for a year. Universities and schools should co-operate in the organisation of the teaching component: school teachers should be selected to act as 'tutors' to the trainees and as a link between the two institutions.

None of these proposals have been acted upon so far. As Quartapelle reports (1996), there are very few universities who offer optional modules in language teaching methodology, and the main emphasis of undergraduate curricula is still on literary and philological studies. There is still no pre-service training for graduates who wish to enter the teaching profession. There are a number of reasons which can explain the unwillingness on the part of Italian Universities to implement such changes. According to Di Giuliomaria (1987:26), “universities may not have a sufficient number of competent lecturers of language teaching methodology. It is also true that some of the changes would probably not be met with favourable reactions by some of the teachers of literature”. The suggestion to offer only a limited number of places to future teachers has also caused some degree of controversy as this is not common practice in most universities where unlimited numbers of students can register for all courses. Finally, the task of organising work placement in schools is seen as complex and difficult to implement and would require a complete readjustment of university cultural horizons.

## **2.4 The recruitment of Modern Foreign Language Teachers**

Graduates can start working as ‘supply teachers’ as soon as they have obtained their degree, without having undergone any teacher training. They can apply directly to the headmasters, who can then appoint them to replace teachers on short-term leave. ‘Supply teachers’ are awarded one ‘point’ for each month they teach. If they want to be considered for annual positions, they have to apply to the Local Education



Authority. In this case, they are ranked in lists according to their graduation mark and years of previous service. They are awarded twelve points for each year in which they have worked, thus allowing teachers to work their way up the list. This procedure is strictly adhered to, and it is impossible for a headmaster to have any input into who works for them and for a teacher to 'queue jump'. Most graduates who wish to enter the teaching profession work as 'supply teachers' for a certain number of years, while they are waiting to take their exams to obtain their fully Qualified Teacher Status.

Before 1981 the way in which teachers were recruited lacked continuity and consistency. Up to 1974, the system involved a series of examinations in which candidates competed at national level. As Bresadola, Frascari and Pantaleoni report (1979:96), the examination was based on the content of university curricula and was mainly aimed at testing the candidate's theoretical knowledge of the subject. "No specific teaching skills were required or assumed, no expertise in classroom management, or knowledge of learning theories or child development". In 1974, this examination was replaced by 'qualifying courses', the so-called 'corsi abilitanti'. These courses were organised on a regional basis and were open to 'supply teachers' with at least 2 years of teaching experience. The courses offered 300 teaching hours on specific subjects, such as philosophy of education and classroom management. At the end of these courses, teachers would gain a title called 'abilitazione' which qualified them to work in state secondary schools. However, as Bresadola, Frascari and Pantaleoni explain (1979) these courses were not perceived by the Ministry of



Education as particularly effective in training future teachers, but mainly as an easy way to provide enough teachers to meet schools' demand (Quartapelle, 1992).

The 1975 ministerial circular was replaced by a ministerial decree in 1981 which set up a new recruitment system and remains in force up to the present day. Graduates who intend to enter the teaching profession are now required to take two state exams (*esami concorso*), where they are assessed by a commission of examiners appointed by the Ministry of Education. Local Education Authorities are responsible for organising the examinations at regional level. The Ministry of Education appoints a number of commissions of examiners on the basis of the number of candidates applying in each region. The commission is usually formed by four examiners, one of which is an expert in school legislation. The structure and the syllabus of the examinations varies according to the subject and to the type of school for which the candidates are applying.

Pellegrini (1987) provides a detailed description of the various issues concerning the new recruitment system. Graduates applying to teach in lower secondary schools (age 11-14) must take a written exam in the foreign language. They are required to write an essay in the foreign language, on one of the following topics:

- the history, description and use of the target language;
- social and cultural aspects of the target language;
- the historical development of key aspects of language teaching;

- a detailed plan of a teaching unit on a topic given. The plan must include a range of tasks and activities as well as provide some form of assessment.

Candidates who score a minimum of 28 points out of 40 are then required to take an oral examination, open to the public, on a fixed syllabus (see Appendix 1). The candidate is expected to respond fluently in the target language on the following topics :

- general education and specific features of Italian lower secondary schools, including relevant school legislation;
- the National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages in lower secondary schools;
- approaches and techniques for the development of language skills in general and foreign language skills in particular; cross-curriculum planning, with special reference to the teaching of the mother tongue;
- analysis of the language on its various levels (syntactic, phonological, morphological, and functional) according to the most recent theories of language and language acquisition;
- the cultural heritage of the target language, its ethnical and linguistic features, and the major works of three writers, one of whom must be contemporary;
- the most significant contributions of psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics to the analysis and the teaching of languages;
- contemporary literature and newspapers and magazines for pre-adolescents and adolescents as well as authentic audio-visual material.

For graduates applying to teach in upper secondary schools (14-19) the requirements are more complex. They must take two written exams in the foreign language. The first exam consists of an essay on one of the following topics: literature, history, economics or culture and society. In the second written exam candidates are given a text of about 40 lines of a contemporary foreign language author and are required to write either a linguistic or a 'didactic' commentary on it. Candidates who score a minimum of 40 points in the two written tests are then required to take an oral exam on a fixed syllabus, which includes the following topics:

- the Italian constitution in its historical development, the laws and regulations of the Italian school system;
- general education topics relating to the learners' age;
- short and long-term curriculum planning;
- the National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages in higher secondary schools;
- the foreign language culture in its literary, historical, economic and social aspects, from its origin to the present day;
- foreign language methodology, testing and assessment;
- E.S.P. curricula in Italian higher secondary schools: textbooks, school and class libraries, audio-visual aids;
- the evolution of language teaching theories, with particular reference to the last three centuries;
- detailed knowledge of three authors chosen from the most representative writers in the foreign language literature and of two contemporary authors who have



contributed significantly to the history, culture or economy of the countries where the foreign language is spoken;

- the teaching plan for an E.S.P. unit and relevant assessment;
- a detailed bibliography on each of the previous topics.

Candidates can study for their examinations on their own or can choose to attend preparatory courses, run by various institutions. These courses are not recognised by the Ministry of Education, and are usually fairly expensive. As Lindsey (1987) reports, because of the very nature of these examinations, attendance to these course does not guarantee that candidates reach a level of preparation which will allow them to pass them.

These state exams are highly selective and only a limited number of candidates are admitted to the oral examination. They should take place every two years, but in fact they have often been cancelled and postponed for several years. Quartapelle believes (1996) that this is mainly due to the long time required to examine the large numbers of candidates who sit these examinations. Candidates who fail the examination are allowed to apply again, as many times as they wish. However, there is an age limit: candidates must be under 40 years of age.

Successful candidates are awarded a title called 'abilitazione' which qualifies them to work in state secondary schools. They are also awarded a mark which combines with their graduation mark. The Education Authorities compile lists where teachers are ranked by their final mark. Teaching posts are then allocated to people enrolled in

these lists, starting with the ones with the highest mark. As far as Modern Foreign Language teachers are concerned, they may be offered a position at any secondary school. This means that they can be required to teach anything, from literature to any technical and business aspects of the language. However, teachers are required to teach only one subject and not two or more as can often happen in UK schools.

If a successful candidate has not been offered a position before new state exams have been completed, s/he retains the title, 'abilitazione', but has to apply to sit new entry examinations. This happens fairly often as the number of positions on offer has gradually been reduced. The high selectivity of the examinations and the limited time available to be offered a position usually combine to make the process of obtaining a permanent teaching position extremely protracted. Sometimes special state exams are set for 'supply teachers' with a certain number of years of experience. These exams are similar to the ones described above, but the final grade will also take into account the 'points' accumulated in previous years.

Once the successful candidates have obtained their permanent full-time position they have to pass their probationary year. During this year they are required to follow a compulsory 40 hours in-service course during which they are lectured on various aspects of teaching methodology as well as on school legislation. An assembly composed of all teachers in the school where the probationer is working appoint a 'tutor'. The tutor is usually an experienced teacher of the same subject to whom the probationer can turn, should s/he experience any problems. At the end of the year, the probationer is required to submit a project work to the school committee responsible

for in-service teacher training. The topic of this project work is agreed between the probationer and his/her tutor. It is usually on an issue closely linked with his/her work at the school, but it can also concern more theoretical aspects of teaching methodology. The project work is examined by a committee which includes the headmaster and the probationer's tutor: if the committee finds the project work of satisfactory quality the probationer is considered to have successfully completed his/her probation year and his/her appointment is confirmed and becomes permanent.

#### **2.4.1           Comments on the recruitment system for Modern Foreign Language Teachers**

The recruitment system introduced with the 1982 ministerial decree has caused a certain degree of controversy among both candidates and educationalists. The main issues causing controversy are the content of the examination syllabuses and the way examiners are recruited. There are also concerns about the probationary year which precedes the final appointment of the newly qualified teacher.

The principles which inspire the written and oral examinations have been revised and brought-up-to-date. However, some educationalists, such as Quartapelle (1996), question the system altogether: they do not believe that teachers should be recruited solely through a series of examinations, which do not involve any teaching practice. Other educationalists and examiners, including Pellegrini (1987), believe that the



examination syllabuses still place too much importance on literature when, in fact, the schools where literature is taught are fairly limited in number. In addition, it must be remembered that literature is the main subject in all degree courses, therefore it can be assumed that graduates are fairly familiar with the subject by the end of their university courses. Candidates are not provided with a bibliography to which they can refer nor with guidelines on how they should set out to prepare for these examinations. In contrast, it is up to them to compile a relevant bibliography on all the topics included in the examination syllabus. Pellegrini (1987: 24) believes that as “in Italy there is no pre-service teacher training and all the previous examinations were totally different, even the most conscientious and good-willed candidate will find it difficult to plan an essential bibliography”. Zagrebelsky (1983) points out that these examinations require from candidates knowledge and skills that Modern Foreign Language graduates simply do not have. In addition, she finds that the Higher Secondary School Examination Syllabus is far too broad and excessively concerned with cultural and factual knowledge.

There are also a series of objections concerning the examining panel. The first objection relates to the way examiners are selected. The examining panel is composed of two foreign language teachers, an expert in Italian school legislation, and it is presided over by a university professor, or an inspector, or a headmaster. Di Giuliomaria (1987) questions the principles for recruiting these examiners and calls for them to be selected according to clearly-defined qualifications. At the moment, any fully qualified secondary state school teacher, who has not incurred any disciplinary sanctions, can be appointed as an examiner. The Ministry of Education

selects the examiners solely on the basis of their graduation mark, which may have been obtained over 20 years previously. Examiners are not expected to have any further qualification apart from their degree diploma and their 'abilitazione', they are not required to have specific knowledge or experience in training teachers and they are not trained to become examiners. Pellegrini also reports (1987:22) that many examiners appointed by the Ministry of Education resign before commencing work and it is then the responsibility of regional school authorities to appoint substitutes. It follows that "while the law aims at guaranteeing equal treatment for examinees throughout Italy, the facts lead to a 'loose' method of appointing the examiners". According to Di Giuliomaria (1987:25), it is therefore not uncommon that "a lot of candidates, after spending time and effort to prepare for their examination, have to face examiners who are often far from being competent in language teaching methodology".

There are also concerns with the way in which the oral examination is conducted. According to Lindsey (1987), the questions asked by the examining commission very often seem to be arbitrarily chosen and remote from the real question of the candidate's actual qualifications to teach the language. He believes that they are mainly notional questions, whose main advantage lies in the ease of scoring them. They seem to test primarily the candidate's memory, not his/her communicative competence, nor his/her understanding.

Another problem which has been often experienced is the lack of consistency among commissions. The number of the commissions appointed by the Ministry of



Education depends on the number of applicants at regional level. Candidates do not know which commission is going to conduct their oral examination until the very day of their exam. It is only on that day that surnames are randomly assigned to the various commissions. It is not uncommon that considerable differences occur in the way the oral examinations are conducted. Talking about her experience as an examiner, Pellegrini (1987:25) reports: "The difference between the two boards of examiners was evident in the oral phase. The regulations allow for much discretion and, even if the examiners must be free in their judgement, they should be given clear guidelines of what they are to assess and of the criteria with which to evaluate the results". Her final comments are that "the exam specifications should be more explicit about the objectives, the criteria and the contents of the oral interview, thus offering a guarantee of homogeneity among the various panels of examiners throughout Italy and giving aspiring teachers the necessary indications".

Comments need also to be made on the probationary year for newly appointed teachers. During this year, probationers are required to follow a 40 hour in-service course, write a project report on a chosen topic and satisfy the targets their 'tutor' has set for them. The law which regulates the probationary year sanctions that this should be a time in which the probationer can gain relevant teaching experience and can receive appropriate guidance. In fact, according to Pozzo (1985), this is rarely the case. In the past, Local Education Authorities set up in-service courses which were aimed at teachers of specific disciplines. As this proved to be expensive, the in-service courses currently on offer may involve large numbers of trainees of any discipline. The content of such courses must therefore revolve around topics which



can be proved of relevance to all probationers. This does not allow for any specific training in the subject trainees are required to teach.

Trainees should be able to count on their tutor's support and advice. However, the teacher who is appointed as tutor does not see his/her teaching load reduced, nor is granted any pay increase. It is left to the goodwill of these tutors to set aside time for their tutees. Therefore, it is not uncommon that probationary teachers may experience a feeling of isolation and frustration in this initial stage of their career. In addition, as there are no fixed regulations as to the targets which the tutors set for their tutees, there is often a lack of consistency between the workload imposed on probationers. It is important to point out that tutors are not required to observe their tutees' lessons and therefore they are not in a position to comment on their ability to teach the subject.

At the end of the probationary year, newly appointed teachers who have attended at least 32 hours of the compulsory in-service course and whose project report has been considered satisfactory by a special committee of teachers at their school are confirmed in their position. In fact, all probationers who have attended the required number of hours of the in-service course know that it is highly unlikely that they will fail because of an unsatisfactory project report. Once teachers have successfully completed their probationer year, they gain fully qualified teacher status and their appointment is confirmed. Their teaching is never observed nor appraised: their schools are not routinely inspected. They are not required to attend training courses, even though they now receive financial incentive if they decide to do so. They can

not progress in their career as Italian schools do not have any position similar to the head of Languages in UK schools. If they want to become headmasters/mistresses or inspectors they have to go through a new series of examinations. It is also very unlikely that they will lose their jobs, unless they are involved in cases of serious misconduct.

## **2.5 Conclusions**

The teachers' educational background and their teaching situation have serious implications for teacher training course designers. Italian teachers follow highly theoretical degree courses which attach great importance to literary and philological studies, and may not offer any modules related to language teaching. The process of obtaining fully Qualified Teacher Status does not involve any pre-service training nor teaching practice. On the contrary, prospective teachers are required to take further examinations aimed at assessing their theoretical knowledge of the subject. The emphasis that both the university and the recruitment system place on the more theoretical aspects of the language have serious repercussions on, and implications for, the content of training courses aimed at Italian teachers of English. The next chapter will describe the various in-service training courses currently open to Italian teachers of English in the UK and in Italy.

## **CHAPTER 3**

# **The provision of in-service training courses for Italian teachers of E.F.L.**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the provision of in-service training courses for Italian teachers of E.F.L.. Italian teachers of English who want to follow an in-service training programme can choose from a variety of options. They can attend courses organised in Italy, both by the State and by a number of private institutions. However, an increasing number of teachers decide to follow education programmes in English-speaking countries. Great Britain is their favourite choice, for linguistic, cultural and financial reasons. A variety of courses are now open to non-native English speaker teachers and the availability of distance learning programmes has allowed overseas teachers to embark on programmes of professional development, while continuing to work in their home countries. The first section of the chapter illustrates the type of



courses open to non-native speaker teachers of E.F.L., currently available in the UK. The section also includes comments from a number of educationalists and researchers, who have recently questioned whether these courses take into consideration the specific training needs of non-native speaker teachers of E.F.L..

The second section of this chapter considers the provision of in-service training activities in Italy. There are a number of private and state institutions which offer courses aimed at E.F.L. teachers. The nature of the most important training project organised by the Italian Ministry of Education, the Special Project for Foreign Languages (Progetto Speciale Lingue Straniere or P.S.L.S.), is considered in detail. Comments from a number of Italian and English native speaker educationalists, researchers and trainers who have been involved in the organisation and running of these training courses are also reported.

### **3.2 The provision of in-service training courses in the UK**

This section describes the current provision of training courses for teachers of English as a foreign language in the UK. The first part of this section illustrates the type of courses open to this group of teachers. The second part is concerned with the new trends in teacher preparation and explores whether these trends coincide with the needs of non-native speaker teachers.

### **3.2.1 UK courses open to non-native speaker teachers of E.F.L.**

Teachers decide to attend in-service training courses for a variety of different reasons. Rinvoluceri (1987) supplies a list of these reasons, which range from the desire to improve their command of the language and their own self-confidence to simply improve their curriculum vitae. When faced with the decision of choosing the course to follow, Italian teachers have several, different options. Although there are in-service training courses held in their country, it is highly likely that they will try to spend some time in an English-speaking country, usually the UK. As it is fairly difficult for teachers to take time off to further their studies, they usually attend short courses during their summer break. However, an increasingly higher number of teachers decide to embark on longer courses, which can either promote their professional development or lead to a qualification that may enhance their career prospects. To satisfy this requirement, many UK institutions now offer distance learning courses which combine short residential blocks in the UK with longer periods of study in the teachers' own countries. In this way, teachers can gain credits towards a final qualification, which can be at Certificate, Diploma or Master level.

The decision to pursue a programme of study abroad has important implications for Italian teachers. The Italian government does not fund teachers who want to attend training courses other than those organised by the Italian Ministry of Education. As mentioned before, it is fairly difficult for teachers to be released from their duties for overseas training. This means that they have to study and come to Britain during

their free time. In addition, no qualification obtained outside Italy, with the exception of a PhD, is currently recognised by the Italian Ministry of Education. At present, the only courses or qualifications which can help teachers in progressing in their careers are those organised and recognised by the Italian Ministry of Education itself. However, Italian teachers hope that this situation will change in the near future. In spite of the fact that in-service training is not compulsory and that, at the moment, there is no career advancement for those who attend training courses or gain higher qualifications, Italian teachers of English regard training as an important part of their professional life. In fact, they are ready to make substantial investments in term of their time and their finance to further their professional development.

Non-native teachers of E.F.L. who want to follow a training course in the UK can choose from a wide variety of programmes. Some courses are aimed at teachers with little or no teaching experience in E.F.L., while others target experienced teachers who intend to embark on longer and more demanding academic courses. Although the entry requirements may vary according to the type of course, all the courses described below are open to native speakers of English as well as to non-native speakers with a good command of the language. The information was obtained from the British Council in the UK (British Council, 1996).

On the basis of the material obtained, these are the options open to both UK and overseas students:



1. **Introductory courses**      These are short teacher training courses offered by English language schools. They cater for a variety of special needs and do not lead to a generally recognised TEFL qualification. The duration of an introductory course is usually a week.

2. **Certificate courses**      People with no previous experience of teaching English as a foreign language, but with a good standard of education, usually a first degree, but in some cases two GCSE A-level or equivalent may enter the profession by taking a certificate qualification. This type of certificate may be considered as an acceptable qualification for employment overseas and/or in the UK private sector. Certificate courses validated by an external body comprise:

- The Cambridge/RSA Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA). This has recently replaced the RSA/CTEFLA or RSA Prep. Cert., following a world-wide consultation in line with ELT professional advice. The course may be taken at approved centres in 40 countries world-wide. A strict external assessment system guarantees standards both

of the course and of assessment. CELTA is the only international award that has a pre-job placement service for each candidate.

- The Trinity College London Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) is a four-week intensive course that can be followed at validated centres. The qualification is generally accepted world-wide

### 3. Diploma courses

These courses are normally open to graduates with at least two years recent experience of EFL teaching. Most Diploma courses run part-time over one academic year, but some institutions offer full-time courses of eight to ten weeks. Applicants normally already possess a recognised TEFL certificate.

- For the RSA/Cambridge Diploma (DTEFLA), candidates must follow either a one year part-time course or a ten week full-time intensive course. The diploma is an accepted qualification for employment in colleges of further education, private language schools in the UK, and some posts overseas. The Cambridge Integrated Language Teaching Schemes

are currently under review. The current scheme operated until June 1997, with facilities to retake either or both components in 1998 and 1999. The revised Cambridge Integrated Language Teaching Scheme will be introduced in September 1998.

- For the Trinity College London Diploma in TEFL candidates must follow an approved course, choosing from part-time courses, full-time intensive courses and a combination of intensive study and a distance learning element.

#### 4. Distance learning courses

As teaching observation and teaching practice constitute a substantial element in initial professional courses, no recognised initial qualification may be obtained by correspondence courses alone. Two known institutions offer TEFL training courses at Diploma level by correspondence to experienced teachers. International House offers the RSA diploma TEFLA course, while Trinity College London offers certificate and diploma qualifications on a number of courses which include an element of distance learning.



## 1. Postgraduate qualifications

For those who already have a first degree or comparable qualification, it is possible to take a PGCE. Following the review of PGCE courses by the Department for Education and Employment in 1992, qualified teacher status was withdrawn from PGCE courses with a main TEFL element. Some training institutions still offer PGCE with a TEFL subsidiary element: the amount of practical TEFL training offered by such courses may vary considerably. While PGCEs with a TEFL subsidiary retain qualified teacher status for employment in state schools in the UK, the perception of the value to the PGCE held by private sector language schools and potential overseas employers is dependent on the amount of practical TEFL training offered by these courses.

## 2. Other advanced courses

Those who wish to pursue their career further, can choose from a variety of advanced and postgraduate courses, ranging from a certificate over two terms to diplomas/ masters/doctoral degrees involving a minimum of one year's study. In addition, there is a vast range of short courses in specialised subject areas.

These are the various courses available to Italian teachers of E.F.L. who want to further their professional development. However, this thesis is particularly concerned with the type of courses offered by UK academic institutions, and more specifically with those courses open to both native and non-native English speaking students. There were two reasons behind the choice of restricting this analysis to academic courses. Firstly, courses run by private institutions, such as The Bell School or Pilgrims, are usually targeted exclusively at non-native English speaker teachers. In contrast, academic courses are usually open to both native and non-native English speaker students. Although individual universities may run courses tailor-made to suit the needs of teachers coming from specific countries, no UK university is currently offering such programmes to Italian teachers of English. There is only one training project sponsored by the British Council in Italy, which involves a limited number of Italian teachers being trained at the University of East Anglia: however, the course has recently been open to other non-native English speaker teachers and has lost its specificity. Section 3.3.2.1.2 of this chapter details the evolution and the current structure of what is known as the 'Norwich Course'. The lack of any course specifically aimed at Italian teachers of E.F.L. means that Italian teachers who want to gain a qualification in the UK will choose one of the courses open to both native and non-native English speaker teachers. It is the aim of this research to determine whether academic courses recognise the different training needs of non-native English speaker teachers in general, and of Italian teachers of E.F.L. in particular. The second reason for only considering academic courses was that courses run by private institutions offer short and intensive training on specific aspects of language teaching: they do not award a recognised qualification, but a certificate of attendance.



This is not the case for courses run by academic institutions. Even though the Italian Ministry of Education do not currently recognise any qualification gained abroad, teachers hope that the situation will change in the near future. In this case, it is felt that only qualifications awarded by institutions recognised at European level, i.e. academic institutions, will be taken into consideration. This is one of the reasons why an increasing number of Italian teachers decide to follow academic courses. Although these courses require greater personal and financial investment, it is hoped that the investment will prove to be worthwhile in terms of future career advancement.

Chapter 7 of this thesis describes and discusses the structure and content of education programmes run by UK institutions which are open to practising non-native speaker teachers of English. The author contacted many of the institutions and obtained information on the content and structure of such courses. The material thus gathered was then analysed, taking into consideration factors, such as the final qualification awarded, the entry requirements, the academic staff involved in the course and the subjects offered. The aim was again to determine if these courses catered for the diverse needs of native and non native speaker teachers of English.

There has been limited research on the provision of training courses for E.F.L. teachers and on how effectively they respond to their students' needs. Henrichson (1997) is an academic who has recently provided a fairly detailed study of teacher preparation programmes. She has drafted a taxonomy of the many different types of E.S.L./E.F.L. teacher-preparation programmes. The eight categories of the taxonomy include the institutional base of the courses, their objectives, timing, educational



purpose, intensity, length, target teaching level and linguistic/cultural setting. Some of the conclusions that she has reached are of great relevance to this thesis and are complementary to some of the findings of the author's own research. She has found that university-based programmes are offered by a variety of departments and schools and that the course content offered is somehow affected by the type of home bases. The need to reflect university requirements often determines that these courses are traditional in their approaches and the emphasis is on modules such as linguistics, learning theory, and research. Talking specifically about in-service teacher education programmes, her research shows that post-experience students constitute about 90% of all the students entering some higher degree courses. She, therefore, believes that it is very important to take this previous experience into account when designing these courses, up to the point of creating custom-tailored programmes for this group of students. On page 3 of her article she expresses the concern that "in the world of English language teaching, teacher-preparation courses exist for many different purposes, serve disparate audiences, and operate in diverse settings. Unfortunately, however, when teacher educators consider principles and procedures, we sometimes fail to take this variety into accounts".

In the recent years a number of educationalists and trainers have questioned the effectiveness of UK training courses in meeting the needs of non-native speaker teachers of English. In 1988, Waters raised a number of important issues, concerning the design of training courses for non-native English speaker teachers. On page 21, he claims that far too many teacher training courses do not meet "their participants' needs, not only as teachers, but also as trainees." He believes that the starting point in

the design of a training course should be the creation of “a basic structure and syllabus that went as far as possible towards meeting the participants’ needs as learners”. Talking about his experience in designing training courses for non-native English speaker teachers, he found that topics and methods should not be imposed on the training situation arbitrarily, but rather they should emerge from it naturally. He also believes that “for the training to be realistic, the treatment of each topic must include a ‘putting into practice’ phase”. The training should be relevant to the trainees’ situation and “of the kind the trainees will readily identify with”. In contrast, what often happens is that “the trainee’s own scheme of knowledge about the subject and that emanating from the course, differ widely”. Parrott (1988) also believes in the importance of meeting the trainees’ needs for a training course to be effective. Again in contrast, he has found that overseas teachers of English often have to adapt themselves to a predetermined programme as well as they can. In his articles, he outlines some of the issues that should be taken into account when designing training courses for non-native English speaker teachers. They include the trainees’ age and professional seniority, their educational background, their tradition of learning and their level of English.

Most non-native English speaker teachers are extremely concerned about their command of the language: however, according to Cullen (1994:163), the great majority of training programmes for E.F.L. teachers fail to meet the need expressed by so many non-native speaker teachers of E.F.L. to improve their command of the language. He believes that “the main emphasis in English language teaching programmes, especially on in-service courses, is usually on methodology and that



the teacher's proficiency in the language is largely taken for granted". Medgyes (1996:30) claims that one of the failures of contemporary teacher education lies in the fact that many native English speaking trainers "are not only blind to local needs, but also defy the vital importance of near-native language competence on ideological grounds. Under their spell, training institutes, and hence the trainees themselves, tend to downplay straightforward language instruction'.

Parrot (1988) found that many teachers often complain about their theoretical and abstract training: what they seek is practical guidance on how to apply the theory they have studied and adapt it to their teaching situation. Ur (1992:56) also questions the rationalist view underlining long programmes of study aimed at E.F.L. teachers, according to which "the training of professionals should be based on the learning of research-based theory subsequently applied in practice by the individual". She advocates the development of 'theory of action', that is the "continual interaction between the theoretical and practical component of a course." According to her, there is an "increased dissatisfaction with courses based on the rationalist learn-the-theory-and-then-apply-it model". She has found that "typically, the (trainee) teachers feel that the theoretical component of their courses fails to contribute significantly to their professional learning: this results in claims that there is not enough practical teaching experience or that formal theoretical studies are relatively useless". The programmes of study currently offered by UK institutions attach great importance to the more theoretical aspects of language teaching and learning. This reflects one of the key issues that has characterised teacher preparation in the recent year: the movement away from teacher training to teacher education.



### 3.2.2 Teacher training and teacher education

The literature on teacher preparation is relatively limited if compared with the material available on other issues, such as teaching methodologies and techniques. However, in the past few years there has been a number of publications dealing with various issues of this subject. "Second Language Teacher Education" edited by Richards and Nunan is one of the most interesting texts on the subject. As the authors state in the Preface, the book was designed as "a state-of-the-art account of current approaches to second language education as well as a source book for people involved in designing either pre-service or in-service education programmes". The book highlights the need of more thorough research into this field which has been generally neglected and reports that there has been hardly any feedback on what works and does not work in teacher education programmes.

The starting point is the definition of what is meant by 'teacher training' and 'teacher education'. Although some educationalists still use the two terms interchangeably (Larsen-Freeman 1983, Stern, 1983, Wallace, 1991), the term 'teacher training' seems nowadays to be used to describe those courses aiming at providing the trainees with techniques and skills to apply in the classroom. Trainees on these courses are seen as recipients whose role in the learning process is relatively passive. In contrast, teacher education programmes are defined as courses in which the trainees are asked to adopt a research orientation to their own classrooms and are required to generate theories and hypotheses and to reflect critically on teaching. The programme and the 'teacher educator', rather than the 'teacher trainer', are viewed as sources of

knowledge and experience for student teachers to use in developing their own approach to teaching. A series of specific activities and experiences are needed to help the student teachers understand and acquire the means by which they can reach significant instructional decisions. These activities include practice teaching, self- and peer observation, seminars and discussions. However, it is recognised that higher-level cognitive processes involved cannot be taught directly (Richards and Nunan, 1990).

Another important issue is the distinction between 'training' and 'development' and the role of Teacher Development in teacher education. According to Kennedy (1993:162), "training can be seen as reflecting a view of teaching as a skill which has finite components which can be learnt. Development focuses much more on the individual teacher's own development of a 'theory' through personal reflection, examination and analysis". This way of looking at teacher preparation can also be seen as linked to another approach to training foreign language teachers known as 'the reflective approach'. Teacher Development aims at enabling and encouraging teachers to explore the opportunities for personal and professional evolution throughout their careers.

The formation in 1986 of a Teacher Development Special Interest Group within I.A.T.E.F.L. and the growing number of similar networks established around the world highlight the need felt by many teachers to become actively responsible for their own professional growth. While training is felt to be something that can be presented or managed by others, development is something that can be done only by



and for oneself. One of the means of promoting teacher self-awareness is through what is called Action Research. The term was coined by a social psychologist, Kurt Levin, to describe the process of conscious learning from experience. As Kemmis and McTaggart (1982) explain, the linking of the terms 'action' and 'research' highlights the essential feature of the method: trying out new ideas in practice in order to improve and increase knowledge about teaching and learning. In this way, the link between theory and practice is ensured and becomes an established practice way of working.

Among the approaches to teacher development proposed and implemented in classrooms since the early eighties, reflective teaching is seen as an effective form of enquiry intended to help teachers improve their practice. Although they define the term differently, Cruickshank and Zeichner have reported on projects to assist both pre-service and experienced teachers to teach 'reflectively'. Cruickshank and Applegate (1981:4) define reflective teaching as "the teacher's thinking about what happens in classroom lessons, and thinking about alternative means of achieving goals and aims". Zeichner (1981-2) describes the reflective teacher as someone who assesses the origin, purposes and consequences of his/her work at all levels. Barlett (1990) follows Zeichner's concept and proposes a process for becoming reflective using examples from second language learning. The process is not an easy one as it forces teachers to adopt a critical attitude to themselves and challenge their beliefs about teaching. Another model of reflective teaching is suggested by Wallace (1991): he sees the 'reflective' model as a compromise solution which gives equal weight to experience and to the scientific basis of the teaching profession.



In the past twenty years a growing number of new, and different, approaches to teacher preparation have highlighted the fact that this process can not be confined to simply provide the trainees with a set of techniques and methodologies to be accepted dogmatically. Course designers have felt the need to assert the importance of theory, as a means to empower teachers and enable them to take a more active and responsible role in the teaching process. The author believes that the need to make a clear distinction between 'teacher training' and 'teacher education' and to assert the importance of theory versus practice was determined by the way in which native speaker teachers have been traditionally prepared for the profession. A large number of native E.F.L. teachers, working both in the private and in the state sector, hold qualifications such as the RSA or the Trinity Certificate/Diploma. The period of study that these courses involved is fairly limited and the content is focused on the teaching of skills and techniques to be employed in the classroom. These teachers lack the theoretical knowledge which will enable them to reflect on their practices, to conduct research projects in their classrooms, to generate theories and hypotheses. What they have received is 'training' and what they need is 'education'. Academic institutions, therefore, offer to those teachers who want to further their professional development a programme of study during which the teacher students will have an opportunity to be exposed to and to study the more theoretical aspects of language teaching and learning.

The situation is different for many non-native English speaker teachers in general, and for Italian teachers of E.F.L. in particular. These teachers are graduates who have followed a long period of highly theoretical study, but may have received no, or very

little, guidance on how to relate theory to classroom practice. Parrott (1988) claims that what these teachers want is practical guidance on how to apply effectively what they have studied to their specific teaching situation. What they have is 'theory' and what they need is 'training'. This does not imply that theory should not be included in education programmes aimed at non-native English speaker teachers. However, as Jarvis says (1991:8), "theory should be built on classroom practice". In fact, practising teachers who have followed a higher degree course often complain that it was too theoretical and not relevant to their working situation (Whitney, Kennedy, Buchan et al., 1989).

It is significant that, in Italian, there is no distinction between the term 'training' and the term 'education', when referred to teacher preparation. The Italian word '*formazione*' covers both aspects of a process in which theory and practice should not be seen as separate. This has important implications for the design of programmes of study aimed at this group of teachers. Chapter 7 of this thesis will explore the structure and the content of the academic courses currently offered by UK institutions, with the aim to determine if they meet the requirements of Italian teachers of E.F.L..

### 3.3 The provision of in-service training activities for teachers of Modern Foreign Languages in Italy

This section illustrates the provision of in-service training courses available to Italian teachers in Italy. It describes courses and activities organised both by state-run and private organisations and focuses especially on the longest running in-service training programme offered by the Ministry of Education to teachers of Modern Foreign Languages: the so-called 'Special Project for Foreign Languages' (Progetto Speciale Lingue Straniere - P.S.L.S.). The section also examines the important role played by The British Council and the increasingly recognition of LEND (Lingua e Nuova Didattica), a voluntary organisation run by teachers of Italian and Modern Foreign Languages.

There are various professional development options available to teachers who have been appointed to a full time position. It is important to highlight that the main motivation for the teachers' attendance of training courses is to be found in their demand for better and richer professional knowledge. In fact, there is no career progression in Italian schools: all teachers have the same status, work at the same level and with the same responsibility. There is therefore no equivalent to a Head of Languages in UK schools. Teachers who want to progress in their career and become for instance headmasters or inspectors have to follow a procedure involving more state exams. Pay increases are not performance related, but depend entirely on the number of years of service. In addition, training is not compulsory. However, the

gender



Ministry of Education has recently devised a series of 'rewards' for those teachers who are willing to follow in-service training courses. Before the 1995 national contract, teachers could not obtain financial incentives if they decided to attend training courses. The 1995 contract set up a two-tier system which offers an 'accelerated' track for teachers who attend training courses. These teachers are awarded 'extra points', which will allow them to gain pay rises more quickly than they would normally do.

There are various organisations which currently offer in-service courses, both in the public and in the private sector. They differ greatly in terms of duration, content and structure.

### **3.3.1 State sector organisations**

According to current legislation, there are various 'agents' of the Ministry of Education in charge of promoting in-service training courses. They are responsible for different aspects of teacher training and are divided into three categories: agents acting at national level, agents acting at regional level and agents acting at local level.

The agents acting at national level are:

1. *Ufficio studi e programmazione e direzione generali del Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione* (Study and Planning Office of the Ministry of Education). This department of the Ministry of Education is responsible for the planning and organisation of national in-service training courses as well as for laying down general guidelines for all in-service teacher education initiatives.
2. Cede (Centro europeo dell'educazione - European Education Centre). It promotes research into education.
3. Bdp (Biblioteca di documentazione pedagogica - Pedagogic Archives and Library). It is in charge of the production, conservation and filing of all documents concerned with teacher education.

The agents acting at regional level are:

1. I.R.R.S.A.E. (Istituti regionali di ricerca, sperimentazione e aggiornamenti educativi - Regional Institutions for Research and In-service Training). They organise and co-ordinate their own in-service training courses or co-operate with other agents to promote in-service training initiatives.

2. Technical Inspectors. They support, evaluate and analyse in-service training activities.
3. Universities. Even though universities are rarely active in teacher training, they develop research projects in education and offer technical advice.

The agents acting at local level are:

1. *Uffici studi dei provveditorati*. These are special committees within each Local Education Authority which supervise in-service training activities at school or city level.
2. *Consigli scolastici distrettuali*. These are elected committees responsible for school activities of various nature within a specific catchment area called 'district'. They organise and co-ordinate training activities involving various schools in the same district.
3. *Collegi dei docenti*. These are assemblies of all teachers working in the same school which are responsible for the organisation of training activities at school level.
4. *Enti locali* (Local organisations). They co-operate with universities and other agents in promoting training initiatives.



5. *Associazioni professionali*. These are professional associations which promote training and self-training activities at local, regional and national level.

As Antonetti, Calzetti, Bresadola~~X~~ et al. report (1990), the high number of these state organisations and the fact that they act at three different levels have often resulted in a lack of co-ordination of the various training initiatives they promote. Each organisation tends to set up its own training events in competition rather than in co-operation with the other agents. It is not uncommon that similar training events are organised in the same area by different agents while no training is offered in other areas or subject fields. The agents which are now more active in the organisation of training courses are the I.R.R.S.A.E. (Regional Institutions for Research and In-service Training). However, according to Margiotta (1983), the regional structure of these institutions and a lack of inter-regional co-ordination have made the provision of in-service training far from being homogeneous throughout Italy.

### **3.3.1.1 In-service activities run by state organisations**

The in-service initiatives organised by the various agents of the Ministry of Education vary greatly in terms of structure and content. They aim at catering for the very different professional and personal requirements of Italian teachers, who, as has previously been described, are not obliged to follow training courses.

These initiatives may take the form of:

- full-time courses;
- intensive courses;
- periodic courses;
- short courses;
- workshops;
- seminars;
- conferences and lectures.

Training courses involve activities which may vary according to the course content and objectives and the previous experience of the trainers. They can therefore consist of:

- lectures given by experts in a particular field and usually followed by questions;
- group-work;
- seminars and workshops;
- round-table conferences.

Training courses can involve either teachers from a variety of subject areas or be aimed at teachers of a specific discipline. However, the most innovative training project offered by State run organisations has been aimed at teachers of Modern Foreign Languages. This project is referred to as P.S.L.S. (Progetto speciale lingue

straniere - Special Project for Foreign Languages). It started as a series of 'experimental' courses to be run only for a fairly limited period of time. However, the courses have proved to be so popular that not only are they still in progress, but they are also being used as a model for training courses in other subjects.

### **3.3.1.2 Special Project for Foreign Languages (P.S.L.S.)**

The Special Project for Foreign Languages (Progetto Speciale Lingue Straniere), supervised by the Study and Planning Office of the Ministry of Education, has been carried out in accordance with the D.P.R. (Special Decree of the President of the Republic) of 31/5/1974, which, as stated in a ministerial publication (Ministero della Repubblica, 1988), asserts that the professional and cultural training of teachers is a right as well as a duty of primary importance, to be implemented by promoting initiatives both on a national and on a local level. There has been little evaluation of the P.S.L.S. since that date.

The P.S.L.S. courses started in the 1978/1979 school year and involved initially 40 school districts of 29 cities. In the past, a typical course consisted of between 90 and 100 hours, divided into three-hour periods once a week, plus an intensive phase of six days, all of which took place during the school year. More recently the number of training hours has been reduced to 50: trainees attend weekly meetings of two or three hours, plus three intensive days of study. In addition to the normal courses, there are also 'refresher' courses, that is, courses for further training of teachers who



have already attended the P.S.L.S. courses and want to study particular fields in more depth. These courses usually consist of 50 hours, plus an intensive phase of three days.

According to data published in 1988 by the Study and Planning Office of the Ministry of Education, P.S.L.S. courses have been organised in all Italian provinces. They had involved up to that date 400 teacher trainers and 22,508 teachers out of 46,890 teachers of Modern Foreign Languages working in Italian schools. Three languages have been so far included in the project: English, French and German. However, the number of courses targeted at teachers of English was much higher in comparison to the number of courses for teachers of other languages. This is due to the fact that English is the most widely taught foreign language in Italian schools (Pulcini, 1994).

Augenti reports (1984) that the Ministry of Education considered the results of the first years of activities to be positive when judged against the number of teachers involved and the high standards achieved by the in-service training. The effectiveness of this type of training is confirmed by data in the trainers' annual reports, from questionnaires filled in by the trainees and from feedback reports by the experts from the foreign cultural organisations who participated in the courses. The popularity of these courses is also proved by the relatively low proportion of teachers registered in the courses who have subsequently dropped out or attended irregularly. As attendance at the courses is not compulsory, the fact that it remains at high levels is an indication of the quality of the service provided.

### **3.3.1.2.1 Recruiting trainees for P.S.L.S. courses**

Mortera reports (1984:21) that “P.S.L.S. course directors have had no real difficulty in recruiting trainees and have nearly always had too many applications, especially in the larger cities of Italy”. In the first phase of the implementation of the courses, permanent staff in lower secondary schools were given priority in participating in P.S.L.S. courses. The second phase was aimed at teachers working in the first two years of the higher secondary school (‘biennio’ teachers), but later involved all teachers in higher secondary schools. Mortera explains that, due to the great number of teachers who apply to attend P.S.L.S. courses, trainers have had to adopt various criteria to select the relatively small number of trainees allowed on each course. Generally, teachers who applied and were excluded from a course one year have the right to attend it in the following year. In the past, some course directors gave priority to teachers who travelled great distances to come to the course. However, more recently they have had instructions from the Ministry to take in a limited number of people from distant areas as funds for travel expenses and grants are limited.

### **3.3.1.2.2 Enrolling and attendance of trainees**

All courses have generally no more than 20 trainees and some of them have ‘listeners’, usually temporary ‘supply teachers’. According to Mortera (1984), the drop-out rate is around 20%, that is to say that 80% of the trainees received a

certificate at the end of the course. Trainees can only obtain this certificate if they have attended not less than two-thirds of the sessions. This means that trainees should not miss more than 34 hours out of a total of 100 hours, or 17 hours out of 50. Attending P.S.L.S. courses is voluntary and there is no provision to make it easier for trainees to follow these courses, for instance, their timetable and their workload at school is not reduced. The average attendance rate of 80% is therefore considered to demonstrate a high level of motivation.

Courses take place during the school year and involve a series of weekly meetings and days of intensive study. This course format enables trainees to try out the teaching techniques and the methodological principles studied during the course. In this way, trainees are provided with an opportunity to discuss with the trainer the difficulties they may have encountered and work out the necessary adjustments.

### **3.3.1.2.3 Content of P.S.L.S. courses**

The content of the P.S.L.S. courses is highly flexible and it is usually agreed between the trainer and the trainees. However, Mortera reports (1984) that the themes dealt with are usually of direct methodological importance for day to day teaching and particular stress is put on the four language skills and their integration. Courses aimed at lower secondary school teachers tend to concentrate more on issues related to the teaching of listening and speaking and on the communicative activities involving these skills. This reflects the emphasis that the Italian Modern Foreign



Languages Curriculum for lower secondary schools places on the development of these skills. The higher secondary school courses usually cover theory and practice and provide guidance on how to integrate the four skills, with particular emphasis on reading and writing.

At the beginning of each year, trainees are required to complete a questionnaire where they are asked in which particular areas they wish to work and to give their opinion on the goals of the P.S.L.S. course they are about to follow. These questionnaires are then analysed and the results taken into account when planning the training courses. The objective is for each particular course to have a maximum relevance to the teaching situations of the participants. As to the trainees' training needs, Mortera reports (1984) that the greatest demand is usually for techniques and activities to teach oral English (listening and speaking) through demonstration lessons and seminar discussions. On the whole, she has found that not many groups seem to be interested in pure theory in the form of lectures. According to Palamidesi (1983), there is a constant demand for language improvement which, she believes, is met by the choice of English as the language of instruction and by the presence among the trainees of teachers with a high command of the language. A number of trainers and educationalists have questioned the fact that, in spite of the overwhelming demand for language improvement, P.S.L.S courses do not normally offer such a component. Di Giuliomaria (Byrne, D'Addio Colosimo, Di Giuliomaria 1985:31) questions this decision: he believes that "the P.S.L.S. is generally giving good results, but if we do not make a big effort to improve the language of the teachers, the whole thing might simply come to nothing". He adds that Italian

trainers “are required to lecture in English, not because they want to, but for just one reason: the trainees demand it. Why? For various reasons. One is that they have so few opportunities to listen to English that they would rather have an Italian use English than have lectures in Italian”. The importance of the language component in training courses is discussed in sections 4.4.5.2 and 4.4.6 of Chapter 4. The choice of the components of P.S.L.S. courses is discussed in Section 5.4.3 of Chapter 5.

According to Mortera (1984), most lower secondary school and ‘biennio’ (first two years of the higher secondary school) P.S.L.S. courses deal with the following areas:

- lesson planning and the teaching unit;
- error analysis;
- testing and evaluation;
- the teaching of grammar;
- text-book analysis;
- methodology;
- language and culture;
- students' motivation and class management;
- language acquisition and language learning;
- audio-visual aids;
- drama in language teaching;
- pair and group work;
- songs and games;
- stress, rhythm and intonation;

- the National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages.

In addition to the above topics, the 'biennio' P.S.L.S. courses cover other areas such as:

- teaching across the curriculum;
- mind and memory;
- interlanguage;
- theoretical problems of L2 teaching;
- language functions at an intermediate level;
- E.S.P.;
- text analysis;
- the teaching of literature.

? (1984)  
 Mortera recognises the difficulty to deal in depth with such a variety of issues in a relatively limited number of hours. However, the 50 hour P.S.L.S. refresher courses, which are usually offered to trainees who have attended a first P.S.L.S. course, usually give trainees the opportunity to explore further specific topics in which they are particularly interested.



#### **3.3.1.2.4 The P.S.L.S. teacher trainers**

The trainers for the first P.S.L.S. courses were selected among those teachers who had already gained some training experience, either on 'Corsi Abilitanti' (special training courses organised by the Ministry to qualify teachers), the DTFM (Distance Training Foundation Module) organised by the British Council, or in courses organised by the universities and the local Education Authorities. Several trainers had also been involved in seminar work and study groups for professional organisations such as LEND (Lingua e Nuova Didattica).

Teachers who apply to become P.S.L.S. trainers are first selected by the local I.R.R.S.A.E. (Regional Institutions for Research and In-service Training), who evaluate their experience and decide whether they are suited for an interview. A panel formed by representatives from the Ministry of Education and from the foreign cultural organisations (British Council, Bureau Linguistique, Goethe Institute) conducts the interview. The candidates selected by the local I.R.R.S.A.E. are then required to attend a second interview in Rome with representatives of the Ministry of Education, who are the ultimate responsible for the choice of the trainers. The successful candidates follow a linguistic-methodological specialisation course. In the past, the course was held abroad, in the United States at UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles), San Francisco and Harvard, or in Britain, at Ealing and Norwich. However, following recent cuts to the funding of the project, the course is currently held in Italy. Trainers are also asked to participate actively in workshops, study groups and seminars run in Italy by organisations such as the British Council,

or LEND. All P.S.L.S. trainers remain full-time teachers in Italian state schools, and their activity as trainers is carried out in addition to their normal timetable at school. Mortera reports (1984) that, although most trainers find their workload excessive and would like to see it reduced, they would not like to give up teaching altogether: being a teacher as well as a trainer gives them the opportunity to gain constant experience in class, and to experiment, analyse and check materials and techniques.

The P.S.L.S. trainer is entirely responsible for the organisation and the running of the course. However, s/he can decide to invite Italian or foreign experts to contribute on specific topics of the course syllabus. The extent of such contribution is agreed between the expert and the P.S.L.S. trainer.

#### **3.3.1.2.5 Comments on P.S.L.S. courses**

P.S.L.S. courses are usually perceived to be very successful among practising teachers of Modern Foreign Languages. According to Costanzo (1993), there are a number of reasons which explain the popularity of this form of in-service training. The course format, which involves training during the school year, has proved to be liking to most trainees, who can try out in their classrooms what they have learnt on the course and then receive feedback from their trainer. However, teachers are never observed at work in their classrooms. Pozzo (1985) shares Costanzo's view that the most important characteristic of these courses is the emphasis placed on practice

rather than theory: the starting point is always the teaching situation from which trainees are encouraged to draw theoretical principles. Costanzo believes that this procedure is in contrast to what usually happens on many training courses, which deal first with theory and then with its applications. Commenting on the feedback questionnaires of his P.S.L.S. trainees, Pepicelli (1986:27) claims that “the reason for theory being rejected was a direct consequence of the time when teacher training did not exist except for endless conferences where speakers used to talk about ‘how to teach’, while approaches to teaching were left to the individual teachers”. On the contrary, P.S.L.S courses are organised in a way to encourage trainees to take a very active role in the training process: they are encouraged to share their problems and experiences, rather than sit passively and listen to some ‘experts’ who often know very little about teaching in secondary schools. The structure of the meetings responds to the expectations of trainees: Castellotti and Di Carlo (1994) surveyed groups of Italian and French teachers and found that most respondents saw training as an opportunity to reflect on their everyday teaching practice and work co-operatively with other colleagues on projects of common interest. Chapter 6 will deal in depth with evaluating the structure and content of P.S.L.S. courses, leading to specific recommendations for improvement.

A number of P.S.L.S. trainers and trainees have, however, reported a series of problems in the organisation and management of the courses. Augenti (1984) has denounced the lack of co-operation on part of the Local Education Authorities, which should have acted as a link between the Ministry of Education, the trainers and the trainees. The Local Education Authorities failed to take into consideration local



situations and take the necessary administrative measures. Mortera (1984:21) believes that some headmasters seem to underestimate the importance of teacher training and are unwilling to host a P.S.L.S. course at their school. She reports that many of them “do not give sufficient circulation to the Ministry circular letter that informs about the courses and invites teachers to submit their applications”. Some also refuse to release from school duties those trainees who have to follow intensive days of training (originally six days, now three days with sessions held in the morning).

Mortera also reports some problems with the use of American and English native speakers, who are invited usually as experts in the field of methodology and language teaching. Their contribution obviously depends on the personality and competence of each individual native speaker. However, there have been complaints because these experts are unable to provide constant input into the course, as they have to cover too many courses in too many areas. Some of them have also proved to have not enough teaching experience: in this case their contribution would be better appreciated in the field of language improvement. Di Giuliomaria (Byrne, D’Addio Colosimo, Di Giuliomaria 1985:30), believes that, while some English native speaker trainers are good, it can not be said the same for “those who make a brief appearance to give a lecture or even an informal talk.” According to him, many of these trainers are not aware of the problems specific to the Italian teaching situation. In spite of this, “English native speakers have a ‘prestige’ for the simple fact that they are natives and this might confuse those Italian teachers who accept anything that comes from native speakers”. In 1987, Di Giuliomaria commented further on the role of English native

speaker trainers: on page 27 he claims that “in certain cases these outsiders have neither *lived up to their fame*, nor *brought a fresh view*”. He recognises that “it is not easy for people who do not know Italy well to talk to a *qualified* audience in a suitable way, adding to their knowledge and not repeating ideas which have already been acquired. However, a number of outsiders do not seem to take into due consideration that the average level of Italian teachers is rather high”. Sheila Rixon had extensive experience of working with Italian teachers, in her role as Deputy English Language Officer at the British Council in Milan. In her article “The ‘Foreign Expert’: Instructions for use” (1986), she outlines some of the problems encountered by English native speaker trainers working in Italy. Some of these difficulties are due to cultural differences and assumptions. For instance, on page 13, she claims that “the Italian system tends to value the teacher who is erudite at a high level, rather than a good transmitter of knowledge to pupils”, which is what the British system would go for. This difference in the idea of what makes a good language teacher is at the basis of many problems and misunderstandings. She also talks about the varying nature of the co-operation between P.S.L.S. trainers and native English speaker experts on P.S.L.S. courses. In some cases native English speaker experts are simply asked to give a 45 minutes talk on anything they like. In other cases, they are informed in detail about the course content, and asked whether they can provide input on a specific methodological area. She concludes that the role of the ‘Foreign Expert’ should only be that of a ‘guest speaker’, a subsidiary role as compared to that of the Italian teacher trainer. The role of the English native speaker trainer is analysed and discussed in sections 4.4.9 and 4.4.11.2 of Chapter 4 and in section 6.4.1 of Chapter 6.

Several P.S.L.S. trainers, such as Palamidesi (1983), Calzetti (1990) and Antonetti, Baione, Bresadola et al. (1990), have complained about their workload, as they are required to work full-time at school as well as conducting training courses, mainly in the afternoon. The P.S.L.S. trainers are in fact responsible for the organisation as well as the running of the courses. They liaise with the Ministry of Education, the Local Education Authorities, the headmasters, the I.R.R.S.A.E., the foreign cultural agencies and the universities. They select the trainees and choose the course content. They do not receive a pay increase, but are paid a lump sum for each course they run. In fact, as stated in two documents written in 1991 and 1995 by the P.S.L.S. trainers working in Lombardy (A.A.V.V. 1991 and 1995), they are not even called 'trainers', but rather 'co-ordinators' as the current structure of the education service does not allow for such a position.

The author shares Garau's view (1986:4) that the major problem with P.S.L.S. courses lies in the absence of any formal instruments for their evaluation. According to her, "courses are appraised empirically by judging attendance, production of materials, and microteaching and success in side activities on the part of the trainees." The Ministry of Education did plan formal evaluation of P.S.L.S. courses through a system of classroom observation (A.A.V.V., 1983), but the project was never implemented. The effectiveness of the project has rarely been questioned: this is demonstrated by the almost total lack of evaluative publications since the early 1980s. From contacts that the author has with the Ministry of Education, she has learnt that a committee has recently been appointed to devise suitable ways of evaluation of the project. However, organisational and logistic problems have meant



that no suitable procedure to determine the effectiveness of P.S.L.S. courses has been identified so far. Chapter 6 of this thesis analyses and comments on the findings of a survey carried out among P.S.L.S. trainers in terms of the course structure, content and activities.

### **3.3.2 Private sector organisations**

In addition to the training courses run by state sector organisation, Modern Foreign Languages teachers can also attend various training events set up by private organisations. This section describes the activities of two organisations which have played a major role in promoting training activities in Italy: the British Council, and LEND (Lingua e Nuova Didattica ).

#### **3.3.2.1 The role of the British Council**

The British Council has been responsible for a number of training projects in Italy. It organised the so-called CNR courses (Centro Nazionale Ricerca - National Research Council), piloted a successful Distance Learning project and has been sponsoring a Teacher Training course specifically aimed at Italian teachers of English for the past 21 years. The British Council has offices in Rome, Milan, Bologna and Naples. Each British Council office has an English Teaching Information Centre which is a focal

point for language and literature teacher training programmes. Specialist staff are available to advise teachers and trainee teachers on methodology, course books, materials and a wide range of other relevant topics. The English Teaching Information Centre reference library contains a wide selection of up-to-date published course material, an extensive selection of books on linguistics, applied linguistics and methodology and a representative range of journals and magazine. In addition, there is a collection of audio-visual material on video-cassette, audio-cassettes and films. The English Teaching Information Centre runs an intensive programme for teaching professionals every September. It also organises afternoon and full day professional seminars throughout the school year, and can arrange, or advise on, special courses, seminars or consultancies on request. Since 1981, the British Council has organised an annual national conference for teachers of English.

The British Council has co-operated with the Italian Ministry of Education and the Local Education Authorities in the organisation of various training projects. In 1975, the British Council designed and ran on behalf of the ministry the CNR courses, which were aimed at lower secondary school teachers. The courses were residential and structured in four one-week sessions during the school year to give the participants the opportunity to experiment between sessions and then share their experiences with the other trainees and receive feedback from the trainer. As Bresadola, Frascari and Pantaleoni report (1979:97), "these courses were generally held to be successful, but were discontinued after the first year, even though a three year scheme had been envisaged".

### **3.3.2.1.1 The Distance Training Foundation Module**

The Distance Training Foundation Module or DTFM was an experiment in teacher training carried out by the British Council between 1981 and 1986. It was a response to the increased demand for teacher training courses at a time when the British Council did not have sufficient resources or staff to cover the whole of Italy. It also offered an alternative to established ways of teacher training such as conferences, short courses and lectures. This type of training was very popular, but, as Rixon reports (1986), it was felt that it could not provide teachers with specific answers to their individual problems and help them overcome the feeling of isolation many of them experienced in their job. The idea was to work with groups of teachers, encourage them to share their experiences and problems and provide them with suggestions to improve their classroom teaching. Some of the courses were financially supported by the I.R.R.S.A.E. (Regional Institutions for Research and In-service Training) and were initially thought as particularly appropriate for use on P.S.L.S. courses for teachers at higher secondary schools.

The first pilot courses were held in 1981-82 and by 1984 about 30 course had been run. Each course had no more than 25 trainees and lasted the whole school year with weekly meetings of three hours. The meetings were held by a co-ordinator, an Italian teacher who had been selected on the basis of his/her experience and trained to perform this task. The trainers co-operated with the British Council consultants in the preparation and revision of the materials to ensure that they were especially relevant



to the Italian situation. They were also responsible for setting up the course, usually in collaboration with one of the Italian authorities.

### **3.3.2.1.1.1 The structure of the course**

Brookes (1983:39) explains that “a basic principle in the design of the course was that it should not tell teachers how to teach, but would build on their existing awareness, knowledge, experience and skills, and, in this way, become relevant to all the very varying teaching situations in Italy.” The DTFM had three main objectives. First, to ensure that the teacher-participant had sufficient and relevant knowledge of recent ideas on language teaching and learning, and awareness of the educational system to which this knowledge is applied. Second, to ensure that the teacher had the various skills required for the application of knowledge to the educational situation. Third, to ensure that the teacher used the experience gained as a driving force to promote effective teaching and learning. The four components of the course, called AKES (Awareness, Knowledge, Experience, Skills ) were made to operate constantly within this general framework.

The materials of the DTFM were prepared and tested beforehand and consisted of 10 units:

1. Individual Language Learning Experience
2. The Nature of Language
3. Theories and Learning and their Methodological Implications
4. Implications for Teaching Language as Communication
5. Teaching Speaking
6. Teaching Listening
7. Teaching Reading
8. Teaching Writing
9. Testing
10. Evaluation of Teaching Materials.

A set of cassettes and Co-ordinator's Notes accompanied each unit and provided suggestions on how to deal with the materials or how to expand them with more practical examples.

Each unit of the material consisted of one, two or three cycles of four components. Within each cycle there were four components. Component 1 was 'Orientation', a phase of individual work involving preliminary reading and exercises to be carried out autonomously. Component 2 was 'Activation', that is a group session which usually involved guided discussions on what had been studied and a workshop. During the workshop trainees worked in groups under the co-ordinator's supervision

and prepared materials to be tried out in their classroom. This was Component 3, the next stage of the course, called in fact 'Application'. Component 4 was 'Evaluation'. Each trainee was asked to evaluate his/her own classroom performance on a special evaluation sheet, which was then sent to the British Council consultants. They in turn commented in writing and returned the sheets to the co-ordinator.

The British Council has kindly made available to the author units 4 and 7 of the DTFM. Unit 4, 'Implications for teaching language as communication', was one of the units of a more theoretical nature, while Unit 7, 'Teaching Reading' was a unit which proved particularly popular for its practical applications.

Unit 4 had three main objectives. Firstly, it aimed at raising awareness of the need to develop communicative, as well as linguistic competence, in language teaching. Secondly, it asked trainees to examine some materials and techniques for doing this in the classroom. Finally, it aimed at developing some of the skills necessary for promoting communicative language teaching. The unit had three cycles of four components each. In the first component (Orientation) of the first cycle, trainees were asked to reflect on their own attitudes towards communicative language teaching. Trainees were asked to answer a number of questions about the reasons for learning a foreign language and the role of the four skills in language teaching. They were then asked to think about their own experiences of communicating in English and their own classroom teaching. The next phase of the component of this cycle involved reading a series of articles or abstracts from books on the topic. Each reading passage



was accompanied by exercises which paved the way for the next component, "Activation".

In the first part of the Activation component trainees worked in groups, under the coordinator's supervision, and discussed their reactions to the Orientation component of Cycle One. This was followed by a workshop. Trainees had to prepare a detailed plan of how they would teach a specific game. The first part of Cycle Two involved micro-teaching: one member of the group would act as the 'teacher' while the other members of the group would monitor how the teaching went. The activity was followed by a discussion, focusing on problems of classroom management. Trainees were then given a selection of games to choose from, one of which should be tried out in the classroom. Trainees were also required to write a report about their teaching experience. A detailed worksheet to guide their writing was also provided.

Cycle Three started with an Orientation component which involved a detailed analysis of a selection of teaching materials together with further background reading. The Activation component involved a discussion on how the Application component of Cycle Two progressed. Trainees were then asked to re-teach the same game or a different game. They were then given the opportunity to discuss the Orientation component of Cycle Three. Finally, trainees were asked to monitor one of their classes for a week using a pre-prepared worksheet which would later be sent to the British Council for evaluation and comment. More background reading was also provided.

Unit 7, 'Teaching Reading' had two cycles in which three issues were explored: what is meant by 'reading', how we learn to read and how we can help a student learn to read. The Orientation component of Cycle One was very similar to the same component of unit 4: it aimed at making trainees reflect on the way they teach this skill, and provided them with relevant guided background reading. The Activation component involved a discussion on the material read. The discussion was followed by an intensive reading activity in which different reading techniques were explored. During the final part of this component, trainees had the opportunity to produce a scanning exercise to use with one of their classes. They were then asked to try it out at school and write a short evaluation report. The Orientation component of Cycle Two provided trainees with further background reading and exercises. Trainees had then the opportunity to produce an intensive reading exercise to use with one of their classes. After administering it, they were asked to write a short evaluation of it, according to guidelines provided.

#### **3.3.2.1.1.2 Evaluation of the DTFM**

The DTFM was first piloted over two years with nine groups of teachers working in various parts of Italy. The groups were regularly monitored and the feedback thus obtained was then incorporated into the second and third revision of the material used. According to Brookes (1983:40), the DTFM proved "to be a very useful, innovative tool for teacher training in Italy." Rowe (1983:200) finds the main reason for the effectiveness of this project in the fact that "not only does it show theory and

practice to be indivisible, but is also shows learning to be cyclical, dynamic and therefore endless.”

However, the actual implementation of the DTFM encountered logistic difficulties, especially at the initial stages. Marcello (1984) reports that trainees experienced problems related to the organisation of the DTFM by the Regional offices which often took a long time to set up the courses. There were also problems in maintaining regular attendance on the courses: some trainees were concerned that the course might be too demanding, while others had to face a lack of co-operation from their headmasters who were unwilling to release them from their normal teaching duties. Marcello also reports some complaints with the topics of the units. Trainees found the first three units to be too theoretical and difficult: on the contrary, they had expected something very practical from the beginning and this explains the great popularity of the more practical units. The preference of Italian trainees for practical forms of training emerges whenever they are required to provide feedback on the training received. The issue is further explored in section 4.4.5.1 of Chapter 4 and section 6.4.2.3 of Chapter 6.

According to Marcello, all four parts of the Cycles were considered relevant: however, the autonomous study component - mainly the ‘Orientation’ - was perceived as very demanding, especially in terms of the time element. As to the components, the ‘Activation’ was particularly appreciated: trainees were given the opportunity to compare their ideas, an activity which is highly neglected in schools. At this stage, they also produced materials to be used in their classrooms and, in



doing so, they felt that what they were doing did have a practical meaning in their everyday teaching. Trainees had also the opportunity to try out in the classrooms the materials that they had prepared during the courses and to share with the other trainees their experiences. Marcello believes that one of the most relevant aspects of the course was the constant use of English as the only means of communication. Trainees were left free to choose the language to use in both plenary sessions and group activities, and the majority of them opted for the use of English in both.

Aiello and Argondizzo (1985:11) were two Italian co-ordinators who worked on the DTFM. They considered the DTFM to be “a right and intelligent formula for teacher training organised at national level”. However, they felt that “the fact of having to follow a strictly structured syllabus, in terms of materials, timing and activities, made them feel deprived of the freedom they needed in order to act spontaneously within the course.” They would have liked to “*personalise* the course in order to help trainees *internalise* it more effectively”: for instance, they would have preferred to be given the choice to select the materials independently on the basis of their teaching experience and to introduce a humanistic component to the course.

The author feels that it is important to point out that, even if the DTFM involved micro-teaching, trainees were never observed while teaching their own classes nor had the opportunity to observe another teacher at work. The fact that no teaching observation is ever involved at any stages of a teacher’s professional life has serious implications for their training: these implications are discussed in sections 4.4.5.4 of Chapter 4 and section 6.4.2.4 of Chapter 6. The aim of the DTFM was to further the

teachers' knowledge of specific methodological areas: therefore, it did not include any language improvement component.

It appears that the project was short-lived for two main reasons. The training offered by the British Council was in competition with other training courses set up by State organisations at the time and coincided with the spread of P.S.L.S. courses all over Italy. In addition, the DTFM apparently failed to gain the administrative recognition by the Ministry of Education which would allow the project to become widely accepted. The production of the distance learning materials also proved to be particularly expensive. The Orientation component of each unit comprised a large number of articles and abstracts from books which needed constant updating. The Activation component also used photocopies of popular teaching material available at the time. It appears that it became increasingly difficult to obtain photocopying permission of the wide range of material needed for the background reading and the teaching activities.

#### **3.3.2.1.2 The British Council 'Norwich' course**

The British Council has been sponsoring an annual training course specifically aimed at Italian teachers of English for the past 21 years. The 12 participants are selected by British Council representatives in Italy and then spend a period of time in England to be trained. The first course took place at Ealing College of Higher Education in 1976. It consisted of a nine week course which mainly focused on the production of

teaching material. From 1982 to 1995 the course was run by The Bell School and was based in Norwich: it therefore became known as the 'Norwich Course'. In 1996, the British Council decided to entrust the organisation of the course to the Norwich Institute for Language Education (NILE), based at the University of East Anglia. This coincided with major changes to the course content and structure. For the first two years, Italian teachers went to Norwich for a period of 9 weeks in April/June. However, as it proved difficult to replace them for such a long period of time during the school year, the course was rescheduled to July/August and the length of the course reduced first to eight and finally to six weeks.

When the Bell School took over the running of the course, it was decided to change the focus of training. The course, which was originally aimed at the production of teaching materials, was now devoted to preparing the participants for their role as trainers. In the subsequent 13 years the content and processes of the course were subject to continual re-formulation. However, three basic components remained constant - a main component on various issues of teaching methodology, optional seminars and a research project. In the first two years of the course, two-thirds of the weekly timetable were taken up by the main component. The issues of teaching methodology explored in the main component were (Pulverness, Maingay and Dodman, 1992):



Weeks 1&2	Teacher Quality and Classroom Management
3	Oral/Aural Skills 1
4	Reading/Writing Skills 1
5	Using Hardware
6	Individualised Learning/New Approaches
7	Oral/Aural Skills 2
8	Reading/Writing Skills 2
9	Integrated Skills

Optional seminars were offered in Advanced Language Analysis, Drama and Video, Need Analysis, Teaching Phonology, Testing and Evaluation, Syllabus Design, Literature, and E.S.P.. The participants were also required to carry out a research project which would allow them to explore in more details an area of their choosing.

Pulverness, Maingay and Dodman report (1992) that the course was met with mixed reception, mainly due to a mismatch between the Norwich and the Italian agenda. The Course Director decided therefore to hold a long pre-course briefing meeting in Rome. The meeting gave both the Director and the participants an opportunity to negotiate the course content. It was decided that there should be fewer options more closely linked to the project work. The Options were therefore taught in the first half of the course and provided background input for the group work which followed in the second half. In 1986 the briefing weekend was redesigned to provide participants with a sample of the activities and techniques which would be used in the course.

The topics of the Main Component were fully and openly negotiated and project groups were given the opportunity to discuss their fields of interest with their tutors.

1988 saw further organisational changes. The briefing weekend was extended to 3½ days, thus becoming 'Phase 1' of the course. The course was redesigned and the traditional single main component replaced by two main components. The first component covered a full range of issues concerned with teacher development. The second component aimed at putting foreign language teaching within the broader perspective of curriculum renewal. Seminars were offered on Language Awareness, The Spoken Language, The Written Language, Literature, Testing and Evaluation. Project work was concentrated in the last two weeks of the course. The group of teachers which was at Norwich in 1988 decided to organise a follow-up meeting in Italy later in the year. This follow-up meeting proved to be so successful that it has become an official 'Phase 3' of the course. In 1990, the Norwich phase of the course was reduced to 6 weeks, comprising two blocks of two-week work on the main components and options, followed by one week of project work. In addition, rather than having one director teaching both main components, joint directors were appointed - one for Teacher Education and the other for Language Across the Curriculum. At this stage, the content of the course focused on various aspects of teacher development, reflecting the requirements of the participants. Personal research continued to be an integral part of the course, but the production of a written research project was not mandatory any more.

Pulverness (1995) reports that the success of the various follow-up meetings prompted the organisers of the 1994 British Council Conference in Bologna to allocate space within that conference for a Mini-Course. On that occasion, a series of proposals were put forward, among which the compilation of a database of past Norwich scholars who are willing to establish informal regional links to further ideas and projects initiated on the course.

In 1996, the organisation of the course was taken over by the Norwich Institute for English Education (NILE), at the University of East Anglia. The change in the institution responsible for the organisation of the course has coincided with a series of major changes in the program of study currently on offer. As the author was one of the 12 Italian teachers selected by the British Council to attend the six week 'Teacher Trainer Development Course' at NILE, she has gained personal experience of the new course structure and content. The course is now linked to a Masters Level Awards Programme: the programme allows students to gain credits that can either be 'cashed-in' or accumulated over a period of 5 years, leading to an MA degree in Education and Professional Development for Teachers of English as a Foreign Language. The British Council sponsors the Italian teachers for the first stage of the course. Teachers who successfully complete this first part gain a Postgraduate Certificate. If they want to progress to obtain a Postgraduate Diploma or an MA, they can choose from a variety of options, including a Distance Learning Module, but they will have to fund themselves.



The course is now open to non-native speaker teachers of English from different parts of the worlds. In 1996, the 12 Italian teachers were joined by teachers from Russia, Argentina and Poland for the first four weeks of the course. The final two weeks remain specific to the Italian teachers. The course is organised around a compulsory core component, three optional modules and a number of seminars and workshops. In 1996, the core components focused on language teaching methodology, the roles of teachers and learners, and language across the curriculum. Students could choose to follow modules on presentation skills, testing, and British Studies. There were also seminars/workshops on 'Metaphors in language teaching', 'Games and activities for language teaching', 'Person-centred approaches and the reflective teacher' and 'Action Research'. The assessment involved a 3,000 word assignment on a topic chosen by the student and a portfolio containing a book review, a plan for an INSET session, and an evaluative piece of work based on a personal course diary.

Bettinelli, Monticolo and Tropea (1998) have reported their experience as trainees on the course. They raise a number of issues concerning the course. They all agree that the components were generally too theoretical and insufficiently relevant to their teaching situation. In addition, the fact that the course is now open to teachers of other nationalities has resulted in the loss of one of its original features: its specificity to the Italian situation and to the teachers working within this system. The 'Norwich Course' was one of the very few opportunities for Italian teachers to share their experiences and problems with other colleagues, thus overcoming the feeling of isolation that many of them experience. They were also disappointed that the

changed nature of the course assessment meant that they had to spend a considerable part of their time in England working on individual assignments. They would have preferred to continue the tradition of the 'Norwich Course' which had always seen teachers working co-operatively on a common project, relevant to their teaching situations. They all agreed that the most positive aspect of the course was the opportunity to meet other colleagues and to spend a considerable length of time discussing common problems and devising possible solutions with them. The need to relate theory to practice and the importance of reflecting on teaching practice are two issues of crucial importance to Italian teachers of E.F.L.. The various aspects of these issues and their implications for teacher training courses are dealt with in various sections of Chapter 4, 5 and 6.

### **3.3.2.1.3 Future activities**

According to David Hill, Teacher Adviser at the British Council in Milan (Goodger, 1995), the British Council intend to continue to run a certain number of seminars, aimed at State School teachers. These seminars are free of charge and cover various aspects of English Language Teaching. In the past, these seminars were officially recognised by the Local Education Authority - this meant that teachers who had attended a certain number of seminars had access to financial incentives offered by the Ministry of Education.

There is a wide range of other training courses available, but teachers who wish to follow them will have to finance the courses themselves. The British Council in Milan has recently opened a self-access centre and is planning to set up packs of self-access materials for teachers on methodology topics. Teachers will be guided in the choice of the study pack and will have access to a wide range of journals, video, and CD-ROMs.

The 1995 contract, which offers accelerated pay increases to teachers who are willing to attend training courses, has determined the proliferation of teacher training activities. However, these training courses must be recognised by the Local Education Authority. The author had the opportunity to talk to David Hill, the English Teaching Adviser at the British Council in Milan, about a possible involvement of the British Council in the organisation of these new courses. It appears that the lengthy procedure to obtain official recognition is difficult to reconcile with one of the main aims of the institution - to respond quickly and effectively to the trainees' requirements.

### **3.3.2.2 Self-training: the LEND experience**

LEND (Lingua e Nuova Didattica) is an organisation which relies exclusively on volunteer work of teachers. It does not have stable structures or regularly paid staff and survives only thanks to the personal dedication of its members. The first LEND group was started in Rome in the early 1970s: Lancia, Calzetti, Baione (1984)



describe it as a spontaneous movement of teachers who were tired of routine and ready for change. There was no institutional source of in-service training available at the time and many teachers did not even have access to specialised bookshops. The only way they could reduce their feeling of professional isolation was to promote collaboration and encourage exchanges of views between them. LEND groups were gradually formed all over Italy.

At first, the LEND groups were mainly composed of teachers of English who met regularly to discuss their problems, to exchange information on recently published materials or courses attended, and to decide common lines of action in day-to-day school issues. The LEND groups could count on the support of the British Council Officers in Italy who helped them in the organisation and running of the first training courses. They were very active and were supported by an increasing number of teachers of Italian and of foreign languages. According to Costanzo (1993), what characterised these groups, and may explain their success, was their pragmatic grasp, the realisation that it was possible to move away from abstract theory and actually do things. Bresadola, Frascari, Pantaleoni (1979:97) also believe that "the reason for LEND's vitality is that it is an organisation for teachers, run by teachers who are well aware of teachers' problems and willing to find solutions for them because *they care*." The courses organised by the various LEND groups all over Italy have proved to be successful because they meet the Italian teachers' demand for practical guidance rather than abstract theory. The novelty was not only in the content of what was being proposed, but in the way teachers organised themselves and took decision. Self training was a new concept for Italian teachers who were able for the first time

to decide the type of training they needed and how to get it - all decisions were taken by elective committees after discussions in members' meetings. Lancia, Calzetti, Baione (1984) find that the role of the LEND groups was particularly important in small towns where teachers could not count on the support of British Council Centres or even find bookshops with a language section. The groups started to establish links with local authorities and school institutions, urging them for change, sending out reform plans and documents. They asked local authorities to set up teachers' centres and libraries where teachers could find books which were useful for work and training.

The expansion in the number of the members and in the nature of the activities organised by the various LEND groups, presented them with a number of problems, which, according to Bertoni Del Guercio (1984<sup>1</sup>) were mostly linked with the voluntary character of the organisation. Only a limited number of teachers in fact were ready to devote their free time to LEND. School authorities often withheld permission to attend LEND courses and conferences as they did not recognise LEND as an association which could organise such events. In addition, teachers found it difficult to be released from their school duties in order to attend local initiatives. It was only more recently that the activities of LEND have been acknowledged and supported by school institutions such as Local Education Authorities and I.R.R.S.A.E.s. Today there are LEND groups in more than 60 provinces all over Italy.

According to Bresadola, Frascari, Pantaleoni (1979:97), "LEND has succeeded in creating a continuous structure which takes into account not only the how and why of

language teaching, but also its psychological implications". Bertoni del Guercio (1984) describes some of the activities organised by the LEND groups. They include lectures with guest-speakers, seminars, workshops, study sessions, and creation of pools of reference materials. LEND is also involved in a number of educational projects and organises regular local meetings, and conferences, with the co-operation of State institutions and Foreign Cultural Organisations.

At national level, the activities of LEND have developed in two directions:

- publishing activities, pivoting around the quarterly journal "Lingua e Nuova Didattica" (LEND). The journal publishes articles on various methodological issues and offers an open forum to teachers, educationalists and legislators. LEND also publishes books on specific topics and the proceedings of their national meetings;
- national meetings, which offer teachers the opportunity to listen to reports on particularly significant subjects as well as to share teaching materials related to the reports.



### 3.4 Conclusions

Italian teachers of E.F.L. consider training as an important part of their professional life. They are ready to invest personally and financially to further their knowledge, even though the Italian Ministry of Education give<sup>S</sup> little, or no<sup>1</sup> recognition to their efforts. When they decide to attend an in-service training course, they can choose from a variety of options available in their country. They can apply to be selected for P.S.L.S. courses or they can take advantage of other activities, run by private institutions such as the British Council. They can also decide to join LEND, a voluntary organisation in which teachers are more actively involved in deciding what type of training they would like to receive. However, as they are concerned about their command of the target language, at some stage in their lives they will try to spend some time in an English speaking country. For financial and cultural reasons, they are likely to decide to follow a period of study in the UK, where they can choose from various courses currently offered by British academic institutions. On these courses native and non-native speaker teachers of E.F.L. work and study together, following the same course syllabus. However, these two groups of teachers have clearly different training needs. For instance, it is questionable whether the emphasis that academic courses place on theory encounters the favour of a group of teachers who have already undergone a very theoretical period of study.

The next chapter will concentrate on defining the major reasons for dissatisfaction of Italian teachers of English with training courses previously attended. It will also identify the training needs and expectations of this group of teachers, in terms of the

course components and trainers. The identification of the training requirements of Italian teachers of E.F.L. is the first and necessary step in the attempt to determine how the various training options available to them, both in Italy and in the UK, can be made more effective in meeting their needs.

## **CHAPTER 4**

# **The in-service training needs of Italian teachers of English: the author's survey**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The identification of the requirements and expectations of non-native English speaker teachers attending training courses plays a key role in determining the effectiveness and the success of these courses. However, there has been relatively limited research in this field and little documented feedback on what works and does not work in teacher education programmes. As was described in Chapter 1, although surveys carried out by a number of researchers have supplied some information on the training needs of non-native speaker teachers of E.F.L., there has been no extensive research on the training needs of Italian speaker teachers.



This chapter describes and analyses the results of a questionnaire administered by the author to a group of Italian teachers of E.F.L.. The questionnaire was devised with three main objectives in mind. It aimed at:

1. defining the requirements and expectations of Italian teachers when attending in-service training courses;
2. determining the type of training they had received and their degree of satisfaction with training courses previously attended, with particular regard to the contribution of the native English speaker trainers involved in these programmes;
3. determining whether their awareness of being non-native speakers of English affects the way that they perceive themselves as teachers, or are perceived by others.

The analysis of the responses to the questionnaire shows the overwhelming importance of the link between language competence and teacher's status. This results in the clear requirement expressed by all teachers to spend more time on improving their language skills, a need expressed also by many other non-native English speaker teachers who were surveyed in other questionnaires (Berry 1990, Parrott 1990, Jarvis 1991, Murdoch 1994, Reves and Medgyes 1994). In particular, it is in the specific field of language improvement that the presence of native English speaker trainers is so desirable. The responses to the questionnaire also provide valuable information on the components that Italian teachers would like to see included in a training course, the language in which the training activities should be carried out and the characteristics of the 'good' teacher of E.F.L..

The survey also shows that practising teachers are focused on their teaching practice and would like to learn techniques which will help them promote successful learning among all their students. It is, therefore, very important that the more theoretical aspects of training programmes are seen to be linked with the practical problems that these teachers have to face in their classroom.

## **4.2 Background to the survey**

The research conducted by the author extends less specific work carried out by other researchers in this field. Section 1.5.2 of Chapter 1 provided a detailed description of a number of questionnaires administered to various groups of non-native speaker teachers of E.F.L.. The results which emerged from the analysis of these questionnaires highlighted a number of very interesting points, such as :

- the link between language proficiency and teacher's status and the consequent importance of language improvement work;
- the preference for a more practical approach to teacher training and the need to link theory with classroom practice;

the teachers' resistance to being observed while teaching.

The questionnaire prepared by the author aimed at providing a more focused analysis of issues which had emerged from previous questionnaires and at relating them specifically to the Italian situation. None of the previous questionnaires was targeted at Italian teachers, even though some Italian teachers were among the teachers in one survey carried out by Parrot (1990).

### **4.3 Methodology**

The author conducted the survey in the winter of 1994. The form of data collection was by a questionnaire developed by the author (see Appendix 2). The methodology employed in formulating the questionnaire, conducting the survey, and carrying out the analysis followed that described in Cohen and Manion (1980). It was felt that the most effective way of gathering information was through a self-completion questionnaire, executed in the presence of the author. This was seen as being more appropriate than other data gathering techniques, such as postal questionnaires or structured interviews. Postal questionnaires often generate a poor response rate and the absence of the surveyor at the time of completion may leave any misunderstanding unresolved on the part of those surveyed. Structured interviews were seen as an inefficient method of achieving the same end as the questionnaire and additionally there is always the danger of bias entering in to them (Borg and Gall 1963, Best and Kahn 1986).



The questionnaire consisted of 11 question areas, aimed at gathering quantitative data. Some of the questions were designed to elicit information about the personal background of the teachers, for instance the number of years they had been teaching, and the type of in-service training they had experienced in the course of their careers. Other questions aimed at defining their expectations and requirements when attending training courses in relation to the course format, the course components, the language of instruction, and the role of native English speaker trainers. One question area was designed to gather information about the respondents' perception of what makes a good E.F.L. teacher, the aim being to explore the respondents' views on how they perceived themselves as non-native English speaker teachers. The last section of the questionnaire aimed at eliciting the respondents' reaction to a number of statements which had been chosen for their potentially controversial nature.

All but one of the questions were closed-ended, i.e. they elicited responses from among a number of given options. Questions were designed in closed form so that quantification and analysis of the results could be carried out efficiently. A second reason which determined the choice of this type of question was to obtain specific responses from the highest number of respondents. As the respondents were teachers attending two seminars conducted by the author at the British Council in Milan, the questionnaire was designed in a way to allow respondents to provide accurate and reliable answers in a relatively short time.

The author had studied a number of different questionnaires designed by the I.R.R.S.A.E. Lombardy. Although the nature and the objectives of these questionnaires were different from the one prepared by the author, it was felt that it would be useful to identify the structure of questionnaires with which Italian teachers of Modern Foreign Languages were likely to be familiar. The author decided to write the questionnaire in Italian. There were two closely related reasons behind her decision. Firstly, all I.R.R.S.A.E. questionnaires taken into consideration were in Italian. Secondly, the author wanted to be sure that the respondents felt comfortable with the language used in the survey: their command of the language should not have been an issue at this stage of the survey.

The questionnaire was designed so that it was as simple and clear as possible, with short and precise statements. The author was present in the room to provide any necessary clarification or explanation and to encourage full participation. Bell (1987) and Best and Kahn (1986) identify that there is a distinct advantage in administering questionnaires personally, including better co-operation and high proportion of usable responses.

Question 1 was open ended since it was seeking background information on the respondents. All other questions were close-ended, but their structures were varied to suit circumstances. Questions 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9 and 10 asked respondents to tick the box relevant to their response. Questions 8 involved the ranking of a number of elements, according to their degree of importance, with 1 as the most important and 10 as the least important element: respondents were likely to be familiar with this type of



ranking, as it is routine for I.R.R.S.A.E. questionnaires to rank from 1 to 10 in descending order of importance.

Questions 5 and 11 employed the Likert method. Questions 5 asked respondents to rate the importance of ten course components, using a five point scale. For question 11 the subjects were given a list of five statements and were asked to say whether they agreed with them using a five point Likert-type scale. This question aimed at gathering information about the respondents' reactions to statements of potentially controversial nature. The author had chosen the five statements in order to challenge certain preconceived ideas about teaching and teacher training. Since in using the Likert Method, "the correctness of the statements is not important ... what is important is that they express definite favorableness or unfavorableness to a particular point of view" (Best and Kahn, 1981:181), the author felt that this method was highly appropriate for this particular question area. For instance, statement 11.5 read 'Native English speaker teachers teach better than non-native English speaker teachers'. The statement had not been chosen because of its correctness, but to ascertain how the non-native English respondents perceived themselves as teachers when compared to their native English speaker colleagues. A five point Likert-type scale was used in order to minimise the number of neutral responses. It was felt that on a three point Likert-type scale some respondents would not be inclined to express strong agreement or disagreement. In addition, I.R.R.S.A.E. questionnaires with which the respondents were familiar, use a five point Likert-type scale.



The questionnaire was pre-tested with a group of 20 Italian teachers working for the Italian Consulate in England. All were fully qualified teachers, seconded from their position in Italy to teach Italian in a variety of schools in the UK. They therefore represented a suitable group to test the questionnaire for clarity and comprehensibility, particularly with regard to Italian character and attitudes. The author asked the teachers to fill in the questionnaire and subsequently asked them to provide suggestions on how the questionnaire could be improved. The feedback received resulted in minor adjustments, mainly concerning the wording of some questions.

The final version of the questionnaire was administered by the author at the headquarters of the British Council in Milan. The questionnaire was circulated among two different groups of Italian lower and higher secondary school teachers of E.F.L. at the end of two seminars conducted by the author. 68 teachers returned the questionnaires: 67 female teachers and 1 male teacher. This was seen as a suitably sized pool of respondents, being similar in size to many other such surveys carried out by other researchers (Berry 1990, Jarvis 1991, Bailey 1993, Kennedy 1993, Bax 1995).

## 4.4 Results and analysis

Simple descriptive statistics (%) were used in the analysis of the data. This approach was chosen in order to best facilitate the interpretation of available data. It was not intended that the findings be advanced as statistical evidence. The figures were intended to provide an overall picture and to support the author's interpretative approach to the data.

Questions 5 and 11 involved the use of a five point Likert-type scale. In question 5 the values were calculated as a percentage of the total respondents for each statement. A scale value from 1 to 5 was assigned to each of the five responses. A total score for each statement was calculated as the sum of the products of each scale value and their respective number of responses. In question 11 the two categories of 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' were combined, and similarly in the case of 'Strongly disagree' and 'Disagree'. The values were then calculated as a percentage of the total respondents for each statement.

The analysis of question 8 was similar to questions 5 and 11 in some respects. Scale values were assigned to responses and the total test score calculated for each statement. Since there were ten statements which had to be ranked according to priority, the scale values ranged from 1 to 10. The results were plotted on a bar chart, with the ordinate being defined by the maximum test score possible, which would

have been achieved if all 68 respondents had rated one statement as being the most important (i.e., a total test score of 680).

### 4.4.1 Respondents' teaching experience

The subjects' teaching experience varied greatly: the least experienced teacher had been working for only four months, while the most experienced teacher for thirty-four years. The analysis was carried out on two levels. Responses were first analysed collectively and then correlated by years of experience, the aim being to determine any differences between the responses of the various groups. The results coming from the author's questionnaire were also analysed in conjunction with data coming from two I.R.S.S.A.E. (Regional Institute for Research and In-Service Training) surveys, which are described and analysed in detail in Chapters 5 and 6. The respondents' teaching experience is described in Table 4.1.

% OF RESPONDENTS	TEACHING EXPERIENCE
12%	less than five years
36%	between six and ten years
22%	between eleven and fifteen years
18%	between sixteen and twenty years
12%	more than twenty years

Table 4.1 Respondents' teaching experience



**4.4.2 In-service training courses attended**

All respondents declared that they had received some form of in-service training in the course of their professional life. 56% had attended only courses run in Italy, 4% only courses run in the UK and 40% had been on courses both in Italy and in the UK. The type of in-service training received showed interesting differences among the age groups, for instance, no teacher in the five year group had received any training abroad. Table 4.2 shows the percentage of teachers who had attended training courses in the UK.

% OF RESPONDENTS WHO RECEIVED INSET TRAINING IN THE UK	TEACHING EXPERIENCE
0 %	less than five years
56 %	between six and ten years
46 %	between eleven and fifteen years
33 %	between sixteen and twenty years
75 %	more than twenty years

Table 4.2 Percentage of respondents who received INSET training in the UK

Italian teachers have to finance any type of course they follow abroad. This result therefore shows that in spite of the financial investment involved, a good number of the respondents believe that a period of study abroad is beneficial to their professional growth. It can be assumed that the desire to improve their command of

the language may be one of the main reasons behind their decision to receive training in an English-speaking country.

#### **4.4.3 Reasons for attending training courses**

Teachers were asked why they had decided to attend an in-service training course.

Five possible reasons were provided:

1. To promote professional growth
2. To learn new methodological approaches
3. Training is compulsory in the school in which they teach
4. To promote personal growth
5. To gain access to "fondo di incentivazione", i.e. financial incentives

Although training is not compulsory in Italy, some head-teachers may require that their teachers devote a certain number of hours to in-service training activities. It was, therefore, felt that the inclusion of this statement was justifiable.

Respondents could give more than one answer. The replies, which are shown graphically in Fig. 4.1, indicated that 79% of the respondents attended training courses to promote their professional growth, 64% to learn new methodologies, and 44% to promote personal growth.



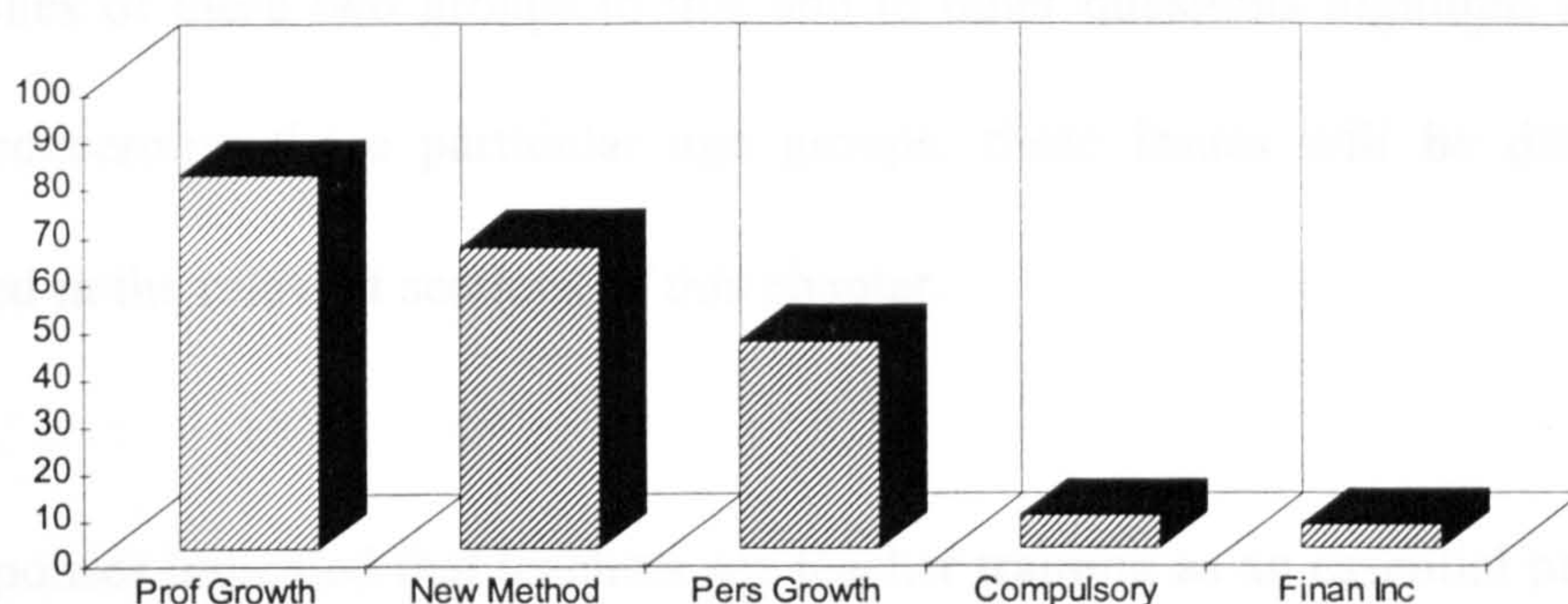


Fig. 4.1 Reasons for attending training courses

As described in section 3.2 of Chapter 3, Italian teachers generally attend training courses outside their teaching time and, until fairly recently, they did not receive any financial incentives or even contributions towards the expenses incurred when attending these courses. This has slightly changed in the past few years to encourage teachers to attend training programmes. The Ministry of Education has approved a scheme which allows teachers to qualify for financial incentives after a certain number of hours spent on training courses organised in Italy and officially recognised by the Ministry. However, the responses obtained indicate that the number of teachers who decide to go on training courses simply to qualify for these financial incentives or because training is compulsory in their schools appeared to be very limited: 5% because of financial incentives and 7% because training is compulsory. None of the teachers in either the five year group or in the over twenty year group and only one teacher in the sixteen to twenty year group selected these two reasons. It follows that those teachers who attended training courses because they had to or



because of financial incentives fall in the five to ten and eleven to fifteen year groups. The replies of these two groups to this and to other questions highlight a series of issues concerning these particular age groups: these issues will be detailed and discussed in the relevant sections of this chapter.

The responses indicated that teachers see teacher training as an essential part of their professional life. They reflect the teachers' desire to advance, to grow and to break the isolation they sometimes experience in their day-to-day work. As Szabo (1992) explains, after years of teaching, a substantial number of teachers share the feeling that they have become stationary or that they have been left behind and do not know how to start again. They feel the need to achieve an attitudinal and professional change. The findings of the author's survey are supported by data coming from the I.R.R.S.A.E. trainees' survey and detailed in sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 of Chapter 5.

#### **4.4.4 Course format preferred**

Question 4 asked teachers which training course format they favoured. The options were either regular sessions during the school year or a period of intensive study abroad. The first option reflects the structure of existing training courses run in Italy, such as the P.S.L.S. courses, or the courses organised by the British Council and LEND. The second option was the only alternative available to them since intensive study is only a possibility in July/August when schools and training institutions in Italy remain firmly closed.

The replies showed that 53 % of teachers preferred to attend courses in Italy, 28 % liked to spend time abroad while 19 % favoured both course formats. The replies confirm the results of a questionnaire that Parrott (1990) had previously administered to Italian teachers: their replies then highlighted a preference for a format which involved sessions run in their home city, on a part-time basis, concurrently with their teaching.

There were, however, significant differences among the age groups. 42 % in the five year group, 44 % in the six to ten year group and 87 % in the eleven to fifteen year group said that they were ready to attend training courses only in Italy. The fact that nearly all subjects were female teachers (95% of teachers of Modern Foreign Languages in Italy are female - Colucci 1983) may explain the preference expressed for training to take place in Italy: this may, in fact, be linked to the great demands of family life which many women in these age groups may experience. This explanation is in line with the findings of Colucci' survey (1983). He found that female teachers who were married and/or had children usually found it more problematic to attend in-service training courses held outside normal working hours. This possible explanation seems to be confirmed by the fact that, when family life becomes less demanding, the number of teachers ready to spend time far from home increases significantly: 50% in the sixteen to twenty year group and 75% in the over twenty year group said they would like to follow a period of study abroad.

4.4.5 Components of a training course

Question number 5 asked teachers to rate various components of a training programme, using a five point Likert-type scale (1 = most important, 5 = least important). Table 4.3 shows the components selected in descending order of popularity.

COMPONENTS RANKED IN ORDER OF POPULARITY	
1	Practical ideas and techniques for classroom teaching
2	Language improvement
3	Creating supporting teaching material
4	Testing and evaluation/assessment procedures
5	Evaluating textbooks and other teaching material
6	Organising activities to help students in specific problem areas
7	Phonology
8	Planning teaching activity
9	Classroom observation
10	Theories of language learning and teaching

Table 4.3 Components of a training course ranked in order of popularity

As shown in Fig. 4.2, all components scored fairly highly among all teachers even though results showed differences among the age groups. These differences are analysed and commented on in the following sections of this chapter.



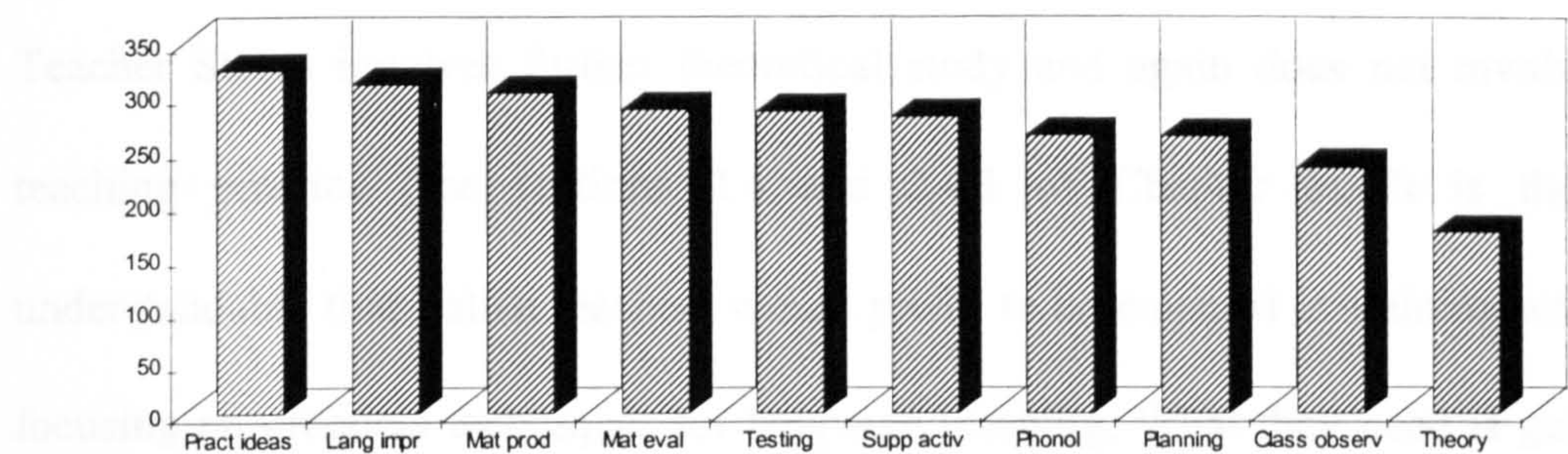


Fig. 4.2 Components of a training course

#### 4.4.5.1 ‘Practical ideas and techniques for classroom teaching’ versus ‘Theories of language learning and teaching’

It was very significant that all groups agreed on what they considered the most and the least important of all the programme components. The most popular component proved to be ‘Practical ideas and techniques for classroom teaching’, while ‘Theories of language learning and teaching’ had the lowest score in all groups.

This outcome shows that Italian teachers feel that they do not require further knowledge of the more theoretical aspects of language teaching and learning. This feeling is most probably due to the fact that their educational background has been highly theoretical. As described in sections 2.3 and 2.3.1 of Chapter 2, Italian



university curricula focus on theoretical investigation and do not involve any pre-service training, nor any teaching practice. The process to obtain fully Qualified Teacher Status involves further theoretical study and again does not involve any teaching practice (see sections 2.4 and 2.4.1 of Chapter 2). It is therefore understandable that Italian teachers would prefer to be engaged in training activities focusing on practical techniques for language teaching. What they need is guidance on how to merge theory with practice and implement the methodology they have previously studied. The preference for a practical approach in teacher training is also reflected by the results of the I.R.R.S.A.E. trainer-coordinators' questionnaire: as detailed in section 6.4.2.3 of Chapter 6, most P.S.L.S. trainers decide to devote a limited amount of time to the more theoretical aspects of training, in favour of practical activities, such as material production. The result is also in line with the findings of Pepicelli's end-of-course questionnaire (1986), which showed that the overwhelming majority of the P.S.L.S. trainees he surveyed preferred practical activities to theoretical training.

The need for training to be based on classroom practice is not restricted to Italian teachers. The importance of linking theory with practice has emerged from other surveys. The results of Parrot's questionnaires (1990:2) indicated that "most teachers attach great importance to learning methodological skills for dealing with specific areas of the syllabus". Jarvis (1991) found that all respondents to her questionnaire wanted to improve their techniques to teach their pupils. The 'ELT methodology and techniques' component was the second most popular among the teachers surveyed by

Murdoch (1994). All the teachers surveyed by Berry (1990) ranked 'Methodology' more important than 'Theory', which was consistently the least popular component.

As Parrot (1988:29) suggests, the majority of non-native English speaker teachers often complain that "their training has been too theoretical and too abstract to be related easily to classroom practice." Some of them may experience difficulties due to "constraints of syllabus, resources or learner expectations" and therefore decide to attend training courses, seeking solutions for particular practical problems of varied nature. White (1979:26) believes that "teachers are essentially practical and, while interested in knowing why a particular technique or method may be preferable to any other, they prefer to get on with the job of teaching as efficiently as possible. This means that they are interested in specific examples or models and that the justification for working one way rather than another can be allowed to emerge from the work itself." Breen, Candlin, Dam and Gabrielsen (1989:117) have also reported that "although teachers find proposals from theory and research as both informative and relevant to their own thinking, they are primarily concerned with action; what they *do* in their classroom." Lee (1974:38) claims that "it is a mistake to suppose that relatively experienced and competent teachers necessarily increase their teaching skills by engaging in some kind of theoretical study, and that they do not need (and will not greatly benefit from) training of practical kind." In fact, as Ur reports (1992:57), "teachers typically feel that the theoretical component of their courses fails to contribute significantly to their professional learning."



Talking about his experience with practising Thai teachers of English, Hayes (1995) claims that “activities should be seen as having direct relevance to teachers’ everyday school situations. The sessions should be essentially practical. Though practice is informed by theory, an understanding of theory alone is insufficient as an agent of long-term change. Teachers need to be able to see the impact of the proposed innovation on daily classroom procedures, if it is to have any validity.

According to Kennedy (1987), <sup>page number</sup> “it is often more effective to create a situation which generates a demand for theory arising from a questioning practice. The starting point is the teachers’ own situation, from which questions are successively asked and answers given ..... Practice and theory are thus closely linked, and the theory that is called for is more likely to be appropriate and relevant than would be the case with the theory-practice sequence where the two are distinct. The demand for theory comes naturally from the insiders, rather than being imposed by the outsider.” Colombo (1990) and Costanzo (1993) share Kennedy’s view that the most successful training programmes are the ones in which theory is derived from practice. Talking specifically about the methodology component, Cullen (1994) believes that it should be “practice-driven” rather than ‘theory-driven’, arising out of the trainees’ direct experience.” Matthews (1983:227) describes the training courses which he runs for Portuguese in-service teachers as “essentially practical”: although the “sessions are informed by theoretical insights we do not swamp the teachers with these insights.”

Practising teachers who decide to follow a programme of study remain focused on their classrooms. This does not preclude the inclusion of a theoretical component as

long as it can result relevant to their teaching. As Brumfit says (1979) “the design of a satisfactory teacher training course will be crucially dependent on the ways in which principles are related to realised classroom activity.”

#### **4.4.5.2 ‘Language improvement’ and ‘Phonology’**

The language improvement component proved to be very important, constantly ranking among the top three activities selected by each age-group. Teachers of all age-groups expressed the need to improve their command of the language: when the analysis was carried by age group, it was clear that the more experienced the teachers were, the stronger was their preference for language improvement work. Younger teachers, who are likely to have graduated fairly recently, appear to be more confident in their command of the language than their more experienced colleagues. However, they may need help with their ‘classroom language’. Willis has found (1981) that non-native English speaker teachers do not usually receive proper training on how to use classroom language, an aspect of language teaching which is more specialised and complex than it is usually recognised. Kennedy (1983) has also highlighted the need for training in the language of the classroom and Johnson believes (1990:269) that “a course that focuses on the effective use of language in the classroom should form an important part of the training of any teacher.”

The need to receive language training is felt much more strongly by those teachers who have been working for a considerable length of time. According to Cullen



(1994), it is common that more experienced teachers who have not had the opportunity to practise the language with native speakers or to spend some time in an English-speaking country feel that their command of the language has become somehow rusty and inadequate to the demands of a communicative approach to language teaching. Section 4.4.6 of this chapter supplies detailed information on the actual amount of training time that respondents would like to spend on improving their language skills. .

Many Italian teachers of E.F.L. feel very insecure about their command of the language. As described in section 2.3.1 of Chapter 2, this is partly due to the fact that the university curricula in Modern Foreign Languages do not attach great importance to the study of the language, but are more focused on the teaching of literature. Nothing has changed since La Pergola Arezzo (Calzetti, Lancia, Zagrebelsky et al. 1984) stated that the existing structure of the Italian educational system offers very limited opportunities to foreign language teachers to acquire adequate language competence. She believes that this is mainly due to three main factors: i) the inadequate linguistic training they receive at university; ii) the fact that most training courses organised in Italy do not usually include a language improvement component; iii) the scarcity of grants which would allow teachers to spend more time in English-speaking countries. In fact, as Donadini (1983) reports, teachers who want to improve their command of English are left with no choice, but to follow language courses abroad at their own expenses. The demand from Italian teachers of E.F.L. for linguistic training is well documented (Palamidesi 1983, and Calzetti, Lancia, Zagrebelsky et al. 1984) and the importance to include language work in training



programmes has been advocated in many instances (Byrne, D'Addio Colosimo, Di Giuliomaria, 1985 and Di Giuliomaria, 1987). Some Italian trainers, for instance Palamidesi (1983), claim that P.S.L.S. courses do include a language improvement element, as they are usually conducted in English and include trainees who have a high command of the language. The author disagrees with her view that P.S.L.S. courses include a language improvement element: P.S.L.S trainers need to recognise the specific linguistic requirements of their trainees and devise ways to address them effectively.

The need to include a language improvement component in in-service training courses has clearly emerged also from other surveys conducted among non-native speaker teachers of E.F.L.. The respondents to Berry's questionnaires (1990) ranked 'Language improvement' as either the most or the second most popular component. Parrott (1990:3) found that "almost all teachers wanted to improve their language skills and put this as a major priority". The need to improve their language was the second most important need felt by the teachers studied by Jarvis (1991). The language improvement component was ranked as the most important component of a training programme by the teachers surveyed by Murdoch (1994).

The teacher's level of proficiency in using the foreign language has serious implications for language teaching. For instance, as Zagrebelsky reported (Calzetti, Lancia, Zagrebelsky et al. 1984), teachers who are not fluent speakers tend to be insecure in class, to have problems in evaluating teaching materials, and to experience difficulties when analysing and correcting mistakes. Thomas has found

(1987) that there is a clear link between language teacher competence and end language learner competence. According to Consolo (1991:41), non-native teachers with insufficient command of oral language are prevented from “accomplishing two important roles in the classroom: i) be a linguistic model and, in this sense, provide language input for the learners, ii) use English as the means of instruction as much as possible and provide learners with more favourable input for the internalisation of the target language.

Medgyes (1994:59-60) has investigated in detail the differences in teaching attitude between native and non-native English speaker teachers, which he claims are mostly determined by the different command of the language that the two groups have. He has found that non-native English speaker teachers are usually “preoccupied with accuracy, the formal features of English, the nuts and bolts of grammar, the printed word and formal registers.” They place the emphasis on these aspects of the language because they have a better grasp of them when compared to other aspects, such as colloquial English, appropriate language use and speaking and listening skills. According to Medgyes, <sup>date & page no.</sup> “if these teachers are engrossed in fighting their own language difficulties, they can not afford to lose grip over the class.” This explains why they prefer secure forms of classwork to group and pairwork, which often create unpredictable situations full of linguistic traps. They also prefer standard coursebooks which give them more security and tend to teach unfamiliar language elements in a context-poor environment or in isolation. From the findings of Medgyes’ work, it is clear that the level of language proficiency of a teacher has important consequences in terms of the content and structure of his/her lessons.



Medgyes's work has also concentrated on the important link between teacher's language competence and teacher's confidence and status: this issue was also explored in the author's survey and is detailed in section 4.4.11.3 of this chapter.

While an overwhelming majority of teachers expressed the desire to improve their language skills, a considerably smaller number would like to see 'Phonology' as a component of a training course. The 'Phonology' component ranked seventh, the same result achieved in the questionnaire administered by Murdoch (1994). As Haycraft (1988) explains, this could be due to the fact that this component is often perceived by trainees as highly theoretical as well as somehow intimidating. The teaching of pronunciation may be difficult especially for those non-native English speaker teachers who are not confident in their own pronunciation: in addition, training courses seem to concentrate more on the theory of intonation, rhythm and sounds rather than on relating phonology to practical application in teaching practice. Thomson has also reported (1995) that the teaching of English intonation is often perceived as an impossible task, because of the complexities of the intonation difficulties. Lee (1977) has pointed out two problematic aspects of phonetics teaching and learning. Firstly, it takes a very long time for non-native English speaker teachers to achieve phonetic proficiency. Secondly, teaching phonetics to language students can be perceived as extremely time consuming: in fact, unless it is protracted for a considerable length of time, it produces negligible result. Priesack (1996) believes that the non-native English language teacher often feels more confident when teaching grammar and the functional uses of the language than with over-involvement with the pronounced correctness of students' utterances. Exercises



in pronunciation are often considered non-motivating and monotonous especially by students. According to Jones and Evans (1995) the teaching of certain aspects of phonology, such as pronunciation, is particularly difficult because “most materials still have a long way in presenting pronunciation in a truly communicative and holistic manner. The approach of current material, in fact, continues to be essentially atomistic, deductive, and rule-based”.

#### **4.4.5.3      ‘Evaluating textbooks and other teaching material’ and                   ‘Creating supporting teaching material’**

Two components which proved to be very popular among all respondents were ‘Evaluating textbooks and other teaching material’ and ‘Creating supporting teaching material’. This result is confirmed by similar responses to the I.R.R.S.A.E. trainees’ questionnaire, as described in sections 5.4.3.1.1 and 5.4.3.2.5 of Chapter 5.

There are two closely related issues which may explain the popularity of these components. Firstly, for many Italian teachers the choice of their course-books is the major opportunity they have to make a personal input into their teaching. Their choice naturally reflects their beliefs in terms of methodologies and approaches to be employed in their classrooms. Secondly, however carefully they choose their course-books, teachers often find that they have to produce substantial supplementary teaching materials to respond to the varying needs of their students. As described in

section 2.2.5 of Chapter 2, Italian teachers have to comply with the requirements of a national curriculum with which they are largely dissatisfied: their dissatisfaction with the existing curriculum has also emerged from this survey and will be discussed in section 4.4.8 of this chapter. Although teachers can not change the syllabus content, they are, however, free to choose how to present it: this is reflected in and determined by their choice of books. Choosing the course-book is therefore an important decision which will affect classroom activities and techniques.

Every year, teachers of the same subject meet to discuss and examine the course-books they have been using, and other books of recent publications which they may consider to employ in future. Each individual teacher is free to choose the book s/he believes would be more appropriate to his/her students. This means that students of English attending the same year in the same school may use different types of books. Lower and higher secondary schools do not provide the books, which have to be bought by the students themselves.

Each teacher who intends to change his/her course-books is required to write a report, explaining the reasons for his/her decision. The assembly of all teachers working in that school then meets once a year to determine if there are sufficient valid reasons for the books to be replaced. Each teacher needs to obtain a favourable vote by the majority of all teachers, before s/he is allowed to change his/her course-book. S/he is then required to use the book for a minimum of three years. The importance that the choice of an appropriate book plays in everyday classroom teaching and the fairly complicated procedure involved in replacing coursebooks may explain why a large



number of teachers considered 'Evaluating textbooks and other teaching material' an important component of a training course.

Zagrebelsky (1984) provides another reason which could explain the importance of this component: she maintains that teachers with limited language proficiency are bound to experience difficulties when evaluating, selecting and grading teaching materials. According to Mariani (1983), evaluating course-books is often a difficult task and one for which teachers need guidance: several issues, such as the teaching situation, the material resources and the syllabus, need to be carefully taken into consideration. However, he warns that the 'ideal' coursebook simply does not exist and, therefore, teachers need to be prepared to devise suitable adaptations. Tandlichová (1996:65) shares Mariani's view: the choice of a good course-book is crucial to the learners' communicative competence. However, as there is not a textbook available that will perfectly suit every teaching/learning situation, "the teaching material should be adapted to the needs of the students, so that it has relevance to the real world and relates to the students' level of education, intellectual abilities and level of maturity.'

The need expressed by most teachers to receive training on creating their own teaching materials is linked with the difficulties they experience in finding a course-book which complies with the requirements of the Italian National Curriculum, reflects their own choice in terms of teaching methodology and is relevant to their students' own personal experience. The various aspects of this issue are further discussed in section 5.4.3.1.1 of Chapter 5. The need to create supporting teaching



material is also linked to the fact that, as all Italian classes are mixed-ability, teachers need to devise activities specifically targeted at learners of varying levels of attainment. As Rizzo (1996) explains higher secondary school teachers often have to cope with a wide range of ability levels in English, depending upon the learners' previous schooling. They therefore need to learn practical classroom strategies which can be used successfully with their students.

Italian teachers are not the only non-native English speaker teachers to experience a certain degree of dissatisfaction with existing published material. Bailey (1993) found in her survey that frustration with teaching materials was one of the reasons which had lead teachers to implement changes in their teaching practice. In the survey conducted by Cullen (1994), 'Creating teaching materials/activities for classroom teaching' also scored very highly together with other activities which required high levels of creativity and production. The important role of creativity has also been highlighted by Kerr (1979:68) who maintains that "the production of locally appropriate teaching materials, however humble, helps teachers to rediscover what their teaching circumstances frequently smother: the creative element in the teaching process." The suppression of the teacher's creativity and the search for suitability are the negative consequences caused by what de Armas calls "Coursebook Syndrome" (1994).

Ruzsa (1988:47) believes that the need to produce teaching material is often determined by the fact that the approaches and the materials used in courses aimed at a world-wide market "too frequently tend to preclude specific national needs and

tradition of learning". According to her, the underlying belief seems to be that what works for native English speaker teachers teaching multilingual classes in a natural language environment can also be effectively used with all nationalities, races, cultures and teaching situations. Many teachers often choose a course-book of this type and later find out that they have to put in considerable work in trying to adapt it to their teaching situation and syllabus requirements. Willis (1981) has also found that "because of the global nature of course books, teachers face problems trying to relate parts of the book to their students lives."

Maley (1990:126) relates the need for teachers to produce their own materials to what he calls "the decline of the textbook". In recent years, there has been a tendency for 'monolithic' materials to be replaced by more flexible forms of materials which can better respond to the different interests and learning rates, thus allowing for more individualised learning to take place. Medgyes (1986:110) has also talked about the decline of the coursebook. He believes that "with the advent of the Communicative Approach, the textbook has become suspect. The arguments against it are numerous.... In consequence, demands to do away with the textbook have become rife. What is advocated as a substitute is a wide stock of flexible and authentic supplementary materials." This has put considerable strains on non-native speaker teachers, "for whom the textbook ensures a great deal of linguistic safety."

Block (1991) highlights the fact that in spite of the abundance of ELT materials, books do not always provide the types of activities and texts that a teacher may need for a specific class. He puts forward three reasons for teachers to produce their own



material: contextualization, timeliness and personal touch. He also believes that there are relatively few books on material evaluation and development (for instance, Williams 1983, Cunningsworth 1984, British Council 1987, Sheldon 1988), and this can explain the need for this component to be included in training courses. McGrath (1992:4) has found that, in spite of the demand from many teachers to receive guidance on developing teaching materials, “there may be more teacher education programmes in which material design is not a feature than those in which it is.” Matthews (1983: 227) claims that a training course should always allocate time for teachers to produce their own materials: very little will be achieved in real terms “unless teachers are able to devise their own worthwhile supplementary materials suited to their own particular groups of pupils and their own teaching style.”

The popularity of the ‘Evaluating textbooks and other teaching material’ and ‘Creating supporting teaching material’ components indicate the need for teachers to be involved in practical training activities in which they can assume a more active role. It also stresses the importance to focus training on specific teaching situations rather than on theoretical and general issues.

#### **4.4.5.4 ‘Classroom observation’**

A component which varied in importance among the age groups was ‘Classroom observation’. Taking the overall responses into consideration, this component was the least popular after ‘Theories of language learning and teaching’. When the replies



were analysed by age groups, the results showed considerable differences between the groups. Teachers in the five year group seemed to be very keen to have their teaching observed (third most popular component), while teachers in the other age groups generally prefer not to be observed while teaching. This resistance might be due to reasons of age and professional status: they may feel embarrassed if asked to perform in front of other colleagues, or even the trainer. According to James (1979:73), being observed while teaching is “a traumatic experience for most teachers, the more so for the more experienced who stand to lose some of their conceits, and the most so if their critics are their compatriots.” Edge (1984:204) has found that “teachers who have invested several years in TEFL find it very difficult to accept perhaps critical comments made on the strength of a session lasting five to ten minutes.” Freeman (1982) has suggested that teachers go through developmental phases in their careers and they require different responses from an observer, depending on which stage they are at. At the beginning of their professional life, teachers need an observer to be a source of authority who will tell them how well they are performing. At later stages of their careers, teachers expect their observer to provide them with alternative ways of doing what they are doing. Finally, they need an observer who will try to understand what they are doing in their own terms. Another reason which may explain why teachers in these groups are reluctant to be observed while teaching could be related to their level of language proficiency. From previous responses to the questionnaire it had emerged that these teachers do not have the opportunity to spend time in English-speaking country and therefore may not feel confident in their use of the target language. As Britten (1985b:235) claims, all in-service trainees experience great embarrassment when their performance is

witnessed and judged by peers and trainers, but “nowhere is this sense of shame stronger, for non-native speakers, than in their handling of English itself.”

The unpopularity of the ‘Classroom observation’ component can also be explained by the fact that Italian secondary school teachers are not familiar with the idea of being observed when teaching (Inglese, 1995). As described in Chapter 3, Italian teachers do not have their teaching observed at any stage in their careers. Their training does not involve any teaching practice and their performance when teaching is not part of their recruitment process. Once they have obtained a teaching post, they do not undergo any form of appraisal and, in fact, it is fairly common that a teacher is never observed when working in his/her classroom. In-service training courses, such as the P.S.L.S. courses, may involve some peer-teaching, but not observation of teachers working in their own classrooms. In fact, responses to the I.R.R.S.A.E. trainer-coordinators’ survey, which are discussed in details in section 6.4.2.4 of Chapter 6, show that most P.S.L.S. trainers prefer not to include peer-teaching in their courses: those who opt for this activity devote to it a small percentage of the total training time.

‘Classroom observation’ also appeared to be a fairly unpopular component among other non-native English speaker teachers. Parrot’s questionnaire (1990) showed that most teachers do not want their teaching to be observed and assessed. In the questionnaire administered by Murdoch (1994) ‘Classroom observation’ also scored very poorly, being the least popular component after ‘Testing’. Matthews (1983:228) reports that “for most Portuguese teachers it is an ordeal to explain or demonstrate a



piece from their own teaching materials in front of their colleagues for fear of 'showing themselves up'".

Several trainers and educationalists have reported that micro-teaching, peer-teaching and classroom observation are usually perceived as threatening by trainees (Wingard 1974, Bolitho 1979). There are two main issues involved in these activities. The first issue is linked to the fact that, as Haycraft reports (1985:41), teaching is a "profession which tends to be defensive, and where teachers sometimes regard their classrooms as fortresses." There is however a second and more important factor that needs to be taken into consideration. According to Hayes (1995), "there has been an unfortunate tradition of lesson observation being an inspection or formal evaluation of one's performance, and inherently judgmental." He therefore calls for a more supportive type of lesson observation, where observers do not criticise, but assist and share their experience. Williams (1989:85) describes traditional classroom observation as 'judgmental' and argues that these visits should be as far as possible 'developmental', that is "they should provide an opportunity for teachers to develop their own judgements of what goes on in their classrooms and heighten their ability to evaluate their own teaching practices." Fitzpatrick and Kerr (1993:9) believe that feedback sessions in which the trainer concentrates on the negative points result in trainees becoming defensive and frustrated. According to them, the problem is that trainers often do not know clearly what they want to achieve in the sessions. The situation is further complicated by the trainees' reluctance to being engaged in useful discussions: this reinforces their passive role and the judgmental role of the trainer. They claim that "what is lacking is a structure to the sessions with clear objectives



and trainee-based tasks which would help them to achieve them.” De Moraes Menti (1992) has put forward a series of suggestions to make classroom observation “more humane and consequently more accepted by teachers”. The suggestions include changing the language used during the sessions, negotiating procedures, ensuring confidentiality, and limiting the time of observation. Swan (1993) has highlighted the problem areas usually associated with the observation schedules used in the evaluation of lessons and has put forward strategies which can be employed to solve these problems. Edge (1993/4) has provided a framework for feedback observation which should help both trainers and trainees overcome the traditionally negative aspects of teacher observation: he stresses the importance to use evaluation to encourage teachers towards self-evaluation and exploration of what they are doing. Wajnryb’s framework for feedback (1993/4) involves five stages: negotiation, climate-setting, review and problem-solving, goal-setting and closure, and personal reflection, a stage for the trainer. She has found that this framework helps both trainers and trainees to maximise rewards from the feedback interaction.

#### **4.4.5.5      ‘Planning teaching activity’, ‘Testing and evaluation/assessment procedures’, and ‘Organising activities to help students in specific problem areas’**

The analysis of the responses of each age group to these components showed interesting differences between the groups. 87% of the teachers in the five year group would like to follow a component in ‘Planning teaching activity’: this compares to 40% of teachers in the six to ten year group and 53% of the teachers in the eleven to fifteen year group. The stronger preference for this component expressed by the first group can be explained by the lack of pre-service training. Lesson planning is perceived as a daunting task by Italian teachers at the beginning of their career, and one for which they have not been prepared. Kennedy (1993:158) has found that inexperienced teachers are usually very concerned with the various issues involved in lesson planning and preparation. They find it very difficult to decide on objectives for their lessons, select appropriate activities and seem to attach more importance to the actual form of the plan rather than its substance.

In contrast, the five year group is the one which seems less interested in the other two components, ‘Testing and evaluation/assessment procedures’ and ‘Organising activities to help students in specific problem areas’. 50% of this group believe that these components are important, in comparison with 88% of teachers in the six to ten year group. As to the eleven to fifteen year group, 93% of these teachers think that ‘Organising activities to help students in specific problem areas’ is an important

component while 80% of them would like to spend some time on 'Testing and evaluation/assessment procedures'. The differences between the responses of the various age groups could be explained by the fact that the least experienced teachers feel fairly confident in their ability to tackle problem areas and assess their students. In contrast, more experienced teachers may have grown disillusioned with the results of the support activities they have organised in the past. They may also find it increasingly difficult to devise ways of testing in which they have confidence, and may need some help with this aspect of language teaching. It certainly takes some time to appreciate the full implications of these two problem areas. More experienced teachers are likely to have gradually become more aware of the very many issues they need to address when they assess their students or devise support activities. As Corder reports (1968:71), "by the time an experienced teacher has reached mid-career, he will have already learnt that there is no single answer to the problems of language teaching, and certainly no one right solution." Teachers in these age groups may also be going through a phase of disillusion with the effectiveness of their teaching or a diminished confidence in their command of the language, which results in increased difficulties in assessing their students' language proficiency (Zagrebelsky, 1984). These interpretations are supported by the life-cycle research carried out by Huberman (1989) quoted in Jarvis (1991). Huberman has provided a schematic model of the successive themes of the teacher career cycle. In his model, teachers with seven to eighteen years of experience are likely to reach a stage of "reassessment and self-doubt" which is accompanied by disenchantment with the effect of the reforms they had attempted in earlier stages of their careers.



The great importance that teachers attach to the design of effective testing procedures is confirmed by the results of the I.R.R.S.A.E. trainees' questionnaire, as will be described in sections 5.4.3.1.2 and 5.4.3.2.5 of Chapter 5. According to Dawson (1996), Italian teachers have grown disillusioned with the testing procedures imposed by the Italian National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages. Individual teachers are responsible for preparing all written and oral tests that their students take before their final state examinations. This means that teachers may have to prepare up to nine written and nine oral tests for each class they teach in the course of each school year. Although evaluating procedures have to be agreed among all teachers working in the same class, preparing, administering and marking tests is often felt as a solitary and time-consuming activity. Sharley (1995) has highlighted another problematic issue related to testing: he believes that communicative teachers find it very difficult to be 'communicative testers'. Talking specifically about the Italian situation, he questions whether traditional oral tests are genuinely communicative and wonders whether it is in fact possible to have real tests of speaking within the existing teaching situations. He recognises the need for teachers to receive guidance on designing tests which are not incompatible with their teaching approach.

The popularity of the 'Organising activities to help students in specific problem areas' component can be explained by two reasons. Firstly, as in Italian schools all classes are mixed-ability, teachers have to provide opportunities for differentiated learning. This makes considerable demands on the individual teacher's skill in preparing suitable learning activities and in organising lessons. The teacher has to allow for different levels of understanding and types of participation in order to

promote the learning opportunities of all pupils. The second reason for the popularity of this component could be linked with recent changes in the way students are assessed at the end of the school year. Up to 1993, students who had not reached a satisfactory level of attainment in one or more subjects by the end of the school year were required to take an examination in September. If they passed the examination they were allowed to progress to the next class, otherwise they had to retake the whole year. As described in section 2.2.4 of Chapter 2, the way students are assessed has now changed. At the end of the school year, the teachers decide which students can progress to the next class. Students who have not obtained the minimum required mark in the majority of the subjects studied are failed. Students who have failed one or two subjects are required to follow special courses which have replaced the September examinations. Schools are encouraged to run special courses also during the school year in order to give students extra tuition in those subjects where they have experienced learning difficulties. This recent change in school legislation may explain the demand from teachers to receive training on how to devise appropriate and effective activities to be used in these special courses.



4.4.6            **The importance of the language component in a training course**

Question 6 asked specifically what percentage of time trainees would like to spend developing their language skills on a training course. The responses are detailed in Table 4.4 and shown graphically in Fig. 4.3.

% OF RESPONDENTS	% OF TOTAL TRAINING TIME TO BE DEVOTED TO LANGUAGE IMPROVEMENT
7.4 %	less than 30%
22.1 %	between 30% and 40%
36.8 %	between 40% and 50%
33.8 %	more than 50%

Table 4.4 Percentage of total training time to be devoted to language improvement

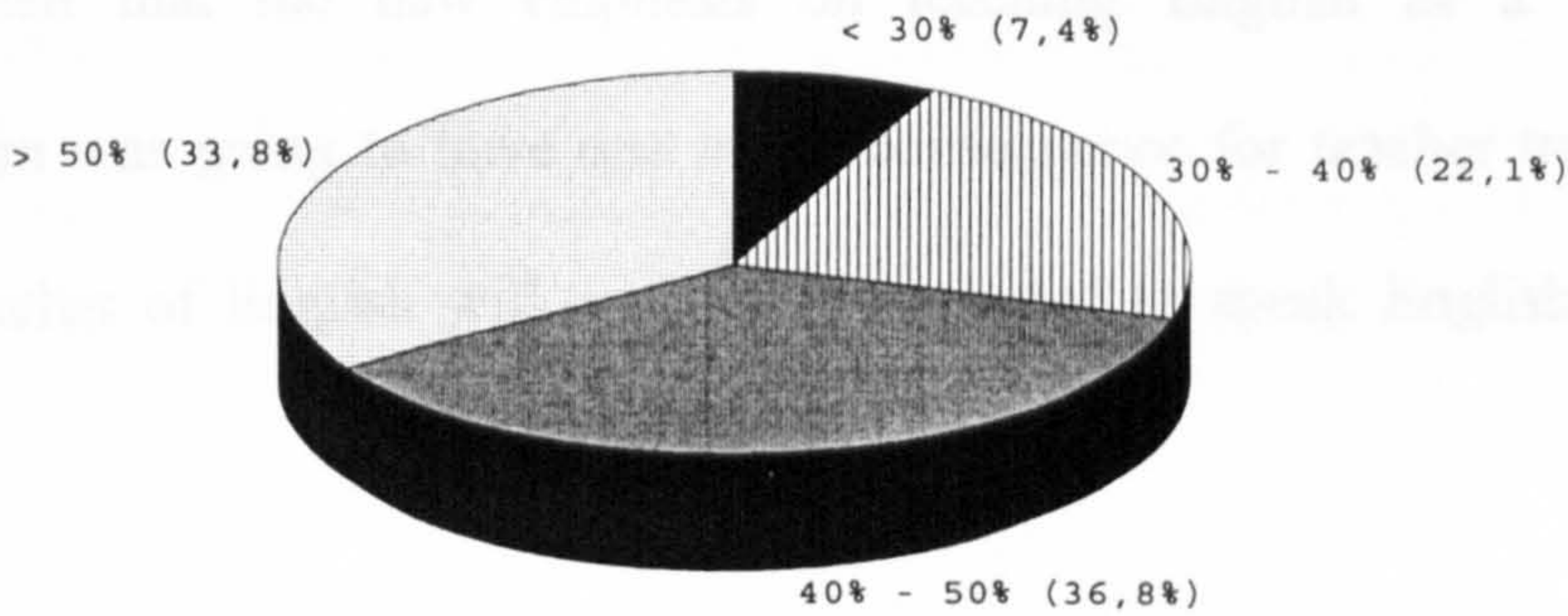


Fig. 4.3 Percentage of training time trainees would like to spend on improving their language



Differences among age groups were negligible. The fact that 70.6 % of the teachers would like the language component of a training course to take up 40% or more of the total training time reflects the great importance they attach to language competence. This is confirmed by a very similar result coming from Murdoch's questionnaires (1994): 77% of the respondents expressed the desire to spend 40% or more of their curriculum hours on language work. Bolitho also reports (1979) that most feedback from courses aimed at overseas teachers of English points to a programme with a roughly equal balance between language improvement and methodology.

According to Marton (1988), non-native speaker teachers feel less confident about using the target language than in the past. This is due to the fact that the communicative approach to teaching makes very high demands on their speaking skills. Unless they have extensive contact with proficient users of the language and frequent opportunities for travel, the English they most frequently hear is that of their students. The spread of the Communicative Approach in language teaching has certainly put heavy demands on non-native speaker teachers of English. In 1977 Harting warned that the new emphasis on teaching English as a means of communication was going to have one major consequence for teacher training: 'in future the teacher of English will actually be expected to speak English fluently' (1977:4).

Results coming from a number of surveys conducted among non-native English speaker teachers support what Britten (1985b) had recognised long ago: language

improvement is probably the commonest need within in-service training. However, it is a well documented fact that the importance of this component is often underestimated or taken for granted when designing training courses for non-native English speaker teachers (Strevens 1968, Shaw 1979, Mariani 1979, Berry 1990, Cullen 1994, and Murdoch 1994). Basanta (1996) has highlighted the need to bring into the open the 'hidden agenda' of many non-native teachers of extending their knowledge of the language: she therefore believes that training courses should give more emphasis to language improvement and development, and less to methodology. As previously reported in section 3.2.1 of Chapter 3, Medgyes (1996) believes that the disregard showed by course designers for the need of language instruction is one of the failures of contemporary teacher education programmes aimed at non-native English speaker teachers.

#### **4.4.7        The use of the mother tongue and of the target language                  in training courses**

Question 7 asked teachers to consider five activities which are usually involved in teacher training courses and express their preference as to the language in which they should be carried out. The replies to the question showed that:

74%    of the teachers preferred Italian to English for the preliminary introduction to  
         the course;

- 85% would like frontal lessons to be delivered in English;
- 79% would like any group activity to be carried out in English;
- 72% would like to use English in the follow-up discussion;
- 53% favoured English for the final discussion leading to the course evaluation.

All the replies seem to indicate a clear preference for most of the activities to be carried out in English, with no major difference between the age groups. Teachers in the five year group did seem to favour extensive use of English, preferring English to Italian both in frontal lessons and group work. This preference decreases slightly among the other groups: this indicates that a certain number of the more experienced teachers feel it more appropriate to carry out at least some activities in their mother tongue.

Two significant issues arise from the analysis of the data. First, it is possible that the reasons for trainees attending courses may differ considerably from the objectives that the trainers have in mind when designing the course. For most Italian teachers, training courses are the only opportunity to listen to and to practise English at a higher level than the one normally employed in their classrooms (Byrne, D'Addio Colosimo, Di Giuliomaria 1985). Training courses may therefore be seen more as an opportunity to practice language skills rather than as an opportunity to reflect on teaching practices and become familiar with particular methodological issues (Woodward 1991). The choice of using English as the language of instruction is, in fact, seen by some trainers as a way to respond to their trainees' demand for language improvement (Palamidesi, 1983).



The second issue arising from the analysis of the data is the role of the mother tongue in teacher training. The majority of the respondents would like the preliminary introduction to the course to be carried out in Italian. In addition, a certain number of the more experienced teachers expressed their desire to use Italian in some activities, a need which could be explained by their lack of confidence in expressing themselves in the target language (Woodward, 1990). There is however another important reason which can justify the use of the mother tongue in training: the need for clarity. Talking specifically about the Italian situation, Byrne (Byrne, D'Addio Colosimo, Di Giuliomaria 1985) suggests that the 'Language development' aspect of a course should be kept separate from the methodological aspect. He encourages a more extensive use of Italian when dealing with methodological issues in order to ensure 'clarity of ideas'. The importance of clarity is also recognised by Rixon (1986) and Holden (1992:32). According to Holden, trainees are often "bombarded with phrases such as 'information gap', 'focus question' and 'skimming and scanning' without either a real understanding of their meaning or the flexibility in their own language to explore and implement them to the full in their classroom." Byrne believes that, if the overall objective of a training course is to further professional and personal development, the choice of the language to be used in the various training activities should not become of paramount importance. It is also important that all trainees, even the ones who are not very confident about their command of the foreign language, have the opportunity to share their experiences and feelings in the language they feel more comfortable with. The decision to use the mother tongue as a means of instruction has implications for the choice of the trainers to be involved in the course. For instance, Byrne calls for more extensive use of Italian trainers, while

Bolitho (1979) recognises the importance for the trainer to know the trainees' mother tongue. Sections 4.4.9 and 4.4.10 of this chapter explore the role of the native English speaker trainer on Italian in-service training courses.

**4.4.8            The skills of a good English teacher**

Question 8 asked teachers to rank the skills which make a good teacher of English, choosing them from a list of 10 (1 = most important, 10 = least important). The skills selected in descending order of importance are listed in Table 4.5, with the results shown graphically in Fig. 4.4.

SKILLS OF A GOOD E.F.L. TEACHER RANKED IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE	
1	A high level of English language proficiency
2	Understand students' learning difficulties and devise effective activities to help them overcome them
3	Make the subject relevant to Italian students and to the other subjects taught in Italian schools
4	Provide motivation for language learning
5	Be able to respond effectively to students' needs as they gradually become clear
6	A thorough knowledge of the cultural and social life of English speaking countries
7	Define clear assessment procedures accepted by other subject teachers
8	A thorough knowledge of new methodologies
9	A thorough knowledge of specific aspects of the subject (i.e. Business English, Literature etc.)
10	Complete the required State curriculum

Table 4.5 Skills of a good language teacher



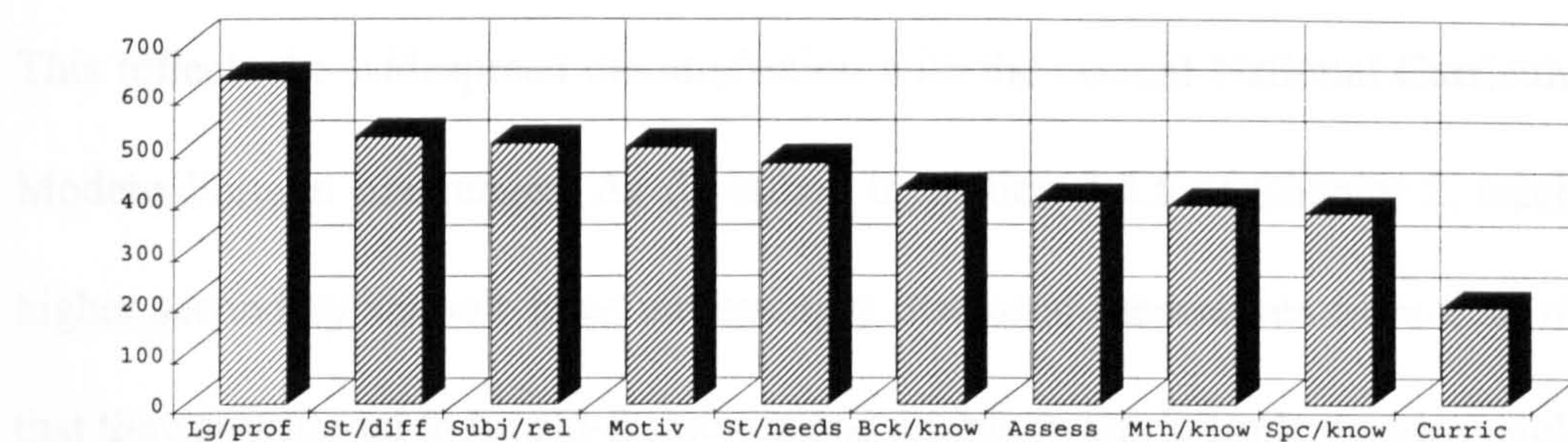


Fig. 4.4 Skills of a good E.F.L. teacher

Although results showed differences among the age groups, it was very significant that all groups agreed on what they considered both the most and the least important qualities of a teacher of English. The most important skill which makes a good teacher of English was undoubtedly a high level of English language proficiency. Once again the issue of the teacher's command of the target language seems to have an overwhelming importance. Non-native speaker teachers are very conscious of their linguistic deficit (Medgyes, 1994) and feel that “a very high degree of proficiency in the language is a necessary requisite for teachers of English” (Zagrebelsky, 1984:6). The replies to this question indicate clearly that, as a high command of the language is the most important skill for a good E.F.L. teacher, language proficiency and teacher's status are closely linked. This issue is further explored in section 4.4.11.3 of this chapter.



On the other end of the scale, all groups agreed that the ability to complete the required state curriculum was fairly irrelevant in terms of being an effective teacher. This reflects the widespread dissatisfaction with the current National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages. As described in section 2.2.5 of Chapter 2, teachers in higher secondary schools have increasingly distanced themselves from a curriculum that they considered to be old-fashioned and unable to equip students adequately with the knowledge and skills which would enable them to cope with the new requirements of the job market (Pozzo 1985 and Camillo 1987). It is therefore not surprising that they do not consider a major priority for a good E.F.L. teacher to comply with all the requirements of such a curriculum. The results of the author's questionnaire are confirmed by the findings of the I.R.R.S.A.E. trainees' survey, which are detailed in sections 5.4.3.1.5 and 5.4.3.2.5 of Chapter 5.

All groups seemed to rank very highly those skills closely associated to a learner-centred approach. All teachers agreed that it is of great importance to be able to understand the difficulties that their students are likely to encounter in the process of learning the language. It is not surprising that non-native speaker teachers are particularly sensitive to this issue and believe it is important that they can respond effectively to their students' needs. They have gone through the complex process of learning English as a foreign language themselves and are therefore well aware of the difficulties that their students are likely to experience. They have insight into the linguistic and cultural needs of their learners, a detailed awareness of how mother tongue and target languages differ, knowledge and experience of using the foreign

language. They are aware not only of the teaching situation, but also of the problems of learning within that teaching situation.

It is also important that teachers should be able to provide motivation for language learning. This was also one of the concerns expressed by the teachers analysed by Jarvis (1991). In this respect, teachers themselves can be one of the most effective sources of motivation for language learners. In fact, when they have gained a high proficiency in the command of the language they can serve as a model of the successful learner. This reinforces once again the importance of the language component in a training course. Another way to provide motivation lies in the ability to make the teaching of the foreign language relevant to the other subjects taught in schools. In spite of the emphasis that the Italian State curriculum places on cross-curricular activities, subjects are still often taught in isolation. In fact, the content of the curriculum itself not only does not always provide teachers and students with opportunities for interdisciplinary work, but it often hinders it. A cross-curricular approach would also require teachers to produce support material tailor-made to suit the requirements of students attending different types of schools, or following different specialisations within the same school. This could further explain the popularity of the “Creating supporting teaching material” component highlighted in section 4.4.5.3 of this chapter.

It is significant that the skills which the respondents valued most are the ones which Medgyes believes (1994) make non-native speaker teachers better teachers than their native speaker colleagues. As described in section 1.4 of Chapter 1, non-native



speaker teachers are thought to be more effective in ensuring learner-centredness in the teaching process. The ability of non-native English speaker teachers to better understand the psychology and the motivation of their students is felt to be an advantage over the native speakers' better knowledge of the language and it is one of the reasons which has led to the re-evaluation of the role of non-native English speaker teachers.

The skills which were defined by an element of "knowledge" did not rank particularly high. Teachers did not see a thorough knowledge of the cultural and social life of English speaking countries as a key skill for good language teachers. Several educationalists and researchers, for instance Cook (1983) and Cem and Margaret Alptekin (1984) have been discussing the importance of the role of culture in foreign language teaching. As Cem and Margaret Alptekin (1984:15) point out, "the native English-speaking teachers of E.F.L. who come to the host country believe that teaching the target culture is a *sine qua non* of teaching the target language". This assumption has now been challenged and attempts have been made either to separate culture teaching from language teaching or to develop different approaches to culture teaching. The replies given by the respondents to the author's questionnaire are somehow in contrast with the findings of the I.R.R.S.A.E. survey detailed in sections 5.4.3.1.1 and 5.4.3.2.5 of Chapter 5. The component 'Culture and intercultural issue' proved to be very popular among the respondents to that survey. One reason which could explain this difference is the fact that the author's survey took place in 1994, before the 1995 Ministerial Circular which urged teachers to devote more time to the teaching of culture in order to promote cultural awareness



and understanding among all students. It could also be that the 'Culture and intercultural issue' component was perceived as slightly different in content, because of its emphasis on the intercultural issue. Teachers may not believe that knowledge about the culture and the society of a country is a top priority for a good teacher, but, at the same time, they can be interested in learning effective ways of teaching about the countries where the language is spoken, that is they consider learning 'how to teach' the culture more important than simply 'knowing' about it.

A thorough knowledge of new methodologies and of specific aspects of the subject also ranked fairly low among all groups. The respondents appear to believe that the most valuable skills of a good teacher are the ones associated with the effective transmission of knowledge. Although the Italian system values teachers who are erudite at a high level (Rixon, 1986), the teachers themselves do not seem to regard erudition as a fundamental requisite for a good teacher. What the teachers are principally concerned about is how to promote successful learning in their classrooms. This is clearly indicated by their desire to devote their training time to activities which are relevant to their teaching situations and which will enable them to facilitate the learning process. The respondents' replies indicate once again a limited interest in the most theoretical aspects of teacher training courses. In this respect the replies are in line with the responses given to question 5 of the author's questionnaire and with the findings of the I.R.R.S.A.E. trainer-coordinators' survey, detailed in section 6.4.2.3 of Chapter 6. In her survey Jarvis (1991:6) also found that practising teachers are clearly focused on their classrooms. She therefore believes that "theory needs to be built on classroom practice, the area in which teachers have a

chance of making informed, responsible choices". Ramani (1987) also recognises the importance of linking theory and practice which she believes is one of the most crucial issues in teacher training: however, as she points out, in most training courses theory and practice are kept apart and often listed as separate components.

#### **4.4.9            The role of the native English speaker trainer in courses previously attended**

Question 9 focused on the role of the native English speaker teacher trainer. Teachers were asked if any native English speakers had been involved in the training programmes which they had followed in the past, and if that was the case, what role s/he had had. Only 12% of the teachers did not have a native English speaker as a trainer. 35% had a native English speaker as a language instructor, 43% as an expert in a specific methodological aspect and 10% as both. This result shows that native English speaker trainers are actively involved in the training of Italian teachers of E.F.L.: it also appears that they are used more as experts in methodology than as language instructors. Table 4.6 shows the role that the native English speaker trainer had in the courses attended by the respondents.

	No nes trainer	Nes trainer as methodology expert	Nes trainer as language instructor	Nes trainer in both roles
< 5 year group	43%	57%	0	0
6 -10 year group	0	60%	24%	16%
11-15 year group	13%	33%	47%	7%
16- 20 year group	17%	25%	50%	8%
> 20 year group	12%	38%	38%	12%

Table 4.6 Role of the native English speaker trainer in courses attended by the respondents

A detailed analysis of the replies of each age group revealed that among the five year group teachers 43% did not have a native English speaker trainer and 57% had a native English speaker trainer who was an expert in a specific methodological field: none of them had an English trainer as language instructor. In the six to ten year group it appeared that the native English speaker had mainly the role of expert (60% against 24% - 16% both). However, this trend is reversed for the eleven to fifteen year group and the sixteen to twenty year group, where the native English speaker trainer had mainly the role of a language instructor. 87% of the teachers in the eleven to fifteen year group had been trained by a native English speaker: 47% had a native English speaker as a language instructor, 33% as a methodology expert and 7% as both. 83% of the sixteen to twenty year group had been trained by a native English speaker. 50% had a native English speaker as a language instructor, 25% as a methodology expert and 8% as both. In the over twenty year group an equal number of trainees were involved in training courses where the native English speaker trainer was either a language instructor or a methodology expert.



A comparative analysis of the responses to question 9 and 10 allowed the correlation of respondents' satisfaction with the type of training they had received from native English speaker trainers. The degree of satisfaction varied greatly between the group where the native English speaker trainer was an expert in a specific methodological field, and the group where the native English speaker was in charge of the language component. In the group where the native English speaker trainer was an expert in a specific methodological field over 47% of the trainees were dissatisfied with the training received: they suggested that the native English speaker trainer should either be in charge only of the language component (36%) or not involved at all (11%). When the analysis was carried out at age group level, it appeared that it was the group of the most experienced teachers who seemed to be the most dissatisfied with the training received (75%). Breen, Candlin, Dam and Gabrielsen (1989:117) described their experience as trainers responsible for the methodological component of a training course aimed at non-native English speaker teachers. They acknowledge that "we, the trainers, decided what was important for the teachers to know and what they should try to do both during the workshops and subsequently in the classroom. There is a tendency, however unintentional, to attach less attention and less value to what teachers already know and experience in their own classrooms..... However, acceptable and welcome these ideas are to the teachers, their immediate practical concerns become overlaid in 'top down' fashion by academic expertise." They recognised the weakness of this 'transmission' approach and the negative consequences it had on their trainees and decided to adopt a 'problem solving' approach.

In the group where the native English speaker was in charge of the language component, 80% of the trainees were satisfied with the training received, 10% would rather the trainer to be an expert in a specific methodological field and 10% did not want a native English speaker trainer at all. When the analysis was carried out at age group level, it appeared that it was again the group of the most experienced teachers who expressed some degree of dissatisfaction, even if an overwhelming 75% was happy with the training received. All teachers in the sixteen to twenty year group were satisfied, as were 92% of teachers in the six to ten year group and 86% of teachers in the eleven to fifteen year group.

*need to  
be specific  
in %*

The results show that the majority of the respondents were very happy with the linguistic training received from a native English speaker trainer. In contrast, a good number of teachers have experienced a certain degree of dissatisfaction with the methodological training received by a native English speaker trainer. Some of the reasons which can explain this dissatisfaction with the contribution of native English speaker trainers are described in section 3.3.1.2.5 of Chapter 3. Some native English speaker trainers do not seem to be familiar with the Italian teaching situation and have different cultural assumptions. In addition, although they are involved in training projects such as the P.S.L.S. courses (see section 6.4.1 of Chapter 6), the nature of their co-operation with the Italian trainer responsible for the organisation of the courses varies greatly: unless their contribution is well planned in advance, it is likely to be perceived as not relevant to the overall content of the course. Byrne (Byrne, D'Addio Colosimo, Di Giuliomaria 1985) suggested that native English speakers should be used mainly as language instructors, while Italian trainers, who



are familiar with their trainees' teaching situation, should be responsible for the other aspects of training. Rixon (1986) has pointed out the common over-reliance on visiting native English speaker experts for aspects of methodology which are specific to certain teaching situations and therefore unlikely to be known, or fully understood by an outsider. She also believes that the real role of the native English speaker expert is in areas such as language improvement and target culture. Holden (1992:32) shares Rixon's view and claims that "the rise of language improvement courses has provided opportunities for native English speaker trainers to offer their services in an area where they do have a unique expertise." Ruzsa (1988) also believes that, as native English speaker trainers are not always aware of the particular implications involved in teacher training work overseas, they could be more profitably used in improving their trainees' command of, and confidence in, the target language.

#### **4.4.10 Preferred role of the native English speaker trainer**

Question 10 asked teachers if they believed it was important to have a native English speaker among the trainers. Only 10.3% of the respondents replied negatively, showing that most teachers would like to be trained at some stage by native English speakers. Similar results had come from Parrot's questionnaire (1990): most of the non-native English speaker teachers he had surveyed wanted to be trained by a native speaker of the language.



Respondents were also asked to state what role the native English trainer should have in Italian training courses. As shown in Fig. 4.5, 55.9% of the subjects would like to see him/her as the person responsible for the language component, 16.2% as an expert in a specific methodological field, while 17.6% in both roles.

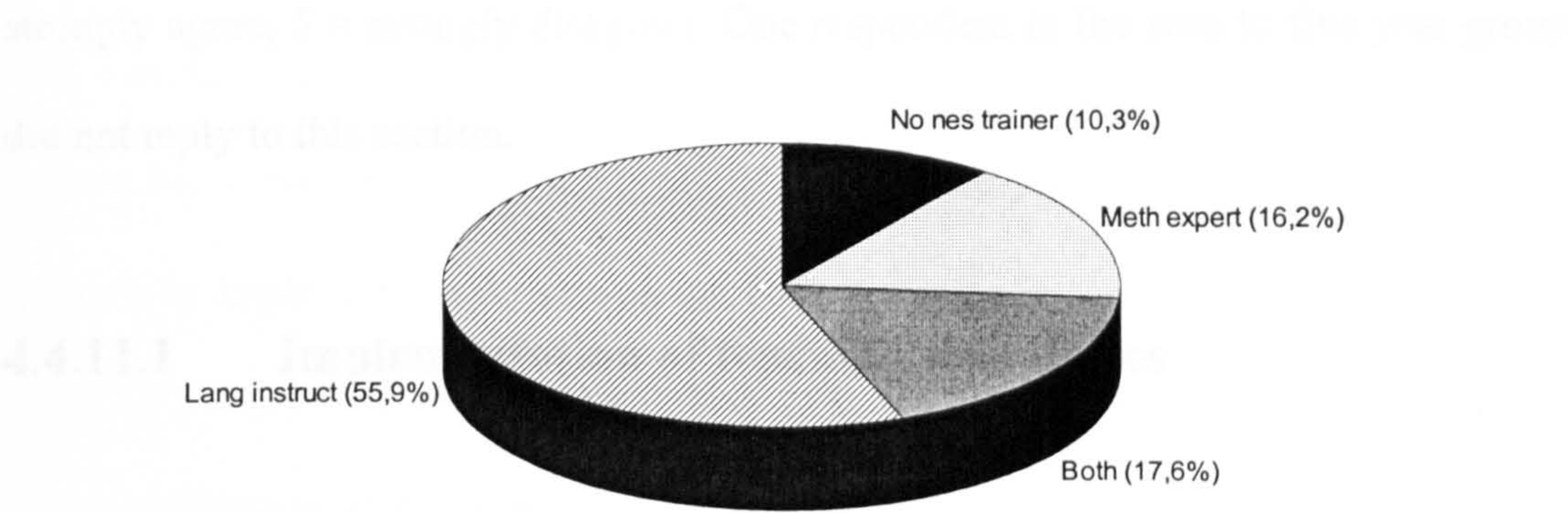


Fig. 4.5 Preferred role of native English speaker trainer

The results confirm the belief held by some trainers, and detailed in the previous section, that the contribution of native English speakers would be more useful in helping non-native speaker teachers to improve their English rather than in providing methodological solutions to problems which are specific to teaching situations they may not be familiar with. This aspect of training is best left to non-native speaker teacher trainers who share the same background as their trainees and have direct classroom experience.

Section 4.4.11.2 in this chapter explores further the reasons which could explain the preference expressed by the respondents for the native English speaker trainer to act mainly as language instructor.



**4.4.11            Reaction to controversial statements**

Question 11 consisted of five statements of potentially controversial nature. Teachers were asked to show their level of agreement with them using a five point scale (1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree). One respondent in the zero to five year group did not reply to this section.

**4.4.11.1           Implementation of teaching techniques**

The first statement was: ‘Teaching techniques and activities learnt in training courses are difficult to implement in the classroom’. The reply to this statement showed that nearly a quarter of all teachers were neutral about the issue. 46% of all teachers generally disagreed with the statement, 22% were neutral and 32 % agreed with it.

The responses of each age group are shown in Table 4.7.

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
zero to 5 year group	57%	14%	29%
6 to 10 year group	44%	32%	24%
11 to 15 year group	40%	13%	47%
16 to 20 year group	33%	25%	42%
over 20 year group	37.5%	12.5%	50%

Table 4.7 Teaching techniques and activities learnt in training courses  
are difficult to implement in the classroom

The more mature teachers appeared to be rather sceptical about the possibility of using in their classrooms what they have learnt on training courses. In the last three groups there were more teachers who agreed with the statement than those who did not. It is possible that these teachers had come to recognise, at some stage in their long careers, that the ideas and methodologies they had learnt on previous training courses have proved to be not entirely relevant to their teaching situations and quite difficult to implement in the classroom for a variety of reasons. According to Lamb (1995:73), this is a common after-effect of many INSET courses. Talking about a follow-up session with the trainees he had worked with a year earlier, he found that “many trainees did feel confused and frustrated. These feelings were partly caused by inability to apply the new ideas within the existing parameters of syllabus, examinations, and other practical constraints.”

Rowe (1983:199) claims that the model, adopted in many training courses, to progress from theory to practice has a major defect: “it presumes that after having considered the theoretical precepts, the teacher then applies them to the classroom, the problem is solved and the story ends there. Seldom, however, does the story end there. Exercises which appear fail-safe in the comparative bliss of a ‘workshop’ often go haywire in class.” Talking about their experience as trainers of teachers working in Morocco, Nolasco and Arthur (1986:100) report that many trainees feel that there is “a considerable gap between the theory of communicative methodology and the realities of teaching in classes of forty or more learners.”



As described in section 3.3.1.2.5 of Chapter 3, P.S.L.S. courses are structured in way to overcome this problem: trainees are first introduced to a specific technique, then they are asked to try it out in their classroom and finally they have feedback sessions with the trainer in which they can discuss the difficulties that they have encountered during the implementation stage and work out the necessary adjustments. It is also important to remember that all P.S.L.S. trainers are also full-time teachers and therefore gain constant classroom experience themselves. Breen, Candlin, Dam and Gabrielsen (1989:111) have described the advantages of a cyclical process in training which starts with “training input, through trainee implementation in the classroom, to subsequent feedback and later training input in response to classroom experiences.” According to Duff (1988b), “one of the inadequacies of much teacher training activity throughout the world is that the trainers actively stop to be teachers, and are training others to do something that they themselves no longer do. It is only common sense that they should practice what they preach, - but training of others must be grounded in one’s own practice and not in some desiccated prescription deriving from almost forgotten - and even sometimes very limited - experience.’ The next section explores another reason why trainees may experience difficulties when implementing techniques learnt on training courses: the relevance of such technique to their teaching situation.

**4.4.11.2 Native English speaker trainers' knowledge of trainees' teaching situation**

The second statement was: ‘Native English speaker trainers know little about the situation of language teaching in Italy’. 46% of all teachers agreed with the statement, 19% were neutral and 35% disagreed. The responses of each age group are shown in Table 4.8.

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
zero to 5 year group	29%	42%	29%
6 to 10 year group	52%	12%	36%
11 to 15 year group	46.5%	7%	46.5%
16 to 20 year group	8%	42%	50%
over 20 year group	12.5%	12.5%	75%

Table 4.8 Native English speaker trainers are not familiar with the Italian teaching situation

As can be seen in Fig. 4.6, the number of teachers who agreed with the statement increased steadily with age.



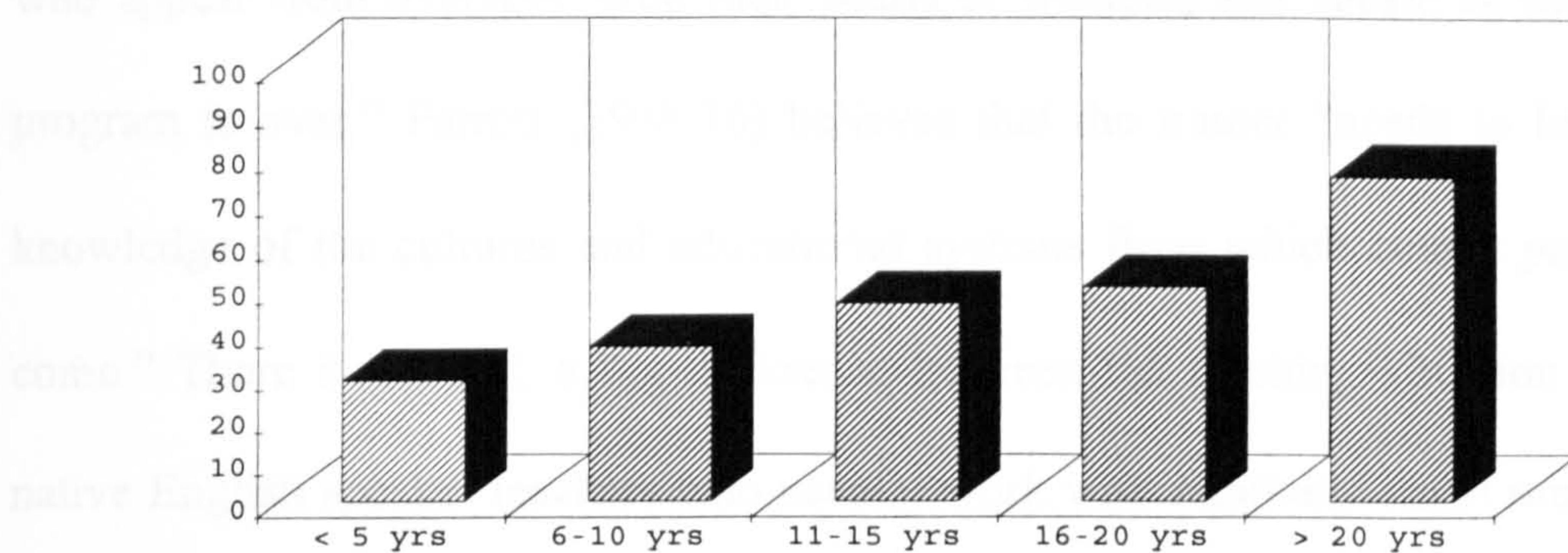


Fig. 4.6 Native English speaker trainers are not familiar with the Italian teaching situation:  
level of agreement

The responses show a certain degree of dissatisfaction with the type of training received from native English speaker trainers who often seem to lack a complete understanding of the specific teaching situations of their non-native trainees. Early and Bolitho (1981:71) claim that while “the outside ‘experts’ have a relevant body of knowledge or experience to impart, they may not sufficiently understand the nature of conditions which constrain teaching and learning in the local schools.” Matthews (1983:228) believes that there has always been a credibility gap between native English speaker trainers and non-native trainees: “we are outsiders to the state system and, however familiar we may be with it, we do not teach within it.” He therefore believes that non-native English speaker trainers should make sure that they select techniques which will appropriate to the trainees’ specific teaching situation. According to Dubin and Wong (1990:291), effective teacher education programmes presuppose that the providers understand the teachers’ classroom and institutional



situations. This is in contrast with the often widespread “image of teachers’ educators who appear from overseas, drop their pearls of wisdom, and vacate as soon as the program is over.” Parrott (1988:36) believes that the trainer “needs to have some knowledge of the cultures and educational systems from which course participants come.” There is, in fact, a big difference between the teaching situation of many native English speaker teachers who usually work with relatively small multilingual classes in English speaking countries for short intensive periods of time and the reality of non-native English speaker teachers who teach monolingual mixed ability classes in non-English speaking countries for three hours a week over a much longer course of study.

The importance for native English speaking trainers to be familiar with their trainees’ teaching situation has been highlighted by a number of educationalists and trainers in Italy. Di Giuliomaria (1985) believes that native English speaker trainers should refrain from giving advice pertaining to specific and detailed aspects of language teaching in Italian schools before they acquire enough experience or knowledge of specific teaching situations. Rixon (1986) recognises that in Italy English ‘Foreign Experts’ have historically been very privileged and played an integral part in a number of training schemes. However, she warns that they can be very dangerous or very useful, according to use: they may be employed as additional sources, but could not provide satisfactory sole input, without practical experience in the system itself. As Hyde (1994:13) suggests, it is necessary that foreign trainers work in a climate of mutual understanding. As she points out, “they not only need to give time to learning

about the local education traditions and culture, they also need to examine the preconceptions behind their own educational beliefs, so often taken for granted”.

**4.4.11.3      Language proficiency and teacher's status**

The third statement read: ‘The degree of language proficiency determines greatly the way a teacher perceives him/herself and is perceived by other people’. 85% of all teachers agreed, 12% were neutral, and 3% disagreed, although nobody strongly disagreed. The responses of each age group are shown in Table 4.9.

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
zero to 5 year group	0	0	100%
6 to 10 year group	4%	12%	84%
11 to 15 year group	0	13%	87%
16 to 20 year group	0	17%	83%
over 20 year group	12.5%	0	87.5%

Table 4.9 Language proficiency determines teacher’s status

As can be seen in Fig. 4.7, the analysis of the responses at age group level showed that all teachers in the five year group strongly agreed with the statement, while in the other groups the level of agreement varied between a minimum of 83% in the



sixteen to twenty year group and a maximum of 87.5% in the over twenty year group. Similar results had been obtained by Murdoch's questionnaire (1994): 89% of the teachers he surveyed agreed that a teacher's confidence is most dependent on his/her own degree of language competence.

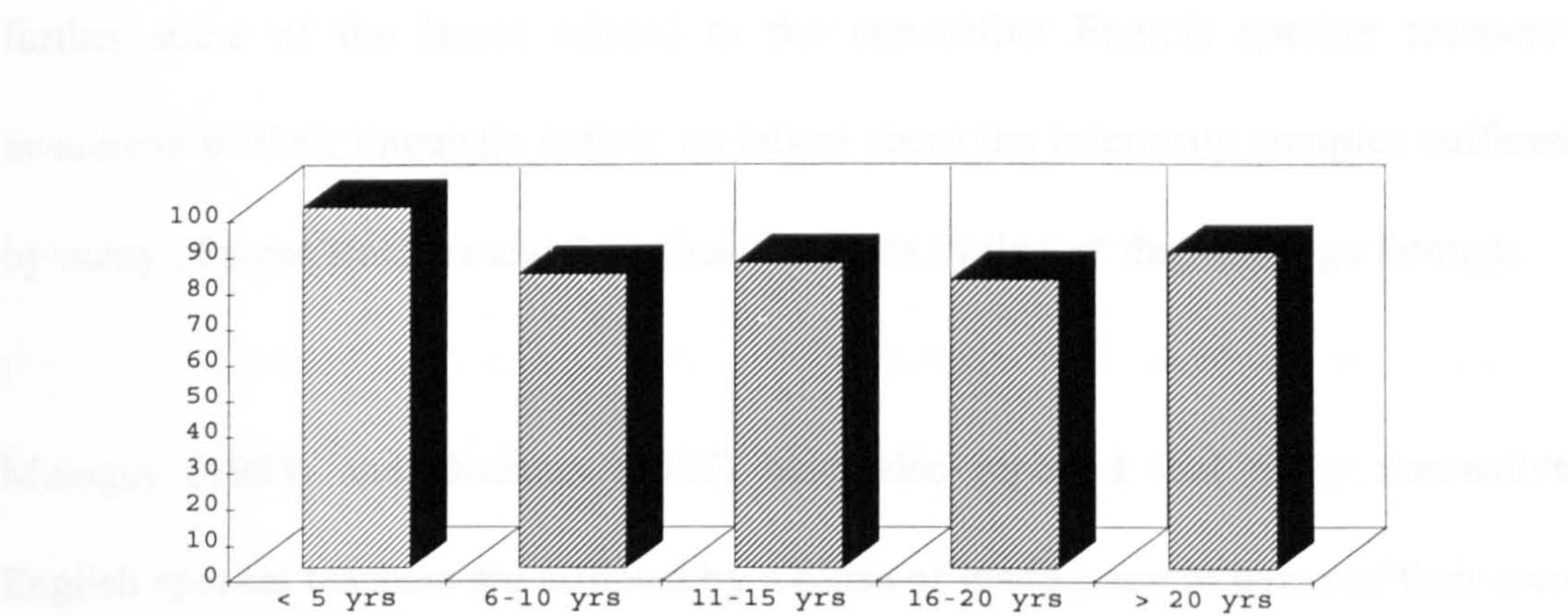


Fig. 4.7 Language proficiency determines teacher's status: level of agreement

Reves and Medgyes (1994:353) have investigated extensively the link between non-native English speaker teachers' language proficiency and their self-perception and teaching attitudes. The aim of the questionnaire that they administered to 216 native and non-native English speaker teachers was to determine whether "these two groups of teachers perceived differences between their teaching and how this perception influenced the teaching behaviour and attitudes of non-native speaker teachers". The data analysis showed that "differences perceived by non-native speaking teachers bias their self-image and attitudes to teaching." On page 364, Reves and Medgyes call for two steps to be taken "in order to salvage the non-native English speaker teachers' self-perception. On the one hand, the differences between their language proficiency and that of native English speaker teachers have to be openly



acknowledged and legitimised. On the other hand, efforts have to be made to improve the non-native English speaker teachers' command of English to the utmost, to minimise the deficiencies so as to approximate their proficiency, as much as possible, to that of the native English speaker teachers. In 1994 Medgyes explored further some of the issues related to the non-native English speaker teachers' awareness of their linguistic deficit: he talked about the inferiority complex suffered by many of these teachers and described the stress cycle that they often go through.

Maingay (1985) and Dodman (1987) have also reported that many non-native English speaker teachers are afflicted by a sense of inadequacy in terms of their own lack of confidence which inevitably results in a loss of confidence. Wright (1991:64) has talked of the powerful contribution of language knowledge to teacher's confidence. He believes that "confidence may be seen as vital for any teacher, but even more so for the non-native speaker who may be held up as a model user and source of information about the language." Berry finds (1990) that the linguistic deficit lamented by many non-native teachers is "quite possibly more a problem of perception than of fact: it is the teachers' confidence rather than their proficiency that needs bolstering." Bailey (1993) and Maingay (1985) for instance agree that, although many Italian teachers are very concerned about their language proficiency, their English is in fact good: the problem is that they are trying to achieve language targets which are both unrealistic and unnecessary.

The link between language proficiency and self-image explains why the respondents attach great importance to the language component of a training course. Non-native

English speaker teachers are judged on the basis of their proficiency in the language which they teach. Languages are under continuous change and evolution, probably much more than other subjects in the school curriculum, and teachers are likely to experience, sooner or later, a degree of uncertainty about their command of the language. They need either extensive contact with native English speakers or frequent visits to foreign countries to keep up their language proficiency and this is not always possible. For a great number of these teachers the only opportunity to practise the language at a high level or to improve their language skills lies in training courses. This is an issue that training course designers can not afford to ignore.

**4.4.11.4      The use of the target language in the classroom**

The fourth statement was: ‘English should be the only language used in classroom’. 37% of all teachers agreed with the statement, 41% disagreed and 22% were neutral. Table 4.10 shows the responses of each age group.

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
zero to 5 year group	0	43%	57%
6 to 10 year group	32%	24%	44%
11 to 15 year group	73%	20%	7%
16 to 20 year group	50%	33%	17%
over 20 year group	50%	0	50%

Table 4.10 Only English should be used in the classroom



There is no recently published research on the actual use of the target language in Italian E.F.L. classes. The only data come from a survey carried out by Pepicelli (1986:27) among P.S.L.S. trainees: according to his findings, in 1980/81 English was used from a maximum of 30 minutes to a minimum of 5 minutes, with an average of about 15 minutes in a fifty minute session. His conclusions were that “English was rarely used in the classroom in 1980/81.”

Fig. 4.8 shows that the level of agreement with the statement varied considerably among the various age groups. Just over 50% of the teachers in the five year group agreed with the statement; however the number of teachers who agreed decreased with age and reached the lowest percentage in the eleven to fifteen year group (7%), before rising to 50% for the last group.

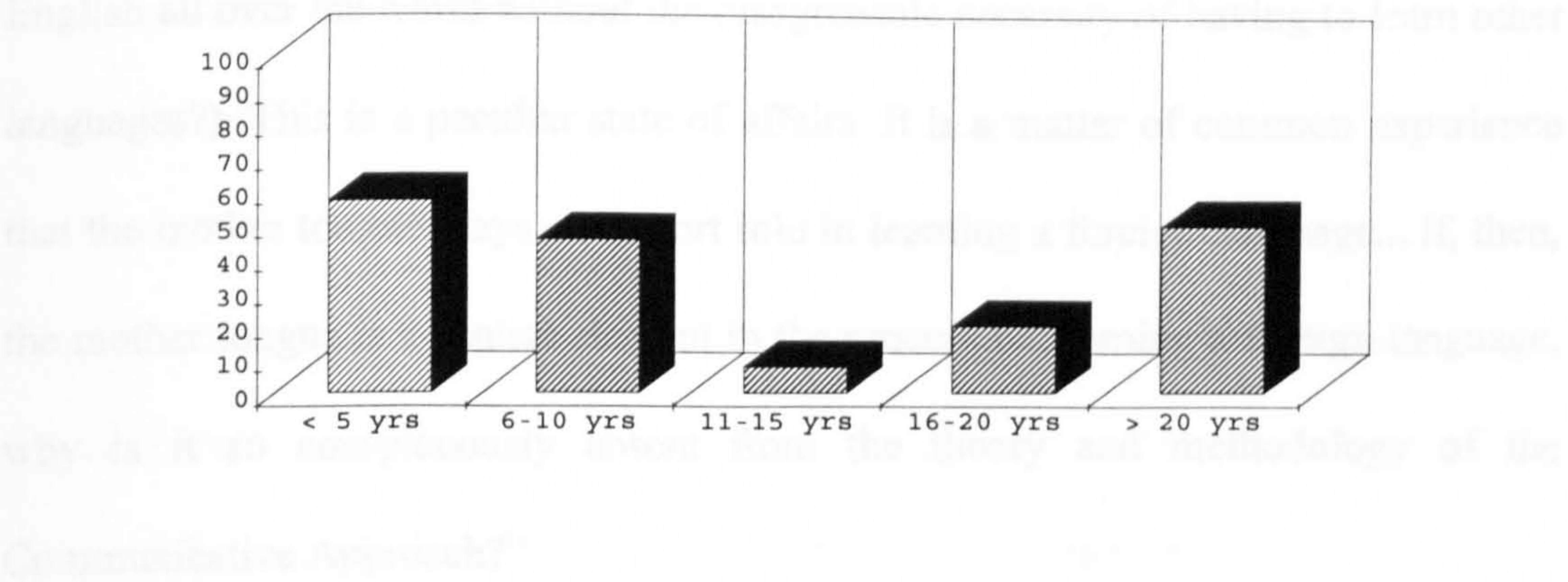


Fig. 4.8 Only English should be used in the classroom: level of agreement

There could be a correlation between the reaction to this statement of the teachers in the eleven to fifteen year group and the fact that it is this group which, according to



the replies to question 4, seems to prefer to be trained in Italy, do not seem to spend any considerable length of time in English speaking countries and therefore may not feel confident in their use of the target language. On the other hand, the use of the mother tongue as a classroom resource is being re-valued in light of the increased recognition of the effectiveness of non-native English speaker teachers and in the attempt to develop what Atkinson (1987) calls a 'post-communicative' approach to TEFL. Swan (1985a:10) identifies one the fallacies that characterise the Communicative Approach to language teaching in its 'tabula rasa' attitude - the belief that students do not possess, or cannot transfer from their mother tongue, normal communication skills". In a subsequent article (1985b:85-86) he adds that "as far as the British version of the Communicative Approach is concerned, students may as well not have mother tongues.... Communicative methodology stresses the English-only approach to presentation and practice that is such a prominent feature of the British E.F.L. tradition (Perhaps because this has made it possible for us to teach English all over the world without the disagreeable necessity of having to learn other languages?). This is a peculiar state of affairs. It is a matter of common experience that the mother tongue plays an important role in learning a foreign language....If, then, the mother tongue is a central element in the process of learning a foreign language, why is it so conspicuously absent from the theory and methodology of the Communicative Approach?"

Phillipson (1992b) believes that the principle that English is best taught monolingually is the first of what he calls "the five key tenets of ELT". He claims that these tenets serve to strengthen the hold of the Centre (English-speaking

countries) over the Periphery (countries where English is spoken as a second or foreign language). In particular, the monolingual tenet supports the second of these tenets, which posits that the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker. Phillipson puts forward a number of reasons for questioning the validity of the monolingual tenet: he believes that it is psycholinguistically naïve and impractical and that it is an expression of colonial attitudes.

Medgyes (1994:66) believes that the “concupiscents of the monolingual principle were always aware of the role L1 played in foreign language learning.” In fact, he claims that this principle has seldom been carried through. He reports that “towards the late 60s, it became clear that the monolingual orthodoxy was untenable on any grounds, be they psychological, linguistic or pedagogical.” He finds that, although monolingualism has past its prime, L1 use is still spurned: standard training manuals “while granting the restricted use of L1, make but a few passing remarks on this complex issue, with no attempt to determine the desirable extent of L1 use, to specify the pedagogical situations which call for it, or to suggest activities which draw upon the learners’ L1 command; nor do syllabuses and teaching materials like to dwell upon this issue.” In fact, according to Kennedy (1979:43), there are some advantages in using the mother tongue in certain teaching situations, for instance when teaching E.S.P.. For instance, he believes that, when reading or listening in L2 there is “no reason why the actual questions and answers should not be asked and answered in L1, indeed there is some evidence that such an approach can lead to considerable improvement in reading comprehension.”



Harbord (1992:351) traces the origins of the monolingual principle in language teaching back to the advent of the direct method. The correctness of this idea was reinforced, on the one hand, by the privileged position enjoyed by native English speaker teachers, and on the other, by the growth of a British-based teacher training movement which aimed at providing training for native English speaker teachers working with multilingual classes. This type of training seemed to disregard the fact that the vast majority of E.F.L. teachers were, and still are, non-native speakers of the language who teach monolingual classes of students whose language they share. In view of this situation and in pursuit of a learner-centred approach to language teaching, he advocates a 'humanistic approach' which, far from supporting the extensive use of L1, justifies its use in certain situations. The importance for students to be allowed to resort to their mother tongue has also been highlighted by Prodromu (1992:43). He carried out a survey among Greek students of E.F.L. and reported that many British Council students experienced a "feeling of frustration when faced with non-Greek speaking teaching attempting to explain difficult vocabulary or when given complicated instructions." According to a survey, 65% of the beginners he surveyed felt that their teacher should know their mother tongue. Murphy (1988:54) believes that "the move to eliminate the use of the mother tongue completely looks, with hindsight, to have been an irrational leap in the dark. The 'English-through-English-only' bandwagon had two great attractions for native speaker E.F.L. teachers. Firstly, it justified, and seemed justified by, an aversion many native English speaker teachers had to the sterile way they had been taught foreign languages at school, and, as a consequence, had largely failed to learn them.



Secondly, it enhanced the value of their native English tongues as passports to good jobs in interesting countries.”

The important role of the mother tongue in monolingual classes has been recognised by the publication of David Atkinson’s “Teaching monolingual classes” (1993). The book explores a number of issues related to the different teaching situations in which native and non-native English speaker teachers work and suggests a number of activities in which L1 use is seen as appropriate. In a previous article, Atkinson (1987:242) had pointed out that teacher training courses devote very little attention to the use of the students’ native language: he believes that this is largely due to the fact that “native speakers, who often enjoy a disproportionate degree of status in language teaching institutions, have often themselves being trained in an environment in which the trainer (also a native speaker and perhaps a monoglot) focuses mainly or exclusively on the relatively unrepresentative situation of a native speaker teaching a multilingual class in Britain or the USA”.

Although many non-native teachers use L1 in their classrooms to a greater or lesser extent, they still do so with a sense of guilt, aware they are infringing one of the dogmas of E.F.L. teaching. The importance of learner-centredness in the teaching process and the re-evaluation of the role of the non-native English speaker teachers should lead to the recognition that this resource has often been neglected. This has important implications for teacher training courses, both in terms of their content and staffing.



4.4.11.5 Native English speaker teachers versus non-native English speaker teachers

The last statement was: ‘Native English speaker teachers teach better than non-native English speaker teachers’. Table 4.11 shows the responses of each age group, while Fig. 4.9 shows the level of disagreement with this statement which occurred in each age group.

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
zero to 5 year group	86%	14%	0
6 to 10 year group	76%	8%	16%
11 to 15 year group	100%	0	0
16 to 20 year group	58%	25%	17%
over 20 year group	63%	12%	25%

Table 4.11 Native English speaker teachers teach better than non-native English speaker teachers

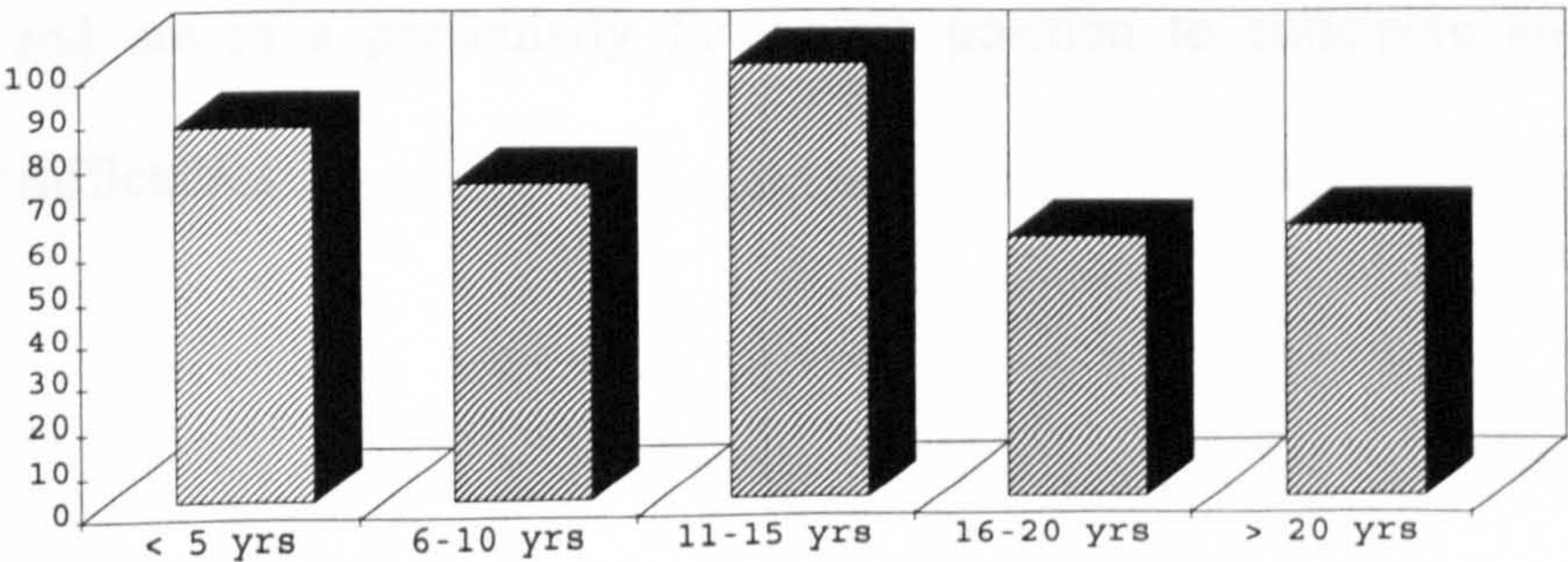


Fig. 4.9 Nests teach better than non-nests: level of disagreement



The result indicates that Italian teachers believe that being a native teacher of the language does not necessarily make a good teacher of the language. Medgyes (1994) obtained slightly different results from the analysis of his questionnaires: almost half of his respondents did not see any difference between the groups. A quarter considered native English speaker teachers to be more effective teachers while about the same number thought that non-native English speaker teachers were more successful.

The respondents' replies to various questions of the survey have indicated that they are very concerned about their command of the language and that they regard a high level of proficiency in the target language as the most important skills for a good E.F.L. teachers. However, from their reactions to this statement, they seem to believe that there are other important factors in promoting successful language learning, apart from language proficiency. This belief was also reflected by the fact that, when choosing the skills of a good E.F.L. teacher, they favoured the ones more closely related to a learner-centred approach to teaching. Recent research has recognised that non-native speaker teachers are more empathetic to the needs and problems of their learners and are in a particularly favourable position to anticipate and prevent language difficulties.



## 4.5 Conclusions

Although the identification of the diverse needs of non-native English speaker teachers on training courses is a daunting task, this should be the starting point when designing teacher training courses. It is only through a careful and detailed needs analysis that it is possible to create a course structure and syllabus that will prove effective in meeting the participants' needs as learners. However, as Parrott first highlighted in 1988, in many training courses little time is devoted to identify and reconcile the trainees' needs and objectives: a predetermined programme is followed and participants adapt themselves as well as they can.

There seem to be a number of requirements common to Italian teachers of E.F.L.. First of all, the overwhelming desire to improve their command of the language itself. The propagation of the principles of communicative language teaching has certainly put more pressure on teachers than in the past to be fluent in English so that they can use it naturally in the classroom. A poor command of English undermines the teacher's confidence and affects his or her self-esteem. Training courses should take into account the language demands which the communicative approach makes on teachers and give language development an important place in their programmes.

Another important issue emerged from the questionnaires is the importance to link theory with practice. When teachers attend training courses, they are focused on their specific teaching situations and the problems they experience in their classrooms.

They want to see theory built on classroom practice, rather than being exposed to theoretical models which may prove to be irrelevant to their teaching situations.

One of the key factors for a successful result of a teacher training course is undoubtedly the teacher trainer, whose competence, preparation and character have a considerable influence on the effectiveness of the course. While most trainees welcome the presence of a native English speaker trainer on training courses, especially as responsible for the language component, a number of them seem to have experienced some degree of dissatisfaction with those native English trainers who did not seem to have sufficient knowledge of their education system and their teaching situations. Trainers should also be aware of the varying needs of teachers belonging to different age groups: for instance, it appears that less experienced teachers welcome their teaching to be observed, while more experienced teachers do not.

In the past twenty years a growing number of new, and different, approaches to teacher preparation have highlighted the fact that this process can not be confined to simply providing the trainees with a set of techniques and methodologies to be accepted dogmatically. In the same way as teachers value a "learner-centred" approach to teaching, trainers should place their participants' needs as learners at the centre of the training process (O'Brien 1981, Altman 1983, Candlin 1983, Cicardi 1990, Bax 1995). Unfortunately this is often not the case: as Kennedy reports (1983:74-75), "how often do teacher trainers lecture on learner needs and wants to trainees while neglecting these principles in the design of the teacher-training course

itself?" To overcome this problem, he supports an E.S.P. approach to training. This approach puts "language and learner purposes in acquiring language as a central component of syllabus design." He then suggests to substitute the word 'learner' with 'teacher': in doing so, we would have "the foundation of training courses, the content of which closely match teachers' needs". The author shares Kennedy's view that the identification of the trainees' training requirements is crucial to the success of education programmes. The training needs of Italian teachers of E.F.L. will be further explored in the next chapter. The analysis of the results of another questionnaire administered to a significant number of teachers of Modern Foreign Languages will provide more details about the training that these teachers have received and about their expectations when attending training courses.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **The in-service training needs of Italian teachers of English: an I.R.R.S.A.E. survey**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter is concerned with the analysis of a survey conducted by the I.R.R.S.A.E (Regional Institute for Research and In-service Training) Lombardy among Modern Foreign Language teachers working in secondary schools in that region during the 1994-1995 school year. The data analysed in this chapter considers the responses of teachers of English, who made up the majority of the teachers surveyed.

The various I.R.R.S.A.E.s receive regular feedback on the P.S.L.S. courses which are held every year in their region. P.S.L.S. trainees are asked to complete a questionnaire at the end of the course they attended: the P.S.L.S. trainer responsible for the organisation of the course summarises the results coming from the

questionnaires in a report which is then passed on to the local I.R.R.S.A.E. In 1995, the I.R.R.S.A.E. Lombardy decided to carry out a survey which would involve a larger number of teachers, some of whom may not have had the opportunity to attend a P.S.L.S. course. The survey involved a total of 5,446 teachers of Modern Foreign Languages working in lower and higher secondary schools in the region. The aim was to gather information about attendance of P.S.L.S. courses and then identify the training needs and requirements of teachers of Modern Foreign Languages. The author collaborated with the Director for Modern Foreign Languages at the I.R.R.S.A.E. Lombardy to analyse the data collated from these questionnaires and to put forward suggestions on how P.S.L.S. courses could be improved to meet trainees' requirements. This chapter describes, analyses, and comments on the data coming from this survey and compares them with the results which had emerged from the author's survey, reported in Chapter 4.

## **5.2 Background to the survey**

In 1995 the author collaborated with the Director for Modern Foreign Languages at the I.R.R.S.A.E. Lombardy to analyse the data coming from the survey conducted by the I.R.R.S.A.E. Lombardy.

The aims of the survey were to:

- determine the percentage of teachers who had already attended P.S.L.S. courses;
- quantify the demand for P.S.L.S. courses;
- define the training needs of Modern Foreign Language teachers.

Although the various regional I.R.R.S.A.E.s receive regular feedback from the trainers and the trainees involved in P.S.L.S. courses, the I.R.R.S.A.E Lombardy decided to commission a survey which would also include those teachers who had not attended P.S.L.S. courses in the past. There were two closely related reasons behind the decision to carry out the survey. Firstly, as described in Chapter 3 and further detailed in section 5.4.1 of this chapter, the number of teachers who apply to attend P.S.L.S. courses has traditionally exceeded the number of places available. This implies that there is a fairly large group of teachers who have not yet had the opportunity to express their requirements in terms of course structure and content, since this opportunity is only available to those completing the course. Secondly, recent changes in Italian school legislation have led to a sharp increase in the demand for training on part of the teachers. The I.R.R.S.A.E, being the state institution chiefly responsible for the organisation of teacher training courses, felt that it was necessary to survey potential trainees in order to design effective training programmes.



### 5.3 Methodology

The survey was conducted in the spring of 1995. The form of data collection was through a questionnaire (see Appendix 3), designed and administered by the I.R.R.S.A.E. Lombardy. The author was given access to the data gathered and was responsible for their analysis. The questionnaire, which aimed at gathering quantitative data, consisted of three parts. The first part enquired into the training the respondents had previously received. The second part was concerned with the level of interest in future P.S.L.S. courses. The third part focused on the training needs of the respondents. All questions were close-ended. Question 1 and 2 were multiple-choice questions. Question 3 asked respondents to indicate which components they would like to see included in future P.S.L.S. courses: respondents could select up to five components from a choice of 11.

The survey was conducted among in-service teachers of English, French and German, working in lower and higher secondary schools in the region. The survey was carried out in 8 provinces: Bergamo, Brescia, Como, Milan, Mantua, Pavia, Sondrio and Varese. A total of 5,446 questionnaires was returned to the I.R.R.S.A.E. offices. 3,279 respondents were teachers of English, 1,838 teachers of French and 329 teachers of German. Although the original analysis carried out by the author considered the total number of questionnaires received (Bettinelli, 1995), the analysis detailed in this chapter focuses exclusively on the data coming from the questionnaires returned by the 3,279 teachers of English.

## 5.4 Results and analysis

The analysis of the data was carried out using simple descriptive analysis (%), with the score based on total number of positive responses being calculated for each category. The data was analysed taking into consideration the type of school where the respondents were working at the time of the survey. One of the aims was to identify the differing training requirements of the two groups of teachers, determined by the type of students they teach and the different curriculum they are required to follow. Lower secondary school teachers teach students between 12 and 14 years of age who are completing their compulsory education, while higher secondary school teachers work with students between 14 and 19 years of age.

The lower secondary school curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages differs considerably from the curriculum in higher secondary schools. One of the main differences between the two curricula is that the teaching of Modern Foreign Languages in higher secondary schools always involves a degree of specialisation, usually in the three years preceding the final exams. According to the type of school they attend, students are required to specialise in one area, such as Literature, Business English, Technical English, English for Tourism and Catering, etc.

Of the 3,279 teachers of English who took part in the survey, 2,012 were working in lower secondary schools and 1,267 in higher secondary schools.

**5.4.1 P.S.L.S. courses previously attended**

The first part of the I.R.R.S.A.E. questionnaire asked respondents if they had ever attended a P.S.L.S. course. The breakdown of the respondents is shown in Table 5.1.

	previously attended a P.S.L.S. course	never attended a P.S.L.S. course
Lower secondary school teachers of English	38%	62%
Higher secondary school teachers of English	42%	58%

Table 5.1 Previous attendance to P.S.L.S courses.

The answers show that the majority of teachers had not yet had the opportunity to attend a P.S.L.S. course. The result was consistent among the two groups of teachers and applied to all the provinces, with the exception of Mantua where 53% of the teachers had previously attended a P.S.L.S. course. The results coming from the I.R.R.S.A.E. questionnaire show a slight improvement in the attendance percentage when compared to previous records. According to data published by the Ministry of Education (Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 1988), 33% of the teachers working in Lombardy had followed a P.S.L.S. course up to that date. This compared with a 48% at national level.



The reason why only a minority of teachers have so far had the opportunity to follow a P.S.L.S. course is determined by the organisational structure of the courses themselves. P.S.L.S. courses are organised on a provincial basis and the number of courses run every year depends on the number of trainers working in the area. In the case of English, there are fifteen P.S.L.S. trainers currently working in Lombardy. This means that, if all trainers declare their availability, the I.R.R.S.A.E. Lombardy can organise a maximum of 15 training courses in the region. Each course has a fixed number of participants, usually not higher than 20. It follows that every year only a maximum of 300 teachers of English working in Lombardy will have the opportunity to follow a P.S.L.S. course.

Palamidesi (1983) and Colombo (1990) have reported that the I.R.R.S.A.E.'s human and financial resources are inadequate to respond to the demand for P.S.L.S. courses. The I.R.R.S.A.E.s receive hundreds of applications, and have to carefully select the small number of teachers allowed on the courses. The criteria applied to the selection of trainees change every year. Various factors dictate these criteria: some courses are aimed at teachers who specialise, for instance, in the teaching of Literature or Business English. Other courses target teachers who work in a specific type of school, for instance vocational schools. There are courses which are open only to teachers who have previously attended P.S.L.S. courses, while other courses are aimed at teachers who have received no previous training. The situation of demand exceeding supply has worsened in the past couple of years. In order to encourage teachers to attend training programmes, the Ministry of Education has launched a scheme which grants financial incentives to teachers after a certain number of hours

spent on training courses officially recognised by the Ministry. As Calzetti (1996) and Costanzo (1996) report, this new scheme has dramatically increased the demand for training courses, demand which has not been matched by an increase in the number of P.S.L.S. courses organised at regional and national level. The replies given to the first question of the questionnaire is further evidence to support their expressed concern that considerable number of teachers have not yet had the opportunity to attend a P.S.L.S. course.

### 5.4.2 Level of interest in P.S.L.S. courses

The second question of the questionnaire asked teachers if they would be interested in attending a P.S.L.S. course in future. The replies are illustrated in Table 5.2.

	interested in a P.S.L.S. course	not interested in a P.S.L.S. course
Lower secondary school teachers of English	78%	22%
Higher secondary school teachers of English	84%	16%

Table 5.2 Interest in future P.S.L.S courses.

The result shows an overwhelming interest in P.S.L.S. courses. This applied to both groups of teachers in all provinces.

In light of the fact that teachers attend P.S.L.S. courses in their free time and without pay, the replies indicate that teachers generally view the type of training provided by P.S.L.S. courses as highly satisfactory. This is confirmed by surveys carried out at national level. Antonetti, Baione, Bresadola, Calzetti, et al. (1990) have carried out extensive research on the content and structure of the courses organised in the first ten years of the P.S.L.S. They have found that the P.S.L.S. has generally responded effectively to the training needs expressed by Modern Foreign Language teachers. The effectiveness of P.S.L.S. courses is also confirmed by the data of a series of questionnaires administered to P.S.L.S. trainees by Pepicelli (1986). He registered positive changes in the attitude and teaching practice of teachers who had followed P.S.L.S. courses. He also reported that teachers had expressed the strong desire to participate in continuing training programmes.

The replies given by the teachers who took part in the I.R.R.S.A.E. survey confirm the results of the survey carried out by the author and detailed in Chapter 4. All the respondents to the author's questionnaire had, in fact, expressed their desire to receive training either in Italy or in the UK. This again confirms that there is a great demand for training courses, demand which, unfortunately, can not be satisfied by the current provision.



### 5.4.3 Components of a training course

Question 3 asked teachers to indicate which components they would like to see included in a future P.S.L.S. course. They could choose five components from the eleven suggested by the I.R.R.S.A.E. Table 5.3 shows the eleven components listed in the questionnaire.

COMPONENTS OF A TRAINING COURSE	
1	Culture and intercultural issues *
2	Testing and evaluation
3	Preparation for non compulsory education
4	The four skills
5	E.S.P.
6	Text analysis
7	Audiovisuals and teaching materials
8	Lower and higher secondary school curricula
9	Techniques for games and creativity in language teaching
10	Learning styles
11	Teaching Literature

Table 5.3 Components to be included in future P.S.L.S courses.

\* The term 'Culture' is a translation commonly accepted in Italy for the Italian 'Civiltà'. It represents the general background knowledge which is an integral part of the teaching of English in both lower and higher secondary school. This aspect of the curriculum involves teaching Geography, History, Politics, the Education System, as well as introducing the customs, traditions, social and cultural issues of Britain and other English speaking countries. Pulverness (1997) points out that, although the E.F.L. curriculum in the UK lacks the concept of 'Civiltà', it can partly be associated with the teaching of 'British Life and Institutions'.

The list of components to be included in future courses reflects the preference that P.S.L.S. courses accord to practice, as opposed to theory. As described in section 3.3.1.2.5 of Chapter 3, Costanzo (1993) finds that one of the strongest points of the P.S.L.S. lies in the fact that the main focus of these courses is on teaching practice. As she states, teaching practice is the starting point from which theoretical and methodological principles are derived: this is in contrast to most in-service training programmes which are usually based on theory and in which the practical aspects of teaching play a minor role.

The following sections analyse and discuss the results which emerged from the analysis of the questionnaires. The replies were analysed separately for the two groups of teachers.

#### **5.4.3.1 Replies of lower secondary school teachers of English**

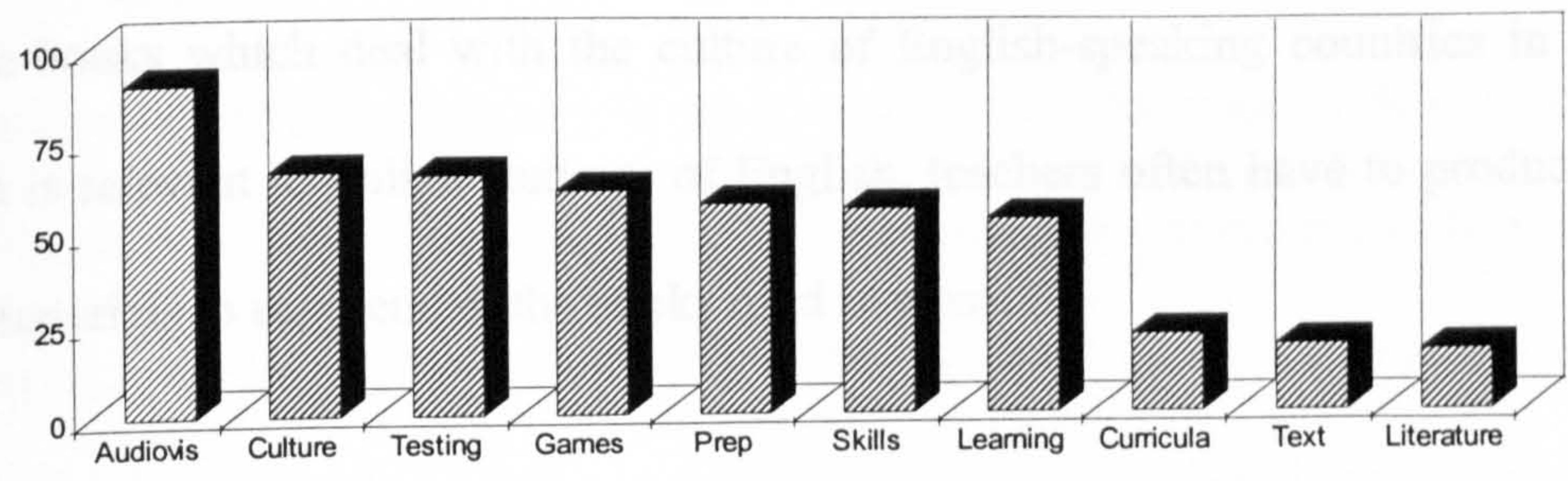
The components selected in order of importance by teachers of English in lower secondary schools are listed in Table 5.4, with the results shown graphically in Fig. 5.1.



COMPONENTS RANKED IN ORDER OF POPULARITY		% OF RESPONDENTS
1	1. Audiovisuals and teaching material	90 %
2	2. Culture and intercultural issues	66 %
3	3. Testing and evaluation	65 %
4	4. Techniques for games and creativity in language teaching	61%
5	5. Preparation for non compulsory education	57 %
6	6. The four skills	56 %
7	7. Learning styles	53 %
8	8. Lower and higher secondary school curricula	21 %
9	9. Text analysis	18 %
10	10. Teaching literature	16%
11	11. E.S.P.	7 %

Table 5.4 Components favoured by lower secondary school teachers of English

of the nature of the course, where the target language is spoken. Teachers are required to motivate students to learn and to be teacher-centred using materials which are relevant to the learners' experience of the world. As it is difficult to find



The most popular component, audio-visuals and teaching material, was selected by 90% of the respondents. Culture and intercultural issues, testing and evaluation, techniques for games and creativity in language teaching, preparation for non compulsory education, the four skills, and learning styles were also popular, with percentages ranging from 53% to 66%.

Fig. 5. 1 Course components favoured by lower secondary school teachers of English

responses. It is significant that a similar emphasis was placed on preparing materials, which are relevant to the learners' experience of the world. As it is difficult to find materials, had also proved very popular among the teachers surveyed by the study.



The replies given by teachers of English in lower secondary schools were consistent and did not show any major differences between the provinces where the survey was carried out.

#### **5.4.3.1.1 'Audiovisuals and teaching materials' and 'Culture and intercultural issues'**

'Audiovisuals and teaching materials' and 'Culture and intercultural issues' were the two most popular components among the respondents. This section illustrates the closely related reasons for the popularity of these components. The Italian Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages places great importance on the teaching of the culture of the countries where the target language is spoken. Teachers are required to introduce students to the culture of the foreign countries using materials which are relevant to the learners' experience of the world. As it is difficult to find course-books which deal with the culture of English-speaking countries in a way which is relevant to Italian students of English, teachers often have to produce their own materials to supplement the books used in class.

The most popular component among teachers of English in lower secondary schools was 'Audiovisuals and teaching materials', which was selected by 90% of the respondents. It is significant that a similar component, 'Creating supporting teaching material', had also proved very popular among the teachers surveyed by the author.

The analysis of the reasons which explain the popularity of this component among those teachers are detailed in section 4.4.5.3. of Chapter 4. They include a general dissatisfaction with existing published material, the need to adapt books aimed at a world-wide market in order to respond to specific national needs and tradition of learning, and the importance for teachers to assume a more active role in their teaching practice.

The 'Audiovisuals and teaching materials' component focuses on two very important aspects of language teaching: the effective use of audio-visual materials and the creation of teaching materials.

The 1979 Italian National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages encourages teachers to use a wide range of audio-visual materials in order to develop the learners' communicative skills. In particular, the curriculum emphasises the importance of using authentic listening material as a way of making students familiar with the language as it is spoken by native speakers. Teachers are therefore encouraged to employ a variety of audio and visual materials in their classroom, ranging from simple pictures to video broadcast. However, some teachers are reluctant to use this type of materials for a variety of reasons. Tierney and Humpreys (1992), for instance, found that teachers were concerned with the amount of artwork involved in preparing visual aids. Some teachers also experience a lack of confidence in using technical equipment such as OHPs and VCRs. The desire to use effectively a variety of resources in the classroom on the one hand, and the concern with the

difficulties that using these resources may entail on the other hand, can explain the demand for training in the preparation and use of audio-visual material.

The second aspect of the 'Audiovisuals and teaching materials' component reflects the desire of many teachers to devote a considerable part of their training time to developing their own teaching material. The preference for this training activity can be explained by the need to comply with different requirements of the National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages.

The new Italian National Curriculum sets very high objectives for both teachers and learners. Teachers are required to organise their class-work in a way which will allow students of all abilities to achieve genuine self-expression. At the same time, teachers have to ensure that English contributes to the overall development of practical skills and reasoning ability. Nalesso-Diana (1996) believes that the choice and the effective use of teaching materials play a crucial role in achieving these targets. She states that teachers need to work with materials which can prove to be a source of motivation for their learners as well as an effective means to help them overcome their learning difficulties. Teaching materials should, therefore, reflect the learners' interests and relate to their experience of the world.

The Curriculum also places great importance on the teaching of 'Culture'. The emphasis on this aspect of language teaching could explain the fact that the second most popular component among lower secondary school teachers was 'Culture and intercultural issues', selected by 66% of the respondents. As described below, the



teaching of Culture and the production of teaching materials are closely related. It is, in fact, very difficult to find text-books which comply with two key requirements of the Italian National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages (Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 1985b): to give students an insight into the cultures where the language they are learning is spoken and to present these cultures in a way which is relevant to Italian students of foreign languages.

The 'Culture and intercultural issues' component focuses on two aspects of Modern Foreign Language Teaching which have become increasingly important in recent years: the inextricable link between language and culture and the promotion of racial harmony and understanding.

The teaching of Culture is an aspect of the Italian National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages which plays an increasingly important role in the three years of lower secondary schools. Culture is also the main focus of the oral examination that students take at the end of the three years. The importance of the teaching of Culture is stressed in the Italian National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages which states that the study of the foreign language should motivate students to compare the social and cultural life of their country with the social and cultural life of other foreign countries. The overall objective is to broaden the cultural, social and human understanding of other communities and promote respect for other ways of life. Students should be encouraged to find similarities rather than differences between the Italian culture and the culture of other foreign countries. It is also important to guard against creating or reinforcing stereotyped views. As Pulcini explains (1994),

“teachers and educational institutions, in accordance with the Ministerial Programmes, believe that the study of the foreign language must be an integral part of a general linguistic training and take place within a context of intellectual, cultural, and social advancement”.

The demands of the new Italian National Curriculum combined with the more recent guidelines detailed in a 1995 Ministerial Circular have put significant pressure on teachers of Modern Foreign Languages. They are not only required to teach the structures of the language and to develop their student's communicative skills. They are also faced with the daunting task to develop cultural awareness and understanding of foreign countries and to do it in a way which can relate to their students' experience of the world. According to Lange (1983:376), “the culture issue is one that has plagued the language teaching profession for a long time; its resolution is not clear.” As teachers do not receive specific training in teaching culture, Morain (1983) finds it not surprising that typical foreign language teachers are ill-prepared to teaching culture. She supports Lange's view (1979) that a ‘Culture’ component should be included in all teacher training courses.

Section 4.4.5.3 of Chapter 4 described how the choice of the course-book on part of the teachers is crucial in terms of the teaching methodology that they intend to use in their classrooms. An equally important factor which has to be taken into account when selecting textbooks is their approach to teaching culture. The ideal course-book should in fact introduce students to the culture of the foreign countries where the



language is spoken in a way which is meaningful and relevant to their reality and experience.

When choosing the text-book which they are going to use in the three years of lower secondary schools, teachers are faced with an option. They can decide on a book specifically aimed at Italian students of English or opt for a book which is targeted at a world-wide market. The choice is not an easy one as both types of books present considerable advantages and disadvantages. Nalesso-Diana (1996) finds that course-books specifically aimed at Italian students of English often fail to convey cultural elements of English-speaking countries. Pictures, photographs, and situations seem to retain an undeniable 'Italian style'. Culture is still treated as something that must be learnt in addition to the language rather than with the language.

In contrast, course-books aimed at a world-wide market often tend to preclude specific national needs. In the past few years a number of teachers and educationalists have expressed their concerns about the use of this type of books. Pagano (1989) believes that these text-books do not offer any comparison with the students' own culture: she states that it is important that the teaching of culture is related to the learners' own personal experience. Altan (1995:59) finds that 'globally' designed course-books have remained stubbornly Anglo-centric: in the E.F.L. classrooms students are often asked "to change into little Mary Browns and John Smiths who are going to master English". In contrast, he believes in the importance of integrating cultural elements of learners' native countries into ELT materials in order to strengthen the learners psychologically for the learning situation to be



encountered. Prodromu (1988) believes the concept of culture in most ELT methods and materials to be predominantly monocultural and ethnocentric. Books aimed at a world market cannot draw on local varieties and, as he stated in 1992, this is not consistent with the learner-centred approach favoured by many E.F.L. teachers.

Cem and Margaret Alptekin (1984) have questioned the role of culture in E.F.L. teaching: they favour the production of teaching materials that are relevant to the learners' culture and experience. In a more recent article (1993:138), Alptekin explains that "one reason for E.F.L. textbooks focusing on elements about the American or British culture stems from the fact that it is generally not cost-effective for publishers to set materials in the learner's society, as such decision would cause other learners from other societies not to make use of the materials in question on account of irrelevance to their own culture." One of the negative aspects of this type of course-book, which has already been highlighted in section 4.4.5.3 of Chapter 4, is what Ruzsa (1988) defines as the underlying, but erroneous, belief that what works for native speaker teachers teaching multilingual classes in a natural language environment can also be effectively used with all nationalities, races, cultures and teaching situations. She believes that the contents of course-books is crucial in ensuring balance between the materials currently available and the individual national perspectives.

The importance given by the Italian National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages to the teaching of culture also reflects the desire to promote a European dimension in education. Bertin (1995) maintains that the recent proliferation of

student and teacher exchanges promoted by various European schemes has made teachers aware of the necessity to respond more adequately to the increasing internationalisation of cultures, markets and jobs. Zagrebelsky (1984:7) believes that the increasing relevance of the European dimension in education can also explain why “the British oriented model of language and culture is by far the favourite in Italian schools. As a consequence, language books assign a minor role to the language and culture of the United States and of other English-speaking countries.” It has only been relatively recently that new types of language materials have been produced: they either refer to an American cultural and linguistic background or present English as an international medium of communication and learning.

Another issue which has become of major importance in the teaching of Modern Foreign Languages, as well as of many other subjects taught in lower and higher secondary schools, is the intercultural dimension of teaching. Italy has recently seen a significant rise in the number of immigrants who have entered the country. The arrival of thousands of immigrants looking for employment at a time when unemployment among Italians was rising resulted in racial incidents between the two groups. It is also important to explain that Italy had never experienced immigration in such large numbers before: Italians had therefore had little or no experience of life in a multicultural society.

In 1993 the Ministry of Education issued a Circular entitled ‘Intercultural education as a means to prevent racism and anti-Semitism’. The Circular detailed ways in which education could help students develop understanding of, and respect for,



different religious, political and cultural values and institutions. The Circular was received with mixed feelings by teachers. As Costanzo (1994) explains, it was not always easy to define what was meant by the expression 'intercultural education'. In addition, the guidelines set out by the Ministry were felt to be too vague and inadequate to tackle the many and complex issues involved in effectively promoting racial harmony.

The teaching of Modern Foreign Languages plays an important role in intercultural education. Moral values, religious beliefs, political attitudes, social and historical traditions, all find expression in the idioms and structures of the language. Language teaching was therefore seen as a way of promoting knowledge and understanding of different cultures and people. The main focus is on what Riley (1992) calls 'intercultural communication', that is communication between two or more participants who do not share the same knowledge, beliefs and values. While the initial stimulus for the Ministry of Education's actions was caused by immigration from the African subcontinent, the effect has been felt in the teaching of all Modern Foreign Languages.

Whichever text-books teachers decide to use in their classroom, it is clear that they would feel the need to adapt some of the materials included in the books and to create supporting materials to supplement them. It is therefore not surprising that the majority of teachers who took part in the I.R.R.S.A.E. survey, as well as those who were surveyed by the author, expressed the desire to devote part of their training time



to the production and development of teaching materials which can be used effectively in their classrooms.

#### **5.4.3.1.2 'Testing and evaluation'**

'Testing and evaluation' was consistently the third most popular component among all lower secondary school teachers: 65% of the respondents declared that they would like to see this component included in future P.S.L.S. courses. The need expressed by so many teachers to explore this issue reflects the importance they attach to this aspect of language teaching. In lower secondary schools, students are assessed by their teachers through written and oral tests carried out throughout the school year. Teachers are responsible for designing all written and oral tests which students take before their first national test in Modern Foreign Languages at the age of 14. The popularity of this component in the survey shows that teachers would like to receive guidance on how to construct suitable and effective tests.

The results coming from the I.R.R.S.A.E. questionnaires confirm the data coming from the author's questionnaire. This component had also proved popular among the more experienced teachers who had taken part in the author's survey. The majority of the respondents of the I.R.R.S.A.E. questionnaire fell in this category. The teachers surveyed were 'di ruolo' teachers, i.e. teachers who have passed the state examinations and have obtained a permanent appointment in a state school. As this process usually takes a considerable number of years to be completed, it is justifiable

to assume that the subjects of the I.R.R.S.A.E. were mostly teachers who had been teaching for a considerable length of time, prior to their 'di ruolo' appointment.

The reasons why more experienced teachers would like to spend a considerable part of their training time on exploring issues related to testing and evaluation are detailed in section 4.4.5.5 of Chapter 4. Reasons include a greater awareness that these teachers have of the very many issues they need to address when they assess students, the phase of reassessment and self-doubt that they are likely to reach at this stage of their careers, and a lack of confidence in their own command of the English language.

Two other factors can explain the demand for training in testing and evaluation. First, as Bolitho (1979) maintains, teachers find it difficult to test communicative competence in the school system. Communicative testing is a problem which has not been satisfactorily solved (Bingham Wesche, 1983). Second, as Dawson (1996) reports, for many years, Italian teachers have been locked in an obsolete tradition of testing. The traditional oral and written tests have become an administrative obligation: teachers test because they are obliged to test. Progress tests serve a bureaucratic rather than educational function. However, Dawson recognises that the new approaches to testing and evaluation which are currently being introduced in lower secondary schools and in the first two years of higher secondary schools will give teachers the opportunity to escape from this obsolete tradition so that regular evaluation procedures can benefit both the teachers and learners.

### **5.4.3.1.3 'Techniques for games and creativity in language teaching' and 'The four skills'**

The fourth most popular component was 'Techniques for games and creativity in language teaching'. The 61% of lower secondary school teachers who selected this highly practical component are looking for enjoyable ways of teaching the foreign language and encourage creativity in language learning.

Games have become increasingly popular as a learning medium. According to Wright, Betteridge and Buckby (1984), there are two main reasons which explain the popularity of games: not only are they more enjoyable than 'traditional' learning situations, but they also create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful. Games give the learners experience of communicating in the foreign language: students stop thinking about the language and instead start to use it. Games, therefore, can be very effective in helping teachers attain one of the main objectives set by the Italian National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages: to promote the learner's ability to communicate in the foreign language.

The component also stresses the important role of creativity in language teaching. If teachers want to achieve real life communication in the foreign language, it is essential that they employ in their classrooms a variety of activities which encourage students to think, question, and to take an active role in the learning process. Not only will students learn about the language, but, as Jones (1992) suggests, they will



learn to recombine already-learned language and to use it in new individual contexts. It is therefore very important that teachers create opportunities which encourage learners to express personal ideas and to combine language in personal ways, which allow for individual interest, involvement and interpretation.

The emphasis that the Italian National Curriculum places on the development of strategies for communicating effectively is reflected by the fact that a considerable number of teachers would be interested in following the 'Four skills' component. This is a practical component which can provide teachers with ideas and techniques to promote the students' ability to speak, listen, read and write in the foreign language.

The popularity of these components demonstrates a need for teachers to add to their stock of methods and techniques to teach the language. A similar component, 'Practical ideas and techniques for classroom teaching', had been the most popular among the teachers who took part in the author's survey. The need expressed by many teachers for practical components in both questionnaires shows that they are focused on the classroom and, as Jarvis says (1991), need 'tips' and 'recipes' to solve their specific classroom problems. This need seems to indicate that what a substantial number of teachers want is 'practice' rather than 'theory': this implies that they need 'training' on how to solve specific problems rather than purely theoretical 'education'.

#### **5.4.3.1.4 'Preparation for non compulsory education'**

The fifth most popular component was 'Preparation for non compulsory education', which was selected by 57% of the respondents. The choice of this component reflects the concerns of many lower secondary school teachers about the difficulties that students experience in the transition from compulsory lower secondary education to non-compulsory higher secondary education. These difficulties, as reported by Colombo (1990), account for the highest number of drop-outs in higher secondary schools being registered in the first two out of their five years.

It is the teachers in lower secondary schools who are especially concerned about the failure of many students to complete their education. Their concern may be well founded since this component was the second least popular among higher secondary school teachers (see section 5.4.3.2.4 of this chapter). Teachers who work in non-compulsory education expect their students to have reached a certain level of attainment in the previous eight years of compulsory schooling. They are therefore less prepared to devote their teaching time to compensate for varying levels of preparation and abilities. This indicates that higher secondary school teachers believe that the responsibility for equipping students with the knowledge and skills they will need to succeed in the next stage of their education, lies mainly with lower secondary school teachers. The results of the survey indicate that the latter group of teachers feel the need to receive some training on how they can effectively help their students overcome the difficulties arising from the transition from compulsory to non compulsory education.

#### **5.4.3.1.5    ‘Learning styles’, ‘Lower and higher secondary school curricula’, ‘Text analysis’, ‘Teaching literature’ and ‘E.S.P.’.**

‘Learning styles’ (selected by 53% of the respondents), ‘Lower and higher secondary school curricula’ (21% of respondents), ‘Text analysis’ (18% of respondents), ‘Teaching literature’ (16% of respondents) and ‘E.S.P.’ (7% of respondents) were the five least popular components. However, ‘Text analysis’, ‘Teaching literature’ and ‘E.S.P.’ are not taught in lower secondary schools and, therefore, teachers working in these schools would not expect these issues to be included in training courses focusing on their specific needs.

‘Learning styles’ was the only theoretical component in the survey and the fact that it did not prove very popular confirmed the overall preference expressed by teachers for practical components. A similar component in the questionnaire administered by the author, ‘Theories of language learning and teaching’, had proved to be the least popular component. This result confirms the lack of interest of a large group of teachers in the more theoretical aspects of education programmes. This issue is discussed in details in Section 4.4.5.1 of Chapter 4.

The ‘Lower and higher secondary school curricula’ component also scored fairly poorly, being the fourth least popular component. The disillusion with the State curricula had also emerged in the replies given by the teachers surveyed by the author. Those teachers considered the ability to complete the required curriculum as



the least important in terms of being an effective E.F.L. teacher. The reasons which can explain this disillusionment are discussed in detail in section 2.2.5 of Chapter 2 and section 4.4.8 of Chapter 4: they are mainly linked with a general feeling that the current curriculum is old-fashioned and fails to equip students adequately with the knowledge and skills they will need to satisfy the demands of the job market.

### 5.4.3.2 Replies of higher secondary school teachers of English

The components selected in order of importance by higher secondary school teachers of English are listed in Table 5.5, with the results shown graphically in Fig. 5.2.

	COMPONENTS RANKED IN ORDER OF POPULARITY	% OF RESPONDENTS
1	Teaching literature	73 %
2	Testing and evaluation	71 %
3	Culture and intercultural issues	67 %
4	Audiovisuals and teaching materials	58 %
5	E.S.P.	56 %
6	Text analysis	55 %
7	Learning styles	42 %
8	Techniques for games and creativity in language teaching	24 %
9	The four skills	23 %
10	Preparation for non compulsory education	23 %
11	Lower and higher secondary school curricula	12 %

Table 5.5 Components favoured by higher secondary school teachers of English



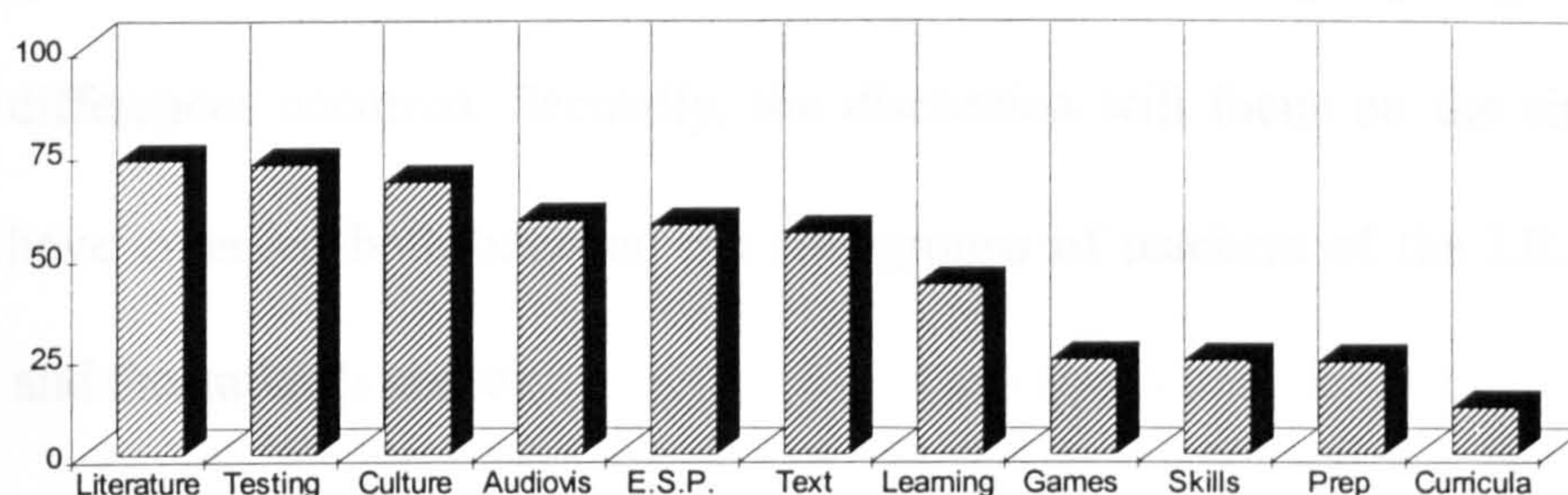


Fig. 5.2 Course components favoured by higher secondary school teachers of English

The replies given by teachers of English in higher secondary schools were consistent across the provinces. However, there were clear differences between the replies of this group of teachers and the replies given by teachers working in lower secondary schools. These differences reflect contrasting aspects of the two curricula. For instance, as will be described in the following sections, teachers working in higher secondary schools would like to further their knowledge on specialised aspect of English teaching, such as the teaching of literature and E.S.P. The request for these components is linked with the need to respond to the requirements of the Italian National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages in higher secondary schools. There are, on the other hand, important similarities between the responses of this group of teachers, the teachers working in lower secondary schools and the teachers surveyed by the author.



The following sections of this chapter will firstly discuss why different replies were given by teachers working in higher secondary schools, by highlighting categories where differences occurred. Secondly, the discussion will focus on the similarities which have emerged both between the two groups of teachers of the I.R.R.S.A.E. survey and the author's survey.

#### **5.4.3.2.1 'Teaching literature' and 'Text analysis'**

'Teaching literature' was overwhelmingly the most popular component, selected by 73% of this group of teachers. It is important to stress that this component does not focus on literature itself, but on its teaching. The result is consistent with most of the respondents either being teachers in schools where literature is taught or teachers who would like to teach this subject some time in the future.

As explained in sections 2.3.1 and 2.4 of Chapter 2, literature is the main subject studied by students of Modern Foreign Languages at university level. It also plays a very important role in the state exams leading to the teaching diploma, the 'abilitazione'. Teachers have therefore a thorough knowledge of the subject: what they seem to lack is a variety of approaches to teaching this subject. According to Cook (1983), literature is still associated with teaching techniques such as translation, with literary language often being perceived as inappropriate to the students' needs. Collie and Slater (1987) also believe that teachers of literature sometimes tend to play a more traditional classroom role, to use a teacher-centred



approach which is in contrast with the student-approach that they would normally use when teaching the language itself. This belief is shared by Ranzoli (1984:18) who thinks that “the communicative approach in English language teaching is largely responsible for increasing the sense of uneasiness among teachers of literature who do not know how to bridge the gap between communicative language teaching and ‘traditional’ language teaching”. Pulverness (1997) associates the decline of literature teaching with the spread of Communicative Language Teaching. However, he believes that the role of literature in ELT has recently been re-defined and should not be regarded as a problematic aspect of the curriculum. According to him, much of the ELT methodology is transferable to literature-based teaching and the problems usually associated with the teaching of literature may actually create powerful opportunities for learning. Mackay (1992:199) claims that “techniques and activities associated with a communicative approach to language teaching/learning are being used more and more by literature teachers as a supplement to, or instead of, more traditional practices. Teachers of literature are discovering in these techniques and approaches possibilities for adopting a more student-centred approach to their subject.” These are probably the techniques and approaches that a large majority of the respondents to the I.R.R.S.A.E. questionnaire would like to be introduced to.

Teachers may also need a repertoire of classrooms procedures and techniques which they can use to help their students overcome the difficulties of approaching a work of literature in a foreign language. Lazar (1994) described the difficulties that students at lower levels may experience when faced with a literary text. Some Italian students fall into this category, as they approach the study of literature two years after having

started to learn the foreign language. As Lazar suggests, the problems connected with the teaching of literature can be overcome when using appropriate tasks and activities. This is the type of specific training that the respondents to the I.R.R.S.A.E. questionnaire would like to receive.

Another problem area linked to the teaching of literature is testing. Students in the last three years at schools similar to English grammar schools are assessed, both orally and written, on their knowledge of literature. Their final year examination will also revolve around literature. Carter and Long (1990:220) explored the nature of examinations in literature: they highlighted the “increasing dangers of disjunction between teaching processes and the kind of product required by end-of-course-examinations”. They also stressed the importance that tests should appear to be a reasonable outcome of classroom activity. This implies that the difficulties usually associated with communicative testing (see section 5.4.3.1.2 of this chapter) are further increased when teachers are faced with devising communicative tests for the literature classroom.

The teachers’ interest in the written form of the language is confirmed by the fact that the ‘Text analysis’ component was also rated as fairly popular. This may once more reflect the fact that most of the respondents teach or would like to teach literature. According to Zambonini (1995), many literature teachers experience a sensation of being overwhelmed by the ‘new methodology’ of linguistic analysis. What they need is practical examples of a methodological approach which will allow them to apply linguistic analysis to any literary text.



Teachers of literature are not the only ones who have an interest in the 'Text analysis' component. All teachers in higher secondary schools are required to explore written texts of various nature in their classrooms. In fact, while the teaching of the foreign language is initially focused on developing the learners' speaking and listening skills, in the last three years of higher secondary school there is much greater emphasis on reading and writing. The texts that the students are required to study become increasingly more complex and it is not uncommon for these texts to present some difficulties for those teachers who are not very confident of their command of the language. The interest in this component shown by a good number of teachers could be explained by their need to improve their understanding of more complex forms of textual organisations.

#### **5.4.3.2.2 'E.S.P.'**

'E.S.P.' was selected by 56% of the respondents and proved to be the fifth most popular component, in contrast to it being regarded as the least important by the teachers in lower secondary schools. This reflects the fact that the vast majority of teachers working in higher secondary schools are required to teach English for Special Purposes, usually in the three years leading to the 'Maturità', the final exams. Teachers of English are required to teach various aspects of E.S.P., according to the type of school where they are working. This may include: Business English, Technical English, English for Tourism, English for Catering, English for Computer Studies etc.



The relative popularity of this component indicates that teachers need some guidance on how to teach E.S.P. It is important to stress that, although it is highly likely that teachers of English will be required to teach some form of E.S.P., E.S.P. is not included in the undergraduate curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages. This implies not only that they do not have the methodology to teach the subject, but also that they may not be familiar with the specialised language that they are supposed to teach. As Britten (1985a) states, "all trainee teachers of E.S.P. have special language needs for which training may be required". Kennedy (1979) believes that E.S.P. teachers have to adapt what they have learnt during their E.F.L. training. This involves not only the methodology they employ in their classrooms, but also their knowledge of grammar and lexis. He adds that more problems may arise if the E.S.P. they are required to teach is subject-specific, for instance if they have to deal with texts on chemistry, engineering, etc., which is often the case in Italian higher secondary schools. In a more recent article, Kennedy (1983:73-74) provided a detailed analysis of potential problem areas of E.S.P. activity. One of these problems is connected with the materials used in the E.S.P. class. He believes that "materials are often produced by designers and writers only partially familiar with the environment in which they will be taught". These materials are then presented to teachers who may possess poor skills in English: "the teacher has to bear the additional burden of teaching language through a subject content with which he may not be familiar. Another problem is linked with the training of E.S.P. teachers: "little thought has been given to the sort of training programme an E.S.P. teacher requires.

Talking specifically about the teaching materials available to Italian teachers of E.S.P., Bettinelli (1994) highlighted that some course-books are definitively out of touch with the 'real' business world and lack the flexibility to suit the various learning needs of students in higher secondary schools. She also draw attention (1993) to the importance of cultural elements in the teaching of E.S.P., an aspect of this subject which should be given appropriate consideration. Describing his experience of working with Italian teachers of Technical and Business English, Hope (1995) has found that they had little knowledge of the subject areas involved. However, he believes that an effective approach to teaching E.S.P. in these schools may lie in the exploitation of the natural information gap created by the extensive technical knowledge of the students versus the lack of technical knowledge of the teachers.

The lack of technical knowledge on the part of the teachers is only one of the problems connected with E.S.P. teaching. Bernardini (1988) explains that when students start an E.S.P. course in higher secondary schools, they are presumed to have acquired a satisfactory knowledge of the structures and functions of the language. They are also expected to be able to read and understand texts at intermediate level of difficulty and to write at least simple paragraphs. She believes that the problem is that they are supposed to become experts in their subjects, and to put this expertise into practice in a foreign language without any previous specific training in it. The difficulties which they encounter when required to do so often result in lack of motivation and in increasing frustration. Willis (1981) and Ducati Bresadola (1996) also recognise lack of motivation as one common problem faced by



overseas teachers: their students may find the world of commerce and tourism to be very distant from their school reality.

Students are often faced with a change in the way they are taught the foreign language, as they progress through the school. As Jordan (1990) states, many E.S.P. books present the specialist material in a boring and traditional way. E.S.P. teachers may therefore find it difficult to teach the subject in a communicative way, which is likely to be the way in which the language had been taught previously. He also highlights the problems associated with the choice of texts to use in the E.S.P. classroom. Authentic texts are usually too difficult and therefore need to be adapted to suit the students' level. Jordan suggests that the solution to this problem may lie in the design of appropriate material: this reinforces the need for teachers to be able to create their own teaching material, need which was expressed by the majority of the two groups of teachers who were surveyed by the I.R.R.S.A.E. and the author.

The lack of technical knowledge of the teachers combined with the linguistic difficulties experienced by the students often result in E.S.P. being considered as a traditionally difficult subject. It is therefore not surprising that 56% of the higher secondary school teachers who took part in the I.R.R.S.A.E. survey have expressed the need to receive some help and guidance on how to teach effectively this subject.



#### **5.4.3.2.3    ‘Techniques for games and creativity in language teaching’ and ‘The four skills’**

The ‘Techniques for games and creativity in language teaching’ component did not prove to be as popular among higher secondary school teachers as it was among lower secondary school teachers. This result can be explained by the very nature of the higher secondary school curriculum which direct students and teachers to focus on what are perceived to be more ‘serious’ aspects of the curriculum. This, in turn, often results in a more teacher-centred approach to language teaching. On the other hand, it is also proven, as Wright, Betteridge and Buckley report (1984), that teenagers tend to be more self-conscious and reticent and therefore less willing to play games.

The heavy demands that the higher secondary school curriculum makes on teachers and students alike may also explain the poor ranking of ‘The four skills’. As described in section 5.4.3.1 of this chapter, in the last three years of higher secondary schools the teaching of the foreign language increasingly concentrate on developing reading and writing skills as well as studying E.S.P. It is on these specialised aspects of language teaching that higher secondary school teachers would prefer to receive training.

#### **5.4.3.2.4 'Preparation for non compulsory education'**

The 'Preparation for non compulsory education' component, which had proved fairly popular among lower secondary school teachers, was the second least popular component among higher secondary school teachers. As discussed in section 5.4.3.1.4 of this chapter, the result seems to indicate that this group of teachers feel that the scope of their action in this particular problem area is fairly limited. They seem to believe that the main responsibility for equipping students with the knowledge and skills they will need in higher secondary schools lies with lower secondary school teachers.

#### **5.4.3.2.5 'Testing and evaluation', 'Culture and intercultural issues', 'Audiovisuals and teaching materials' 'Learning styles' and 'Lower and higher secondary school curricula'**

While the previous sections have discussed the reasons which may have determined different replies between lower and higher secondary school teachers, this section focuses on the similarities which have emerged both between the two groups and between the I.R.R.S.A.E. and the author's surveys.

The 'Testing and evaluation', 'Culture and intercultural issues', and 'Teaching materials and audiovisuals' components confirmed the popularity they had enjoyed among lower secondary school teachers. The reasons which explain the demand for these components expressed by lower secondary school teachers also apply to teachers in higher secondary schools.

Higher secondary school teachers are responsible for designing all the written and oral tests their students take before their state final exams at the end of the five years of non-compulsory education. All teachers are also responsible for designing entry tests to assess the students' previous knowledge of the language. In the last three years of higher secondary education, testing procedures focus on the specialised aspects of the language taught in the various types of school. For instance, oral and written tests in schools similar to English Grammar schools focus on literature, while tests in Business schools include writing business letters, dealing with customers and carrying out commercial transactions. Both the respondents to the I.R.R.S.A.E. and the author's survey (see section 5.4.3.1.2 of this chapter and section 4.4.5.5 of Chapter 4) attached great importance to this aspect of language teaching and would like to see this component included in training courses. There are several reasons which could explain the interest of so many teachers in receiving training and guidance on preparing, administering, and marking oral and written tests. Teachers may feel that they should be 'communicative testers' as well as communicative teachers. They may also experience a degree of difficulty in assessing their students' language competence because they are unsure about their own linguistic competence.



They may have grown disillusioned with the appropriateness and effectiveness of the tests they design. All these issues have been discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

‘Culture and intercultural issues’ was the third most popular component among higher secondary school teachers, almost as important as viewed by lower secondary school teachers. This reflects the belief that the study of foreign languages is based on a close link between language and culture. The teaching of culture, which had been introduced in the last stages of lower secondary education, is pursued further in higher secondary schools. The Italian National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages requires teachers who work in the last three years of higher secondary schools to teach the history, geography, political organisation, social structure, traditions and religious beliefs of English speaking countries. As mentioned in section 5.4.3.1.1. of this chapter, the main focus of many course-books is usually the United Kingdom: however, teachers may also decide to introduce their students to the culture of other English-speaking countries. Teachers and students rely increasingly on authentic materials to explore in more depth issues which had already been dealt with in lower secondary schools.

Goodger (1995) thinks that one of the problems that both teachers and students experience during lessons devoted to the study of culture is the lack of a spontaneous communicative dimension as they often tend to be structured around the repetitious and rigid format of text comprehension and related course-book tasks. The overwhelming popularity of the ‘Culture and intercultural issues’ among teachers of both lower and higher secondary school may be due to their need to receive some

help in finding ways of maintaining their students' interest in the subject. For many students, talking about their history, geography, society and traditions of countries they have not visited may at times sound distant and irrelevant. Teachers may therefore need approaches and techniques to make their lessons on culture interesting and relevant to their students.

Another reason explaining the popularity of this component is that the teachers themselves need information about the recent developments and changes in the society of English-speaking countries. According to the data coming from the author's survey (section 4.4.4 of Chapter 4), around 44% of teachers who had been working for up to ten years and 85% of teachers who had been working between eleven and fifteen years would experience problems if required to spend time abroad. As explained in section 5.4.3.1.2 of this chapter, most of the respondents to the I.R.R.S.A.E. questionnaire are likely to belong to this group of teachers. It follows that, not having had the opportunity to spend time abroad in recent years, they may lack real life experience of the changes that have occurred in these countries.

58% of higher secondary school teachers selected the 'Audiovisuals and teaching materials' component, which was the fourth most popular component among this group of teachers. The same component had proved to be the most popular among lower secondary school teachers. A similar component, 'Creating supporting teaching material', had also proved to be very popular among the teachers surveyed by the author. The reasons which can explain the interest in this component expressed by lower secondary school teachers (see section 5.4.3.1.1 of this chapter)



and by the respondents to the author's survey (see section 4.4.5.3 of Chapter 4) also apply to higher secondary school teachers. Some teachers are dissatisfied with existing course-books and find that they need to adapt or produce supporting materials. They are keen to use authentic audio and reading material, but they have to adapt it to suit the level of proficiency in the language of their students. They would like to use a variety of techniques and approaches and become familiar with enjoyable ways of teaching the language. They have also to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages which stresses the importance of using audio-visual materials. The popularity of this component proves that teachers are focused on their classrooms, that they need to start from their teaching practice and learn and develop strategies to cope with the specific problems that they experience in their classrooms. In Italian schools, all classes are mixed-ability. This applies to primary, lower secondary and higher secondary education. It follows that teachers often need to adapt or supplement the material of the course-books they use in class. They also need to create teaching material to help certain students overcome their learning difficulties as well as to maintain their interest and motivation.

"Learning styles" was not a particularly popular component among both lower and higher secondary school teachers. As described in section 5.4.3.1.5 of this chapter, this is the most theoretical component of the eleven suggested in the questionnaire. It appears that the teachers surveyed by the I.R.R.S.A.E. and the author favour more practical components related to specific problem areas of language teaching. Section



4.4.5.1 of Chapter 4 provides a detailed analysis of the reasons why Italian teachers of English prefer a more practical approach in teacher training.

The 'Lower and higher secondary school curricula' component generally scored very poorly. It was the fourth least popular component among lower secondary school teachers, who had preferred it only to the three components which focused on subjects which they are not required to teach. This component was the least popular among higher secondary school teachers, while the respondents to the author's survey regarded the ability of completing the required state curriculum as the least important for a good E.F.L. teacher. The reasons which explain the unpopularity of this component have been detailed in section 2.2.5 of Chapter 2, and section 4.4.8 of Chapter 4. They include the dissatisfaction with a curriculum which has not undergone any change for a considerable length of time and it is therefore perceived as obsolete and inadequate to respond to students' and teachers' needs alike.

## **5.5 Conclusions**

The results coming from the I.R.R.S.A.E. survey highlight important issues involved in the provision of training courses to Italian teachers of English in lower and higher secondary schools. The results provide quantitative data on the number of teachers who have been so far involved in the P.S.L.S. and on the level of interest in future P.S.L.S. courses. They also supply information on the training requirements of this group of teachers. The replies to the third question area of the survey show a certain

degree of difference between those who teach in lower secondary school and those who work in higher secondary schools. However, they also highlight important similarities and confirm results of the survey carried out by the author.

Quantitative data about the number of teachers who have attended P.S.L.S. courses confirm the concerns expressed by several Italian educationalists that the current provision of training courses is inadequate to satisfy the demand for them. A majority of teachers have not yet had the opportunity to take advantage of this training scheme, even though a slight improvement in the attendance percentage has been registered.

The teachers who took part in the survey expressed a high level of interest in future P.S.L.S. courses. This in spite of the fact that they will have to attend them in their free time, and will not obtain any career benefit. The results coming from both the I.R.R.S.A.E. and the author's questionnaire prove that teachers consider training an important part of their professional life and would like to be involved in continuing training programmes.

There are important similarities between the replies given by the two groups of teachers and the results coming from the author's survey. Trainees favour the more practical course components. They all want to devote a considerable part of their training time to the production of their own teaching material. They also need guidance in finding new and more effective ways of testing and evaluating their students. The overwhelming majority of the respondents are disillusioned with the

current National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages, especially higher secondary school teachers, who have been demanding a new National Curriculum for the past thirty years.

The replies also shed light on the type of components that trainees would like to see included in future P.S.L.S. courses. There are differences between the replies supplied by the two groups of teachers. Higher secondary school teachers are more focused on E.S.P. and literature, as they are required to teach these specialised subjects in the last three years of the school curriculum. On the other hand, lower secondary school teachers seem to be interested in learning ways through which they can help their students cope with the major changes they will be faced with, when starting higher secondary schools.

The I.R.R.S.A.E. survey was conducted in the spring of 1995. The next section of this chapter will analyse data coming from a questionnaire administered in summer 1996 to trainers and inspectors who were involved in P.S.L.S. courses, in all regions of Italy. The analysis of the data will determine if these courses have met the requirements and needs of Modern Foreign Languages teachers as they have emerged so far.



## **CHAPTER 6**

### **The provision of P.S.L.S. training courses in Italy: an I.R.R.S.A.E. survey**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter is concerned with the provision of in-training service courses for Italian teachers of E.F.L.. It illustrates, analyses and comments on the results of a survey conducted by the I.R.R.S.A.E. (Regional Institute for Research and In-service Training) Lombardy among trainers in charge of the organisation of P.S.L.S. courses in various parts of Italy.

The survey was regarded by the Italian Ministry of Education as the first step towards a formal evaluation of the P.S.L.S. at national level. The aim was to gather information about the structure and content of the various P.S.L.S courses in order to identify similarities and differences in aspects such as training activities, trainers

involved and use of the target language. The author was responsible for the analysis of the data coming from the survey and for supplying interpretation of the results which could contribute to the overall evaluation of the project.

This chapter details the analysis of the survey data and includes comments on various issues related to the training of Italian teachers of E.F.L.. Chapter 4 and 5 of this thesis were concerned with the identification of the training requirements and expectations of this group of teachers. The analysis of the data gathered through the author's and the I.R.R.S.A.E. survey showed that a great number of Italian teachers of English are very concerned about their command of the language and would like to devote training time to language improvement work. They also expressed the desire to focus on practical aspects of language teaching, rather than on more theoretical issues. One of the practical activities in which they showed a strong interest was the development of their own materials to supplement their course-books or to support specific teaching activities. The overwhelming majority of the teachers surveyed by the author indicated that they would like to see a native English speaker trainer involved in the training courses currently available in Italy. However, they stated their preference for the native English speaker expert to be responsible for the language component of the course, rather than for the methodological component. It is the aim of this chapter to ascertain whether the P.S.L.S. courses surveyed were effective in meeting the requirements of Italian teachers of E.F.L. as they have so far emerged.

## 6.2 Background to the survey

As described in section 3.3.1.2 of Chapter 3, the first P.S.L.S courses were organised in the school year 1978-79. They were intended to be 'experimental' in nature and had originally envisaged to be run only for a limited period of time. However, the success of this training project meant that they were never discontinued: in fact, the number of courses has steadily increased over the years and the structure and content of this training programme are now held as a model for training courses aimed at teachers of other subjects.

The project was intended to be monitored constantly and evaluated both at regional and national level. The various regional I.R.S.S.A.E.s receive regular feedback from the trainers and the trainees involved in the courses. This is a type of empirical appraisal, based on attendance of trainees, production of materials and end-of-course questionnaires aimed at ascertaining the level of satisfaction experienced by the trainees.

Prior to the beginning of the courses, trainers are required to submit to their regional I.R.R.S.A.E. a detailed plan of the content and structure of the course for which they are responsible. At the end of the course, they are also required to draw an end-of-course report, containing details of what was actually covered during the training sessions, the contributions of experts invited on the course and any logistic or methodological problems they might have experienced.



The various I.R.R.S.A.E.s are responsible for the evaluation of all the P.S.L.S. courses at regional level. They are also involved in the evaluation of the courses at national level, as they are supposed to liaise between the P.S.L.S. trainers and the Ministry of Education. In 1983, the Ministry supplied a plan of formal evaluation of the project: however, the plan has never been implemented. As Garau reports (1986), the current praxis requires course directors only to submit a final report to the Ministry. Very little is known about how the information contained in the reports is treated in terms of providing feedback on the project. Neither the P.S.L.S. trainers nor the regional I.R.S.S.A.E. appear to receive comments from the Ministry on the reports that they are required to submit regularly.

In recent years, there has been a growing concern about the lack of any formal evaluation of this training project. As mentioned in section 3.3.1.2.5 of Chapter 3, new ways of evaluating the P.S.L.S. are currently under examination. The survey detailed in this chapter represents one of the first of such attempts to gather information about the various P.S.L.S. courses which are organised at national level. In 1996, the I.R.R.S.A.E. Lombardy decided to survey a number of trainers who had been involved in the organisation and running of P.S.L.S. courses in the school year 1995-96. The main aims of the survey were:

- to gather information about the structure of the courses and the trainers involved in them;
- to identify the training activities employed in the courses;

- to determine the language of instruction used in the various training activities.

### 6.3 Methodology

The survey was conducted in the summer of 1996. The form of data collection was through a questionnaire (see Appendix 4), designed and administered by the I.R.R.S.A.E Lombardy. The author collaborated with the Director for Modern Foreign Languages at the I.R.R.S.A.E. Lombardy, her specific task being to analyse the survey data and to provide interpretation of the results which could contribute to the overall evaluation of the courses surveyed (Bettinelli, 1996).

The questionnaire aimed at gathering quantitative data. It consisted of three sections. All the questions in the first part of the questionnaire were open-ended, as they aimed at gathering information about the trainers who had been involved in the courses. Respondents were asked to indicate what trainers had contributed to the training course for which they were responsible, giving precise information about the number of sessions which had been conducted by each trainer. The second section of the questionnaire was concerned with the type of activities employed during the courses. A list of ten training activities was provided and the respondents were asked to indicate what percentage of the total training time had been devoted to each of them. Respondents were also invited to provide information about any other activity which they had employed in their course and which had not been included in the list. In the third part of the questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate if the activities

listed in the second part of the questionnaire had been carried out in English or in Italian.

The questionnaire was administered to 29 P.S.L.S. trainer-coordinators responsible for P.S.L.S. courses aimed at teachers of English. They had come from various parts of Italy to attend a seminar in Rome: the aim of the seminar was to gather information about the various P.S.L.S. courses run all over the country, information which was then to be used in the evaluation of the project itself.

## **6.4 Results and analysis**

The analysis of the results was conducted using simple descriptive analysis (%), the method used in analysing the results of the author's, and of the I.R.R.S.A.E. survey aimed at trainees.

The analysis of the results of the survey detailed in the following sections of this chapter was conducted with the aim of determining whether the P.S.L.S. courses surveyed met the training needs of Italian teachers of E.F.L., as they have emerged from the analysis of the results of the author's and of the I.R.R.S.A.E. trainees' surveys. The analysis and the discussion of the results focused on three main issues: the presence of a native English speaker expert among the trainers, the type of activities used in the courses and the use of the foreign language (i.e. English) during these activities.



### **6.4.1 The role of the native English speaker trainer**

The first part of the questionnaire was concerned with the structure of the P.S.L.S. courses. The respondents were asked to specify the number of sessions in which the total training time had been divided. The replies showed a number of sessions, ranging from 11 to 18, with 55% of the trainer-coordinators having opted for 17 sessions. Trainer-coordinators are free to organise their courses in the way they regard as more appropriate. The training sessions must take place outside teaching time, that is in the afternoon. Although it is possible to organise days of intensive study, trainer-coordinators are aware that trainees may experience problems in obtaining release from their teaching duties. It is important to remember that Italian schools are open six days a week, and, in contrast to UK schools, do not have half-term breaks nor days devoted to training.

Respondents were also asked to specify the trainers who had been involved in the course and the number of sessions that each trainer had conducted. P.S.L.S. trainer-coordinators are allocated a budget for the courses they run and are then left free to invite experts who can contribute to the training programme. The trainer-coordinators may decide to conduct all the sessions themselves. However, it is fairly common for them to involve other P.S.L.S. trainers or Italian and/or foreign experts in language teaching methodology. It is important to stress that the P.S.L.S. trainer-coordinator has the ultimate responsibility for the running of the course and s/he is expected to contribute significantly in his/her role as trainer.

The replies of the trainer-coordinators who took part in the I.R.R.S.A.E. survey are listed in table 6.1, with the results shown graphically in Fig. 6.1.

% OF COURSES	TRAINERS INVOLVED IN P.S.L.S. COURSES
31.0%	native English speaker expert
24.1%	native English speaker expert and Italian expert
20.7%	did not involve any other trainer
13.8%	another P.S.L.S. trainer and a native English speaker expert
6.9%	another P.S.L.S. trainer and an Italian expert
3.4%	another P.S.L.S. trainer.

Table 6.1 Trainers involved in P.S.L.S. courses

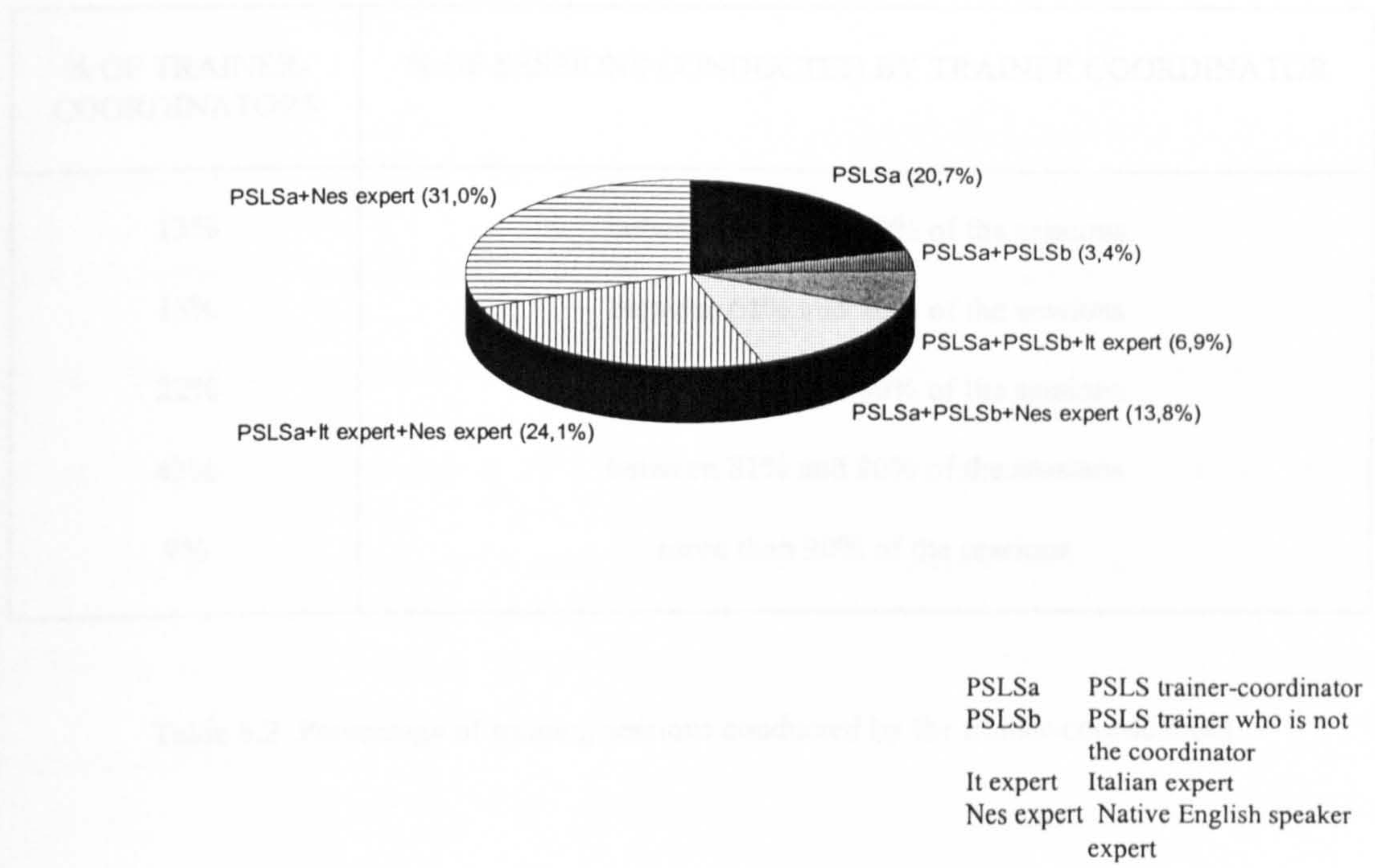


Fig. 6.1 Trainers involved in P.S.L.S. courses



The replies show that 68.9% of the trainer-coordinators had invited a native English speaker expert to run some of the sessions of the course for which they were responsible. The most common situation comprised the combination of P.S.L.S. trainer-coordinator and native English speaker expert, having been found on 31% of the courses.

When asked to provide details on the number of sessions conducted by each individual trainer, it appeared that the great majority of trainer-coordinators had been conducted most of the training sessions. The respondents' replies are detailed in Table 6.2.

% OF TRAINER-COORDINATORS	% OF SESSIONS CONDUCTED BY TRAINER COORDINATOR
13%	between 40% and 60% of the sessions
13%	between 61% and 70% of the sessions
22%	between 71% and 80% of the sessions
43%	between 81% and 90% of the sessions
9%	more than 90% of the sessions

Table 6.2 Percentage of training sessions conducted by the trainer-coordinators

The analysis subsequently focused on the replies of those trainer-coordinators who had invited a native English speaker expert on their courses. This had been the case



for 68.9% of the total respondents. The aim was to determine the extent of the native English speaker expert's involvement in the course. Table 6.3 shows the percentage of training sessions conducted by native English speaker experts.

% OF P.S.L.S. COURSES	% OF SESSIONS CONDUCTED BY NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKER EXPERTS
24%	up to 10%
62%	between 11 % and 20%
14%	between 21% and 30%

Table 6.3 Percentage of training sessions conducted by native English speaker experts

As can be seen in Table 6.3, on 24% of the courses native English speaker trainers had conducted up to 10% of the sessions. On 62% of the courses they had conducted up to 20% of the sessions, while on 14% of the courses the native English speaker trainer was in charge of up to 30% of the total training sessions. The result shows that, although the presence of a native English speaker expert is valued, the majority of the trainer-coordinators preferred most of the training to be conducted by Italian trainers and experts.

The involvement of an English native trainer is in line with the replies coming from the author's survey and detailed in Chapter 4. When asked if they believed it was

important to have a native English speaker among the trainers, 90% of those respondents answered affirmatively. It is however important to highlight that English native speaker trainers are invited to contribute to P.S.L.S. courses as experts in a specific methodological field. This is somewhat in contrast with the findings of the author's survey: although the majority of the respondents welcome the presence of an native English speaker trainer, they see his/her role more as language instructor than as methodology expert. Section 4.4.9 and section 4.4.11.2 of Chapter 4 detail some of the reasons which may explain the respondents' preference for the native English speaker expert to be involved in training courses as language instructor, rather than as an expert in a specific methodological field. Some native English speaker trainers have proved not to be familiar with the Italian Education system: this implies that their contribution was perceived by trainees as not relevant to their teaching situations. As described in section 3.3.1.2.5 of Chapter 3 and further detailed later in this section, this situation often occurs on those P.S.L.S. courses where the co-operation between the trainer-coordinator and the native English speaker expert has not been fully agreed.

Breen, Candlin, Dam and Gabrielsen (1989:123) reported their experience as trainers of non-native English speaker teachers. They found that "the visiting trainers were still placed in an 'expert role'. This was even when they were in far less of a position to judge the relative significance of a problem or contribute to its solution than the teacher who identified it." They also stressed the importance of the co-operation between foreign experts and local trainers: foreign experts are always perceived as outsiders and their solutions to the trainees' problems are often perceived as

“someone else’s innovation from another context”. In contrast, local trainers are seen as closer to the trainees and in a better position to appreciate their difficulties. This is especially true when the local trainers are still working as teachers, which is the case for all P.S.L.S. trainers in Italy.

Costanzo (1993) welcomes the presence of an English speaking expert, as long as his/her contribution is relevant to the course content as it has been designed by the Italian trainer-coordinator. Rixon (1986) shares Costanzo’s view: she has warned about the over-reliance on the English native speaker as a methodology expert. As described in section 4.4.9 of Chapter 4, she sees the native English speaker experts as additional resources, but believes that the main responsibility for organising the course must rest with the Italian coordinator. Rixon believes that, as the Italian trainer has had extensive experience of working within the Italian education system, s/he is well aware of the difficulties and problems with which the trainees are faced in their classrooms. S/he should decide what role the native English speaker trainer will have in the course and should make sure that the native English speaker expert’s presence will be relevant to the trainee’s specific needs.

As previously described, a good number of the teachers who were surveyed by the author complained that, in many cases, native English speaker trainers are not familiar with the Italian teaching situation. This problem can be overcome if the Italian and the native English speaker trainer co-operate in defining the content and the scope of the native English speaker expert’s contribution to the training programme. Unfortunately, as described in section 3.3.1.2.5 of Chapter 3, Rixon has



found that the nature of co-operation between the Italian trainer responsible for the organisation of a P.S.L.S. course and the English native speaker experts invited to contribute to the course may be quite variable. Some Italian trainers involve the English experts in every stage of the training programme, thus ensuring that their contribution is relevant and meaningful. However, it is not uncommon for English trainers to simply receive a telephone call, inviting them to give a talk on a subject of their choice. In this situation, their contribution may often prove to be irrelevant to the general course content. Rixon, therefore, believes that it is crucial to the success of the native English speaker trainers' contribution that they are informed in detail about the course structure and content and that they become more closely involved in the training programme.

#### **6.4.2. Activities used in P.S.L.S. courses**

The second question enquired into the structure and content of the courses. The trainer-coordinators were asked to specify the percentage of time their trainees had spent on those activities listed in Table 6.4. The respondents were also invited to supply details of any other activity they had used. Only 7% of the respondents did so, and indicated that their trainees had also been engaged in small-scale Action Research projects and in diary writing.

TRAINING ACTIVITIES USED IN P.S.L.S. COURSES	
1	frontal lessons
2	interactive lessons
3	presentation of audio and video tapes
4	I.T. workshops
5	group-work: teacher learning
6	group work: material production
7	role-play
8	teacher observation
9	writing reports on the work carried out during the course
10	filling in questionnaires

Table 6.4 Training activities used in P.S.L.S. courses

The results show that all trainees were exposed to a large variety of training modes. The employment of a wide range of activities and techniques is consistent with recommendations made by various trainers and educationalists. Murdoch (1994), for instance, suggests that trainees should be exposed to as wide a number of training modalities as possible: these should include seminars, workshops, and discussions. He believes that this will maximise the effectiveness of the training and have a profound influence on the trainees' classroom practices. Balbi (1990) stresses that the trainees' background, teaching situations and learning styles are different: it is



therefore advisable to diversify training activities in an effort to meet different needs and personalities.

The following sections will analyse and discuss the replies given by the trainer-coordinators. The discussion will focus, specifically, on those activities which had been recognised as being particularly important by the teachers who took part in the author's and the I.R.R.S.A.E. trainees' surveys .

6.4.2.1 ‘Frontal lessons’ versus ‘Interactive lessons’

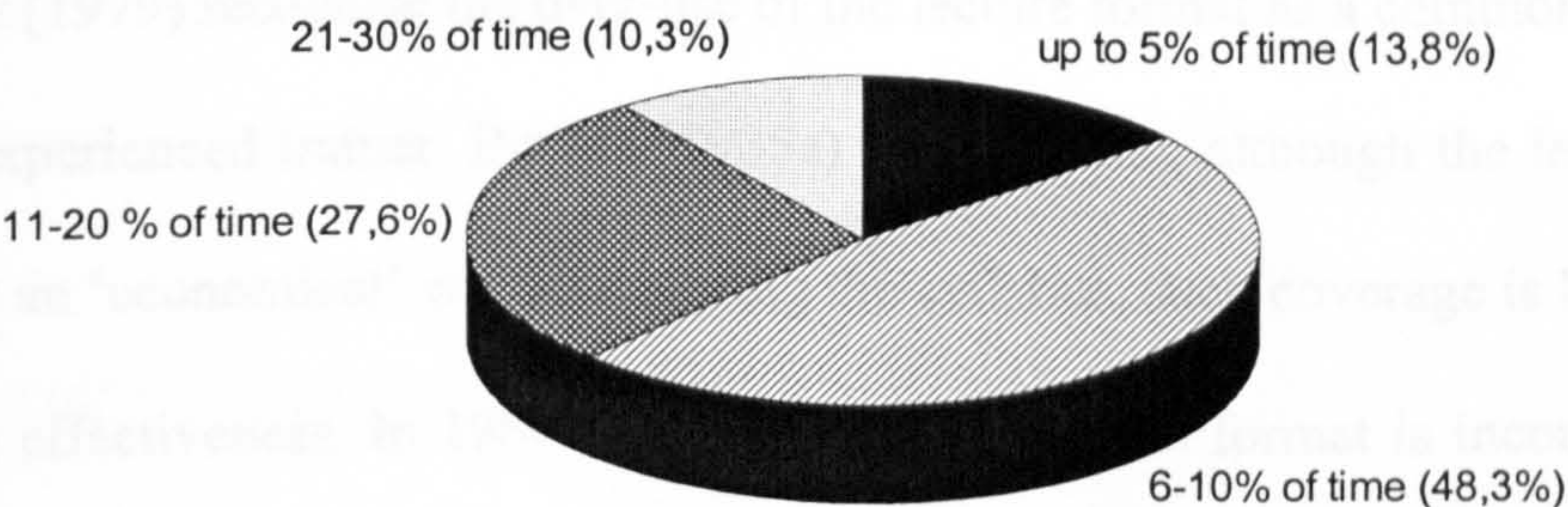


Fig. 6.2 Percentage of training time spent on frontal lessons

As shown in Fig. 6.2, all trainer-coordinators decided to use frontal lessons in the course they organised. It is, however, interesting to highlight that 62.1% of them devoted 10% or less of the total training time to frontal lessons, and 27.6% of trainer-



coordinators used them for between 11% and 20% of the total time. The result indicates that, in most instances, this type of activity was employed for a relatively small percentage of the total training time.

The choice to employ frontal lessons only for a small percentage of the total training time and, by inference, to allow the trainee to play a more active role in the training process is consistent with suggestions put forward by several trainers and educationalists in the recent years. Byrne (1973) recognises that lectures are an 'economic' way of teaching theory: however, he believes that training foreign language teachers should involve above all a programme of activities. Rinvoluceri (1979) also considers the lecture as an inefficient mode of instruction on training courses. Woodward (1988) exhorts trainers to avoid lecturing altogether. Davis and Worley (1979) recognise the over-use of the lecture format as a common weakness of the inexperienced trainer. Britten (1985a) believes that, although the lecture is often seen as an 'economical' way of covering the syllabus, such coverage is likely to be of limited effectiveness. In 1988 he added that the lecture format is incompatible with the principle that training should illustrate only those methods that the trainees are expected to use in their classrooms. Golebiowska (1985:277) believes that trainers should "practise what they preach at all times": this applies to teaching principles, such as trainee-centredness and cutting down trainer talking time. Willis (1981), O'Brien (1981) and Kontra (1997:243) agree with Britten and Golebiowska: as Kontra states "if we believe that the 'jug-to-mug' method - with the teacher pouring knowledge into the heads of the learners - does not work in the language classroom, why should it work in teacher training?". Bolitho (1983) does not rule out the use of



lectures on training courses as long as they are ‘trainer-led, but trainee-centred’. He recognises, however, that there is a danger that this mode of instruction could dull the trainees’ spirit of enquiry. Bax (1995) advocates a model of trainee-centred teacher development to be used in evaluating and designing training courses. This is in contrast to what he believes to be the one-directional, top-down model still adopted in many training courses. De La Motte (1985:20) claims that the overuse of the lecture format could explain built-in prejudices towards theory rather than practice. This format, in fact, lends itself “exclusively to the exposition of a ‘new’ (possibly not so new?) theory to a passive audience, who can lap it up with usually, these days, modified rapture.”

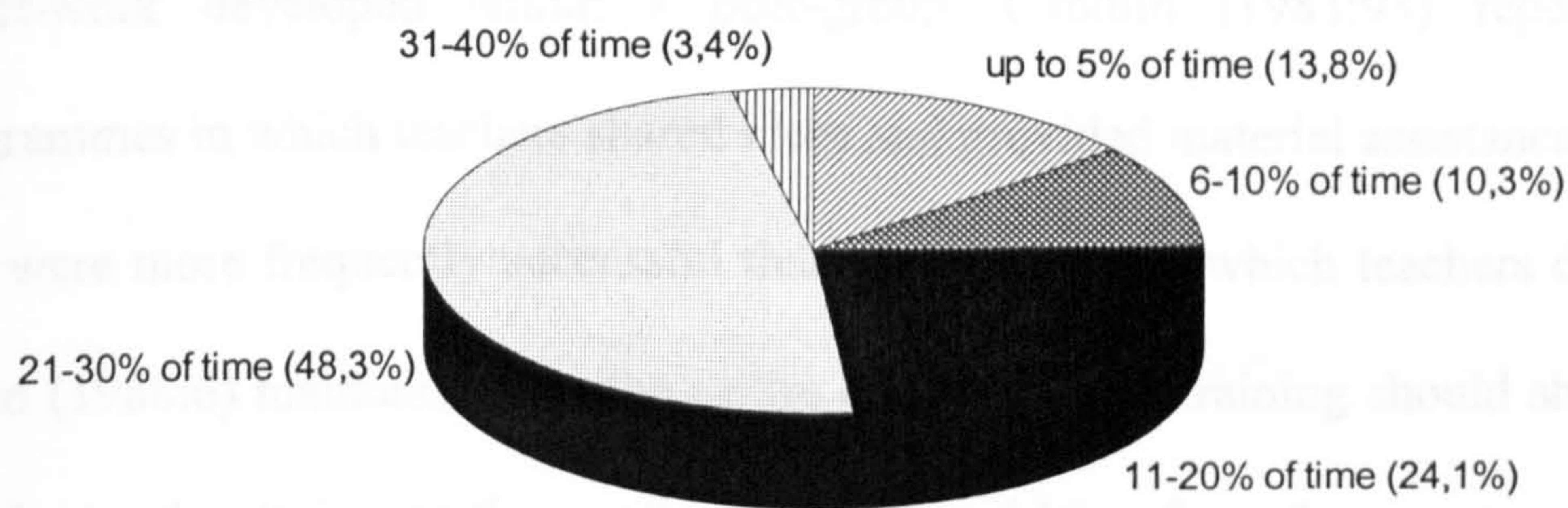


Fig. 6.3 Percentage of training time spent on interactive lessons

As shown in Fig. 6.3, the trainer-coordinators generally preferred to use interactive lessons as opposed to lectures. This was the most commonly employed lesson format for 51.7% of the trainer-coordinators who employed it between 21% and 40% of the



total training time. This result is consistent with suggestions put forward by many trainers and educationalists. Balbi (1990), for instance, highlights the importance for the trainee to have an active role in his/her personal and professional development: she, therefore, encourages trainers to keep frontal lessons to a minimum and to opt for 'trainee-centred' training modalities. Costanzo (1993) believes that one of the most important features of P.S.L.S. courses is the opportunity which trainees have to reflect on their teaching practice and to share their experience with other colleagues. This is in contrast to what happens in training courses where trainees listen 'passively' to academics who may have no real teaching experience in secondary schools. When Castellotti and Di Carlo (1994) surveyed trainees who had attended training courses both in France and Italy, they found that most of them viewed training programmes as an opportunity to reflect on their classroom practice through project-work developed within a peer-group. Candlin (1983:93) reports that "programmes in which teachers shared ideas and provided material assistance to each other were more frequently successful than programmes in which teachers did not." Britten (1988:6) maintains that "the centre of authority in training should shift, first from the teacher trainer to the small peer-group and later, from the peer-group to the individual trainee". Brumfit (1983b) and Kerr (1979) favour the use of a variety of modes of instructions: in particular, Kerr highlights the importance of group-work as a means to involve all participants. Woodward (1992) advocates the use of a repertoire of process options to serve trainees with different learning styles.

The preference expressed by P.S.L.S. trainer-coordinators for activities which require trainees to take an active role in the training process compliments the desire of



trainees to share their experiences and problems with other colleagues. In addition, as described above, it is in line with the recommendations made by several native and non-native English speaker trainers and educationalists.

**6.4.2.2 ‘Audio and video cassettes’ and ‘I.T. workshops’**

The ‘Audiovisuals’ component was one of the most popular components among the teachers of both lower and higher secondary schools surveyed by the I.R.R.S.A.E. in 1995 (see sections 5.4.3.1.1 and 5.4.3.2.5 of Chapter 5). However, as shown in Fig. 6.4, the trainers who took part in the 1996 survey devoted only a small percentage of the total training time to this area of activity.

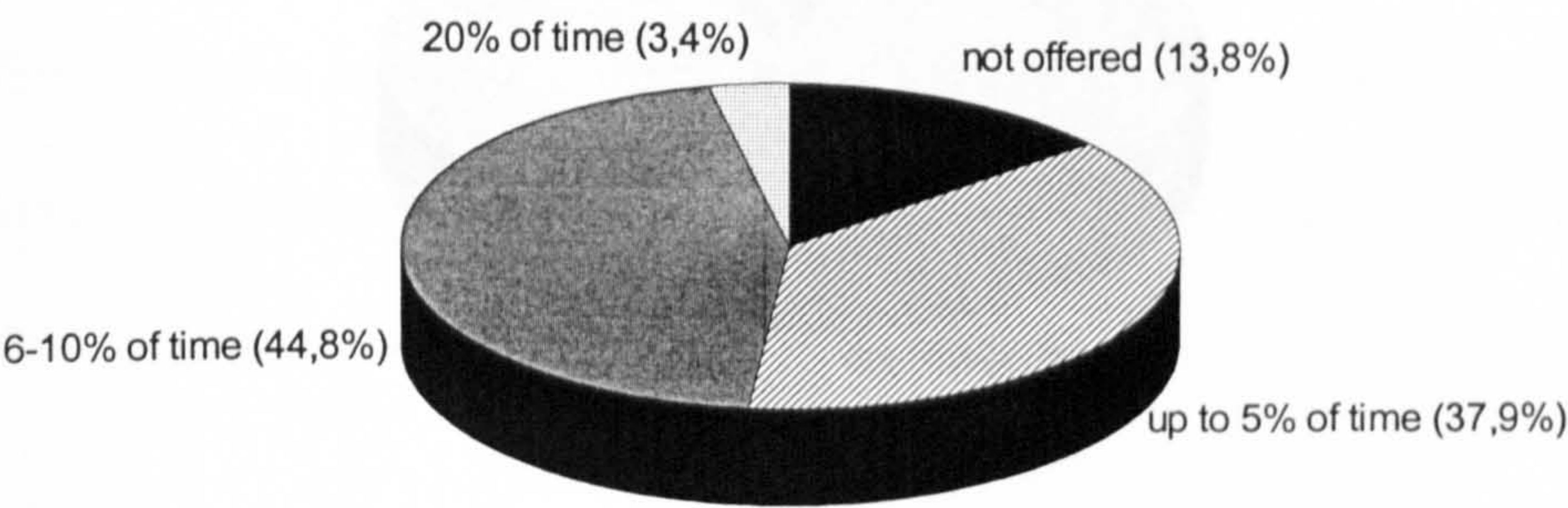


Fig. 6. 4 Percentage of training time spent on audio and visual material



A large majority of trainers (82.7%) spent 10% or less of the course on this component, while 13.8% decided not to include it in the course for which they were responsible. This is in contrast to the demand expressed by the respondents to the I.R.R.S.A.E. trainees' questionnaire. It is also inconsistent with the recommendations of the Italian National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages which encourages teachers to use a wide range of audio-visual materials.

There seems to be some resistance on the part of the trainers to integrate technical equipment into language teaching. This is confirmed by the fact that, as shown in Fig. 6.5, only 10.3 % of the trainer-coordinators who took part in the survey included I.T. workshops in their courses.

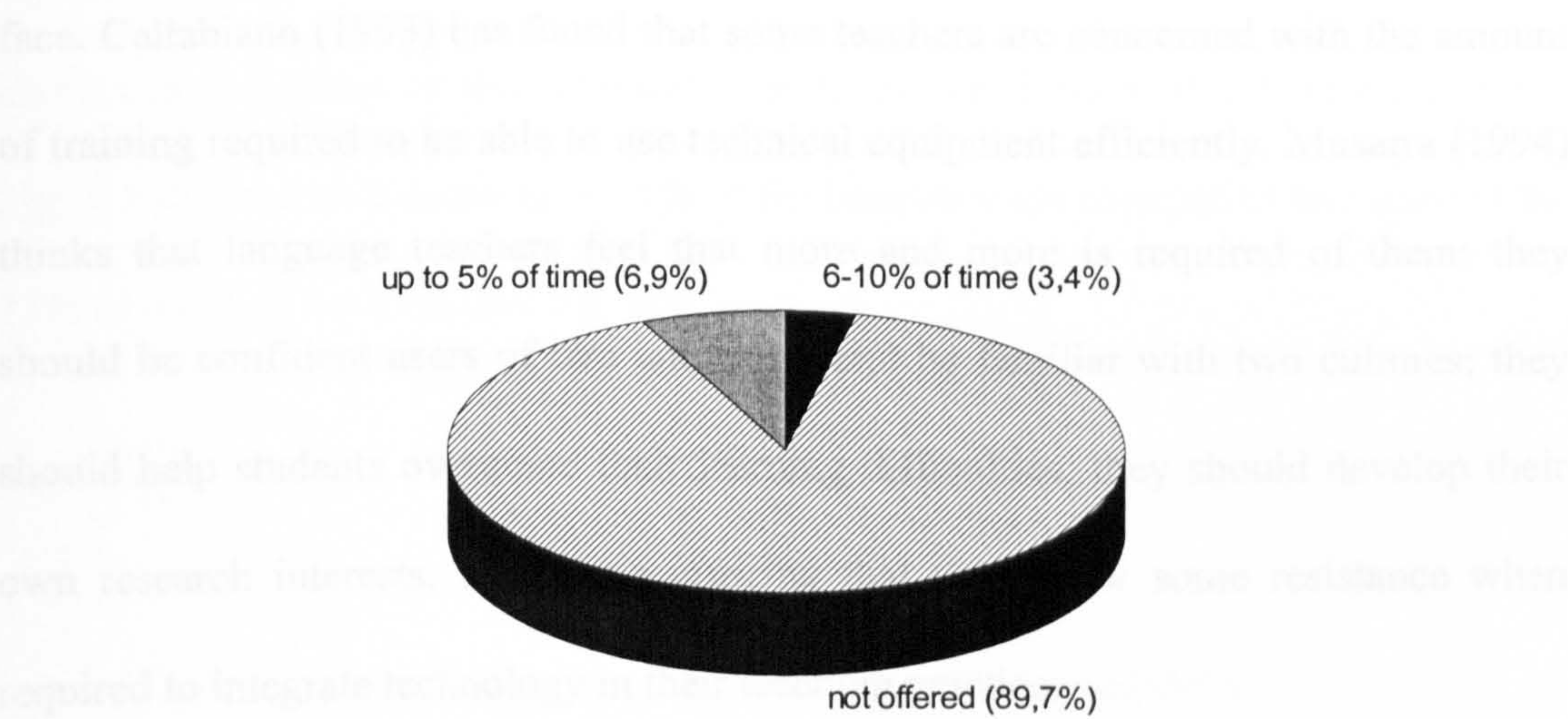


Fig. 6.5 Percentage of training time spent on I.T. workshops



There are two main reasons which can explain this resistance: the limited availability of technical equipment and the lack of confidence which many teachers experience when asked to use such equipment. In an interview given to the Italian newspaper 'La Repubblica', the Italian Minister for Education (Cavallieri 1997) conceded that Italy lags behind many European countries in terms of technological resources available in schools. To overcome this problem and to bring Italy in line with the resources available in other European countries, the Ministry of Education has recently announced that the government is planning to invest heavily in this sector of Education, which has so far been neglected.

The lack of funding is, however, only one of the difficulties which teachers have to face. Caltabiano (1993) has found that some teachers are concerned with the amount of training required to be able to use technical equipment efficiently. Musarra (1994) thinks that language teachers feel that more and more is required of them: they should be confident users of two languages and be familiar with two cultures; they should help students overcome their learning difficulties; they should develop their own research interests. It is not surprising that they show some resistance when required to integrate technology in their teaching practice.

The relatively little time devoted to the use of audiovisuals and I.T. could be explained either by a lack of technological resources in the schools where the training courses took place, or by the difficulty to find suitable trainers. The Ministry of Education has recognised the need to prepare trainers expert in I.T.: following the



Ministerial Circular No 147 of 17/4/96, the Ministry has started a programme of re-training existing P.S.L.S. trainers in this field.

**6.4.2.3 Group work: ‘Teacher learning’ versus ‘Material production’**

‘Group work - teacher learning’ involved activities in which teachers were engaged in furthering their theoretical knowledge of the subject. As can be seen in Fig. 6.6, 44.8% of the trainer-coordinators devoted 10% or less of the total time to this component and 41.4% of them between 11% and 20%. In contrast, the trainer-coordinators decided to devote more time to the production of teaching materials. Fig. 6.7 shows that trainees on 65.5% of the courses were engaged in this activity for 21% or more of the total training time.

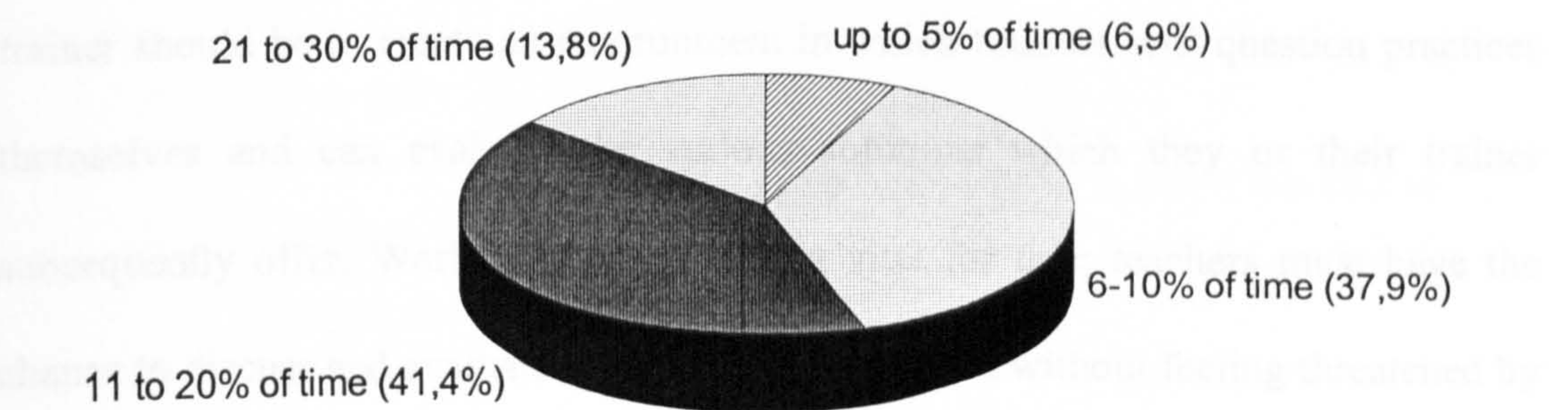


Fig. 6.6 Percentage of training time spent on teacher learning



The trainer-coordinators decided to use group work for both activities. Their choice seems to indicate that they believe in the importance of involving actively their trainees, even in the more theoretical aspects of the training programme. The trainer-coordinators could have decided to adopt a more 'trainer-centred' approach, especially when dealing with the 'Teacher learning' component. Frontal lessons are usually a popular choice when it comes to the more theoretical components of a training course. In contrast, trainees were asked to work co-operatively in groups. The choice of this operational modality is consistent with the desire expressed by many teachers to work on common projects and share their experiences. As previously mentioned in section 6.4.2.1 of this chapter, several trainers and educationalists believe in the importance for the trainees to have a more active role in the training process. Kerr (1979) believes that activities for small groups are indispensable to involve all participants in a training course. The co-operation required to carry out projects helps everyone to become less defensive and to contribute their opinions and ideas. Mariani (1979) maintains that teachers should experience the group situation themselves, since teaching is essentially carried out with groups of people. According to Willis (1981:51), "The major role of a teacher trainer should be to create an environment in which trainees will question practices themselves and can evaluate the various solutions which they or their trainer subsequently offer. Work in small groups is vital for this; teachers must have the chance to discuss and evaluate ideas among themselves without feeling threatened by too a large group."

The decision to work on the more theoretical aspects of language teaching for a relatively limited time confirms the practical nature of P.S.L.S. courses. This is



considered to be, as indicated by Costanzo (1993), one of the strongest points of these education programmes. As detailed in section 4.4.5.1 of Chapter 4, the decision is consistent with the desire expressed by many teachers to remain focused on their classroom work. In the survey carried out by the author, the ‘Theories of language learning and teaching’ was the least popular component. The trainees’ preference for a practical approach to teacher training had also emerged from other surveys, for instance Parrott’s (1990), Jarvis’s (1991), and Murdoch’s (1994).

Although P.S.L.S. courses are characterised by their practical approach, these training programmes do not deny the importance of theory. Trainees spend a great proportion of their total training time engaged in practical activities, but they are also involved in more theoretical projects. As Costanzo (1993) indicates, teaching practice is the starting point from which theoretical and methodological principles are derived.

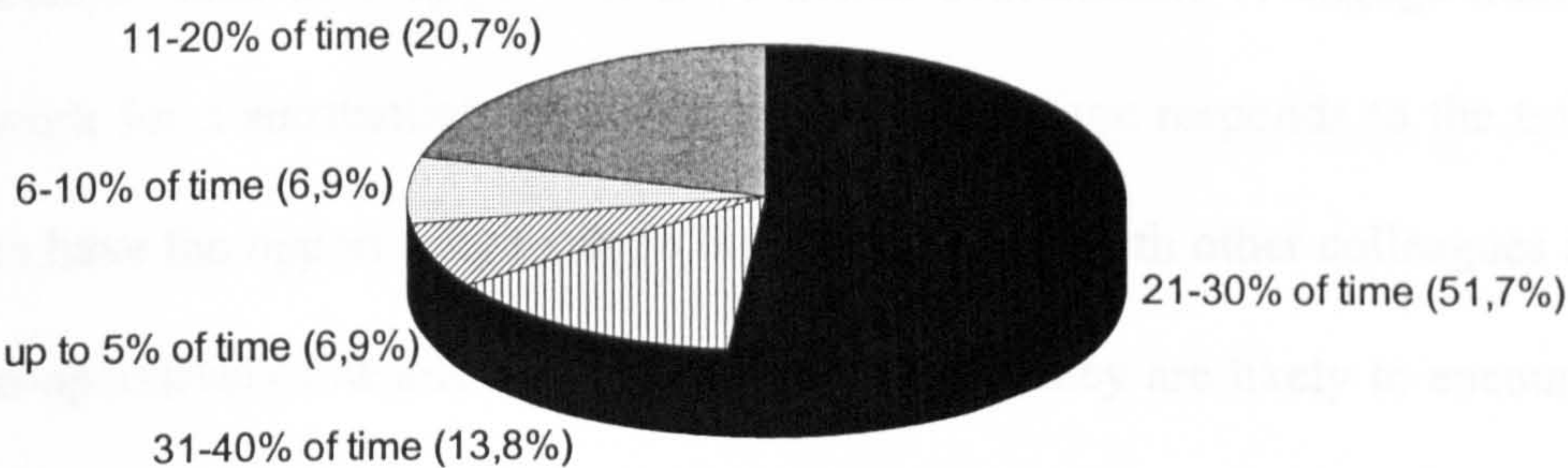


Fig. 6.7 Percentage of training time spent on material production



'Group work - material production' was the activity on which most trainer-coordinators decided to spend the highest percentage of the total training time. As shown in Fig. 6.7, 51.7% of the respondents allocated between 21% and 30% of the total training time to this activity, and 13.7% of them devoted to it between 31% and 40% of the time.

The 'Material production' component had proved to be extremely popular among the respondents to both the I.R.R.S.A.E trainees' and the author's questionnaire. The overwhelming majority of the teachers surveyed expressed the need to receive guidance on how to develop their own teaching materials. The reasons which explain the popularity of this training activity are detailed in section 4.4.5.3 of Chapter 4 and sections 5.4.3.1.1 and 5.4.3.2.5 of Chapter 5. They include dissatisfaction with existing published material, the need to comply with the requirements of the Italian National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages, and the desire to rediscover the creative element in the teaching process.

The decision taken by a large number of trainer-coordinators to engage trainees in group-work for a substantial part of the total training time responds to the trainees' desire to have the opportunity to share their experiences with other colleagues and to work co-operatively towards the solution of problems they are likely to encounter in their classrooms. This focus on classroom practice explains the preference granted by the trainer-coordinator surveyed to a practical approach to teacher training. Although trainees worked on furthering their theoretical knowledge, a great part of the total training time was devoted to the creation of supporting teaching material, an area of



activity in which a substantial number of teachers surveyed both by the I.R.R.S.A.E and the author expressed the desire to receive specific training.

**6.4.2.4 ‘Teacher observation’**

The majority of the trainer-coordinators (51.7%) decided not to include any teacher observation in their courses and those who did, devoted to this component only a small percentage of the total training time. Fig. 6.8 shows graphically the replies given to this question. It is important to highlight that, on the few courses where teacher observation was included, the activity did not entail actual classroom observation, but rather involved observing a colleague engaged in peer-teaching.

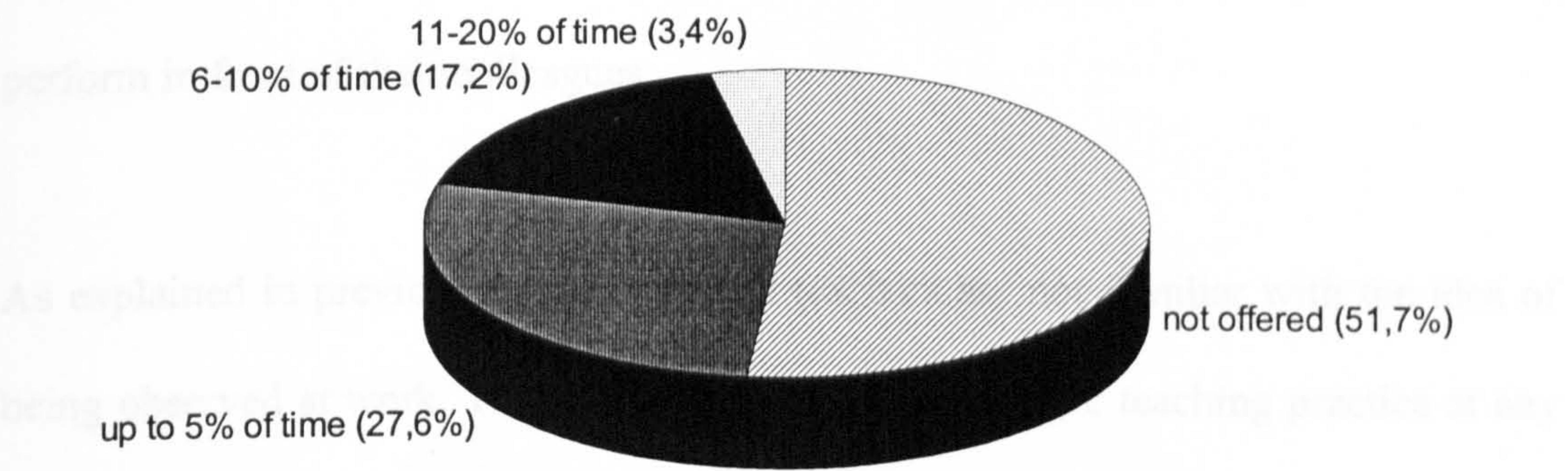


Fig. 6.8 Percentage of training time spent on teacher observation



The decision taken by the trainer-coordinators indicates that this component is not very popular among both trainers and trainees. This is consistent with the replies given by the majority of the respondents surveyed by the author: 'Classroom observation' was the second least popular component. Both Parrott (1990) and Murdoch (1994) obtained similar results from the analysis of their questionnaires. The reasons which can explain the teachers' dislike at being observed are detailed in section 4.4.5.4 of Chapter 4. For instance, teachers may feel embarrassed or threatened when teaching in front of other trainees. They may also not be confident in their use of the target language, or they may have perceived previous observation as judgmental. Another reason which can explain why so many teachers dislike being observed when working in their classrooms is linked to the way in which classroom observation is sometimes conducted. There has been a tradition of judgmental observation which puts great pressure on both trainees and observers. The situation is worsened in the case of experienced non-native English speaker teachers: if they are not confident in their use of the target language, they may feel embarrassed to perform in front of their colleagues.

As explained in previous chapters, Italian teachers are not familiar with the idea of being observed at work. Their preparation does not involve teaching practice at any stage and once they have obtained a permanent position their teaching is never observed or appraised. According to Inglese (1995), Italian teachers are used to working in isolation: they dislike being observed and would never agree to be filmed while teaching. However, he believes that the starting point for any effective training and real professional growth lies in comparing teaching practices and sharing



teaching experiences and problems. This belief is shared by the author: training courses should break the isolation in which teachers become accustomed to work. The experience and the trust gained when working co-operatively on small-scale projects, such as the production of teaching material, should help teachers overcome the uneasiness they feel when their teaching is observed.

### 6.4.3 The use of the target language in training activities

Section 3 of the questionnaire asked trainer-coordinators to specify the language in which each activity had been carried out during the course. The replies indicate that most trainer-coordinators conducted some activities in English and others in Italian. There were two exceptions: one trainer opted for the exclusive use of the target language and another for the exclusive use of the mother tongue. This section discusses the results coming from the I.R.R.S.A.E. trainer-coordinators' survey and compares them with data coming from the author's survey, which are detailed in section 4.4.7 of Chapter 4.

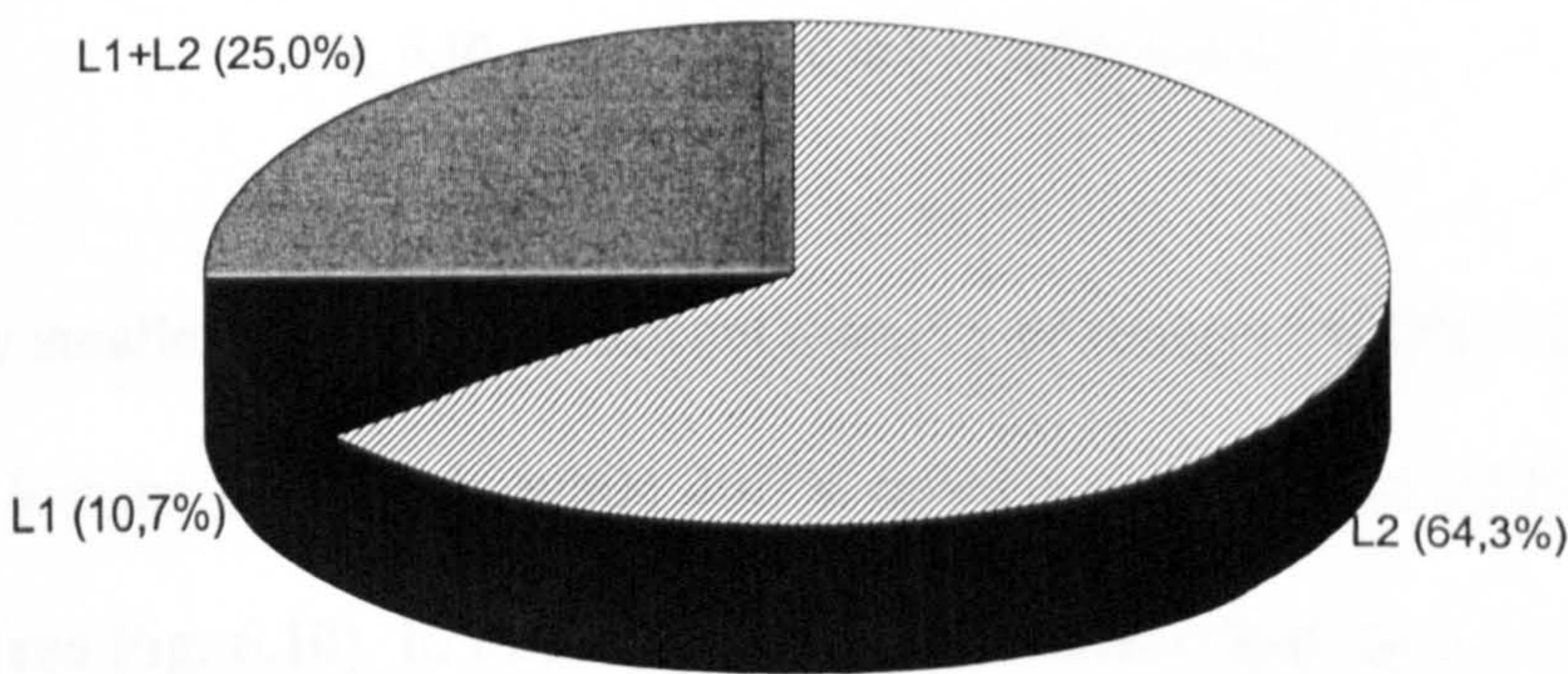


Fig. 6.9 Language used in frontal lessons



It was interesting to determine which language had been used in the activities on which the trainees had spent a considerable percentage of the total training time: frontal lessons, interactive lessons and group work activities for material production. Fig. 6.9 shows that English was the language used in frontal lessons by the majority of trainers (64.3%) while 25% of them used both English and Italian and only 10.7% used Italian exclusively. Most trainees had, therefore, the opportunity to listen to lessons and lectures in L2. This is consistent with the desire expressed by the teachers surveyed by the author: 85% of them had, in fact, chosen English as the desired language for frontal lessons.

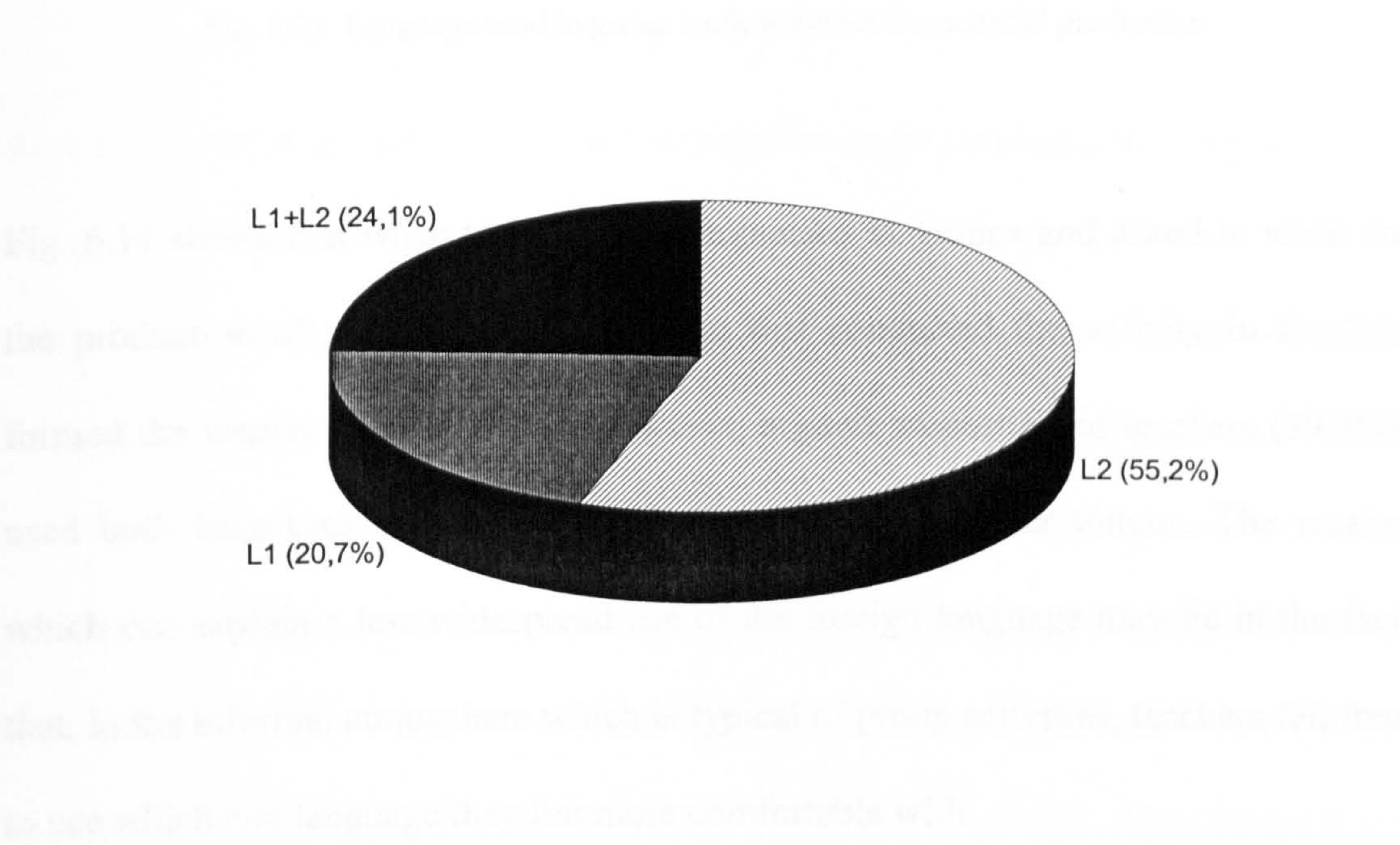


Fig. 6.10 Language used in interactive lessons

A relatively smaller, but still a significant majority of trainers (55.2%) carried out the interactive lessons in English, while 20.7% opted for Italian and 24.1% used both languages (see Fig. 6.10). In this type of activity, trainees had the opportunity to be exposed to, as well as to use, the foreign language.



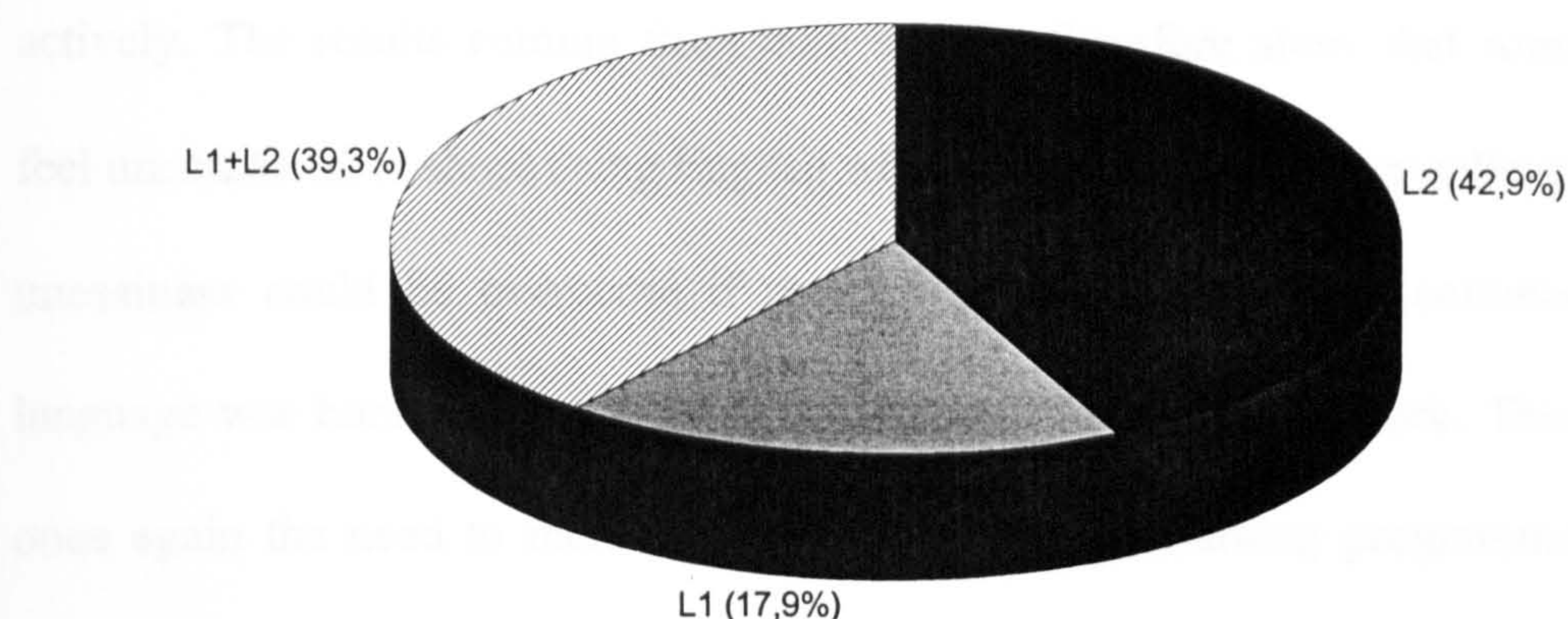


Fig. 6.11 Language used in group work activities for material production

Fig. 6.11 shows that when trainees were organised in groups and asked to work on the production of teaching material, those that conducted the activity in English formed the largest group (42.9%). However, a good proportion of teachers (39.3%) used both languages and 17.9% decided to use their mother tongue. The reason which can explain a less widespread use of the foreign language may lie in the fact that, in the informal atmosphere which is typical of group activities, teachers felt free to use whichever language they felt more comfortable with.

In the survey carried out by the author, 79% of the respondents declared their preference for English as the only language to be used in any group activity. This percentage is higher than the 42.9% which emerged from the I.R.R.S.A.E. trainer-coordinators' questionnaire. Both surveys indicated that the number of the teachers who favour English as the language to be used in frontal lessons is significantly



higher than the percentage who chose it as the language for group activities. In frontal lessons, teachers are exposed to the language, but are not required to use it actively. The results coming from both surveys therefore show that some teachers feel uncomfortable about using English when interacting with other colleagues. Their uneasiness could be overcome if teachers' confidence in their command of the language was boosted through constant language improvement work. This confirms once again the need to include such a component in training programmes, a need which had also been expressed by the overwhelming majority of the respondents to the author's survey.

About 55% of all trainer-coordinators decided to carry out some training activities using exclusively the trainees' mother tongue. All I.T. workshops, for instance, were carried out in Italian: this is most probably due to the need to transmit technical information clearly and effectively. However, it may also imply the presence of an expert in I.T., who did not speak English. Italian was also used by some trainers during teacher observation. In this case, the choice of using the trainees' mother tongue may have been taken to alleviate the pressure and the stress that this activity may involve. Italian was also used in the final stage of the course, when trainees are required to provide feedback on the course they have followed. This usually takes the form of an informal discussion, followed by a questionnaire to be returned to the trainer-coordinator. This is a standard questionnaire which is administered to P.S.L.S. trainees teaching various languages and is, therefore, in Italian. The preference to use Italian during the course evaluation had also been expressed by 47% of the teachers surveyed by the author. Some teachers, who are less confident



about their use of the target language, may feel more comfortable to carry out the feedback session in their own language.

The analysis of the responses to this question area of the survey show that the target language was used extensively during the training programme. However, the decision of using L2 should not preclude the inclusion of a language improvement component in training courses. Some trainers believe that the fact that most training activities are carried out in English is sufficient to respond to the trainees' demand for language work. In contrast, the author believes that trainees should be allowed to spend part of their training time working specifically on improving their command of the language. The replies to this section of the questionnaire indicate that all trainer-coordinators, with the exception of one who opted for L2 use only, regarded the use of the trainees' mother tongue as a valuable resource. Section 4.4.7 of Chapter 4 detailed some of the issues related to the use of the mother tongue in training courses. For instance, trainers may decide to use their trainees' mother tongue to ensure 'clarity of ideas'. The decision to use the mother tongue in training courses has implications for the choice of trainers invited to contribute to the course and supports the belief held by some native and by several non-native English speaker educationalists that native English speaker trainers are best employed as language instructors, while the methodological aspect of the course should be the responsibility of the local non-native English speaker trainer.

## 6.5 Conclusions

The analysis of the questionnaire administered to the I.R.R.S.A.E. trainer-coordinators has highlighted several important issues. The analysis was aimed at ascertaining whether the P.S.L.S. courses which had been organised in various regions of Italy in 1995-96 had satisfied the needs of trainees as they had emerged from the author's and the I.R.R.S.A.E. trainees' surveys.

Although the main responsibility for the organisation and running of all P.S.L.S. courses rested on the Italian trainer-coordinators, most courses surveyed saw the involvement of native English speaker trainers. This responds to the desire expressed by non-native English speaker trainees to be exposed to the language as it is spoken by native speakers. As P.S.L.S. courses do not offer a language improvement component, native English speaker trainers are invited to contribute to them as experts in a specific methodological field. The role of the Italian trainer-coordinator is to ensure that the native English speaker expert's presence will be relevant to the trainee's specific needs: this should overcome any potential problems caused by the fact that native English speaker trainers may not be familiar with the Italian teaching situation.

Trainer-coordinators preferred to use interactive lessons more extensively than frontal lessons. This operational mode is consistent with recommendations made by various trainers and educationalists: trainees should have an active role in the training process in the same way as students should be actively involved in the learning



process. The use of interactive lessons also give trainees the opportunity to share experiences. The choice of this type of activity complements the desire, expressed by many trainees, to spend part of the training time reflecting on their teaching practice with other colleagues.

With regard to the choice of the components to be included in the training course, the analysis has highlighted the resistance of a good number of trainers to devoting time to aspects of language teaching which involve the use of technical equipment. This is in contrast with the recommendations contained in the Italian National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages. It is also contrary to the needs expressed by the respondents to the I.R.R.S.A.E. trainees' questionnaire: a large majority of lower and higher secondary school teachers had, in fact, indicated that they would like to receive guidance on how to integrate audio-visual material in their lessons. The Ministry of Education seems to have recognised that schools lack sufficient technical equipment and is planning to allocate funds to overcome this problem. Necessary steps have also been taken to ensure that existing P.S.L.S. trainer-coordinators receive further training in I.T. and its applications to language teaching.

The choice of a large majority of trainer-coordinators to devote a substantial part of the total training time to practical projects rather than to the more theoretical aspects of language teaching and learning reflects the practical nature of P.S.L.S. courses. It also responds to the trainees' requirement to remain focused on their teaching practice. This choice does not deny the importance of theory, but shows the belief that practice should be the starting point from which theoretical principles are

derived. Trainees spent considerable time on producing teaching materials. This is consistent with the replies of the respondents to both the author's and the I.R.R.S.A.E. trainees' questionnaire. The fact that this activity involved teachers working in groups reflects the importance given to the co-operative aspect of training. The trust and the experience gained in activities of this type should help teachers and trainers overcome the resistance that they showed in having their teaching observed.

Most of the activities were carried out in the target language or in both English and Italian. This decision matches the need expressed by the respondents to the author's questionnaire to be exposed to, and to use, English as the main language of instruction. Training courses are the only chance that many teachers have to improve their command of the language: it is therefore possible that some teachers see these courses more as an opportunity to improve language skills rather than as an opportunity to further their methodological knowledge. It is unfortunate that, in spite of the overwhelming desire expressed by the Italian teachers surveyed by the author to devote a large part of their training time to language improvement, this component is not offered on any P.S.L.S. courses. The author feels that this is an issue that can not be ignored when designing training courses.

The author's survey showed that a considerable number of Italian E.F.L. teachers believe that they can greatly benefit from a period of training abroad. For both financial and cultural reasons, they are likely to decide to attend courses in the UK. They are also likely to choose courses offered by academic institutions: although the



Italian Ministry of Education do not currently recognise qualifications awarded abroad, teachers hope that in future this will change. In that case, they feel that qualifications awarded by institutions recognised at European level will be more likely to be accepted in Italy. The decision to receive training abroad involves great personal and financial investment on part of the teachers. It is in fact relatively difficult for them to be released from their school duties, which means that they have to devote their holidays and free time to further their professional knowledge. In addition, they have to self-finance any programme of study outside Italy. In the rare cases in which they do obtain to be released from their schools, they can only be granted unpaid leave of absence. They will also not receive any financial help towards the costs involved in their training. In spite of all these difficulties, an increasing number of teachers decide to join UK education programmes. It is therefore important to determine whether their personal and financial investment will prove worthwhile in terms of their professional advancement. The next chapter will focus on the analysis of training courses open to Italian teachers of English currently available in the UK. The analysis aims at ascertaining whether these courses are likely to meet the training requirements of this group of teachers, as they have emerged from the author's survey and the I.R.R.S.A.E trainees' surveys detailed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **The provision of training courses in the UK: a survey**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the provision of training courses open to Italian teachers of E.F.L. in the UK. Data coming from the author's and the I.R.R.S.A.E. trainees' survey indicate that Italian teachers regard training as a very important aspect of their professional life. This in spite of the fact that training is not compulsory and that gaining further qualifications does not lead to any career advancement. There are a number of training programmes available to Italian teachers of E.F.L. in their home country: teachers can apply to follow a P.S.L.S. course, take advantage of the many training initiatives offered by the local British Councils, or attend the various courses organised by associations such as LEND. However, the Italian teachers surveyed by the author indicated that they would benefit from a period of study abroad. In fact, an increasing number of Italian teachers decide to join programmes of study in the UK, which for financial and cultural reasons appear to be their favourite choice in terms



of English speaking countries. The decision of receiving training abroad involves considerable personal and financial investment on their part, as they are not easily released from their school duties and have to finance themselves.

This chapter illustrates a variety of courses open to Italian teachers of English in the UK. Individual institutions were contacted to obtain detailed information about the content of such courses. The material received was subsequently analysed in a way which allowed a comparison of the various courses according to variables such as the final qualification awarded, the length and mode of delivery, the entry requirements, the course components and the academic staff involved in the courses. The aim of the analysis was to determine whether these courses met the requirements of Italian teachers of E.F.L., as they have emerged from the surveys conducted by the author and the I.R.R.S.A.E. Chapters 4 and 5 provided a detailed description and analysis of the findings of the two surveys. From the data gathered it was possible to identify some of the requirements and expectations of this group of teachers and to gain valuable information on the type of training they would like to receive. It was for instance possible to determine that:

- Italian teachers of E.F.L. would like to devote a considerable proportion of the total training time to improve their command of the language.
- Teachers are focused on their classroom practice and on the needs of their students: they therefore see training as an opportunity to explore the nature of the

problems that they have encountered in their classrooms and to receive guidance on how to tackle and solve these problems.

- Teachers favour a practical approach to teacher training: the most popular components among the teachers surveyed were aimed at producing materials and devising activities which could be used successfully in their classes. One of the explanations for the extreme popularity of the more practical components of training courses may lie in the lack of any practical element in the preparation they have received. In contrast, the more theoretical aspects of teacher training did not prove to be very popular among the respondents: this could depend on the highly theoretical preparation that Italian teachers receive at university and post-university level.
- Teachers would like to play an active role in the training process. They regard training courses as an opportunity to break the isolation in which many of them work and to share their experiences and problems with other colleagues. They enjoy working co-operatively on common projects focusing on problematic aspects of their teaching situations.
- Teachers expressed the desire to be taught by native English speaker trainers. However, some of them had experienced a certain degree of dissatisfaction with the training received by native English speaker trainers who were not familiar with their teaching situation. This had made it difficult for them to implement in their classes what they had learnt on training courses.



The first part of this chapter illustrates and analyses the information obtained from various UK academic institutions, while the second part provides comments on the data which emerged from the analysis. The findings of this survey confirm the concerns expressed by some educationalists, such as Waters (1988), Parrot (1988), Cullen (1994) and Medgyes (1996) that course designers should rethink the content of teacher education programmes in an effort to meet their trainees' needs and requirements.

## **7.2 Background to the survey**

Starting from March 1994, the author approached 94 UK universities and 45 university sector colleges, which could potentially offer courses aimed at Italian teachers of E.F.L.. The institutions were contacted either by letter or by using the Internet (see Appendix 5 for a complete list of the institutions contacted). 39 universities and colleges were initially approached by letter. These were the institutions which regularly advertised their courses in specialised journals. The letter detailed the nature of the research and its objectives and aimed at obtaining detailed material about courses targeted at E.F.L. teachers. 23 institutions replied sending information and stating their willingness to take part in the survey. The type of material gathered varied greatly: some institutions seemed very interested in co-operating and sent detailed information about their courses, course components and

the teaching staff involved in designing and running the courses. Other institutions sent only the type of information usually available to prospective students. 16 universities failed to reply: all of them were approached again at a later stage: this time the request for information was made as a potential student. 8 universities sent back details of their courses.

During November and December 1996, 139 universities and colleges were contacted using the Internet. The 31 institutions initially contacted by letter were contacted again to see if they still ran the courses about which they had sent information previously. Access was gained to the relevant sites of 129 institutions, i.e. 93% of the total sites. The 10 sites which could not be accessed were still under construction. 39 universities and colleges, i.e. 30% of the total, offered courses potentially aimed at Italian teachers of E.F.L.. The information accessed in this way showed great differences in terms of the level of web site development reached by universities and also between departments within the same university.

### **7.3 Material obtained from UK institutions**

The type of material obtained from the various universities and colleges varied greatly. The 23 institutions who were willing to take part in the survey sent very interesting and relevant information about their courses. This included detailed descriptions of entry requirements, course components, timetables, suggested



bibliography, forms of assessment together with information about their teaching staff.

The information obtained when the application was made as a potential student was obviously not so comprehensive and detailed; however, the brochures received did provide information about the entry requirements, the course components and the form of assessment. The material was therefore considered to be relevant, taking into account that it is the type of information on which potential trainees would base their choice when deciding which training course to attend.

When all institutions were contacted using the Internet, the differences in terms of the information actually accessible were considerable. Some institutions only listed the courses available with little or no information about their components. Other institutions provided very detailed information about the various aspects of their courses, including, in some cases, guidelines on how to prepare written assignments.

When the information gathering stage was completed, relevant and extensive material had been obtained from 34 institutions, that is 87% of the 39 institutions which run courses potentially aimed at Italian teachers of E.F.L.. A total of 83 courses run by 34 institutions were analysed.

## **7.4 Material analysis**

Each course about which information had been obtained was analysed in terms of:

1. qualification awarded;
2. length and mode of delivery;
3. entry requirements;
4. trainees' mother tongue;
5. teaching staff;
6. course components.

These were felt to be the main aspects of a course that an Italian teacher of English would take into consideration before enrolling. These aspects were also consistent with the type of information received. Appendix 6 offers a detailed breakdown of the data which emerged from the analysis of the material obtained.

### **7.4.1 Qualifications awarded**

The courses examined lead to qualifications at Certificate, Diploma and Master level. 17 of the 83 courses lead to a Certificate (20.5%), 20 lead to a Diploma (24%) and 46 to a Master qualification (55.5%).



Of the 34 institutions, four institutions offered courses only at Certificate level, one institution offered courses only at Diploma level and two institutions offered courses at both Certificate and Diploma level. Two institutions offered both Certificate and MA courses, while 8 institutions offered both Diploma and MA courses. Eight institutions offered courses only at MA level and Cambridge University offers a taught MPhil programme.

An increasing popular programme of study, which was available at nine institutions (26% of the total), gives students the opportunity to progress through a series of credit-bearing modules towards an MA. Credits are awarded at the successful completion of each module. The programmes usually consist of three stages: if a student successfully completes the first stage, s/he can either 'cash-in' the credits and obtain a Certificate or take a second stage. Successful completion of this second stage brings additional credits which, once again, can be 'cashed-in' in exchange for a Diploma or carried forward. Students who pass a third stage and submit a dissertation will be awarded an MA.

There was a wide range of courses available at the time when the survey was conducted. Table 7.1 shows the course title and the number of institutions offering the qualifications, arranged by Certificate, Diploma and Master.

COURSE TITLE	CERT	DIPL	MA	MEd	MPhil	MSc
Applied Linguistics		3	6			1
Applied Linguistics and TESOL			1			
Applied Linguistics for Lang. Teaching			1			
CALL and TESOL						1
Education and Applied Linguistics					1	
Educational Technology and TESOL				1		
Educational TESOL			1			
ELT	1	1	1	2		
ELT to Young Learners			1			
ELTSP			1			
English for Teaching English	1					
English Language Education		1	1			
English Language Studies and Methods			1			
Language Teaching				1		
Linguistics	1	1	6		1	
Linguistics and ELT		1	2			
Linguistics for TESOL		2	2			
Linguistics for TESOL						
Methodology of TESOL		1				
Special Applications of Linguistics			1			
Teacher Training				1		
Teaching English		1				1
Techniques and Methods in E.F.L.	1					
TEFL	5	5	4			
TEFLA	2	1				
TESOL	5	3	3	2		1
TESP	1			1		

Table 7.1 Courses open to Italian teachers of E.F.L. and number of institutions offering them

All courses are open to teachers who work or would like to work in E.F.L.. However, they can be divided into three main groups (see Appendix 7). The first group comprises courses in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics. These courses are usually defined as 'theoretical' and are targeted not only at teachers with a professional interest in language, but more generally at graduates in a wide range of disciplines. The second group includes courses in ELT. These courses aim at developing knowledge in English Language Education as well as offering modules in E.F.L..



They are therefore aimed at teachers of English, educators, curriculum developers and educational administrators as well as at E.F.L. teachers. The third group comprises courses which are specifically aimed at teachers of English as a Foreign Language.

To determine the reason for so many different course/qualification titles, the various courses were compared in terms of their course components and entry requirements (see Appendix 6). It appeared that the differences between courses with different titles were not much greater than the differences occurring between courses which shared the same title. At both Certificate and Diploma level, most courses leading to TEFL, TEFLA and TESOL courses seem to favour components such as 'Grammar', 'Methodology', 'Phonetics and Phonology', and 'Testing' while more 'theoretical' components, for instance 'Linguistics', and 'Pragmatics, Syntax and Semantics' are less likely to be on offer. TEFL and TEFLA Certificate courses seem to offer a wider choice of components (an average of 12) while TESOL courses, with the exception of the one run by Luton University, offer an average of 6 modules.

The analysis of Master courses was carried out at two different levels. Firstly, a comparison was made between the course components of MAs with different titles, e.g. MAs in Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, TESOL, TEFL and ELT. Secondly, the analysis was carried out between MAs and MEds sharing the same title, for instance MAs and MEd in ELT and TESOL (there are no MEd in TEFL). No analysis was carried out between MAs, MEds and Scottish MScs as, according to documents sent

by Edinburgh University, the MSc courses are so named because the name MA is already used in Scotland for the undergraduate degree.

No major differences emerged between the various MA courses. However, MAs in Linguistics seem to be characterised by a more focused choice of modules, the maximum choice being a selection from 9 or 10, compared to 17 or more for other MAs. The MAs in Applied Linguistics, TESOL, TEFL and ELT do not show major differences. However, all MAs in Applied Linguistics offer a module in Syntax, Semantics or Pragmatics which is not always available on the other courses. While Linguistics is a module offered by most of the MA courses taken into consideration, it is not offered by any of the 4 MAs in TESOL. However, three out of four of the TESOL courses offer a module in 'Language across the curriculum', a module which is rarely offered in other courses.

The most interesting difference between the various MA courses lies, however, in the structure of the courses itself. In some of them all modules are compulsory, while in others they are all optional and it is left to the student to select the ones s/he is interested in following.

#### **7.4.2 Length and mode of delivery**

The duration of the courses varied greatly, depending on the availability of part-time and distance learning programmes of study. At Certificate level, students can choose



from 4 weeks' intensive study to a maximum of 4 years' distance learning programmes. However, the most popular course duration of Certificate courses is 3 months (41% of all Certificate courses on offer). Diploma courses range in duration from 6 months of full-time study to 6 years part-time. 70% of the courses last from 9 months to one year when followed full-time. Some confusion lies in the use of expressions such as '9-months', '3-term' and '1-year' courses: it is quite possible that Italian teachers would find it difficult to appreciate the difference between the duration of these courses.

It is at Master level that courses offer the highest degree of flexibility. 28% of all Master courses are offered as either a 9-month or a 1-year full-time course. 17% of the courses can be taken over a maximum period of two years. 50% of the courses, however, offer a highly flexible modular structure. Students can follow the course full-time for 9 months or one year, or opt to complete it over a period of time which can vary from 2 to up to 7 years. Three universities offer students the opportunity to negotiate the length of their study programme. Most of the institutions seem to move towards offering more and more flexible programmes of study. This has certainly been the case for most of the universities first contacted in 1994 and then re-approached in 1996.

Programmes of Distance Learning are also growing in popularity: 29% of all institutions surveyed offer Distance Learning courses at Certificate, Diploma and Master Level. These courses usually involve a period of residential study, either preceded and/or followed by a period of study or project-work at home.

### 7.4.3 Entry requirements.

The course entry requirements were usually a degree or a teaching qualification and relevant teaching experience. However, the degree or the teaching qualification did not have to be necessarily in E.F.L., English or Modern Foreign Languages. Most courses are, in fact, open to graduates or teachers of any subject who are wishing to change subject area. This includes, for instance, graduates in disciplines such as Mathematics or Artificial Intelligence. While some institutions seem to be fairly strict in the selection of their applicants, others appear to have a more relaxed approach. For instance, the entry requirements for the course leading to a Certificate in TEFL run by the University of Luton are: "good, general education; high standard of English; stamina". Westminster University is the only institution which requires native English speaking applicants to have a good command of at least one foreign language. This seems to stress the importance given to the experience of having gone through the process of learning a foreign language in order to appreciate the difficulties and problems that any E.F.L. student may encounter.

Entry requirements were also analysed in order to determine how many courses were aimed at practising teachers. 67% of all the courses on offer and, more specifically, 64% of all Master courses require their applicants to be practising teachers: the number of years of experience required varies from institutions to institutions. As will be discussed in section 7.5.2 of this chapter, the author believes that the fact that the vast majority of students on these courses are practising teachers has important implications in terms of the course components on offer. 33% of the courses are open



to applicants without any previous teaching experience. 19% of these courses offer initial qualifications in teaching English awarded at Certificate level. 91% of the remaining courses offer a qualification in Linguistics or Applied Linguistics. Although these courses are open to graduate teachers, it appears that they are regarded as appropriate to graduates who want to further their theoretical knowledge of the subject.

#### **7.4.4 Trainees' mother tongue**

Nearly all courses appear to be open to both native and non-native speakers of English. Only two universities stated clearly that their courses are open only to native English-speaking or bilingual applicants. These courses were not included in the survey, since Italian teachers would not be eligible. It is however important to highlight that only a few courses state clearly that they are open to non-native English speaker teachers. This is not specified in the entry requirements appearing in most course prospectuses, but can only be ascertained from the application form in which non-native speakers of English are required to provide evidence of their level of mastery of the language. On the other hand, some institutions mentioned that they run courses specifically aimed at non-native English speaker teachers. These courses appear to be targeted at specific groups of teachers coming from countries with whom the institutions have established special links.

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### 7.4.5 Departments and teaching staff

The departments responsible for the organisation of the courses on offer could be divided into three main groups. 31% were departments linked with language teaching and language studies, for instance Departments for Applied Language Studies, Centres for English Language Teaching, or more generally Language Centres. 34% of the departments were within a School of Education and 28% were departments of Linguistics. However, courses in TEFL and TESOL are also offered by departments such as the Department of Historical and Critical Studies at Northumbria University or the Business School at Sheffield Hallam University. 67% of the departments of Linguistics offered courses in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics. Courses in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics were also offered by 60% of the 'Language teaching' departments and 27% of the Education departments. Courses in various aspects of TESOL, TEFL and, more generally, English Language Teaching were offered by 33% of the Linguistics departments, 40% of the 'Language teaching and language studies' departments and 73% of the Education departments. While it was expected that the majority of the Linguistics departments offered courses in Linguistics and that most Education departments concentrated on the pedagogical and methodological aspects, it was interesting to note that the majority of the 'Language teaching and language studies' departments offered courses in Linguistics and only 40% of them organised courses specifically focused on the teaching of English.

The author felt that having details about the qualifications of the teaching staff involved in the courses could prove to be interesting as well as relevant. All courses are aimed at teachers or potential teachers of E.F.L.: it was therefore thought to be valuable to ascertain if the teaching staff had themselves being trained as teachers or had in fact any experience of teaching E.F.L. students rather than E.F.L. teachers. The background education of the teaching staff could in fact play an important role in the design and the delivery of the courses themselves.

Information about teaching staff was not always available. It was not possible to gain any information about the teaching staff at 47% of the universities and colleges analysed. 29% of the institutions gave extensive information about the past working experience and the areas of interest of their teaching staff, but no details about their qualifications. Only 8 institutions (24%) supplied information about the qualifications of their teaching staff. Out of these 8 universities, 7 have some members of staff who hold a qualification which involved their training as teachers.

All teaching staff seemed to be native English speakers. A good number of them had extensive experience of teaching abroad.



### 7.4.6 Course components

Courses were subsequently analysed in terms of their course components or modules (see Appendix 7). The way courses are structured varied greatly: for instance, there was a big difference in the number of modules offered, especially at Master level. In addition, while at some institutions all modules are compulsory, at other institutions students are allowed a much greater freedom of choice in selecting the modules they intend to follow. For instance, two universities offer a highly flexible programme of study where all modules are optional.

Some institutions offer very specialised modules, which seem to closely reflect the interest of some members of staff. A great number of institutions stress in their prospectuses that the modules on offer may vary according to the availability of staff to teach them. The analysis was therefore carried out on the basis of the most recent information obtained. It was possible to identify 36 modules which were widely available. Table 7.2 shows the modules, the number of courses which offer them (the percentage is provided in brackets), and on how many of these courses the module is optional or compulsory.

MODULES	% OF COURSES	COMPULSORY	OPTIONAL
* Grammar	67 (81%)	54	13
* Second Language Learning	59 (71%)	43	16
* Methodology	58 (70%)	48	10
* Phonetics/Phonology	56 (67%)	41	15
* Course/Syllabus/Curriculum Design	51 (61%)	40	11
Testing	51 (61%)	21	30
Sociolinguistics/Psycholinguistics	44 (53%)	24	20
* Discourse Analysis	34 (41%)	23	11
° CALL/IT	33 (40%)	8	25
° Literature	33 (40%)	3	30
* Material Evaluation	32 (39%)	23	9
* Pragmatics/Syntax/Semantics	32 (39%)	25	7
* Applied Linguistics/ Linguistics	31 (37%)	22	9
* Material Design	30 (36%)	18	12
° Management	29 (35%)	7	22
* Teaching Language Skills	29 (35%)	19	10
* Research Methods	27 (33%)	21	6
° E.S.P./E.A.P.	26 (31%)	6	20
° Culture, Society, Ideology	19 (23%)	4	15
° Teaching Young Learners	19 (23%)	5	14
° Teacher Training	17 (21%)	2	15
° Action/Classroom Research	16 (19%)	1	15
° Teacher Education	14 (17%)	3	11
° Teacher Development	13 (16%)	2	11
° Bilingualism	12 (14%)	2	10
° Audiovisuals	9 (11%)	3	6
* Lexis	9 (11%)	6	3
* Classroom Observation	8 (10%)	7	1
° Language across the Curriculum	8 (10%)	1	7
* Lesson Planning	8 (10%)	6	2
Self-access/Distance Learning	7 (8%)	4	3
* Teaching Practice	7 (8%)	7	0
* Classroom Management	6 (7%)	5	1
* Error Analysis	3 (4%)	2	1
* Language Awareness	3 (4%)	3	0
* Language Improvement for non-nest	1 (1%)	1	0

\* Compulsory modules in a majority of courses offering this module.  
° Optional modules in a majority of courses offering this module.

Table 7.2 Course components on courses open to Italian teachers of E.F.L.

It was not always easy to relate the module title to the module content. It was found that modules having different titles shared approximately the same content. It was



only when an actual outline of the module was provided that full understanding of its content could be gained. It is interesting to highlight the compulsory or optional nature of the modules on offer. It seems that the same module tends to be offered either as a compulsory or as an optional module on all courses which offer it. Only three modules, 'Self-access and Distance Learning', 'Sociolinguistics/Psycholinguistics' and 'Testing' do not show a great difference between the number of courses on which they are compulsory (57%, 55% and 41% respectively) and on which they are optional (43%, 45% and 59% respectively).

20 modules out of 36 (56%) are compulsory in a majority of courses which offer them. 13 modules out of 36 (36%) are optional in a majority of courses which offer them. Some of them offer further study in specialised subjects such as 'Audiovisuals', 'CALL/IT', 'Literature', 'E.S.P./E.A.P.', 'Management', 'Teaching Young Learners', 'Culture, Society, and Ideology', 'Bilingualism', and 'Language across the Curriculum'.

Four modules also offered mainly as optional are 'Teacher Development' (optional in 85% of the courses which offer this module), 'Teacher Training' (88%), 'Action/Classroom Research' 94%), and 'Teacher Education' (79%). The fact that these modules are mainly optional seems to be somehow in contrast with the recent views on teacher preparation expressed by many educationalists and researchers. This issue is further explored in section 7.5.6 of this chapter.

The course component analysis was subsequently carried out at Certificate, Diploma and Master level. The aim was to determine differences between courses components offered by courses at different levels. As shown in Table 7.3, courses at certificate level tend to offer more practical components, such as ‘Lesson planning’, ‘Material design’, ‘Teaching skills’, ‘Audiovisuals’ etc. All certificate courses offer a module in ‘Grammar’, but none include options aimed at teacher development or education.

COURSE COMPONENTS	% OF COURSES
Grammar	100%
Methodology	62%
Phonetics/Phonology	62%
Testing	62%
Course/Syllabus/Curriculum design	54%
Material evaluation	54%
Second language learning	46%
CALL/IT	38%
Lesson planning	38%
Material design	38%
Teaching skills	38%
Teaching young learners	38%
Audiovisuals	31%
Classroom management	23%
Socio/Psycholinguistics	23%
Teaching practice	23%
Classroom observation	15%
Culture, Society, Ideology	15%
Error analysis	15%
Language awareness	15%
Lexis	15%
Literature	15%
Self-access/Distance Learning	15%
Discourse analysis	8%
E.A.P./E.S.P.	8%
Management	8%
Pragmatics/Syntax/Semantics	8%

Table 7.3 Components offered at Certificate level

The analysis at Diploma and Master level highlighted great similarities between the components on offer. Table 7.4 shows the modules offered by Diploma courses.



Similarly to the results which had emerged from the analysis of Certificate courses, 'Grammar' and 'Methodology' are two modules widely on offer. At Diploma level, the number of theoretical components increases significantly. However, only a limited number of institutions offer modules specifically aimed at teacher development and education.

COURSE COMPONENTS	% OF COURSES
Methodology	85%
Grammar	80%
Second language learning	65%
Course/Syllabus/Curriculum design	60%
Phonetics/Phonology	60%
Testing	60%
Management	45%
Socio/Psycholinguistics	45%
CALL/IT	35%
Material evaluation	35%
Literature	35%
Discourse analysis	30%
Material design	30%
Pragmatics/Syntax/Semantics	30%
Teaching skills	30%
Teaching young learners	30%
Applied Linguistics/Linguistics	25%
Culture, Society, Ideology	25%
E.A.P./E.S.P.	25%
Research methods	25%
Teacher development	25%
Teacher education	20%
Action/Classroom Research	15%
Audiovisuals	10%
Classroom observation	10%
Teaching practice	10%
Language across the curriculum	5%
Language improvement	5%
Lesson planning	5%
Lexis	5%
Self-access/Distance Learning	5%
Teacher training	5%

Table 7.4 Components offered at Diploma level

As can be seen in Table 7.5, the modules more widely available on courses at Master level are of more theoretical nature. Components specifically aimed at teacher education and development are still offered only by a relatively small number of institutions.

MODULES	% OF COURSES
Second Language Learning	80%
Phonetics/Phonology	78%
Grammar	75%
Sociolinguistics/Psycholinguistics	70%
Methodology	68%
Course/Syllabus/Curriculum Design	63%
Testing	63%
Pragmatics/Syntax/Semantics	58%
Teaching Language Skills	56%
Discourse Analysis	53%
Applied Linguistics/ Linguistics	53%
Literature	50%
Research Methods	48%
CALL/IT	43%
E.S.P./E.A.P.	40%
Material Evaluation	38%
Management	38%
Material Design	33%
Culture, Society, Ideology	30%
Teacher Training	30%
Bilingualism	30%
Action/Classroom Research	25%
Teacher Education	25%
Teaching Young Learners	15%
Teacher Development	15%
Lexis	13%
Language across the Curriculum	13%
Self-access/Distance Learning	8%
Audiovisuals	5%
Classroom Observation	5%
Teaching Practice	5%
Classroom Management	3%
Language Awareness	3%

Table 7.5 Components offered at Master level



The course components offered by the courses surveyed were also studied in terms of their relevance to the training needs of Italian teachers of E.F.L.. The comments resulting from the analysis are detailed in section 7.5.5 of this chapter.

## **7.5 Comments derived from the data analysis**

The analysis of the data coming from the survey highlights a number of issues which were studied in detail. They included:

- the type of qualification awarded;
- the implications related to the course entry requirements;
- needs and wants of non-native English participants;
- the role of the native English speaker trainer;
- the course components.

### 7.5.1 Qualifications awarded

The analysis of the material received from the various academic institutions indicated clearly that there is a great variety of courses open to Italian teachers of English. As described in section 7.4.1 of this chapter, it appeared that it is somehow difficult to appreciate the differences between courses with different titles. Whitney (1979:5) defined the provision of courses open to foreign teachers of E.F.L./E.S.L. as “peculiarly rich and varied.” He believes that “many foreign applicants do not know enough about higher education in Britain to be able to discriminate between the characteristics of different courses. What often happens is that foreign applicants choose a particular course either for its location or for the qualification it leads to. As British qualifications are highly regarded abroad, foreign applicants usually seek the most prestigious reward they can find: this allows even the longest, most academic, and least practical sort of course to survive”. Goodchild (1979:89) believes that “the realisation of a credibility gap between the qualification gained and the quality of training that lies behind it, suggests that the argument should not be about qualifications as such at all, but about the quality of training courses leading to qualification and, by implication, the credentials of the examining bodies awarding qualifications.”

There has been an increasing concern among educationalists and researchers about the quality of provision by British institutions in the field of teacher education. In 1979 Candlin highlighted the need for UK institutions to co-operate in formulating a



national policy for teacher training and development in order to prevent fragmentation and associated dispersion of effort. In 1980 Brumfit warned that “both universities and the private sector train teachers for qualifications which vary considerably in quality without reference to any policy” (1980:143). He added that it was very difficult to evaluate the comparative relevance of qualifications and called for courses to be subject to some degree of control. In 1992 Maley wrote “An open letter to ‘the profession’” which was published in the ELT Journal. He highlighted the sheer diversity of the qualifications awarded by different bodies and institutions and expressed the need for a measure of evaluative control. Widdowson (1992:337) also expressed concern about the costs and value of language teacher education. As the ELT profession is big business, he believes that “now more than ever we need to be vigilant about the standards of the profession”. In 1995 ELT Journal published an article in which Hedge, Brumfit and Coleman discussed various issues related to the need for established procedures for the evaluation and accreditation of courses. They reported that in the recent years there had been some anxiety about a number of new teacher development programmes which had become available in the UK. They claimed that, since institutions are free to set up their own courses, it is difficult to find equivalence among them. For instance, it is difficult to know what qualifications such as ‘certificate’ or ‘diploma’ actually mean. In addition, courses leading to the same qualification are often very different in nature. They believe that it would be advisable that there were organisations whose task was “to facilitate general understanding of the relationship between different types of qualification .... and to ensure that courses which lead to qualification meet reasonable standards” (Hedge, Brumfit, Coleman, 1995:178). Lowe (1996:13) reported that there are a number of

institutions, such as ARELS (Association of Recognised English Language Schools), BASCELT (British Association of State Colleges in English Language Teaching), and BATQUI (British Association of Teacher Qualifying Institutions) which are currently focusing on matters of quality assurance and customer satisfaction. However, he supports the idea of creating a British Institute of ELT “to unify the profession and provide the launch-pad for a new improved image for British ELT.”

The decision to spend a period of study in the UK involves great personal and financial investment for all Italian teachers of E.F.L.. As the course content and the final qualification awarded vary considerable from institution to institution, there is certainly scope for some form of quality assessment to be implemented and for equivalencies across countries to be established.

### **7.5.2 Entry requirements**

When courses were analysed in terms of their entry requirements, it emerged that the large majority of them were targeted at practising teachers. 67% of all the courses surveyed required applicants to have been working as teachers for a varying number of years. The analysis focused then on courses at Master level which are perceived as being more theoretical than courses at certificate or diploma level: 64% of all Master courses require their applicants to be practising teachers. The result is consistent with the findings of a survey reported by Henrichson (1997). She found that as high as 90% of the students entering some TESL MA programs have at least



one year of teaching, and over half have three or more years of experience. The author shares Henrichson's view that the applicants' teaching experience should be taken into account when designing teacher education courses. In fact, what often happens is that it is altogether ignored. One of the characteristics of most practising teachers is the fact that they are focused on their teaching practice and need to see that what they learn on training courses is relevant to their classroom reality. This clearly emerged from the surveys conducted by the author and the I.R.R.S.A.E. and has also been reported by other writers and trainers working with practising teachers (Berry 1990, Parrott 1990, Jarvis 1991).

Larson (1983) had highlighted the need for course designers to give more attention to classroom experience and classroom-related experience throughout the teacher education program. According to Brown (1990: 95), it is important to devise and test ways "for finding out what teachers' beliefs may be at a given point in time, and especially at the entry point to a course of training". In contrast, he has found that "the dimension of the trainees' concepts about teaching is one that has largely been neglected." Palmer (1993:168) believes that trainers should taking into account the trainees' previous teaching experience when selecting the approach to be adopted on their courses. For instance, "where teachers have little experience, a more transmission-oriented approach may be what is expected to help participants overcome a perceived lack of teaching expertise. On the other hand, more experienced teachers might bring to the programme some very specific problems to which they wish to find solutions and would therefore be happier with a problem-solving approach." Mok (1994: 109) shares Palmer's view that teachers at different

stages of professional development have different needs. She calls for course designers to “create opportunities for their student teachers to reflect upon previous experiences so as to establish a link between theory and practice.”

Harris believes that “the most difficult and - and hence most challenging - problem posed by teacher education programs is to satisfy the participant’s quite natural desire to be given full and explicit instructions on ‘how to’”. In fact, there is often very little relevance between the theoretical component of these courses and teaching experience (Harris, quoted in Alatis, 1974). Ur (1992:57) is also critical of the course design of many long programmes of study targeted at E.F.L. teachers. She believes that “the research based orientation of these courses aims at upgrading the status of teachers by making them ‘academics’”. In contrast, teachers are professionals who are primarily concerned with bringing about change through action. This explains why “teachers who follow programmes of study based on the ‘learn-the-theory-and-then-apply-it-model’ often feel that the theoretical component of these courses fail to contribute significantly to their professional learning”. Asked if they had found any specific points in the MA course they had followed useful in their jobs, Heap and Gibson reported that very little of what they had studied was relevant to their teaching. They felt that too much time was wasted on theoretical components and very little attention was given to learning, for instance, about different ways of teaching reading or listening. (Whitney, Kennedy, Buchan et al., 1989). Hartill and Kendrick (1997:12) also claim that the traditional MA course is often “theory-based with an emphasis on the pursuit of academic excellence”. However, when they



surveyed the course participants it became clear that their reasons for attending the course were related to being better prepared for their jobs. They therefore believe that “MAs should offer more opportunities for the kinds of ‘hands on’ experiences which students require and which meet their wants and needs.” According to Lee (1974), “it is a mistake to suppose that relatively experienced and relatively competent teachers necessarily increase their teaching skills by engaging in some kind of theoretical study”. Whitney (1979:7) claims that foreign teachers on many UK academic courses spend “a lot of energy on the specifically academic bias of the course content” and have “to trade a temporary sense of alienation in favour of the belief that, in the long term, the course somehow ‘helps’”.

The results coming from the author’s and the I.R.R.S.A.E. trainees’ surveys indicated clearly that Italian teachers of E.F.L. are focused on their classroom practice. They would like training courses to include components which can help them promote successful learning among their students. They do not seem to attach great importance to the more theoretical aspects of these courses. This may be due to the fact that they fail to see how theory can be related to teaching practice. Programmes of study aimed at practising teachers should recognise the participants’ previous experience and build on it, rather than ignoring it. The author agrees with Kennedy that teachers need a theoretical background as part of their professional studies, as long as they see that theory can be applied (Whitney, Kennedy, Buchan et al., 1989). The importance of relating theory to practice is further explored in section 7.5.5 of this chapter.

### **7.5.3 Needs and wants of Italian teachers of E.F.L.**

As all courses surveyed were open to both native and non-native English speaker applicants, they were analysed to see if they recognised a diversity of needs between the two groups of teachers.

Sections 1.5.1 and 1.5.2 of Chapter 1 discussed the different needs of native and non-native English speaker teachers. The factors which play an important role in determining the different requirements of native English speaker teacher and Italian teachers of E.F.L. can be summarised as follows:

- The preparation that native English speaker teachers have previously received is varied in content and length. They may have attended a course focusing on the more practical aspects of language teaching and are also likely to have been involved in teaching practice. In contrast, Italian teachers of E.F.L. followed a highly theoretical degree course and were subsequently required to further their theoretical knowledge as part of the procedure to obtain a teaching post.
- Many native English speaker teachers teach multilingual classes of students in English-speaking countries for short and intensive periods of time. Italian teachers teach monoglot classes far from English-speaking countries, generally for three hours a week over a long period of study.



- When native English speaker teachers work abroad, they teach students from a different culture and do not usually speak their language. Italian teachers share their students' language and culture. Native English speaker teachers usually work in private schools, where students are more likely to be highly motivated and there are no syllabus or resources restrictions. Italian teachers have to follow a fixed syllabus and may have access only to limited resources.
- Native English speakers are secure in their command of the language, although they may not always be aware of how their language works. Italian teachers are very concerned about their level of proficiency in English, which they see as closely affecting their status as teachers.

The previous educational background, the teaching situation and the different degree of language proficiency of native English speaker teachers and Italian teachers of E.F.L. all play a major role in determining the requirements and expectations of these two groups of teachers when attending a joint programme of study. It was therefore interesting to ascertain if the courses surveyed recognised that there could be differences between the two groups in terms of their needs and wants.

All courses appear to offer the same modules to both native English speaker teachers and non-native English speaker teachers. There are no special components aimed specifically at each individual group. Only the University of Stirling seems to allow for a diversity of needs between the two groups. On their Postgraduate Diploma in

the Methodology of TESOL they have different course components for the two groups. Non-native English speakers are required to follow a component in 'Advanced Language Practice', while native speakers of English work on practical projects relating to classroom teaching of English to speakers of other languages.

It was significant that 'Grammar' was the component offered on most courses (81%): this seems to indicate that these courses aimed at improving the language awareness of native English speaker participants. As Wright reported (1991:65), "non-native English speaker teachers often have a very well-developed metalanguage born out of a structural/grammatical approach." Medgyes (1994) found that non-native English speaker teachers are better at teaching grammar than their native colleagues: in fact, they tend to privilege the teaching of grammar because they have a better grasp of it when compared to other aspects of the language, such as colloquial English, or speaking and listening skills. They usually have a sound knowledge of how the English language works, but they are not confident in the actual use of the language. It is also important to mention that at some institutions the 'Grammar' component was highly theoretical and included the exploration of theories of linguistics.

Many educationalists and researchers have recently highlighted the importance to include a language improvement component in teacher training programmes. The propagation of the principles of the Communicative Approach to language teaching has put more pressure on teachers than in the past to be fluent in English so that they can use it naturally in the class. The survey conducted by the author indicated that Italian teachers would like to spend a considerable part of their training time on



improving their language skills (see sections 4.4.5.2. and 4.4.6 of Chapter 4). Surveys conducted by other researchers investigating the training needs of non-native English speaker teachers also found that language improvement work is a top priority for this group of teachers (Berry 1990, Parrott 1990, Jarvis 1991, Murdoch 1994). Bolitho (1979) reported that most feedback coming from overseas teachers of English points to a programme where language improvement has a substantial role. Thomas (1987:40) believes that there should be a totally integrated Language and Methodology curriculum on language teachers education programmes: “language teaching methodology should primarily develop pedagogic competence, but secondarily language competence”. According to Golebiowska (1985), teacher training courses aimed at non-native English speaker teachers should always incorporate language improvement classes at an appropriate level.

Several educationalists and trainers have pointed out that language improvement work is often neglected in courses for overseas teachers and have stressed the importance of introducing such a component on all courses aimed at these teachers. According to Strevens (1968:214), when overseas teachers of English come to Britain to attend a course, they expect that their English “will be the subject of organised efforts for its improvement: only too often they are disappointed.” Lange (1979:176) claims that “second language teacher education programs tend to ignore or assume that language proficiency has been attained prior to entrance into the profession, or that such proficiency continues to develop on its own.” Describing the ‘philosophy’ behind UK Diploma TEFL courses, James (1979:71) reported that there is often the assumption that the trainees are fully proficient in English, and so there

should be no language improvement component on such courses. However, there is often evidence that these teachers' command of the language does need improving. He therefore called for a "revision of the view prevalent in some departments that direct language teaching is 'retail' and not academically respectable in the 'wholesale' setting of a university". A number of educationalists and trainers have reported over a long period of time the disregard that training institutions have traditionally showed for the non-native English speaker teacher's need to improve their command of English (Shaw 1979, Alatis 1983, Edge 1988a, Cullen 1994). This culminated in 1996 Medgyes's scathing attack against teacher education programmes run by native English speaker trainers. He believes that contemporary teacher education fails to meet the language needs of non-native speaker teachers of English: "this is caused by the profound influence of native English trainers, many of whom are not only blind to local needs, but also defy the vital importance of near-native language competence on ideological grounds. Under their spell, training institutes, and hence the trainees themselves, tend to downplay straightforward language instruction" (1996: 30).

One of the non-native English speaker teachers' strengths lies in sharing their mother tongue with their students. In the past, using the learners' mother tongue was generally considered bad teaching practice. However, as described in section 4.4.11.4 of Chapter 4, a growing number of educationalists, such as Kennedy (1979), Murphy (1988), Harbord (1992), Atkinson (1993), have recently come to recognise its role as a useful tool in the foreign language classroom. However, as Atkinson (1987) pointed out, in spite of this recognition, in teacher training very little attention is



given to the use of the native language. The analysis of the detailed course information that some institutions supplied indicates that none of the courses deal with or provide guidance on the use of the mother tongue in language teaching. This in spite of the fact that, as Medgyes claims (1994), the English-only-through-English principle is untenable on psychological, linguistic and pedagogical grounds and, in any case, it has seldom been carried through.

Another characteristic of Italian teachers of E.F.L. is that they have received a highly theoretical preparation, both at university level and when studying to obtain fully qualified teacher status. As described in sections 4.4.5.1 of Chapter 4, sections 5.4.3.1.5 and 5.4.3.2.5 of Chapter 5, and section 6.4.2.3 of Chapter 6, results coming from the author's survey and both the I.R.R.S.A.E. surveys indicate that Italian teachers favour a practical approach to teacher training. This can be explained by the lack of pre-service practical training and also by the desire, common to many practising teachers, to remain focused on their classroom activities. As previously mentioned in section 7.5.2 of this chapter, many of the postgraduate courses surveyed seem to place great emphasis on the more theoretical aspects of language teaching: this could result in Italian teachers being disappointed with the content of such courses which are not seen as successful in meeting their desire for guidance on resolving specific classroom problems. The importance of relating theory to practice is further discussed in section 7.5.5 of this chapter.

Native and non-native speaker teachers of English have different needs and requirements. They should therefore be encouraged to explore and build on their own

individual strengths and helped to deal with individual weaknesses. Education programmes should allow for this diversity and offer different modules to meet the different needs and requirements of these two groups. However, the courses analysed do not seem to recognise these potentially diverse needs. It is obviously difficult to offer different modules to different groups of students following the same course. However, even some of the courses which are followed by a majority of non-native English speaker teachers do not seem to include components which could help them cope with weaknesses, such as a limited command of the language, or to build on their strengths, for instance exploring the role of the mother tongue in their teaching.

#### **7.5.4 The native English speaker trainer**

The trainer plays a key role in determining the success of a training course. The author therefore felt that it was important to gain information on the background and, above all, the teaching experience of the staff involved in the organisation and the teaching of the courses surveyed.

As described in section 7.4.5, 29% of the institutions surveyed provided extensive information about staff's interests and past working experience. However, details of staff's qualifications was available only for 8% of the institutions. The author was interested in determining whether the teaching staff involved in courses aimed at teachers had themselves been trained as teachers or had any experience of teaching E.F.L. students, rather than E.F.L. teachers. The fact that only a small number of



institutions provided information about the educational background of their staff seems to indicate that they do not regard it either as necessary nor as relevant. In contrast, the author feels that the type of training received and the actual teaching experience of the trainers involved in courses aimed at teachers play an important role in the choices that such trainers take in terms of the course approach and content.

Results coming from the author's survey indicate that some Italian teachers have experienced a certain degree of dissatisfaction with the training received by native English speaker trainers, especially when their contribution was in the field of methodology. This had also resulted in difficulties when they tried to implement in their classrooms what they had learnt in training courses (see sections 4.4.9, 4.4.10, 4.4.11.1 and 4.4.11.2 of Chapter 4). Two reasons can explain this feeling of dissatisfaction with the training delivered by native English speaker experts in methodology: their lack of direct teaching experience and their unfamiliarity with the trainees' teaching situation.

Several educationalists and researchers involved in teacher training have expressed their concerns about the staffing of courses aimed at E.F.L. teachers. In 1968, Strevens identified a source of lost efficiency in the choice of staff who teach on teacher training courses. He believes that someone whose interests and training do not lie above all in language teaching is unlikely to be the best person to train teachers. Lee (1974) maintains that, unless training is entrusted to those who have plentiful first-hand experience of language teaching, the relevance of theory is likely to remain in doubt. Kerr (1979:66) described the teacher trainer who is no longer a

practitioner as “in danger of being, quite precisely, an adviser who cannot ‘speak from (recent) experience’.” Hill and Dobbyn (1979:2) linked the predominance of theory in most training courses to the fact that teacher trainers are often not themselves expert in teaching English and, therefore, take refuge in theorising about how to teach.

Brumfit and Rossner (1982:230) provided a hierarchical approach to teacher training which places academic courses at the top of a ‘pyramid’, as these courses are concerned with decision-making at the approach level. However, they recognised that “there is something strange about encouraging extensive theoretical discussion of a practical activity which has not been extensively experienced by those involved in the discussion.” They therefore suggested that the normal route to reach the top of the ‘pyramid’ should be via initial and in-service training. According to Rossner (1988:108), “at university level, teacher educators run the risk of completely losing touch with first-hand experience of coping with full responsibility for real learners in real learning environments using up-to-date materials. The difficulty is that many university departments responsible for teacher education in E.F.L. do not have the means of ensuring that staff maintain this contact.” Duff (1988b:111) claims that one of the inadequacies of many teacher training courses is that the trainers “actively stop being teachers, and are training others to do something that they themselves no longer do. It is only common sense that you should practice what you teach, - but training of others must be grounded in one’s practice and not in some desiccated prescription deriving from almost forgotten - and even sometimes very limited - experience.” Brumfit (1983a:131) calls for “expert whose expertise is based on direct



practical experience. There are already too many people designing syllabuses, writing materials and advising with too little acquaintance with straightforward classroom teaching.” According to Haycraft (1983:141), trainers who do not abandon teaching altogether “can try out new ideas with students in a normal class. This means that their theoretical ideas are continually brought down to earth by classrooms realities”. One of the suggestions that Freeman (1987:5) gives to teachers who would like to become teacher trainers is: “Use your skills as a teacher when you train. Don’t abandon your classroom experience; it is an invaluable source not only for what to present, but for how to present it”.

Phillipson (1992b:261) claims that those who teach applied linguistics in English-speaking countries “are virtually excluded, because of the rigidity of career structures, from involvement in the direct teaching of a foreign or second language. Their first-hand experience of this inevitably recedes into the past year by year. This is not necessarily a disqualification, but it certainly increases the likelihood of academics being remote from everyday classroom realities.” Hayes (1995:253) highlighted the advantages of selecting practising classroom teachers as trainers on in-service teacher development courses: this “gives immediate validity to the developmental proceedings. Teachers on the course recognise that what they are being asked to consider is grounded in the experience of a colleague, and it is not abstract theory of a university lecturer, far removed from ordinary classrooms.”

The second important factor which can explain the dissatisfaction that some of the Italian teachers surveyed by the author experienced when they received

methodological training from native English speaker experts is linked with the native trainers' limited knowledge of their trainees' teaching situation. Bolitho (1979) goes as far as recommending that it would be advisable for native English speaker trainers working with overseas teachers not only to be familiar with their trainees' teaching situation, but also to know their mother tongue. Whitney (1979:8) claims that "it is only reasonable that foreign teachers should expect British 'specialists' to know enough about the practical circumstances of particular countries for UK courses to be as meaningful as possible." Britten (1985a:115) warned that "native English speaker trainers working with non-native English speaker trainees should be aware of the possible limits on the trans-cultural applicability of their notions of teacher effectiveness, as should the organisers of teacher training E.F.L. courses for teachers from overseas. The export of a methodology from Society A to Society B may be unsuitable in terms not just of the school environment of B, but also of more cultural traits and role models." Parrot (1988) believes that tutors working with overseas teachers need great flexibility combined with wide experience in terms of foreign countries and teaching situations.

Dubin and Wong (1990) claim that the teacher educator's practical knowledge of the teachers' teaching situation plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of in-service training. According to Hyde (1994:13), if native English speaker trainers who work with non-native English trainees want their training to be effective, they "need to operate in a climate of mutual understanding: they do not only need to give time to learning about the local education traditions and culture, they also need to examine the preconceptions behind their own educational beliefs, so often taken for granted."



Pacek (1996:341) is one of the writers who have raised the problem of cultural differences between the British and American education and teaching methods, and those of other countries. She believes that "INSET courses should be made as relevant as possible to the participants by allowing for different traditions in language teaching in their culture, which may make it difficult for them to introduce change in their home countries."

Bax (1997:232) reports that the move towards appropriate methodology has been steadily gaining momentum. In teacher education, the main focus has been on responding more sensitively to the trainees' teaching situations. While Nunan (1989) advocates the use of a client-centred approach, Bax believes that the trainers' work should be context-sensitive. According to him, "traditional teacher education has been unduly trainer centred in both approach and content. The trainer - necessarily an outsider - is thought to have succumbed too often to the temptation of offering suggestions and input in a transmission mode", a mode which is still adopted by many teacher educators. In contrast, he advocates a more trainee-centred approach, which would ensure that the course content has as close a bearing as possible on the trainees' concerns and contexts.

It is clear that the staff on mixed intake courses cannot be expected to know about the background and teaching situations of each participant. However, institutions can act at two levels to ensure the effectiveness of the courses they run. They can provide potential students with extensive information about the course and its staff in order to help them choose the programme of study more appropriate to their needs. In

addition, every effort should be made to obtain information about the trainees' expectations and requirements in order to make the necessary adjustment for the course to be relevant and effective.

### **7.5.5 Course components**

The courses were subsequently analysed in terms of their course modules. The components offered by UK academic institutions were then compared with the components selected by the Italian teachers surveyed both by the author and by the I.R.R.S.A.E. The aim was to determine whether the course content of UK based education programmes are effective in meeting the requirements of this group of teachers. As previously described in Chapter 4 and 5, Italian teachers appeared to favour practical components which focus on techniques for classroom teaching, the use of audio-visual material, testing, the teaching of culture and literature. They also expressed the desire to work on developing their own teaching materials. In contrast, the more theoretical components did not appear to be very popular among them. This section firstly provides comments on how successful UK courses are in meeting the training demands of Italian teachers of E.F.L.. Secondly, the discussion focuses on two important issues in the training of Italian teachers of E.F.L.: the value of the more theoretical course components and the importance to integrate theory and practice.

The analysis of the material obtained from UK institutions indicate that they do provide training on some of the components favoured by Italian teachers. 'Testing' was the third most popular component among the lower secondary school teachers and the second most popular component among the higher secondary school teachers surveyed by the I.R.R.S.A.E. 'Testing and evaluation/assessment procedures' was the fourth most popular component among the teachers surveyed by the author. A similar component was widely available on UK courses: 62% of Certificate courses, 60% of Diploma courses and 63% of Master courses had this module on offer. From the information available to the author, it appears that at some institutions this component deals with the theories behind language testing. In contrast, other institutions such as Lancaster University organise this component in such a way to give their participants the opportunity to construct and validate their own tests. This is certainly an important aspect, as Italian teachers are above all interested in receiving guidance on how to prepare their oral and written tests in compliance with the specific requirements of the Italian National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages.

Some of the components which had proved extremely popular among the Italian teachers surveyed do not seem to be widely available on UK courses. The 'Audio-visual and teaching material' component had been selected by 90% of the lower secondary school teachers and by 58% of the higher secondary school teachers surveyed by the I.R.R.S.A.E. A similar component, 'Creating supporting teaching material' was the third most popular component among the teachers surveyed by the author. In contrast, 'Material design' was offered by 38% of courses at Certificate



level, 30% of courses at Diploma level, and 33% of courses at Master level. The 'Audiovisuals' module was available on 31% of courses at Certificate level, 10% of courses at Diploma level and 5% of courses at Master level. Among the institutions which offer this module, the School of Education at the University of Exeter emphasises that their MEd students concentrate specifically on the design of teaching materials for their home countries.

'Culture and intercultural issues' had been favoured by 66% of the lower secondary school teachers and by 67% of the higher secondary school teachers surveyed by the I.R.R.S.A.E.. Modules on British Culture, Society and Ideology were available on 15% of Certificate courses, 25% of Diploma courses, and 30% of Master courses. 'Evaluating textbooks and other teaching material' was the fifth most popular component among the teachers surveyed by the author. 'Material evaluation' was available on 54% of courses at Certificate level, but on only 35% of courses at Diploma level and 38% of courses at Master level. 'E.S.P.' which had been selected by 56% of higher secondary school teachers surveyed by the I.R.R.S.A.E. was available only on 8% of Certificate courses, 25% of Diploma courses, but on 40% of Master course.

'Literature' was extremely popular among the higher secondary school teachers surveyed by the I.R.R.S.A.E.: 73% of them had expressed the desire to receive training on this subject. This component was available on 15% of Certificate courses, 35% of Diploma courses and 50% of Master courses. The desire of many Italian teachers to concentrate on their teaching situations could be satisfied by the approach

adopted by some of the UK institutions which offer this module. For instance, the MA in TESOL offered by the Institute of Education at London University involves work on practical stylistics and the exploration of a range of teaching techniques.

As previously mentioned in section 7.4.4 of this chapter, only one institution appears to offer a 'Language improvement' component on one of their courses specifically aimed at non-native speaker teachers of English. This is in clear contrast with the desire expressed by the overwhelming majority of the teachers surveyed by the author to devote a substantial amount of the total training time to improving their language skills.

The Italian teachers surveyed both by the author and the I.R.R.S.A.E. do not appear to want to receive further training on the more theoretical aspects of language teaching. 'Theories of language learning and teaching' was the least popular component among the respondents to the author's questionnaire. The P.S.L.S. trainer-coordinators surveyed by the I.R.R.S.A.E. devoted to 'Teacher learning' a relatively small proportion of the total training time, favouring more practical activities such as 'Material production'. In contrast, UK courses seem to include a wide range of theoretical components. For instance, 'Second language learning', a module similar to the one included by the author in her survey, was included in 46% of Certificate courses, 65% of Diploma courses and was the module most widely on offer on Master courses (80%). 'Methodology' was a component widely available in courses at all levels. Although in some courses the teaching of this module concentrates on the implementation of various methodological approaches, at other

institutions it dealt mainly with the theoretical underpinnings of teaching methodologies. As their pre-service preparation is mainly of theoretical nature, Italian teachers would certainly prefer the first approach which they could relate more easily to their classroom situations. The educational background and the type of pre-service education that Italian teachers experience have important implications for their training. Two issues are particularly important in the in-service training of this group of teachers: the value of theoretical course components and the importance to integrate theory and practice.

One of the theoretical modules widely available on all courses aimed at E.F.L. teachers is linguistics. 55% of all MA courses aimed at teachers of E.F.L. have 'Linguistics' in their course title: on these courses, obviously, the teaching of the various aspects of linguistics plays a major role. However, 61% of the courses whose title did not include the word 'linguistics' offered modules on one or more aspects of linguistics. The role of linguistics in courses aimed at E.F.L. teachers has been the constant object of controversy among educationalists and researchers. Wingard (1974:47) believes that many courses aimed at teachers sometimes devote excessive time to general and descriptive linguistics: "even psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and descriptive linguistics may lack interest or experience in classroom learning and teaching." Stevens (1974:25) maintains that "the direct gain to the language teacher which these theoretical studies provide is often very small." According to Morrison (1979:12), the overselling of linguistics was an effect of the linguistics boom of the 1960s which led to "a cycle of irrelevance that now needs to be broken". He suggested two ways in which this cycle could be broken: firstly, that all linguistics



teachers on courses aimed at E.F.L. teachers should themselves have a background of classroom teaching; and secondly that the linguistics course should be based on a skills analysis of the teacher's role and linked to language and methods courses. He also saw the study of linguistics as a way to help teachers improve their own language performance.

One of the various course models which could be used to plan training courses according to Rinvogluceri (1988:130) is the 'From Linguistics to Classroom Practice' model. He believes that "the problem with this model is that there are plenty of areas in which the linguists are happy to have had their insights and have not bothered to think applications through seriously". Freeman (1989:29) highlighted the need to define the content of language teacher education programmes. He believes that this basic challenge may be obscured because of the excessive importance attached to subjects such as applied linguistics, research in second language acquisition and methodology. These subject areas "all contribute to the knowledge on which language teaching is based, but they are not and must not be confused with language teaching itself". He identifies two misconceptions in language teacher education: the first is "that language teacher education is generally concerned with the transmission of knowledge, specifically about applied linguistics and language acquisition. The second misconception is that the transmission of knowledge will lead to effective practice". Phillipson (1992b:258) maintains that "very probably much of the speculation and sophistication of contemporary linguistics is of limited utility to ELT practitioners, and one can have grave doubts as to the utility of the linguistics and to some extent the applied linguistics that are on offer in English-speaking countries".

Ur (1990: 12-13) finds that there is an apparent conflict between linguistics/applied linguistics and pedagogy which forces the teacher to make decisions about which has the priority. According to her, "teachers who have been through TEFL or Applied Linguistics courses come out with a lot of theoretical linguistic knowledge, but little idea how to integrate it with practical classroom pedagogy". What happens in the classroom is that "teachers may try uneasily at first to apply some of the linguistics research-based knowledge, but more swiftly abandon it and base their teaching on techniques they learned through practice or observation". She therefore advocates more integration of linguistics and pedagogy and of theory and practice. Kennedy identifies one possible reason for E.F.L. to have cut itself off from education in its historical links with linguistics. However, he believes that this situation is now changing (Whitney, Kennedy, Buchan et al., 1989).

The importance to balance the role of linguistics and the role of pedagogy is paralleled by the need to integrate theory and practice, an issue which proved particularly important for the Italian teachers surveyed. The difficulties involved in successfully integrate the theoretical and practical aspects of any course are well documented. Describing the results of a feedback questionnaire administered to TESOL students, Harris reported that "almost all of the less-than-enthusiastic questionnaire responses can be attributed to a fairly general feeling of disappointment with those program elements that were specifically designed to relate theory and practice" (Harris quoted in Alatis, 1974:16). Brumfit (1980) believes that the approach that many courses adopt to deal with theory is based on the assumption that

students will then be able to apply it to their teaching situations. He considers this approach as being more dangerous than an over-practical approach as, unless the theory that is presented to the students includes a theory of the teaching situation, the students are going to be left high and dry. In contrast, he claims that it is only by learning how to relate theory to practice that students may acquire the skills needed to deal with different teaching situations. This will not take place if they only receive, passively, the theoretical basis.

Edelhoff's description of the situation of teacher training in Germany (1985) bears great resemblance to the Italian situation: academic courses have little or no direct connection with school life, as academic study is confined to theoretical linguistics and literature. Once formal qualifications have been obtained, teachers are left to themselves and usually suffer what he calls the 'shock of practice'. When these teachers attend in-service training courses, they will perceive theoretical knowledge as useless, unless they feel that they can apply it in their daily tasks and routines. Taylor (1985:40) reported the common complaint coming from language teachers that the theoretical components of many training courses are irrelevant and the equally common request for a repertoire of techniques for dealing with particular practical problems. He believes that "the formal separation into theoretical and practical components seems out of question" and suggests to replace the traditional dichotomy between theory and practice, with the idea of 'theory OF practice'. Teacher education programmes should consequently be based on the needs of students "as perceived by them as result of their experience and practice, appropriately analysed and reflected on".



Kennedy (1986: 313) called for a review of the objectives of university and teacher education programmes as “there is often a lack of ‘fit’ between any teacher education/training provided and the reality of the classroom”. Solomon (1987:272) believes that an approach to learning about teaching which is based on the simple transmission of knowledge is bound to prove unhelpful as it encourages students “to force practice into moulds formed by academic research instead of helping them acquire the habit of using reflection as their own research tool”. Reflection on practice could in fact result in a greater appetite for the kind of theoretical input which has proved so unpopular on teacher training courses (Calloway quoted in Solomon). Ramani (1987) rejects the theoretical-input model of most teacher training courses in which theory and practice are kept apart. In contrast, she puts forward an approach which moves from the specific to the general and it is rooted in teachers’ own intuitions.

According to Bolitho (1988:6), “a teacher’s decision to take an MA in Applied Linguistics or in ELT is often solution-oriented, in which case the potential for disappointment is already there”. In his opinion, certain areas of theory have sometimes contributed more confusion than enlightenment in their practices. He wonders how many university lecturers go back to teaching and claims that the rules for professional advancement are devised by academics so that training takes place on their territory and on their terms. He adds that “it simply will not do for applied linguists to assert that they lay no claim to practical relevance on their courses and that teachers who come on them have no right to expect any practical implication”.

Widdowson (1990:66) reported the persistent problem of connecting in-service training courses with classroom reality. He believes that “the starting point is not a theoretical insight or a research finding ..... but an investigation into what language teachers in different classrooms in different countries find problematic about conventional practice and about proposals for innovation that have been put forward”. Hayes (1995) believes that teachers involved in professional development courses need to be able to see how to relate what they are learning to their everyday classroom practice. He therefore advocates a greater involvement of trainees in the preparation of courses, however difficult this principle may be to live up to.

The way in which theoretical principles are related to classroom activity plays a crucial role in the design of successful teacher education programmes. Practising teachers always did, and still do, demand practical courses: they need to know that the theory they have learnt can be effectively implemented in their classrooms. Practising teachers are aware of the value of theory, but they dislike the paternalistic approach of those academics who distance themselves from the reality of the classroom. As most training courses run by UK academic institutions are aimed at practising teachers, it is important that course designers recognise the students’ previous teaching experience and their need to remain focused on their teaching.

### 7.5.6 Teacher training versus teacher education

It appears that the institutions surveyed attach a varying degree of importance to the terms 'teacher training' and 'teacher education'. Three out of the twenty-three institutions which agreed to take part in the survey stated in their replies that they do not consider the aim of their courses to offer in-service training. This refers to both MA and Diploma courses which are seen rather as 'professional academic qualifications' or as 'teacher education' programmes. However, the majority of the institutions contacted did not seem to object to the term 'teacher training'.

The term 'teacher training' tends nowadays to be associated with courses aiming at providing the trainees with techniques and skills to apply in the classroom. 'Teacher education' programmes, on the other end, are perceived as having a much greater scope. Richards and Nunan (1990), for instance, define these programmes as involving teachers in developing theories of teaching, understanding the nature of teacher decision making, and strategies for critical self-awareness and self evaluation. Richards (1990:15) emphasises the need for a change in the role of the student teacher: s/he must "adopt the role of autonomous learner and researcher".

Britten (1988:8) sees the transfer of training as a very serious problem for the training of non-native language teachers. He believes that this problem can be dealt with only if "during training, the acquisition of skills goes hand in hand with the acquisition of appropriate attitudes to teacher development. Training should therefore prepare teachers to make their own decisions. The centre of authority should shift,



first from the teacher trainer to small peer-group and later, from the peer-group to the individual trainee”.

If Diploma and Master courses are seen as ‘teacher education’ programmes, they should consequently offer modules which can help student teachers develop their role as researchers and allow them to gain deeper awareness of what happens in their classrooms. Some of the modules currently available at UK institutions which are more likely to fulfil this aim are: ‘Classroom Observation’, ‘Teacher Development’, ‘Teacher Education’, and ‘Action/Classroom Research’. However, these modules are offered only on a minority of courses (from 19% to 10% of the overall number of courses) and even when they are available they are mainly offered as optional modules, with the exception of ‘Classroom Observation’ which is compulsory on all, but one, of the courses which offer it.

The analysis subsequently focused on Master courses, which are generally perceived as more ‘theoretical’ and therefore would not be considered as ‘teacher training’ courses. However, only 36% of the TEFL/TESOL Master courses offer ‘Action/Classroom Research’, 14% offer ‘Classroom Observation’, and only one offers ‘Teacher Development’. ‘Teacher Education’ is on offer on 50% of these courses. None of the Master courses in Applied Linguistics or Linguistics offer ‘Teacher Development’, or ‘Classroom Observation’, 13% offer ‘Teacher Education’ and 13% ‘Action/Classroom Research’. None of the Master courses in ELT or Language Teaching offer ‘Classroom Observation’, one offers ‘Teacher Education’,

three offer 'Action/Classroom Research', while half of them offer 'Teacher Development'.

All the courses analysed are aimed at practising or future teachers. If teachers are to become autonomous practitioners who can adopt a research orientation to their own classrooms and teaching, this change in their role should be reflected in the content of 'teacher education' programmes. It follows that courses should recognise the importance of those modules which will enable student teachers to fulfil their new role.

## **7.6 Conclusions**

This chapter has illustrated the variety of courses available to Italian teachers of English who intend to follow a programme of study in Britain. Each course was analysed in the light of the expectations and needs of this group of teachers, as they have emerged from the author's and the I.R.R.S.A.E. surveys.

In the past few years, several native English speaker educationalists have highlighted the necessity to rethink the content of teacher education programmes organised in the UK. Parrott (1988) recognised that in many of these courses, non-native English speaker teachers have to adapt themselves as well as they can to a predetermined programme which does not allow for a diversity of needs and requirements. Some of the results of the analysis carried out in this chapter seems to confirm his concern.

Taylor (1992:360) however thinks that it is possible to change this situation. He believes that “recent thinking on the training of teachers can be described as ethnographic, holistic, integrative, and participant-centred. It places the role of the trainer firmly in the category of facilitator rather than omniscient foreign expert. It contains a minimum of linguistic theory, focused instead on raising awareness of effective classroom practice in the local context”.

As O’Connell rightly reported (1993), Italian teachers have to find considerable sums of money if they want to follow a long-term award-bearing course. It is therefore automatic for them to wonder what return to expect from such a major investment of time, energy and money, in terms of career development, pay prospects and above all of personal and professional satisfaction. She claims that it is difficult to find a clear correlation between investment in training and professional and personal advancement. Yet, each year hundreds of teachers continue to invest their time and efforts in improving their professional knowledge and skills, thus demonstrating their commitment to their chosen profession.

There is a wide range of UK based education programmes open to Italian teachers. Courses are extremely flexible in terms of their length and mode of delivery, a factor which is very important for Italian teachers who have to fund their training abroad and can not count on long periods of release from their teaching duties. The courses surveyed offer a great variety of modules, some of which are of great interest to Italian teachers of E.F.L..



The analysis of the courses available at the time of the survey has however highlighted some aspects that UK course designers need to take into account when preparing courses for Italian teachers of E.F.L.. It is first of all necessary that the different training needs of non-native English speaker to native English speaker teachers are fully identified and acknowledged. One of the demands of a great number of Italian teachers is, for instance, to devote part of their training time to improve their command of English. They would also expect to receive guidance on solving specific problems that they have encountered when working with their students. They would like to be introduced to effective ways of teaching topics, such as culture, E.S.P. and literature and to devote part of their training time to the production of their teaching materials. They also need help in devising effective testing and assessment procedures.

Because of their theoretical preparation, Italian teachers favour the more practical aspects of a programme of study. They do not disregard the importance of theory, but they need to be able to see how they can relate it to their classroom activities. It follows that they would prefer an approach which concentrates first on specific aspects of their teaching and subsequently explored the theoretical principles behind those principles. As Italian teachers see their classroom practice as the starting point of any professional development programme, it is important for the native English speaker trainers involved in these courses to become acquainted with their trainees' teaching situations.

The analysis of the material supplied by the UK academic institutions who run courses open to Italian teachers of E.F.L. has revealed a number of important issues.

There is a great variety of courses which award different type of qualifications and offer a wide range of components. It is, however, sometimes difficult for applicants not thoroughly familiar with the British Higher Education system to appreciate the differences between different courses.

A vast majority of courses are specifically aimed at practising teachers. However, it is apparent that participants often perceive the course content as too theoretical and therefore irrelevant to their teaching.

All courses surveyed were open to both native and non-native English speaker teachers. However, they do not seem to recognise that the two groups have different requirements and expectations which need to be acknowledged and catered for. For instance, UK course designers do not regard it as important to include language improvement work in their courses.

Some of the course components which had proved to be extremely popular among the Italian teachers surveyed do not seem to be widely available on UK courses. It also appears that some courses attach great importance to theoretical components. This sometimes results in a lack of fit between teacher education programmes and the reality of the classroom.

The components which are regarded as important in promoting teacher development are available only on a limited number of courses, and mainly as optional modules.

The following chapter will provide some recommendations and suggestions on how training courses currently available to Italian teachers, both in Italy and in the UK, could be improved in an effort to successfully meet the needs and expectations of this group of teachers.



## **CHAPTER 8**

### **Recommendations on designing teacher training courses open to Italian teachers of E.F.L.**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

This research has been concerned with the identification of the training requirements and expectations of Italian secondary school teachers of English firstly with the aim of determining whether they are successfully met by courses currently available to them both in Italy and in the UK, and secondly to identify areas of potential improvement.

The author has described, analysed and commented on the results of two surveys conducted among Italian secondary school teachers of English. The first survey was designed and administered by the author herself. The second survey was prepared and conducted by the I.R.S.S.A.E. (Regional Institute for Research and In-service Training) Lombardy with the author being responsible for the analysis and the

interpretation of the data thus gathered. The results coming from the surveys have provided important information on the training that the teachers had previously received, their preferences in terms of course format and components, and their level of satisfaction with the contribution of the native English speaker trainers involved in the courses followed.

The research has subsequently focused on the current provision of training courses for Italian teachers of E.F.L. both in Italy and in the UK. The author has analysed data coming from a survey that the I.R.R.S.A.E. Lombardy conducted among trainer-coordinators of P.S.L.S. (Special Project for Foreign Languages) courses, the most important and longest-running training project aimed at teachers of Modern Foreign Languages in Italy. The analysis of the data has provided important information about the structure, the components, the training activities and the language of instruction of P.S.L.S. courses organised in various parts of Italy. The author has also conducted a thorough survey of the UK academic courses open to Italian teachers of English. The data thus gathered has highlighted a number of important issues related to the type of qualification awarded and the components on offer.

This chapter provides a number of recommendations and suggestions on how programmes of study aimed at Italian teachers of E.F.L. could be improved in order to meet the requirements and expectations of this group of teachers, as they have emerged from the surveys conducted. In developing these recommendations, published contributions from expert trainers are introduced and discussed. The first part of this chapter focuses on the P.S.L.S. courses and describes a number of issues

which course designer and trainers should reconsider in order to successfully meet their trainees' requirements. The second section of the chapter is concerned with the UK provision of courses open to Italian teachers of E.F.L.. A number of recommendations are put forward on how these course could become more effective in responding to the needs and wants of this group of teachers.

The research has highlighted three main areas related to the training of Italian teachers of E.F.L. which are in need of further investigation. The final section of the chapter illustrates these key areas and describes future research that the author recommends should be conducted in this field.

## **8.2 Recommendations regarding P.S.L.S. courses**

The P.S.L.S. is the major training programme aimed at Italian teachers of Modern Foreign Languages. The first P.S.L.S. courses organised in 1979 were 'experimental' in nature and intended to run for only a limited number of years. However, the courses proved to be so successful and popular among trainees that they have never been discontinued. No other training project in any subject for Italian teachers has been running for such a length of time, nor has involved such a vast number of teachers. In fact, P.S.L.S. courses have been taken as a model for training projects in other subject areas of the Italian school curriculum.



Being a training programme aimed at a specific group of teachers, P.S.L.S. course designers and trainers have had the opportunity to adjust the training provision to suit the specific needs of different groups of Modern Foreign Language teachers. The feedback constantly provided by the trainees involved in the project has allowed trainers and designers to make changes and adjustments to the course content and structure which were felt to be necessary to maintain a high quality of training provision. However, as will be described in the following sections, the author feels that there are significant areas for improvement.

As described in Chapter 5, the majority of Italian teachers who have the opportunity to attend a P.S.L.S. course find the experience satisfying and would be interested in attending other future courses. The key positive points of these courses were identified as being:

- The practical nature of these courses. The starting point of every training activity is the trainees' teaching situation. P.S.L.S. trainees are encouraged to derive theoretical principles from their teaching practice rather than being exposed to theory and then asked to put it into practice.
- The course format. Sessions are held during the school-year and are structured in a way to allow participants to try out in their classrooms what they have learnt on the course and then to have the opportunity to discuss with the other trainees and the trainer the outcome of their teaching experience.

- The P.S.L.S. trainer. All P.S.L.S. trainers are full-time teachers working in state schools. They know the Italian teaching situation and the problems which their trainees are likely to experience in their classrooms. As they can try out new ideas with students in a normal class, their training is grounded in their practices and based on direct practical experience.
- The trainees' active role in the training process. Trainees play an important role in determining the course content and structure. The main topics of each P.S.L.S. course are chosen on the basis of the trainees' needs analysis and taking into consideration the feedback from previous courses. Rather than listening to lectures, trainees spend a considerable percentage of the total training time working co-operatively on small-scale projects closely linked to various aspects of their teaching activity.

The author acknowledges the success and popularity enjoyed by the project and agrees with the general content and structure of the courses. However, as a consequence of the research detailed in this thesis, she recommends that some specific areas which are crucial to the long-term effectiveness of the P.S.L.S should be reconsidered. They are related to the following five points which are each addressed in the subsequent sub-sections:

- the importance of language improvement work in teacher training;
- the contribution of the native English speaker experts involved in the courses;

- the role of the mother tongue in teaching and training activities;
- the need to familiarise Italian teachers with forms of teacher observation;
- the importance of technology in language teaching.

### **8.2.1        The importance of language improvement work in teacher training**

Although decisions as to the structure and content of P.S.L.S. courses are left to the individual trainer-coordinators, it is apparent that it is policy of the P.S.L.S. not to provide language improvement classes for their trainees. This is in clear contrast to the need expressed by the teachers surveyed by the author of spending a considerable proportion of the total training time on improving their command of English.

The author believes that P.S.L.S. courses should acknowledge the need of so many Italian teachers of English to receive linguistic training. So far, most P.S.L.S. trainers have dismissed the importance of specific language improvement work. They maintain that trainees are bound to improve their command of the language as English is usually the language of instruction used on the courses. The author agrees that exposure to the language does provide some opportunities for language



improvement, but does so in an inefficient and uncontrolled way. In any case, exposure alone can not be considered as an effective way to address this issue. Efforts should be made to define the specific linguistic needs of Italian teachers of English. Some teachers may for instance need training on using classroom language, while others may feel insecure in their use of more technical aspects of English. Non-native English speaker teachers who use a communicative approach to language teaching may regard their command of the language as inadequate, especially in aspects such as colloquial English and speaking and listening skills. All these problematic areas related to language use can not be addressed efficiently simply through uncontrolled exposure to L2.

Objections to the incorporation of a language improvement component in training courses are usually based on a number of constraining factors such as limited time available, large number of participants or need to concentrate on specific methodological issues. Some trainers are also aware of the psychological difficulties involved in teaching English to English teachers (Willis 1981). One possible way to overcome these problems lies in linking methodology and language improvement by making methodology the content of a language improvement programme. Cullen (1994) provided examples on how to combine methodology and language improvement in one component. He also suggested an approach which sees language improvement as the central element of a course and the other component planned round it. Wright (1991) also devised a series of exercises which do not separate language from teaching methods. Faced with the problem of satisfying enormous demand for oral fluency in a fairly limited time, Cross (1987) decided to give

language improvement modules a major pedagogic emphasis. Teachers' reading skills could be improved using the activities and the worksheet devised by Edge (Edge, 1985a). He found that some E.F.L. teacher trainees experience a certain degree of difficulty when required to read articles about TEFL teaching methods. He therefore supplied them with a framework which they could use both while reading and for note-taking. Edge (1985b) provided further examples of how to integrate language improvement into professional development in a subsequent paper, where he described his experience of training a group of teacher trainers. Sunderland and Toncheva (1991) advocates a wider use of project-work in teacher training courses. They believe that project work provides an opportunity for further development of participants' language proficiency, as well as making it possible to handle a wide range of participants' needs, abilities, expectations and interests. Murdoch (1994) claims that trainees can receive increased level of language support through activity-based teacher education tasks.

The author believes that there are two possible ways in which the trainees' demand for linguistic training can be addressed. P.S.L.S. course designers should take into consideration organising courses to focus specifically on improving the trainees' language skills. P.S.L.S. courses organised in the past concentrated on very specific aspects of language teaching, such as E.S.P. or literature. The decision to offer a course on language, would only represent a shift from the 'how' to the 'what' teachers are required to teach. At a different level, P.S.L.S. trainer-coordinators should consider organising courses in which language and methodology are combined in one component: this will allow them to introduce some language

improvement work, while still complying with the guidelines which regulate the courses.

### **8.2.2 The role of the native English speaker experts**

The I.R.R.S.A.E. trainer-coordinators' survey described in Chapter 6 has indicated that native English speaker trainers are usually invited to contribute to P.S.L.S. courses. They have traditionally played an important role in the training of Italian teachers of E.F.L. and, in addition to their P.S.L.S. role, have been involved in a number of initiatives organised by the local British Councils and the various LEND groups.

The Italian teachers surveyed by the author welcomed the presence of native English speaker trainers. The respondents to the author's survey clearly indicated that they would like to be trained by native English speakers. As detailed in Chapter 4, the results coming from the survey demonstrate that the favoured role for these trainers is that of language instructors rather than methodology experts. This response is explained by replies to another question-area of the survey where the contribution of native English methodology experts was not felt as appropriate and relevant, due to their lack of familiarity with the Italian school system and teaching situation.

The author recognises that the contribution of native English speaker trainers is valuable in many respects. Native English speaker trainers can certainly play an



invaluable role in improving the language proficiency of Italian teachers. They could be responsible for specific language improvement courses within the existing P.S.L.S. courses. In the case of courses which combine methodology and language work in one component, they could co-operate with the P.S.L.S. trainer-coordinator in devising suitable language activities and could act as facilitators in those sessions specifically focused on language work.

Native English speaker trainers can also contribute in their role of experts in a specific methodological field. However, the success of their contribution in this case rests heavily on the nature of the co-operation they establish with the individual P.S.L.S. trainer-coordinators. It is advisable that they are involved in all stages of the organisation of the course. They should gain detailed information of the overall aims and objectives of the course, as well as of the background and expectations of their trainees. All the trainers involved in the course should harmonise the extent and content of their contributions and find ways in which it could prove to be relevant to the overall aims of the courses and the specific needs of their trainees. In this case, the author recommends that the methodology of co-operation between P.S.L.S. trainer-coordinators and English experts should be clearly established and then monitored to ensure adherence.

### **8.2.3 The role of the mother tongue in teaching and training activities**

One of the objectives of the author's survey was to gather information about the use of Italian in teaching and training activities. It is recognised that, although the communicative approach supports the exclusive use of the target language, this principle has seldom been carried through. As described in section 4.4.11.4 of Chapter 4, a large number of the teachers surveyed by the author disagree with the idea that English should be the only language used in classroom. Although there is no recently published research on the actual use of English in Italian E.F.L. classes, data from a 1986 survey and supported by the author's survey indicate that Italian teachers routinely use their mother tongue as well as English.

The author believes that the target language should be extensively used and that every effort should be made to improve the teachers' own confidence in L2 so that it could be used naturally in the classroom. However, it is also important to acknowledge that there are advantages in teachers and students' sharing the same mother tongue. What usually happens is that teachers resort to Italian in a variety of teaching situations, but do so feeling guilty, as they are contravening one of the basic principles of Communicative Language Teaching. The problem is that, for a number of reasons previously described in Chapter 4, the issue of mother tongue use in language teaching has to date been addressed in a limited manner. It is the author's belief that the reality that teachers use L1 when teaching L2 should be acknowledged

and teachers should be given specific guidance on how to use Italian in their teaching, rather than using it in uncontrolled and unspecified ways. Standard training manuals provide little help in terms of the use of the mother tongue in monolingual classes. However, a number of writers have recently put forward interesting suggestions on how it could be used effectively and contribute to the teaching of L2. Murphy (1988) and Harbord (1992) described various situations in which the use of L1 could be beneficial. However, it was Atkinson (1987 and 1993) who has provided the most extensive illustration of activities and procedures in which L1 can be used effectively.

Teachers use their mother tongue not only when they are teaching, but also when they are being trained. The results of the author's survey detailed in section 4.4.7 of Chapter 4 indicate that, although trainees prefer to use English in most training activities, they see scope for Italian to be used, for instance, in the preliminary and conclusive stages of a training course. Data coming from the I.R.R.S.A.E trainers-coordinators' confirm that the respondents routinely use both L1 and L2 in their courses, but so far there has been no feedback on the reasons and the extent of L1 use in P.S.L.S. courses. It is acknowledged that L2 is the language of instruction preferred by trainees as they often view these courses as an opportunity to improve their English. However, the fact that English is used extensively on P.S.L.S. courses is not necessarily the most effective way to meet the trainees' demand for specific linguistic training. The scope of L1 use is inextricably linked to language improvement work in L2. At the moment teachers are divided in groups according to the language they teach (Italian teachers of Modern Foreign Languages teach only



one language), as the target language is used as the means of instruction. However, if trainees were given specific linguistic training, methodological training could be administered in Italian to teachers of different languages.

The issue of mother tongue use in foreign language teaching and training has been a neglected subject for both teacher trainers and course-book writers. This in spite of the fact that most non-native English speaker teachers have never stopped using it in their classrooms. This research has indicated that Italian is routinely used both in teaching and training alongside the target language. The author therefore recommends that further investigation should be conducted into the effective use of this valuable resource in monolingual classrooms.

#### **8.2.4 Teacher observation**

Results coming from both the author's and the I.R.R.S.A.E. trainer-coordinators' surveys clearly indicate that Italian teachers do not like their teaching being observed. This can be related to two main issues. The first issue refers specifically to the Italian situation and is linked to the fact that Italian teachers are not familiar with the idea of teacher observation: they tend to consider their classes as 'fortresses' and resist allowing anyone into them. The second issue to be considered is characteristic of many observation procedures. In countries where teachers are routinely observed and appraised, a tradition of judgmental teachers observation has been reported. This

has resulted in teacher trainees feeling threatened and under pressure whenever they are asked to perform in front of colleagues and trainers.

The author believes in the importance of observing classrooms at work. This could prove beneficial not only for those teachers who are at the beginning of their professional life, but also for those teachers who have been working for a considerable length of time and may experience a feeling of isolation. The recognised importance of conducting small-scale classroom research and the role of reflection on practice as a way to promote positive change reinforce the need to stop regarding teaching as an activity which takes place 'behind closed doors'.

The resistance on the part of Italian teachers to open their classroom doors could be addressed in different ways. One of the reasons which may explain why Italian teachers do not want to have observers in their classroom could be linked to their lack of confidence in the use of English. This obstacle would be removed if language work at the appropriate level became a standard activity in training courses. Italian teachers are not familiar with the concept of teacher observation. However, there is an established tradition of team work within each school: teachers work in different teams at different levels when organising and planning their teaching or contributing to the overall running of the school. Modern Foreign Language teachers have also been involved for a considerable time in projects of various nature within the P.S.L.S.. They usually like working co-operatively in small groups, an activity which P.S.L.S. trainers seem to favour (see section 6.4.2.3 of Chapter 6). It would therefore be possible to build on the experience and trust that teachers have gained in these

activities in order to overcome the feeling of uneasiness that they are likely to experience when observed at work. In this particular respect, the P.S.L.S. trainers would have a crucial role. However, they themselves would need appropriate training in implementing a supportive type of lesson observation. Section 4.4.5.4 of Chapter 4 has provided indications of activities and suggestions made by various trainers in order to overcome the traditionally negative aspects of teacher observation.

The findings of this research has indicated that Italian teachers dislike the idea of being observed at work. This is reflected by the decision of the majority of P.S.L.S. trainer-coordinators to avoid using classroom observation in the courses for which they are responsible. The author is aware of the difficulties involved in changing a long-established tradition of teachers working in isolation. She believes that the first step towards changing the situation may lie in the value that many teachers and trainers have started to attach to classroom research projects. These initiatives involve teachers working co-operatively towards the solution of specific learning problems. This could induce them to allow observers into their classrooms and to take on the role of observers themselves. If the perceived focus of lesson observation is shifted from appraising the teachers to, for instance, students' behaviour, it could be possible to use the feedback coming from observation to encourage teachers to reflect on what happens in their classrooms and develop their ability to evaluate their teaching practices.



## **8.2.5      The importance of technology in language teaching**

The results of the I.R.R.S.A.E trainees' survey detailed in sections 5.4.3.1.1 and 5.4.3.2.5 of Chapter 5 show that Italian teachers of E.F.L. need training on the use of audio-visual material. However, data from the I.R.R.S.A.E trainer-coordinators' survey indicate that a relatively small proportion of the total training time is allocated to components such as 'Audio and visual cassettes' and 'I.T.'. The Government has recently recognised that many Italian schools are under-resourced in terms of technical equipment. This includes not only the more sophisticated technology such as language laboratories and multi-media centres, but very often more standard machines such as VCRs and OHPs. As described in Chapter 5, the Ministry of Education is currently tackling the issue and has promised to invest heavily on technology in order to bring Italy in line with the resources available in the schools of other European countries.

The author believes that teachers should be encouraged to use technical equipment in language teaching at two levels. Firstly, P.S.L.S. trainers should themselves receive appropriate guidance on how to effectively use technology on a routine basis in their classrooms. It can be assumed that once the trainers feel confident in using technical equipment, they will introduce specific training activities to promote its effective use in language classrooms. Secondly, the author recommends that the issue should also be addressed at local school level. Different teachers experience varying levels of confidence in the use of technology. Those teachers who have already successfully integrated technology in their teaching practice should therefore be involved in

demonstration lessons or training activities as part of the experience of professional development within a peer-group. In this way, each school could capitalise on their teachers' strengths to promote positive change.

### **8.3 Recommendations regarding UK based courses**

An increasing number of Italian teachers decide to follow a programme of study in the UK. The flexibility that now characterises these programmes allows them to overcome time restrictions which in the past made their attendance at courses extremely difficult. However, the decision to join a long-term award-bearing course still represents a great personal and financial investment for many Italian teachers. It is therefore important that they feel that there is a clear correlation between this investment and professional and personal development.

The author conducted an investigation into the UK based programmes of study open to Italian teachers of E.F.L., focusing on those courses offered by academic institutions. Courses organised by private institutions do not award a recognised qualification, but a certificate of attendance. In contrast, academic courses lead to qualifications which are, or will probably in future, be recognised at European level. Italian teachers therefore feel that an academic award-bearing course is more likely to prove to be worthwhile in terms of future career advancement

The survey conducted by the author and detailed in Chapter 7 has revealed that there is a very rich variety of UK courses open to Italian teachers. They vary in terms of length and mode of delivery, final qualification awarded, and course components offered. These courses are open to both native and non-native English speaker teachers who, as described in Chapter 1, have different needs and wants. The following subsections will deal with the main issues that should be considered when designing courses aimed at Italian teachers of E.F.L.. They can be summarised as follows:

- the importance of the language improvement component
- the integration of practice and theory
- the native English speaker trainer
- components of specific interest to Italian teachers of English
- qualifications awarded

### **8.3.1 The importance of the language improvement component**

Although it is recognised that the great majority of non-native English speaker teachers would like to spend considerable time on improving their language skills,



the analysis conducted by the author has indicated that UK courses do not offer a language improvement component specifically aimed at this group of teachers. As it is assumed that participants already have a good command of the language, further specific linguistic training is not regarded as appropriate to the nature of these courses. This is bound to disappoint a large number of overseas teachers of E.F.L. who consider language proficiency as a crucial factor in determining their status as teachers. The author believes that the need for language improvement work should be recognised by UK course designers and feels that the suggestions which she has put forward in the case of P.S.L.S. courses could similarly prove to be effective on UK based courses. In particular, Wright (1991) described language activities which could be used on mixed intake courses. He found that native and non-native English speaking participants could benefit from each other's presence, as the first group is more proficient in the use of the language, while the second group usually has better metalanguage and deeper awareness of how the language works.

The author believes that the approach adopted by the University of Stirling should be considered by other institutions. Their Postgraduate Diploma in the Methodology of TESOL includes different components for native and non-native English speaker participants on their Postgraduate Diploma in the Methodology of TESOL. This is only a first step towards the recognition that the two groups have different requirements which need to be specifically addressed. Sections 1.5, 1.5.1 and 1.5.2 of Chapter 1 have provided an outline of these different training requirements which could prove useful in identifying those content areas to be specifically targeted at the two groups of teachers. This could lead to mixed-intake courses to be structured in a

way to allow native and non-native English speaking participants to focus on different activities. Native English speaker teachers could, for instance, experience the process of learning a foreign language, raise their own language awareness, explore problem areas which are typical of learners of specific countries. On the other hand, non-native English speaker teachers could work on improving their language skills, investigate the use of L1 in L2 communicative teaching, or follow components which are of particular interest to them. Section 8.3.4 of this chapter provides information on the type of modules that Italian teachers of E.F.L. would like to see included in a programme of study.

### **8.3.2 The integration of practice and theory**

Chapter 3 has provided an extensive description of the highly theoretical preparation of Italian teachers of English. The results coming from the author's and both I.R.R.S.A.E surveys indicate that this group of teachers favour a training approach which is clearly focused on their teaching practise rather than on more theoretical aspects of language teaching.

In the past years, there has been a movement away in UK courses from 'teacher training' to 'teacher education' which has resulted in the re-evaluation of the role of theory in teacher education programmes. This is reflected in the importance that components perceived as 'theoretical' have in the UK courses surveyed by the author. This emphasis on theory rather than on practice is in contrast with the desire

expressed by Italian teachers to remain firmly focused on their teaching situations. Any course aimed at this group of teachers should therefore privilege classroom practice as the starting point for the exploration of theoretical principles. Experiential learning should be a significant feature of the methodology used in these courses. Dubin (1985), Ellis (1986) and Harmer (1990) believe in the importance of using experiential practices in teacher training: they have provided examples of trainee-centred activities in which theory and practice can be successfully merged. Bax (1995) provided examples of an approach which allows a significant degree of trainee-input. He believes that the shifting from 'teacher training' to 'teacher education' will naturally be followed by the shift from 'teacher education' to 'teacher-development'. Section 7.5.5 of Chapter 7 has highlighted that the components usually regarded as crucial in enabling teachers to become autonomous practitioners are not widely on offer on UK courses yet. The author recommends that course designers adopt a trainee-centred approach to teacher education programmes. In this way, they would ensure that classroom practice rather than theoretical principles be regarded as the starting point for effective professional advancement.

### **8.3.3            The native English speaker trainer**

Section 7.5.5 of Chapter 7 has illustrated various issues linked with the role of the native English speaker trainers involved in courses for overseas teachers of E.F.L.. It has, for instance, been highlighted that traditional teacher education has been trainer



centred in both approach and content. This is obviously in contrast to the more holistic and participant-centred thinking which seems to characterise some more recent education programmes.

The trainer is no longer seen as a depository of knowledge which is handed down and must be, more or less faithfully, followed by the trainees. The trainer is now seen as a 'facilitator' (Balbi, 1990), an 'educator' (Freeman, 1990), a 'catalyst' (Kennedy in Whitney, Kennedy, Buchan and al., 1989), or a 'counsellor' (King, 1990). These new roles complement a shift of focus from the trainer to the trainees which affects other areas such as the mode of instruction and the actual course content.

In the specific case of native English speaker trainers involved in trainee-centred courses aimed at Italian teachers of E.F.L., there are two closely related issues that need consideration. First of all, trainers need to recognise the importance for these trainees to remain focused on their teaching practice. This has implications in terms of the approach and the activities to be employed in these courses. The importance to use the trainees' teaching situation as the starting point of any training activity will also require native English speaker trainers to become familiar with the Italian teaching situation.

The author recognises that it is obviously difficult for trainers involved in multinational courses to identify the needs and expectations of each trainee. However, she has found that a number of writers have provided recommendations on how to gain access to this sort of information (Bolitho 1979, Kennedy 1983, Parrott

1988, Cicardi 1990, Pieri 1996) and on how this information could be used in the design or adjustment of training courses. These authors have put forward a variety of suggestions to be used as the starting point in the design of courses which are intended to be participant-centred and to aim at promoting real professional development.

### **8.3.4 Components of specific interest to Italian teachers of English**

The analysis of the results coming from the author's and the I.R.R.S.A.E. trainees' surveys have provided clear indications as to the components that Italian teachers of E.F.L. would like to see included in a training course. The importance of incorporating language improvement work in this type of programmes has already been discussed in this chapter. This section therefore focuses on the other components which proved to be of particular interest to the Italian teachers surveyed, but are not widely available on UK based courses.

<i>Culture and inter-cultural issues</i>	The Italian National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages recognises that culture plays an important role in language classes. As a consequence, the Italian teachers surveyed expressed their interest in furthering their understanding of the role of culture and inter-cultural issues in language teaching.
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They are particularly interested in exploring the relationship between target culture(s), their students culture(s), and the use of textbooks and other materials.

*Material Design* Italian teachers often find that they need to write their own teaching materials in order to cater for the various needs of their mixed-ability classes or to supplement the course-books they use. They wish to explore principles of material evaluation and creation and gain experience in the process of material production.

*Technology in language teaching* A great number of Italian teachers need guidance on the use of technical resources, in particular on the contributions that computer, video and audio technology can make to language teaching.

*Literature* Italian higher secondary school teachers are interested in investigating current methods of teaching literature and how these different approaches could be implemented in their own teaching context. They would also like to be introduced to communicative ways of testing their students' knowledge of the subject.



*E.S.P.* Italian higher secondary school teachers of E.S.P. are particularly interested in examining the applications of key areas of E.S.P. to specific learning contexts. They would like to receive help on how to integrate language, pedagogy and their students' subject specialism. They are interested in investigating issues related to E.S.P.-oriented published course-books and wish to receive guidance on creating their own supporting materials.

This research has led to the clear identification of the activities and components that Italian teachers of English would like to see included in a programme of study. The author believes that courses offering the modules described above would be perceived as effective in meeting the needs and expectations of this group of teachers.

### **8.3.5 Qualifications awarded**

The author shares the concerns expressed by many British educationalists and researchers about the consistency of teacher education provision by UK institutions which have been described in section 7.5.1 of Chapter 7. The diversity of qualifications awarded by different bodies and institutions and the difficulty to

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establish a clear link between the qualification gained and the content of the courses leading to it have highlighted the need for establishing procedures for the evaluation and the accreditation of such courses.

At the moment, the Italian Ministry of Education do not recognise any post-graduate qualification gained by Italian teachers abroad, with the exception of PhDs. However, the situation is perceived as changing. In the recent years, the Ministry has recognised the importance of in-serving training activities and has implemented a series of changes to encourage teachers to pursue programmes of professional development. An increasing number of Italian teachers decide to attend award-bearing courses abroad: this has put the Ministry under pressure to recognise qualifications gained at European institutions. However, it is unlikely that foreign qualifications will be taken into consideration unless they are seen as undergoing some form of evaluative control. The author strongly believes that it is very important for the British institutions currently focusing on matters of quality assurance to establish appropriate evaluation and accreditation criteria for the rich variety of UK courses on offer.

## 8.4 Further research

The research which the author has conducted and which has been the object of this thesis has highlighted the need to conduct further investigation into three key issues for the training of Italian teachers of E.F.L.:

- the identification of the specific linguistic needs of this group of teachers
- the role of the mother tongue in teaching and training activities
- the further evaluation of P.S.L.S. courses

The survey conducted by the author has determined that Italian teachers are extremely concerned about their command of the target language. The replies of the respondents have showed that there is a strong link between their perceived level of proficiency in English and their status as teachers. They have clearly identified that the most important skill of an E.F.L. teacher is a high command of the language and have indicated that they would like to spend a substantial proportion of their training time on improving their language skills. However, very little is known about their specific language needs. There has been no research on the actual level of proficiency of Italian teachers of English. It is therefore difficult to state clearly whether their concerns about their command of the language are perceived as such rather than linked to actual low levels of proficiency. There has also been no research on the



specific language needs of this group of teachers. Some of the aspects related to the linguistic training which need to be explored are listed below and comprise elements derived from this thesis and work by Stevens (1968), Willis (1981), Kennedy (1983), Britten (1985b) and Medgyes (1994):

- general English;
- classroom language;
- vocabulary, reading and writing skills for E.S.P. courses;
- colloquial and idiomatic English;
- listening and speaking skills;
- authentic spoken and written English texts;
- metalanguage, registers, sociolects, regional varieties.

The author therefore recommends that there should be further research into the language needs of Italian teachers of English and on how these needs could be successfully addressed in training courses. The author recommends that research is carried out with the aim of preparing a prospective syllabus for a training course in which these problems are addressed.

The second issue which has emerged from the author's research is the role that the mother tongue plays in both language teaching and teacher training. Very little is known about the extent and scope of L1 use both in Italian E.F.L. classes and on P.S.L.S. courses. However, the findings of the author's and the I.R.R.S.A.E trainer-coordinators' surveys indicate that Italian is routinely used in both situations. The author believes that, while it has been tacitly accepted that L1 is used in L2 classes, there has been very little research on the role of the mother tongue in communicative language teaching. As teachers and students who share the same language are bound to use it in some situations, it would be important to determine how effectively L1 can be employed in foreign language teaching. Italian is also used by both trainees and trainers involved in P.S.L.S. courses. However, the reasons behind the decision to use L1 rather than L2 in certain training activities have not so far been explored. At the moment, different P.S.L.S. courses are organised for teachers of different languages, the aim being to use extensively L2 as the language of instruction to provide trainees with some form of language improvement. One issue which needs to be considered is the possibility to include sessions specifically aimed at improving the teachers' command of the language. This will allow trainer-coordinators to opt for L1 use in those activities which deal with methodological aspects of language teaching in order to ensure 'clarity of ideas' and to allow trainees to use their mother tongue when dealing with issues of common interest to all language teachers.

The third issue to emerge is the requirement for further evaluation of the effectiveness of P.S.L.S. courses. The project consumes considerable financial and

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human resources; however, it has not so far been ascertained whether teachers who have had the opportunity to join the scheme have carried out any successful change in their classrooms. The Italian Ministry of Education has encountered serious difficulties in implementing the evaluation plan which had been originally devised for these courses and is currently exploring different evaluative procedures. At the same time, P.S.L.S. courses are being revised in the light of the new applications of I.T. to classroom teaching. The project is therefore at a crucial stage which could lead to substantial changes to the course content and structure. It would be important for P.S.L.S. course designers and trainers to receive feedback on the overall effectiveness of the courses so far organised before those changes and adjustments are put into place. The findings of this research represent the first step towards the clear identification of the structure and content of the P.S.L.S. courses which have been so far organised. The research also provides detailed information on the needs and wants of Italian teachers of English, information which would prove valuable in the design of future courses.

## **8.5 Conclusions**

The author's research has determined that the programmes of study currently available to Italian teachers of E.F.L. are not fully effective in meeting some of their requirements and expectations. This thesis has illustrated a number of important issues which need to be reconsidered when designing courses aimed at this group of



teachers. They include the urgency to incorporate language improvement work in these courses, the need for native English speaker experts involved in the training of these teachers to be familiar with their trainees' teaching situation and the importance of relating theory to the trainees' teaching context. The author has put forward a number of recommendations on how these issues can be addressed. She has also highlighted the need to conduct further research into the linguistic needs of this group of teachers and to investigate effective ways in which the mother tongue can be used in communicative language classes. She feels that the conclusions reached and recommendations developed in this thesis can contribute significantly to the development of training courses for Italian teachers of English in both Italy and the UK.

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# APPENDIX 1

## **Syllabuses of State Entry Examinations (*esami concorso*) for Modern Foreign Language teachers in lower and higher secondary schools.**

This appendix provides a detailed description of the syllabuses for the State Entry Examinations<sup>1</sup> (*esami concorso*) that graduates in Modern Foreign Languages are required to take in order to gain fully Qualified Teacher Status.

Graduates are required to take different entry examinations according to the type of school in which they wish to work. The State Entry Examination for Modern Foreign Language teachers in lower secondary schools comprises a written and an oral exam, while the State Entry Examination for Modern Foreign Language teachers in higher secondary schools involves two written exams and an oral exam.

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<sup>1</sup> Perini, N. (ed.) (1985) *La formazione iniziale e la formazione in servizio degli insegnanti di lingue straniere nei paesi della C.E.E.: analisi comparata*. Udine: Gianfranco Angelico Benvenuto Editore.



**Syllabus of State Entry Examinations (*esami concorso*) for Modern Foreign  
Language teachers in lower secondary schools.**

The exam comprises a written and an oral test.

**a) Written exam**

The written test consists of an essay in the foreign language. Candidates can choose among four titles. The 4 essay titles are concerned with topics which also form the syllabus for the oral test. They can refer to:

1. problems concerning the usage, the history and the description of the foreign language;
2. socio-cultural aspects of the foreign countries in which the language is spoken with particular regard to contemporary issues linked with language usage;
3. main issues in foreign language teaching from a critical and historic perspective;
4. design of a teaching unit complete with exercises and evaluation procedures on a specific topic or grammar point.

Candidates will be expected to make critical evaluations on the topic chosen, and to be aware of the educational objectives of the knowledge they possess. They will also be expected to show a high command of the written foreign language.

Duration of the written test: 8 hours (in a closed room, under constant supervision).

Candidates may use a monolingual dictionary of the foreign language.

b) Oral test

Candidates, who are required to have a high command of the foreign language, will be expected to show a sound knowledge of the following issues:

1. Objectives, methodology and techniques of foreign language teaching as part of a multidisciplinary approach to language education. Language education must be seen as a gradual process aiming at developing the learner's communicative ability and at promoting his/her ability to interact successfully with people in a variety of social situations. Candidates will be required to have a sound knowledge of the various methodological approaches and techniques aiming at developing the learner's oral and written linguistic skills. Candidates are expected to be familiar with a wide variety of functions of the foreign language, to know its correct usage and to be aware of the problems linked with the learning of the mother tongue and of the other subjects of the school curriculum.

2. Analysis of the various structures of the foreign language (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, etc.) based on recent theories. The important role of language awareness in language education.
3. Cultural heritage of the foreign countries where the language is spoken, its literature and other forms of art. Candidates will be expected to have a sound knowledge of the literary production of three authors, one of which must be a contemporary writer. Candidates are also expected to be familiar with the ethnic and linguistic heritage of the countries where the language is spoken.
4. Psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics contributions to language analysis and language teaching.
5. Sound knowledge of teenagers' literature and publications as well as of audio and video material for language teaching.



**Syllabus of State Entry Examinations (*esami concorso*) for Modern Foreign  
Language teachers in higher secondary schools.**

The exam comprises two written tests and an oral test.

**a) Written tests**

Both written tests consist of an essay in the foreign language. The tests are structured as follows:

1. Candidates are required to write an essay analysing and commenting on a literary text of about 40 lines. Candidates may choose if they wish to analyse and comment on the text from a linguistic or a methodological point of view.
2. Candidates are required to write an essay choosing from four essay titles. The titles will be related to historical, literary, social or economical issues in the countries where the language is spoken.

Duration of both written tests: 8 hours (in a closed room, under constant supervision). Candidates may use a monolingual dictionary of the foreign language.

**b) Oral test**

Candidates, who are required to have a high command of the foreign language, will be expected to show a sound knowledge of the following issues:

1. History, literature, economic and social issues of the countries where the language is spoken from the origins up to the present day.
2. Objectives, methodology and techniques of foreign language teaching; Modern Foreign Languages Syllabuses of the various types of higher secondary schools; recently published textbooks; school and class libraries; teaching aids and support material.
3. Evolution of language teaching theories, with particular regard to theories of the past three centuries.
4. Detailed knowledge of the literary production of two contemporary writers chosen for their historical, economic or sociologic relevance. Detailed knowledge of three authors chosen by the candidates among the main writers in the foreign language literature.
5. Issues in language testing and evaluation.

6. Essential bibliography in Italian and in the foreign language on the various points of this examination syllabus.

During the oral test candidates will also be required to plan a teaching unit. The unit will be specifically aimed at teaching the various technical aspects of the foreign language. The unit plan will also comprise progress and proficiency tests.

Candidates will be expected to be able to link the teaching of the foreign language to the teaching of the other subjects of the school curriculum and to develop cross-curricular themes.



## **APPENDIX 2**

### **The in-service training needs of Italian teachers of English: the author's survey**

This appendix comprises the questionnaire used in the survey conducted by the author among Italian teachers of English as a Foreign Language. The questionnaire was devised by the author and administered to two groups of lower and higher secondary school teachers at the end of two seminars conducted by the author at the headquarters of the British Council in Milan.

# **Survey questionnaire of the in-service training needs of Italian teachers of English**

- 1      How long have you been teaching?
- 2      Have you followed a teacher training course? If no, go to question 4. If yes,  
where did you attend it?
  - 2.1    ☐      In Italy
  - 2.2    ☐      Abroad (Please specify the country)
- 3      Why did you decide to follow a training course?
  - 3.1    ☐      To promote your professional growth
  - 3.2    ☐      To learn new methodologies
  - 3.3    ☐      Because your school required you to do so
  - 3.4    ☐      To promote your personal growth
  - 3.5    ☐      To obtain financial incentives
- 4      Which course format do you favour?
  - 4.1    ☐      Regular sessions during the school year
  - 4.2    ☐      A period of intensive study abroad

5      Consider the value of the following components of a training programme.  
Rate each one using a five point scale (1= most important, 5= least important).

5.1	Theories of language learning and teaching	1	2	3	4	5
5.2	Practical ideas and techniques for language teaching	1	2	3	4	5
5.3	Planning teaching activity	1	2	3	4	5
5.4	Material evaluation	1	2	3	4	5
5.5	Material production	1	2	3	4	5
5.6	Activities to help students in specific problem areas	1	2	3	4	5
5.7	Testing and evaluation/assessment procedures	1	2	3	4	5
5.8	Language improvement	1	2	3	4	5
5.9	Phonology	1	2	3	4	5
5.10	Classroom observation	1	2	3	4	5



6      What percentage of your time would you like to spend simply developing your language skills on your training course?

- 6.1    ☐    Less than 5%
- 6.2    ☐    5 - 10%
- 6.3    ☐    10 - 20%
- 6.4    ☐    20 - 30%
- 6.5    ☐    30 - 40%
- 6.6    ☐    40 - 50 %
- 6.7    ☐    more than 50%

7      Which language would you like to use in the following activities of a training course? Tick the appropriate box (L1 - Italian, L2 - English).

- |     |  |                             |                             |
|-----|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 7.1 | Preliminary introduction to the course | L1 <input type="checkbox"/> | L2 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.2 | Frontal lessons                        | L1 <input type="checkbox"/> | L2 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.3 | Group-work                             | L1 <input type="checkbox"/> | L2 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.4 | Activity follow-up discussion          | L1 <input type="checkbox"/> | L2 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.5 | Course evaluation                      | L1 <input type="checkbox"/> | L2 <input type="checkbox"/> |

8 What makes a good EFL teacher? Rank the following skills according to their degree of importance (1= most important, 10= least important).

- 8.1 ☐ A high level of English language proficiency.
- 8.2 ☐ A thorough knowledge of the cultural and social life of English speaking countries.
- 8.3 ☐ A thorough knowledge of specific aspects of the subject ( e.g. Business English, literature etc.).
- 8.4 ☐ A thorough knowledge of new methodologies.
- 8.5 ☐ Making the subject relevant to Italian students and to the other subjects taught in Italian schools.
- 8.6 ☐ Providing motivation for language learning.
- 8.7 ☐ Understanding students' learning difficulties and devising effective activities to help them overcome them.
- 8.8 ☐ Being able to respond effectively to students' needs as they gradually become clear.
- 8.9 ☐ Completing the required State curriculum.
- 8.10 ☐ Defining clear assessment procedures accepted by other subject teachers.

9 If you followed a training course in the past, was one of the trainers involved in the course a native English speaker? If so, what was his/her role?

- 9.1 ☐ Responsible for the language improvement component of the course.
- 9.2 ☐ An expert in a specific methodological aspect.
- 9.3 ☐ Other. Please specify what role s/he had.

10 Do you believe it is important to have a native English speaker among the trainers. If so, what role do you think s/he should have?

10.1 ☐ Responsible for the language improvement component of the course.

10.2 ☐ An expert in a specific methodological aspect.

10.3 ☐ Other. Please specify what role.

11 Tick the number that best summarises your reaction to each statement.

11.1 Teaching techniques and activities learnt in training courses are difficult to implement in the classroom.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly				Strongly
agree				disagree

11.2 English native English speaking trainers know little about the situation of language teaching in Italy.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly				Strongly
agree				disagree

11.3 The degree of language proficiency determines greatly the way a teacher perceives him/herself and is perceived by other people.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly				Strongly
agree				disagree



11.4 English should be the only language used in classroom.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly				Strongly
agree				disagree

11.5 English native English speaking teachers teach better than non-native English teachers.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly				Strongly
agree				disagree

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **The in-service training needs of Italian secondary school teachers of Modern Foreign Languages: an I.R.R.S.A.E. survey**

This appendix contains the questionnaire used in the first survey conducted by the I.R.R.S.A.E. (Regional Institute for Research and In-service Training) Lombardy. The questionnaire was administered to a total of 3,279 teachers of Modern Foreign Languages working in lower and higher secondary schools in the region

## **The in-service training needs of Italian secondary school teachers of Modern Foreign Languages: an I.R.R.S.A.E. survey**

1. Have you ever attended a P.S.L.S. course?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Would you be interested in attending a P.S.L.S. course in the future?

☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Which of the following components would like to be included in a future P.S.L.S. course?

1. Culture and intercultural issues
2. Testing and evaluation
3. Preparation for non compulsory education
4. The four skills
5. E.S.P.
6. Text analysis
7. Audiovisuals and teaching materials
8. Lower and higher secondary schools curricula
9. Techniques for games and creativity in language teaching
10. Learning styles
11. Teaching literature



## **APPENDIX 4**

### **The evaluation of P.S.L.S. training courses: an I.R.R.S.A.E. survey**

This appendix contains the questionnaire used in the second survey conducted by the I.R.R.S.A.E. (Regional Institute for Research and In-service Training) Lombardy. The questionnaire was administered to a group of trainer-coordinators who had been responsible for the organisation of P.S.L.S. (Special Project for Modern Languages) courses in the 1995-1996 school-year. The courses had been aimed at teachers of English, working in lower and higher secondary schools in various parts of Italy.

# **The evaluation of P.S.L.S. training courses: an I.R.R.S.A.E. survey**

## **1. Course organisation**

Who were the trainers involved in the course you organised?

No of sessions held by the P.S.L.S. trainer who was responsible for the course —

No of sessions held by another P.S.L.S. trainer —

No of sessions held by an Italian expert —

No of sessions held by a foreign expert —

## **2. Course activities**

What activities were employed during the course? (Please specify the % of time spent on each activity.)

- \_\_\_ %      frontal lessons
- \_\_\_ %      interactive lessons
- \_\_\_ %      presentation of audio and video tapes
- \_\_\_ %      I.T. workshops
- \_\_\_ %      group-work: teacher learning
- \_\_\_ %      group work: material production
- \_\_\_ %      role-play
- \_\_\_ %      teacher observation
- \_\_\_ %      writing reports on the work carried out during the course
- \_\_\_ %      filling in questionnaires
- \_\_\_ %      other (please specify)

**3. Use of the target language**

In which activities was L2 used?

- |                              |                             |   |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | frontal lessons   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | interactive lessons                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | presentation of audio and video tapes                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | I.T. workshops  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | group-work: teacher learning                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | group work: material production                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | role-play   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | teacher observation                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | writing reports on the work carried out during the course |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | filling in questionnaires                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | other (please specify)                                    |



## **APPENDIX 5**

### **The provision of training courses in the UK: a survey.**

This appendix provides the list of the universities and university sector colleges contacted by the author in order to gain information about courses open to Italian teachers of E.F.L.

# **The provision of training courses in the UK: Universities and University Sector Colleges surveyed**

## **1. Universities**

University of Aberdeen  
Abertay University  
Anglia Polytechnic University  
Aston University  
University of Bath  
Birmingham University  
Bournemouth University  
Bradford University  
Brighton University  
Bristol University  
Brunel University  
University of Buckingham  
Cambridge University  
University of Central England  
University of Central Lancashire, Preston  
City University,  
Coventry University  
Cranfield University  
Derby University  
Dundee University  
Durham University  
University of East Anglia, Norwich  
University of East London  
Edinburgh University  
University of Essex  
Exeter University  
Glasgow Caledonian University  
University of Glamorgan  
Glasgow University  
Greenwich University  
London Guildhall University  
Heriot Watt University  
Hertfordshire University  
Huddersfield University  
University of Hull  
Keele University  
University of Kent  
Kingston University  
Lancaster University  
Leeds University  
Leeds Metropolitan University  
University of Leicester  
Leicester De Montfort University  
Lincoln University  
Liverpool University  
Liverpool John Moores University  
University of London Institute of Education  
Loughborough University

University of Luton  
 Manchester Metropolitan University  
 University of Manchester  
 University of Manchester  
 Middlesex University  
 Napier University  
 Newcastle University  
 University of Northumbria  
 University of North London  
 Nottingham University  
 Nottingham Trent University  
 The Open University  
 Oxford University  
 Oxford Brookes University  
 Paisley University  
 Plymouth University  
 Portsmouth University  
 Queen's University Belfast  
 Reading University  
 Robert Gordon University  
 St.Andrews University  
 Salford University  
 The University of Sheffield  
 Sheffield Hallam University  
 Southampton University  
 South Bank University  
 Staffordshire University  
 Stirling University  
 Strathclyde University  
 Sunderland University  
 University of Surrey  
 Sussex University  
 Teesside University  
 Thames Valley University  
 Ulster University  
 University of Wales:  
     University of Wales Aberystwyth  
     University of Wales Bangor  
     University of Wales Cardiff  
     University of Wales College of Medicine  
     University of Wales Lampeter  
     University of Wales College Newport  
     University of Wales Swansea  
 Warwick University  
 University of Western England  
 Westminster University  
 University of Wolverhampton  
 University of York



## **2. University sector colleges**

Bath College of Higher Education  
Bolton Institute  
Bretton Hall College Wakefield  
Buckinghamshire College  
Cardiff Institute of Higher Education  
Camborne School of Mines  
Canterbury Christ Church College  
Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education  
Chester College  
Chichester Institute of Higher Education  
Royal Agricultural College  
Dartington College of Arts  
Edinburgh College of Art  
Edge Hill College of Higher Education  
Falmouth College of Art  
Fife College of Further and Higher Education  
Glasgow School of Art  
Guildford College of Further and Higher Education  
Harper Adams Agricultural College  
Henley Management College  
Kent Institute of Art and Design  
King Alfred's College, Winchester  
University College of St.Martin, Lancaster  
Moray House Institute of Education  
Northern College  
Nene College  
North East Wales Institute of Higher Education  
Newman College  
Norwich School of Art and Design  
The College of St. Mark & St. John  
Queen Margaret College  
Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication, London  
Roehampton Institute  
Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama  
The Royal College of Art  
The Royal College of Music  
University College, Salford  
University College Scarborough  
Stranmillis College Belfast  
Scottish College of Textiles, Galashiels  
Southampton Institute of HE  
Saint Andrew's College  
St. Mary's College, Belfast  
University College, Stockton  
Stranmillis College Belfast  
Swansea Institute of Higher Education  
Trinity and All Saints College  
Tresham Institute of Further and Higher Education, Kettering  
St. Mary's College  
University College of Ripon and York St. John  
Warrington Collegiate Institute  
Westminster College, Oxford  
Worcester College of Higher Education  
Writtle College

# APPENDIX 6

## Table comparing UK based course structure and content

This appendix comprises a table in three sections which provides comparative information about UK based training courses open to Italian teachers of E.F.L.. The table indicates the name of the institutions contacted, the mode of contact, and information about the entry requirements and the course structure and content. Institutions are listed in alphabetical order, and courses are arranged from Certificate to Master level.

Original  
Contains  
Pullouts



Original  
Contains  
Pullouts

Mode of Contact	Institution contacted by letter and which agreed to take part in the survey.		
	Institution contacted using the Internet		
	Institution contacted by letter as a potential student		
Modules	Compulsory Module		
	Optional Module		

INSTITUTION	MODE OF CONTACT	TYPE OF COURSE	LENGTH	ENTRY REQUIREMENTS	DISTANCE LEARNING	Action/Classroom Research	Applied Linguistics/ Linguistics	Audiovisuals	Bilingualism	CALL/IT	Classroom management	Classroom observation	Course/Curriculum/ Syllabus Design	Culture/Society/ Ideology	Discourse analysis	EAP/ESP	Error analysis	Grammar	Language across the curriculum	Language awareness	Language improvement	Lesson planning	Lexis	Literature	Management	Material design	Material evaluation	Methodology	Phonetics/ Phonology	Pragmatics/Syntax/ Semantics	Research methods	Second Language Learning	Self-access/ Distance Learning	Socio/Psycholinguistics	Teacher development	Teacher education	Teacher training	Teaching practice	Teaching skills	Teaching young learners	Testing
Aston Univ - Language Studies Unit	☑	Adv Certificate in Principles of TEFL Diploma in Teaching English	6 months 1 year	Qualified teachers + 1 year experience Degree or teaching qual + substantial experience	Yes Yes																																				
Birmingham Univ - Centre for English Language Studies	☑ ☑	MSc in Teaching English MA in Applied Linguistics MA Special Applications of Linguistics MA in TEFL	20-23 months 1/2 years 1/2 years 1/2 years	Degree + 3 yrs experience Degree + experience Degree Degree + experience	Yes																																				
Cambridge Univ - Dep Linguistics	☑	MA in TEFL Open Learning Programme MPhil in English & Applied Linguistics	2 years 9 months	Degree + 2 yrs experience Degree	Yes																																				
Canterbury Christ Church College - Dep of Language Studies	☑	MPhil in Linguistics Adv Cert Techniques & Methods in EFL Diploma in English Language Education MA in English Language Education Diploma in TEFL	3 months 1 year 11 mos/5 yrs 11 mos/5 yrs 11 mos/5 yrs	Degree Degree + 1 year experience Degree + 1 year experience Degree + 1 year experience Degree + 1 year experience	Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes																																				
Durham Univ - School of English and Linguistics	☑ ☑	MA in Applied Linguistics	1 year	Degree + 3 yrs experience																																					
East Anglia Univ - NILE	☑	MA in Linguistics Advanced PG Certificate in TEFL	1 year 6 weeks + DL	Degree Practising teachers	Yes																																				
Edinburgh Univ - Institute for Applied Language Studies	☑	Postgraduate Diploma in TEFL Advanced Certificate in ELT	4 weeks + DL 3 mos/1 year	Practising teachers Degree + 2 yrs exp / teaching diploma + 5 yrs experience	Yes																																				
Edinburgh Univ - Dep Linguistics	☑ ☑	Advanced Certificate in TESOL MSc in Applied Linguistics	10 weeks 1/2 years	Teachers + 3 yrs experience Degree + substantial experience																																					
Exeter Univ - Dep of Language and Linguistics	☑	Cert in English for Teaching English Certificate in TEFL	10 weeks 10 weeks	Degree + experience Degree + experience																																					
Exeter Univ - School of Education	☑ ☑	Diploma in TEFL Diploma in Applied Linguistics	9 mos/4 yrs 9/23 mos	Degree + experience Not specified																																					
School of English & American Studies	☑	MA in Applied Linguistics MEd in Language Teaching Studies	11/23 mos 1 year	Degree Degree/Adv Dip Education																																					
Heriot-Watt Univ - Henry Home Institute of Education	☑	Certificate in TESOL Diploma in TESOL	1 term 3 terms	Degree + 3 yrs experience Degree + 3 yrs experience																																					
Leeds Univ - Dep of Linguistics	☑ ☑	MA in TESOL MA in Linguistics for ELT	3 terms 1/2 years	Degree + 3 yrs experience Teachers + 3 yrs experience																																					
Leeds Univ - School of Education	☑	Graduate Cert in Principles of TESOL Graduate Diploma in TESOL	1 semester 1 year	Teachers + some experience Teachers + some experience																																					
		MEd in TESOL	1/5 years	Teachers + 3 yrs experience																																					

Table A6.1a UK based courses- structure and content

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Mode of Contact	Institution contacted by letter and which agreed to take part in the survey.		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Institution contacted using the Internet	Institution contacted by letter as a potential student	
Modules	Compulsory Module		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Modules	Optional Module		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

INSTITUTION	MODE OF CONTACT	TYPE OF COURSE	LENGTH	ENTRY REQUIREMENTS	DISTANCE LEARNING	Action/Classroom Research	Applied Linguistics/ Linguistics	Audiovisuals	Bilingualism	CALL/IT	Classroom management	Classroom observation	Course/Curriculum Syllabus Design	Culture/Society/ Ideology	Discourse analysis	EAP/ESP	Error analysis	Grammar	Language across the curriculum	Language awareness	Language improvement	Lesson planning	Lexis	Literature	Management	Material design	Material evaluation	Methodology	Phonetics/ Phonology	Pragmatics/Syntax Semantics	Research methods	Second Language Learning	Self-access/ Distance Learning	Socio/Psycho linguistics	Teacher development	Teacher education	Teacher training	Teaching practice	Teaching skills	Teaching young learners	Testing		
Liverpool Univ - School of Education	G12	Advanced Certificate in TESOL	1 term	Postgraduate teachers																																							
London Univ - Inst. of Education - Dep of TESOL	G	MA in Applied Linguistics & TESOL MA in TESOL	year/ing 1/4 yrs	Overhead teachers Not specified																																							
Liverpool Univ - School of Languages and Linguistics	#	Certificate in TESOL	4 weeks	Good education, high standard of English, 21 years of age																																							
Manchester College Arts & Technology	G	Certificate in TEFLA	1 year	High level of education, 21 years of age																																							
Manchester Univ - Dep of Educational Studies	G12	Diploma in TESOL MEA in TESOL MEA Educational Technology and TESOL	1/2 years Up to 7 yrs Up to 6 yrs	Degree Teachers + 2 yrs experience Degree / Teaching Dip + 3 yrs experience Teachers + 5 yrs experience																																							
Newcastle Univ - Faculty of Arts - Language Centre	G12	Diploma in Linguistics for TESOL	9/13 months	Teaching qualif + 2 yrs exp																																							
Northumbria Univ - Dep of English	G	MA in Linguistics for TESOL	9 mos / ing	Teaching qualif + 2 yrs exp																																							
Northumbria Univ - Dep of Historical and Critical Studies		MA in Linguistics Postgraduate Diploma in TEFLA	1/2 years 2 years	Degree or teaching qualification																																							
Reading Univ - Centre for Applied Language Studies - Dep of Linguistic Science	G12	Certificate in TEFL Diploma in TEFL MA in TEFL MA in Applied Linguistics	1/2 terms 2 terms 12 mos/6 yrs 9 mos/4 yrs	Degree / Teaching Dip + substantial experience Degree / Teaching Dip + substantial experience Degree / Teaching Dip + substantial experience Degree																																							
College of St Mark & St John - affiliated to Exeter Univ	#	MA in Linguistics MEA in ELT MEA in TESP MEA in Teacher Training	9 mos/4 yrs 12 mos/ing 12 mos/ing 12 mos/ing	Degree Qualified teachers + 3 yrs ELT experience Qualified teachers + 3 yrs ELT experience Qualified teachers + 3 yrs ELT experience	Yes																																						
Surrey Univ - Division of Education - Dep of English Language and Linguistics	G12	Diploma in Applied Linguistics MA in Applied Linguistics Diploma in ELT MEA in ELT	9 months 1/2 years 4 semesters 4 semesters	Degree Degree Teaching qualif + some exp Teaching qualif + some exp																																							
Surrey Univ - Business School - Centre for TESOL	G12	Certificate in TESOL MA in TESOL	24 weeks 46 weeks	Non-restrictive as possible Non-restrictive as possible	Yes Yes																																						
Sussex Univ - Centre for Language in Education	G	MA in Applied Linguistics for Language Teaching	1 year	Degree + 2 yrs experience																																							
Surrey Univ - Centre for ELT	G12	PG Diploma in TESOL Methodology MA in Education TESOL MSc in CALL & TESOL MSc in TESOL	9 months 1 year 1 year 1 year	Degree Degree + experience Degree + experience Degree																																							

Table A6.1b UK based courses- structure and content

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Mode of Contact	Institution contacted by letter and which agreed to take part in the survey.		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Institution contacted using the Internet	Institution contacted by letter as a potential student	
Modules	Compulsory Module		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Modules	Optional Module		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

INSTITUTION	MODE OF CONTACT	TYPE OF COURSE	LENGTH	ENTRY REQUIREMENTS	DISTANCE LEARNING	Action/Classroom Research	Applied Linguistics/ Linguistics	Audiovisuals	Bilingualism	CALL/IT	Classroom management	Classroom observation	Course/Curriculum/ Syllabus Design	Culture/Society/ Ideology	Discourse analysis	EAP/ESP	Error analysis	Grammar	Language across the curriculum	Language awareness	Language improvement	Lesson planning	Lexis	Literature	Management	Material design	Material evaluation	Methodology	Phonetics/ Phonology	Phonetics/Syntax/ Semantics	Research methods	Second Language Learning	Self-access/ Distance Learning	Socio/Psycho linguistics	Teacher development	Teacher education	Teacher training	Teaching practice	Teaching skills	Teaching young learners	Testing		
Strathclyde Univ. - Faculty of Education	at	Certificate in TEFL	1 term	Teaching qualif + 2 yrs exp				<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>													
Strathclyde Univ. - Survey Univ. - English Language Institute	at	Diploma in TEFL PG Dip in Linguistics for TESOL	3 terms 17 months	Teaching qualif + 2 yrs exp Teacher + 2 yrs experience	Yes			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>									<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>													
Wales Univ. - Bangor - Dep of Linguistics		MA in Linguistics for TESOL MA in Linguistics	27 months 3/6 years	Teacher + 2 yrs experience Degree	Yes		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																																	
Wales Univ. - Cardiff - School of English Studies		Diploma in Applied Linguistics	2 semesters	Degree/ equiv. qualif exp			<input type="checkbox"/>												<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>									<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>													
Wales Univ. - Swansea - Centre for Applied Language Studies		MA in Applied Linguistics Certificate in TEFLA	1 year 6 weeks	Degree/ equiv. qualif exp Degree			<input type="checkbox"/>																																				
Wales Univ. - Cardiff, Univ. - Centre for Language Teacher Education		MA in ELT MA in ELT to Young Learners MA in ELTSP	1/4 years 1/4 years 1/4 years	Degree + experience Degree + experience Degree + experience			<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>												
Westminster Univ. - School of Languages		MA in Language Studies and Methods Certificate in Linguistics	1/4 years 3 years	Degree + experience Degree/ teach qualif exp			<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																							
York Univ. - Dep of Language and Linguistic Science		Diploma in Linguistics MA in Linguistics diploma in Linguistics & ELT	2 years 2 years 9 months	Degree/ teach qualif exp Degree/ teach qualif exp Degree			<input type="checkbox"/>																																				
		MA in Linguistics & ELT	1/2 years	Degree																																							

Table A6.1c UK based courses- structure and content

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## APPENDIX 7

### Tables comparing UK based course components

This appendix comprises three tables which provide comparative information about the course components of the UK based courses open to Italian teachers of E.F.L. which were surveyed by the author. The first table provides information about courses at Master level, the second table about courses at Diploma level, and the third table about courses at Certificate level. Courses at Master and at Diploma level are arranged in three groups. The first group refers to those courses which are specifically aimed at teachers of English as a Foreign Language. The second group refers to courses in Linguistics or Applied Linguistics. The third group refers to more general courses in English Language Teaching and Language Studies.









Modules	Compulsory Module	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Optional Module

Testing		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching young learners		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching skills			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching practice		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Teacher training				
Teacher education				
Teacher development				
Socio/Psycholinguistics		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-access/Distance Learning			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Second Language Learning		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Research methods				
Pragmatics/Syntax/Semantics			<input type="checkbox"/>	
Phonetics/Phonology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Methodology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Material evaluation		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Material design		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Management		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Literature			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Lexis			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lesson planning		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language improvement				
Language awareness				<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Language across the curriculum				
Grammar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Error analysis		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
EAP/ESP			<input type="checkbox"/>	
Discourse analysis		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Culture/Society/Ideology		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
Course/Curriculum/Syllabus Design		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom observation	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Classroom management		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CALL/IT			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Bilingualism				
Audiovisuals			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Applied Linguistics/Linguistics				
Action/Classroom Research				
TYPE OF COURSE	Cert in Techniques & Methods in TEFL Christ Church College Certificate in TEFL Aston Univ East Anglia Univ Essex Univ Reading Univ Sheffield Hallam Univ Certificate in TEFLA Manchester College University of Wales - Swansea Certificate in TESOL Lancaster Univ Leeds Univ Luton Univ Hertford Hallam Univ Sheffield Hallam Univ			

Table A7.3 UK based Certificate courses- course components

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