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Localizing an International English Teacher Training Course for Iranian Context

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Abstract

In order to cater for the ever-increasing demand for learning English, private language institutes have mushroomed across Iran. These institutes adopt different policies such as designing their own Teacher Training Course (TTC), following the syllabus of Certificate for Teaching English to Adults (CELTA), or localizing it for the Iranian context to train competent English teachers. Surprisingly, there exists little research evaluating these TTC's or investigating if localizing CELTA is an effective strategy for the Iranian context. This study aimed to fill this gap by delineating the steps taken by a widely-known Iranian language institute in localizing CELTA for the Iranian context, and secondly to determine if the teachers were satisfied with this localized TTC. Data collected through the websites and interviews were subjected to conceptual content analysis; while the data mined through evaluation questionnaires were analysed through quantitative descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that the Iranianized TTC suffered from discrepancies such as unreliable selection of the participants, lack of opportunities for teaching practices, not observing experienced teachers' classes, and focusing on received rather than experiential knowledge. These findings are discussed, and a number of practical suggestions are offered to improve the Iranian TTC.

Keywords: CELTA, English Teacher, Evaluation, Implementation, Planning, Private Language Institutes, Teacher Training Course

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Due to the pivotal importance accorded to teachers in educational milieus, evaluating teacher preparation courses has garnered attention form SLA researchers for the last two decades (Bayrakçı, 2009; Lee 2007; Pérez Cañado, 2018). Sandres and Horn (1998, p. 19) rightly state that "the single most important factor in determining student academic success or failure is the classroom teacher". To be a successful teacher, Harmer (2002) argues that teachers can improve their teaching knowledge and skills in different ways, among which attending TTC's is the most common method for most English teachers.

Recently, there has been a growing demand for learning English among Iranian teenagers and the youth (Sadeghi & Richards, 2016). However, Iranian formal system of English education at senior and junior high schools is not very effective (Sadeghi & Richards, 2015). Many a time a high school graduate, who has spent six years leaning English as a part of their general education, can hardly introduce themselves in English unless they have taken English lessons in Private Language Institutes (PLI's), which is increasingly the case these days (Bandpei, 2011; Dorshomal et al., 2013). As a result, in order to develop practical and oral skills in English, many young people take courses in Iranian PLI's, and these are the PLI's which play the main role in teaching English in the Iranian context (Mesri, 2009; Sadeghi & Richards, 2016). Accordingly, this research focuses on the PLI's rather than Iranian high schools.

However, Mirhosseini and Khodakarami (2015) argued that the language learners taking classes in some of these institutes did not improve very much in their speaking skills and speech fluency, which was their main reason for taking these courses. They argued that directors, teachers, and supervisors of these institutes did not have a clear understanding of the nature and complexity of communication in English. In the same vein, Sadeghi and Richards (2015) asserted that most of Iranian private institutes fail in teaching spoken English due to irrelevant curriculum, limitations of the classroom based-learning, and most importantly lack of competent teachers. This lack of competent teachers might be attributed to the fact that Iranian university graduates study solely theoretical courses at their BA and MA studies, and they do not experience any practical teaching course or do not have any observation during their studies. In order to compensate for lack of practical experience in teaching, Iranian PLI's hold 40-60 hour initial

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TTC's one to two times a year, and a large number of BA and MA graduates in English majors take these TTC's. However, these institutes do not follow any fixed and unified procedure for holding their TTC's, and each and every institute runs its own TTC. Consequently, most of these institutes do not approve of the certificates offered by other institutes, and the teacher candidates have to attend several TTC's in different institutes.

Given that teacher quality and student achievement are dependent on teacher education programs (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Pérez Cañado, 2018; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005), the critical importance of initial teacher education as "the first entry point to the teacher professional career" (Musset 2010, 15), and dearth of academic research and publishing on the localized TTC's or teaching programs (Abasifar & Fotovatnia, 2015; Abaszadeh, 2012; Akbari & Yazdanmehr, 2012; Ghasemi Bagherabadi & Mazdayasna, 2021; Baleghizadeh & Saeedi, 2021), this study aimed to investigate the procedures involved in holding the localized TTC in KOOSHA (coded not to reveal its real name) in order to see if this localization has been successful or not. To be more exact, it firstly aimed to find out what changes were made in planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of CELTA to make it suitable for the Iranian context, and secondly to see if these changes were welcomed by the Iranian teachers taking this course in KOOSHA.

1.2. Context of the Study

The current study was conducted in an Iranian private language institute coded as KOOSHA. There were several reasons why the researchers chose this particular institute. For one thing, KOOSHA is the institute following CELTA completely and indeed runs an Iranianized version of CELTA. Secondly, it is a well-established and popular Iranian PLI, had more than 96 branches, and had trained over 2000 English teachers, more than one hundred of whom hold CELTA certificates. Finally, many KOOSHA teachers had taken CELTA, so they could provide reliable data with regard to these two courses. The researchers decided to study the localized version of CELTA among the international TTCs because although each Iranian institute runs its own TTC and does not approve of the TTC's held in other institutes, almost all Iranian PLI's (for example, KOOSHA, Iran-Oxford Institute, Iran-Canada Institute, Iran-Cambridge Language Institute, and Dehkhoda Language Institute) approve of CELTA. More importantly, in some institutes (KOOSHA), all the teacher trainers must have CELTA certificate. Next, both CELTA and Iranian initial TTC's aim to prepare applicants with no teaching experience for teaching English to adults. Finally, there are so many institutes in Iran which follow the CELTA syllabus completely or partially

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(KOOSHA, Iran-Cambridge, Jihade-Daneshgahi, Anjomane-Elmi, Iran-Oxford, Iran-Canada, and Mojtame-Fanni Tehran). Having considered the above mentioned issues, the researchers aimed to investigate if localizing CELTA has been a successful policy for preparing Iranian English teachers.

1.3. Related Studies

Review of literature shows that there was little investigation in evaluating English teacher education programs, and it was not until 1980s that evaluation of English teacher education programs started to catch the attention of researchers in EFL context. A plethora of research has recently been conducted in various countries evaluating TTC's and programs (Bayrakçı, 2009; Burton, 2009; Coskun & Daloglu, 2010; Erozan, 2005; Hawkins & Norton, 2009; Mahmoodi, Rashtchi, & Abbasian, 2019; Odabaşı Çimer, Cakir, & Çimer, 2010). Bayrakçı (2009) reported that creating new materials during the course and collecting feedback after the course positively influences the impact of TTC's on teachers' practices. Evaluating English teacher training programs in Turkey through questionnaires and interviews, Odabaşı Çimer, Cakir, and Çimer (2010) found that these programs followed a pure transmission model, mostly focused on theoretical knowledge and did not allow the trainees to actively participate in their class. Based on evaluation questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observation, Erozan (2005) also evaluated the language improvement courses in a pre-service English teacher education program. The findings revealed that the language improvement courses were generally effective, but the student teachers needed more practice, exposure to more teaching methods and activities, and continuity and coherence among the courses. In their mixed-methods study, Ganji and Khoobkhahi (2022) investigated the extent to which Iranian English teachers localize their teaching techniques according to the levels and needs of the students of high school students in Sistan and Balouchestan province. While the analysis of the self-reported data in teachers' and students' questionnaires indicated that teachers followed the recommendations of teachers' guides, the interviews with the teacher supervisors and classroom observation showed the opposite.

However, TTC's in Iranian PLI's, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, have not been comprehensively evaluated by Iranian researchers. To be more exact, where studies have been conducted, they have either evaluated the TTC's held by Iranian Ministry of Education (Kazemi & Ashrafi, 2014; Rajabi, Kiany, & Maftoon, 2012) or they have focused on other aspects rather than localization (Mesri, 2009; Mirhosseini & Khodakarami, 2015; Sadeghi & Richards 2015; Sadeghi & Richards, 2016). However, very few studies investigated the TTC's held in these institutes (Abasifar & Fotovatnia, 2015;

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Abaszadeh, 2012; Akbari & Yazdanmehr, 2012), which mainly focused on their evaluation rather than comparison with international TTCs. To reach these aims, the following research questions were posed.

1. What changes are made in the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of CELTA to make it suitable for the Iranian context?
2. To what extent are the Iranian English teachers satisfied with the changes made to CELTA?

2. Materials and Method

2.1. Design

Applying a mixed-methods approach (side-by-side design), the current research aimed to find out what changes were made to CELTA to make it suitable for the Iranian context, and secondly to investigate to what extent the participants were satisfied with these changes. In order to answer research question one, qualitative data were gathered through websites, documents, and interviews. However, in order to answer the second research question, quantitative data gathered through questionnaire.

2.2.KOOSHA Participants

First of all, one of the researchers conducted face-to-face semi-structured interviews with three supervisors (Appendix A) and three English teachers (Appendix B) working in KOOSHA. Besides the interviews, the researchers distributed a researcher-made questionnaire among 64 English teachers teaching in KOOSHA (Appendix C). Table 1 summarizes the background information of these participants.

Table 1: *Background information of the participants in KOOSHA Institute*

Participant	Age	Degree	Experience	Gender
Supervisor A	34	MA in TEFL	10 years	M
Supervisor B	41	MA in TEFL	9 years	F
Supervisor C	39	PhD Student in TEFL	12 years	M
English Teacher A	23	BA (English Literature)	3 years	F
English Teacher B	28	MA in TEFL	5 years	F
English Teacher C	30	MA in Translation	4 years	F
English Teachers 1-64 (Questionnaire)	20-34	(BA & MA) in TEFL, Translation, and Literature	2-8 years	29 M 35 F

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2.3.CELTA Participants

In order to collect the data regarding the implementation of CELTA, the researchers interviewed six Iranian English teachers with CELTA certificates (Appendix D). Further, the researchers utilized a questionnaire with six open-ended questions to obtain data from those Iranian English teachers with CELTA certificate who were not ready for the interview (Appendix D). This open-ended questionnaire was emailed to twelve KOOSHA English teachers with CELTA certificate (eight male and four female teachers), who had taken CELTA in Turkey, Greece, and Armenia. Table 2 summarizes the background information of these participants.

Table 2: *Background information of the Iranian CELTA holders*

Participant	Age	Degree	Teaching Experience	Gender
CELTA Holder A	32	MA in TEFL	10 years	M
CELTA Holder B	28	MA in TEFL	8 years	F
CELTA Holder C	33	PhD student in TEFL	11 years	M
CELTA Holder D	35	MA in English Literature	7 years	M
CELTA Holder E	31	MA in Translation Studies	10 years	M
CELTA Holder F	36	MA (English Literature)	12 years	F
CELTA Holders1-12 (Questionnaire)	24-38	(BA and MA) in TEFL, Translation Studies, and English Literature	6-10 years	8 M 4 F

2.4.Sampling Procedure

In order to choose the interviewees (KOOSHA supervisors and English teachers), the researchers chose the participants through convenience sampling. To be more exact, the researchers chose those supervisors and English teachers who were available and ready to take part in the interviews. Next, the English teachers who filled out the questionnaires were chosen through cluster sampling. In fact, all those who were working in three branches of the institute were chosen as the sample and were asked to fill out the questionnaires. However, in order to choose the CELTA holders, the researchers employed snowball sampling technique since they did not know many English teachers holding CELTA certificates. Finally, it must be mentioned that in all these steps, the researchers continued their search for new data until they reached data saturation point.

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2.5.Development, Reliability, and Validity of the Data Collection Instruments

Because of the interactive nature of interviews (Best & Kahn, 1998; Nunan, 2004), semi-structured open-ended interviews were used in this study. Since all the participants' mother tongue was Persian, the interviews were conducted in Persian and were audio-recorded. There were three sets of interviews utilized in this study: interviews with supervisors, KOOSHA English teachers, and KOOSHA English teachers holding CELTA. As regards the validity of the interviews, the researchers used peer-checking suggested by Dörnyei (2007), that is, interview questions were given to three experts in the field to read and comment on the areas which needed modification. They were also asked to add or delete any questions they considered necessary or extra. Finally, the typescripts of the interviews were given to the interviewees for their endorsement and feedback, which is called validation interview (Dörnyei, 2007) in order to ensure validity.

Besides the interview, the researchers developed one open-ended questionnaire in order to collect information about CELTA. This questionnaire consisted of the same questions as those of the interviews conducted with CELTA holders. It mainly focused on the course implementation and candidates' involvement in the course. The other sections were not needed because the aims, selection procedure, course content, course topics, and evaluation criteria in CELTA were clearly mentioned in the available documents such as the CELTA syllabus, trainee handbook, and websites of CELTA centers. Because the questionnaires were almost the same as interviews, the same strategies of peer-checking and respondent feedback were followed to ensure reliability and validity.

Finally, the researchers developed and validated a close-ended questionnaires based on the results of the comparison between CELTA and the localized CELTA. This comparison revealed 20 items describing the main steps in holding the course, eleven of which were the changes made by KOOSHA course designers in order to make it suitable for the Iranian context (items 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 18, and 20). For example, limiting the TTC to the techniques for teaching a special book in KOOSHA, reducing the duration of the course, not observing real classes, having no written feedback about the teaching practices, and conducting the interviews in groups rather than individually. The other ten items included the steps which were similar to the policies adopted in CELTA such as providing the trainees with observation sheets, course schedule, and evaluation criteria. This questionnaire was intended to reveal the extent to which English teachers taking the localized CELTA embraced and approved of the changes made to CELTA. The questionnaire was given to three university professors who were teacher trainers to read and comment upon the wording of the items, add or delete items, and indicate if the items

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are really measuring the intended aspects. This stage of piloting resulted in deleting three items, adding two items, and changing items 2, 5, and 13. The questionnaire was piloted among 10 English teachers. Since the results of piloting showed the developed questionnaire enjoyed Cronbach's Alpha of 0.82, the researchers did not add or delete any items.

2.6.Data Collection Procedure

On the one hand, the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with three English teachers and three institute's supervisors working in KOOSHA. Then, to obtain more data about the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of this TTC, information provided on KOOSHA website was also collected. Finally, the evaluation questionnaire was distributed among 64 English teachers who had taken TTC in KOOSHA institute. On the other hand, in order to collect information about CELTA, the researchers utilized three data sources. The first source of data was the information available in the CELTA syllabus, CELTA trainee's book, and the websites of CELTA centers where this course was held. Then, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six KOOSHA English teachers with CELTA certificates who had taken CELTA abroad. Finally, an open-ended questionnaire was filled out by twelve Iranian CELTA holders.

2.7.Data Analysis Procedure

According to the previous research in this area (Bayrakçı, 2009; Burton, 2009; Coskun & Daloglu, 2010; Erozan, 2005; Hawkins & Norton, 2009; Mahmoodi, Rashtchi, & Abbasian, 2019; Odabaşı Çimer, Cakir, & Çimer, 2010), the researchers employed conceptual content analysis to analyze the audio-recorded interviews and text data, searching merely for the existence of the concepts. The type of content analysis was explicit and inductive. That is to say, although there was a list of possible categories according to the previous research, the researchers did not limit themselves to these categories and were ready for finding new ones. Having transcribed the data, the researchers read the texts two times carefully, put the related concepts under one category and chose names for the categories. Having gone through the first and second interviews, the researcher came up with the main categories of the data. Then, the researchers used an external code check, that is, they asked one of their colleagues to check the second interview using the list of categories already identified. Then, only one of the researchers did the rest of content analysis himself since the agreement between two coders was 87% and as Lombard, Snyder-Duch, and Bracken (2002) argued the agreement of 80% or greater between coders is acceptable. Then, the

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researchers answered questions such as where, when, why, who, how, and with what consequences to discover how the categories were related to their subcategories along the lines of their properties and dimensions. Finally, in order to analyze the evaluation questionnaire data, which were quantitative, the mean scores for each item was calculated. The results of quantitative data analysis are shown in Figure 1.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1.Research Question One (Qualitative)

The first research question addressed the main differences between the Iranianized version of CELTA and real CELTA. The analysis of the collected data revealed that there were eight main categories: aims, trainees' selection, teacher trainer, content, syllabus, presentation policy, trainees' involvement, and evaluation of the trainees. These categories were further divided into 21 subcategories in KOOSHA and 23 subcategories in CELTA.

Table 3: *Similarities and differences between the localized CELTA and CELTA*

Categories	Iranian TTC	CELTA Course
Aims	Institute level	Specific-International
Trainees' selection	Writing-Resume-Written exam-Interview	General Requirements-Registration Pre-interview tasks-Interview
Teacher trainer	Experience-Certificates	Experience-International certificates
Content	Topics-Source-Basis	Determined topics -Practical sources
Syllabus	Course duration-Syllabus specification	Different Modes-Course duration Different elements
Presentation	Lecture-based to workshop manner	Input-Exercise-Feedback-Practice
Trainees' involvement	Peer observations-Mini TPs-Feedback	Assignments-Observations-Teaching practices-Feedback sessions
Evaluation	Task-Rater-Criteria-Result	Tasks-Rater-Criteria-Result

3.2.Aims

The findings revealed that while CELTA aimed to train English teachers for EFL context and pursued three specific aims at international level, the TTC in KOOSHA aimed "to train competent English

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teachers for teaching in that institute" (Supervisor A). Supervisor B explained that "we do not aim to hold TTC as a source of income like many Iranian institutes, but to choose the top applicants and employ them as English teachers". By comparison, the aims in CELTA were “acquire essential subject knowledge and familiarity with the principles of effective teaching, acquire a range of practical skills for teaching English to adult learners, demonstrate their ability to apply their learning in a real teaching context” (CELTA syllabus, n.d.).

3.3.Trainees' selection (requirements)

The teacher applicants, with less than 5 years teaching experience, have to fill out a teacher application form online (KOOSHA, n.d.). "The candidates write an argumentative essay on a given topic, which is assessed by the experts in the central office, and some candidates might fail this stage" (Supervisor B). The next step in the selection procedure was the written exam, "a mixture of IELTS and GRE exams designed at the institute" (Supervisor C). Finally, they had to be interviewed in groups of ten candidates, lasting for an hour. The requirements which were specified for the CELTA candidates were totally different from those of KOOSHA, specially the interview. Candidates must be at least 18 years old, have the potential to develop the necessary skills to become effective teachers, and have a competence in English that enables them to undertake the course successfully (The official CELTA entry requirements, n.d.). Having met the above requirements, the candidates have to register, using online registration system. Then, they have to perform a pre-interview task designed to help the candidates prepare for the interview. And finally, all the candidates had to be interviewed (face-to-face, online, or on the phone) which typically lasts around 40 minutes (CELTA application tips, n.d.).

3.4.Teacher trainer

KOOSHA supervisors emphasized that "teacher trainers were usually experienced teachers of the institute" (Supervisor C), having between 10 to 15 years of experience" (Supervisor A). Supervisor B noted that "all the trainers in KOOSHA have CELTA". However, CELTA trainers had much more experience in teaching English; they have taught English since 1987, 1988, 1992, 1996, and 1997. Most of CELTA trainers had done both CELTA and DELTA, and four of them had taught English and trained teachers in more than 6 countries (Meet the team, n.d.).

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3.5.Content

The TTC in KOOSHA included the theories and principles of language teaching and the main teaching methodology followed by the institute's teachers (KOOSHA, n.d.). "Being aware of the teaching methods and theories helps teachers make sounder decisions while teaching" (Supervisor B). During the course, the trainees teache one part of the conversation book, following the teaching steps suggested by the TTC trainers. "Besides knowing the theories, the candidates must learn several practical techniques and a series of steps for teaching language skills and components" (Supervisor A). All the supervisors expressed that although TTC in KOOSHA follows CELTA syllabus, they do not cover all the materials and have to delete some parts such as feedback sessions, replace real teaching classes with short teaching practices teaching peers, and suffice to oral feedback on the trainees' teaching practices. By comparison, the topics in CELTA were as follows: Learners and teachers, and the teaching and learning context; language analysis and awareness; language skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing; planning and resources for different teaching contexts; developing teaching skills and professionalism (CELTA syllabus, n.d.). CELTA source books were divided into two groups: grammar books and teaching methodology books (Recommended books, n.d.).

Syllabus

The TTC in KOOSHA lasts for 60 hours and consists of both the theoretical part (input sessions) and the practical part (short TPs). It is completed in 10 to 18 days and is offered from morning to afternoon (KOOSHA, n.d.). Supervisor A mentioned "we give them a hand-out, specifying exactly what activities they will do in each session." However, CELTA could be taken full-time taking usually 4-5 weeks, part-time taking a few months to over the course of a year, or online taking a minimum of 10 weeks to a maximum of an academic year (Ways to take CELTA, n.d.). CELTA took much longer than KOOSHA, covering a minimum of 120 contact hours and consisting of seven components: input sessions, supervised lesson planning, teaching practice (six assessed hours), feedback on teaching, peer observation, observation of experienced teachers (minimum six hours), and consultation time (CELTA syllabus, n.d.).

3.6.Presentation policy

The presentation policy in KOOSHA consisted of two parts: lecture-based sessions and teaching practices. In lecture-based sessions, "the course trainer provides the trainees with the necessary background information about teaching principles and ends with the most dominant methodology

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followed in the institute for teaching the language skills and components" (Teacher B). The second part was described by Teacher A as "the most interesting part, all of us had 5-8 teaching practices and this was followed by the feedback by our classmates and the trainer". In CELTA, the trainees were first provided with the necessary input; then they practiced through preparing lesson plans and observing English classes; and finally started teaching in a real class. "We were taught the necessary knowledge and skills through the input sessions, which was completely learner-cantered" (CELTA holder C). CELTA holder C added that "then, we prepared a lesson plan with the help of our tutor. Besides observing our peers' teaching, we observed experienced teachers classes". CELTA holder C continued that "in my mind, participating in the feedback sessions after the observation sessions was really useful". Finally, he asserted that "the main difference between KOOSHATTC and CELTA was that we taught a real class with non-native students, but in Iran you teach your classmates".

3.7.Trainees' involvement

The trainees' involvement consisted of mini TPs, observation, and feedback. The trainees in KOOSHA were given the opportunity to practice-teach part of the book during the course. Supervisor A said "It depends on the trainees' needs. Some need more TPs. They have more than 4-5 TPs, sometimes 8 TPs". Regarding observations, teacher C expressed "unfortunately, we did not observe experienced teachers classes. We only observed our classmates' teaching, which was not very useful". After each TP, the trainee and his classmates have to fill out self-evaluation and peer-evaluation sheets respectively. Then, the course trainer points out the main problems with the trainees' teaching and help them improve their teaching (KOOSHA, n.d.). Active involvement of CELTA trainees was guaranteed by pre-course and during-the-course written assignments, observation, teaching practices, and feedback sessions. Four of the CELTA holders (1, 4, 5, and 7) mentioned that "we were required to study a lot and prepare for the course. There were a lot of exercises and assignments". The trainees are expected to do one pre-course task, and write four assignments of about 750-1000 words (CELTA syllabus, n.d.). CELTA holder B commented "we observed our peer's classes, and observed the classes taught by experienced teachers for around six hours". Praising the TPs in CELTA, all the interviewed CELTA holders noted that "the most challenging part of CELTA was teaching real classes for six hours". After observing classes, the trainer starts the feedback session with the strengths and weaknesses of previous day's lessons, trying to point out what didn’t go well and offer solutions. Finally, the trainee will receive the trainer’s written comments

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on and evaluation of his own lesson. Besides the tutor, the trainee receives feedback from their peers (CELTA syllabus, n.d.).

3.8.Evaluation

The last point of comparison was the evaluation of the trainees, divided into subcategories of tasks, raters, evaluation criteria, and the result in both contexts. In KOOSHA TTC, the evaluation was based on during-the-course TPs and the final TP. The trainees taught part of a lesson; a dialogue, a reading passage, a listening, or a grammar exercise. This teaching practice lasted for 10-15 minutes. The other trainees, the course trainer, and examiners played the role of students; and the examiners evaluated the task using CELTA evaluation criteria (KOOSHA, n.d.). Supervisor B noted "the examiners use CELTA criteria for evaluating the teaching performances, and both during-the-course and final demos are considered in the evaluation. And, the results of the evaluation are in the form of Pass A, Pass B, Pass, and Fail". Evaluation in CELTA followed a very clear procedure and was objective, continuous, and integrated. It happened during the course and both components of teaching practice and written assignments were considered. The trainees taught for a total of six hours and completed four written assignments during the course (CELTA syllabus, n.d.). The assignments and activities were internally assessed first and then moderated by a Cambridge English approved assessor. There was a detailed checklist for evaluating the teaching performances. This checklist consisted of two parts: prepare and plan for the effective teaching of adult ESOL learners (including 14 elements), demonstrate professional competence as teachers (including 28 elements). For evaluating the writings, there were separate criteria consisting of different elements. The criteria for assessing task one consisted of (six elements), task two (four elements), task three (three elements), and task four (four elements). The certificate was awarded to candidates who met the course requirements and whose performance met or exceeded the criteria in both assessment components. The grades were Pass A, Pass B, Pass, and Fail (CELTA syllabus, n.d.).

3.9.Research Question Two (Quantitative)

The study also aimed to find out to what extent KOOSHA teachers were satisfied with the changes made by KOOSHA authorities in localizing CELTA for the Iranian context. Thus, the researchers developed a 20-item questionnaire, consisting of 11 changes (items 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 18, and 20) made by KOOSHA course designers in localizing CELTA and 9 steps which were similar to CELTA. The changes were as follows. First of all, the TTC in KOOSHA aims to prepare candidates to teach the main course

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books taught in KOOSHA and employ the top trainees at the end of the course. They believed that since the TTC is not very long, there is no time to cover all the materials needed for a comprehensive course enabling the candidates for teaching in every EFL context. Thus, most Iranian TTC's present the trainees with a series of steps and practical techniques for teaching language skills and components, and expecting them to follow these steps exactly in their demos and real classes. They believed that employing the top candidates at the end motivates them greatly, which influences their participation in the course and their leaning. Next, regarding the written exam and essay writing task, Supervisor A explained "they are skilfully designed to measure the candidates' general English proficiency, which is needed for an English teacher". Supervisor A added "the focus group interview is an ideal way for measuring the candidates' speaking ability, since the candidates should be able to speak in a natural setting like a discussion, not an individual interview". As regards the trainers' selection, supervisors explained that trainers should be experienced so that they know all the rules and regulations of the institute, and that attending an international TTC such as CELTA gives the trainers the power and authority to teach the less experienced ones. Other changes were to do with reducing the course to 60 hours, following the dominant teaching methodology of the institute, and deleting the real observation from the TTC. The supervisors argued that Iranian candidates get tired and bored with long TTC's and expect the trainers to give the most they can in a short time. Thus, they have to shorten the course and focus on those aspects and steps of teaching which are advised by experienced teachers. Plus, they reasoned that trainees' observations do interrupt the natural routine of the class and teaching, and both the teacher and the students object to the presence of observers. It is natural that we cannot cover all the materials covered in CELTA since we have a shorter course, and we have to present the trainees with some background and input in the first sessions since many of them do not know much about teaching methodology (Supervisor B). The last changes were concerned with the feedback and observation after the TTC. The trainees received just oral feedback during the course since there is not enough time for having long feedback sessions. Finally, those trainees who passed conditionally were asked to observe experienced teachers classes and work under his supervision in order to improve their teaching. Figure 1 below shows the participants' satisfaction level with these policies and practices.

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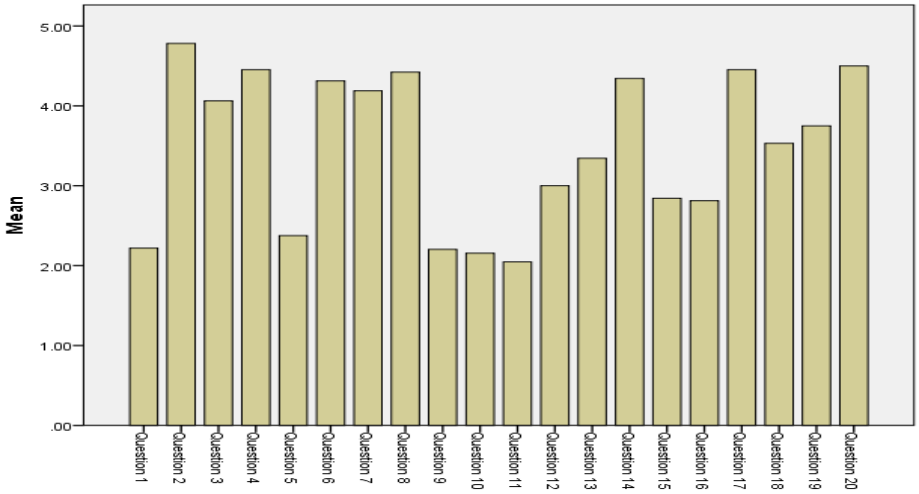


Figure 1. *English teachers' satisfaction level with KOOSHA's teacher training course*

The analysis of the participants' responses showed that they were least satisfied with item 1 (2.21), limiting the TTC to preparing teachers for a very specific context rather than preparing for every EFL context. Another change which was not embraced by the participants was the fact that KOOSHA authorities employed group interview for assessing the candidates' speaking ability (2.37) instead of 40-minute-long individual interview and pre-interview tasks which were employed for choosing CELTA candidates. Furthermore, the participants were not satisfied with other steps taken by the authorities in planning the course and choosing the course content. The teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the institute's policy to limit the course content to the main teaching methodology followed by the institutes' teachers (2.20). In fact, items 1 and 9 showed that the teachers did not like to be constrained in their teaching, limited to a series of steps, and be forced to follow a rigid type of teaching. The teachers' dissatisfaction with items 10 and 11 (2.15 and 2.04 respectively) showed that course designers did not plan the course according to the participants' expectations. The results indicate that the participants expressed dissatisfaction with course duration and scheduling.

The participants were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with changes expressed in items 12, 13, 15, and 16 (3, 3.34, 2.84, and 2.81 respectively). In other words, the participants were not sure if the information provided in the hand-out was enough for the course. Besides, they were not very much satisfied with the first sessions of the course which were lecture-based. However, the most serious problems of the course seemed to be lack of opportunities for students to have real teaching, enough TPS, and observing experienced teachers' classes. They did not express very much satisfaction with the mini-TPs they had during the course and observing their peer's teaching practices. They were fairly satisfied

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with the feedback they received after their mini-TPs, but it seems they needed more constructive and insightful feedback.

On the other hand, the participants were satisfied or highly satisfied with 50% of the steps taken by KOOSHA, whether these were the same as CELTA or related to the changes made. They were quite satisfied (3.75 out of 5) with the way their final demos and teaching practices were evaluated. It needs to be mentioned that KOOSHA evaluators employed a checklist based on CELTA criteria for assessing the trainees' teaching practices. Next, they agreed with the course designers in employing written exam and essay writing tasks for choosing more proficient candidates (4.45 and 4.06). Fortunately, the teachers welcomed these policies which were adopted by KOOSHA authorities in the selection of candidates. Furthermore, the teachers believed that the teacher trainers in KOOSHA were qualified enough for teaching the course and approved of the idea to follow CELTA syllabus in holding an Iranian English TTC (4.31). Sad to say, although almost all participating teachers believed that observing an experienced teacher class is necessary for a trainee (4.42), the trainees were not allowed to observe experienced teachers' classes during the TTC. Still another good point is that the teachers unanimously agreed that they needed to learn some specific steps and techniques for teaching language skills and components (4.34). This might seem contradictory to their responses to items 1 and 9, where they expected the course to teach them general teaching techniques and skills. Like CELTA trainees, the trainees in KOOSHA were provided with certain checklists and forms for their observations. The participants believed that these forms helped them have a more focused observation. Finally, the participants were most satisfied with two important decisions made by the course designers. They were highly satisfied with the institute's policy to employ the top trainees at the end of the course (4.78) and to allow conditional-pass trainees, those trainees whose scores are on the borderline, observe experienced teachers' classes after they started their job as English teachers in KOOSHA (4.50).

4. Conclusions

This study aimed to find out the main changes made by an Iranian private language institute to adapt CELTA for the Iranian context and to check if these changes were welcomed by the participating teachers. The results of the study indicated that KOOSHA aimed to train English teachers for teaching in a specific language institute, but the trainees were expected to immediately apply what they learned in the theoretical part of the course in a class without much preparation, TP, or observation. Next, KOOSHA course designers utilized written exam and essay writing task to choose the most proficient candidates,

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but conducted group interviews instead of individual interviews. Furthermore, all the teacher trainers in KOOSHA were experienced teachers and CELTA holders, but does having CELTA certificate enable the person to teach localized-CELTA?

As regards the content, KOOSHA followed CELTA syllabus, but this seemed impossible since CELTA took 120 hours, while the TTC in KOOSHA lasted for 60 hours. As a consequence, the teacher trainers had to reduce the practical components of the course such as TPs, feedback sessions, observations, and experiencing real classes. Indeed, they deleted those elements of CELTA which were the main sources of experiential knowledge for the trainees. All in all, CELTA took longer, covered more topics, enjoyed more resources, included longer feedback sessions, and most importantly contained observing experienced teachers' real classes. Sad to say, Iranian teacher trainees just attended the class and took notes; they did not do much reading or writing during the course. They had 4-8 TPs, each one lasting for 10-15 minutes, which was no comparison with CELTA TPs. Finally, examiners in the Iranian context utilized CELTA criteria for assessing the teaching performances of the trainees during the course and on the final demo.

Analysis of the evaluation questionnaire showed that the participating teachers agreed with 50% of the changes made by KOOSHA course designers. They agreed with the designers' decisions to employ the top trainees, to use essay writing tasks and written test in order to choose the most proficient candidates, and to follow CELTA syllabus and evaluation criteria. Besides, they expected the course designers to allow them observe the experienced teachers' classes rather than their peers' TPs. Finally, they were highly satisfied with the observation sheets which were developed for self- and peer-observation and with the institutes' decision to allow conditional-pass trainees to observe real classes. However, they were not satisfied with the fact that they had no opportunity to observe real classes, that the course solely covered a hand-out, and that it focused on the dominant teaching methodology followed by KOOSHA teachers. Furthermore, the participants expected the course to take longer and to be spread over a longer period rather than intensively held from morning to evening. They also expressed dissatisfaction with the lecture-based sessions, mini-TPs they had, and the feedback they received following their teaching practices. To top it all, they were most dissatisfied with the candidates' selection procedure, that is to say, evaluating the speaking performances of ten applicants in a group interview as they are discussing. It needs to be added that the examiners and trainers did not have any criteria for scoring the interviews, the interviews were not recorded for later check, and the interview lasted for an hour, leaving each candidate just 6 minutes to talk in the best of all possible worlds.

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With these findings, the researchers believe that the following implications can be drawn for improving the Iranian TTC's. The researchers strongly recommended that KOOSHA supervisors conduct both individual and group interviews for assessing the speaking abilities of the candidates. Although few centers conduct both individual and group interviews, the time of the group interview is not enough for ten candidates. Participating in a discussion is quite different from a dialogue between the interviewee and interviewer. Irrelevant factors such as the ability of the discussion leader in involving the trainees, the topic of discussion, and the personality features of the candidates might influence their degree of involvement in the discussion. Next, monitoring the discussion between 10 trainees and scoring their performance subjectively at the same time without later checking of the video file cannot be considered a reliable means of assessment. The examiners are advised to use a checklist for the scoring and evaluate the trainees after watching the videos 2 to 3 times. Although it is very prestigious for an Iranian English teacher to have CELTA, it is not a very advanced and professional course in language teaching, enabling you to become a teacher trainer. Thus, it is recommended to employ teacher trainers who have passed higher-level courses in teaching such as DELTA or an international trainer training course, not a TTC. Another suggestion is to increase the course duration or spread it over a longer time span since teaching CELTA syllabus in 60 hours is almost impossible. In this way, teacher trainees have more time to do TPs during the course and observe more classes. Another vital element to be added to the Iranian mini-CELTA is to provide opportunities for the trainees to observe real classes taught by experienced teachers, not demos given by their peers in unreal classes. Finally, in order to further involve the trainees in the course, course designers are strongly recommended to assign different assignments such as writing critical reports about different elements of the course or to provide the trainees with the video recording of the experienced teachers' classes to watch and criticize.

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Appendix A (Semi-structured interview for institute supervisors)

1. What are the main aims of the English teacher training courses?
2. What materials are taught during these courses?
3. What are the requirements for attending the course?
4. How are the trainees involved during the course?
5. How are the trainers selected? Do they have the needed qualifications?
6. What are the strengths and weaknesses of these courses?
7. What criteria do you use for assessing the candidates' teaching performances?

Appendix B (Interview for English teachers)

1. What were your main reasons for attending the TTC?
2. What materials were taught during the course?
3. What were the requirements for attending the course?
4. How were the trainees involved during the course?
5. Were you satisfied with the teacher trainer?
6. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the course?

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Appendix C

Evaluation Questionnaire for the teachers participating in KOOSHA's TTC

Dear Participant

The following questionnaire is designed in order to assess the changes made by KOOSHA authorities for making CELTA suitable for the Iranian context. You are presented with twenty items describing these changes and the policies which are not changed. Please read each item carefully and indicate to what extent you are satisfied with the change made. You can show your level of satisfaction with these changes by choosing a number from 1 (extremely dissatisfied) to 5 (extremely satisfied). Your responses are kept confidential and will solely be used for research purposes.

Full Name: Age: Field: Degree: Teaching experience:

N	Questions (Changes and similarities)	1	2	3	4	5
1	The course aims to prepare teachers who can teach English in KOOSHA.					
2	The top trainees will be employed after the course ends.					
3	Essay writing task could measure the applicants' general English proficiency.					
4	The written exam could help the institute choose more proficient candidates fairly.					
5	The applicants' speaking ability should be assessed in a group interview.					
6	The teacher trainer was qualified enough for teaching the teacher training course.					
7	KOOSHA course designers follow CELTA syllabus in holding the course.					
8	Observing experienced teachers' classes is important for a trainee.					
9	The course focused on the dominant teaching methodology followed by KOOSHA teachers.					
10	The teacher training course lasted for 60 hours, which is enough.					
11	The course is held intensively, from morning to afternoon.					
12	The hand-out contained enough materials for the course.					
13	The first sessions should be input-centred and lecture-based.					
14	The trainees should learn certain steps for teaching language skills and components.					

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15	The mini-TPs we had during the course helped us improve our teaching skills.					
16	Observing our peers' teaching practices was really useful.					
17	The observation sheets helped us have better observations.					
18	We received useful feedback on our teaching's strengths and weaknesses.					
19	The applicants' final demos were fairly evaluated.					
20	The trainees who are conditional pass can observe experienced teachers classes later.					

Appendix D (Interview and Open-ended Questionnaire for CELTA Holders)

1. What were your main reasons for attending CELTA?
2. What materials were taught during this course?
3. How were the trainees involved during the course?
4. What were the strengths of CELTA?
5. What were the weaknesses of CELTA?
6. To what extent can CELTA prepare teachers for teaching in Iranian language institutes?
7. What are the main differences between CELTA and TTC's in Iranian language institutes?

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