Online Language Teacher Education in Bangladesh: A Possibility Ahead

Nazida A. Fabee
Graduate Student
Department of English and Humanities
BRAC University, Bangladesh

Asifa Sultana, PhD
Assistant Professor
Department of English and Humanities
BRAC University, Bangladesh
Corresponding Email: bdliza@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This exploratory study investigates the possibility of Online Language Teacher Education (OLTE) in Bangladesh for the secondary level English teachers’ ongoing development. Due to infrastructural limitations such as inadequate number of trainers, availability of training programmes, distance to the training centre, face-to-face trainings are often difficult to avail. The authors investigate the level of acceptance of OLTE among the secondary level language teachers in Bangladesh. In this study 40 English language teachers and 10 teacher educators participated and responded to a questionnaire and a follow-up interview. The findings suggest that the English language teachers face problems in traditional training system due to location, schedule conflict, time limitation, and lack of ongoing support. OLTE rather helps them attend trainings overcoming the location and time constraints.

Keywords: Online teacher education, technology in teaching, Bangladesh

Introduction

The traditional face-to-face teacher education is not always convenient due to some constraints like location issue and time shortage (Murray, 2013), which can be improved by integrating online education into the existing system. Online teacher education, a modified version of distance education, is the latest technological advancement in education. The focus of this study is on the short training programme designed for the teachers’ continuous development in Bangladesh. The researchers aim at few specific research
Online education is the kind of knowledge creation system where most of the teaching-learning processes take place online and only the essential aspects are covered face-to-face. The needs for education beyond the political boundaries of the countries have also influenced language teacher education. Therefore, it is delivered online in some universities and organizations as well. According to Murray (2013), OLTE is that professional development opportunity for teachers of English to speakers of other languages where at least 80% is delivered online.

In OLTE, English language teacher education gets the priority because of the growth of English as a global language. Thus, a number of agencies and institutions have focused on TESOL and some other similar programmes for incorporating online education (Murray, 2013). Most of the online courses are similar to the traditional face-to-face and distant courses in terms of the interactive content input from the teachers and queries from learners (Murray, 2013; Nunan, 1999). However, the nature of OLTE practised in TESOL and other programmes is somewhat different from the aim of this research. These online programmes are steered towards providing master’s degree and certificates for professional development, whereas this research explores the possibilities of OLTE in the traditional teacher training system.
The aim of this study is not particularly course-focused; it is rather focused on a continuous process of overall development of the English teachers. Therefore, the operational definition of OLTE for this particular study is adapted as the following: OLTE refers to that professional development opportunity for language teachers where at least 80% of the teaching and learning elements are delivered online; the development process can have limited time-period, or it can be over the lifetime.

**Social constructivism in language teachers’ development**

The underlying concept of OLTE is to educate learners in one platform beyond any physical or time restraint. Almost all the OLTE programmes accentuate the interaction and collaboration among learners, and between learners and the teachers (Murray, 2013). In OLTE, one of the common practices is creating online communities, and a broadly used tool is the discussion forum (Arnold & Ducate, 2006; Murray, 2013) where all the learners can participate and give their opinions on a selected topic or issue. All the learners share their views concerning the topic and construct knowledge by critiquing and evolving one another’s perspectives (Murray, 2013), which resembles the theory of social constructivism. Such interactions also reflect Vygotsky’s (1978) view on the importance of social interaction for cognitive development of individuals, and his speculation that people cannot learn in isolation; learning occurs when individuals interact with other people from society (as cited in Martha & Hashimoto, 1997).

Yet, there is a contradiction regarding the social learning process of the learners in online environments. According to Russell (1993, as cited in Martha & Hashimoto, 1997), learning process in online environment is autonomous where a learner constructs knowledge on his/her own in separation from the society. In terms of OLTE, learners sometimes have to work individually, but that does not indicate autonomous learning. They have to learn individually for cooperating and enhancing their community learning as they are distant learners (Robb, 2006 as cited in Murray, 2013). Moreover, in asynchronous communication, learners get time to reflect on their own which helps to collaborate effectively with others (Arnold & Ducate, 2006). Sometimes learners work individually in knowledge construction, but the outcome is prolonged when social aspect is involved; social interaction can eventually inspire and guide ideas to evolve (Arnold & Ducate, 2006; Martha & Hashimoto, 1997).
English language teacher education in Bangladesh

In recent years, teacher education in Bangladesh is shifting towards a new paradigm by integrating ICT in all possible facets. There are several government, non-government and foreign-aided institutions in Bangladesh that provide teacher education for the English teachers. Yet, the number of secondary teacher education programmes is fewer than those of primary teacher education programmes. Besides, there are only three major programmes operated for secondary teacher education. The government project, the Teacher Quality Improvement (TQI), targets English teachers of all secondary schools of Bangladesh since 2006 (English in Action [EIA], 2009), which hold regular training programmes. Apart from that, there are other government and non-government organizations that provide degrees like B.Ed and M.Ed as qualifications for secondary level teachers. However, these are one-off programmes for certification, whereas the secondary English teachers need frequent trainings or a mode that can keep them updated with regular changes concerning English language teaching.

Secondary teacher training programme PACE, initiated by BRAC is providing in-service training to English teachers since 2002 (Jamil, 2012), which sets refresher programmes for participant teachers. On the other hand, English in Action (EIA) is a nine-year project implemented by the UK government that has been providing training to English teachers since 2008 (EIA, 2009). The TQI and BRAC PACE programmes provide national curriculum oriented teacher training. These comprise all other subjects along with English, whereas EIA aims only at communicative use of English. Moreover, all of these trainings are mostly dependent on traditional face-to-face systems that have some drawbacks. These trainings take place for a very short period of time and the contents are not covered in detail due to resource constraints (Access to Information Programme [a2i], 2015). Besides, the number of teacher trainers is inadequate in comparison to that of the teachers; the ratio of total teachers and teacher trainers in Bangladesh is 357:1 that sometimes adversely affects the quality of training (a2i, 2015). In addition to that, there is lack of monitoring which affects the actual training and stops the teachers from remaining updated with the latest development (a2i, 2015). Apart from these aspects, location is also a major problem for attending training sessions, especially for female teachers from rural areas (a2i, 2015) as physical presence is required for teacher training.

To minimise the drawbacks of traditional face-to-face teacher training, some measures have already been taken. One of the major initiatives is the
use of Computer Assisted Learning (CAL) in the teaching and learning process which is used in teacher training from a few years ago. Teacher training programmes of government, BRAC PACE and EIA use multimedia or computer assisted learning for training the secondary school teachers (a2i, 2014; EIA, 2015; Jamil, 2012). Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP) funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has started teacher training using multimedia tools and smartphones for endorsing convenience, ongoing development, collaboration among teachers, and interaction between teachers and school administrators (Pouzevara & Khan, 2008). The government has involved school administrations with respective teachers which gives opportunity to the teachers to receive training and use ICT tools from schools. Likewise, EIA has started using mobile phones for training and monitoring purposes; they provide audio-visual materials to the teachers hosted on low-cost mobile phones (EIA, 2015). Above all, the government has created the Teachers Portal which is “an online open learning platform for teachers of general, madrasa and vocational education system in Bangladesh” (a2i, 2015, p. 2). It will bring the teachers into one shared stand where they can communicate and collaborate with each other. Although it is currently used only for sharing multimedia contents among teachers and only a small number of them has joined the portal, the government’s policy indicates that all the teachers of Bangladesh are to join it in the next few years (a2i, 2015). Therefore, it can also be developed as an online teacher training platform in future (a2i, 2015). Additionally, the most important mode for online collaboration and training is an internet-enabled device, which is available at low cost. Due to the low-cost smartphones and the decreasing price of internet, people have developed interest in various online applications. In last two years (2013-2015), the total number of mobile phones and internet subscriptions in Bangladesh have increased by 19% (Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission [BTRC], 2015b) and 48% (BTRC, 2015a) respectively. These are strong indicators that the implementation of online teacher training is not likely to receive a lot of technological challenges.

Methodology

In this study a mixed-method approach is followed. It includes responses of the English language teachers and the teacher educators to identify the possibilities of OLTE in Bangladesh. The study has been conducted in Dhaka with two groups of participants (Tab. 1). In the first group, there are 40 English teachers from seven schools in Dhaka. The participants are all
English teachers at the secondary level schools where the medium of instruction is Bangla. The authors have used convenience sampling as they try to ensure that only some of the participants have experience in the OLTE scenario. The second group includes 10 teacher educators from different educational organizations who are involved in training the secondary level teachers. It is to be noted that the main focus of this study is to identify the needs and opinions of the English teachers, whereas the teacher educators’ perspectives have been collected for triangulating the data. To ensure genuine information, and to keep the participants at ease, the identities of the participants are kept anonymous.

Table 1. General profile of the English teachers and the teacher educators

| Age (Years) | Frequency (f) | Academic Background                                      |
|-------------|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 26-30       | 3             | B.A. in English, M.A. in English (ELT/Linguistics/Literature), B.Ed., M.Ed. |
| 31-35       | 7             |                                                          |
| 36-40       | 14            |                                                          |
| 41-45       | 9             |                                                          |
| 46-50       | 7             |                                                          |
| Teacher Educators | | |
| Age (Years) | Frequency (f) | Academic Background                                       |
| 31-35       | 2             | M.A. in English (ELT/Linguistics/Literature), M.Ed., Professional development trainings |
| 36-40       | 3             |                                                          |
| 41-45       | 2             |                                                          |
| 46-50       | 2             |                                                          |
| 51-55       | 1             |                                                          |

The authors have used a questionnaire as an instrument and a set of follow-up interview questions for conducting the study. The questionnaire contains 17 questions comprising of both close-ended and open-ended questions. Some of the close ended questions are MCQ type and some are based on a five-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932). These close-ended questions are followed up with additional open-ended questions. In addition, detailed responses are collected from the teacher educators through a set of six questions in an interview setting. However, to conduct the teacher survey, the authors have selected seven Bangla medium schools. After that they have contacted the school authorities and then have conducted the survey with the teachers at the appointed time. The teacher educators’ interviews have been conducted over the telephone. For data analysis, the responses from the questionnaire have been converted into percentages, except for the
elaborated ones. The open-ended questions from both the questionnaire and the interviews have been analysed in detail.

Results

**Findings from the teachers’ questionnaire**

Most of the responses from the English teachers are presented in Table 2, and some are stated descriptively here. As shown in Table 2 (Item 1), 20% of the teachers who did not participate in teacher education programme were relatively younger than other teachers. It is possible they were still exploring teaching as a profession, and given some more exposure, they will join the teacher education programmes.

Some of the teachers had negative remarks regarding mobile based internet (17.5%, Table 2), and they identified that it was because of slow internet connection and their lack of interest in gadgets. In terms of social networking sites, more than 60% teachers (Table 2) stated that it will benefit them in their work. However, some of the teachers had reservations against the use of social networking sites for training purposes since they thought that these platforms were inappropriate for professional activities. The teachers who joined the Teachers Portal, as per instructions from the government, used to share multimedia contents among them, specially the lessons for classroom activities (20%, Table 2). Yet all the teachers agreed to join online training, if their school authorities would recommend it as a part of their professional development (Table 2). Moreover, some of the teachers identified points of improvement where they suggested that there was a need for training regarding online education but helplines needed to be opened for technical supports (Table 2).

| Item | Questions                                      | Responses | (f) | (%) |
|------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------|-----|-----|
| 1    | Already participated in any teacher education programme | Yes       | 32  | 80  |
|      |                                               | No        | 8   | 20  |
| 2    | Time span for most of the teacher education programmes attended | 1-5 days  | 10  | 25  |
|      |                                               | 6-10 days | 18  | 45  |
|      |                                               | 11-15 days| 8   | 20  |
|      |                                               | 20-25 days| 4   | 10  |
|   | Question                                                                 | Strongly agree | Agree | Not sure | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------|----------|----------|------------------|
| 3 | Satisfied with the locations of training facilities, schedule and transportations | 0              | 0     | 0        | 0        | 0                |
|   | Strongly agree                                                          | 5              | 12.5  | 0        | 10       | 22               |
|   | Agree                                                                    | 3              | 7.5   | 0        | 8        | 23               |
|   | Not sure                                                                | 10             | 25    | 0        | 23       | 57.5             |
|   | Disagree                                                                 | 22             | 55    | 0        | 5        | 12.5             |
| 4 | Teacher educators and the trainee teachers need to be in touch regularly after the programmes | 0              | 0     | 0        | 0        | 0                |
|   | Strongly agree                                                          | 0              | 0     | 0        | 0        | 0                |
|   | Agree                                                                    | 4              | 10    | 0        | 8        | 23               |
|   | Not sure                                                                | 8              | 20    | 0        | 23       | 57.5             |
|   | Disagree                                                                 | 23             | 57.5  | 0        | 5        | 12.5             |
| 5 | Interested to know about the new updates regularly in terms of English language teaching | 27             | 67.5  | 0        | 13       | 32.5             |
|   | Strongly agree                                                          | 13             | 32.5  | 0        | 0        | 0                |
|   | Agree                                                                    | 13             | 32.5  | 0        | 0        | 0                |
|   | Not sure                                                                | 0              | 0     | 0        | 0        | 0                |
|   | Disagree                                                                 | 0              | 0     | 0        | 0        | 0                |
|   | Strongly disagree                                                        | 0              | 0     | 0        | 0        | 0                |
| 6 | Technology can strengthen the teacher education programmes               | Yes            | Easy to understand | 13 | 32.5 |
|   |                                                                        |                | Make lessons interesting | 10 | 25  |
|   |                                                                        | No             | Difficult to understand | 11 | 27.5 |
|   |                                                                        |                | Challenging to use in short time | 6  | 15  |
| 7 | Use of computer                                                          | Own computer   | 25 | 62.5 |
|   |                                                                        | Computer labs in school | 11 | 27.5 |
|   |                                                                        | Cyber café     | 4  | 10  |
|   |                                                                        | Friends’ house | 0  | 0   |
| 8 | Access to internet regularly                                           | Yes            | Broadband internet | 17 | 42.5 |
|   |                                                                        |                | Mobile internet     | 10 | 25  |
|   |                                                                        | No             | No computer          | 6  | 15  |
|   |                                                                        |                | Slow internet connection | 4  | 10  |
|   |                                                                        |                | Not interested       | 3  | 7.5 |
| 9 | Mobile based internet helps to stay connected                            | Yes            | 24 | 82.5 |
|   |                                                                        | No             | 7  | 17.5 |
| 10| Purposes for using internet                                             | Browsing websites | 37 | 92.5 |
|   |                                                                        | Searching online materials | 35 | 87.5 |
|   |                                                                        | Using social networking sites | 32 | 80  |
|   | Preparing teaching materials | Watching videos/movies | Reading e-books |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| 11| Frequency of using social networking sites | Gmail | 32 | 80 |
|   |                               | Yahoo Mail | 18 | 45 |
|   |                               | Skype | 10 | 25 |
|   |                               | Facebook | 35 | 87.5 |
|   |                               | Blog | 0 | 0 |
|   |                               | Moodle | 3 | 7.5 |
|   |                               | LinkedIn | 10 | 25 |
| 12| Use social networking sites to share ideas, problems, and updates with other teachers | Strongly agree | 0 | 0 |
|   |                               | Agree | 19 | 47.5 |
|   |                               | Not sure | 8 | 20 |
|   |                               | Disagree | 13 | 32.5 |
|   |                               | Strongly disagree | 0 | 0 |
| 13| Social networking sites help to communicate with the teacher educators and colleagues | Strongly agree | 14 | 35 |
|   |                               | Agree | 11 | 27.5 |
|   |                               | Not sure | 8 | 20 |
|   |                               | Disagree | 7 | 17.5 |
|   |                               | Strongly disagree | 0 | 0 |
| 14| Willing to participate in online training sessions | Strongly agree | 10 | 25 |
|   |                               | Agree | 21 | 52.5 |
|   |                               | Not sure | 9 | 22.5 |
|   |                               | Disagree | 0 | 0 |
|   |                               | Strongly disagree | 0 | 0 |
| 15| Online teacher education will help in terms of communicative skill | Yes | 28 | 70 |
|   |                               | No | 12 | 30 |
| 16| Rate of joining online training recommended by school authorities | Yes | 40 | 100 |
|   |                               | No | 0 | 0 |
| 17| Use of Teachers Portal implemented by the government of Bangladesh | Yes | 8 | 20 |
|   |                               | Active members (Shares teaching materials) | 11 | 27.5 |
|   |                               | Neutral members | 11 | 27.5 |
|   |                               | Did not know | 5 | 12.5 |
Findings from the teacher educators’ interview

In response to the question “What is the time period for the training facilities and where are they held? Do the teachers attend them regularly?” the teacher educators identified that depending on the requirements and training objectives, the time span can vary for these programmes. Generally, the training programmes are held for one to three days, seven to ten days, or in some cases for 14 to 15 days. The OLTE programmes are usually held from 9 am to 5 pm with some exceptions depending on the situation and needs. The teacher educators stated that most teacher education/training programmes try to approach the teachers in every district of Bangladesh, and attempt to bring all the educational institutions of a district within the training coverage. The current plan is to bring together the teachers from rural and distant areas as well as from developed institutions to the same platform. Therefore, teacher education programmes are held more frequently in the rural and under developed areas. However, the teacher educators pointed out that since it is difficult to offer training to each school separately, these services are given to a group of schools together, but due to locations, transportation problems or timing some of the teachers cannot attend these sessions.

In response to the question “Do you provide ongoing support for your trainees? Why or why not?”, some of the teacher educators claimed that they provided ongoing support to their trainees until they achieve their goals, whereas some of them claimed that they provided ongoing support for a particular period of time. For instance, one teacher educator informed that in long term training period, they asked the trainee teachers to report about their improvements regarding the covered sessions every month, whereas another teacher said that they provided continual sessions of one day, three days, and seven days for a one-month training programme. Between these sessions, the teachers were expected to practice whatever they learnt, and get support from their trainers in the subsequent sessions. According to the teachers, ongoing support and monitoring by the trainers helped teachers improve their teaching skills continuously. However, the educators also identified that there is no definite way to monitor the teachers regularly once the training is over. Moreover, many teachers exhibited preferences towards the traditional
methods, and were not ready to familiarise themselves to the more recent methods of teaching.

The educators were also asked how they used ICT for training and education purposes. In response they stated that ICT was integrated into both government and non-government teacher education programmes to advance teaching quality. ICT equipments such as computers, multimedia, internet, facebook, and mobile phones were used in the training programmes for providing subject-specific lessons. Some materials were also uploaded in the relevant websites so that the teachers could download those whenever needed.

When asked about if they thought incorporation of the online-based language teacher education programme into the traditional system would be useful, all the teacher educators responded in affirmation. They identified some existing problems of the traditional teacher training framework which could be removed by bringing in online elements. As identified by them, some of these limitations included lack of monitoring and ongoing support beyond the training period, and inability to attend training workshops due to locations or timing. In addition, by providing more effective trainings in these contexts OLTE could also be useful for the teachers to do self-study.

In response to the question “What do you think about the Teachers’ Portal implemented by the Education Ministry of Bangladesh?” the participants stated that the Teachers Portal was an initial stage of online teacher education. Recently, all the teachers have been instructed to the Teachers Portal through which they could get a common platform to share their teaching expertise, materials, experiences, ideas, problems, and solutions. They added that while this platform could be an important aspect of online teacher education, the collaborative development needed to be guided by the teacher educators. Moreover, it is a programme based on the national curriculum; hence, the English teachers participate here depending on the English syllabus (English for Today) of the national curriculum.

While discussing the major barriers of online language teacher education and ways to overcome those, many of the teacher educators pointed out that the main barrier was to train the teachers and the educators regarding the use of ICT. Some of them added that there had already been some measures taken regarding this issue. To integrate ICT in teacher education both teachers and teacher educators received training from the government and non-governmental organisations.
Discussion

The study intends to identify the drawbacks of the traditional teacher training, as well as the possibilities of OLTE as a solution to these limitations. Findings from the teachers’ questionnaire and the teacher educators’ interview indicate that the duration of the face-to-face training programmes is short for overall development of teachers. In such a short period only some aspects can be covered. Besides, refresher training programmes are not held frequently, which hinders the ongoing development of the teachers. In addition to lack of monitoring possibilities, there is a communication gap between the trainers and the trainees which also restricts the ongoing development. Monthly monitoring sessions are possible only for the longer training programmes. In one-month long training programmes, there are subsequent sessions after one month where the teachers reflect on previously learnt lessons. Another problem identified by both groups of participants is that the physical presence of the participants is vital for those programmes although the time and location of the programmes are not favorable to them. In these circumstances, sometimes teachers cannot attend the training sessions, and they have to let go of the opportunities. These findings are similar to the insights of Murray’s study (2013). The same problem is also reflected in a study on the Teachers Portal (a2i, 2015). However, the research findings (Table 2) indicate that in order to stay updated the teachers are willing to cooperate if the circumstances are favorable to them.

According to most of the teachers and teacher educators, the use of technology would enhance the quality of teacher education. Besides, the study shows (Table 2) that majority of the teachers have their own computers; those who do not own computers have access to computer labs in schools. They can also use their internet-enabled mobile phones to stay connected. These suggest strong possibilities for implementing online teacher education. Notably, the schools are important stakeholders of online teacher education, as it reduces the cost of cyber café (Table 2). The teachers’ responses are in line with previous findings (BTRC, 2015a, 2015b) that the use of internet, through computers or mobilephones, has increased significantly in the recent years, and the cost of using internet services has got cheaper allowing greater participation from the teachers in these training programmes. Moreover, initiatives have already been taken regarding mobile based learning in Bangladesh which engages the teachers from rural area in continuous development (Pouzevara & Khan, 2008). Thus, mobile learning
can be included in the OLTE programmes for maximum participation of the English teachers.

The study also reveals that most of the teachers are already engaged in online activities like browsing various websites, searching online materials, using social networking sites, watching videos or movies online, and reading e-books from internet. However, the purposes are different; the participants do these individually, while OLTE aims to bring all the language teachers together where they can share their teaching expertise to help advance each other under the guidance of the teacher educators. A similar objective is executed through Moodle, but the use of Moodle among the participants is very low (Table 2). However, they sometimes use the social networking sites to share their ideas, problems and updates with other teachers regarding English language teaching. It reflects that many teachers are already collaborating with each other by themselves for facilitating their teaching. It also indicates to their proactive efforts to hone their expertise and to the possibility of cooperating with OLTE initiatives. While some participant teachers mention the lack of professionalism in social networking sites, and do not approve of using these forums for teacher training, it is recognised to a large extent that social networking or communication is one of the key factors for being updated constantly, and that professionalism can be ensured through monitoring in those platforms.

During the study, majority of the teachers agree about participating in OLTE. However, some teachers mention that they could attend these sessions if the timing was convenient. To resolve this issue, there can be several repetitions of the same online session, and the materials can be uploaded online so that all the teachers can participate affording their convenient time. Previous research also recommends that the teachers can participate in discussion boards, or watch various recordings whenever they have the time (Murray, 2013). In fact, one of the most important advantages of OLTE is it allows knowledge and participation beyond any location and time constraint. There are also suggestions from both groups of participants to organize training facilities for online sessions as well as to open helpline facilities. There are government initiatives for ICT integration which include teachers and teacher educators in rural areas receiving ICT training. The TQI-SEP project funded by ADB (Pouzevara & Khan, 2008) provides multimedia equipped vehicles to all government teachers’ training colleges so that the teacher educators can give training to the teachers from distant areas regarding the use of ICT (Chowdhury, 2012). Therefore, ICT training
is not likely to be a significant obstacle for implementing OLTE programmes in Bangladesh.

Another advantage of OLTE, reflected in the responses, is that it would enable the teachers to interact with a lot of people, along with other English teachers and the teacher educators. Further, it would help to improve their fluency in English. However, opinions varied on this issue, and some participants express that face-to-face communication is particularly required for enhancing communicative skill. While it may be true that face-to-face interaction can serve some important purposes, it poses some practical problems that affect a large participation. Therefore, OLTE can serve as the best available solution where teachers can interact and receive education without being physically present. Furthermore, the teacher educators will be able to provide ongoing support to the trainee teachers and monitor them regularly online. Therefore, the process of professional development can continue through online interaction.

The government of Bangladesh has taken a major leap in the realm of online teacher education through the Teachers Portal. Although it is an approach to bring all the teachers to one shared place, not all of them are active users of this portal till now (a2i, 2015). To fulfill the purpose, there is a government requirement for the teachers to join the portal, in response to which some participants of the present study have already joined it. However, the portal has not been developed into a full-fledged online teacher education programme yet, and is still limited to sharing of teaching materials and interaction among teachers (Table 2). For being a complete online teacher education programme, the collaborative development needs to be under the guidance of teacher educators for active monitoring and support (Murray, 2013; Nunan, 1999). Besides, the portal is not specifically designed for language resources, and it includes resources for all subjects which is why it, in its present shape, can only be considered as a guideline for implementing OLTE in Bangladesh.

However, all the participants are positive about joining OLTE programmes if their school authorities would recommend those as a part of their professional development (Table 2). It further reveals that if a particular OLTE programme is regarded compulsory by the schools or required for career development, then teachers’ participation can be ensured. In similar lines was the research finding by Khan (2014) that recommends formal certification and recognition in professional life as the motivational...
factors for the teachers’ development. Teacher education programmes can use this policy in collaboration with the educational institutions to draw the teachers towards online education along with traditional training system.

Conclusion

The findings of the present research suggest that there are obstacles in realising the goals of teacher education through face-to-face training programmes which can be overcome by incorporating OLTE with the traditional training system. The study also reveals that the teachers are ready to participate in the OLTE programmes if they are conducted through supportive environments. This study can be used as a source of suggestions for any OLTE initiative concerning a similar group of participants. This study will help determine teachers’ expectations from OLTE and how to engage them in the training programmes.

However, the study is limited in that it focuses only on the secondary level English teachers based in Dhaka city. Besides, the research is mainly teacher focused, and it does not include an in-depth study concerning the teacher educators’ needs and perspectives regarding OLTE. These factors restrict the research findings to this participant group and to similar settings only. Further studies need to be conducted on a larger scale by including a larger group of participants: teachers of different levels of education and from outside Dhaka, and teacher educators and administrations. Finally, there is a strong need for running pilot OLTE programmes to identify the participants’ needs and perspectives more accurately before large-scale projects are undertaken.

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