

Chapter 4

The Epistemological Structures of Teacher Training Programmes in Sudan (1900 – 2023)

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ABSTRACT

Traditional Western applied linguistics viewed the teachers as technicians, and the process of teacher-training as unproblematic applications of theoretical linguistic principles already constructed in the Global North. Teacher training programmes throughout Sudanese history have played a significant role in instructing teachers at the different levels of education in the country. Each training programme seemingly works along certain epistemological lines to achieve professionalism in the learning by its teachers. The authors engage with the following three related questions:

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-7722-9.ch004

What is the nature of the epistemological structures embedded in teacher-training programmes in Sudan? How do they dialectically shape the design of Sudanese English language teacher-training programmes in attaining professionalism? And how is the teacher trainee's identity imagined and enacted in the training materials and practice? Drawing on theoretical framework, the chapter explores a case study of five teacher-training programmes. The chapter demonstrates that most programmes analysed conform to "technicist," applied, and competency-based epistemologies of teacher education/training.

INTRODUCTION

Traditional western applied linguistics conceptualised teachers and the process of teacher-training as mere applications of theoretical linguistic principles already constructed in the Global North (Borelli, Silvestre & Pessoa, 2020; Canagarajah, 2012; Kumaravadivelu, 2003, 2006; Pennycook & Makoni, 2020). We engage with this critical observation in both colonial and postcolonial contexts of Sudan. Teacher training programmes throughout Sudanese history have played a significant role in training teachers at the different levels of education in the country. Each training programme seemingly works along certain epistemological lines to achieve professionalism as an effect of completing the programme. We engage with the following three related questions: First, what is the nature of the epistemological structures embedded in teacher-training programmes in Sudan? Second, how do they dialectically shape the design of Sudanese English language teacher-training programmes in attaining professionalism? Third, how is the teacher trainee's identity imagined and enacted in the training materials and practice? To answer these questions, we focus on five teacher-training programmes (henceforth TTPs): two of these operated within the colonial era (1899–1956), while the remaining three were established in the post-colonial era (1956–present). The TTPs established in the colonial period are the training department at Gordon Memorial College (henceforth GMC) and Bākht-er-Ruda Teacher Training Institute (henceforth BRTTI). The programmes established in the post-colonial period are the Higher Teacher Training Institute (henceforth HTTI), In-Service Educational Training Institute (henceforth ISETI) and SNCL/SELTI.

Drawing on an interpretive-analytic framework, we examine five teacher training programmes covering both the colonial and the post-colonial eras. The paper demonstrates that most programmes that we analysed conform to 'technicist', applied, and competency-based epistemologies of teacher education/training. Thus, the teacher particularly in Sudan is viewed as a technicist who should apply theories

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