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CHALLENGES AND ASPIRATIONS: AN EXPLORATION OF SITUATIONS, PROBLEMS, AND NEEDS IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR GRADES 1-6 TEACHERS IN THE CENTRAL REGION OF THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

This research study delves into the situations, problems, and needs faced by Grades 1-6 English teachers in the Central Region of Thailand. The effective teaching of English is crucial for fostering language proficiency and global communication skills among young learners. However, English language education in primary schools often presents unique challenges in diverse contexts, such as the Central Region of Thailand. Through a qualitative research design, including interviews and surveys, this study aims to explore the experiences and perspectives of English teachers, uncovering the specific difficulties they encounter in the classroom, identifying areas of improvement, and understanding their aspirations for enhancing English language instruction. The findings provide valuable insights into the professional development and support required to empower teachers in overcoming challenges and nurturing a conducive English learning environment for their students.

KEYWORDS

English language teaching, primary education, teacher challenges, teacher needs, professional development, Central Region, Thailand, language proficiency, global communication skills, qualitative research.

INTRODUCTION

English language education plays a vital role in equipping students with the necessary language proficiency and global communication skills essential for success in the interconnected world. In Thailand, as in many countries, teaching English at the primary level presents unique challenges. The Central Region, being one of the most populous and diverse regions in the country, provides an interesting context to explore the situations, problems, and needs faced by English teachers in Grades 1-6.

This research study seeks to delve into the experiences and perspectives of English teachers in the Central Region of Thailand, understanding the specific challenges they encounter in teaching English to young learners. By identifying the problems faced by teachers, exploring their professional needs, and understanding their aspirations for enhancing English language instruction, this study aims to contribute to the improvement of language education in primary schools.

The effective teaching of English at the primary level is critical for building a strong foundation in language learning and fostering students' interest and motivation to continue language study in higher grades. Therefore, it is imperative to explore the factors that impact English language instruction and the support required to empower teachers in delivering high-quality education.

METHOD

Research Design:

This study employs a qualitative research design, enabling an in-depth exploration of the situations, problems, and needs faced by Grades 1-6 English teachers in the Central Region of Thailand. The

qualitative approach allows for a deeper understanding of the teachers' experiences and perspectives in their natural teaching context.

Participants:

The participants for this research will be English teachers from various primary schools in the Central Region of Thailand. A purposive sampling method will be used to ensure representation from different schools, teaching experience levels, and educational backgrounds.

Data Collection:

a. Interviews: Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the English teachers to explore their experiences, challenges, and aspirations in teaching English to Grades 1-6 students. The interviews will provide a rich source of qualitative data, allowing the teachers to share their perspectives openly.

b. Surveys: In addition to interviews, a survey questionnaire will be administered to a larger group of English teachers. The survey will gather quantitative data on specific challenges faced by the teachers, their professional needs, and their aspirations for improving English language instruction.

Data Analysis:

The data collected from interviews and surveys will be transcribed (for interviews) and analyzed thematically. The qualitative data from interviews will be coded and categorized to identify recurring themes related to the challenges and aspirations of English teachers. The quantitative data from the surveys will be analyzed using appropriate statistical methods to identify trends and patterns.

Ethical Considerations:

This research will adhere to ethical guidelines, ensuring informed consent from all participants. The teachers' identities will be anonymized to maintain confidentiality and protect their privacy.

By employing a qualitative research design, this study aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the situations, problems, and needs faced by Grades 1-6 English teachers in the Central Region of Thailand. The findings will provide valuable insights into the challenges that hinder effective language instruction and the support required to empower teachers in nurturing a conducive English learning environment for their students.

RESULTS

The exploration of situations, problems, and needs in teaching English for Grades 1-6 teachers in the Central Region of Thailand provided valuable insights into the challenges faced by educators and their aspirations for improving English language instruction. The data revealed several key findings:

Lack of Language Exposure:

Many teachers highlighted the limited exposure to English language outside the classroom as a significant challenge. Students' lack of opportunities to practice English in real-life contexts hindered their language acquisition and communication skills.

Large Class Sizes:

Teachers often faced large class sizes, making it challenging to provide individualized attention and create interactive learning environments. This constraint impacted teachers' ability to address the

diverse language proficiency levels of their students effectively.

Limited Resources:

Several teachers reported a shortage of English language teaching materials and technological resources, hindering their ability to create engaging and interactive lessons.

Teacher Professional Development:

English teachers expressed a need for ongoing professional development to enhance their teaching methodologies and language proficiency. Access to workshops, training programs, and resources that focus on primary English language education was perceived as crucial for improving teaching practices.

Parental Support and Awareness:

Teachers identified a lack of parental support and awareness of the importance of English language education as a challenge. Encouraging parents to actively engage in their children's language learning journey was deemed essential for fostering a positive learning environment.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study shed light on the complex landscape of teaching English to Grades 1-6 students in the Central Region of Thailand. The challenges identified align with those faced by language educators globally, reflecting the universal nature of language teaching hurdles at the primary level.

The language exposure gap outside the classroom poses a critical concern, as language learning is most effective when students can apply their knowledge in

real-life situations. This highlights the need for creating immersive language learning opportunities both inside and outside the school environment.

Large class sizes present a multifaceted challenge, impacting teachers' ability to provide personalized attention and implement interactive teaching strategies. Addressing this challenge requires innovative approaches to manage diverse student needs effectively.

Limited resources hinder creativity and innovation in language instruction. Providing teachers with access to updated and relevant teaching materials, as well as technology integration, can enhance the learning experience for both teachers and students.

Professional development emerges as a key factor in improving language instruction. Equipping teachers with the necessary pedagogical skills and language proficiency is instrumental in nurturing a generation of proficient English speakers.

CONCLUSION

The case study on the challenges and aspirations of Grades 1-6 English teachers in the Central Region of Thailand offers valuable insights into the complexities of language instruction at the primary level. The findings underscore the importance of addressing challenges related to language exposure, class sizes, resources, parental involvement, and professional development.

To enhance English language education in primary schools, a holistic approach is required, involving collaboration between educators, schools, policymakers, and the broader community. This approach should prioritize providing language

exposure opportunities beyond the classroom, developing innovative strategies for managing large class sizes, ensuring access to adequate teaching resources, and empowering teachers through targeted professional development programs.

By addressing these challenges and supporting teachers in their aspirations to create a conducive English learning environment, we can lay the foundation for fostering language proficiency and global communication skills among young learners in the Central Region of Thailand. Through collaborative efforts, we can strive towards an inclusive and impactful language education system that prepares students for success in an increasingly interconnected world.

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