

How Some Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers Perceived the Classroom-English Proficiency Test Part of the National Primary School Teacher Certification Exam

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to report how a group of Korean primary school pre-service and in-service teachers perceived the classroom-English proficiency test part of the national primary school teacher certification exam. The two main data-collection sources were survey results and individual interviews. Two preliminary findings emerged: (1) Most pre-service and in-service teachers were not sure of the evaluation criteria and the credibility of the test; (2) Most pre-service teachers could not practice classroom-English while taking their college courses, so they were anxious while preparing for the test alone. Implications of the study results are added.

I. Introduction

This study aims to report how a group of Korean primary school pre-service and in-service teachers perceived the classroom-English proficiency test part of national primary school teacher certification exam. The two main data-collection sources were survey results and individual interviews.

II. Research Question

How did a group of pre-service and in-service teachers perceive the classroom-English proficiency test part of national primary school teacher certification exam?

III. Research Method

A. A Group of Pre-service and In-service Teachers

In spring 2009, the researchers approached some pre-service teachers at a teachers' college and asked them to fill out a questionnaire about the classroom-English test part of national primary school teacher certification exam. Many of them returned their answers. Some answers were not trustworthy, so were not used as data in this study. The final survey data analyzed were gathered from 25 English-education majors and 25 non-English-education majors. The researchers mailed the questionnaire to 30 local in-service teachers and got 25 answers back. Out of these 75 participants, two English-education-major pre-service teachers, two non-English-education-major pre-service teachers and two in-service teachers were interviewed to understand their perceptions on the classroom-English test part of national primary school teacher certification exam.

B. Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected throughout the spring semester in 2009 from the survey results and interviews. The data were analyzed according to descriptive and qualitative research analysis traditions.

IV. Preliminary Results¹

1. Most pre-service and in-service teachers were not sure of the evaluation criteria and the credibility of the test.
2. Most pre-service teachers could not practice classroom English while taking their college courses, so they had to prepare for the test by themselves.

V. Implications and Conclusion

The current study results draw some implications: (1) Most pre-service teachers felt so worried about the test mostly because they did not know the test evaluation criteria. The criteria should be informed clearly; (2) Most pre-service teachers wanted some college courses which help them ready for the test; (3) There should be a way for students and teachers to foster intrinsic motivation which is so crucial to maximize the effectiveness of English language education. Now all primary school teachers are required to teach English despite the fact that some of them never want to. The classroom English test part of national primary school teacher certification exam might induce pre-service teachers to practice classroom English to pass the test. However, it never helps them foster their intrinsic motivation. It is strongly suggested that not all primary school teachers but English-subject teachers teach English at Korean primary schools. English-subject pre-service teachers might be selected as such when they start an English-teacher preparation program.

About the Presenters

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¹ It should be noted that the data analysis is not finalized yet, so the study results need to be fully developed later.