

Sample Proposal: Research-Oriented Session

Title (10 Words)

Speaking Pedagogy: Vietnamese EFL Teachers' Cognitions and Practices

Description (300 Words)

The development of effective speaking skills has become the desired goal for language learning (Goh, 2014; Horwitz, 2013) due to its importance in the globalized world (Goh, 2013). Nevertheless, speaking still remains under-researched (Hughes, 2002). This neglect is particularly noticeable in the area of teacher cognition research (Borg, 2006; Goh, 2013). Given that speaking is multifaceted and difficult to teach (Johnson, 1996), there is a strong need for developing understanding of knowledge and skills for teaching speaking in a principled manner (Chen & Goh, 2011).

This paper presents a study designed to address this need by investigating six Vietnamese EFL university teachers' cognitions and practices in teaching speaking. The study featured a qualitative design with semi-structured interviews, stimulated-recalled interviews, and observations. A comprehensive framework integrating Shulman's (1986, 1987) teachers' knowledge base with Bernstein's (1973, 1975) pedagogic codes and Goh and Burns' (2012) pedagogical models was employed to illuminate teachers' intricate knowledge base and its impact on classroom implementation.

Findings revealed that teachers' knowledge of speaking topics, vocabulary, grammar and speech acts dominated their beliefs about speaking teaching, which was further reflected in their practices. In addition, despite believing pronunciation to be integral to speaking, teachers treated it as an isolated component. Speech-enabling skills, a critical element of speaking instruction (Goh & Burns, 2012), were also missing from the teachers' knowledge and unsurprisingly their practices. Similarly, teachers showed limited awareness of communicative strategies and discourse structures, which were not featured in teaching. Unlike findings from previous studies, these teachers had a higher level of proficiency and pedagogical knowledge and enjoyed extensive freedom in decision-making. Their undue attention to certain components of speaking pedagogy seems to reflect gaps in their knowledge base rather than contextual constraints.

The presentation concludes with recommendations for the improvement of teaching outcomes in the Vietnamese school curriculum.

Abstract (50 Words)

This presentation reports on findings from an investigation into six Vietnamese EFL teachers' cognitions and practices in teaching speaking skills to English-major students. Findings revealed that teachers' overemphasis or exclusion of certain content in their teaching practices reflects gaps in their knowledge base. Implications for effective teacher training are discussed.