
Teaching English in the Primary Grades: A Case Study Conducted in the Vavuniya District

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Abstract

This is a case study focused on teaching English in the primary grades in randomly selected group of five government schools from north and south zones in the Vavuniya District. Based on Flesch's (2008) premise that, educational opportunities of children vary depending on the location, performance record, teacher competence, and leadership traits of the schools they attend. This study investigates how these factors affect the students' performance in public examinations. In the process of collecting qualitative data, classroom observations, questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions were used and, in order to validate the data quantitatively, annual reports on the students' performance results were used. Finally, the data were analyzed using descriptive and argumentative methods. The findings reveal that, the majority of teachers test the English language skills of the students in the event of their admission to grade one, and more than 80% of the teachers start teaching English from Grade 3 onwards to correlate with the prevailing government education policy. While the order of introducing the English language skills varies from teacher to teacher, the classroom management has been identified as a challenge for most of the teachers who participated in the research. As such, the primary school English language teaching program in the Vavuniya district has a number of potentials as well as an equal number of limitations. Therefore, this study recommends that the teachers should be trained further in order to provide equal opportunities for the beginner level English language learners in the region.

Keywords: *Classroom observations, English, opportunities, Vavuniya district*

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