

A Multiple Case Study on EFL Teachers' Perceptions in Research Skills Development: Merits, Constraints and Needs

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Abstract

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has been growing across the world with a considerable increase in the population of EFL learners. Consequently, EFL teachers play a key role for a successful EFL teaching and learning process. Research can be regarded as the utmost level of academics since through which academics will be able to make informed decisions for the improvement of their respective discipline. This study, conducted while the author was doing her Master of Applied Linguistics and TESOL at Macquarie University as an Australia Awards Scholarship awardee for the Unit, Research Methods in Language Study, aims at exploring the perceptions of EFL teachers and the opportunities and challenges in developing research skills and their needs for improving the skills. With an underlying aim of expanding the study on EFL teachers' research skills in the higher education sector in Myanmar as a comparative analysis, eight postgraduate students doing their Master of Applied Linguistics and TESOL in the Department of Linguistics under the Faculty of Human Sciences at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia were selected and interviewed. The data was collected by seven prepared questions and the analysis was conducted using a theoretical thematic analysis through the practical analysis process described and explained by Maguire and Delahunt (2017) adapting from the "step-by-step guide" constituting six phases developed by Braun & Clarke (2006). The major findings revealed that individual EFL teachers' capacity was developed through research engagement activities leading to the development of a language education system while institutionally insufficient support, shortage of research resources and lack of research opportunities were the critical constraints which were found out as the needs of the participants.

Key Words: perceptions, EFL, merits, constraints, needs

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