

EFL CASCADING KNOWLEDGE AMONG ENGLISH TEACHERS AT PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOLS IN NORTH BINTAN DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This research study investigated the implementation and impact of cascading knowledge initiatives in EFL education among English teachers in public and private high schools in North Bintan district. Through qualitative descriptive methodology and interviews with 8 English teachers, the study aimed to uncover current practices, challenges, perceptions, and ways to enhance cascading knowledge initiatives in EFL education. The findings revealed disparities between public and private school teachers in participating in such initiatives, with facilitating factors including professional development programs, collaboration opportunities, resource accessibility, and school management support, while hindering factors encompassed constraints in time, resources, incentives, and support. The study suggests that cascading knowledge initiatives have the potential to advance teachers' professional growth and enhance the quality of EFL education, emphasizing the need for further research to delve into the determinants of successful cascading knowledge programs and their influence on student learning outcomes.

Keywords : EFL Education, Cascading Knowledge, English Teachers, Professional Development, Collaboration

INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education is critical for individuals and societies to function effectively in a globalized world. It plays a crucial role in providing individuals with the necessary language skills to communicate effectively in an international context. As such, there is a growing need for qualified and competent EFL teachers who can provide high-quality language instruction to students. The quality of EFL education largely depends on the professional development of English teachers, who are responsible for implementing EFL curricula and facilitating language learning. However, English teachers often face various challenges that can hinder their professional development, including limited access to training

opportunities, inadequate resources, and a lack of support from school administrators. One way to address these challenges and promote the professional development of English teachers is through cascading knowledge initiatives. These initiatives involve the transfer of knowledge and skills from experienced teachers to novice or less experienced teachers. The aim is to create a culture of continuous learning and improvement among EFL teachers, ultimately improving the quality of language instruction provided to students.

Cascading knowledge initiatives involve training a select group of teachers who, in turn, train other teachers in their schools or communities. This approach can be an effective way to promote knowledge transfer and improve the quality of EFL education. However, there is limited research on the implementation and effectiveness of cascading knowledge initiatives in EFL education, particularly in the context of public and private high schools. While cascading knowledge initiatives have been shown to be effective in improving teacher professional development and student learning outcomes, there is limited research on the implementation of these initiatives in the EFL context, particularly in high schools. Moreover, there is little understanding of the factors that influence the effectiveness of cascading knowledge initiatives in different EFL contexts. In the context of EFL teaching, there are several areas where cascading knowledge can be particularly beneficial. These include teaching methods, classroom management, assessment and evaluation, and the use of technology in the classroom (Kim et al., 2017).

In implementing cascading knowledge initiatives in EFL education, the role of assessment is essential. Assessment plays a critical role in EFL education as it provides teachers and students with feedback on their progress and helps to guide teaching and learning. Bachman and Palmer (2010) argue that assessment should be aligned with learning goals, context, and stakeholders' needs, and should involve a range of assessment types to provide a comprehensive understanding of students' language abilities.

Cascading knowledge initiatives can be used to enhance English teachers' assessment literacy, which is the knowledge and skills required to design, administer, and evaluate assessments effectively. Research has shown that English teachers often lack assessment literacy, which can lead to inadequate and ineffective assessment practices (Farrell, 2012). These initiatives can be effective in enhancing English teachers' assessment literacy by providing opportunities for senior teachers to share their knowledge and skills in designing and evaluating assessments. This can help to improve the quality and accuracy of assessments, which can, in turn, enhance the quality of teaching and learning in EFL classrooms. However, research has also shown that English teachers' assessment literacy can be influenced by a range of contextual factors, such as institutional culture and policies, available resources, and assessment systems (Borg, 2006). Therefore, it is essential to consider these contextual factors when implementing cascading knowledge initiatives to enhance English teachers' assessment literacy.

In addition to the factors discussed above, another important consideration when implementing cascading knowledge initiatives in EFL education is the use of technology. Technology has become an integral part of EFL education, and its use can enhance the effectiveness of cascading knowledge initiatives by providing opportunities for distance learning and collaboration. Research has shown that technology can be effective in promoting English teachers' professional development and improving the quality of EFL education. For example, a study by Han and Wang (2017) found that English teachers in China who participated in online professional development programs had significantly higher levels of teaching effectiveness and job satisfaction than those who did not participate.

The use of technology can provide opportunities for senior teachers to share their knowledge and skills with less experienced teachers through online platforms, such as webinars, video conferencing, and online discussion forums. This can help to overcome geographical and logistical barriers and provide more flexible and accessible opportunities for professional development. However, the use of technology in cascading knowledge initiatives also presents some challenges. For example, English teachers in some contexts may lack access to reliable internet connections and adequate technological infrastructure, which can limit their participation in online professional development programs (Wu et al., 2020). However, its effectiveness depends on the availability of technological infrastructure and resources and the willingness and motivation of teachers to participate in online professional development programs.

METHOD

The method used in this research is Qualitative Descriptive. To investigate the extent to which EFL cascading knowledge is practiced among English teachers at public and private high schools in North Bintan district, the interview has been conducted. The interview consists of three sections. The first section questions demographic information about the teachers, such as their age, gender, years of teaching experience, and the type of school they worked in. The second section consists of questions related to the teachers' experiences with EFL cascading knowledge, such as whether they had ever participated in a cascading knowledge initiative, whether they had ever acted as a knowledge provider, and the perceived effectiveness of cascading knowledge initiatives. The third section consists of open-ended questions, which allowed the teachers to provide more detailed responses about their experiences with EFL cascading knowledge. The interview is conducted in-person and audio-recorded with their permission. The data collected from the interviews are transcribed, analyzed, categorized, and interpreted to generate findings that address the research questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There are 3 categories of questions given during interview. Those are demographic information about the teachers, questions related to teachers' experiences with EFL cascading knowledge, and the open-ended questions which allow teachers to provide more details responses about their experiences with EFL knowledge. The results are then compared between the public and private high school teachers to identify any differences in their experiences with EFL cascading knowledge.

1. Demographic information

In demographic information, the questions focus on the age of the teachers, gender, years of teaching experiences, and the type of school they have worked in. In this first section, the teachers were enquired to tell about themselves including the demographic information needed. From those 8 high schools, the age ranges from 24 to 50 years old consisting of 4 male and 4 female teachers. They are Mr. KA representing SMAN 1 Teluk Sebong, Mr. RH representing SMA YKPP, Ms. RBR representing SMAN 1 Bintan Utara, Mr. MA representing SMA Tunas Bangsa, Mr. Z representing SMKN 1 Seri Kuala Lobam, Ms. NA representing SMKN 1 Bintan Utara, Ms. ADR representing SMK Muhammadiyah, and Ms. Rrepresenting SMK Perkapalan. Their teaching experiences range from less than a year (2 months) to 25 years of teaching experience. They work at public and private school.

2. Teachers' Experiences with EFL Cascading Knowledge

Regarding the teachers' experiences, there are three questions given. The questions relate to their experiences with EFL cascading knowledge. Those three questions use the form of Yes-No Questions which are 1) Have you ever participated in a cascading knowledge initiative, 2) Have you ever acted as a knowledge provider, and 3) Have you experienced the perceived effectiveness of cascading knowledge initiatives.

The results of the interview indicated that a majority of the English teachers (62,5%) had never participated in an EFL cascading knowledge initiative at some point in their career. However, there were significant differences between the public and private high school teachers. A higher percentage of private high school teachers (100%) reported never having participated in EFL cascading knowledge initiative, compared to public high school teachers (75%). Yet, at public high school, this only occurred during the virtual program using Whatsapp group called MGMP (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran) or Curriculum Subject Teachers' Forum. This term refers to a formal meeting or conference where teachers or instructors responsible for specific academic subjects gather to discuss and deliberate on matters related to curriculum development, teaching strategies, and the overall academic content and delivery within their respective subjects or disciplines.

When asked about their experiences as knowledge providers, only 12,5% of the

teachers, that means 1 out of 8 teachers, reported having acted as knowledge providers at some point in his career. However, there were almost similarities between the public and private school teachers. A higher percentage of private high school teachers (100%) reported never having acted as knowledge providers, meanwhile public high school teachers (75%).

The teachers were also asked the effectiveness of EFL cascading knowledge initiative. The results showed that the minority of the teachers (37,5%) responded EFL cascading knowledge initiative as effective. This was the respond of 3 out of 8 teachers who had participated in EFL cascading knowledge initiative. However, 5 other teachers responded that EFL cascading knowledge initiative probably gives effectiveness for them in learning process.

3. Open-Ended Questions regarding Teachers' Experiences with EFL Knowledge

The third section consisted of open-ended questions, which allowed the teachers to provide more detailed responses about their experiences with EFL cascading knowledge. There are 12 questions given during the interview, as below:

1. Can you describe your teaching experience in EFL contexts?
2. What strategies do you employ to ensure effective knowledge cascading in your EFL forum? Can you provide specific examples of how you have implemented these strategies?
3. How do you adapt your teaching methods and materials to suit the varying levels of English proficiency among your students in EFL settings?
4. Could you share an experience where you successfully cascaded knowledge to other English teachers?
5. What role does technology play in your EFL teaching, particularly in terms of disseminating knowledge and resources to students?
6. Have you ever encountered challenges in cascading English language knowledge among EFL learners, and if so, how did you overcome them?
7. Can you discuss any professional development or training opportunities you have pursued to enhance your ability to cascade knowledge effectively in EFL settings?
8. What assessment methods or tools do you use to evaluate the progress and learning outcomes of your EFL students, and how do you use these assessments to inform your cascading approach?
9. In your opinion, what are the key qualities or skills that make an English teacher successful in facilitating the EFL cascading of knowledge?
10. How do you stay updated with the latest trends, research, and best practices in EFL teaching and knowledge cascading?
11. Can you provide an example of a successful collaborative project or program you have been involved in that aimed to cascade knowledge across different EFL classrooms or institutions?
12. Would you like to join the training we provide? How long?

The questions given and answered by the English teachers from 8 High Schools with the summary of each answer as below:

1. Each teacher can describe their teaching experience, highlighting the contexts in which they have taught English as a Foreign Language (EFL). They can discuss the types of students they have taught, the challenges they have faced, and any successes they have experienced.
2. Teachers can explain the strategies they use to ensure effective knowledge cascading in their EFL forums. They can provide specific examples of how they have implemented these strategies, such as organizing workshops, creating mentorship programs, or using online platforms for sharing resources. However, in implementing these strategies, they generally got obstacles due to the fact that the structural
3. Teachers can discuss how they adapt their teaching methods and materials to suit the varying levels of English proficiency among their students in EFL settings. They can provide examples of different strategies they use for teaching students at different proficiency levels and how they assess the effectiveness of these strategies.
4. Teachers can share an experience where they successfully cascaded knowledge to other English teachers. They can discuss the specific knowledge they shared, the methods they used to share this knowledge, and the impact it had on the teachers they were sharing with.
5. Teachers can discuss the role of technology in their EFL teaching, particularly in terms of disseminating knowledge and resources to students. They can provide examples of how they use technology in their teaching and the benefits it brings to their students.
6. Teachers can talk about any challenges they have encountered in cascading English language knowledge among EFL learners and how they have overcome these challenges. They can discuss specific examples and the strategies they used to address these challenges.
7. Teachers can discuss any professional development or training opportunities they have pursued to enhance their ability to cascade knowledge effectively in EFL settings. They can talk about the specific training programs they have participated in and the impact these programs have had on their teaching practice.
8. Teachers can discuss the assessment methods or tools they use to evaluate the progress and learning outcomes of their EFL students. They can explain how they use these assessments to inform their cascading approach and improve their teaching practice.
9. Teachers can share their opinions on the key qualities or skills that make an English teacher successful in facilitating the EFL cascading of knowledge. They can discuss traits such as communication skills, adaptability, and a passion for teaching.
10. Teachers can explain how they stay updated with the latest trends, research, and best practices in EFL teaching and knowledge cascading. They can discuss the sources they use for professional development, such as conferences, workshops, and online resources.

11. Teachers can provide an example of a successful collaborative project or program they have been involved in that aimed to cascade knowledge across different EFL classrooms or institutions. They can discuss the goals of the project, the methods used to achieve these goals, and the outcomes of the project.

12. Teachers can express their interest in joining the training provided, indicating the duration they would be willing to participate in. They can also provide feedback on the training format, content, and any specific areas they would like to focus on.

The analysis of the qualitative data revealed that the factors that facilitate EFL cascading knowledge implementation include professional development programs, collaboration and networking opportunities, access to resources, and support from school management. On the other hand, the factors that hinder EFL cascading knowledge implementation include lack of time, lack of resources, lack of incentives, and lack of support from school management.

The results of the interview suggest that EFL cascading knowledge is being practiced among English teachers at both public and private high schools, with a majority of teachers having participated in such initiatives at some point in their careers. This is a positive finding as cascading knowledge has been shown to be an effective way of improving the quality of teaching in schools. However, there were significant differences between public and private high school teachers in their experiences with EFL cascading knowledge. Public high school teachers reported higher rates of participation in cascading knowledge initiatives compared to private high school teachers. However, for acting as knowledge provider, all teachers are reported never had become knowledge providers. There are several possibility factors, such as the institutional support for cascading knowledge initiatives, the heavy workload imposed on teachers, whether in administrative roles or as class advisors, leaves them with insufficient time to prepare instructional materials and update their knowledge for teaching English, the school's situation, where only one English teacher is hired to teach all grades, or the availability of resources for such initiatives. These conditions are correlated to issues of student's anxiety and motivation in EFL learning process.

The perceived effectiveness of cascading knowledge initiatives was generally positive among the teachers, with only 2 out of 8 rating as either "effective" or "very effective". This suggests that not all teachers could see the value in these initiatives because of their failure to implement the EFL cascading knowledge among the teachers. Generally, for those who have never participated in EFL cascading knowledge suggests that these initiatives can contribute to teachers' professional development. However, it is important to note that the effectiveness of cascading knowledge initiatives can be influenced by several factors, such as the quality of the knowledge being transferred and the skills and motivation of the knowledge providers. Therefore, it is important to ensure that these initiatives are well-designed and implemented to maximize their effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, EFL cascading knowledge has not been practiced among all English teachers at both public and private high schools, with a majority of teachers not having participated in such initiatives at some point in their careers. However, there are significant differences between public and private high school teachers in their experiences with cascading knowledge, which could be due to several factors. The perceived effectiveness of cascading knowledge initiatives was generally positive among the teachers, yet the responses are still the teachers' possibility due to the failure to implement it.

Future research could investigate the factors that contribute to the success of cascading knowledge initiatives in EFL contexts, such as the role of institutional support and resources, the quality of the knowledge being transferred, and the skills and motivation of the knowledge providers. Additionally, research could explore the impact of cascading knowledge initiatives on student learning outcomes and the overall quality of EFL education in public and private high schools.

Overall, this research highlights the importance of cascading knowledge initiatives in supporting the professional development of English teachers in EFL contexts. By promoting the transfer of knowledge, skills, and experience between senior and less experienced teachers, these initiatives can contribute to improving the quality of EFL education in both public and private high schools.

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