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Implementation of emergency remote teaching (ERT) among Philippine teachers in Xi'an, China

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Abstract: Considering the event of change in the context of education, institutions worldwide implemented Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) to mitigate the educational learning issues due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This study was designed to explore the instructional strategies of Philippine teachers in implementing the remote English language instruction among primary learners in Xi'an, China. The online survey method was used to get a gist of the Philippine teachers' experiences in remote teaching. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the responses of the teachers. The results highlight the instructional strategy as they are aware of the strategies to do considering the level of the students in implementing ERT. The major findings of this study emphasize the positive outlook, concern for students, and instructional strategies of the Philippine teachers in implementing remote teaching, notwithstanding the abrupt changes in the face of education. Implications of this study gyrate around the concept of contextualizing instructional model in remote instruction which calls for the attention of teachers and curriculum designers.

Keywords: COVID-19, Emergency remote teaching, Philippine teachers, remote teaching, e-learning

Introduction

The phase of education has changed due to the risk of COVID-19 pandemic as many schools opted to do online instruction instead of face-to-face classes (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, & Bond, 2020). Such a scenario is common to some English training schools in Xi'an, China as teachers conduct online English instruction to primary learners. This is reinforced (Bao, 2020) in the government of China as it required the schools to pursue the teaching and learning process in education through online classes. Nevertheless, given the pressing concern about COVID-19, it is vital to determine the specific term for the kind of instruction performed by the teachers considering the concept that there is an abrupt change in education and that the current model of teaching is interim. As such, Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) should not be labeled as online teaching considering the difference in educational approaches (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). Also, ERT includes instruction with corresponding instructional design and systematic planning for its effectiveness. However, due to emergency transitions, the process of crafting a carefully designed instruction is deficient in many cases (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, & Bond, 2020).

Literature Review

As traditional teaching abruptly shifts due to pandemic, remote teaching was practiced among schools worldwide (Affouneh, Salha, & Khlaif, 2020). Hence, the purpose of this study is to explore how Philippine teachers implement remote English language instruction among primary learners in Xi'an, China. In this regard, the results of this study sought answers to specific research questions such as 1) What are the perceptions of the Philippines teachers on ERT? 2) What are the instructional materials used in ERT? and 3) What are the things to consider in the implementation of remote teaching? Given the need to pursue learning amid COVID-19 outbreak, LaBonte (2020) proposed that teachers should



have comprehensive training and practices in ERT, to improve students' motivation to learn as many countries experience ERT. In the context of China, teachers can implement effective online education through efficient instructional strategies (Bao, 2020). However, to implement a successful and beneficial ERT, teaching practices and instructional planning should be properly employed to avoid waste of time, investments in technology and education (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). Moreover, teachers should consider the needs of their students and employ several strategies to impart knowledge (LaBonte, 2020) as they get through the challenges of learning in this abrupt change in the context of education. Also,

To reinforce the aforementioned concepts, this study aimed to explore how Philippine teachers implement Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) in online English language instruction among primary learners in Xi'an, China. Furthermore, the instructional strategies used by the teachers were emphasized including their perceptions of the benefits and challenges of ERT. Hence, concepts obtained from this study are deemed necessary for getting an actual gist of how online education is done as well as the factors to consider in the online instruction.

Conceptual Background

Educational responses were designed to support the concept of learning in times of global problems. Given the risks of COVID-19, ERT is one way of addressing the gap in education systems worldwide (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, & Bond, 2020). The successful implementation of ERT is in the hands of the teachers as they are the catalyst of learning (LaBonte, 2020). Hence, teachers should be empowered by the necessary techniques in delivering remote teaching (Bates, 2020). Aside from instructional strategies, instructional design or framework is necessary for teachers to be guided in ERT. To reinforce this idea, Khan (2016) proposed the eight concepts of e-learning framework such as pedagogical, institutional, technological, management, interface design, ethics, resource support, and evaluation. This conceptual framework is vital for quality e-learning. Hence, educators, curriculum designers, and public or private academic institutions should consider creating an instructional framework for ERT for the sake of quality implementation of such educational response to emergency cases.

Methodology

Participants and Setting

The participants of this study were the twenty (n=20) Philippine teachers who are involved in remote English language instruction. Moreover, these teachers represent the three training schools in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, China. The small sample of teachers who participated in this study was because most teachers went back to the Philippines during the winter break. Hence, purposive sampling was used, as the researcher asked the help of the Filipino community in Xi'an, China to participate in the study.

Research Method

The quantitative research method was used to explore how Philippine teachers in Xi'an, China implement the remote teaching which includes their perceptions on remote teaching, the instructional materials used in online instruction, the things to consider in the implementation of remote teaching, and teacher quality.

Instrument

A quantitative online survey method was used to collect data in this study. It included fifteen items considering the experiences of Filipino teachers in remote English language instruction among primary students in training schools. Besides, items in the online survey were developed to explore the Filipino teachers' perspective in the implementation, preparation, and instructional strategy used in an online class.

Data Collection

The study was conducted from April 20-May 5, 2020. The researcher sought the consent of the participants to answer the online survey. Also, the rationale of the study was explained to the participants, explaining the significance of their responses. Considering the ethical consideration, aside from getting the participants' consent to participate in the study, the researcher informed them of their rights to withdraw their participation if they are not comfortable to participate in the study.

Findings and Discussions

ERT is one of the educational responses to the COVID-19 outbreak worldwide (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). Hence, it is important to explore the different instructional strategies of teachers in implementing the ERT. The online survey results are presented in Table 1 and followed by the discussion in the next paragraphs.

Table 1: Participants' response in the Implementation of ERT

Filipino teachers are optimistic, thinking that online teaching is beneficial to learners. Given the perceptions of the Filipino teachers concerning ERT, (90%) consider this teaching method as manageable and (10%) said otherwise. This idea is supported by (Palvia, et al., 2018) as they explained that teachers adapt to the changes in education such as methods of instruction in online teaching. Nevertheless, (65%) of Filipino teachers experience difficulty in online teaching, and (35%) do not feel much difficulty. This is due to the problems they encounter in online teaching such as internet connection (65%), technical problems (15%), overloading of conferencing tools (10%), and passive learners (10%).

Moreover, the materials, time, and platforms in ERT are considered in implementing online classes. As such, (90%) of Filipino teachers used laptops, and only (10%) used mobile phones. As to the conferencing tools they usually choose to teach online, (35%) of Filipino teachers prefer to use Tencent Meeting, (25%) RoomBox, (20%) Classin, (10%) WeChat, (5%) Private application, (5%) DingTalk, and (5%) Zoom. To support these ideas, teachers should get the appropriate technology (Bates, 2020). Teachers prefer laptops as it is handy compared to desk-top. Likewise, Tencent Meeting is the commonly used video conferencing system among teachers as it is convenient to use in China. According to Wei (2020), Tencent Meeting is a remote learning and meeting tool that is expanding its capacity to offer smooth online conferencing services to different organizations and sectors including education. Furthermore, Tencent Meeting has been used in online teaching among different schools in Mainland China. Other conferencing tools such as RoomBox, Classin, WeChat, DingTalk, and Zoom also provide access and support to online communication. However, there are feedbacks of slow communication among individuals who are using Zoom (Crotty, 2020), this might be due to overloading of the online site considering the synchronized utilization of a massive group of people.

Regarding the time of online class, (60%) of Filipino teachers consider 31-60 minutes as appropriate to conduct online classes, (20%) choose 15-30 minutes, and (10%) prefer 61-90 minutes as well as 91-120 minutes. To reinforce these data, (Tao, 2020) said that teachers from the best schools in Chengdu provide remote teaching to students from 20-45 minutes. Consequently, teachers are also giving students breaks between classes following the face-to-face classroom teaching. Such a concept is essential for teachers and students to avoid eye strain due to prolonged exposure in laptops, iPads, or computer screens (Tao, 2020). Moreover, most teachers use PowerPoint Presentation (80%) and videos (20%) as learning aids in online teaching. They usually prepare games (65%), singing activities (10%), concept mapping (10%), storytelling (5%), reading (5%), and dialogue (5%). It is also advisable to avoid long lectures, especially for primary learners considering their attention span (Bates, 2020).

Besides, Filipino teachers show positive attributes as they spend their spare time in making instructional materials. They also consider the level of learners and learning behavior in preparing the teaching content of their online classes. This is supported by (95%) of Filipino teachers who consider the level of

their learners in planning their remote class. Moreover, considering the level and needs of the learner is essential for a successful ERT.

Likewise, the preparation of the online class needs strategic planning for its success. Thus, Filipino teachers have a positive attitude toward planning their teaching strategy ahead of time. Similarly, (85%) of Filipino teachers prepare plan B in case plan A does not work in online teaching. Another good practice of Filipino teachers is teaching at pace with the learners' level obtained (95%) and only (5%) do not observe such practice. Moreover, according to Bao (2020) planning ahead of time is vital for a smooth implementation of ERT (p. 1). Hence, planning for emergency preparation does not stop in plan B, even plan C is needed to secure a successful online instruction.

Regarding the implementation of an effective instructional, it is important to get the attention of the learners to participate in an online class. Hence, (95%) of Filipino teachers are particular with their learners' participation in an online class. Unfortunately, (5%) does not care about getting the learners' attention to collaborate in the class. This is reinforced by the collected data about how the learners respond in an online class. Opportunely, (85%) of teachers responded that learners are actively participating in the class and only (15%) reported otherwise. On the other hand, seeking the assistance of the Chinese teacher assistant is important for Filipino teachers considering that some of them are not proficient in the Chinese language. Consequently, (65%) ask for the Chinese teacher assistant while (35%) manage their classes without the help of a Chinese teaching assistant. Such concepts are also supported by Bao (2020) as she explained that teacher assistant is important in remote teaching among teachers in China (p.1). Likewise, encouraging students' active participation and engagement is important in remote teaching. On the other hand, (75%) of Filipino teachers implied that assessing learners' performance is possible in online teaching while (25%) determined the opposite. To reinforce these ideas, ERT is beneficial not only to the learners but to the teachers as well (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, & Bond, 2020). However, telecommunications industries should focus on improving fast connectivity and stability of conferencing tools for online education (Palvia, et al., 2018).

Furthermore, a successful online class also depends on the quality of the teacher. Hence, (45%) of Filipino teachers believe that being proactive is the most important quality of a teacher doing online classes, followed by (35%) being patient, (15%) determined, and (5%) persuasive. Being practical and positive amid challenges in education is crucial for teachers. As such, their qualities and attitudes in dealing with remote teaching should be considered. Also, teachers need to be practical in dealing with remote teaching (Bates, 2020). They should seek different ways to deliver a successful remote instruction to students regardless of their usual experiences in teaching.

Limitations and Future Research

In general, this study is limited to the small sample of Philippine teachers implementing ERT in Xi'an China. Hence, the results of this study cannot speak for the entire teachers who are implementing ERT worldwide. Nevertheless, this study presents an empirical investigation of the successful implementation of ERT among Philippine teachers which is beneficial for other implementers of ERT. Given the results, this study implies designing an instructional framework for ERT. Also, the implementation of ERT should be crafted carefully. Moreover, this study highlights the regard of Philippine teachers to students learning amid the crisis brought by the pandemic. Implications for further implementation of ERT are the use of the e-learning model in teaching (Khan, 2016) that will guide educators to quality education even in times of global crisis. Suggestions for future research include addressing gaps in technology and equality in e-learning. Also, conducting further research on a large number of samples is vital for more reliable results. Furthermore, considering the small number of participants in this study, it cannot speak for the whole population of teachers who are practicing remote teaching. Hence, the results may not apply to the universal concept of ERT. However, the apprehension of the participants in ERT can contribute to the empirical data of a successful implementation of ERT.

Conclusion

The focus of this study was to explore how Philippine teachers implement Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) in Xi'an, China. Results showed that Philippine teachers are equipped with necessary preparations for ERT in English language instruction. Likewise, they perceived ERT as beneficial to continue the teaching and learning process amid the challenges brought COVID-19 that causes the transition in education. Because of the meeting tools used in remote teaching, the majority of Philippine teachers are using Tencent Meeting. Moreover, this study highlights the importance of evaluating the level and needs of the learners in ERT which is reinforced by the high percentage rate of the teachers' perception considering the level and engagement or participation of their learners in planning their remote teaching. Hence, this study implies that the learners' needs are taken into account in planning an instructional strategy and design for emergency remote teaching. For the instructional materials used in remote teaching, the majority of the teachers are using PowerPoint presentations. On the other hand, teachers should be guided with an instructional model in remote teaching. Furthermore, teachers and instructional designers should consider contextualization and the learners' background before adapting any instructional model to pursue remote teaching as well as online education.

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