

Development of Thai Language Teachers for Improving Students' Reading Comprehension in Multicultural Society of The Three Southern Border Provinces (in Thailand)

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Abstract—This research aimed to study the development of Thai language teachers for improving students' reading comprehension in a multicultural society of the three southern border provinces. The results found that :1) Teachers' achievement in classroom action research of post-development was higher than the pre-development and teachers' achievement after development was at a very good level. 2) Quality of teachers' classroom action research after development was at a good level. 3) Teachers' attitude on classroom action research had become more positive after development and teachers' attitude on classroom action research was at good level. 4) Teachers' opinion on teacher development found that teachers strongly agreed on training teachers classroom action research that can improve students' reading comprehension and developed training curriculum was effective; it can help teachers to learn and practice their abilities in doing classroom action research for truly improving students' reading comprehension. 5) Students' reading comprehension was higher after teachers' development.

Keywords— Thai Language Teachers, Reading Comprehension, Multicultural Society, Three Southern Border Provinces .

I. INTRODUCTION

THIS Thai language has been accepted as national identity as well as one of cultural treasures which creates unity and strengthens Thai citizens' personality. It is also a tool for communicating to make an understanding and good relationships to each other. Moreover, the language can help one to do business, and work and live together peacefully in democratic societies. It is known as a tool for searching knowledge, various information which can be used as useful experiences, developing a thinking process, critical thinking and creation for social changing and progress of technology. The advantages of the language include career development and economic security. Additionally, it indicates local wisdom in culture, tradition and aesthetics. It is valuable for learning, conservative and should be inherited eternally within Thailand.

Thai Basic Education Curriculum BE 2008 consists of Thai language which is one of eight learning areas that all students

must learn from primary level (grade 1) to secondary level (grade 12). Furthermore, learning strands that students must learn will be 1) reading 2) writing 3) listening, watching and speaking 4) principles in using Thai language and 5) literature.

The three Southern Border Provinces are comprised of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat provinces which are located in the lowest part of southern Thailand. This area is more special than the other areas in terms of history, Islamic learning sources and the diversities of people' race, religion and culture among Thai Buddhist, Thai Muslim and Thai Chinese. Currently, students in this area have encountered some problems in aspects of low Thai language achievement, especially reading, according to the Ministry of Education meeting results among administrators, teachers, and experts who are attempting to drive educational policies for developing the education system in the southern border provinces on 29 March 2014 in Pattani province. It was found that primary grade 3 students have problems in Thai language reading as follows: 1) 3,637 students (19 percent) of Pattani province 2) 2,952 students (31 percent) of Yala province 3) 3,924 students (43 percent) of Narathiwat province. It is showed that many students have reading problems which is a basic difficulty in learning Thai language. If the problems continue to occur, it will influence Thai language developing at the higher level, and the learning of other content which are important issues, will be impaired.

Teachers are important factors that can solve this problem since teachers are people who promote and create students learning effectively. Accordingly, it is essential that teachers will be engaged, developed and praised for protecting and generating students' learning to have knowledge, skills and attitudes, including moral and ethic, being a good member of community, the society and the nation.

From that point, it makes the researcher, (a lecturer at the Faculty of Education, Thaksin University), like to develop the Thai language teachers in teaching and learning for improving students' reading comprehension in the

multicultural society of the three southern border provinces as one of the main duties in providing academic services for the community, especially for the southern region.

Effectiveness of developing Thai language teachers in teaching and learning will improve students reading comprehension in the multicultural society of the three southern border provinces. This will provide positive effects on learning in other subjects and to be the basis of living for students in the multicultural society of the three southern border provinces.

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

To study the development of Thai language teachers for improving students' reading comprehension in the multicultural society of the three southern border provinces as follows:

1. to study teachers' achievements on classroom action research before and after development.
2. to study teachers' report of classroom action research after development.
3. to study teachers' attitude before and after development.
4. to study teachers' opinion on development.
5. to study students' reading comprehension after teachers development.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Preparation

1. Researcher studied guidelines to develop Thai language teachers for improving students' reading in the multicultural society of the three southern border provinces. From related research, the study found that training is the method that can develop teachers ability in teaching and learning and studying documents and related research were found that doing classroom action research of teachers is the method that can solve the problem and improve students' ability. In conclusion, in relation to study document and related research, it was found that developing Thai language teachers to improve students' reading comprehension in the multicultural society of the three southern border provinces is training the teachers to do classroom action research.

2. The researcher studied guidelines in training, the guideline in training Thai language teachers that was synthesized as follows:

Step 1 Studying basic information for training

1. Researcher studied documents and related research and basic information for training.
2. Researcher studied 10 experts' opinions about training in classroom action research for Thai language teachers to improve students' reading comprehension in the multicultural society of the three southern border provinces. The results of the study were used to develop a training curriculum.
3. Researcher recruited Thai language teachers who teach at the primary level (grade 3) in the three border southern

provinces to be trained about classroom action research for improving students' reading comprehension. Thirty Thai language teachers were trained. They were from schools under Office of the Private Education, Office of the Basic Education and Bureau of Local Personnel System Development.

4. Researcher questioned Thai language teachers who were trained about 1) basic information 2) state in doing classroom action research 3) Thai teachers' knowledge about classroom action research and the multicultural society of the three southern border provinces and 4) needs of developing themselves in doing classroom action research to improve students' reading comprehension and used the results of questioning for developing a training curriculum.

Step 2 Construction of training curriculum and checking

1. Researcher studied documents related to curriculum development, training curriculum development and related research of training curriculum development.

2. Researcher constructed training curriculum on classroom action research for Thai teachers from basic information in step 1 with textbooks on classroom action research for Thai language teachers [1] by setting 1) principle 2) course description 3) aim 4) content 5) training method and 6) assessment and checking from experts.

3. Researcher constructed nine training lesson plans in classroom action research for the Thai language teachers in the three southern border provinces. Each lesson plan consisted of 1) concept 2) objectives 3) contents 4) activities 5) medias/learning sources and 6) assessments from training curriculum on classroom action research for Thai language teachers that was constructed, checked, tried out and revised to be accomplished.

4. Researcher constructed instruments for collecting data by studying documents and related research, operating and trying out.

4.1 Fifty items of achievement pre-test and post-test of classroom action research, was done (multiple choice questions). The difficulty index of pre-test was between 0.23 – 0.80, discrimination index of pre-test was between 0.25 – 0.87, difficulty index of post-test was between 0.20 – 0.80, discrimination index of post-test was between 0.26 – 0.88, reliability of pre-test was 0.85 and reliability of post-test was 0.87.

4.2 Fifteen items of assessment form in classroom action research, it was rubric scoring, reliability of the assessment form was 0.75.

4.3 Twenty items of Teachers' questionnaire on training, using the 5-point rating scale: reliability of the questionnaire was 0.85.

4.4 Fifteen items of classroom action research attitude test, using a five-point rating scale: reliability of the questionnaire was 0.85.

5. Researcher studied the effectiveness of curriculum in training classroom action research for Thai language teachers in the multicultural society of the three southern border provinces by using sixty Thai language teachers in Songkhla

province. They were selected to be an experiment group and a control group. Each group was comprised of 30 teachers for comparing achievement in classroom action research, attitudes on classroom action research, and the quality of classroom action research report. It was found that after training, the achievement in classroom action research, attitudes on classroom action research, classroom action research report of experiment group was higher than the control group in all aspects.

Step 3 Operation training and training evaluation

1. Researcher tested teachers using an achievement pre-test in classroom action research.

2. Researcher tested teachers' attitudes on classroom action research.

3. Teachers were trained followed by seven training lesson plans (21 hours). The researcher was the trainer.

4. Researcher tested teachers using an achievement post-test in classroom action research.

5. Researcher coached teachers for 3 hours to design a proposal of classroom action research to improve students' reading comprehension which was comprised of three steps: identifying, learning and improving [2].

The innovation that the teachers used for improving students' reading comprehension, the researcher suggested to them to use instructional model in the multicultural society of the southern border provinces developed by Noppakao Naphathalung [3] with teaching techniques or media that were appropriately chosen. The instructional model was comprised of 5 approaches: a) using the integrated content from the southern border provinces b) group process approaches c) literature-based reading approaches d) questioning techniques and e) the use of graphic organizers. Each activity involved four learning processes, namely, step 1 Attitude Focus, step 2 Learning Content, step 3 presentation and step 4 Evaluation.

In addition, Thai language teachers were guided to use a Thai reading comprehension test for primary grade 3 students in 5 southern border provinces developed by Noppakao Naphathalung [4] to study the progress of the target group's reading comprehension.

6. Thai language teachers did classroom action research by appropriate use of a mentoring system, teachers guidance and counseling from meetings, using e-mail, LINE application and telephone individually until the research was finished. The mentoring system comprised of step 1 Building the Relationship, step 2 Exchanging Information and Setting a Goal, step 3 Working Towards Goals/Deepening the Engagement, step 4 Ending the Formal Mentoring Relationship and Planning for the Future [5].

7. Researcher questioned teachers' opinions on training using a teachers questionnaire on training.

8. Researcher assessed quality of teachers' report of classroom action research.

9. Researcher tested teachers' attitudes on classroom action research, using the same attitude test.

10. Researcher studied students' reading comprehension progress from classroom action research.

IV. FINDINGS

1. Teachers' achievement in classroom action research of post-development (mean=41.76) (standard deviation=2.35) was higher than the pre-development (mean=26.56) (standard deviation=2.83) and teachers' achievement was at a very good level. (83.52 percent).

2. Quality of teachers' report of classroom action research after development was at a very good level. (87.10 percent)

3. Teachers' attitudes on classroom action research of post-development (mean=3.51) (standard deviation=0.77) became more positive pre-development (mean=2.61) (standard deviation=1.36) and teachers' attitudes on classroom action research was at a good level.

4. Teachers' opinions on teacher development found that teachers strongly agreed on training teachers classroom action research (mean=4.09) (standard deviation=0.74) that can improve students' reading comprehension and the development training curriculum was effective. It can help teachers learn and practice their abilities in doing classroom action research for truly improving students' reading comprehension.

5. Students' reading comprehension of teachers post-development (mean=26.45) (standard deviation=2.82) was higher than the teacher pre-development (mean=18.05) (standard deviation=1.38) and students' reading comprehension was at a good level. (73.47 percent).

V. DISCUSSION

1. Teachers' achievement in classroom action research of post-development was higher than the pre-development and teachers' achievement was at a very good level since the training curriculum was developed from studying documents and related research and questioning opinions from ten experts and Thai language teachers to help the curriculum suitable for Thai language teachers.

In addition, using group processes to help teachers working and learning together, giving an opportunity for teachers to exchange knowledge with their peers and to help each other which can promote qualified learning. Additionally, using graphic organizers for concluding knowledge to help their learning the content in easy ways, faster and remember it longer as a result of the teachers' higher achievement.

2. Quality of teachers' report of classroom action research after development was at good level because writing classroom action research proposal used coaching techniques which utilized communication skills to help teachers shift their perspectives and thereby discover different approaches to achieve their goals. Moreover, doing classroom action research that used a mentoring system, which is a way to transfer knowledge between an experienced trainer in classroom action research and Thai language teachers, which

is an effective system.

3. Teachers' attitudes towards classroom action research have become more positive after development and teachers' attitudes on classroom action research was at a good level, due to using various training methods comprised of using lecture methods, learning together, concluding knowledge by graphic organizers that promote teachers' learning and understanding more about classroom action research, using coaching techniques for developing research proposal and using mentoring system in doing classroom action research. This made the Thai language teachers feel confident in doing classroom action research by the trainer until completion.

4. Teachers' opinions on teacher development found that teachers strongly agreed on training teachers classroom action research that can improve students' reading comprehension and the developed training curriculum was effective. This can help teachers learn and practice their abilities in doing classroom action research for truly improving students' reading comprehension owing to effective development training process from studying documents and related research including experts ideas questioning and surveying the need of the Thai teachers.

5. Students' reading comprehension was higher after teachers development and students' reading comprehension was at a good level because of training Thai language teachers to teach them to learn more about classroom action research and the methods to solve teaching and learning problems, especially the research for improving students' reading comprehension in the multicultural society of the three southern border provinces.

VI. SUGGESTION

Suggestions on the application of research findings

1. Stage of studying basic information for developing Thai language teachers to improve students' reading comprehension. Researcher had to be friendly and familiar with teachers since the teachers responded to the questionnaire and provided true information at their leisure.

2. Before training, the researcher had to make a clear understanding for the Thai language teachers about the aims of classroom action research and the benefits of classroom action research towards students' reading comprehension. This helped the teachers to concentrate and be engrossed in classroom action research to improve their students' reading comprehension.

3. The Thai language teachers who were trained, came from different schools. Firstly, the trainer had to arrange activities for the teachers to get to know each other. This helped to arrange training activity easily because the training was effective by group training process and the focus on cooperative learning with help from each other while doing classroom action research.

4. The Thai language teachers who have been training were different ages, had different experience, majors and

background knowledge about classroom action research. Accordingly, the trainer had to choose training methods to fit the individual differences of the teachers such as sharing knowledge and help amongst the teachers.

5. Trainer had to be friendly with teachers while training. This encouraged teachers to have the confidence to speak, ask questions and share their ideas. I also helped the teachers to learn more. During the classroom action research, if the teachers were faced with a number of problems and barriers, the trainer had to advise, cheer up and support them with kindness. This helped the teachers to do the research until it was satisfactorily finished.

6. Trainer had to integrate knowledge and skills for the Thai language teachers about searching methods from websites while training as well. It helped the teachers to learn more and use these tools with their teaching and learning in the future.

Suggestions for further research

1. This research studied only primary grade three Thai language teachers from schools in the multicultural society of the three southern border provinces. Thus, there should be Thai language teachers doing classroom action research for improving students' reading comprehension in other grade levels and other learning areas as well.

2. This research studied only the development of then Thai language teachers in classroom action research for improving students' reading comprehension. Hence, there should be the development of Thai language teachers in classroom action research for improving other language skills, including students' attribution in learning Thai.

3. This research studied focusing on the achievement of teachers in classroom action research, quality of classroom action research report and attitudes on classroom action research. As a result, there should be a study of others variables, such as problem solving ability, analytical thinking skills etc.

4. This research studied training that used the group process with graphic organizers, coaching and a mentoring system. Consequently, there should be a study of the effects of training with other approaches, methods and medias such as constructivism, E-training, CAI (Computer-Assisted Instruction), etc.

VII. CONCLUSION

The training on classroom action research for Thai language teachers that used the group process with graphic organizers, coaching and a mentoring system can develop teachers' achievement in classroom action research, quality of teachers' report of classroom action research, teachers' attitudes on classroom action research and students' reading comprehension.

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