THE SITUATION OF ENGLISH TEACHERS FOSTERING ACTIVITIES AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KE SACH DISTRICT, SOC TRANG PROVINCE, VIETNAM

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Abstract:

This article aims to provide scientific, accurate and overall information on the English teachers fostering activities at secondary schools in Ke Sach district, Soc Trang province. Via the sociological survey method and direct interview, this article has informed comprehensively about the status of teachers' quality and students' results in learning English, English teachers' awareness of fostering activities, implementing teaching contents under the teaching and learning foreign languages project, as well as English teachers fostering activity methods, and forms of English teachers fostering activities of educational managers. The results of the study are the basis to improve the quality of teaching and learning foreign languages for students at secondary schools in Ke Sach district, Soc Trang province.

Keywords: fostering, English teachers, secondary school, Ke Sach, Soc Trang

1. Introduction

In 2008, the Prime Minister (2008) issued decision No.1400/QD-TTg on September 30th, 2008, on approving the foreign languages teaching and learning project in the national education system from the period 2008-2020. The objectives of the project are to reinvent the foreign languages teaching and learning in the national education system comprehensively, apply new foreign languages teaching and learning program at all educational levels and training levels, aiming to achieve a clear step by 2015 in terms of qualifications, the ability to use foreign languages of human resources, especially in some priority fields; by 2020, the majority of Vietnamese teenagers graduate from intermediate levels, colleges and universities will have sufficient foreign languages capacity to use independently, confident in communication, learning and working in an integrated, multilingual and multicultural environment; turn foreign languages into the forte of Vietnamese people, serving the industrialization and modernization of the country.

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To perform the project according to the conclusion of the Minister of Education and Training at the seminar on "Solutions to enhance the quality of teaching and learning foreign languages - especially English in the national education system" on December 8th, 2018, the Minister said that "*Teachers play a key role in improving the quality of teaching and learning foreign languages*"; He emphasized that "*foreign language teachers must be standardized and fostered in practical training, in accordance with the requirements of each educational level*". Thereby confirming the teachers' role in directly affecting the learners' output; therefore, the foreign language teachers fostering activities play a crucial role, decide the contingent's quality and teaching's quality at all learning levels. However, in order to bring the results as expected, the foreign language teachers fostering activities need to update and follow up the latest changes in implementing the subjects, in line with the teachers' requirements, qualifications and perceptions play an extremely vital role. With the importance above, this article carries out the research on "The situation of English teachers fostering activities at secondary schools in Ke Sach district, Soc Trang province, Vietnam".

The purpose of the study is to provide scientific, accurate and overall information on the English teachers fostering activities at secondary schools in Ke Sach district, Soc Trang province as a reference for managers to propose solutions to perfect the fostering as well as elevate the quality of teaching and learning English for secondary students.

2. Material & methods

The research uses these following methods: questionnaire, exchange, interview, summarizing experience, practical survey and statistical method. Participants: 48 English teachers at secondary schools and Vocational Education - Continuing Education Centers in Soc Trang province.

3. Results

3.1 The teaching quality of English teachers at secondary schools in Ke Sach district, Soc Trang province

Table 1: Statistics on assessing English teachers' professional standards
at secondary schools in Ke Sach district, Soc Trang province

Year	Assessment according to teachers' professional standards				Total
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	
2017-2018	25	7	3	4	39
2018-2019	30	10	4	3	47
2019-2020	31	11	3	3	48

The statistics in Table 1 show that:

In the school year 2017-2018, there were 39 English teachers including 35 qualified teachers accounting for 89.74% and 10.26% of unqualified teachers; among the 35 qualified teachers, there were 25 excellent teachers, 7 good ones, and 3 fair ones.

In the school year 2018-2019, there were 47 English teachers including 44 qualified teachers accounting for 93.62% and 6.38% of unqualified teachers; among the 44 qualified teachers, there were 30 excellent teachers, 10 good ones, and 4 fair ones.

In the school year 2019-2020, there were 48 English teachers including 45 qualified teachers accounting for 93.75% and 6.25% of unqualified teachers; among the 45 qualified teachers, there were 31 excellent teachers, 11 good ones, and 3 fair ones.

3.2 The quality of learning English at secondary schools in Ke Sach district, Soc Trang province

Table 2: Statistics on results of learning English at
secondary schools, Ke Sach district, Soc Trang province

Year	Total students	Quality of learning English			
		Good	Fair	Moderate	Poor
2017-2018	7293	1500/20,56%	2792/38,28%	2439/33,44%	562/7,7%
2018-2019	6685	1409/21,1%	2421/36,21%	2429/36,33%	426/6,37%
2019-2020	6827	1526/22,35%	2485/36,4%	2427/35,6%	389/5,7%

By observing Table 2, we can see that the proportion of students' results in learning English who achieved good category from 2017 to 2020 fluctuated from 20%-22%, The proportion of students reaching a moderate category is quite high which accounts for about 33%-36%. Additionally, the poor proportion accounts for 5%-7% which is also the figure that teachers and managers should consider.

3.3 The situation of English teachers' awareness of fostering activities
The survey results of English teachers' awareness at secondary schools in Ke Sach district presented in Table 3 show that the training activities for English teachers are necessary or very necessary. In particular, the fostering activities to improve the teachers' professional qualifications are essential with the high consensus of 48 out of 48 survey coupons. Activities of fostering ethic, skills, informatics and fostering activities on the professional and personal requirements are supposed necessary or very necessary by 100% teachers who participated in the survey. However, fostering activities on teachers' qualifications of political reasoning are considered less necessary or necessary with approximately 50% awareness of less necessary or necessary level. As a result, it is obvious that teachers who directly do professional work as teaching, profession and skills fostering activities or other fostering ones that support professional activities are more necessary.

Table 3: English teachers' awareness of fostering
activities in Ke Sach district, Soc Trang province

No	Content	Levels			
		1	2	3	4
1	Ethical fostering			40	8
2	Qualifications fostering				48
3	Skills fostering			35	
4	Political reasoning qualifications fostering		23	25	
5	Informatics fostering			48	
6	Self-fostering according to professional and personal requirements			24	24

Note: 1: Not necessary; 2: Less necessary; 3: Necessary; 4: Very necessary

By observing Table 3, we see the English teachers' awareness of the qualifications fostering and informatics fostering are considered to be the most necessary by teachers in the current period (100%); Next, the task of teachers' ethical fostering is assumed necessary (83.3%), we also find that the other fostering activities are also supposed necessary by teachers with a rate of over 50%.

3.4 The situation of implementing teaching contents under the teaching and learning foreign languages project

Many secondary schools in Ke Sach district have implemented professional guidance documents of the Division of Education and Training, the Department of Education and Training and the Educational and Training Industry on teaching and learning English at secondary schools. They have followed the teaching English plan under the national foreign languages project for secondary levels.

The quality of teaching and learning English at secondary schools in the district has considerable advancement. The quality and quantity of teachers' contingent teaching this subject meet the demand of teaching program. The young teachers' contingent with love for job, enthusiastic in the work, they always try to innovate the teaching methods to suit the students. Over the years, The Department of Education and Training of Soc Trang, The Department of Education and Training of Ke Sach have organized training sessions to improve the English teachers' capacity, as well as fostered the teaching methods for English teachers throughout the district so that all teachers have accessed to active teaching methods. The Division of Education and Training has also organized for students to participate in useful playgrounds such as exams for students who are good at English at district and provincial levels; moreover; modern equipment, teaching materials and audiovisual facilities that have been equipped, so the teaching quality of the subject has been improved.

English is considered as a difficult subject by the majority of students. Especially for ethnic minority students, because they are aware of the importance of this subject, they try very hard as well as have the right attitude and motivation in study. In addition, learning English is increasingly supported by families and society. Therefore, the quality of teaching and learning English is gradually enhancing and achieving quite good results in provincial English exams.

However, according to the Foreign Language Project 2020, 100% of secondary teachers must reach level B2 in accordance with the European foreign language capacity framework but in fact, the number of teachers achieving B2 in the district only accounts for a low proportion. The results of teaching English in the district are still low compared to several districts in the province and the general ground of the province as well as other provinces or cities. This is partly due to the content of English teachers fostering and the effectiveness of English teachers fostering at secondary schools in Ke Sach district, Soc Trang province are limited.

Table 4: The implemental level and the implemental result of fostering contents at secondary schools in Ke Sach district, Soc Trang province

No	Encode	Content	Implemental level				Implemental result			
			1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**P**	**M**	**F**	**G**
1	**KN**	**Fostering Skills**								
1.1	KN 1	Planning skill		23	20	5				
1.2	KN 2	Skill of choosing and using teaching method	10	23	15					
1.3	KN 3	Skill of testing and evaluating in the direction of approaching to capacity		15	33					
1.4	KN 4	Skill of information technology application in foreign languages teaching		11	36	1				
1.5	KN 5	Skill of implementing task of teaching and learning under foreign languages project	3	23	22					
1.6	KN 6	Teamwork skill		8	25	15				
1.7	KN 7	Coordination skill		28	20					
1.8	KN 8	Communication skill	20	26	2					
1.9	KN 9	Emotional management skill	1	17	25	5				
2	**CM**	**Professional fostering**								
2.1	CM 1	Professional knowledge		10	28	18				
2.2	CM 2	Practical knowledge		8	30	10				
2.3	CM 3	Strategic and directional knowledge	1	15	28	4				
3	**NL**	**Fostering the capacity of scientific research and technology transfer**								
3.1	NL 3	Knowledge of applied pedagogical research experience		48						
3.2	NL 3	Knowledge of applied pedagogical research methods		48						
3.3	NL 3	Knowledge of technology transfer methods in the application of foreign language teaching	48				48			

Notes: 1: Not done, 2: Irregular, 3: Regular, 4: Very regular, G: Good, F: Fair, M: Moderate, P: Poor.

Analysing Table 4 on the implemental results of fostering contents at secondary schools in Ke Sach district, Soc Trang province, we can see that the fostering of English teachers has a profound impact on the quality of English teachers and teaching efficiency. In which professional fostering activities are carried out regularly or very regularly by teachers with professional knowledge fostering activities agreed by 75% teachers, practical

knowledge fostering is carried out by 83.33% teachers, and strategic-oriented knowledge is implemented by 66.67% teachers. Fostering skills activities for teachers such as planning skill, applying information technology, choosing teaching methods, evaluating are implemented regularly by teachers. While activities of fostering the capacity of scientific research and technology transfer are less performed when teaching at secondary schools. Thus, with the features of students in Ke Sach district such as facing many difficulties, poor labourers' children, many ethnic minority students, the implementing fostering contents is limited, especially the contents of fostering the capacity of scientific research and technology transfer.

3.5 The situation of implementing English teachers fostering activity methods of secondary schools

Table 5: English teachers fostering activities
at secondary schools, Ke Sach district, Soc Trang province

No	Content	Implemental level				Implemental result			
		1	2	3	4	P	M	F	G
1	**Thematic learning fostering organized by superiors**								
1.1	Inviting leaders, experts to report	48				48			
1.2	Through the reporters' contingent of the Department and the Division of Education and Training.		48				48		
2	**Fostering in the course of teacher's work**								
2.1	Lecturing, attendance			48				48	
2.2	Seminar, conference, professional exchange	48				48			
2.3	Interacting and practical researching to learn experience	48				48			
3	**Fostering through participating in competitions**								
3.1	Good Teacher Competition	20	27	1		3	25	20	
3.2	Presentations in a foreign language competition	48				48			
3.3	Designing and teaching competition with e-lectures	19	28	1			20	28	
4	**Self-fostering**								
4.1	Practical research		9	39			48		
4.2	Self-studying through books, newspapers, magazines, media networks		22	26			48		
4.3	Self-participating in extra fostering classes		11	37			37	11	

Notes: 1: Not done, 2: Irregular, 3: Regular, 4: Very regular, G: Good, F: Fair, M: Moderate, P: Poor.

The survey results in Table 5 show that the English teachers fostering activities of schools in the district also depend on the general plan of the Department of Education and the teachers' self-fostering process. Particularly, 100% teachers who were surveyed said that the work of inviting experts to report had not been done. Teachers were only fostered infrequently through the reporters' contingent of the Department, and the Division of Education and Training. Similar results are also recorded in fostering activities through

seminar, conference, professional exchange, interacting activities, practical researching to learn experience and presentation competition in a foreign language. Especially, the fostering skill activities, participating in seminars and specialized conferences to improve their expertise, most of English teachers in Ke Sach district have not been participated, but only through materials, practical teaching and self-fostering activities. These activities are essential in the implementing teaching contents under the teaching and learning foreign languages project as well as improving the capacity and quality in teaching English of the district has not been implemented. Instead, the teachers participated in the survey said that teachers must self-fostering through practical research, self-studying through books, newspapers, magazines, media networks or self-participating in extra fostering classes, so the implemented results of fostering activities were not high. A few teachers were self-fostering through the working process and participating in professional competitions organized by the Division of Education or the Department of Education, brought quite good fostering results, but the number of teachers participating in this activity was not much.

Table 6: The effectiveness of English teachers fostering activity methods

No	Content	Levels			
		1	2	3	4
1	Traditional method	11	24	13	
2	Method of enhancing information exchange	22	17	9	
3	Presentation method	6	11	31	
4	Fostering method through the mass media		48		
5	Self-study method	8	20	20	

Notes: 1: Ineffective, 2: Less effective, 3: Effective, 4: Very effective
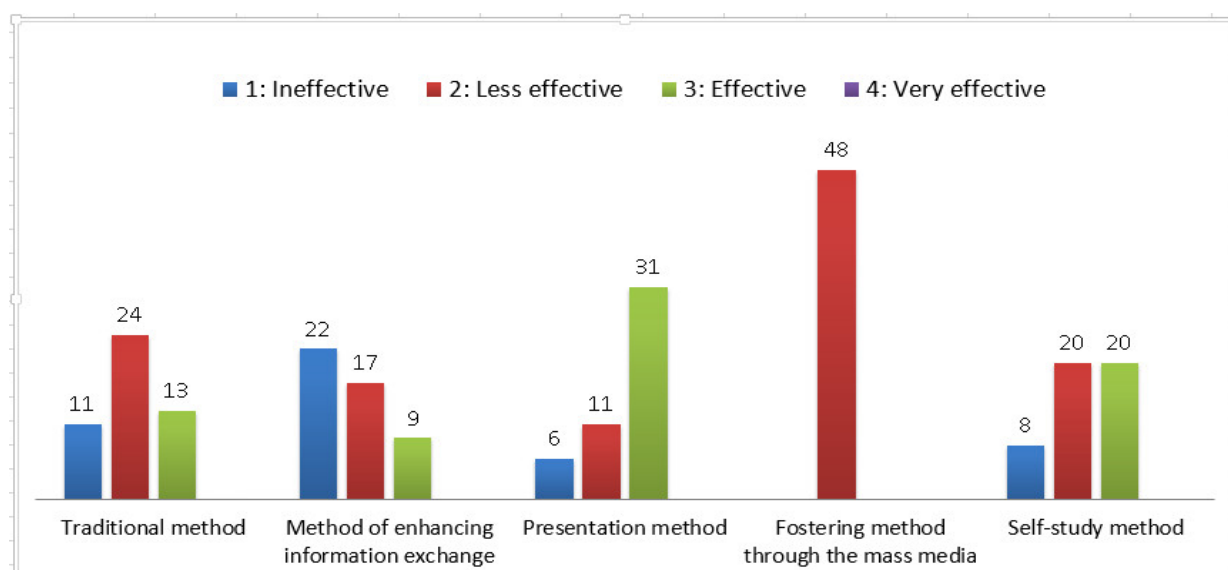

Figure 1: Description of the effectiveness of English teachers fostering methods

By observing the survey results in Table 6 and Figure 1 on the effectiveness of fostering activities, we can see that the effectiveness of English teachers fostering methods

at secondary schools in Ke Sach district, Soc Trang province is not high and different methods brings different effects. In which 64.6% teachers participated in the survey assumed that the presentation method in English was the most effective ones. This may explain that the fostering by the presentation method helped teachers strengthen their English skills, so it made English fostering become more effective than other methods. The second effect was the self-learning fostering method with 40.67% teachers approved its effectiveness, however, there were 40.67% teachers supposed that this method was less effective, and 16.67% teachers assumed that it was ineffective because the teachers' self-fostering activity was still affected by many objective and subjective factors. Therefore, fostering by this method was less effective. Notably, the method of enhancing information exchange fostering was evaluated to be good in fostering English teachers, English teachers assessed this method was ineffective or less effective with 45.83% and 35.42%, respectively and only 18.75% teachers believed that this method was effective. To explain this reason, the teachers supposed that information exchange was significant in teaching, nevertheless, when the information was provided without being directly exchanged, discussed with experts or reporters and colleagues which made teachers confused in the acquiring and applying process. Fostering activities by traditional method or through the mass media were considered less effective fostering methods by teachers. Indeed, currently, teaching in general and teaching English in particular are getting access to knowledge and new intriguing methods to help students gain communication skills in accordance with international standards. This requires that in English teachers' fostering activities, they also have to approach new, dynamic methods suitable for teaching requirements. For the mass media, most of the teachers evaluated it was less effective. Because the investment of modern media at schools in Ke Sach district in recent years had been improved significantly, it was still lacking in several schools, or was overlooked and the use of information had not been fully exploited in the teachers fostering process.

3.6 The situation of implementing forms of English teachers fostering activities of educational managers

With the innovation in education, the English teachers fostering at secondary schools in Ke Sach district, Soc Trang province was also carried out flexibly in many forms. Depending on the features of the school, the fostering requirements as well as the objectives in each certain period, managers chose the appropriate fostering form; the majority of the fostering activities were carried out in the form of direct focus fostering regularly or thematic basis. Table 7 presents the situation of implementing forms of English teachers fostering activities at secondary schools in Ke Sach district, Soc Trang province shows that concentrated fostering activities such as organizing fostering in courses or in batches are performed frequently and have brought fairly results

Table 7: The situation of implementing forms of English
teachers fostering activities of educational managers

No	Content	Implemental level				Effectiveness			
		1	2	3	4	I	L	E	V
1	On-site fostering: organizing fostering at school	48				48			
2	Concentrated fostering: organizing fostering in courses or in batches		8	40			15	33	
3	Distance fostering: through coursebooks, documents, means, information technology		48				48		
4	Self-fostering			26	22		22	26	

Notes: 1: Not done, 2: Irregular, 3: Regular, 4: Very Regular; I: Ineffective; L: Less effective; E: Effective; V: Very effective.

By observing the survey results in Table 7 about English teachers, we can see that the distance fostering activities of teachers are irregular and the effectiveness of fostering activities is only average. In particular, up to now, English teachers at most schools in the district have not been organized on-site fostering by the Division of Education as well as the Department of Education, but only send a limited number of English teachers participating in training and fostering classes organized by the Department of Education in Soc Trang city (100% teachers evaluated at the non-done level). The Division of Education in the district has organized retraining or not retraining for teachers in local which makes the English teachers' quality in Ke Sach district not improved synchronously. Also, according to the survey results, the common form of English teachers fostering activities in Ke Sach district is encouraging teachers to self-fostering. Teachers suppose that they have difficulties caused by subjective and objective factors, so it makes the implementation of self-fostering not feasible. This leads to the English teachers' quality in the district unequal. In addition, the survey results show that.

4. Conclusions

The situation of English teachers at secondary schools in Ke Sach district, Soc Trang province is 48 people; the majority of teachers are aware of the fostering in informatics and ethic of teachers. The teachers agree to fostering skills regularly, practical knowledge, and strategic knowledge; difficulty in implementing the contents of fostering the capacity of scientific research and technology transfer. Teachers have to self-fostering through practical research, self-study through books, newspapers, magazines, media networks or self-participating in extra fostering classes, thus, the implementing results of fostering activities are not highly effective. Teachers evaluate the presentation method in English has the highest efficiency and the majority of teachers are not directly participated in fostering but mainly in distance fostering.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interests.

About the Author

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