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TEACHER VOICE IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN SAUDI SCHOOLS

Abstract:

Little research into teacher voice in the area of curriculum development in Saudi Arabia has been carried out to date, and none in the area of Saudi native English Language teachers; therefore, this study contributed to this under-researched area and raised awareness of the issue in this context. This study aimed to find out more about how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers working in the public school system in Saudi Arabia perceive 'voice' and whether they use their 'voice' to contribute to curriculum development. The study presented the findings of a small, exploratory, critical study into teacher voice and curriculum development. The participants were six English as a Foreign Language teachers working in Saudi public schools, three male and three female. All the participants were Saudi nationals who work within a girls' and a boys' intermediate school in Saudi Arabia. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews. Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis procedures and the three themes emerged from the interview data were: (a) lack of response to teacher voice, (b) top-down approach to curriculum design, (c) desire to be heard. This study has underpinned by a critical agenda with a focus on raising awareness of the lack of teacher voice in curriculum development and empowering teachers to make their voice be heard. The findings indicated that teachers had a clear idea of how and why they should contribute their voice to curriculum development, but that the current system marginalized their voice in favour of 'experts' at a higher level in the hierarchical education system. The study concluded with some Implications for empowering teachers to contribute to how curriculum is developed and teachers' right to be involved in the decision-making process at all levels. Recommendations for future research are made.

Keywords:

Critical ideology; teacher voice; emancipation; power; culture; oppression; leadership, empowerment, English Language Teaching, Saudi Arabia