

The New Chilean "English in English" Curricular Initiative: EFL Teachers' Perceptions and Experiences

Paulina Moya Santiagos¹, Ana Sepúlveda Poblete²

¹UCL Institute of Education

²University of Warwick

Abstract

The new “English in English” curricular initiative announced by the Ministry of Education in 2019 intended that all 5th and 6th primary students from public schools should be able to engage in fluent conversations in English at an A1 proficiency level. In order to fulfil this goal, Chilean EFL teachers are expected to use English as the medium of instruction all throughout their lessons. However, little, if any, is known about the way teachers are dealing with this new methodological approach in their classrooms. Thus, this paper aims at examining their experiences and perceptions towards this new “English in English” initiative. To this end, six Chilean EFL teachers from rural and urban public schools in Chile completed a questionnaire about their perceptions towards this new programme and were subsequently interviewed regarding their experiences implementing it. Overall, the results showed that all EFL teachers were willing to adopt the new initiative, nonetheless, they claimed that the following actions need to be urgently taken: increase the amount of time destined to teach the language, consider the students’ and schools’ realities and contexts, provide free training to all EFL teachers without discrimination, and give them clear guidance on how to get support to meet the requirements posed by this initiative.

Keywords: Chilean public schools; foreign language policy; EFL teaching; EFL school curriculum; EFL teaching challenges