



Elementary School Teachers' Preference on Homeroom Teachers and Specialist Teachers for English Classes

Ryuichi Yorozyua¹

Hokkaido University of Education, Japan^{1,2}

Abstract

This is a survey study on elementary school teachers' preference on homeroom teachers and specialist teachers for English classes in Japan. According to Rixon (2001), in many countries specialist teachers of English teach elementary school English. Although the general policy in Japan has been that homeroom teachers take responsibilities to teach English along with other subjects, a new scheme has been implemented to increase specialist English teachers in elementary schools. This study explores how current elementary school teachers are reacting to the policy change through a survey on their opinions regarding who should be teaching English in elementary schools. The study showed that more teachers wished for specialist teachers to teach English than those who think that homeroom teachers should teach English. The two groups had different reasons for their opinions. The former group who preferred specialist teachers mainly had reasons regarding the importance of high proficiency teachers of English and lessening teaching load for homeroom teachers. The latter group preferring homeroom teachers showed reasons that are related to the importance of having versatile pedagogic expertise to tailor the teaching to English for children, and a deeper understanding of the children abilities and personalities. It was found that teachers with longer experiences of teaching English, and those who like English, tended to think that homeroom teachers should teach English. Those who had shorter or no experiences of teaching English tended to answer specialist teachers should teach English in elementary schools.

Keywords: *Primary school English, Specialist teachers, homeroom teachers.*

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