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Action Research in Tamil Language Teaching in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Tamil language is one of the primary language in Malaysia. Tamil language is taught in both primary and secondary level. In Malaysia there are 524 Tamil schools and Tamil language is the medium of instruction in these schools. Besides this, Tamil language is also taught in 500 secondary schools as pupil own language. More than 10,000 Tamil teachers working in these schools. Language is basic subject for a student in learning process. In 1988, the Malaysian Education Ministry introduced action research to improve teaching and learning process for Malaysian teachers. Action research still continues in Malaysian schools. This paper discusses about the process of action research in Tamil language teaching.

Keywords: Action Research and Tamil Language

Introduction

Tamil language is one of the primary languages in Malaysia. It is taught in both primary and secondary level. In Malaysia there are 524 Tamil schools and Tamil language is the medium of instruction in these schools. Besides this, it is also taught in 500 secondary schools as pupil own language. More than 10,000 Tamil teachers are working in these schools. Language is a basic subject for a student in the learning process. In 1988, the Malaysian Education Ministry introduced “Action Research” to improve the teaching and learning process for Malaysian teachers. Action research is still continued in Malaysian schools. This paper discusses about the process of action research in Tamil language teaching.

Action Research

Action research is a systematic research in which teachers employed their own experiences and the activities to bring out a change and development in the process of teaching and learning. These researches have to find out the outcome and accept the action and their experiences. Action research can be tackled in two angle either by participatory action research and practical action research. Action research can be either research initiated or reflective process. Immediate problem are solved research initiated action and progressive problem solving is done by reflective process.

The word “Action Research” was proposed in 1944 by Kurt Lewin. The method was applied to find and solve the problem faced by the Post-World War 1. The socio psychological research methodology is used in the socio related field studies. In 1953 Steven Cored, an educationalist applied this method in Columbia teachers training College. And then, in 1976 John Eliod and his friends in England encouraged their teachers to use this method to improve their observation skills in class room teaching and learning.

This action research method was used in the beginning, by the teachers of Europe in the development of professional skills and education and this action research was introduced in 1988 in Malaysia. In the first stage, (11.12.1978) 41 lecturers and officers from the Teachers Training Division were trained in action research by Prof. Steven Kemmy. As a follow up, action research as a subject was introduced in all Teachers Training Colleges since 1990. In 1993, the Education Planning and Research Division of Ministry of Education,

Malaysia implemented the action research plan to all the schools in Malaysia through the State Curriculum Sector.

Process of Action Research in Tamil Language Teaching

Action research in the class room teaching can be done by a single teacher or by a group of teachers who share an interest in a common problem. Action research involves four main processes. They are:

1. Reflection
2. Planning
3. Action
4. Observation

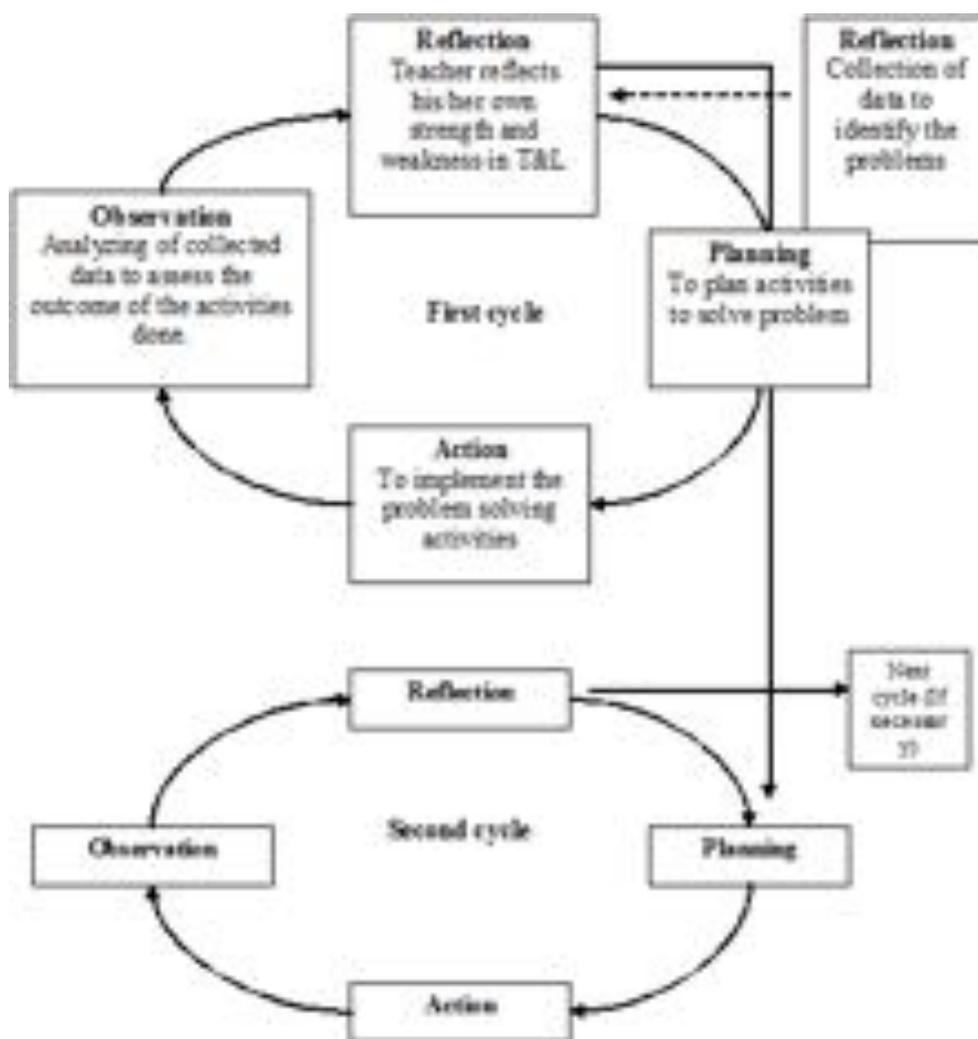


Figure 1. Process Of Action Research

Reflection

The action research process begins with a reflection to find out the problems in the teaching and learning process. Reflection is a process in which the teacher reflects on that which as happen and its outcome. Hence, the teacher reflects upon his/her own strength and weakness, the strength and weakness of his/her student, the learning environment, the relevance of teaching aids and curriculum content to assess the achievement of the students. Towards this end the teacher has to raise relevant questions to find out student achievement.

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Questions:

1. Which problem made me to rethink about my teaching and learning activities?
2. Why did this problem cost the thinking process?
3. How do I feel about this problem?
4. What is my belief and concept about this problem?
5. What have I learnt through this problem?
6. What are the steps did I need to take to solve this problem?

To reflect, the teacher has to identify the problem in teaching and learning and has to collect the relevant data in the following ways:

Pretest. Pretest is to carry out to find out the students achievement after the teaching and learning activities.

Assessment record. Apart from the pretest, the achievement of every student should be recorded into individual records.

Observation chart. Student learning behavior should be observed and recorded in a proper chart.

Interview questions. To find out the strength and weakness of the students, this can be interviewed by the teachers. Interview question should be prepared before interviewing the students.

Research questionnaire. Data also should be collected through research questionnaire. Such questionnaire should be prepared in the form of question paper according to the need of the required data.

Analysis of record. Student attendance, exercise books, answer sheets, achievement records, assignments and text books can be analyzed to collect the data.

Audio and visual recording of teaching and learning. Teaching and learning can be recorded audio visually for later evaluation and reflection. With this, students achievement should be diagnosed

The collected data should be analysed properly to identify the problems. To do this the conventional method or SPSS software can be used. By using SPSS software data can be analysed more frequently.

Teacher's reflection should be done in three stages as follow:

Before the research. To identify the problem and to find the proper solution.

During the research. To ensure proper activities are carried out to solve the problem.

After the research. To find whether the problem has been solved or not.

Planning

Planning is a procedure by which a teacher systematically planned his/her activities to solve the problems. Before the planning the following aspects have to be determined.

1. Objective of the action research
2. Time duration for the research
3. The target group
4. The necessary supporting aids
5. Evaluating instruments for the success of the plan

The planned activities must fulfill the aimed action research.

Action

After planning, the research activities should be carried out. The schedule must be properly followed. The task should be completed in the scheduled time duration. During the action, it should reflect and changes should be made when ever necessary. While

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implementing the action research, observation, evaluation, identifying the outcome activities should be carried out.

Observation

Keen observation is needed after the implementation. Collected data should be analysed and problems should be identified. The problem has to be solved through the assessment of the method used by the teachers to collect data. If the problem has not been solved in the first cycle of the reflection, it should be reflected in the second cycle to solve that problem. In this cycle the reflection is reflected again the planning action observation should be carried out again and again. The cycle should be repeated until the problem is solved.

Significance of Action Research

Action research is important strategy in teaching and learning for a number of reasons. The following are considered as the important reasons:

1. In professionalizing teaching.
2. Enhance the motivation of the agency.
3. To meet the demands of the diverse student population.
4. Improve education standard.

Conclusion

The action research in Tamil language place an important role in teaching and learning process. All these steps which are mentioned here should be followed with care. No doubt it brings a lot of changes among the teachers and the students in Malaysia.

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