PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' SENSE OF EFFICACY IN TEACHING ENGLISH: A STUDY AT UiTM SHAH ALAM

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Abstract

The purpose of this research study was to explore the sense of teaching efficacy in teaching English, perceived English language proficiency, and academic achievement among pre-service teachers of UiTM students. Descriptive correlational research design was employed in this study to examine and describe teaching efficacy in teaching English by investigating their perceptions on their level of confidence in carrying out specific teaching tasks in the English language classroom. The data was collected through the survey method using questionnaires as the main type of instrument. 30 pre-service English teachers (7 males and 23 females) participated in the study. Results showed that pre-service teachers' level of teaching efficacy in teaching English is at the moderate level. In addition, it was found that they are more efficacious in classroom management compared to instructional strategies, student, engagement, and oral English language use. The pre-service teachers perceive their English language proficiency to be moderately high. It was also discovered that sense of efficacy in teaching English is positively correlated with perceived English language proficiency. However, no significant correlation was found between sense of efficacy in teaching English and their academic achievement. Some important implications have been brought forward from this study for teacher training development.

Keyword: *Teacher efficacy, English language proficiency, Pre-service teachers, Teacher education programmes*

INTRODUCTION

Today we live in a world where English is spoken by almost every country and this language has taken its place as the third language with the most speakers, after Mandarin and Spanish (Lewis, Simons, & Fennig, 2013). The significance of English nowadays can be seen through the high demands of the teaching of English to different bodies of organizations, no matter the age or gender of the target group. There are many reasons that people seek to acquire this international language varying from educational purposes to communication purposes.

For instance, this need for being fluent in the language can be seen in the education system of Malaysia. Most universities demand students to be fluent in the English language since most textbooks and the medium of instruction is in English.

PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN MALAYSIA

There are many tertiary-level teacher training programmes in Malaysia which provide undergraduate level teacher education programmes. The Bachelor in Education (Honours) in TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) programmes, which are offered by many public universities, are mostly in the duration of four years for completion in the full time mode. Among the entry requirements of these programmes are attaining a minimum of grade 2A in English Language in SPM, minimum Band 4 for MUET (Malaysian University English Test), passing the MEdSI (Malaysian Educators Selection Inventory) test and passing the interview conducted by the Ministry of Higher Education. The filtering of the candidates' ability to communicate fluently is carried out during the interview; hence the quality of the intake is in the hands of the teacher training institute.

RECENT SCENARIO IN MALAYSIA REGARDING THE CURRENT POLICY

The current policy being implemented by the Ministry of Education is the "Upholding the Malay Language, and Strengthening the English Language" (MBMMBI) which focuses on the balancing of both languages by switching back the medium of instruction of Science and Mathematics from English to *Bahasa Melayu* in phases, while also extending teaching and learning class time for the English subject. The purpose of this policy is to make up as a result of many researches which have been conducted upon the previous policy ETeMS (English Teaching and Learning of Mathematics and Science) and highlighted many flaws of the implementation of PPSMI such as the increasing gap of grades among rural and urban students, (Ministry of Education Policies: Frequently Asked Questions, 2012). The implementation of the MBMMBI policy is being carried out through the 'soft-landing approach' in which it is done in stages. The policy which has been executed since 2010 has been transitioning from English being the medium of instruction of Mathematics and Science, bilingual instruction (English/*Bahasa Melayu*), to full *Bahasa Melayu* by 2016 in primary schools and 2021 in secondary schools (*Memartabatkan Bahasa Malaysia & Memperkukuh Bahasa Inggeris, 2012*).

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY OF MALAYSIAN ENGLISH TEACHERS

Due to the MBMMBI policy, great emphasis has been put on the English teachers in the effort of achieving one of its objectives which is to raise their proficiency in English. Deputy Prime Minister, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin stated that 10, 000 English teachers were to be given special training to raise competency in teaching the subject, (Bernama, 2012). Other efforts include the offer to 600 retired English teachers to teach the subject based on a contract, and also the bringing in of foreign English teachers to improve English language lecturers' and teachers' professionalism where 360 of them are appointed as mentors at 1, 800 primary schools (Bernama, 2012). Among those efforts, in order to maintain and enhance the quality of English language education in schools, English are required to sit for the Cambridge Placement test to assess the teachers' English proficiency. The New Straits Times newspaper reports;

"Teachers who do not meet the proficiency standards this year will be put through an intensive eight-week immersion programme and eight-week self-learning course in 2013, which will provide 480 hours of lessons. The immersion programme is an in-person, face-to-face course with 30 hours of contact time a week while the self-learning course is a modular, computer-based programme with 30 hours of self-directed learning per week. Teachers will be evaluated at the end of next year and those who still do not meet the minimum competency standards will have to make improvements by 2015. Those whose grasp of English is too weak to teach the language will be redeployed to teach other subjects."

(2012, p. 1)

Results of the English proficiency test indicate that two-thirds of the 70, 000 English teachers assessed were not proficient in the language. In addition, the Prime Minister has stated that there have been plans to bring in English teachers from India to teach the subject in schools as an attempt to overcome the issue of shortage of English teachers and also to improve the language proficiency.

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Additionally, this scenario has caused worries among English trainee teachers who are yet to step into the teaching career. It cannot be denied that many local university students have had difficulties in the English language as proven by past researches (Mustaffa, 2006; Muhammad, 2007; Nambiar, 2007; Abu Hasan, 2008; Mohd Noor, 2006; Abdul Aziz, 2007). However, there is a lack of research that involves students of English teacher training programmes, thus this research is to also identify the language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which might need further emphasis in the teacher training programmes to be developed. The need for this study is to see if the trainee teaching students are capable to be up to par with the requirements of the Education Ministry.

Researches conducted on Malaysian university students have shown that their English proficiency level is only satisfactory. Studies suggest that university students' English usage ability was low, irrespective of workplace or level of study (Md Yassin et al., 2010 and Singh & Choo, 2012). Md Yassin et al. (2010) concluded that the English language skills that are developed at the tertiary level are not consistent with the language skills which are required at the workplace. Ahmad Mazli Muhammad (2007), Nambiar (2007), and Abu Hasan (2008) have reported that higher learning institution students have insufficient English vocabulary and are weak at comprehending long sentences or sentences with difficult words. Due to the complexity of the sentences, it affects the understanding of academic reading and thus relatively affects the students' performance in the content subject matter (Rosemala Ismail, 2008).

The issue of unemployable graduates has created doubt of the government's efforts to assist graduates from teacher training institutions in attaining placements in schools. Furthermore, as a result of the MBMMBI policy, trainee teachers are feeling the stress of the uncertainty of their future as well as their English proficiency to be aligned with the requirements of the Ministry of Education for English language teachers. As of late, on 27 May 2013, the New Straits Times newspaper has reported that the Education Ministry has planned to abolish the job guarantee for future teachers which have been given automatically for several years now. In addition, he also states that this plan is set to take action in stages. This plan is to ensure the quality of future teachers, so that only teachers with the best performance will be offered a job.

EFFORTS TO IMPROVE ENGLISH PROFICIENCY IN MALAYSIA

Regardless, the Ministry of Higher Education has not let the issue pass through without any action, the Malaysian University English Test (MUET) is one of the efforts that have been implemented since 1999 to assess and improve the English proficiency of Malaysian University students. Many scholars suggest that language development depends on strong foundation laid out to the learners during their early education. Therefore, the government has come to focus on the need of improving English language education in school starting from the primary level.

The ETeMS policy was a result of realization of the university students' level of English proficiency. The former Prime Minister, Tun Dr. Mahathir proposed the policy to ensure students' mastery in science and mathematics due to the fact that most of the sources are available in the English language, and to indirectly improve the students' command of the language.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

With the English proficiency of English teachers in Malaysia being a national issue, it is crucial to investigate the source of the problem. Based on past research, many studies have suggested that a high language proficiency and competency is an essential requirement in becoming a successful ESL teacher. According to Ranjit Singh Gill (2013), having a good command in English language does not only reflect the quality of English teachers, but also acts as the determining factor for students' outcomes. However, the question of the teachers' language proficiency must also be observed from the perspectives of second language acquisition since the teachers after all are non-native English speaker (NNES) teachers and they are also learners of the English language. (NNES) teachers have been depicted as having English proficiency as one of the main challenges with being an English teacher, (Richards, 2011).

This issue has to be addressed in order to develop better quality future teachers whom are able to meet the requirements set by the Ministry of Education for English teachers. Dimova, (2011) stresses that teacher trainers and educators should focus more on the particular language proficiency and teaching skills that the NNESTs struggle with. By collecting the subjects' self-perceptions, the results would allow the researcher to observe the problems in a descriptive manner from the learners' own experience and regarding their beliefs of their ability to teach the English language.

In this context, ineffective teaching is seen as a result of a lack of confidence in teaching English which has been associated with the teachers' lack of proficiency in English (e.g., Butler, 2004; Lee, 2002; Nunan, 2003). For example, Richards (2011) stated that a teacher will have reduced confidence in her teaching ability and inadequate sense of professional legitimacy if the teacher perceives herself to be incompetent in the language, (Seidlhofer, 1999). No further research was mentioned which looked into the relationship of language proficiency and confidence in teaching the language, which indicates a need for the study to be done.

In the light of the issue surrounding the quality of English teachers, pertinent questions about the perceptions and beliefs of the teachers themselves need to be addressed. Therefore, one might ask, what are the teachers' beliefs in their ability to teach the English language? How confident are they in delivering their knowledge using the English language? Moreover, what are their perceptions regarding their own English proficiency? Is their English proficiency level somehow related to their beliefs of their ability to teach the subject in Malaysian schools?

Reviewing the vast studies (Jafarigohar & Ganjabi, 2012; Eslami & Fatahi, 2008; Sabokrouh & Barimani-Varandi, 2013) which have focused on the subject-specific variable of teaching efficacy in the Middle East, the results supported the idea of English proficiency being a significant variable in teachers' sense of efficacy in teaching English. A study conducted on

Venezuelan English teachers showed a positive correlation between perceived English proficiency and teaching efficacy in teaching English. Another study by Lee (2009) which focused on Korean elementary English teachers indicated a stronger correlation between current level of self-reported English proficiency and teaching efficacy level of teaching English.

Many have questioned the qualification of the teachers as to how they were able to be recruited for a teaching position in the first place. This would naturally bring us to the teacher training programmes in Malaysia which are responsible for training future teachers before they are able to step into the teaching career. Thus, the focus of this study will be on trainee teachers from the Bachelor of Education (TESL) (Hons) in Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam.

The rationalization of focusing on trainee teachers in this study is due to the raising challenges surrounding future teachers, especially English teachers. It is has been reported that prospective teachers will be chosen amongst the top 30% of the graduates (Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025, 2013). With the strict requirements to be implemented, future English teachers have to step up in order to make it into the teaching career. In addition to the purpose of the study which is to examine the sense of efficacy in teaching English with regards to English proficiency and academic achievement, pre-service teachers have been chosen because their self-construct can be shaped and molded in their early training (Woolfolk Hoy, 2004). Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) added that their efficacy beliefs will be somehow resistant to change once they are established.

In addition, with the emphasis put on the achievement of student teachers upon entering the teaching career, is there relevance between academic achievement and the students' confidence in teaching the subject in schools? Self-efficacy and academic achievement have been inferred to have a significant correlation in past studies, however can the same be said for pre-service teachers' academic achievement with regards to their sense of efficacy in teaching the English language in schools?

With the deficiencies found in the past research in studying teacher efficacy in the field of TESL in Malaysia, this study will be examining pre-service teachers' sense of teaching English, their self-reported English proficiency, and their academic achievement.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives of the study are:
1. To investigate the pre-service teachers' current levels of teaching efficacy for teaching English
2. To examine the pre-service teachers' perceived level of English proficiency
3. To explore the relationship between the pre-service teachers' sense of efficacy in teaching English, perceived English language proficiency, and academic achievement

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The proposed study employs a descriptive correlational research approach through inferential statistics analysis. Singh et al., (2006) explains that descriptive research is for the purpose of attaining thoughts, perceptions, and opinions regarding a particular issue of a large population. This approach focuses on the testing of hypotheses and theories in the need of explaining it rather than just describing it (Mujis, 2004). Significant to this study, survey cross-sectional designs "are useful in attaining an overall 'picture' as it stands at the time of the study" (Kumar,2005). Thus, this study will involve the gathering of information regarding the teaching

efficacy beliefs of pre-service teachers and their relationship with self-perceived language proficiency and academic achievement.

In the study, only one type of instrument was employed to collect the data, which is a questionnaire which is considered to be one of the popular methods due to much of the researcher's work requires gathering information from special populations of people who have first-hand knowledge and experience, and also because of the cost-effective factor (Singh et al., 2006). Additionally, questionnaires offer greater anonymity. In some situations, some questions are asked as it helps to increase likelihood of attaining accurate information (Kumar, 2005).

The questionnaire contains two types of questions enquired to answer the research questions which are closed-ended for Part A, and rating scale for Part B, C and D. This questionnaire consists of four sections which are 1) Part A: Demographic Background 2) Part B: Sense of Teaching Efficacy in Teaching English, 3) Part C: Personal Teaching Efficacy and 4) Part D: Perceived English Language Proficiency.

RESULTS

The following presents the findings which are significant in answering the research questions.

RQ 1: What are the current levels of the teaching efficacy for teaching English among pre-service teachers?

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviations for each of the item in the questionnaire employed in this study.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of the pre-service teachers' sense of efficacy items

TSES items	Mean	Std deviation
1. How well can you control disruptive behaviour in your English class?	3.90	0.71
2. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in learning English?	3.60	0.77
3. How much can you do to make students believe that they can do well in English?	3.97	0.67
4. How well can you help your students to value learning English?	3.90	0.66
5. To what extent can you craft good questions for eliciting responses from your students in your English class?	3.53	0.73
6. How well can you get your students to follow classroom rules in your English class?	3.73	0.78
7. To what extent, can you effectively teach oral language skills (listening, speaking) to the students?	3.67	0.80
8. To what extent can you effectively teach written language skills (reading, writing) to the students?	3.87	0.63

9. How much can you do to calm down a student who is noisy or uncooperative in your English class?	4.03	0.67
10. How well can you establish a classroom management system with your students in your English class?	3.83	0.70
11. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies in your English class?	3.83	0.70
12. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example in English class when your students are confused?	4.00	0.64
13. How well can you implement alternative instructional strategies when a certain strategy does not work?	3.70	0.65
14. How well can you help the students to understand the foreign culture(s) related to their English learning?	3.70	0.84
15. To what extent can you help the students achieve the English learning objectives?	3.93	0.58
16. How well can you teach the class using English only?	3.97	0.93

Note: 1 = Nothing / not at all, 2 = Very little, 3 = Some influence, 4 = Quite a bit, and 5 = A great deal

Overall, the mean scores ranged from 3.53 (Item5) to 4.03 (Item 9) indicating a belief in their confidence in teaching English to be at the moderate level. Item 9 (How much can you do to calm down a student who is noisy or uncooperative in your English class?) received the highest average score with a mean of 4.03. On the other hand, item 5 received the lowest average score (M=3.53) from the participants indicating a weak belief in their ability to craft good questions to their students to obtain responses.

RQ 2: Perceived English language proficiency
Part D of the questionnaire asks the respondents to rate their own English language proficiency. It can be seen from table 4.10 that the participants perceive their four language skills to be no lower than 3.5 which is above moderate. For the listening skill, 13 (43.3%) participants reported to perceive their listening proficiency level to be of almost fluent like a native speaker of English. Additionally, 11 (36.7%) participants believe that their speaking proficiency level to be rated as 5 (I am generally fluent, but occasionally have minor pauses when I search for the correct manner of expression).*Table 2*: Frequency of each language skill domain levels of proficiency

Level	Listening Frequency (%)	Speaking Frequency (%)	Reading Frequency (%)	Writing Frequency (%)
1.0	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
1.5	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
2.0	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
2.5	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

3.0	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
3.5	0 (0.0)	**3 (10)**	0 (0.0)	**2 (6.7)**
4.0	**1 (3.3)**	**3 (10)**	**2 (6.7)**	4 (13.3)
4.5	2 (6.7)	4 (13.3)	4 (13.3)	7 (23.3)
5.0	10 (33.3)	**11 (36.7)**	6 (20.0)	**8 (26.7)**
5.5	**13 (43.3)**	9 (30.0)	**13 (43.3)**	7 (23.3)
6.0	4 (13.3)	0 (0.0)	5 (16.7)	**2 (6.7)**

In terms of listening, as shown in table 4.10, 43.3% of the participants rated their listening proficiency level as Level 5.5, indicating that they perceive they can nearly understand everything at normal speed, almost like a native speaker of English. 10% of the participants assess their listening proficiency level at Level 5, meaning that they practically comprehend everything at normal speed but with occasional repetition. Interestingly, 13% of the participants rated their listening proficiency level as Level 6 which represents the ability of understanding everything at normal speed just like a native speaker. All the respondents assess their listening proficiency level as Level 4 or higher.

Regarding the speaking skill, 36.7% of the respondents assess their speaking proficiency level as Level 5 indicating a general fluency in speaking but with minor pauses for searching a correct manner of expression. About 30% of the respondents indicated that they have almost 'native-like' fluency. 10% of the respondents reported to believe their speaking proficiency level to be at Level 4, expressing a need to slow down speech when explaining complex ideas and less common expressions. However, a similar percentage of the respondents indicate a lower level of speaking proficiency at Level 3.5. The respondents rated their speaking proficiency level to be at Level 3.5 or higher which is comparatively lower than the listening proficiency level.

According to the frequency pattern of the perceived reading proficiency level in table 4.10, 43.3% of the participants reported to possess the reading proficiency level of 5.5 which represents that they can read with ease but not as proficient as they would in their mother tongue. About 20% of the participants indicated that they are at Level 5 in their reading proficiency signifying that they believe they are able to read with ease but may occasionally encounter unfamiliar words. Whereas, 16.7% of the participants believe that they are able to read various types of English texts at normal speed and with ease just as they are able to do so with texts in their mother tongue. All the respondents perceived that they possess reading proficiency of Level 4 and above.

Concerning writing, the dispersion of scores ranged more widely compared to the other language skills, ranging from Level 3.5 to Level 6. 26.7% of the respondents perceive their writing proficiency to be at Level 5 indicating that they are able to write like a native speaker however with minor unconventional uses of vocabulary and expressions. 23.3% of the participants indicated that they possess a writing proficiency level of 5.5, meaning that they believe they are able to write English almost like a native speaker of English, however may still encounter some minor problems with expressions when writing. Whereas, the same percentage of participants believe that their writing proficiency was between Levels 4 and 5 indicating that they are equipped with enough vocabulary and grammatical knowledge to write with ease, however may still encounter some problems when writing to not be able to write like a native speaker of English. When comparing the scores of the writing proficiency levels with listening, speaking, and reading, writing has the most similarity with the speaking proficiency scores in which most of the respondents tend to rate their proficiency in the lower levels.

Additionally, the mean score for each of the language skill was calculated and presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Pre-service Teachers' Perceived English Language Proficiency Levels According to Language Skills

	Mean	Standard deviation
Listening	**5.28**	**0.47**
Speaking	**4.83**	**0.65**
Reading	5.25	0.57
Writing	**4.83**	**0.67**

Listening skill attained the highest score, followed by reading, and speaking and writing. Speaking skill and writing skill was reported to be the two lowest perceived language skill by the participants, which both had same average score (M=4.3). The receptive skills were found to be higher than the productive skills which corroborated with the findings of Lee (2009).

RQ 3(a): Relationship between pre-service teachers' sense of efficacy in teaching English and their perceived English language proficiency
For this section, the relationship was analyzed in two ways, as a whole, and broken down into the components and domains. Firstly, the relationship between sense of efficacy in teaching English and perceived English language proficiency was analyzed through Pearson correlation coefficient and the results are as presented in table 4.

Table 4: Correlation between sense of efficacy in teaching English and perceived English language proficiency

		Perceived English Language Proficiency
Sense of Efficacy in Teaching English	**Pearson Correlation**	.571[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	30

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on table 4, it can be seen that there is a significant relationship (p = 0.001) between the participants sense of efficacy in teaching English and their perceived English language proficiency with a moderate positive correlation (r = 0.571).

For this section, the correlation between the two variables will also be examined according to their respective components (student engagement, classroom management, instructional strategies, and oral English use) and domains (listening proficiency, speaking proficiency, reading proficiency, and writing proficiency).

Table 5: Correlation between student engagement and the four language skill proficiencies

		Listening proficiency	Speaking proficiency	Reading proficiency	Writing proficiency
Student engagement	**Pearson correlation** Sig. (2-tailed) N	.258 .169 30	.308 .098 30	.032 .868 30	.259 .167 30

From the table above, the results show that there is no significant relationship between student engagement with any of the language skill proficiency. Among the four language domains, only speaking proficiency seems to have a correlation (p=.308) with student engagement, however the relationship is not significant (p=.098). The other language skills (listening, reading and writing) have weaker positive correlations (r=.258, r=.032, r=259) but also with no significant relationship (p=.169, p=868, p=167).

Table 6: Relationship between classroom management and the four language skill proficiencies

		Listening proficiency	Speaking proficiency	Reading proficiency	Writing proficiency
Classroom management	**Pearson correlation** Sig. (2-tailed) N	.277 .139 30	.266 .155 30	.111 .558 30	.394 .031 30

From Table 6, the data presented shows that the participants' writing proficiency was the only variable that has a statistically significant relationship (p=.031) with the classroom management component of teaching efficacy with a weak correlation (r=.394).

Table 7: Correlation between the participants' oral English use and the perceived language skill proficiencies

		Listening proficiency	Speaking proficiency	Reading proficiency	Writing proficiency
Oral English Use	**Pearson correlation** Sig. (2-tailed) N	.218 .247 30	.178 .346 30	.527 .003 30	.205 .277 30

From the table above, it was found that there is a significant relationship (p=.003) between the participants' confidence in using oral English in class and their perceived reading proficiency level, in which the correlation is moderately positive (r=.527).

Table 8: Correlation between the participants' instructional strategies and the perceived language skill proficiencies

		Listening proficiency	Speaking proficiency	Reading proficiency	Writing proficiency
Instructional strategies	**Pearson correlation** **Sig. (2-tailed)** **N**	.250 .183 30	.049 .799 30	.066 .729 30	.307 .099 30

Based on Table 8, it can be seen that instructional strategies is similar to student engagement in which there is not any significant relationship with the language skill proficiencies.

Overall, it is found that there is a significant relationship between the English language proficiency levels and the English teaching-specific dimensions, but with a low to moderate relationship. The correlations were found between classroom management and writing proficiency level (p=.031, r=.394) and oral English language use and reading proficiency level (p=.003, r=.527).

RQ 3(b): Relationship between pre-service teachers' sense of efficacy in teaching English and their academic achievement (CGPA)

Table 9: Correlation between academic achievement and the four components of teaching efficacy in teaching English

		Student Engagement	Classroom Management	Oral English Use	Instructional Strategies
Academic achievement	**Pearson correlation** **Sig. (2-tailed)** **N**	.190 .314 30	-.120 .529 30	-.011 .953 30	.346 .061 30

The P value for student engagement in correlation to student engagement is 0.314. This is followed by 0.529 for classroom management, 0.953 for oral English use, and 0.061 for instructional strategies. Since the P value representing a significant relationship is <0.05, therefore there is no significant relationship between academic achievement and any of the component of teaching efficacy in teaching English.

DISCUSSION

Research question 1:

What are the current levels of the teaching efficacy for teaching English among pre-service teachers?
The findings revealed that the pre-service teachers believe that their teaching abilities to be at the moderate level in all the dimensions; Instructional Strategies, Classroom Management, Student Engagement, and Oral English Use. The pre-service teachers felt most efficacious in the Classroom Management dimension (M=3.88), while they felt the least efficacious in the dimension of Oral English Use (M=3.72). However, the difference in the mean scores of the

four dimensions is not that widely dispersed implying that the difference between the highest and the lowest means scores are not to two extremes.

Further analysis of the data showed that the item which received the lowest rating from the pre-service teachers was their ability to craft good questions to elicit responses from their students (Item 5). The lack of confidence in this ability could be connected with the pre-service teachers' lack of experience as they have only had three months of teaching experience during their practicum. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) found that novice teachers have lower teaching efficacy beliefs compared to experienced teachers, indicating an increase in teaching efficacy beliefs as their career progresses. However, since the current study does not investigate the difference between the teaching efficacy beliefs of novice teachers and experienced teachers in the field of ESL, it is unable to support the finding entirely.

The results corroborated with Lee (2009) who found that teachers felt most confident in their Classroom Management component and least confident in their Oral English Language Use component. Although Oral English Use attained the lowest mean score, it is still in the range of the moderate level (3: Some influence). Taking into account the ESL context of the participants' setting, the usage of English may have an effect on their confidence due to the fact that they are not native speakers of the language. However, Item 16, which asks the participants to rate their ability in using only English in the classroom, received one of the highest mean scores (M=3.97) among the other items. This indicates that the participants are somewhat confident in delivering the content and communicating with the students using the English language only. Moreover, the results prove that the participant believe that they are capable of managing the classroom well although they are still new to the teaching scene.

In addition, the varying ratings of the different items in the teaching efficacy scale supports that the efficacy levels depend on the task being given. Chacon (2002) and Lee (2009) both found that their participants' level of efficacy differed across tasks. Thus, the teaching efficacy of the participants should be observed in terms of the different factors and not as a whole because labeling a participant with a high or low efficacy in teaching does not necessarily reflect their beliefs in differing tasks and context.

The teaching efficacy in teaching English among the participants in accordance to the original subsets by Tschannen-Moran & Wollfolk Hoy (2001) which are classroom management, student engagement, and instructional strategies showed that the participants in the current study scored lower than the participants in the past research. Chacón's (2002) study found that the participants' rated their teaching efficacy highly on classroom management (M=6.89), student engagement (M=6.59), and instructional strategies (M=7.13). Jafarigohar and Ganjabi's (2012) participants also rated their level of efficacy in teaching English moderately high in classroom management (M=8.0), instructional strategies (M=7.6), and student engagement (M=7.0). It must be noted that the current study did not employ the original rating scale of 1 (Nothing / not at all) – 9 (A great deal) which was used in the past research, but instead narrowed the scope to 1 (Nothing/ not at all) – 5 (A great deal). When examining the levels of teaching efficacy in teaching English in the current study and the past researches, one variable that stands out, which could be a predictor to great teaching efficacy, is the teaching experience of the participants. In Chacón's (2002) study, the participants were middle school teachers in Venezuela who have had 1 to 20 years of teaching experience, while the participants in Jafarigohar and Ganjabi's (2012) study were high school teachers in Iran who had teaching experience of 3 to 25 years. The participants in the current study are pre-service teachers who have just undergone their three months of teaching practice. Therefore, the teaching experience factor could be taken into consideration as a contributing variable to the differing levels of teaching efficacy in teaching English.

However, when compared to the teaching efficacy levels of the participants in Lee's (2009) study, the results proved to be of the moderate level similar to the results of the current

study. The mean scores in Lee's (2009) study were 5.70 (classroom management), 5.36 (instructional strategies), 5.53 (student engagement), and 4.76 (oral English use). The participants in Lee's (2009) study were elementary school teachers who have had teaching experience of between 1 to at 30 years, therefore teaching experience is not exactly a strong indicator of teacher efficacy.

Research question 2:

What are the pre-service teachers' perceived current English proficiency levels?
Part D of the study aimed to examine the participants' perceived English proficiency level, employing the modified proficiency scale by Lee (2009). The study found that the participants perceived highly of their English language proficiency with a mean score across domains of 5.05. The results showed that the participants rated their English language proficiency in the four language skills as: listening (5.28), speaking (4.83), reading (5.25), and writing (4.83). In addition, it can be seen that the receptive language skills (listening and reading) were perceived higher than the productive language skills (speaking and writing) which corroborated the past research of Lee (2009) and Llurda and Huguet (2003).

From the analysis, it was found that the mean score for the speaking component was 4.83 which means that the generally the participants felt that their speaking proficiency to be between Level 4 and Level 5. This implies that in general, the participants do not possess the 'native-like fluency' but are still able express their ideas efficiently with a normal pace. However, the results also show that the re

Compared to the past study which had utilized the same instrument, the results showed a vast difference compared to the current study. In Lee's (2009) study, the participants rated their language proficiency skills ranging from Level 1.5 to Level 6. A possible explanation for the difference of the mean scores of the past study and the current one highlights the significance of the ESL and EFL setting, and the location of the countries and the English varieties in the circles of World Englishes. Malaysia is classified into the outer circle where English is frequently used in formal situations, while Korea is included in the expanding circle where English is considered a foreign language.

However, when critically examining the pre-service teachers' perceived level of English language proficiency, it is peculiar as to how current English teachers in school have been reported of attaining unsatisfactory marks in the Cambridge Placement Test when there are many teachers in training who are proficient in the language. There must be a reason as to where all the proficient English teachers from the teacher training institutions have gone to. Therefore, there comes the significance of the fourth question in the demographic section which asks the participants whether they intend on becoming English school teachers after the completing the B. Ed programme and the results proved that 50% of the participants do not plan on becoming an English teacher. This could be a significant factor as to why there are not enough proficient English teachers in Malaysian schools. Nevertheless, another aspect to be considered is that this study employs the method of self-assessment, hence the result of the study may not accurately reflect their actual level of English language proficiency.

In conclusion, to answer the second research question, it can be inferred that pre-service English teachers perceive their English proficiency level to be moderately high with the order of listening, reading, speaking and writing. Moreover, they perceive their receptive language skills to be more proficient than their productive language skills.

Research question 3:

What are the relationships between the pre-service teachers' teaching efficacy for teaching English and 1) perceived English language proficiency and 2) academic achievement?

Correlational analysis was employed to answer the third research question. The relationship was studied and the result proved to be quite contradictive with the previous studies done in this area. Lee's (2009) study found that the self-reported English language proficiency levels correlated with the English teaching-specific efficacy dimensions (r=.27 to r=.58). While the current study found that the English language proficiency levels were only low to moderate positively correlated to certain dimensions of the English teaching-specific efficacy which ranged from 0.05 to 0.53. The significant relationship was found between classroom management and writing proficiency level (p=.031, r=.394) and oral English language use and reading proficiency level (p=.003, r=.527).

The results, therefore, suggest the more proficient one is in the skill of writing, the more confident one is in managing a classroom, and also the more proficient one is in the skill of reading, the more confident one is able to use oral English in the classroom. Surprisingly, the results do not quite add up to previous studies in the areas of language skills and teacher efficacy. Therefore, in order to obtain a wholesome picture of the relationship between teaching efficacy in teaching English and perceived English language proficiency among pre-service English teachers, principal component analysis was implemented to attain a factor loading of one component from both the variables. The results showed that overall, sense of efficacy in teaching English is correlated with perceived English language proficiency with a positive correlation of 0.571.

Bivariate correlation was used to test the relationships between teaching efficacy in teaching English and academic achievement (CGPA). From the results presented, it was found that there was no significant relationship between the two variables. Therefore, it corroborated the findings of Abdullah et al. (2011) which also found that the teaching efficacy of college student teachers from Universiti Sains Malaysia was not at all affected by their CGPA. This indicates that how well a pre-service teacher performs academically in their teacher training institution does not affect their level of confidence in teaching English.

From the correlation matrix, however it is found that the participants' CGPA has a significant relationship (p=.008) with their writing proficiency level with a strong positive correlation (r=.474). This shows the importance of writing proficiency in handling academic tasks and courses. Although this finding is not relevant to answer the research questions, it shows that writing proficiency is crucial in order to attain a higher academic achievement, which is critical in order to become a teacher in Malaysia.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research has succeeded in answering the research questions on the pre-service teachers' level of teaching efficacy in teaching English, their perceived level of English language proficiency and the relationship between the teaching efficacy in teaching English and perceived English language proficiency and academic achievement. It was found that the pre-service teachers have a moderate level of sense of efficacy in teaching English, and is most efficacious in tasks concerning classroom management. In addition, the pre-service teachers perceive their English proficiency language to be at a high level. This develops a new hope for better quality English teachers in the future. The results also prove that the teaching efficacy in teaching English is correlated with perceived English language proficiency. However, further analysis into the correlation of the English-teaching specific dimensions proves to have limited

correlation with the English language proficiency domains. In contrast to past research, there was no significant relationship between teaching efficacy in teaching and academic achievement. A wider and more extensive study is needed to explore further the construct of teaching efficacy in the field of ESL in Malaysia with the hope of improving teacher quality in teacher training institutions and in schools.

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