

PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS' SELF-EFFICACY, THEIR ENGLISH PROFICIENCY AND THEIR PREPAREDNESS FOR TEACHING PRACTICUM PROGRAM

Him'mawan Adi Nugroho
Universitas Negeri Surabaya
himmawan_95@yahoo.co.id

Abstract

Teacher training institutions hold an important role in preparing their students, the prospective or pre-service teachers, to become professional teachers based on their specific fields of study. This study examined the pre-service EFL teachers' perception of self-efficacy and their English proficiency toward their preparedness for the teaching practicum program. The study used a survey research design using questionnaire as the instrument to get the pre-service EFL teachers' perception of self-efficacy. The English proficiency data was from the TEP (test of English proficiency) collected from the university's language center where the pre-service EFL teachers took the test. Findings show that the pre-service EFL teachers have medium to high self-efficacy toward their teaching of EFL. They feel ready in spite of the fact they still have the feeling of anxiety. The courses related with the preparation to become a good and qualified EFL teachers and also for the teaching practicum program helped them to feel more confident.

Key words: Self-efficacy, Pre-service EFL Self-efficacy, English Proficiceincy, Teaching Practicum Program

INTRODUCTION

One of the goals of a teacher training institutes is to provide qualified graduates who are responsible of being able to apply the knowledge and theories and able to teach as a professional teachers. Therefore the consideration of how much knowledge and theories the students get in the teacher training institutes should be considered wisely. But the fact shows that teacher training institutes tend to put more of its attention of providing knowledge and theories rather than equipping students with practical skills that will give the students real-world experience that is closely related to situations which occur in the real classroom (Carroll, Forlin, & Jobling, 2003). In reality the students or the pre-service teachers need as many experience as possible in applying what they have learned and put them in practice in the real classroom.

As it is stated by Richards & Clough (2004) that the greatest benefit of the preparation programs is field-related training where pre-service teachers contextualize the learned knowledge and theories with tasks and students during training. This should be the consideration for the teacher training institutions to provide more field-related practice materials or courses as well as provide environments where student teachers can develop practical experience and skills in order to make sure that their graduates are qualified to teach.

Conceptual Framework

Pre-service teachers can make use of the preparation phase at the campus to build their self-efficacy as teachers, especially English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. Bandura (1977) suggested Self-efficacy Theory, i.e., *efficacy expectancy* and *outcome expectancies*, to explain the motivation in behavior changes. *Outcome expectancy* explains the changes in behavior as depending on an individual's estimation of effort required by the outcome, and it is the judgment on the consequence of the action. *Efficacy expectancy*, on the other hand, underline the importance of an individual belief about his ability. By having a high self-efficacy the pre-service EFL teachers will have a high motivation to be successful in their work and in the process of making decisions. As Bandura (2006) mentions that self-efficacy has the influence on the cognitive, motivational, affective and decisional processes.

Teacher's self-efficacy has become the focus of many studies. Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, and Hoy (1998) define teacher self-efficacy as a teacher's beliefs about if and how he or she is able to implement a particular teaching task in a specific context. Teachers' positive perception on their self-efficacy have significant implications for student learning. Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs have been positively correlated with teacher persistence and level of success (Bandura, 1997; Kamil, Mukminin & Abu Kassim, 2013), student achievement (Eslami & Azizullah, 2008; Butt, Khan & Jehan, 2012), student motivation (Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989; Mojavesi & Tamiz, 2012), and students' sense of efficacy (Anderson, Greene, & Loewen, 1988).

Teachers' self-efficacy level may differ from one teacher to another. There factors which can influence the differences of self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) highlights that teacher self-efficacy is not consistent across various subject matter nor across various tasks. Self-efficacy beliefs are also unstable and influenced by time and space (Bong, 2006; Dellinger, Bobbett, Oliver, & Ellett, 2008). It can be understood that teacher self-efficacy is highly

situated and context-specific. Teachers make self-efficacy evaluation after they assess the complexity of the task and understand what skills are required to be successful in carrying out each task (Knoblauch & Woolfolk Hoy, 2008). By realizing their self-efficacy, the teachers will be able to arrange more goals for both themselves and students. As a result they will put an effort to achieve the goals and also assist difficult and unmotivated students. When facing the students who have difficulties, these teachers are less critical toward students' performance and more positive about students' abilities to make progress. Efficacious teachers contribute to the improvement in students' performance and, in turn, the students' progress increases teachers' level of efficacy (Liaw, 2009).

There have also been some studies related to pre-service teachers' self-efficacy. It is interesting to find out about how pre-service teachers build their self-efficacy. The previous studies on pre-service teachers' self-efficacy find that factors such as self-perceptions of teaching competence, personal characteristics (Poulou, 2007), emotional and pedagogical support from fellow pre-service teachers as well as the preparation program (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Woolfolk, 2007), and the practicum and "real" teaching experiences (Faez & Valeo, 2012) contribute to teaching efficacy. Many of the pre-service teachers do not have confidence in their abilities in teaching. Not only related with the matters of teaching the subjects but also the external factors of teaching, such as the influence of children's home environment. This might be due to the problem with the exposure of the external factors and the real teaching experience. In short, teacher training institutes should give more teaching experience, such as the length of teaching practicum time and subjects taught, the opportunities to work with students in the classroom if possible or in the form of observation activities and the practical knowledge acquired, such as meeting parents or doing the administrative requirements, and the supportive community that provides encouragements and solutions is a place where pre-service teachers are nurtured with practical tips that they can never learn from lectures in teacher training programs (Liaw, 2009; Swanson, 2013). But unfortunately based on some reasons, one of them is the lack of cooperation of school-university, pre-service teachers can only acquire such experience and knowledge after they start real teaching in their teaching practicum. Courses and activities in teacher training programs have the tendency to focus more on the theories and methods of teaching and put less attention to the practical experience which can have a direct impact on pre-service teachers' level of efficacy.

As a good language teachers, particularly English teachers, one should have a good mastery of English language proficiency. Language proficiency constitutes the foundation of the professional confidence of pre-service English teachers. Language competence has been rated as the most essential characteristic of a good teacher (Lange, 1990). According to Doff (1987), a teacher's confidence in the classroom activities relies on how well the teacher is able to give good and clear command of the English language. Poor command of the language can affect the teachers' confidence and professionalism of the teacher and can hinder simple teaching procedures. A language competent English teacher can meet the pedagogical requirements of a communicative approach to language teaching. Previous studies show that perceived language proficiency is very important for non-native English teachers (NNES) and has an impact on their professional self-esteem and confidence (Reves & Medgyes, 1994; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999; Kamhi-Stein & Mahboob, 2005, Eslami & Fatahi, 2008). It is clear that language proficiency plays a very important role in building teachers' self-efficacy.

There have been a significant number research concerning with the early years of teaching and issues related to novice teachers in doing their job as English teachers in school-based education with children (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 2000, 2003; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). However, little is known about the transition from preservice to in-service and the efficacy beliefs of novice teachers of language to adults (see Farrell, 2008). Therefore this study aims to find out the relationship between self-efficacy and language proficiency of pre-service EFL teachers prior to their teaching practicum program. The following were proposed for this study:

1. What are the perceived self-efficacy beliefs of the pre-service EFL teachers prior to their departure for the teaching practicum program?
2. What are the current pre-service EFL teachers English proficiency level?
3. What are the factors affecting pre-service EFL teachers' confidence to teach EFL?

METHODS

The study used survey research design. Out of 110 questionnaires distributed, the resercher got 65 questionnaires of pre-service EFL teachers, aged from 21 – 23 years, enrolled in preparation class for their departure of doing teaching practicum at the secondary schools in East Java, Indonesia. The ratio of males and females is 9:56 (male = 9; female =

56). They were the students of English Department of State University of Surabaya majoring English Education and they were on their sixth semester.

The participants were given a questionnaire which is called Prospective English Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (PETSES). It consists of three parts. Part one is about demographic information. Part two is about pre-service EFL teachers' sense of efficacy. The form is the adaptation of the short version of the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001. The adaptation was made to fit the context of EFL. It has 12 questions which is divided into three kinds of efficacy. Questions number 1 to 4 is related with students engagement efficacy (SE), questions number 5 to 8 is about class management efficacy (CM) and questions number 9 to 12 concerns with instructional strategies efficacy (IS). The third part is about participants' opinions about teaching EFL due to their preparation for the teaching practicum.

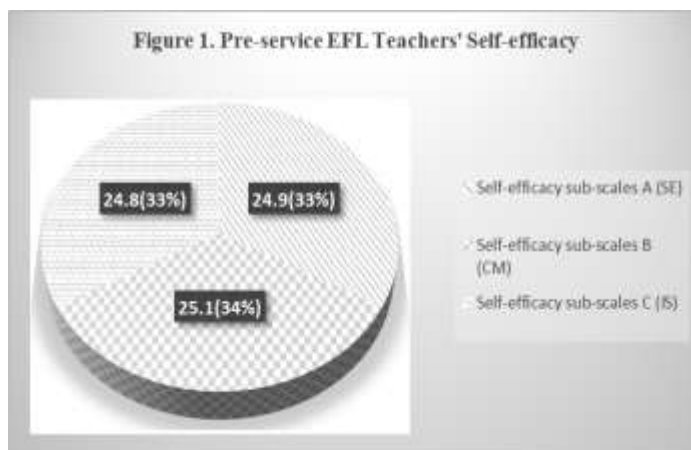
The researcher used the result of the pre-service EFL teachers' English proficiency test (TEP) from the university's Language Center. All the students of State University of Surabaya have to take the Test of English Proficiency (TEP) at the Language Center.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

A. Pre-service EFL teachers' Efficacy for Students Engagement, Class Management, and Instructional Strategies

The result of pre-service EFL teachers' self-efficacy scale or PETSES questions can be seen from Figure 1 below.

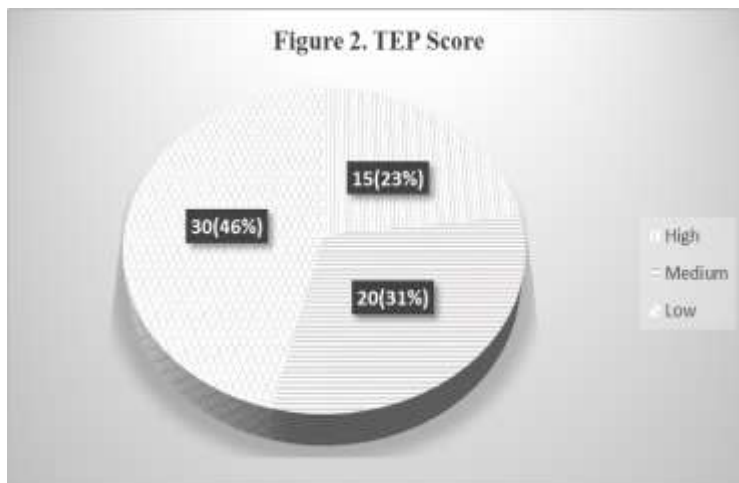


From Figure 1 we can see that the average of the three subscales indicate that the pre-service EFL teachers perceived themselves as more efficacious in managing the class 25.1(34%) than in engaging students 24.9(33%) and in using instructional strategies 24.8(33%).

By using hypothetical calculation, the researcher classified the result of calculating the score of the self-efficacy into three, high, medium and low efficacy score. High efficacy score ranges from 77 – 108, medium efficacy score ranges from 44 – 76, and low efficacy score ranges from 12 – 74.3. There were 26 pre-service EFL teachers with high efficacy score and 39 pre-service EFL teachers with medium efficacy score. None of the students got low efficacy score.

B. Pre-service EFL Teachers' English Proficiency

The second research question requires the information about the pre-service EFL teachers' English proficiency. As mentioned previously that the pre-service EFL teachers had taken their English proficiency test or it is known as Test of English Proficiency (TEP) at the university's Language Center. From the data which the researcher got from the language center, he classified the result into three groups. The high TEP score (≥ 500); average TEP score ($\geq 450 - < 500$) and low TEP score (≤ 449). As seen in Figure 2:



The researcher found 15 (23%) pre-service EFL teachers with high TEP score, 20 (31%) pre-service EFL teachers with average TEP score and 30 (46%) pre-service EFL teachers with low TEP score.

C. Factors Affecting Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Confidence To Teach EFL

The third part of the questionnaire is used to find the answer concerning with the factors affecting the pre-service teachers' confidence to teach EFL. The factors can be

factors which decrease the pre-service EFL teachers' confidence or factors which can increase their confidence.

The result showed that the first factor is anxiety which can lead to the lack of confidence. Most of the students felt anxious when they have to stand in front of the students teaching. But they can overcome the problem by preparing well for the teaching and learning activities, practicing with their friends, and asking for improvements for their teaching practice. The second factor that contribute to the problems of confidence was related to the students' personal condition, such as health, being stressed out, and self-confidence. This factor is varied from one pre-service EFL teachers to another.

The next factor was the courses which were given in relation with the teaching and learning process. The courses can help to increase pre-service EFL teachers' confidence. The courses are Instructional Design, Curriculum and Material Development, ELT Methods, Media in ELT and ELT Assessment and Evaluation help the students prepare well for their teaching activities. Beside the courses, there is one program called Microteaching which acts as the final preparation before pre-service teachers are sent to schools to do the teaching practice. Pre-service EFL teachers stated that this program helped them to do reflection on how they will carry out their teaching practice.

The fourth factor which pre-service EFL teachers mentioned factors was the schools' facilities to support the teaching and learning process. Facilities which include the school's building, classroom, teaching media such as LCD, loud speakers.

Discussions

The aim of this study was to investigate the possibility of a correlation between pre-service EFL teachers' language proficiency and their self-efficacy. Based on the data analyzed, the result showed some interesting aspects. The data showed that the pre-service EFL teachers, the sixth semester students of English education program, judged their abilities in motivating and engaging students to learn English and their use of effective instructional strategies to be lower than their ability in managing the class. It seems that the pre-service EFL teachers perceived themselves to have low abilities to motivate the students to learn and to see the benefits in learning English. They also had low perceived efficacy in using and modifying their explanations and teaching strategies. The finding was different with Eslami & Fatahi, 2008, they found that the teachers were efficacious in instructional strategies, and

Liaw, 2009 found that pre-service teachers in Taiwan was more efficacious in student engagement. But the finding supported previous literatures, Bandura (1997); Bong (2006); Dellinger, Bobbett, Oliver, & Ellett, (2008) which highlights that teacher self-efficacy is not consistent across various subject matter, across various tasks, and self-efficacy beliefs are also unstable and influenced by time and space.

A possible cause why none of the pre-service EFL teachers got low efficacy score is that they have got courses related to their preparation for the teaching practicum program. Some of the courses for example English Language Teaching (ELT) Methods, Developing ELT Material, ELT Curriculum Analysis, Instructional Design contribute to the efficacy of the pre-service EFL teachers more than their language proficiency.

The result from the English proficiency test score (TEP) showed that many of the participants (77%) still got lower than 500 and only few of them (23%) got higher TEP score. It indicated that the pre-service EFL teachers who will do their teaching practicum still had low English proficiency. According to the previous studies, teachers with high English proficiency will be more confident and therefore they will be successful in their pedagogical activities (Reves & Medgyes, 1994; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999; Kamhi-Stein & Mahboob, 2005). Therefore, there is a concern whether or not the pre-service EFL teachers have enough confidence as what it takes to become EFL teachers successful and will be successful in their teaching practice. The finding could become a reminder for the institutions in general and for the English department to pay more attention to the language proficiency mastery of its students.

The researcher also found that out of 65 participants, there were only 15 participants whose English proficiency were above 500 and only 7 of them had high self-efficacy. Then 9 out of 20 participants with average English proficiency, their TEP score was greater than or equal to 450 to less than 500, had high self-efficacy. There were 30 participants whose English proficiency were less than or equal to 449, 15 of them had high self-efficacy. We can see that the number of participants with low score and average score on English proficiency with high self-efficacy was bigger (15 and 9 participants) than the ones whose English proficiency score was high with high self-efficacy (7 participants). The number of the pre-service EFL teachers who had high self-efficacy score was 31 from the total number of the pre-service EFL teachers involved in the study.

The pre-service teachers who are going to do their teaching practice have a quite high self-confidence of their ability in teaching English. It is true due to their respond that they felt anxious, but they have got ideas how to solve and face the anxiety during their teaching and

learning process. The specific courses designed to prepare them for the teaching practicum program have revealed that the courses have made the students felt confident and ready for the program.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings presented in this study underline the notion that teacher preparation programs need to provide a balanced set of programs which will guarantee the professionalism of their students who will become EFL teachers. At one point the program should be able to make the students reach the required score for their English proficiency test. It is important because when the students become English teachers, they become the model for their students of how to learn English correctly. The other programs dealing with the knowledge and theories which are related with English as foreign language teaching and programs which will give the students more chances get involve in the observations and field experiences. These sets of programs are expected can improve pre-service EFL teachers' self-efficacy that in return they can perform well in the class-room.

BIOPROFILE

Him'mawan Adi Nugroho, M.Pd is an English lecturer at the English Department of Universitas Negeri Surabaya. He has been active as instructor for language laboratory management and PLPG (teacher professional training). He has participated in several international and local conferences such as Sang Guru2, ICERD, ETC etc. His undergraduate degree on English Education was from Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA). His master degree on English Education was from Universitas Negeri Malang. He is now pursuing his English Education doctoral degree in Universitas Negeri Malang. His expertises are in ELT, Speaking, Writing and Professional Development. Corresponding email: himmawan_95@yahoo.co.id

REFERENCES

- Anderson, R., Greene, M., & Loewen, P. (1988). Relationships among teachers' and students' thinking skills, sense of efficacy, and student achievement. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 34, 148–165.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bandura, A. (2006). Toward a Psychology of Human Agency. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 1(2):164-180.
- Bong, M. (2006). Asking the right question: How confident are you that you could successfully perform these tasks? In F. Pajares & T. Urdan (Eds.), *Self-efficacy beliefs of adolescents* (pp. 287–305). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.
- Butt, M.N., Khan, H., & Jehan, S. (2012). Impact of English Teachers' Self-Efficacy Beliefs on Students' Performance. *World Applied Science Journal*, 20(7): 1031-1035.
- Dellinger, A. B., Bobbett, J. J., Oliver, D. F., & Ellett, C. D. (2008). Measuring teachers' self-efficacy beliefs: Development and use of the TEBS-self. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24, 751–766.
- Eslami, Z. R. & Fatahi, A. (2008). Teachers' Sense of Self-Efficacy, English Proficiency, and Instructional Strategies: A Study of Nonnative EFL Teachers in Iran. *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*, 11(4): 1-16.
- Carroll, A., Forlin, C., & Jobling, A. (2003). The impact of teacher training in special education on the attitudes of Australian preservice general educators toward people with disabilities. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 30(3), 65–79.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). *Solving the dilemmas of teacher supply, demand, and quality*. New York, NY: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2003). Keeping good teachers: Why it matters and what leaders can do. *Educational Leadership*, 60(8), 7–13.
- Doff, A. (1987). Training materials as an instrument of methodological change. In R. Bowers (Ed.), *Language Teacher Education: An integrated Programme for ELT Teacher Training*. ELT Documents 125:67-71. Basingstoke: Macmillan for Modern English Publications.
- Eslami, Z. R., & Azizullah, F. (2008). Teachers' sense of self-efficacy, English proficiency and instructional strategies: A study of nonnative EFL teachers in Iran. *TESL-EJ*, 11(4), 48–82.
- Faez, F. & Valeo, A. (2012). TESOL Teacher Education: Novice Teachers' Perceptions of Their Preparedness and Efficacy in the Classroom. *TESOL QUARTERLY*, 46 (3): 450-471
- Fantilli, R. D., & McDougall, D. E. (2009). A study of novice teachers: Challenges and supports in the first years. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25, 814–825. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2009.02.021

- Kamhi-Stein, L. & Mahboob, A. (2005). Language proficiency and NNES professionals: Findings from TIRF-Funded research initiatives. Paper presented at the 39th Annual TESOL Convention, San Antonio, Texas.
- Kamil, D., Mukminin, A. & Abu Kasim, N. L. (2013). From Education Policy to Class Practices: Indonesian Secondary EFL Teachers' Self-Efficacy in Developing School-Based EFL Syllabi. *Excellence in Higher Education*, 4(2): 86-107.
- Lange, D.L. (1990). A blueprint for a teacher development program. In J.C. Richards & D. Nunan (Eds.), *Second language teacher education* (pp. 245-268). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Knoblauch, D., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2008). "Maybe I can teach those kids": The influence of contextual factors on student teachers' efficacy beliefs. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24, 166–179.
- Liaw, En-Chong. (2009). Teacher Efficacy of Pre-Service Teachers in Taiwan: The Influence of Classroom Teaching and Group Discussions. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25: 176-180
- Midgley, C., Feldlaufer, H., & Eccles, J. (1989). Change in teacher efficacy and student self- and task-related beliefs in mathematics during the transition to junior high school. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 81, 247–258.
- Mojavesi, A. & Tamiz, M. (2012). The Impact of Teacher Self-Efficacy on the Students' Motivation and Achievement. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(3): 483-491.
- Poulou, M. (2007). Personal teaching efficacy and its sources: student teachers' Perceptions. *Educational Psychology*, 27(2), 191–218.
- Reves, T. & Medgyes, P. (1994). The non-native English speaking EFL/ESL teacher's self-image: An international survey. *System*, 22(3): 353-367.
- Richards, G., & Clough, P. (2004). ITE students' attitudes to inclusion. *Research in Education*, 72, 77–86.
- Samimy, K. & Brutt-Griffler, J. (1999). To be a native or nonnative speaker: Perceptions of nonnative speaking students in a graduate TESOL program. In G. Braine (Ed.), *Non-native educators in English language teaching* (pp. 127-144). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Swanson, P. B. (2013). From Teacher Training Through the First Year on the Job: Changes in Foreign Language Teacher Efficacy. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language*, 10 (1): 5-16.
- Tschannen-Moran, M., Woolfolk Hoy, A., & Hoy, W. K. L. (1998). Teacher efficacy: Its meaning and measure. *Review of Educational Research*, 68, 202–248.
- Tschannen-Moran, M., Hoy, A., & Woolfolk, A. E. (2007). The differential antecedents of self-efficacy beliefs of novice and experienced teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23(6), 944–956.