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Exploring Factors That Affect English Language Teachers' Self-Efficacy Beliefs in the English as a Second Language Context

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Abstract

This study explored factors that affect English language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in the English as a second language (ESL) context. Data were collected via two interviews with five English language teachers, one stimulated recall interview, and a full day observation of their classrooms. Based on the context and program requirements, the results showed that English language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are impacted by language proficiency, the curriculum and materials, the administration and collective teacher efficacy, and teaching online. Teachers view language proficiency as a principal quality of successful and effective English language teachers, and this, without doubt, impacts their sense of professional legitimacy. They also see language as intertwined with culture, so they place an importance on teachers having language abilities and a level of proficiency sufficient in transferring cultural knowledge to their learners so as to integrate them into the culture and society. Additionally, teachers' language proficiency affects their efficacy beliefs and their self-concept. Teachers have certain perceptions and understandings of themselves as teachers and professionals as well as beliefs on the process of teaching and learning. When they are placed in situations that do not account for or accommodate those impressions and beliefs, their self-efficacy beliefs and self-concept is impacted negatively, and positively when the situation correlates and aligns with their beliefs. The curriculum and materials impact their self-efficacy beliefs both positively and negatively. Teachers spend a number of uncompensated hours creating and developing materials, which affects teacher burnout and job satisfaction. However, when teachers create and develop materials and are responsible for the whole learning process, they are autonomous, and this could impact their self-efficacy beliefs in a positive way. The administration and collective teacher efficacy impact their self-efficacy beliefs as teachers need a cooperative and supportive work

environment to overcome the workload and other stress factors and challenges. Lastly, teaching

online influences their efficacy as they are forced to change and adapt both their understanding

of the processes of teaching and learning and who they are as teachers and professionals.

Summary for Lay Audience

The aim of this study was to explore the factors impacting self-efficacy beliefs of English language teachers in the ESL context. Self-efficacy beliefs have been looked at as a primary determinant of human agency. They are one's beliefs in their abilities to bring about desired results (Bandura, 1997). They also determine one's willingness to take on a task or endeavour. Self-efficacy beliefs have been researched in a number of fields, including health, psychology, sports, and education. Research has shown that for teachers in particular self-efficacy beliefs determine how much effort they invest, their ability to overcome challenges, and their resilience when faced with challenges (Caprara et al., 2006; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Additionally, they have been connected to job satisfaction and burnout (Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; 2010), which are the two most prominent contributors to teacher attrition (Madigan & Kim, 2021). Thus, understanding the aspects that affect teachers' self-efficacy beliefs will help curriculum developers, materials and resources developers, administrators, and teacher educators make important decisions in order to better accommodate teachers in the task of language teaching. The results of this study showed that language proficiency, the curriculum and resources, the administration and collective teacher efficacy, and teaching online all impact teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in the ESL context. Knowing the factors that impact teachers' self-efficacy beliefs makes it easier to change and adjust circumstances that build confidence in language teachers and this, as a result, can create a more stable and effective language teacher workforce.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Introduction

As a primary constituent of human agency, self-efficacy has been a construct of interest in a number of fields since its development about 40 years ago. It has been researched in the field of psychology, sports, health, and education alike. Fundamentally, self-efficacy can be defined as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). For teachers specifically, it is the force that pushes them to overcome challenges, embrace more difficult tasks, and fulfill their professional responsibilities (Caprara et al., 2006). Furthermore, job stress, teacher burnout, and job satisfaction have all been linked to efficacy beliefs, and teacher burnout and job satisfaction hold a significant role in teacher attrition (Madigan & Kim, 2021). Thus, understanding the factors that impact perceived efficacy is of the utmost importance as it can help policymakers, curriculum developers, teacher educators, and administrators make informed decisions that will strengthen the (language) teacher workforce.

Initially, this work explores the most common factors impacting language teachers' efficacy beliefs. The most common factors that have been reported in the literature to affect language teachers' perceived efficacy are language teachers' (self-perceived) language proficiency, language teacher education (LTE) programs, teaching qualifications, years' experience, resources and curriculum, collective teacher efficacy, and working conditions. Afterwards, it focuses on the factors impacting self-efficacy beliefs of language teachers in an ESL context. Most research has been conducted in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context and using a quantitative approach. Consequently, there is a call for more qualitative research as it can provide a more nuanced look and understanding of the contextual aspects at

work in developing efficacy beliefs, as well as an understanding of the ways in which they impact them (Faez & Karas, 2017; Faez et al., 2021). There is also a need for more research in the ESL context as it is greatly lacking in the literature (Wyatt, 2018). This work looks to fill this information gap. Moreover, more research in the ESL context adds to the current body of literature to create a more complete understanding of the profession of language teaching.

Situating the Researcher

As an ESL teacher myself and having worked in the same context and with the same program expectations, curriculum, resources, and learner demographics, the question of self-efficacy piqued my interest as I see it as a primary determinant of how we, as teachers, differ in our approaches and beliefs in teaching. Having grown up in Ontario with a household language other than English, I have always been interested in languages. I majored in French for my undergraduate degree and shortly after began to study teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) and become certified as an ESL teacher. I have now taught ESL for over 5 years. I have taught various levels, ranging from literacy to Specialized Language Training (SLT) courses. From collaborating and interacting with fellow colleagues, I understand the importance of perceived efficacy as we have to deal with a wide spectrum of discrepancies, like age, educational and cultural backgrounds, personal experiences, and many other attributes that each individual learner presents. A teacher must possess flexibility and adaptability as well as a confidence or belief in their abilities to not only provide an optimal language learning experience that coincides with the curriculum but to also deal and interact with all those discrepancies. Thus, finding the aspects that influence teachers' efficacy beliefs is essential to better accommodate teachers in the task of language teaching, which will ultimately contribute to the language learning experience of the learners and their adaptation to a new cultural and social environment.

Purpose

The purpose of the present study is to explore the factors that affect self-efficacy beliefs of English language teachers in the ESL context. It is an exploration of the contextual factors that impact English language teachers in a publicly funded program in Ontario, Canada, and the implications this has on the teaching process. This will provide a closer examination of how policymakers, curriculum developers, teacher educators, and administrators can adapt and modify the circumstances that build confidence in language teachers, and therefore, build a more effective and stable language teacher workforce.

The following question directed this study:

What factors affect English language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in the ESL context, and how do they affect them?

Context

The study was conducted with five ESL teachers from a publicly funded program in Ontario, Canada. The program is both provincially and federally funded. The standard classes are Monday to Friday, 5 hours a day, and are divided as two 2.5-hour classes. The morning class is considered a reading and writing class, and the afternoon class focuses on listening and speaking. Students are first assessed using the standards and abilities outlined in the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) and then put into their class based on their level. The CLB is a 12-level benchmark. CLB 1 – 4 are considered stage 1 (beginner), CLB 5 – 8 are considered stage 2 (intermediate), and CLB 9 – 12 are considered stage 3 (advanced). This particular program only offered literacy classes to CLB 7 (stage 1 and stage 2) as well as IELTS preparation and SLT courses. Furthermore, learners are assessed and progress through their English language learning journey using a Portfolio-Based Language Assessment (PBLA) model, which is a collection or

portfolio of learners' assessments and activities that shows their language learning progress as based on four different competencies for the four skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). In addition, language instruction focuses on real-world tasks; tasks they would have to do in Canadian society.

The program is for adult learners, specifically for individuals who are 18 years of age or older. The reasons as to why learners take these classes vary immensely, ranging from fulfilling a social service requirement to personal interests that include continuing their education at the post-secondary level in Canada; these reasons influence a learner's motivation, which is a factor that teachers deal with on a daily basis. Furthermore, teachers are both permanent employees and temporary employees (or in other words, supply teachers), and each year teachers are given an assignment and the assignment can be either full-time or part-time hours. Many of the temporary teachers are given full-time hours and are working long-term assignments; however, they are still considered temporary employees. Precarious employment is characteristic of English language teaching in Canada (Breshears, 2019). Due to the precarious nature of employment, teachers may feel uncertainty and work insecurity, which could affect both their physical and mental well-being and this, in turn, could influence their teaching (Breshears, 2019).

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework: Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs

Grounded in Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is one's belief in their abilities to successfully carry out a course of action to bring about desired results (Bandura, 1997). What's more, perceived self-efficacy is a primary determinant of human agency, and one's belief in their abilities is said to be more powerful and have more influence on one's motivation, actions, and affective state than the objective reality (Bandura, 1997). Without these beliefs one is unlikely to pursue a task or endeavor, especially if they do not see their abilities as sufficient in achieving the set out objectives. Self-efficacy beliefs are said to be formed by four sources of information, which are enactive attainment or mastery experience (performing tasks), vicarious experience (seeing or experiencing others in a more or less similar situation being successful), verbal persuasion (appraisals and the use of words of encouragement), and physiological and emotional state (this is individuals' reliance on somatic information) (Bandura, 1986). The ways in which teachers cognitively appraise and interpret these sources of information will impact their self-efficacy for teaching.

Furthermore, teachers' self-efficacy beliefs have been described as the belief in one's ability to support and enable learning in a number of "task and context-specific cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social ways" (Wyatt, 2010, p. 603). These beliefs can be responsible for how much effort teachers invest in teaching, their goals, their hopes and ambitions, persistence and resilience when faced with challenges and setbacks, commitment to the profession and teaching behaviours, job satisfaction, and levels of stress (Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2010, 2014, 2017a, 2017b, 2021; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). In addition, it is a construct that is context and subject specific

(Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001); the "fluid and dynamic" (Hoang & Wyatt, 2020, p. 11) state of teacher self-efficacy beliefs is in part due to the nature of diverse classrooms, which vary in classroom composition and classroom size (Guo et al., 2011), context (e.g., Knoblauch & Woolkfolk Hoy, 2008), and task (e.g., Wyatt & Dikilitas, 2019). In sum, these are the beliefs that guide teachers' decisions and empower them to act.

2.2 Factors affecting perceived efficacy of language teachers

2.3 Language proficiency

Language proficiency has been looked at as one of the most influential factors in determining self-efficacy beliefs of language teachers in addition to one of the most studied factors. This could be due to a number of reasons; however, it most likely stems from the fact that a language teachers' expertise and effectiveness is largely dependent on their subject knowledge (Renandya et al., 2018; Richards et al., 2013; Tsui, 2003), which in language teaching is intertwined with teachers' proficiency in the language of instruction. According to Tsui (2003), teachers with greater subject knowledge are said to be able to assist students in making conceptual links, come up with different and understandable explanations, and make meaningful dialogues with the students. Moreover, in language teaching and learning, language serves both as the object of learning as well as the medium of instruction (Freeman et al., 2015; Tsui, 2003), which helps to propel forward the belief that higher levels of language proficiency would contribute to a higher sense of efficacy. Correspondingly, teachers with higher levels of language proficiency are said to be able to provide rich language input consisting of meaningful explanations and are able to respond knowledgeably and with ease to the questions of culture and language posed by the learners (Richards et al., 2013; Sadeghi et al., 2020). On the other hand, lower levels of proficiency do not necessarily have an impact on teaching effectiveness and

student engagement (Tsang, 2017). A reason for this being is that teachers with a lower level of proficiency can make up for this deficit with higher levels of both determination and motivation, creative and original use of resources, and utilizing technology and the media to a greater degree (Sadeghi et al., 2020) and, as a result, are able to provide an effective language learning experience all the same.

Even though language proficiency is an important attribute of language teachers, there is still no one precise meaning, definition, or level of language proficiency for teachers (Faez et al., 2019; Karas & Faez, 2020; Tsang, 2017) as the construct is subject to changes and fluctuates in accordance with the different contexts, content, tasks, and cultures in which the language teaching and learning takes place (Elder & Kim, 2014). Despite this fact, language teachers' level of language proficiency has often been evaluated with measures of general proficiency. This can be limiting as it does not address language proficiency in term of teachers' professional needs, and furthermore, it places non-native speaking teachers at a deficit and can have a negative impact on teachers' (self-perceived) professional legitimacy (Freeman, 2017). This way of determining capable and effective language teachers also lacks the understanding of the knowledge and abilities that language teachers need in addition to general language proficiency (Elder & Kim, 2014). In other words, solely the ability to speak the language doesn't make one able to teach it (Richards, 2010, 2017) as there are many other teaching aspects, such as classroom management skills and instructional strategies, that are crucial for effective teaching.

Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs have often been measured using a self-report assessment, such as the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) or an adapted version of it (e.g., Chacon, 2005; Eslami & Fatahi, 2008; Ghasemboland & Hashim, 2013; Sabokrouh & Barimani-Varandi, 2013; Yilmaz, 2011). The TSES is designed for

general K-12 education, not for language education in particular, and it is organized into three subscales, which are classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement. The majority of studies have investigated the relationship between general proficiency and self-efficacy using bivariate correlations (Faez et al., 2019). While the correlations vary in strength and are not always significant, there is a clear positive relationship between proficiency and self-efficacy. However, this approach does not allow for further fine-grained analysis. Faez and colleagues' (2019) meta-analysis shows that proficiency is slightly more important for instructional strategies compared to student engagement and classroom management, but the specific reasons for this are less clear and how this is impactful in the classroom is also less clear. That said, other findings have shown various implications that this can have on the process of language teaching. In Chacon's (2005) study with EFL teachers in Venezuela, it was revealed that there is a relationship between language proficiency and efficacy beliefs, and the teachers in the study felt most efficacious in student engagement and instructional strategies in comparison to the subscale of classroom management. In their study, it was found that teachers make judgements on how and the ways they go about teaching their class based on their own language abilities, and both teachers with perceived high efficacy and low efficacy were more inclined to focus on accuracy (grammar-oriented) than on meaning (communication-oriented). Eslami and Fatahi's (2008) results align with Chacon's findings as they report that the teachers in their study felt most efficacious in instructional strategies, but contrary to Chacon (2005), they found that the higher the sense of efficacy the more likely they were to use communicative strategies in the classroom. Others have determined a reciprocal relationship between proficiency and perceived efficacy; language proficiency and self-efficacy are interdependent, and English use increases as teachers have a higher sense of both pedagogical and linguistic competence (Choi & Lee, 2016).

Additionally, others attest that after a certain point or once a threshold of language proficiency is attained, there are other factors that determine the effectiveness of a language teacher (Tsang, 2017). Recent findings also point to perceptions of language proficiency, teaching practices, and self-efficacy to all be interrelated (Korkmazgil & Seferoglu, 2021). In total, although language proficiency is an essential attribute of language teachers and it does impact teachers' confidence and beliefs in their abilities, it is only one of the factors that make up a language teachers' efficacy beliefs and so other factors need to be investigated further (Faez et al., 2019). There is also a greater need to explore different types of proficiency and the impact on self-efficacy; Karas' (2019) study shows that classroom proficiency can be more impactful than general proficiency.

2.4 Language teacher education programs and teaching qualifications

It has been shown that LTE programs play a prominent role in forming language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs. Teachers' efficacy beliefs are most flexible in their early years (Bandura, 1997); thus, these preparatory programs play a key role in developing ready, well-prepared, and in turn confident teachers. Just as importantly, teacher education programs play a part in shaping preservice teachers' beliefs and, as a result, forming their teaching practices (Goff & Eslami, 2016). These programs are composed of a theoretical, in-class component and occasionally a practicum component. Even though the practicum isn't a compulsory component of every LTE program, findings have shown that the practicum takes a considerable role in forming efficacy beliefs. The practicum often serves as the first mastery experience, which is one of the most important sources of information contributing to efficacy beliefs. Hoang and Wyatt (2020) found that the practicum experience was most significant in developing pedagogical confidence for preservice English language teachers in Vietnam, specifically in aspects such as

managing the class and time, providing instructions, instructing large classes, using a variety of teaching approaches for the different levels of students, creating lesson plans and materials, using technology to teach, and assessing learner progress. Equally important, they mention that the practicum not only provided the mastery experience but also the vicarious experience and verbal persuasion component as the preservice teachers were able to observe experienced teachers in the profession and received feedback and commentary on their own teaching performance. Thus, based on Bandura's framework, the practicum experience provided three out of the four sources of information (enactive attainment or mastery experience, vicarious experience, and verbal persuasion) that are responsible for shaping efficacy beliefs. Similarly, Faez and Valeo (2012) report on a relationship between the LTE program and perceived efficacy. They also found that for teachers in Ontario, Canada, the most useful part of the TESOL program was the practicum. It provided the teachers a hands-on experience where they were able to develop lesson plans and manage the classroom. They also mentioned a need to provide teachers an opportunity to prepare lessons and teach in a variety of classes (e.g., literacy, advanced classes, etc.) as the preservice teachers felt insufficiently prepared to take on these different classrooms once they were placed in their teaching positions. Knowledge and experience in dealing with only one type of class and one sort of context doesn't compensate for the variations in classroom and context demands and the teaching approaches needed to fulfill those various demands. The importance of a practicum is also echoed in the study by Cooke and Faez (2018) in which it was found that French as a second language (FSL) teachers in Ontario, Canada, did not feel particularly confident and efficacious upon completion of the teacher education program. This, as they found, originates from a lack of a practicum component, or

more precisely the lack of mastery experiences that are so essential in developing efficacy beliefs.

In the literature on LTE little has been considered in regard to what qualifications make one feel more efficacious. Karas and Faez (2021) looked at teaching qualifications as a possible determinant of self-efficacy beliefs. Based on their study in Ontario, Canada, they found that higher levels of education, such as having a master's degree, did not have a notable impact on self-efficacy beliefs. Due to the range in employment opportunities available in Canada, language teachers' teaching qualifications vary and aren't a significant source affecting their efficacy beliefs. However, their study investigated self-efficacy from a cognitivist perspective (Burns et al., 2015) using surveys. This does not allow for a nuanced look at teachers' LTE experience. Furthermore, in part due to the quantitative methodology, they investigated self-efficacy at a global level (i.e., when task specific self-efficacy beliefs are generalized to a global self-belief), which is perhaps an inaccurate measure as global self-efficacy diminishes, to a certain extent, the dynamic attribute of task specific self-efficacy (Wyatt, 2016).

2.5 Years' experience

Years' experience seems to be another factor impacting efficacy beliefs, though the exact nature as to how they impact perceived efficacy remains unclear and for this reason results have been inconsistent. Bandura (1997) posited that efficacy beliefs would remain more or less stable after being established. This is further supported with the belief that if teachers pass the early, beginning stages of their career and decide to remain in the profession, their efficacy beliefs would remain relatively stable and wouldn't really change as time goes on (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). However, Klassen and Chiu (2010) have shown that the relationship between years' experience and efficacy beliefs is nonlinear; sense of efficacy increases from 0 –

23 years and declines after the 23-year mark. While the number is specific to their study, it shows that there is potentially a 'tipping point' where teachers' self-efficacy may actually decline with experience. One could hypothesize reasons for this; for example, it is harder to connect with students, less knowledge about newer methods, issues with technology, etc. In Chacon's (2005) study, years' experience didn't have any influence on self-efficacy beliefs. The teachers in the study had varying years of experience and no significant correlation was found. Similarly, in Eslami and Fatahi's (2008) study, teachers had 1 – 5 years of experience and no relationship was reported. In contrast, Karas and Faez (2021) discovered that there is a positive relationship between years' experience and efficacy beliefs. In their study teachers had a mean of about 13 years of experience, and it was years' experience that showed the largest effect size as a predictor of self-efficacy. This was notable as they conducted analysis via multiple regression, allowing for comparison with other variables (e.g., LTE). While experience in years was prominent in Karas and Faez (2021), it is important to consider the literature as a whole. Unlike proficiency, experience continues to show mixed results in terms of impact (e.g., positive, null, and even negative). Additionally, and as they note, it still remains unclear exactly how years of experience impact efficacy beliefs as they were not provided the details and nuances of what those experiences were. If the specifics and significance of those experiences were disclosed, it could have provided a better understanding of how years' experience affect perceived self-efficacy and what sort of process or cycle these beliefs go through. This highlights the need to further understand the nuances of teachers' lived experiences in the classroom to understand what specific experiences may contribute to, or hinder, teachers' self-efficacy beliefs.

2.6 Resources, syllabus, and curriculum

Since the curriculum, syllabus, and resources govern the ways in which the task, that is, the act of teaching is carried out and achieved, it would seem to be a factor influencing perceived efficacy; however, there is little discussion in the literature about its impact on self-efficacy beliefs of language teachers. With that said, teachers can be categorized into three groups in terms of the way they implement the curriculum. The three groups are the curriculum transmitters (teachers who follow a prescribed curriculum and course of action), curriculum developers (teachers who adjust the curriculum to match their classroom context), and curriculum makers (teachers who develop a curriculum that coincides with the wants, needs, and abilities of the students) (Shawer 2010, 2017). Factors that drive the way in which a teacher implements a curriculum include convenience of textbook, quality of the textbook, pressure at work, teacher training, experience, teaching style, and teacher beliefs (Shawer, 2017). Availability of resources appears to affect the perceived efficacy of novice teachers in particular (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007), whereas experienced teachers feel capable of utilising or modifying the materials and resources available. This dependence on the availability of resources as well as the quality of resources was also discovered with in-service language teachers (e.g., Kraut et al., 2016). Moreover, Imran and Wyatt (2020) capture the three types of curriculum implementers in detail based on English language teachers at a university in Pakistan. Both the curriculum developer and curriculum maker took advantage of the curriculum-free policy at their university as this provided them the opportunity to be creative, adapt and develop materials that promoted a communicative approach to language learning and one that promoted learner autonomy. Not to mention, these teachers were guided by personal principles and beliefs on teaching, which was not apparent by the curriculum transmitter. There were a few contextual factors that inhibited the curriculum transmitter from adapting or developing the curriculum and

material. These factors include time, workload, examination requirements, students' level of English proficiency, and the large class size, though training in curriculum and materials development and experience were the most significant factors. In comparison, in the Iranian context with EFL teachers, Baleghizadeh and Goldouz (2016) reported that teachers have no say and cannot exert an influence on any decisions regarding their own teaching approaches or the syllabus as everything is predetermined. Due to the restrictions of a pre-planned syllabus, teachers lack empowerment and, as a result, the want to take collective responsibility for their students' learning. From the findings of Imran and Wyatt (2020) and as Baleghizadeh and Goldouz (2016) point out, teachers who are simply curriculum transmitters (Shawer 2010, 2017) rely on predetermined materials and lack motivation and a drive in delivering an optimal language learning experience that corresponds with the wants and needs of the learners. On top of that, predetermined materials reduce teacher autonomy (Ballet et al., 2006), and perceptions of efficacy are negatively affected when teachers are required to structure teaching in ways that they don't deem as optimal for learning (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2014). It could also be argued that this would diminish a teacher's motivation and belief in their work, and a teacher's belief in their work, the belief in the significance of their professional responsibilities, increases their efficacy beliefs (Barni et al., 2016). It should also be noted that the use and adaptation of resources, materials development, and curriculum implementation are factors that are interdependent on other aspects such as language proficiency; teachers' language proficiency can determine teachers' efficacy and ability to use and develop materials (Karas, 2019).

2.7 Collective teacher efficacy and working conditions

Collective teacher efficacy is another factor impacting perceptions of efficacy. People don't live in isolation from one another and many of the decisions and happenings in our lives are heavily dependent on others. Collective efficacy impacts the decisions and actions people make and take as a group, the effort they invest, and their perseverance when the efforts of the group fail to generate results (Bandura, 1986). It has been reported that collective teacher efficacy beliefs are related to student behaviour, job stress, goal setting, and job satisfaction (Caprara et al., 2003; Klassen, 2010; Klassen et al., 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2010, 2017a, 2017b). Teacher collaboration is one of the ways in which to foster collective teacher efficacy beliefs. Through teacher collaboration teachers receive validation and reinforcement, broaden their knowledge of pedagogy and content, and it is an opportunity to discuss experiences and exchange strategies about ways to promote learners' engagement and enrich teaching practices (Guo et al., 2011; Richards, 2010). Additionally, for collective teacher efficacy to grow, it is necessary to make teachers more empowered by allowing them to make decisions in instructional aspects of the school (Goddard et al., 2004). In the Iranian context, Baleghizadeh and Goldouz (2016) found that there is a positive correlation between collective teacher efficacy and teacher empowerment. The context of their study prohibits the teachers from making any decisions about their teaching methodologies and the syllabus; thus, teachers do not have a sense of empowerment. Furthermore, Abedini, Bagheri, and Sadighi (2018) compare the collective teacher efficacy beliefs in three settings (English language institutes, high schools, and universities) in Iran. When assessed with the scales of efficacy in collaboration with fellow colleagues, efficacy in decision making, efficacy in instruction, and disciplinary and coping efficacy, the results showed that English language institutes in Iran have the highest collective teacher efficacy overall. Teachers in English language institutes were most confident with their

abilities in instruction (e.g., motivating students, promoting creativity in their students, and using effective teaching approaches), which is a result of the high standards by which they are employed and the regular observations, workshops, and professional development opportunities that preserve and uphold this high standard. Also, the classes were not crowded, the institutes were well-equipped with instructional resources and materials, they were well-established and ordered, and there were fewer challenging students to deal with. Another important finding in the Iranian context is the need for administrative support, which promotes teachers' involvement in making decisions and encourages social interactions regarding instruction (Abedini et al., 2018).

Working conditions, such as context, also play a role in forming collective and individual efficacy beliefs. Knoblauch and Woolfolk (2008) report on how school setting (e.g., rural, suburban, and urban) contributes to teachers' efficacy beliefs. Initial findings, prior to the teacher education program and the practicum, showed that teachers felt more efficacious to take on a position in a suburban and rural school in contrast to an urban school; however, after the education program and practicum, their efficacy beliefs increased and even the lack of resources in the urban setting didn't affect the efficacy beliefs of the teachers as they felt prepared to take on those challenges. Nevertheless, the collective teacher efficacy for teaching in an urban school was lower than the other schools. Moreover, the way the subject and course or even faculty is looked upon within the school holds a prominent role in developing teachers' collective and individual efficacy beliefs. An example of this is the French as a second language (FSL) classes within Ontario, Canada, which often aren't provided a classroom as the other classes within the building (see Cooke & Faez, 2018). This circumstance affects the teachers, students, and parents and is a reflection of the significance the subject holds in the school in total.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

Methodology

This study was a qualitative study as it allowed for a more detailed and nuanced understanding of the factors influencing a language teachers' efficacy beliefs (Faez & Karas, 2017). This is characteristic of qualitative research as it attempts to explain the distinct and the particular (Hyde, 2000). Furthermore, this is of vital importance if we are to develop our understandings of language teacher efficacy beliefs further as most studies in this field have taken a quantitative approach (Wyatt, 2014). Correspondingly, concerns have been raised regarding the accuracy and the possibility of capturing a construct as multifaceted as teacher efficacy beliefs through a self-report assessment (Glackin & Hohenstein, 2018), which has been the prevalent method of study.

This qualitative study took on a case study methodology. Case studies explore the real context and use the real context to gain insight on the cause and effect of a phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2007). A case is contextually bound and has boundaries that sustain the phenomenon (Merriam, 1998), which is an essential component when exploring efficacy beliefs as they are bound by context and task (Wyatt, 2010).

Participants and Sources of Data

This study was conducted with five ESL teachers who teach adults. Teachers must have a minimum of a bachelor's degree and a Teachers of English as a Second Language (TESL) Ontario[1] accreditation or an acceptable equivalent (e.g., Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition – PLAR, etc.) to teach these classes.

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[1] TESL Ontario is the accreditation body for ESL teachers in Ontario

Data were collected through two audio recorded interviews with each teacher, one stimulated recall interview, and a full day observation in one of their classes. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected almost every area of expertise and forced many to change their ways of operating and functioning, teaching turned to the online mode of delivery, so classes were being delivered through Google Classroom and Google Meet; classes were composed of both a synchronous and asynchronous learning component. The interviews were conducted on Google Meet and had questions on factors impacting language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in the ESL context (see Appendix A). Interview questions were related to the themes discussed in the literature as well as exploratory to allow for other variables to emerge. Interviews allowed teachers to express their own opinions and understandings on the question of what forms their efficacy beliefs. They were about 30-40 minutes in length. Once the interview was finished, I joined the teacher's online classroom and observed the teacher teaching for the full school day. During observations I took down notes and created prompts to better understand the contextual aspects of the classroom and to further discuss and understand how those aspects affect the decisions teachers make in the classroom. After the school day was finished, there were stimulated recall interviews so as to explore and discuss items that emerged in the observations and to better understand the context and the decisions teachers make and the influence of those decisions on efficacy beliefs (Karas & Faez, 2021). The stimulated recall interviews lasted about 10-15 minutes. There was also a second interview about a month after the first interview. The second interviews were conducted on Google Meet and were about 30 minutes in length. The questions were based on the first interview questions as well as formed from the findings of the first interview (see Appendix B); they were probing questions so as to fill in missing pieces of

information or gaps and to provide a more complete understanding. The second interviews confirmed the information disclosed and expressed in the first interviews.

Ethical approval was obtained from Western University (see Appendix C). Prior to the start of the first interview, participants were asked to give written consent for their participation in the study. To ensure data and personal information disclosed by the participants remain confidential, all data collected and any identifiable information was coded. For confidentiality reasons, participants were assigned pseudonyms. All study data was encrypted and password protected and will be stored for 7 years as per Western University's research and ethical guidelines. All study data will be deleted after 7 years.

Data Analysis

Interviews were transcribed and analysed to identify common themes and to discover any new, emergent themes. Interviews were done to better understand the factors and how those factors influence English language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in the ESL context, as well as to gain an understanding of their implications on teaching and learning. Observations helped to provide a more thorough understanding of the context – the classroom, materials, resources, and the overall circumstances the teacher is working with. Data analysis was done using a deductive approach, working from the general to the specific (Graneheim et al., 2017). A deductive approach rests on testing an earlier theory in a different context and at different times (Elo & Kyngas, 2007; Hyde, 2000). For the data analysis process, I had rooted myself in Bandura's (1997) framework and worked off the base, anticipated themes that were outlined in the literature review; however, I always remained attentive and open to new and unanticipated themes and concepts to present themselves. This was done by following the four stages described in the

constant comparative method designed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Lastly, concepts and themes were related back to the research question guiding this study.

Below is a small biography of the five teachers who volunteered to participate in the study.

Reza

Reza was born and raised in Iran. He found his career path early on, while still in high school. He found out that he has the ability to teach English by teaching friends and neighbours. He majored in English literature for his bachelor's degree, and then completed a master's degree in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL). After completing his studies, he taught English for a few months in his home country, Iran, then taught English in Thailand for 11 years, and has been teaching in Canada for the last 12 years. In total, he has been teaching English for about 25 years.

Maria

Maria was born in Portugal but raised in Canada. She completed a college program and started her career in Canada as an early childhood educator. In 1990, she decided to move back to Portugal, and there she decided to teach English as English teachers were in demand at that time. She went to university in Portugal and completed a PLAR program and the Cambridge English Proficiency exam. Once all of this was completed, she became an accredited English teacher in Portugal. She's taught all levels and ages, from school age children to adults. In total, she has been teaching English for about 30 years.

Kathryn

Kathryn was born and raised in the United States of America. Teaching ESL is her third career. She has a master's degree in art history and worked in the art world in New York. After having children, she stayed home for about 14 years. Then, she decided to go back to university to get a master's degree in education as she was planning to teach English in secondary school,

and this was the required degree to become a secondary school teacher in the United States of America. During her studies, her advisor suggested that she adds on a TESL component to her graduate degree. After completing this degree, she moved to Canada as her husband had a job opportunity in Canada. It was difficult to get her credentials completely evaluated in Canada, which provided limitations in employment opportunities and for this reason she ended up teaching ESL to adults. In total, she has been teaching English for about 5 years.

Jennifer

Jennifer was born and raised in Canada. After completing a bachelor's degree, she went overseas to teach English. She taught English in Korea and Taiwan for 7 years. Once she returned to Canada, she worked as an educational assistant where she dealt with behaviours and children who needed extra support. She started missing working with languages and teaching English and decided to become an ESL teacher in Canada. She acquired all the necessary qualifications and at the time of the study taught ESL to adults in Canada. In total, she has been teaching English for about 17 years.

Laura

Laura was born and raised in Canada. She completed a bachelor's degree in psychology. Teaching English wasn't her first career and her interest in teaching ESL arose after a trip she took to Mexico. She wanted to remain in Mexico and decided that teaching English would be a possible way to do that. After she completed all the qualifications needed to teach EFL/ESL, she taught EFL in Mexico for a few years and at the time of the study was teaching in Canada. In total, she had been teaching English for about 5 years.

Chapter 4 – Findings

Findings are presented as the categories and themes outlined in the literature review. The same five categories and themes are discussed as well as another prominent theme that emerged from the data. The additional theme is teaching online.

4.1 Language proficiency

There were three prominent subcategories that emerged in relation to language proficiency. The three subcategories are linguistic capabilities, cultural knowledge, and perceptions of professional legitimacy.

4.1.1 Linguistic capabilities

All the teachers in the study were highly proficient (as they were either born and raised in Canada or the United States of America or they studied English in university and had a long residence in Canada) and said that they were confident in their language abilities and that their abilities do not pose any limitations (e.g., to teach a certain grammar point, a certain topic, to teach certain levels, etc.) and this is in conjunction with the fact that they acknowledge their weaknesses and strengths in one skill or task in comparison to another. Jennifer said that even though she may have certain weaknesses in one skill or task, "I don't think there really is anything I cannot overcome; for example, I don't think anything has affected my teaching". Kathryn, Jennifer, and Laura also said that they check and review grammar rules to either make sure that what they are teaching is correct or to find the best possible way to explain and deliver it to their learners. Also, some of the teachers mentioned that they take courses or workshops to expand and broaden their knowledge or improve skills or abilities they believe they may

be lacking. Additionally, in terms of fulfilling their everyday job responsibilities, a high level of proficiency also gives teachers flexibility and versatility within the classroom, as was mentioned by Laura. This is how she expressed this matter:

> I would say it allows me to be flexible. Like how many times I've given a lesson and it's going nowhere. I got to change. I got to do something different. Especially speaking. Or like I got to keep them engaged. They're engaged, but how do I keep this going? Or they're not engaged, so I got to do something else. So, being proficient helps me to be always thinking. Like what can I do next?

Each teacher expressed their preference in teaching higher level learners (CLB 4 and higher) though Jennifer said she wouldn't mind teaching a lower level when classes are in person since online learning provides a second barrier for lower-level learners as "they're learning not just English, but they're learning the computer" (keep in mind that this is not to say that they wouldn't be capable of teaching lower-level learners). For starters, one of the main reasons for this preference could be due to the fact that they were all highly proficient teachers and, as a result, felt comfortable teaching higher-level learners. The teachers themselves also highlighted three principal reasons for the interest in teaching higher level learners. The first reason that all the teachers mentioned was that they enjoy being able to communicate and have discussions with the higher-level learners, which is not possible with the lower-level learners. Another reason mentioned by Reza was that he doesn't need to "struggle" to teach the language, and Maria said that she doesn't need to focus on the "nitty-gritty" of the language (e.g., vocabulary, etc.), as they do with lower-level learners. The last reason added by Reza and Laura was that they feel their

preference in teaching higher-level learners is largely based on their personality. Higher-level learners suit their personality better because of the pace at which they can teach, the materials they can use and how creative they can be, and most importantly the communication factor. Laura further elaborated on this point by discussing how due to her personality (her preference to a certain energy and pace in the classroom), when she is not teaching the level that suits her, she is not in her "comfort zone", which brings with it a number of uncertainties and doubts. She said she felt that she is constantly in the process of doubting and questioning her teaching. These are her thoughts:

> …it affects my confidence because I'm not sure if I'm doing the right job or teaching well enough. Like do I go slow enough? Is it too slow? Do I go hard enough? Is it too hard? For me, it's just a lot of, I don't know, is this okay? Is this how I'm supposed to do it? Because for me, low levels are not in my comfort zone.

Jennifer had similar contemplations in regard to adjusting to different levels and learners. These are her thoughts:

> …then when I teach the lesson and I leave and I'm thinking to myself: was it too much? Did I give too much information where they're just confused? And then did I give not enough where they're not understanding? So, it's hard sometimes to find that balance.

Additionally, all the teachers mentioned that they rely on student response in terms of understanding their worth as teachers, which affects both their efficacy beliefs as well as their self-concept. It is through seeing and receiving some sort of confirmation from the learners that they are understanding the lesson (e.g., through active participation in the classroom activities and responding to questions) that the teacher also determines their value as a teacher and professional. Another point mentioned by Reza, Kathryn, and Laura was the motivation of the learners. Kathryn said she preferred higher-level learners as they are more motivated and have higher self-efficacy themselves, and Laura added that they may be motivated for a number of reasons, which could include plans to continue their studies at the post-secondary level and finding work in Canada. This creates a completely different classroom atmosphere and influences a teachers' beliefs on teaching and learning and forms their understandings about their own abilities as teachers.

4.1.2 Cultural knowledge

Language proficiency as a factor impacting self-efficacy beliefs was mentioned by Maria, Kathryn, and Jennifer. They all discussed how it is an essential quality of a successful and effective English language teacher and they place an importance on teachers possessing cultural knowledge as they view it as an integral part of language proficiency. Maria expressed that ESL teachers need to "know about the language, and they need to know the language". This she further explained as knowing "the English language, English culture, and English history". Language instruction isn't only a matter of teaching the language, but it is also a means of integrating people into a country and culture. Maria and Kathryn elaborated on this point by

discussing how important it is that through language instruction learners become acquainted with cultural norms and what's acceptable and what's not acceptable in Canadian society and their community. This is how Maria expressed her opinion:

> I think a lot of real-world experiences, stories, sharing etiquette, what is expected. Things you can do and things you can't do. More of expectations and what is acceptable and what isn't acceptable in Canadian culture, in the community – things you do and things you don't.

Kathryn expressed this as providing learners with "inside information", or insider knowledge, necessary to succeed in Canada. Jennifer also added that it's important to acquaint or at least be able to explain idioms, expressions, and slang to learners. They all highlighted the importance of teachers' language proficiency and language abilities being sufficient in allowing one to acquaint and integrate learners into the culture and Canadian society. For teachers, language is interrelated with culture, and knowledge of cultural norms and helping newcomers integrate in Canadian society is significant.

4.1.3 Perceptions of professional legitimacy

Within the interviews certain teachers also very strongly expressed their opinions regarding other teachers' level of language proficiency and knowledge of the language. It was mentioned by some of the teachers that knowing the language and having knowledge of and about the language is essential, and "If you don't have these requirements, I don't think you have what it takes. I really don't think so" and "if you don't know about the language and if you don't

know the language, you're in trouble", and on another occasion another teacher mentioned that a high command of English "it's one thing I think is like a given" for one to be a successful ESL teacher. This was also coupled with words like "native speaker" and "nonnative speaker", which was said at some point by each teacher. It was further discussed that there are teachers who have deficiencies and lack certain language skills. Teachers' impressions and perceptions of one another influence their understanding of both their own and others' professional legitimacy, and possibly of the teaching environment and program in total. Negative impressions, feelings, and criticism about colleagues may impact negatively and lower the overall morale and job satisfaction level of the teaching environment. A plausible reason as to why these judgements arose could be due to the fact that a good portion of teachers are not permanent employees and are temporary employees on an assignment. This could cause a sense of competition to arise among teachers, and with that, teachers start to value, judge, and compare one another; however, this is not exclusive to the profession of language teaching and happens in all professions and fields of expertise. With all that said, it's still important to note that language proficiency inevitably is a factor impacting self-efficacy beliefs and perceptions of professional legitimacy.

In sum, language proficiency seems to affect English language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in the ESL context as teachers see it as a primary attribute of an effective English language teacher, and this influences their perceptions of professional legitimacy. They also see language as interrelated with culture, so teachers' language abilities and level of proficiency need to be sufficient in conveying cultural knowledge to the learners. The need for teachers to have cultural knowledge could also be due to the curriculum and program expectations, which put the main focus of language instruction on integration into the culture and society. Additionally,

teachers are undoubtedly impacted by their self-concept and their realizations of themselves as teachers. They are impacted in a positive way when the situation and conditions are conducive and align with their individual beliefs and understandings and negatively when they do not.

4.2 Language teacher education programs and teaching qualifications

The LTE programs were discussed within the interviews as it was one of the questions posed; however, it didn't seem to be a significant factor on its own in terms of building their efficacy beliefs, and teaching qualifications were never mentioned as a variable impacting their efficacy beliefs. All the teachers had completed some sort of a LTE program as this is a requirement of the position. The TESL Ontario accreditation is required, though there are other acceptable equivalents such as the PLAR accreditation. Two of the teachers in this study had completed the TESL Ontario accreditation, and three of the teachers had completed the PLAR accreditation. The two teachers who had completed the TESL Ontario accreditation, Jennifer and Laura, were both very happy with the program and highlighted the benefits of the program, which was the opportunity to observe other teachers, to be observed and receive feedback on their teaching performance, and the practicum component. This is how Jennifer expressed the value of the observations:

> When I observed each teacher, I was able to observe different ways of teaching
> and how they teach. … Within my observation hours, I was able to take away
> different pieces from those instructors. Everybody has their own way of teaching
> and so I was able to collect what I could from each class.

Correspondingly, Laura said that the program she took really focused on and trained her in lesson planning, which was something she was tested on in her first interview right out of the program. She also felt that the program aligned with her current work expectations and that it had overall prepared her for her current working conditions and employment expectations. While Kathryn, Reza, and Maria, the teachers who completed the PLAR accreditation process, all felt that the process didn't provide any benefits or influence their efficacy in any way. Kathryn and Maria explained that all they needed to do was send in their qualifications and then they became accredited. Reza explained that he had to send in his qualifications and do some hours of observations and a little bit of a practicum. For him, the only benefit he gained and how it impacted his teaching was that he observed other teachers teaching and gained insight on what he would improve or do differently – what he would or wouldn't do in their position. Overall, the teachers could explain what they enjoyed or didn't from the LTE program they completed; however, this didn't seem to be a factor to impact their self-efficacy of its own accord.

4.3 Years' experience

Years' experience was very rarely discussed or expressed within the interviews as a factor impacting efficacy beliefs. It was at certain moments and within context of other aspects only mentioned by the two most experienced teachers who had more than 20 years of experience, Reza and Maria. They mentioned years of experience within context of their ability to be both flexible and adaptable and capable of creating materials and resources. As a result of their years of experience, they have built a repository of resources, which allowed them to save time on finding materials as well as to modify and develop materials quickly and with ease. Additionally,

they both added that the variety and range of their experiences also played a role in affecting

their efficacy as English language teachers. They had both worked in different contexts (both in

an ESL and EFL context) and had taken on different tasks (different levels and learners – from

children to adults). However, Reza explained the importance of each single year of experience as

having its own significance as "wherever you go, wherever you teach, any class is a new

experience" and "when you go to a new place, everything will be totally new. Even every single

class year will be a new experience", which was also discussed by Jennifer. We can also include

the number of unexpectant situations that happen along the way and which force teachers to

constantly change and adapt to the situation (e.g., new curriculum standards, new teaching

methodologies, and situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic). With these comments they

highlight that each individual year is significant in its own way, so experience and an

understanding of yourself as a teacher continues to grow and expand and is in continual

development.

4.4 Curriculum, resources, and materials

The curriculum, resources, and materials are prominent factors impacting an English

language teacher's perceived self-efficacy in the ESL context. The program follows and uses a

PBLA model, and all teaching and learning is based on real-world tasks. The program also uses a

needs assessment approach, which allows learners to choose what they are interested in learning

from the themes and topics outlined in the curriculum. This makes the curriculum quite open,

adaptable, and flexible as there is no prescribed schedule for how long, how or in which manner,

and when any theme or topic should be taught. The teacher has complete autonomy over their

class and how to structure learning. With all this considered, each teacher said that they create

and develop almost all of their materials as there is a very limited number of materials and resources available that align with the expectations outlined in the curriculum (real-world tasks). Kathryn and Jennifer highlighted that a lot of the material currently available is outdated and can't be used as "our world is changing basically every day" and the resources don't match that changing world. It becomes difficult to find readily available materials to use which can accommodate the expectations of the curriculum. This is further elaborated on by Jennifer who explained that it's "going through hoops" to create a lesson and find materials. Reza and Maria said that it's quick and easy for them to create materials now, but at the beginning it would take them hours to do. With years of experience, they have become capable of creating and developing materials without difficulty. It is important to mention that each teacher said that they felt confident in developing and making materials; however, Kathryn emphasised that she feels "resentful all the time in having to do them". Having resent, and in an aspect that is so essential to the position, can't possibly affect a teacher's job satisfaction level in a positive way (job satisfaction and teacher burnout being some of the main contributors to teacher attrition). Additionally, this is a point of concern as it's a matter of "the hours you don't get paid" since teaching is "the before, the during, and the after", as was expressed by Maria. Jennifer confirmed this by saying that "we're constantly working", and Kathryn mentioned that "it's nearly impossible to not work extra hours". These are also Kathryn's comments regarding compensation and materials development:

> I'm creating the big picture of how I want to structure my class, but then the daily things… there's no time to do that. We're not paid to do that. It's like scurrying around and finding what you need. Deciding what you need and then scurrying

around to find it. Sometimes you have to create it yourself, but we don't get paid

enough to create all these things.

With all that said, Maria made an important point by mentioning that by knowing all the

circumstances of the position, like being on contract or not, the lack of materials, and many other

aspects of the job, it is all about choice. She has the choice to continue in this profession and in

this specific context, and if she decides to remain in the profession, she must make the best of the

situation. This is how she expressed this idea:

> … I'm in this situation. I have to be positive, motivated, and happy. I have to be
>
> entertaining. I have to be catering to the students' needs because this is my job. I
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> get paid for this. … It's my choice. I'm here. I'm teaching. I have to make the
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> best of it. This is the way it is. I chose this profession. It's not easy; however, it's
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> my problem. It's my choice.

In addition, Kathryn said that no matter her circumstances she feels responsible to her learners.

Reza also explained that he puts a lot of effort and attention into developing and creating

materials and lessons that align with the requirements of the curriculum, but most importantly,

that are of interest to the learners.

In short, the curriculum, resources, and materials do have an impact on English teachers'

self-efficacy beliefs. The uncompensated hours the teachers spend in resources and material

development impact their job satisfaction and teacher burnout, which impacts self-efficacy.

However, the fact that the circumstances and working conditions, specifically the need for

teachers to create and develop materials and the opportunity for them to structure learning however they see fit, create teacher autonomy and create a sense of responsibility in teachers towards their work, could impact their self-efficacy in a positive way.

4.5 Collective teacher efficacy, administration, and work environment

Collective teacher efficacy, the administration, and the work environment seem to be other factors impacting English language teachers' efficacy beliefs in the ESL context. The need for a "positive, supportive environment" was stressed by Reza. Having a warm, friendly, and supportive administration gives one assurance and the feeling that they are able to handle any challenges. This was a very important point for him as he had very diverse experiences. For him, adapting to all those different settings and contexts is made easier if there is a "warm, welcoming, supportive, and approachable administration". Additionally, Kathryn discussed how an unorganized administration makes it difficult to understand and handle job expectations and, to a certain extent, "sets one up for failure". She expressed that when the administration is disorganized it leaves the teachers lost and not knowing what they are expected to do. Laura also expressed the importance of a supportive administration as it helps relieve certain difficulties and issues that may arise with learners, and this gives the teacher more time to focus on their teaching. This is how Laura expressed her thoughts:

> We're like a team. It's a very nice environment. We're a very team friendly
> environment. We help each other. I feel like I can just be myself, come to school
> and do my thing, and I have the support. That's true, I do have a lot of support.
> The team lead in the office is very supportive. I would say she has the biggest

impact because I can go to her with a problem about a student and she can help me out, which relieves me of a problem and lets me focus on my teaching.

Laura's thoughts above also show the importance of an overall supportive and cooperative work environment that is created not only by the administration but by the relations and interactions between the teachers as well. Also, Kathryn said that she enjoys "checking in with an experienced, trusted colleague" and the importance of good relations and interactions between colleagues and teachers was also mentioned by Jennifer. Here are Jennifer's thoughts:

The administration, my colleagues, everybody is very supportive. Everybody is great. If I have questions, instructors have no problems in answering them or sharing material. I've never had any situations or issues with instructors. It's more been on the positive side, in sharing material or talking about how to overcome an obstacle because there are obstacles and barriers that we do face with learners that we need to overcome, and my colleagues have always been there and coordinators have always been there 100%.

In essence, it seems that the administration, collective teacher efficacy, and overall work environment impact teachers' self-efficacy beliefs. The administration sets the standards on how the work environment operates and functions and can have an influence on the sort of interactions teachers and colleagues have, which impacts and

contributes to the collective teacher efficacy. The collective teacher efficacy is formed by supportive and cooperative interactions between teachers and the administration.

4.6 Teaching online

Another interesting point that was brought up by each teacher was about the ability to deliver classes online as it's something that is now becoming more and more common and a normal method of teaching and learning. All the teachers that took part in this study were computer literate, but they knew of the challenges and difficulties that some of their colleagues faced during this time. This was clearly outlined by Reza and Jennifer. They both mentioned how many of their colleagues and co-workers struggled during these times when they were expected to deliver classes online, and how they have either helped with resources and materials or given individual or group trainings to help other teachers maneuver and use the new learning platforms. Furthermore, Kathryn expressed how for her, teaching online has actually improved her teaching. The synchronous and asynchronous time provides her more opportunity to prep and organize her teaching, and she believes that "you have to be a better teacher to teach people online". Teachers need to keep learners motivated and interested in attending and participating in classroom activities on a daily basis. The virtual classroom provides learners the opportunity to turn off their camera and not participate in the classroom activities, all of which wasn't allowed or possible in in-person classes. This is in addition to the fact that a number of assessments and activities cannot be done in the same manner and class time needs to be structured differently. Thus, teachers need to become more adaptable and flexible in addition to creative, as was mentioned by Maria, Jennifer, and Laura. All the teachers in the study felt confident and felt that teaching online was a great experience for them as they discovered new skills and abilities and

expanded their potential, and it has overall provided them with a sense of being well-rounded as professionals and teachers. However, they all acknowledge the efforts it took to get to this point. It was the searching for and investing countless hours, unavoidably beyond their work hours, into developing their knowledge of the online learning environment and the learning platforms. Jennifer explained that "it was a lot of my own time just navigating all the different platforms. It was just taking the time myself". It took a lot of determination and effort from the teachers' end to get to the point at which they are now.

Overall, teaching online does affect teachers' efficacy beliefs as they are forced to change and adapt to new circumstances. This influences and forces them to modify their understanding of teaching and learning and who they are as teachers. Additionally, as they are forced to adapt and change, this requires more resilience and determination from their end. All this, in turn, affects their self-efficacy as they are required to change their understandings and beliefs about both teaching and learning as well as what they bring as teachers and what they are capable of achieving professionally.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

The above outlined themes will be discussed and explored through the lens of Bandura's self-efficacy framework and supported by empirical findings.

5.1 Language proficiency

Our findings show that language proficiency is a factor that influences efficacy beliefs of English language teachers in the ESL context. There are three prominent subcategories: linguistic capabilities, cultural knowledge, and perceptions of professional legitimacy.

5.1.1 Linguistic capabilities

Each teacher in this study viewed language proficiency as a primary attribute of an English language teacher; this could stem from the fact that a teachers' expertise and effectiveness is dependent on their subject knowledge (Renandya et al., 2018; Richards et al., 2013; Tsui, 2003). Each teacher in this study said that they felt confident in their language abilities and that they do not pose any sort of limitation in their teaching, which could be due to the fact that they have surpassed the threshold (inevitably a threshold determined at the individual, personal level) at which language proficiency becomes a factor that is not as important in terms of determining an English language teachers' effectiveness as was found by Tsang (2017). All the teachers acknowledged that they have strengths and weaknesses, though none of them viewed those weaknesses as limitations in their teaching abilities. Additionally, and in line with the results shown in Eslami and Fatahi (2008), when teachers have a strong sense of efficacy in their language proficiency, they are more likely to use communicative strategies and approaches in their teaching, which was something all the teachers in this study highlighted to be their preference and strong suit. Each teacher in this study expressed their preference in having

communication with their learners and utilising communicative approaches and strategies as much as is possible in their classroom. The use of communicative strategies in the classroom could be further related to the results of Choi and Lee (2016), who determined that the relationship between language proficiency and self-efficacy is reciprocal, meaning teachers' English use increases as they have a higher sense of both pedagogical and linguistic competence. Karas and Faez (2020) also found that novice English language teachers feel that teachers with higher levels of language proficiency are better suited to teach higher level learners. However, it could also be argued that their preference in teaching higher-level learners and using communicative strategies is due to the fact that teaching higher-level learners may be easier than teaching lower-level learners as it relieves the teachers of the challenges that lower-level learners present (that exact "struggle" that was mentioned by Reza). It is at the lower, beginning levels where a teacher needs to integrate and acquaint learners with different and at times completely new linguistic structures and systems, and in the case of literacy learners, with skills and abilities that might have never been attained before (for a discussion on literacy learners, see Gunderson et al., 2020). To add, it could be an issue of the teachers' discourse skills, which is their ability to adjust language so that it is comprehensible to different learners (Richards, 2017). Beyond just being proficient in the language, it is the ability to adjust language so that you are understood by your learners (e.g., adjusting the speed and language used) and at the point where you receive validation and affirmation from your learners that you are an effective teacher as the learners demonstrate that they are understanding your lesson and teaching.

Looking at it through Bandura's self-efficacy lens, teachers' preference in the level that they are expected to teach could be associated to unsuccessful mastery experiences, physiological state, and to the verbal persuasion component of the four sources of information

responsible for building efficacy beliefs. Their preference is influenced by the verbal persuasion component as teachers are affected by their students and their response to the lesson and their teaching (e.g., receiving affirmation that they are teaching well as the students are demonstrating that they understand), which, inevitably, influences their physiological state. If the learner response is positive (e.g., the students are engaged in the lesson as they are responding to questions and participating in the classroom activities, etc.), they will be impacted positively, and negatively if there is a lack of student response to their lesson and teaching.

The teachers' teaching preference could be even further related to teacher self-concept. Teacher self-concept is one's perceptions and understandings of their self as well as feelings of self-worth (Pajares, 1992). Being that efficacy beliefs are bound by context and task (Wyatt, 2010), the task that is given to teachers, or in other words, the class and level that the teacher is expected to teach, is a factor that influences their self-concept and efficacy beliefs as it influences a teachers' realization of themselves as teachers and their abilities. It defines their teaching and their impressions of what they are capable of doing and achieving in their classroom and with their learners. If the task is not aligned with their understandings of self, this can raise concerns and doubts in regard to who they are as teachers and their abilities, as was discussed by some of the teachers in this study. What's more, teacher self-concept has been shown to affect teacher burnout, and teachers who feel confident in their professional abilities expect that their expertise and competence will bring about student success and they will, as a result, feel more satisfied with their work (Friedman & Farber, 1992). Aspects of a lowered self-concept, such as having a lowered sense of professional competence, a feeling of being unable to manage students and the classroom, and not being satisfied with their job, are all related to teacher burnout and the relationship between low self-concept and teacher burnout is a reciprocal

relationship (Friedman & Farber, 1992). Additionally, teachers who are satisfied with their work are less likely to burn out (Friedman & Farber, 1992). Furthermore, Lohbeck, Hagenauer, and Frenzel (2017) found a relationship between teacher self-concept to teachers' emotions of anxiety, enjoyment, and anger, as well as self-concept of pedagogical skills being linked positively to enjoyment and negatively to anger. They also found that self-concept of subject or content knowledge had a significant negative correlation to anxiety. Teachers' preference, which is formed by their beliefs and understandings of who they are and what they can accomplish and achieve professionally, is what their self-concept and efficacy beliefs will be dependent on; it's a matter of how they perceive themselves as teachers and what their beliefs are in regard to what they can accomplish professionally.

5.1.2 Cultural knowledge

In this study, teachers also clearly highlighted the importance of language instruction being a means of cultural integration, and for the teachers this means that language is intertwined with culture. Language cannot be studied independently and in isolation from culture (Baydak et al., 2015) as culture is fully engrained in language and the two cannot be separated from one another (Baydak et al., 2015). The teachers in this study highlighted that English language teachers' language abilities and level of proficiency need to be suitable to be able to transfer cultural knowledge to the learners. It could be the context that elevated the significance of cultural knowledge as an ESL context increases its importance since learners are living in the country and not just simply taking a course; their livelihood depends on the language (Webb & Nation, 2017). In total, teachers are impacted by cultural knowledge as it is the main focus and

goal of the program and curriculum expectations as well as their personal beliefs on what language instruction is supposed to accomplish**.**

5.1.3 Perceptions of professional legitimacy

Another point that was presented in this study was that perceptions of language proficiency affect teachers' self-perceived professional legitimacy (Freeman, 2017; Richards, 2017). Since each teacher felt confident in their language abilities, based on their strong opinions on the question of what qualities and abilities an effective ESL teacher needs, it became evident that people compare their own and others' language abilities and, as a result, professional legitimacy. They understand their individual worth and what they bring as teachers based on the comparison of their language abilities to others'. It could also be that there were other factors that made these beliefs and opinions more prominent (factors such as working conditions); however, language proficiency seems to be one of the major, if not the most important, reasons. It could also be the context that heightened the sense of professional legitimacy in teachers as perceptions of legitimacy are based on context (Patterson, 2020), and in most cases the native speaker perspective (or at least peoples' perception of what that is and what those individuals' abilities in the language need to be) influences perceptions of professional legitimacy (Patterson, 2020). These same thoughts and considerations were discussed in Karas and Faez (2020) with novice English language teachers. Their impressions of the required level of proficiency were heavily dependent on the context and the level being taught**.** Language proficiency could also influence a number of other aspects essential to the position such as the ability to develop and create materials and resources (Karas, 2019), which could also be a factor influencing their sense of professional legitimacy.

5.2 Language teacher education program

The teachers in this study who completed a LTE program, and one where they actually took courses and were not just expected to send in their qualifications, were all happy with their LTE program and gained a number of benefits from the program. Similar to the findings presented in Hoang and Wyatt (2020) and Faez and Valeo (2012), all the teachers mentioned the practicum and observations as the most useful and beneficial parts of the program. The observations allowed the teachers to see other experienced teachers in the profession and gain insights on different teaching approaches and strategies. The practicum component gave teachers the opportunity to develop lessons, teach in a variety of classes (different levels), and receive feedback on their teaching from experienced teachers. All in all, as Hoang and Wyatt (2020) reported, the practicum aspect of the program provided three out of the four sources of information (that is, the enactive or mastery experience, vicarious experience, and verbal persuasion component) responsible for influencing efficacy beliefs. However, there is a lack of significant results presented in our study in regard to LTE programs influencing self-efficacy beliefs. Further qualitative data may be needed to capture teachers' LTE experience and its true impact.

5.3 Years' experience

Years' experience was mentioned by the two most experienced teachers and within context of other aspects. They both have worked in a variety of educational settings, in different contexts (both EFL and ESL contexts), and have taken on different tasks (different levels and learners). They both mentioned that years of experience gave them adaptability and the ability to

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develop and create lessons very quickly as they have built their own repository of resources. Beyond these aspects it wasn't discussed how years' experience affects their efficacy. Reza's and Jennifer's discussion on experience was interesting as it provides insight on how they interpret and view years of experience. It could be that due to the nature of the profession of English language teaching (maybe even to some extent due to the precarious nature of employment in this field), meaning having different learners each year, having a different assignment (teaching different levels), being placed in a different school and setting, having different colleagues, having unexpectant situations and circumstances come about, and many other aspects of the job create inconsistency and lack of stability in job expectations, so teachers never feel stable in their working conditions and need to assimilate and adapt to their new circumstances. They are constantly in the process of adapting to their working conditions and environment. The consideration of how and what specifically in years of experience influences one's self-efficacy also opens up other questions. Why do some overcome challenges and others don't? Why do some teachers overcome the first 5 years and decide to remain in the profession and others don't? So, are years of experience responsible for one's confidence and self-efficacy, or is it something else (possibly teachers' innate sense of efficacy) that is responsible for the years of experience? Is it the accumulation of successful mastery experiences? Or is it a combination of a number of factors? These questions should be investigated further and in greater detail.

5.4 Curriculum, resources, and materials

In this study, this aspect seemed to be a prominent variable affecting self-efficacy beliefs and there are a few reasons as to why and how. It is possible to conclude that all the teachers in this study were curriculum makers as defined by Shawer (2010, 2017) and as demonstrated in

Imran and Wyatt (2021). This aspect inevitably affects teachers' efficacy beliefs both positively and negatively.

On one hand, teachers felt overworked as their work goes beyond the compensated hours, which can affect teacher burnout and job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010, 2017b). Also, time pressure and a heavy workload can result in emotional exhaustion as teachers don't have the time or energy to sufficiently and adequately plan and prepare for their lessons as well as care about their students (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010, 2017b; Valeo & Faez, 2013).

On the other hand, the teachers in this study were confident in materials development and this could be a factor in terms of building efficacy beliefs. The reason as to why materials and resources development can be a factor affecting one's efficacy beliefs in a positive way can be further related to what Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007) found. If teachers structure learning in ways they see fit for their learners and that they believe provides the most optimal language learning experience, this will strengthen their efficacy beliefs as well as encourage teacher autonomy (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). When teachers create and develop materials, they are invested in the process of determining what is acceptable and appropriate for their level and learners, what is aligned with the curriculum expectations, and at the same time relevant and interesting. They become responsible for the language learning process as they are fully engrained in the process. They are responsible for creating and developing the stages of the learning process in order for learners to achieve the learning objectives. Correspondingly, they are able to structure learning in the manner that caters to their own abilities; they can use approaches and strategies in which they are most confident in as they can structure learning to coincide with their own characteristics, abilities, and qualities. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2014) also argue that teachers with successful mastery experiences and who are autonomous could be more engaged and satisfied with their job

as they can teach based on their own teaching values, create and utilise their own resources, and

use strategies and approaches they see fit for the situation and their students' abilities and needs.

Additionally, for teachers who lack confidence in some of their abilities, autonomy provides

them the opportunity to avoid tasks and activities they perceive as challenges and shortcomings,

which could impact positively their job satisfaction and engagement as well (Skaalvik &

Skaalvik, 2014). Teacher autonomy is present in the program as a whole; thus, teacher

empowerment (that is, the need for teachers to make decisions in regard to the instructional

aspects of the school (Goddard et al., 2004) as was presented by Baleghizadeh and Goldouz

(2016) to be an important aspect which strengthens efficacy beliefs) is inevitably a component of

their job position. Each teacher is completely in charge and responsible for their classroom, and

no two teachers are the same in terms of the ways in which they deliver the lesson, the strategies

they use and the approaches they take, or the materials they choose in delivering their lesson.

In sum, though materials development is time-consuming and could be a frustrating

aspect of the position, and again, affect one's job satisfaction and teacher burnout, it could just as

much be an aspect that contributes to strengthening one's self-efficacy as each teacher confirmed

that they personally felt responsible to their learners. Each teacher felt the need to provide a

lesson that aligned with the curriculum and corresponded with the wants and needs of their

learners. A student-focused approach, or in other words, an approach that caters to the needs,

wants, and abilities of the learners and that gets them to make decisions in regard to their

learning, has been shown to strengthen teachers' efficacy beliefs (Cao et al., 2018). Not only

that, but they seem to have a reciprocal relationship (Cao et al., 2018). In conclusion, the

curriculum, resources, and materials are aspects that can impact teachers' efficacy beliefs both

positively and negatively. It could be that in combination with other attributes and skills, such as

language proficiency and experience in materials development as well as a number of other factors, the curriculum, resources, and materials could impact English language teachers in a positive way.

5.5 Collective teacher efficacy, administration, and work environment

In this study, it was found that collective teacher efficacy, the administration, and the work environment are factors that impact self-efficacy beliefs of English language teachers in the ESL context. Teachers need a supportive administration to feel capable of overcoming the workload and other stress factors and challenges. This aspect was commented on by teachers with many years of experience (20+ years) and teachers who are still in the beginning stages of their career (5 years of experience); hence, this is an essential component to an effective workplace and a factor to affect English language teachers' efficacy beliefs. Research has shown that principals, or the administration that is in charge of leading the program, impact teachers in several ways. Teachers excel when principals show professional respect, provide acknowledgement and encouragement, provide appropriate protection when needed, make sure that teacher voices are heard, and communicate vision (Lambersky, 2016). Many of these factors were discussed by the teachers in this study. Also, this is significant as all of these factors impact one's emotional state, and teachers' emotional state plays a key role in teacher performance (Lambersky, 2016), and teacher performance or teaching behaviours have been shown to impact self-efficacy beliefs (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Research has also shown that a supportive work environment and teacher autonomy are positively linked to teachers' teaching self-concept and their job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017a). Considering all of this, school administration or the school leadership should take extra effort into building a strong collective

teacher efficacy and culture at school as the various aspects of collective teacher efficacy impact each other in a reciprocal way (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2021); for example, it has been reported that seeing others succeed as a result of common effort can create trust and willingness to help and support each other, and this, in turn, increases their readiness and willingness to establish common goals and values (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2021). Furthermore, common goals and values add to the teachers' want and motivation for collaboration and has an influence on the teachers' social interactions (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2021). It is important that administration cultivates a supportive work environment where teachers can depend on the administration for support. It should also encourage cooperative and supportive interactions among teachers as well.

5.6 Teaching online

Teaching online is becoming more and more common and a normal method of teaching and learning. During the COVID-19 pandemic, teaching online became a necessity and for the most part the only possible way to accommodate and continue teaching and learning. Teaching online takes a lot of flexibility and adaptability from the teachers' end as they are forced to take on all these new challenges, which include learning how to utilise the new learning platforms, developing or transforming teaching material to be conducive to that learning environment, as well as keeping learners both engaged and motivated. All this, without a doubt, calls for increased levels of resilience and efforts from the teachers (Bao et al., 2021). Teaching online, especially during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, has been shown to affect passion burnout of teachers' teaching online self-efficacy (Ma et al., 2021) and compassion fatigue (Yang, 2021), which would seem to affect teaching behaviour and teacher performance as well. This could be overcome, at least to a certain extent, if teachers are provided support in tackling these new

challenges. Research has shown that teachers who had support activities, trainings, and professional development opportunities have a higher online teaching efficacy (Baroudi & Shaya, 2022; Menabo et al., 2021; Richter & Idleman, 2017). Teachers need support in the form of professional development opportunities and trainings in order to relieve them of a certain number of challenges that they face with teaching online.

Chapter 6 – Conclusions

Limitations

It is important to consider the limitations of the study. The study was conducted completely online, which could impact the results and what could have been discovered and disclosed in in-person classes. The study was also conducted during COVID-19 lockdowns, which, again, could impact teachers' willingness to participate in research. In addition, all the teachers who took part in this study were all highly proficient and confident in their teaching abilities (and note, this could've had an influence in their willingness to take part in this study), which impacts the results of the study. Additionally, none of the teachers were novice teachers. It would've been interesting and beneficial to hear the perspectives of novice teachers so as to make a comparison between teachers in different periods of their careers and to find out what aspects impact their self-efficacy. Furthermore, the study was quite small as there were only five participants; this makes it difficult to generalize. However, research is a process of inquiry and processes of inquiry are not always dependent on generalizations, whereas they are dependent on providing understanding (Thomas, 2017).

Implications

We believe this study provides valuable insights for curriculum developers, administrators, and materials and resources developers. From the results of this study, it could be concluded that there is a need for more material and resources that align with the expectations of the curriculum in the ESL context. Resources and materials developers can look at what the needs of the teachers are and specifically work on these items. This could take away some of the time that teachers invest in materials development and possibly decrease the aspect of teacher

burnout and, in turn, increase their job satisfaction. Additionally, there's a need for more trainings and professional development opportunities to learn new methods of teaching so that teachers are up to date on new methodologies and are more prepared to take on any new and required challenges such as teaching online. Additionally, in any way that teachers are expected to fulfill their teaching task, be it either online or in-person, administration should take extra efforts to make sure the atmosphere and work culture promotes a sense of support. Overall, this study provides an understanding of the factors that affect an English language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in the ESL context and the ways in which they affect them, which provides insight on what can be done to lessen or remove issues and challenges that English language teachers may face.

Future Research

There are a few directions for further research presented in this study. Looking into the question of teacher self-concept in relation to self-efficacy beliefs could shed more light on how self-efficacy beliefs are formed. It could also help to make a comparison between teachers' behaviours and performance and their beliefs. Also, more participants and observations that compare teachers' beliefs and teaching behaviours could provide a more complete and well-rounded understanding of language instruction in the ESL context. Furthermore, the ESL context is still not as researched as the EFL context, and this is only one program in the ESL context. Taking a look at the other programs offered in the ESL context can provide a more thorough and complete understanding of the ESL context as the expectations and needs of the teachers are different; thus, factors that affect self-efficacy beliefs are as well. This would help to make a comparison and to establish more prominent the factors impacting self-efficacy beliefs of

English language teachers in the ESL context. All of this, in turn, would help develop the fields of language teaching and teacher self-efficacy beliefs further.

Conclusion

The findings of this study point to language proficiency, the curriculum and resources, the administration and collective teacher efficacy, and teaching online as the main factors impacting English language teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in the ESL context. Teachers consider language proficiency as a main attribute of a successful English language teacher, and this affects their perceptions of professional legitimacy. Language is interrelated with culture, and teachers should possess language abilities and a command of English that allows them to transfer cultural knowledge to their learners. Furthermore, the curriculum and resources also play a role in affecting teachers' efficacy beliefs both positively and negatively. Due to the requirements and expectations of the curriculum, teachers have a limited number of readily available materials and resources to use. This forces them to spend uncompensated hours creating and developing materials, which can contribute to teacher burnout and, in turn, impact their job satisfaction. However, the flexibility, openness, and adaptability of the curriculum provides teachers the opportunity to be autonomous and encourages a sense of responsibility for the learning process. This autonomy and responsibility towards the learning process can impact them in a positive way. Teachers also need a supportive work environment; administration needs to provide and encourage a supportive work environment. This could encourage teachers to have supportive and cooperative interactions as well. Lastly, teachers are impacted by teaching online since it forces them to change and adapt to new and different circumstances. They are required to take on a

number of new challenges as well as change their understandings and beliefs on the process of

teaching and learning and what they are capable of doing and achieving professionally.

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Appendix A

First interview questions:

1. Can you describe your path to becoming an English as a second language teacher? How did you become an English as a second language teacher?

2. What characteristics, qualities, and abilities does a language teacher need to be considered an effective language teacher?

3. What variables in your context impact your efficacy beliefs? How do they impact your efficacy beliefs?

4. What CLB level do you prefer to teach? Why?

5. Do your language abilities allow you to teach a wide range of topics, etc.? Do your language abilities prevent you from teaching something (e.g., grammar, a specific topic, etc.)? Do you have a preference of what or how you teach based on your language abilities?

6. Did you complete a preparatory language teacher program? If yes, how was the experience? Was it helpful? What was the most helpful part of the program?

7. How long have you been teaching? Have you felt confident throughout your whole teaching career? Were there certain experiences that either strengthened or diminished your confidence in your teaching abilities?

8. What teaching materials or resources do you have available? What resources do you use in your classroom? In your opinion, do you feel that it creates a more effective language learning experience? Does it make you feel more efficacious?

9. Do you feel confident in implementing the curriculum expectations into your teaching? Do you feel the curriculum aligns with the wants and needs of the learners? Do you develop material for your class?

10. What is the teaching atmosphere like (e.g., in the classroom, the school, colleagues, administration, etc.)? Does it affect your teaching in any way? Does it impact your confidence as a teacher? How do your working conditions (e.g., type of contract, etc.) affect your teaching efficacy?

11. Are there any other factors that shape your efficacy beliefs? Are there other factors, outside the school context, that shape your efficacy beliefs?

12. How has COVID-19 affected your teaching efficacy?

Appendix B

Second interview questions:

1. On a scale of 1 – 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest), where do you position your confidence in your teaching abilities?

2. What factors strengthen/boost your confidence?

3. What factors limit/reduce/diminish your confidence?

4. What task are you most confident in teaching? What skill/task are you most confident in teaching? Why? What skill/task are you least confident in teaching? Why? Can you tell me about an experience? Can you give me an example?

5. What role does language proficiency have in your confidence in teaching (teaching efficacy)?

6. Tell me about your teacher education program. What kind of TESL/TESOL program did you complete? If you want to reflect on that experience, what was the role of that teacher education program? What content/experience/class/person impacted your confidence in teaching? What was the role of the teacher education program in your teaching efficacy? Were there any aspects of the program you found useful or helpful? Has any aspect/part of the program influenced your teaching in any way?

7. How long have you been teaching? Have you felt confident in your teaching abilities throughout your whole teaching career? Has your confidence in your teaching fluctuated over time? Has it remained stable over time? Why did it fluctuate/remain stable over time? In which ways has the number of years that you've been working as an English language teacher impacted your confidence in your teaching abilities? Can you tell me about an experience that either strengthened or diminished your teaching efficacy?

8. What's the role of the curriculum you have to follow in impacting your teaching confidence? Do you have to create/develop your own materials and resources? Does this impact your confidence? In what ways?

9. What's the role of your type of position (e.g., contract/stability in contract, etc.) in your level of confidence in the classroom?

10. What's the role of the work environment in your teaching confidence? How do your colleagues and administration affect you? In what ways?

11. How did teaching online impact your confidence in your teaching ability? Are you more confident? Are you less confident? Why? How do you feel using the online platforms? How does it impact your confidence?

12. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your confidence in teaching? If so, how?

Date: 16 December 2021

To: Dr. Farahnaz Faez

Project ID: 119936

Study Title: Exploring Factors That Affect English Language Teachers' Self-Efficacy Beliefs in the English as a Second Language Context

Short Title: Factors Affecting English Language Teachers' Self-Efficacy Beliefs in the ESL Context

Application Type: NMREB Initial Application

Review Type: Delegated

Full Board Reporting Date: January 14 2022

Date Approval Issued: 16/Dec/2021 14:03

REB Approval Expiry Date: 16/Dec/2022

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Dear Dr. Farahnaz Faez

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the WREM application form for the above mentioned study, as of the date noted above. NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the expiry date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

This research study is to be conducted by the investigator noted above. **All other required institutional approvals and mandated training must also be obtained prior to the conduct of the study.**

Documents Approved:

Document Name	Document Type	Document Date	Document Version
Interview Guide	Interview Guide	27/Sep/2021	
Observation Guide	Non-Participant Observation Guide	17/Nov/2021	1
Email Script	Recruitment Materials	17/Nov/2021	2
Letter of Information and Consent form	Written Consent/Assent	17/Nov/2021	2

No deviations from, or changes to the protocol should be initiated without prior written approval from the NMREB, except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazard(s) to study participants or when the change(s) involves only administrative or logistical aspects of the trial.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB. The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Kelly Patterson , Research Ethics Officer on behalf of Dr. Randal Graham, NMREB Chair

Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system that is compliant with all regulations).