



WHO SHOULD TEACH ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS: PRE-SERVICE CLASSROOM TEACHERS' VOICES

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate pre-service classroom teachers' beliefs about teaching English to young learners and a recently initiated course in 2021 named "Foreign Language Teaching in Primary Schools" in the initial classroom teacher education programmes in Turkey. More specifically, it explored to what extent this course was efficient to prepare them to teach English for their future careers. Adopting a mixed-method research design, the data were collected through a questionnaire (N=128) and follow-up semi-structured interviews (N=8). The findings revealed that professional English teachers were best placed to teach English to children for several reasons, including subject teachers' high level of expertise in teaching English and participants' low self-reported English proficiency level (A1-A2). However, participants mostly reported both in the quantitative and qualitative parts that this course had a considerable impact on their confidence to teach English at the primary level since they were familiar with various teaching techniques and activities to use for each language point in the curriculum. A number of implications are provided in the light of findings for a better implementation of English education in primary schools.

Keywords: Teaching English to young learners, Pre-service classroom teachers, Teacher education, Teacher language proficiency.

Çocuklara İngilizce'yi Kim Öğretmeli: Sınıf Öğretmeni Adaylarının Görüşleri

Öz

Bu çalışma, sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının ilkökul öğrencilerine İngilizce öğretilmesine ve Türkiye'deki üniversitelerdeki temel eğitim programlarında 2021 yılında başlatılan "İlkokullarda Yabancı Dil Öğretimi" adlı derse yönelik görüşlerini araştırmayı amaçlamıştır. Daha spesifik olarak, bu dersin onların gelecekteki kariyerlerinde İngilizce öğretmeye hazırlanmaları açısından ne ölçüde etkili olduğu araştırılmıştır. Karma yöntemli bir araştırma tasarımı benimsenen veriler, bir anket (N=128) ve takip eden yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler (N=8) aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Bulgular, İngilizce branş öğretmenlerinin İngilizce öğretmedeki uzmanlık düzeyi ve katılımcıların ankette kendilerinin bildirdiği düşük İngilizce yeterlilik düzeyi (A1-A2) gibi çeşitli nedenlerden dolayı profesyonel İngilizce öğretmenlerinin çocuklara İngilizce öğretmek için en iyi konumda olduklarını ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, katılımcılar çoğunlukla hem niceliksel hem de niteliksel bölümlerde, müfredattaki her bir konuda kullanılabilecek çeşitli öğretim teknikleri ve etkinliklere aşina oldukları için bu dersin ilkökul düzeyinde İngilizce öğretme konusunda kendilerine olan güvenleri üzerinde önemli bir etkiye sahip olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Elde edilen bulgular ışığında ilkökullarda İngilizce eğitiminin daha iyi ve etkili uygulanmasına yönelik birtakım tavsiyeler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Çocuklara İngilizce öğretimi, Sınıf öğretmeni adayları, Öğretmen eğitimi, Öğretmen dil yeterliliği.

1. Introduction

The profession of teaching English to young learners (TEYL) has grown recently in line with the position of English as a lingua franca in today's world. Parents increasingly want their children to learn English at a young age so that they can become competent users in the competitive world.

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Educational policies follow this trend, as schools introduce English at the primary or even nursery level (Andrews, 2003). In Turkey, for instance, the age of introduction to English at primary level was lowered to seven (2nd grade) in 2006 (Kirkgoz et al., 2016) despite Turkey's being a modest time context (only two hours per week) (Garton & Tekin, 2022). In line with this, there is a high demand for professional English teachers in a short time, and teacher education becomes critical to ensure teachers' possession of functional English language skills and professional knowledge to teach English effectively.

However, despite the importance of English language teaching to young learners (YLS) due to fundamental differences between teaching adults and children (Garton & Tekin, 2022; Moon, 2005; Pinter, 2017), it is commonly reported that a significant number of teachers lack appropriate qualifications across the world (Richards, 2017). According to Young et al. (2014), what is meant by qualification is sufficient language proficiency level and subject knowledge. While the former refers to knowledge of language, the latter is related to knowledge about language. These components are improved during pre-service and in-service training to ensure effective teaching by teachers.

The high demand for English teachers has led to a problem of professional English teacher shortage across the world (Andrews, 2003; Emery, 2012). Turkey is not an exception to this problem. In order to overcome this challenge, the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Turkey allows classroom teachers to teach English in primary schools that do not employ professional subject teachers. This move was also complemented by the Council of Higher Education (CHE) which initiated a new course at classroom teacher training departments named "Foreign Language Teaching in Primary Schools" for the final-year pre-service classroom teachers in 2021. By doing so, CHE aims to familiarise classroom teacher candidates with English teaching techniques, contents of the English curriculum in primary schools, and age-appropriate activities (CHE, 2021). However, this sparks a debate regarding the sufficiency of this course and the quality of teaching English, ranging from teacher language use (Tekin & Garton, 2020) to teacher competency (Richards, 2017). Teaching English is considerably different from teaching other school subjects such as mathematics since the language used by the teacher during teaching is both the content of the lesson and the means of teaching that content (Freeman, 2016). In this regard, teachers who are supposed to teach English need to have a certain level of knowledge of content, and pre-service teacher education programmes have an important role in preparing teacher candidates in line with these requirements.

This study bases the justification for this investigation on the necessary skills for language teachers and aims to examine pre-service classroom teachers' views about TEYL and the Foreign Language Teaching in Primary Schools course, as they are intended to work at the primary level and teach English. Since this course was recently initiated by CHE in the classroom teacher education programmes in the fall term of 2021, this study could be regarded as novel, investigating it from classroom teacher candidates' viewpoints promptly.

2. Literature Review

The role of teacher language proficiency in teaching English

Several scholars argue that language proficiency has an important role in the effectiveness of teaching. According to Butler (2004), for example, several aspects of teaching English are affected by teachers' language proficiency such as pedagogical abilities, lesson content, motivation of students, and level of students' achievement in English. Richards (2017) also argues that it is a determinant factor in teachers' language use, namely, how much English (in case of necessity) to use whilst teaching English. Low English proficiency might lead teachers to use the first language (L1) excessively, which in turn might affect the target language (L2) learning process adversely (Young et al., 2014). Teachers' language choice (L1/L2) with young learners is a matter of discussion in the field of language education

particularly due to children's amount of exposure to L2 (Garton & Tekin, 2022; Tekin & Garton, 2020). Moreover, according to Murdoch (1994), there is a positive relationship between language proficiency and professional confidence in that a higher proficiency means a higher confidence. It indicates that language proficiency and teachers' confidence are closely related to each other.

Considering the important impact of language proficiency on language education in terms of many aspects, including self-confidence, effective language use, and students' achievement level, it could be argued that teachers' language proficiency is not an ignorable issue to maintain effective language education. The views summarised above are also supported by empirical evidence that was carried out in various contexts.

Previous Studies

There are several empirical studies examining teachers' level of language proficiency. For example, inadequate language proficiency was one of the important challenges found in the Indonesian context (Songbatumis, 2017). Participant teachers emphasised in this study that their motivation and confidence were adversely affected, as they viewed their proficiency as too insufficient to teach English. Investigating the proficiency level of classroom teachers teaching English in Korea, Taiwan, and Japan, Butler (2004) similarly found that teachers' English proficiency was far lower than the minimum level for teaching. The situation in Thailand is even worse, as the English test scores of students in a national exam were far lower than expectations, and teachers' inadequate language proficiency was regarded as one of the main reasons for this. It is not a regional issue that is specific to particular contexts, but a common issue across the world, according to a global British Council-funded study conducted by Emery (2012) which revealed that teachers' language proficiency is not adequate to efficiently teach English to children. One interesting finding in this study was related to initial teacher education. It was stated that there are a great number of teachers who are not specifically trained to teach English, but they are expected to do so probably due to a shortage of professional subject teachers. Unfortunately, it could have adverse effects on students' learning. As for the solution to this issue, Emery (2012) highlighted the necessity of support for teachers experiencing language problems, the importance of recruitment of professional English teachers rather than other subject teachers, and the arrangement of professional development training activities. In this way, it could be possible to pursue excellence in TEYL.

There is also some evidence showing that teachers teaching English at primary schools are not specialised English teachers (Chodijah, 2008; Enever et al., 2009; Wang, 2009). The common drawback arising from this situation is teachers' lack of proficiency level. Teachers with insufficient proficiency level are more inclined to use students' L1 and hence it causes the danger of L1 being the preferred strategy (Enever et al., 2009). A similar argument is also voiced by Wang (2009) who emphasises the necessity of the improvement of teachers' proficiency level, as it considerably affects teachers' effectiveness in teaching negatively. Although in-service training is important to ensure quality English education, initial teacher training is particularly emphasised by several scholars, as teacher candidates lack previous experience in teaching (Enever et al., 2009; Garton et al., 2011; Papp, 2011). However, many countries merely offer basic training to teacher candidates and expect them to teach English at high standards (Enever et al., 2009). According to Cameron (2001), this could be due to two common misconceptions in TEYL. Firstly, TEYL is conceived as an easy responsibility that can be done by anyone with basic training, and secondly, language points taught at the primary level are easy, so a high level of proficiency is not necessary. However, contrary to these misconceptions, TEYL is regarded as an important sub-field of English education and increasingly gaining popularity across the world (Garton & Tekin, 2022). For this reason, TEYL teacher education could be argued to be crucial for this age group.

Considering the importance of initial teacher education, the current study aims to examine pre-service teachers' beliefs about TEYL and to what extent they are confident with TEYL. Moreover, it investigates the role of Foreign Language Teaching in Primary Schools course in preparing them to teach English to children. To this end, the following research questions (RQs) have emerged.

1. What are pre-service classroom teachers' beliefs about teaching English to YLs?
2. To what extent are pre-service classroom teachers confident about TEYL?
3. How effective is the Foreign Language Teaching in Primary Schools course to prepare pre-service class teachers for TEYL?

Methods

3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-method research design which is a strategically and intentionally integrated form of quantitative and qualitative methods (Brown, 2014). The former is helpful to quantify the issue, produce numerical data, and convert it into statistics, while the latter enables researchers to go deeper and understand underlying reasons and thoughts with the help of prompts and elaboration (Dörnyei, 2007). By utilising a mixed method design, this study increases the strengths and minimises the weaknesses of each method (Creswell et al., 2011). More specifically, mixed method research design is utilised through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

3.2. Participants

This study employed a convenience sampling method which is a specific type of non-probability sampling (Dörnyei, 2007; Silverman, 2013). The prospective participants meeting certain criteria (4th-grade classroom teaching and taking the Foreign Language Teaching in Primary Schools course) were approached, and the volunteers took part in the study. For the questionnaire part, participants of the study included 128 4th-grade pre-service teachers majoring in classroom teaching and interviews were carried out with eight of them. Participants' ages ranged from 20 to 24 and female participants outnumbered the males (96 vs. 32, respectively). Their self-reported English proficiency level was highly fluctuating, ranging from A1 (29%) to C1 (3%). Approximately half of them were in A2 level (42%). A summary of demographic information of participants is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Demographic information of participants

Gender		Age					Self-Perceived English Level (CEFR)					
<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>A1</u>	<u>A2</u>	<u>B1</u>	<u>B2</u>	<u>C1</u>	<u>C2</u>
32	96	13	48	42	11	14	37	54	29	4	4	0
(25%)	(75%)	(10%)	(38%)	(33%)	(9%)	(11%)	(29%)	(42%)	(23%)	(3%)	(3%)	(0%)
Total: 128												

3.3. Data Collection Tools and Procedures

Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews in a sequential route. Each tool and its procedure are explained below.

3.3.1. Questionnaires

The prospective participants who met the criteria, namely, studying final year of classroom teaching and taking the Foreign Language Teaching in Primary Schools course, were invited to take part in the study. The questionnaire was applied online through Google Forms during the fall term of 2022. In order to ensure a high level of comprehension for participants, it was administered in Turkish. It included two sections and 16 items that were prepared by the researcher depending on the related literature. The first section aimed to collect demographic information such as gender and their self-perceived English proficiency level. The second section was constructed on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree) and focused on several points, including participants' level of perceived self-confidence in TEYL, their experiences with the Foreign Language Teaching in Primary Schools course and its effectiveness to prepare them to teach English, knowledge about teaching specific English skills to children, knowledge about teaching techniques in TEYL, beliefs about whether classroom/English subject teachers should teach English to children, and so on. The items were statements such as "I am confident about teaching English in primary schools" and "I can teach English vocabulary to children successfully". Participants were asked to decide on these statements by choosing one of five options.

3.3.2. Interviews

The study also utilised follow-up interviews which are regarded as "a good way to mine attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of self-disclosing respondents" (Talmy & Richards, 2011, p. 2). The interviews were in semi-structured style, and the questions were built on the questionnaire results. The interview questions mainly aimed to lead participants to elaborate on several issues, including in what aspects the Foreign Language Teaching in Primary Schools course was useful, why subject teachers should teach English, opinions about TEYL, and so on. Considering the participants' low proficiency level, which was revealed from the questionnaire results, participants were offered to choose either English or Turkish to do interviews. In line with their choices, interviews were carried out in Turkish with eight participants individually.

3.4. Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire were analysed using Excel 2013. First, they were checked to see if there were any errors or missing information. Then, descriptive statistics were calculated, including frequency, mean, median, and percentage to find the results related to each research question. Regarding the analysis of interviews, this study utilised the Framework approach which is regarded as a useful procedure for thematic analysis (Bryman, 2012). In this approach, certain steps are followed to create main and sub-themes to achieve a synthesis of the interpretation of the data (Ritchie et al., 2003). Interviews were first translated into English through non-literal translation rather than word-to-word translation to achieve conceptual equivalence between the two languages (Choi et al., 2012). This was followed by the main analysis conducted through NVivo 12 to identify the themes and coding. In this way, key characteristics of the findings were visualised, and interpretation and explanation of the data were achieved.

3.5. Research Ethics

Research ethics was paramount in every stage of this study. Ethics permission was obtained from the related university dated 20.09.2022 and numbered 2100131467. Participants were treated responsibly and in line with ethical considerations, and sufficient information was provided regarding

the voluntary nature of participation and withdrawal from the study without their legal rights being affected. There was no conflict of interest between the researcher and participants.

4. Findings

The findings are presented in line with the RQs under the relevant titles which are pre-service teachers' beliefs about and confidence in teaching English to children as well as the effectiveness of the Foreign Language Teaching in Primary Schools course. Each theme is explained below successively.

4.1. Beliefs about TEYL

The first RQ was concerned with the participants' beliefs about TEYL. The findings revealed that a great number of participants (85%) agreed or strongly agreed with the idea of TEYL by professional English teachers rather than classroom teachers. While none of the participants strongly disagreed, a small number of them disagreed with it (3%). The relevant findings suggest that the majority of participants were in favour of the idea of English being taught to children by English teachers professionally. An overview of the relevant data is provided in Figure 1 below.

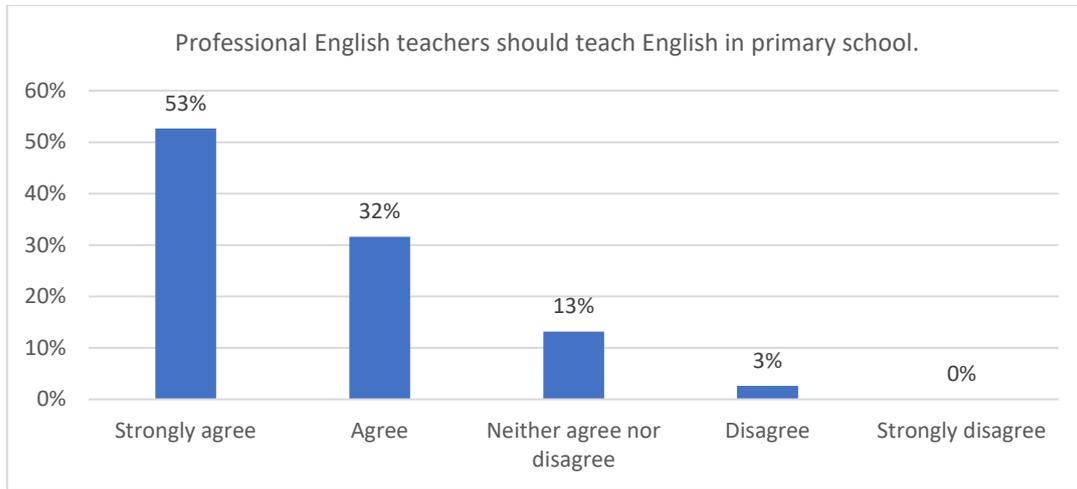


Figure 1. Pre-service classroom teachers' beliefs about TEYL

The abovementioned findings were elaborated by the participants who stated several reasons in the interview. The most common issue that emerged from participants' answers was related to the level of English proficiency. The participants stated that their language level was not sufficient enough to teach English to children. One participant expressed her opinions as follows.

Classroom teachers might not be proficient enough to teach English. Children meet English for the first time in their lives and there could occur major problems if teachers teach wrong pronunciation or use inefficient teaching techniques. Thus, I believe that it is ideal for English teachers to teach English in primary schools.

The above response highlights the importance of a high proficiency level to teach English to children correctly, particularly in terms of pronunciation. It is particularly important for small children since it is mostly their first time to learn English at the primary level. A high proficiency level was also expressed by another who highlighted the professionalism of English teachers in this field.

Considering the importance of English in today's world, I think that it would be much more efficient if English could be taught by professional teachers who are experts in this field.

In line with other responses, another participant argued that they were not proficient enough to teach English and compared themselves with professional English teachers.

Compared to professional English teachers, I feel insufficient. We lack in theory of language teaching and this highly likely affects English teaching adversely.

Participants' arguments were also in line with the findings about their proficiency level. As previously mentioned, approximately three third of participants (71%) regarded their English level as A1 or A2. While 27% were B1 or B2, only one participant viewed herself as C1. The findings show that none of the participants were C2 in this study. Participants' low proficiency level is shown in Figure 2 below.

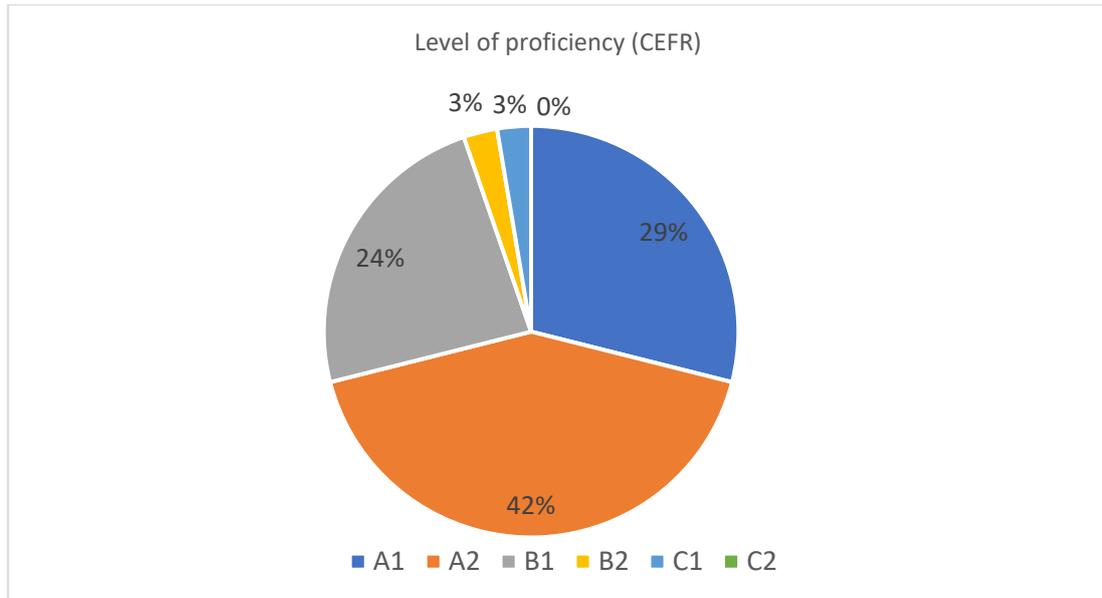


Figure 2. Level of proficiency

4.2. Confidence in TEYL

In response to the question regarding the sufficiency of their English proficiency level for teaching English in primary schools, participants had mixed opinions. According to the results, relatively fewer than half of the participants strongly argued or argued that they are proficient enough for TEYL (45%), while 29% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Considering the English level mentioned in the previous section (A1-A2: 71%), one could argue that the number of participants viewing themselves as proficient for TEYL raises a number of questions about the minimum/ideal English level for TEYL. Moreover, almost one-fourth were not sure about the sufficiency of their English level for TEYL. Probably the most striking point regarding these results is that a great majority of participants did not have opinions at two extreme ends (strongly agree: 11% and strongly disagree: 8%) but responded more mildly by agreeing, disagreeing, or being indecisive. An overview of the figures is shown in Figure 3 below.

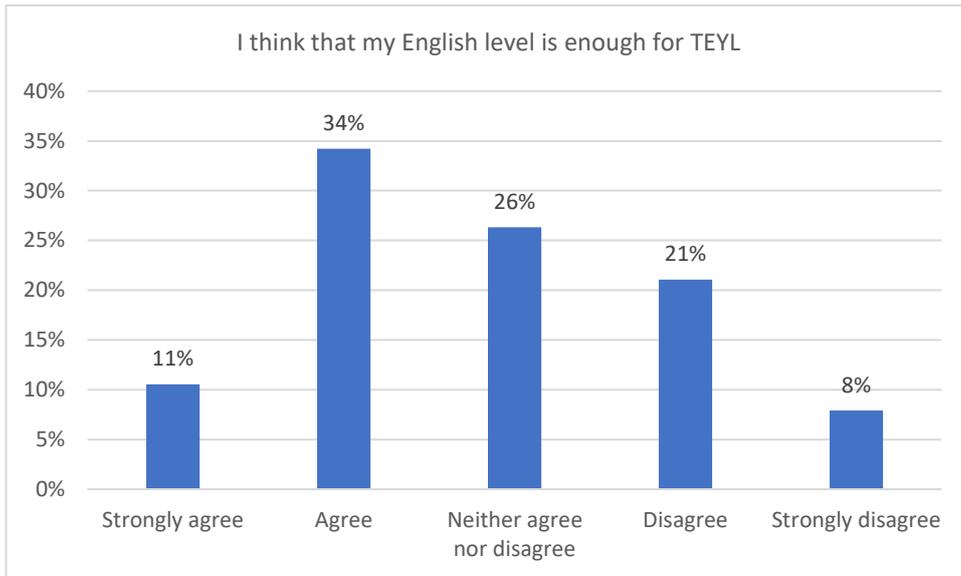


Figure 3. *Sufficiency of English level for TEYL*

The results show that the mixed figures in the sufficiency of English level are more coherent in terms of confidence in TEYL. As shown in Figure 4 below, 63% of the participants had confidence in TEYL to varying degrees, while only 5% were unconfident. Approximately one-third were not sure or did not want to answer this question.

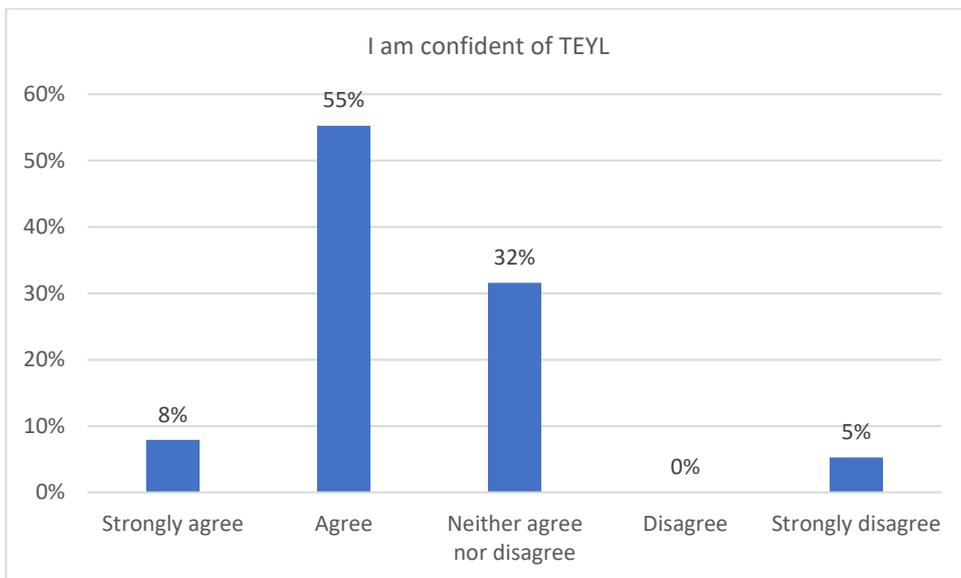


Figure 4. *Participants' confidence in TEYL*

A possible explanation for the high rate of answers for neither agree nor disagree could be provided using some participants' responses in the interviews.

In case of a lack of professional English teachers, I can teach English, but I do not think that I am as much equipped and knowledgeable as them. Therefore, it would be much better for children to learn from subject teachers.

It could be understood from the above quote that TEYL is not a desirable option for the participant who states that it is manageable for them in schools that do not have professional English

teachers. This idea was shared by many other participants who held positive opinions about TEYL by classroom teachers only if they were required to. Otherwise, the dominant idea was that professional English teachers were best placed to teach English to children.

4.3. Effectiveness of the Foreign Language Teaching in Primary Schools Course

Participants were also asked about the effectiveness of the course, and they all stated a favourable opinion about it. Although they were mostly unwilling to teach English to children, they either strongly agreed (69%) or agreed (31%) with the effectiveness of the course. In other words, the course was beneficial to all participants to varying degrees (Figure 5).

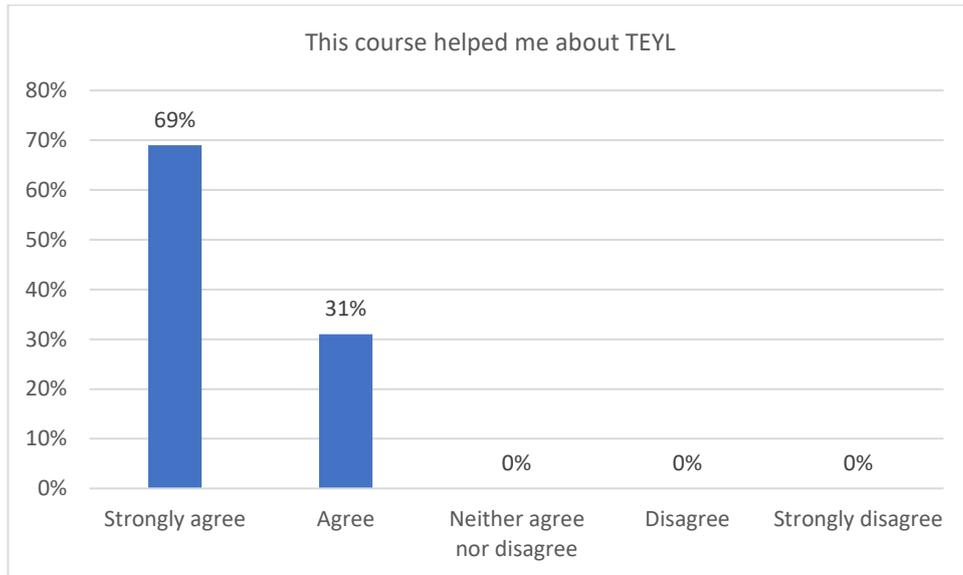


Figure 5. Effectiveness of the Foreign Language Teaching in Primary Schools Course

The interviews provided participants with an opportunity to elaborate on their responses regarding in what ways the course helped them improve. One participant stated that the course was useful in terms of gaining knowledge on age-appropriate materials.

I have seen a number of materials and visual examples about teaching English to children and this has helped me a lot.

In line with this, another participant highlighted the role of microteaching in terms of broadening their horizon and giving new ideas to teach other topics.

I now have extensive knowledge of what to do in an English class and how to do it. What we have done in the activities so far has helped me build on previous activities and design new ones.

A much more detailed response was given by another participant who pointed out planning enjoyable activities that would lead children to develop positive attitudes towards English.

This course helped me learn how to teach English to children, what methods and techniques to use, what to do in order not to bore children, and how to behave to manage effective teaching and learning. I believe I will be able to put this knowledge into practice effectively.

In line with the results presented so far, findings indicate that the course helped participants learn to teach specific language skills. More than half of the participants strongly agreed or agreed that

they could successfully teach vocabulary to children (86%). This proportion relatively decreased depending on different skills, including writing (76%), listening (72%), speaking (66%), and reading (59%). This difference could stem from the way of teaching vocabulary, which is regarded as a common practice considering the young age and language level of children. Regarding the level of knowledge on teaching techniques for TEYL, the findings indicate mixed results. As shown in Figure 6 below, a great majority of participants (83%) stated that they have a certain level of knowledge on how to teach English, while only 3% stated that they did not know any teaching methods. 14% of them were not sure or did not state any specific opinion about this.

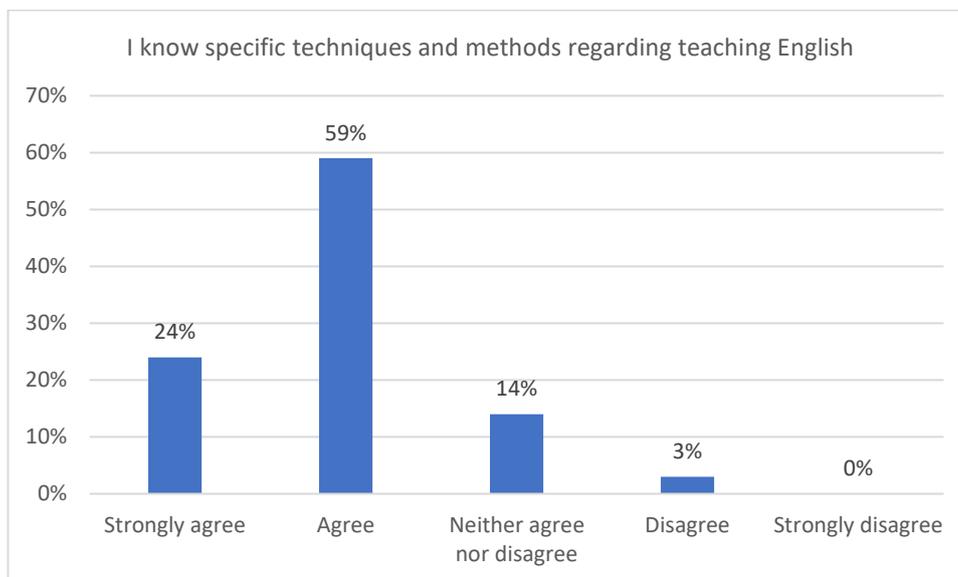


Figure 6. Knowledge of teaching techniques

Discussion, Conclusion, and Implications

This study aimed to investigate pre-service classroom teachers' beliefs about and confidence in TEYL as well as the effectiveness of the Foreign Language Teaching in Primary Schools course that was designed to prepare them to teach English. The findings revealed that a great majority of participants were in favour of English classes being taught by professional teachers rather than classroom teachers. The main reason for this finding could be the low English proficiency level of participants who were mostly in A1 or A2, and this could be regarded as insufficient for effective language teaching (Young et al., 2014). A similar finding was also found in Butler (2004) which revealed that classroom teachers in Korea, Taiwan, and Japan perceived their proficiency level as lower than the minimum level they thought necessary for TEYL. Although teachers do not have to possess a native-like proficiency (Nunan, 2003), they are supposed to have a certain level of English that could allow them to teach English effectively and become role model for students (Richards, 2017). In this regard, participants' English proficiency level could be argued to be problematic and needs to be taken seriously before they are allowed to teach English in primary schools. Otherwise, as Butler (2004) argues, it is highly likely that it will adversely affect several aspects of teaching English such as confidence, pedagogical abilities, lesson content, motivation of students, and level of students' achievement in English.

Despite the existing body of literature that argues the necessity of a certain level of proficiency for TEYL (e.g., Chodijah, 2008; Emery, 2012; Enever et al., 2009; Wang, 2009), findings showed that a relatively high number of participants believed that their proficiency level was sufficient to teach English. This finding could be interpreted as that teachers believed that they did not need to have a high level of English for participants. It was quite in line with the level of their confidence in English.

Approximately two-thirds of participants were confident enough to teach English. It could be argued that participants' views are controversial considering the counterarguments existing in the literature (Emery, 2012; Murdoch, 1994; Wang, 2009). According to Murdoch (1994), professional confidence correlates with proficiency level; however, the findings of this study do not support this view. It could be due to participants' lack of knowledge about the minimum required language level to teach English to children effectively. The effectiveness of the course probably played some role in building their confidence at this point. Alternatively, they might believe that TEYL is manageable for them, as the contents are designed for beginner-level children and hence simple. If this is the case, it is against Richards's (2017) argument of the necessity of appropriate qualifications to teach English. It is also closely related to Cameron's (2001) argument about the presence of misconception which suggests that a high level of English proficiency is not needed to teach English to children.

As for the effectiveness of the Foreign Language Teaching in Primary Schools course, the findings showed that all participants found it useful for their future teaching, particularly in terms of providing materials and visuals, age-appropriate activities, presenting teaching methods and techniques, giving information about practical implications along with theoretical aspects, and so on. It seems that the contents of the course and how it was delivered were satisfying for participants to get prepared for TEYL. However, considering the important characteristics of TEYL in terms of language use and content knowledge (Cameron, 2001; Garton & Tekin, 2022; Pinter, 2017), it would be too optimistic to view this course as sufficient to efficiently prepare classroom teachers for TEYL. Instead, it could be regarded as basic training that is also implemented in many countries (Cameron, 2001; Emery, 2012; Enever et al., 2009). In order to maintain excellence in TEYL, it is necessary to go beyond this and provide more comprehensive training for those who intend to teach English at the primary level.

This study investigated pre-service teachers' views about TEYL and the Foreign Language Teaching in Primary Schools course that is offered in classroom teacher training programmes. Since Foreign Language Teaching in Primary Schools is a recently initiated course in higher education, this study is a novel, examining pre-service teachers who first took this course. However, this study was carried out only with pre-service classroom teachers in one context and hence it cannot be generalised to other settings. For this reason, future research is invited to examine this issue from various aspects and stakeholders such as children, school principals, in-service classroom teachers, and professional English teachers working in primary schools.

5.1. Implications

Considering the findings discussed so far, several pedagogical implications regarding teaching English to children could be drawn. First, in line with participants' beliefs, professional English teachers are best placed to teach English in primary schools. Unlike pre-service classroom teachers who only take one course related to teaching English, they are specifically trained to teach English over the course of a four-year bachelor's degree period. In this regard, it would be more sensible to employ a sufficient number of English teachers in primary schools to achieve an effective teaching and learning environment.

If it is practically unlikely, pre-service teachers should be provided with English courses so that they can improve their language proficiency level. This should be carried out prior to taking the Foreign Language Teaching in Primary Schools course for them to have a certain level of readiness. In this way, they could have a higher confidence level. As Butler (2004) suggests, this could be achieved with a serious systematic needs analysis to determine what they need and what to offer in terms of language skills.

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