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The Factors Affecting Teacher Efficacy Perceptions of Turkish Pre-Service English Language Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The construct of teacher efficacy is considered to be one of the factors that have an effect on beliefs, judgements and practices of teachers as well as performances of students in an educational process. With the aim of exploring the factors affecting teacher efficacy perceptions of pre-service teachers, the present study used a mixed methods design, and collected the relevant data from 113 participants majoring in ELT at a state university in Turkey. The analysis of the data yielded a moderate level of overall perceived teacher efficacy in the sample, and the findings of the focus group interviews with 22 participants revealed four main factors that affected the development of teacher efficacy perceptions either positively or negatively: ELT education, practicum experiences, perceived language proficiency, and affective states, out of which practicum experiences had the greatest effect on the perceived teacher efficacy. Accordingly, certain implications were presented concerning language teacher efficacy.

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Research exploring the factors that may have an impact on English language teaching (ELT) education has been drawn attention in the literature so as to provide new insights into how to give a better education to the learners of English, and thereby to the prospective English language teachers. One of such essential factors has been recognized to be teachers' own belief systems; namely, their teacher efficacy. In the most general sense, teacher efficacy refers to the confidence or belief in teachers' own capability to produce desired learning outcomes (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Therefore, teacher efficacy has been believed to influence both teachers' practices and students' performance (Hansen, 2005; Poulou,

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2007) so they are regarded as “the major predictors of teachers’ competence and commitment to teaching” (Silverman & Davis, 2009, para.12).

The development of teacher efficacy beliefs can trace back to the training years of teachers because efficacy beliefs “are considered to be the most pliable early in learning” (p.947) so they are somewhat unchanging when they are set, as Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2007) asserted. Moreover, only to have content knowledge and pedagogical skills are not enough for effective teaching, teachers also “need to be confident in their abilities to enact effective instructional practices that result in students’ learning, motivation, and other positive outcomes” (Duffin, French & Patrick, 2012, p.827). Then, it is highly important to support pre-service teachers in the teacher education programs to have stronger and positive efficacy beliefs in order to produce effective, capable and motivated teachers (Pendergast, Garvis & Keogh, 2011). Thus, it becomes crucial to find out what kind of factors contribute to the development of teacher efficacy beliefs in early years of their construction, for such factors are essential to understand teachers’ own theoretical and practical judgments about their capabilities and competences (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). It is also meaningful to investigate possible factors that may affect efficacy perceptions especially in a certain teaching area because there has been a general agreement that teacher efficacy can change according to certain competences, tasks or contexts; that is, it is context specific (Chacon, 2005; Henson, 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). So such kind of study designed to explore the potential factors affecting the improvement of pre-service teacher efficacy perceptions within a specific teaching context and competence, i.e., ELT, may reveal the opportunistic ways how to enhance their efficacy beliefs or what needs to shape their teaching beliefs in their developmental phase. In response to this concern, the current study aims to find out the factors that might affect pre-service ELT teachers’ perceived efficacy beliefs within the EFL context.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. The Construct of Teacher Efficacy

Teacher efficacy beliefs are believed to have a major impact on their behaviors, cognitive processes, teaching practice as well as students’ performance. The concept of teacher efficacy actually evolved from Bandura’s theory of self-efficacy introduced within the social cognitive theory (Ghaith & Shaaban, 1999). Self-efficacy is defined as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p.3). However, this construct is regarded rather as a general term associated with human psychology, and fails to reflect the components of teachers’ work and teaching context (Labone, 2004). Therefore, Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, and Hoy (1998) developed a comprehensive model called teacher’s sense of efficacy. Defined as “the teacher’s belief in his or her capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context” (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 1998, p.233), teacher efficacy has three components: efficacy in student engagement (the beliefs about the capability to motivate students, foster creativity, and handle difficult students), efficacy in classroom management (the beliefs about controlling disruptive behaviors, making students follow the rules, and making the activities performed smoothly), and efficacy in instructional strategies (the beliefs about instructional behaviors such as responding to student questions, asking good questions, and adjusting the lessons to the level of students). All three elements of teacher efficacy are seen to be representative of teachers’ practices as well as teaching environment.

In addition to the knowledge of content and pedagogy, teachers' beliefs about their skills or capabilities have been thought to be the attributes effective in teaching (Knoblauch & Woolfolk Hoy, 2008) because they influence "the way they learn to teach, and their perceptions, judgments, decision-making and actions in the classroom" (Yeung & Watkins, 2000, p.213). Therefore, teacher efficacy beliefs are considered to be "stronger indicators for predicting their teaching behaviors" (Poulou, 2007, pp.194-195). In this sense, certain studies have already found that more efficacious teachers are able to cope with difficult situations easily, are good at planning and organization, use instructional strategies more effectively, sustain student engagement and motivation, maintain the continuity of the task, are good at teaching particular subjects, are better in classroom management, and are more open to innovations (Duffin, French & Patrick, 2012; Hansen, 2005; Klassen, Tze, Betts & Gordon, 2011; Knoblauch & Woolfolk Hoy, 2008; Milner & Hoy, 2003; O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012; Oh, 2010; Redmon, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Moreover, teacher efficacy affects not only teachers' behaviors and actions in their teaching practices but also affects students' performance, motivation and outcomes (Aslan, 2013). Concerning this effect, in the literature, higher level of teacher efficacy has been steadily found to lead to higher level of student achievement as well as better performance of teachers in the classroom (Mulholland & Wallace, 2001; Oh, 2011). So it has been concluded that the greater the efficacy is, the higher and the better both teachers' own practices and students' performance are.

It is seen that teacher efficacy influences teaching behaviors and student performance but at the same time, its development is affected by certain factors such as teaching tasks, context, motivation, and competency in a specific subject matter. Thus, it can be deduced that there is mutual influence between the factors affecting teacher efficacy, and the effects of teacher efficacy on these factors. In this regard, the prominent researcher Bandura (1997) proposed four sources of efficacy building information. However, in terms of teaching context, his proposed sources are determined in accordance with teacher efficacy. Therefore, enactive mastery experiences reflect teachers' own judgments about their performance whether being successful or not; vicarious experiences are about the comparisons of their capabilities or skills with other teachers; verbal/social persuasion is the effect of verbal interactions occurred in feedback, workshop, meetings, etc.; and physiological/emotional states are related to the feelings in the teaching process such as happiness, stressfulness, and confidence (Oh, 2010; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). In addition to Bandura, those who investigated other factors that may influence the development of pre-service teacher efficacy found that teacher training components such as teaching practice, methodology and elective courses, lecturers' images and practicum supervisors (Yeung & Watkins, 2000), university training, personality characteristics, capabilities/skills, and motivation (Poulou, 2007), teaching practice, competence and beliefs about teaching/learning (Atay, 2007), cooperating teachers (Knoblauch & Woolfolk Hoy, 2008; Oh, 2010), teacher training courses (Woodcock, 2011), university-based learning experiences including the content, tutors and learning activities (Filatov & Pill, 2015) had an effect in shaping teacher efficacy beliefs.

2.2. Research on Teacher Efficacy

In the literature, teacher efficacy has been studied with different aspects such as competence, enthusiasm, behavior, motivation, attitude, students' achievement, and learners' self-efficacy beliefs either with in-service or pre-service teachers without considering their subject matters. However, in recent years, teachers from specific subject areas like ELT have been studied with respect to their teacher efficacy. Such studies have mostly investigated the relationship between teacher efficacy and other concepts such as demographic variables as gender, age, teaching experience, teacher status, teaching level, educational background, etc. (e.g. Ebrahimi & Moafian, 2012; Ghanizadeh & Moafian, 2011; Karimvand, 2011; Tajeddin & Khodaverdi, 2011), burnout/job stress (e.g. Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Vaezi & Fallah, 2011), job

satisfaction (e.g. Klassen & Chiu, 2010), emotional intelligence (e.g. Ebrahimi & Moafian, 2012; Penrose, Perry & Ball, 2007), student achievement (e.g. Saeidi & Kalantarypour, 2011), teacher knowledge (e.g. Zakeri & Alavi, 2011), teaching style (e.g. Heidari, Nourmohammadi & Nowrouzi, 2012), motivation (e.g. Huangfu, 2012), critical thinking (e.g. Ebrahimi & Moafian, 2012) and English language proficiency (e.g. Chacon, 2005; Eslami & Fatahi, 2008; Ghasemband & Hashim, 2013; Jafarigohar & Ganjabi, 2012; Lee, 2009), all of which reached significant relationships between teacher efficacy and those variables. Nevertheless, they were carried out mostly with in-service EFL/ESL teachers, and none of those studies were interested in the factors that might have an impact on the improvement of teacher efficacy perceptions of English language teachers.

Yet, there have been notable attempts in the literature to pinpoint the factors that may influence the formation of teacher efficacy beliefs in other teaching subject fields. With regard to in-service teaching, mainly professional development activities, teaching experience, principals/administrators, colleagues, parents, community and school environment in addition to Bandura's sources of efficacy have been found among the contributing factors to teacher efficacy (Cheung, 2008; Guo, Justice, Sawyer & Tompkins, 2011; Phan & Locke, 2015; Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2011; Zhou, 2014). Differently from in-service teaching environment, in the context of pre-service teaching, even though most of the time Bandura's proposed sources of efficacy (enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, physiological/affective states, and verbal persuasion) have been studied (e.g. Mullholand & Wallace, 2001; Wah, 2007), other kinds of factors have been found to affect teacher efficacy perceptions either positively or negatively. For instance, teaching practice, education studies, teachers' images, courses and electives, supervisors, pupils, form teachers, and lesson plans were found to affect the development of pre-service teachers' efficacy beliefs (Yeung & Watkins, 2000). Moreover, Poulou's (2007) study revealed that personality characteristics, capabilities/skills, motivation and university training in addition to Bandura's sources of efficacy were effective in the development of pre-service teachers of primary education. Besides, Oh (2010) investigated efficacy changes within a one-year practicum of elementary and early childhood school education pre-service teachers. His study yielded that Bandura's sources, Poulou's factors, and another factor that was mentor's help brought about a positive change in pre-service teachers' efficacy. In his another research with pre-service teachers in their reading and writing courses in the education program, Oh (2011) found only personality characteristics, capabilities, motivation, enactive mastery experiences with social/verbal persuasion, and physiological/affective state were significant predictors of efficacy in classroom management. Furthermore, Woodcock's (2011) research with pre-service teachers of primary and secondary school education produced that to a great extent teacher training courses influenced pre-service teachers in the department of the secondary school education rather than the primary school education. In addition, Erawan (2011) found major effects of the factors such as attitudes towards profession, the quality of teacher preparation program, and practicum experiences in developing stronger efficacy beliefs of pre-service teachers. In a different sense, O'Neill and Stephenson (2012) based their study only on the subcategory of efficacy in classroom management in line with the sources of pre-service teacher efficacy, and they concluded that only personality qualities and physiological/affective states were significant predictors of efficacy in classroom behavior management. Lastly, Filatov and Pill (2015) found a strong relationship between the university-based learning experiences made up of the content, tutors and learning activities; that is, teacher education, and pre-service English teaching self-efficacy. They concluded that teacher education had an effect in the efficacy beliefs of pre-service ESL students. To sum, though all the mentioned studies found out different factors other than Bandura's sources that affect pre-service teachers' efficacy, almost none of them were executed in the field of ELT.

When the Turkish context is considered, teacher efficacy of either pre-service or in-service English language teachers has been found to be in relation to a number of variables such as epistemological beliefs (Rakicioglu, 2005), mentor's effect (Pekkanli Egel, 2009), teaching competence (Cakir & Alici, 2009),

academic achievement and grade (Kulekci, 2011), readiness to teach (Incecay & Dollar, 2012), and critical thinking dispositions (Yuksel & Alci, 2012). However, nearly none of them examined what kinds of factors are influential in the development of pre-service teacher efficacy of English language teachers. In this sense, only Atay's (2007) study and Yuksel's (2014) study were significant attempts to probe the factors affecting pre-service ELT teachers' sense of efficacy. Atay (2007) investigated the change of 78 pre-service ELT teachers' efficacy beliefs over the practicum course as well as the factors that were likely to cause the change in their efficacy perceptions. The findings indicated that while efficacy in classroom management and student engagement increased, efficacy in instructional strategies decreased. The research also revealed that competence, beliefs about teaching and learning, cooperating teachers, established classroom practices, and practicum school led the change in the efficacy levels of pre-service ELT teachers during the teaching experience period. In the same vein, Yuksel (2014) focused on the change of teacher efficacy, and whether Bandura's sources were effective in the change of the beliefs of 40 pre-service ELT teachers during the one-year teaching practice course by collecting questionnaires and reflection papers. The results yielded significant differences in the changes of their efficacy levels before and after the practicum. While the sources of enactive mastery experiences and social persuasion affected the efficacy levels more, vicarious experiences and physiological/affective states did not contribute to the change in efficacy levels. Even though both studies had significant contributions to the efficacy literature in terms of pre-service ELT context, they were based only on the change of efficacy levels during the practicum course; and besides, Yuksel (2014) explored only Bandura's sources of efficacy. Therefore, there might be other different factors affecting pre-service ELT teachers' efficacy in its construction period throughout the training years in addition to the practicum.

On the whole, when the efficacy research is taken into account, it is seen that it has mostly dealt with already constructed efficacy beliefs of in-service teachers, the relationship between efficacy and other constructs such as motivation and student achievement, and the sources of efficacy building information proposed by Bandura (1997) as enactive mastery experiences, social/verbal persuasion, physiological/affective states, and vicarious experiences. Besides, the efficacy studies have been mostly focused on general efficacy rather than a certain teaching area, based on correlational designs, or conducted in the USA (Klassen, Tze, Betts & Gordon, 2011). In addition, there are few studies upon the affecting factors of teacher efficacy in foreign language learning environments (Raofi, Tan & Chan, 2012). So the studies on what triggers the construction of pre-service teacher efficacy especially with respect to a specific teaching competence are found to be scarce in the literature (Chacon, 2005; Henson, 2001; Klassen, Tze, Betts & Gordon, 2011; Labone, 2004; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, 2007). But more importantly, in the Turkish context, the researchers have studied with in-service teachers most of the time regardless of their subject areas, and also almost none of them examined the affecting factors behind the perceived efficacy beliefs of pre-service ELT teachers.

Considering these gaps in the efficacy research, it is clear that there are urgent needs to be fulfilled. Firstly, there is a need to do research with pre-service teachers in an EFL context with the specific teaching subject area. Secondly, more qualitative or mixed methods design research studies are required to gain a better understanding of teacher efficacy beliefs. Thirdly, to study on the affecting factors of teacher efficacy perceptions other than the viewpoint of Bandura's proposed sources of efficacy is necessary since there might be other elements being influential in the development of this multi-faceted construct. Lastly, in Turkey, there is a need to study on what factors are responsible for the development of pre-service teacher efficacy perceptions with respect to the English language teaching field.

In response to all of these needs, the present study was designed to get a profile of pre-service ELT teachers' perceived efficacy, and also to explore what kind of factors influence their teacher efficacy perceptions. In this way, it is assumed to contribute to the significance of the area interested in the factors affecting teacher efficacy in the literature, and in a way, to provide insights into the teacher education

programs of English language teaching in Turkey. In line with the purposes of this study, the following questions guided the research:

1. What are the levels of pre-service English language teachers' efficacy perceptions?
2. What are the factors affecting the perceptions of pre-service English language teachers' efficacy?

3. Methodology

3.1. Context and Participants

In Turkey, ELT education programs cover four years of training in the English language. In the programs, the courses of English language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking), the methodological [content and pedagogy] courses (e.g. language teaching approaches, methods, techniques, material design, testing), the courses of English literature, linguistics and translation, the general education and pedagogy courses taught in Turkish, elective courses, and the practicum course (micro- and macro-teaching) are offered.

A total of 113 pre-service ELT teachers studying at a Turkish state university participated on a voluntary basis in the present study via convenience sampling. They were at their final semester in their education program, and had completed the first part of the school experience; namely, the practicum, in the previous semester. The sample was assumed to reflect more realistic perceptions of teacher efficacy after the teaching practice in which pre-service ELT teachers relate their knowledge to their practical skills as Brown, Lee, and Collins (2015), and Poulou (2007) indicated.

3.2. Instruments

The current study was based on the explanatory sequential mixed methods design which utilizes the collection of quantitative data before gathering qualitative data (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, two instruments were used in the study.

Firstly, the Turkish version of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) adapted by Capa Aydin, Cakiroglu and Sarikaya (2005) from the original long form developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) was utilized in order to find out the levels of perceived teacher efficacy. This version consists of 24 items distributed under three subscales as efficacy in classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement. It is based on a 9-point Likert scale ranging from nothing (1) to a great deal (9), and higher mean scores indicate higher levels of teacher efficacy. Since the target sample included pre-service teachers, two items were excluded from the scale in accordance with the experts' opinions in the field of ELT. One of the items was about families, and the other one was related to assessment, both of which did not concern the target sample in the practicum. Therefore, the last form was made up of 22 items in total. In order to establish its reliability, that final scale was piloted with 32 pre-service ELT teachers, and as a result, its internal consistency was found high ($\alpha=.92$). The administration of the scale to the whole sample also produced higher Cronbach's alpha values: .92 for the total scale, .80 for the subscales of efficacy in student engagement and instructional strategies, and .86 for the subscale of efficacy in classroom management.

Secondly, the focus group interviews were conducted in order to gain a deeper understanding of perceived teacher efficacy beliefs, and at the same time, to explore the potential factors that may have an impact on the development of their teacher efficacy perceptions. Six guiding questions posed in the interviews were formed according to the related literature by the researcher herself in line with the suggestions of Krueger and Casey (2009) for the focus groups. They were mostly based on the framework suggested by Poulou (2007) called “Teaching Efficacy Sources Inventory (TESI)” that was specifically designed for the pre-service context to find out the possible sources of teacher efficacy.

3.3. Data Collection

The study was carried out in the Spring Semester of 2013-2014 Academic Year at the department of ELT education at a state university in Turkey. In the first place, the revised version of the scale was piloted at the beginning of the semester with a class of final year ELT students ($n=32$). Secondly, the scale accompanied by consent forms was administered to the whole final year students ($N=121$) in their regular class meetings. The participants filled out the scale approximately in 15 minutes, and out of 121 students, 113 forms were returned without incomplete items. Thirdly, the collected scale forms were examined with regard to the distribution of perceived efficacy levels so as to determine the participants who would take part in the focus group interview. Fourthly, the participants were invited for the interview sessions, and the focus groups were carried out with the volunteer 22 participants. There were three groups as high ($n=8$), low ($n=7$), and moderate ($n=7$) level of teacher efficacy, and each group was given appointments in different days and times. Finally, the entire sessions were conducted in their mother tongue (Turkish) in order to make the participants to feel more comfortable while expressing their opinions, and the researcher had the role of the moderator in the discussions. Each discussion session lasted about one hour, and all of them were audio-recorded, and then, their transcriptions were made.

3.4. Data Analysis

All of the collected data were analyzed using certain statistical methods. Firstly, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for the scale were computed. Secondly, for the first research question, the means and the standard deviations were calculated in order to obtain the distribution of teacher efficacy levels. Thirdly, the obtained scores were divided into three levels of perceived efficacy as high, low, and moderate through the following formula (Aydin, 1999; Ganschow, Sparks, Anderson, Javorshy, Skinner & Patton, 1994):

high group : $M + SD = X$
moderate group : $M + SD = X$ and $M - SD = Y$ (the scores between X and Y)
low group : $M - SD = Y$

Fourthly, for the second research question, the transcriptions of the conversations were written, and the content analysis (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leeds & Zoran, 2009), in another term, thematic analysis (Massey, 2011) in an inductive way was performed. Finally, before the findings (codes and themes) were tabulated, and the frequency of communication units were calculated, they were checked and evaluated by the researcher herself and an independent rater, who was also a researcher in the field of ELT, in order to determine the degree of consistency by means of percentage agreement among the interrater reliability procedures suggested by Huck (2012). As a consequence, 83% consistency in the findings was found.

4. Results

The analysis regarding the distribution of teacher efficacy levels showed that the sample had a moderate level of overall perceived teacher efficacy ($M=6.60$, $SD=0.86$). In the subscales of the efficacy scale, close mean scores were reported: The participants felt efficacious in student engagement ($M=6.50$, $SD=0.96$), instructional strategies ($M=6.62$, $SD=0.93$) and classroom management ($M=6.67$, $SD=1.01$) at the moderate level.

Following that, the categorization of perceived teacher efficacy levels for the interview phase was determined considering the overall mean score of 6.60 and the standard deviation of 0.86. So the mean score of the high efficacy group was over 7.46 whereas the mean of the low group was under 5.74. Accordingly, there were 19 participants in the high group, 80 participants in the moderate group, and 14 participants in the low group in total. However, 8 volunteers from the high group, 7 from the moderate group, and 7 from the low group were interviewed. The analysis of the transcriptions constructed from the focus groups revealed four themes that affected their perceived teacher efficacy: ELT education, practicum experiences, perceived language proficiency, and affective states. The findings indicated that pre-service ELT teachers were affected by their practicum experiences mostly ($f=369$) either positively or negatively. After that, ELT education they received ($f=107$), and their affective states ($f=90$) were other factors often mentioned regarding teacher efficacy. The least commented factor became the perceived language proficiency ($f=43$) (see Table 1).

Table 1.

The distribution of the factors affecting perceived teacher efficacy of pre-service ELT teachers (n=22)

Themes	teacher efficacy level			
	<i>f</i> ^a high	<i>f</i> moderate	<i>f</i> low	<i>f</i> total
ELT education (the content of the courses, the perception of teaching as a profession)	51	25	31	107
Practicum experiences (teaching dimension: classroom practices, student dimension; teacher dimension: cooperating & supervisor teacher)	168	101	100	369
Perceived language proficiency (language skills & components)	11	15	17	43
Affective states (personality, motivation, emotions)	38	16	36	90

^a*f* shows the number of communication units

ELT Education. The role of university training received over the course of four years in the ELT teacher education program was found to affect the development of the perceived teacher efficacy of the participants adversely. It is because the sample underlined the problematic sides of the training process, and how those sides affected their views of teaching. They expressed their opinions about the training they received, evaluated the courses they took, and focused on the perceptions they held about teaching as a profession. Nearly all the participants ($n=19$) emphasized the fact that they received too much theoretical knowledge but could not transfer that knowledge in their teaching practice. For instance:

"I think we focus on theoretical knowledge a lot in the methodology course, that's why we ask the question 'How are we gonna do this?' in teaching practice. Though it doesn't sound nice, we should have written

more lesson plans in the methodology course. Learning all the theoretical knowledge is good but we begin writing plans through the end of the term. I think we need more practice.” (LowGroup.3)

“The courses we have taken are very utopic. For example, in methodology courses we prepare lessons, and our classmates act like students and we teach them but it doesn’t work in real life because students are really different. So we should learn how to cope with this.” (HighGroup.6)

On the other hand, 8 of the participants, 4 of whom were in the high group, believed that being a teacher is not just teaching English language but being a teacher means having other abilities and duties such educating people in many ways, and those participants seemed to be aware of the teaching mission. Then, the perception of teaching as a profession contributed to the building of their teacher efficacy in a positive way. For example, one of the participants stated that:

“We are going to be English teachers in the future, and we are going to teach English. Additionally, I think we should do some other things. We should educate them to be very good and honest people.....It is not only teaching something. For instance, we have not signed any attendance registration until now, but we will do it or some other things such as being a hall monitor and meeting its requirements. How many pre-service teachers know these things? We don’t know them. These kinds of things should also be taught to us.” (HighGroup.6)

Practicum Experiences. The experiences gained during the practicum was the greatest contributor to the improvement of teacher efficacy perceptions. The classroom practices, students’ characteristics, cooperating and supervisor teachers’ attitudes and feedback were highly effective in constructing positive or negative teacher efficacy perceptions.

In terms of classroom practices, all of the participants ($n=22$) addressed the issues of classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement in their teaching practice. For example, some of the participants ($n=8$) believed that they were good at giving instructions and feedback as well as checking understanding of their students’ learning. One of them stated that she used certain strategies for the instructions:

“I do sometimes paraphrase; sometimes give examples; sometimes I do it myself or show, or select one of the students to show the activity. Then, they understand how to do it or with the help of gestures, facial expressions, or simplified instruction, I make them understand what to do.” (LowGroup.5)

However, while the low group pointed out their inability to manage the classroom well, the high group felt more efficacious in their capability to control the classroom.

“Let’s say students don’t listen to you, there is a noise, a problem, etc. in the class, I feel helpless. It seems that I need to become more experienced in classroom management.” (LowGroup.7)

Similarly, the low and moderate group tended to be more prepared and planned before going to the practicum whereas the high group inclined to behave more spontaneously because they felt more confident. Besides, though the low group believed the importance of adaptation, bringing real life contexts into the classroom accompanied by the appropriate cultural elements, they were not able to do them in the practicum unlike the high group who stated that they were capable of adapting teaching materials. The high group also talked about their use of different kinds of techniques while teaching whereas the low and moderate group could not develop coping strategies for a more successful teaching practice. Furthermore, a few participants ($n=6$) expressed their difficulty in engaging students in their

lessons when the students seemed unconcerned or did not participate. The matter of time management was also emphasized by all the participants as a negative factor that affected their classroom practices because they pointed out that they were given insufficient time in the practicum. All of these findings suggested that classroom practices such as management, instruction, and engagement were effective in developing stronger or weaker efficacy perceptions.

In addition to classroom practices, the profile of the students was another affecting factor in the enhancement of teacher efficacy beliefs. Concerning the class profile, the participants underlined certain student features such as their interests, needs, attitudes, age, motivation, and levels, and the class size that influenced their teaching practices either negatively or positively, which in return affected shaping their efficacy perceptions. For example, some participants ($n=11$) believed that the features of the students were one of the most important components to increase the motivation in order to engage them in the lessons more; nonetheless, they stated that they were not able to reach all the students in the practicum because the variables of the students were very changing. However, over time they knew the class better; hence, they said they were more prepared. To exemplify:

“When we learn the needs and interests of the students in time, we prepare the lesson plans accordingly. In this way, we see that the lesson is conducted in a much better way.” (LowGroup.4)

The attitudes of the students towards English language itself, English language lessons, and the participants as their intern teachers also affected the perceptions of teacher efficacy. More than half of the participants ($n=15$) discussed that if the attitudes of the students were negative, then, the participants felt less motivated and capable. For instance, one of the participants illustrated it such:

“The students in our classes say that ‘Will I go to England? Will I meet an English person? Why do I learn English?’ They do not have this awareness. This situation is quite abstract for them. Though I try to give the importance and reason of learning English, it doesn’t work at all in the 5th, 6th, and 7th grade.” (HighGroup.4)

Apart from classroom practices and the class profile, cooperating and supervisor teachers were found to play a role in promoting teacher efficacy of the participants. Nearly all of the participants agreed that both their cooperating and supervisor teachers were not helpful during the practicum. They complained about the negative attitudes of the teachers, and the lack of coordination between cooperating and supervisor teachers who required completely different tasks being unaware of each other’s expectations. They also pointed out that the teachers were not a role-model, not interested in the improvement of the interns, did not give any feedback, and not give opportunities to behave more independently. For instance, one of the participants indicated that:

“For example, we would like to prepare specifically a lesson plan of a ‘skill’, I say I will prepare a plan of one skill such as story-telling. My cooperating teacher says ‘no, not now, time may be wasted, let’s do the test.’” (HighGroup.6)

“It is not possible to apply the lesson plan in real classroom practices and none of our supervisor teachers are aware of it, and we experience problems in adaptation in the first one or two weeks since each of our supervisors has their own strategies and the methods each applies differ from one another. The common point in both is that the plans we prepare are utopic.” (HighGroup.6)

Then, the characteristics of the teachers such as being unhelpful, uncooperative, and reckless appeared to negatively affect the development of teacher efficacy perceptions of the participants.

Perceived Language Proficiency. The perceived English language proficiency seemed to have a negative role in the development of teacher efficacy of the participants. Since the participants underscored their language-proficiency-related-difficulties in the class, those difficulties affected their perceived teacher efficacy negatively. No matter what the efficacy level of the participants is, almost all of them ($n=19$) pointed out that they felt inadequate in language skills, and could not express themselves in English, the target language, easily while doing their teaching practice. To exemplify:

"I do not feel competent to be a language teacher in terms of language proficiency; I feel very incompetent in all skills." (LowGroup.4)

"According to my teaching performance, I feel that I am good. I think that we are better than the cooperating teacher; however, I do not find myself good when I consider myself as the actual language teacher. In that, actually, I do not know whether I am the person who will teach all the skills properly such as listening, speaking, etc." (HighGroup.6)

Affective States. The personality, motivation, and emotions of the participants emerged as the affective factors that had an impact on their teacher efficacy perceptions either positively or negatively. Concerning the personality, although the high group was more self-confident, and aware of their ability to teach unlike the low and moderate group, all of the participants ($n=22$) stated that to establish a good rapport with students, and to adopt a positive attitude towards them resulted in a more willing participation in their teaching classes. For example, one of the participants exemplified the rapport effect:

"I get along with the students like brothers outside the classroom. I talk to them, I have a chat with them... When I enter into classroom, the student coming to the blackboard does not feel like a stranger. Because they always interact with me and we are not distant to each other, they participate in the lesson willingly." (LowGroup.8)

Moreover, motivation was found to be highly important in the development of positive and stronger teacher efficacy beliefs. Such that nearly all of the participants ($n=20$) mentioned that the positive reactions and attitudes of their students in the practicum to their teaching lessons, and their satisfaction with their teaching performance motivated them more, which in return led an increase in their efficacy levels. To illustrate this finding, it can be said that those who had a high level of motivation also felt more efficacious, for the high efficacy group appeared to be more satisfied and motivated compared to the low and moderate group. For instance:

"While doing the activities, what I like is that students come to me and say what that was. They care about my course. However, when the students do not want to participate in the lesson, we get discouraged too." (LowGroup.7)

"I like to do something with students because when I am teaching, they always come and say, 'Teacher, I started loving English, can we do some more activities?', 'Do you have any other activity?'. As long as I observe such kind of reactions, I like it." (HighGroup.4)

The emotions of the participants seemed to be effective in shaping their teacher efficacy perceptions. In general, they focused on the positive feelings about their teaching performance. However, especially the low and moderate group ($n=5$) underlined the fact that their anxiety, stress and negative feelings about their practices influenced their teaching, and hence, lowered their efficacy levels. To exemplify, one of them commented on her anxiety:

"I still have some shortcomings; especially, my anxiety level is a bit high." (ModerateGroup.2)

All in all, it was concluded that pre-service ELT teachers who felt more efficacious pointed out that they had better teaching experiences and strategies, were capable of teaching tasks and managing the classroom, and were more self-confident and motivated. On the other hand, regardless of teacher efficacy levels, classroom practices, student profile, the view of teaching as a profession, personality, and motivation contributed to the development of teacher efficacy perceptions of pre-service ELT teachers. Yet, the content of ELT teacher education program, cooperating and supervisor teachers, emotions, and perceived language proficiency had a negative impact on the construction of their efficacy perceptions.

5. Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to investigate teacher efficacy perceptions of pre-service ELT teachers in line with the factors that may affect the development of their efficacy beliefs. The results indicated a moderate level of overall teacher efficacy as perceived by pre-service ELT teachers. Concerning the components of teacher efficacy, efficacy in classroom management had a slightly higher mean score compared to efficacy in instructional strategies and student engagement, which shows that pre-service ELT teachers felt more efficacious in managing the classroom, as similarly found in the research of Atay (2007), and Oh (2010, 2011).

In terms of the factors affecting the development of teacher efficacy perceptions of pre-service ELT teachers, the findings revealed four main factors: ELT education, practicum experiences, perceived language proficiency, and affective states. This study underlined the important role of especially the university training, and the practicum experiences in establishing teacher efficacy perceptions. It also emphasized that despite its negative effect, perceived language proficiency is another crucial effective factor in efficacy perceptions because it is directly related to the ELT context.

The content of ELT education; that is, teacher education program or university training, was complained about its being highly theoretical, and so lacking practical issues with regard to teaching methodologies. Pre-service ELT teachers indicated their inability to combine content and pedagogical knowledge; however, the synthesis of content and pedagogy is relatively important in teaching (Richards, 2010; Shulman, 1987). Therefore, since the university training had a negative effect, it did not promote developing stronger efficacy perceptions. Similarly, Yeung and Watkins (2000) showed that education studies and methodology courses did not influence efficacy beliefs. However, Erawan (2011), Filatov and Pill (2015), and Poulou (2007) found university training was a contributing factor in building teacher efficacy. The courses of language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) and language areas (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation) were also not very helpful in improving language proficiency as indicated especially by less efficacious pre-service ELT teachers; thus, the courses negatively affected their efficacy perceptions. On the other hand, more efficacious pre-service ELT teachers were more aware of their teaching mission, which resulted in stronger efficacy beliefs because as Erawan (2011) argued that attitudes towards the profession are connected to satisfaction with teaching. In Erawan's (2011) study, such attitudes were also found highly effective in enhancing teacher efficacy.

Teaching experience is another factor found to have positive effects in the improvement of teacher efficacy in most of the studies (Atay, 2007; Erawan, 2011; Poulou, 2007; Yeung & Watkins, 2000). In a similar way, in this study, the practicum in which pre-service ELT teachers faced with real teaching experiences was the most contributory factor in promoting teacher efficacy. The experiences they gained through the teaching practice were primarily related to Bandura's (1997) efficacy sources of enactive mastery experiences, social/verbal persuasion, and vicarious experiences, and Poulou's (2007) teaching efficacy source as capabilities/skills that play a role in building teacher efficacy. If people feel more

independent, successful in teaching, and satisfied with their performance, then, their efficacy increases, which is about their enactive mastery experiences believed to be the strongest contributor to the development of efficacy perceptions (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Along the same line, more efficacious pre-service ELT teachers stated that they felt accomplished in their teaching performance, were capable of adapting materials, had certain coping strategies, and used different teaching techniques to engage students, all of which influenced the contentment with their teaching, and hence, their efficacy perceptions. The effect of such enactive mastery experiences, and capabilities/skills was also proved to be a contributory factor to efficacy building in the literature (Erawan, 2011; Mulholland & Wallace, 2001; Poulou, 2007; Oh, 2011; Yuksel, 2014; Wah, 2007). Furthermore, the knowledge of learners and their characteristics (Shulman, 1987) can be effective in motivating the students; and such that pre-service ELT teachers expressed their belief in the importance of engaging and motivating students by the help of that knowledge including their interests, needs, language level, and the like while teaching, all of which affected their efficacy perceptions. As previously stated, verbal/social persuasion and vicarious experiences are the sources of teacher efficacy building information, and the traces of these sources reflected in the factor of cooperating and supervisor teachers' effect in the present study. Since the relationship between pre-service teachers and their cooperating and supervisor teachers is considered to affect the improvement of teacher efficacy perceptions (Erawan, 2011), the shared knowledge and experience, the guide, the feedback, the support, and the encouragement provided by the teachers lead to the enhancement in teacher efficacy perceptions (Oh, 2010). However, pre-service ELT teachers in this study pointed out that their teachers were not helpful during the practicum, held negative attitudes towards them, and were very unconcerned with their teaching progress. So both teachers were ineffective in promoting teacher efficacy perceptions, and that kind of negative impact was also reported in the literature (Atay, 2007; Mullholland & Wallace, 2001; Yeung & Watkins, 2000). Then, it can be said that neither vicarious experiences nor verbal persuasion under the factor of teachers' effect positively influence the development of teacher efficacy perceptions.

It is acknowledged that teachers possess different cognitions according to their teaching subject areas, and so language teachers have certain knowledge domains such as the knowledge of language itself, language as pedagogical content and so on (Feryok, 2010). Therefore, in addition to content and pedagogy, the competence related to language proficiency is essential to language teachers in carrying out their classroom practices because it affects the confidence of teachers in their ability to teach; that is, their teacher efficacy (Richards, 2010). Such that the relationship between teacher efficacy and language proficiency has been significantly established in most of the studies (Chacon, 2005; Eslami & Fatahi, 2008; Ghasemboland & Hashim, 2013; Jafarigohar & Ganjabi, 2012; Lee, 2009; Tunc Yuksel, 2010). In the same vein, this study showed that those who perceived themselves less proficient had also lower levels of teacher efficacy seeing that pre-service ELT teachers had a moderate level of teacher efficacy though felt incompetent in English. Nevertheless, those who made efforts to improve their proficiency pointed out they felt more confident in their teaching practices, which led them to feel more efficacious in giving instructions, in managing the classroom, in engaging the students, in presenting the content and the like.

The affective states of pre-service ELT teachers, especially their personality characteristics, motivation, and emotions were found to be contributory factors to the improvement of teacher efficacy perceptions as opposed to Poulou's (2007), and Yuksel's (2014) studies in which no relationship was found between affective states and teacher efficacy. Pre-service ELT teachers' interactions and attitudes with students positively influenced their teaching efficacy, and such positive effect of personality was also verified in certain studies (Poulou, 2007; O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012; Oh, 2010, 2011). In addition, the role of motivation in promoting teacher efficacy was highlighted in the literature; that is, a significant relationship between motivation and teacher efficacy was found (Poulou, 2007; Oh, 2010, 2011). Moreover, since positive feelings regarding teaching were emphasized by pre-service ELT teachers in general, their

emotions was found effective in their efficacy perceptions. But less efficacious ones expressed their anxiety and stress in teaching whereas more efficacious ones did not mention such emotions. The impact of affective states on enhancing teacher efficacy were also established in the studies of O'Neill and Stephenson (2012), Oh (2010, 2011), and Wah (2007).

6. Conclusion

The present study is considered to provide new insights into teacher efficacy perceptions of pre-service ELT teachers as well as teacher education programs by exploring the factors affecting teacher efficacy perceptions because as Usher and Pajares (2008) asserted, to study on the origin of efficacy building, and the factors which influence it either positively or negatively would “make substantive contributions to educational theory, thinking, practice, and policy” (p.791). Therefore, in line with the findings, certain implications can be drawn to help pre-service ELT teachers develop stronger and positive efficacy perceptions during their training years. For example, the content of the methodological courses may be balanced considering the content and pedagogical knowledge so that more focus can be given to the practical issues for the transfer of that knowledge into the future teaching behaviors. So it might be useful to devote more practice time for the pre-service ELT teachers in the program courses. In the same vein, the content of language skills courses can be reviewed, and revised in order to provide more opportunities to use and practice the target language, and thus, help them improve their language proficiency. Moreover, to allow prospective teachers to share their opinions, evaluate and reflect on their training as well as their experiences may be beneficial to promote their efficacy. Since this study suggests that the practicum was highly effective in the improvement of teacher efficacy beliefs, to give relevant tasks according to the capability of pre-service teachers, and to devote more practice time to carry out the tasks thoroughly in the practicum may make them feel accomplished. This kind of treatment can contribute to their building positive efficacy perceptions, for Redmon (2007) argued that early experiences of successes can shape teacher efficacy. To introduce pre-service teachers with different teaching contexts where they interact with different levels of students may also be helpful in improving teacher efficacy beliefs as suggested by Morgan (2008) because they would gain various teaching experiences. Furthermore, both cooperating and supervisor teachers should help, guide and support their student teachers in the teaching process by giving more opportunities and independence to perform different kinds of skills and tasks in their classroom. Lastly, it may be recommended that to make pre-service teachers observe different school environments from the beginning of their university training to the end of the program would make them be more aware of teaching profession and its expectations while observing what they learn in the courses.

In the light of the findings of the current study, some suggestions can be made for further studies. Since this study underlined the effect of perceived language proficiency factor apart from other sources of teacher efficacy, to develop a teacher efficacy framework directly related to pre-service ELT context is required. To elaborate on the factors affecting teacher efficacy beliefs of ELT teachers may also be helpful in establishing such framework. In this way, it is likely to develop new scales to measure specifically pre-service ELT teachers' efficacy perceptions and their affecting factors. More studies are also needed to study on what affects the development of pre-service ELT teachers' efficacy in different contexts with more participants by using different kinds of methods in a longer research period.

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