

# Korean Pre-service Elementary School Teachers' Perceived Competence and Beliefs about English Language Teaching Skills

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## Abstract

The present study aims to investigate Korean pre-service elementary school teachers' perceptions about their English language teaching skills and their beliefs about what are good language teaching skills. For the purpose, 81 Korean pre-service elementary school teachers from three different majors such as physical education, practical course education and elementary education participated in the study. They were asked to participate in microteaching and reflection sessions and respond to the survey about their perceived competence and language teaching skills before and after microteaching. Their teaching skills were evaluated and the data from the reflection sessions and survey were collected and analyzed. The findings from the study are as follows: there are differences in pre-service teachers' English language teaching skills across majors; there are also differences between the pre-service teachers' perceptions and beliefs and differences between their perceived competence and actual competence in English language teaching.

## Keywords

Language teaching skills, pre-service teachers, elementary English education

## 1 Introduction

In the present study, the researcher intended to investigate Korean pre-service elementary school teachers' perceptions about their English language teaching skills and their beliefs about what are good language teaching skills.

## 2 Language Teacher Competence

In Korea, elementary English education started in 1997 as a regular subject. Whereas most debates were primarily focused on effects of English education on elementary school students before

1997, English language teacher qualification was one of the most debated topics after elementary English education started. Along the debates, a body of research concerning elementary teachers' language teacher competence was conducted. Language teacher competence consists of two kinds of skills: English ability and language teaching ability (Jin, Kim, & Lee, 2002). One of the most important issues related to English language teacher qualification is non-native teachers' competence over native teachers. According to previous studies, native teachers have a position of advantage over non-native teachers in terms of fluency, accuracy, and authenticity of English language (Lavender, 2002) on one hand; non-native teachers deliver lessons more effectively than native teachers in terms of understanding their students' affective factors and learning problems (Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999). In elementary schools in Korea, English is taught by elementary school teachers regardless of their majors. Pre-service elementary school teachers can teach English if they want to regardless of their undergraduate majors. All pre-service elementary teachers are required to take English lesson demonstration test as part of the national elementary teacher recruitment examination for teaching appointment. In this context, the present study was designed to explore how pre-service elementary teachers perceive their English teaching skills and how important they rate each teaching skill for elementary English education.

## 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Participants

Eighty-one Korean pre-service elementary teachers were asked to participate in the study. They took a course titled "English conversation for elementary teachers" during the spring semester in 2018. They were all seniors, and their

majors were physical education, elementary education, and practical course education.

### 3.2 Course Design

The course was intended to develop pre-service teachers' English language teaching skills, especially classroom language skills. They were asked to perform six microteaching tasks in total: three group tasks, two pair tasks, and two individual tasks. Each microteaching task was designed to include three stages: lesson planning, microteaching, and feedback session (See figure 1). During the first three microteaching tasks, four or five trainees designed one short lesson delivered it in groups. After three group tasks, trainees worked in pairs for their microteaching tasks. In the last two microteaching demonstration, they designed and delivered a short lesson individually. Different topics were given for each task.

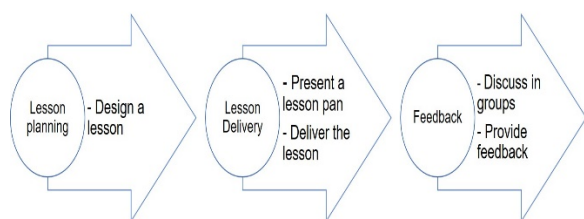


Figure 1: Microteaching session

### 3.3 Procedure

The study was conducted as follows. Before they started microteaching tasks, the participants were asked to discuss what skills are required for elementary school teachers to attain to teach English. After discussion sessions, they completed three group microteaching tasks. Before pair tasks, they were asked to respond to the survey about their perceived competence and beliefs about English language teaching skills for elementary English education. Each specific language teaching skill was rated in two areas: how they perceive their competence related to each skill (self-rating) and how they value each skill (beliefs). After they completed two pair tasks and two individual tasks, the participants were asked to respond to the survey again. The survey results and the microteaching evaluation results were gathered and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 23.

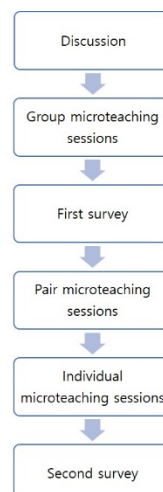


Figure 2: Procedure

## 4 Results and Discussion

The results are as follows. First, there were differences pre-service elementary teachers' English language teaching skills across majors. Elementary education majors performed their microteaching tasks better than practical course education majors and physical education majors. Second, there were also differences between how the pre-service teachers perceive their language teaching skills and how they value each skill. They were likely to rate their competence lower than they value; however, they showed confidence in their competence regarding specific skills, especially non-verbal skills. Finally, there were differences in the pre-service teachers' perceived competence and their actual competence in English language teaching. The pre-service teachers showed tendency to underestimate teaching skills even though they overestimated some skills.

## 5 References

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