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A Study of Elementary School Thai English Teachers' Perceived English Proficiency and Self-Reported English Teaching Efficacy

Masters Dissertation, Payap University
Chiang Mai, Thailand

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Chapter 1

Introduction

English as a global language has grown exponentially. It has become the modern day "lingua franca." It is the basis of communication in countries all over the world. In southeast Asia a new community—ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)—is becoming stronger each day. It is comprised of 10 countries: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. The chief aim of this collaboration of countries is to promote "economic growth, social progress, cultural development in the region through joint endeavors in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian Nations" (ASEAN.org, n.d.). As a community working together they are stronger than as individual nations. And in 2015, the ASEAN economic community (AEC) will be officially integrated in southeast Asia. Since the 10 countries represent many languages, one language, English, was chosen for business communication. Thus, speaking and using English in daily communications has become more important to many Thais.

International business and transactions, science and technology, international academic communities and education also use English as the primary language, which, in turn, requires proficiency in English (Crystal, 2003). And English, used mainly for business, education, and technology, is generally used in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, and other tourist destinations (Chamcharatsri, 2013). In order to be competitive globally, Thailand realizes the need to produce citizens who are competent in more than one language (ONEC, 1999). In this country there are over sixty three million citizens who will help Thailand be a part of the global age (BIC, 2005). To achieve this, teachers need to help prepare students in all subjects, including English. The students need to become proficient, or competent, in the areas outlined in the national curriculum (ONEC, 1999). Proficient English teachers are also needed to teach English as a foreign language to the fourteen and a half million students of Thailand (BIC, 2007). They are expected to teach students how to use foreign languages in a more communicative manner and to have a good attitude toward the people and its culture. Language proficiency is needed to communicate and be understood by using the language for

exchange of information, sharing interpersonal relationships, etc. In general, knowledge of a second language helps a person experience a more expanded view of the world beyond the immediate community. Language proficiency is now viewed as more than grammatical knowledge and a more communicative language teaching approach is the present course of action as described by the Basic Core Curriculum of Thailand (2008). As stated in the core curriculum (ONEC, 2007), a foreign language is required at all grade levels. The standards call for an understanding and mastery of the four macro skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening, and an ability to communicate in a foreign language. English is the standard foreign language taught in schools in Thailand. Understanding of the similarities and differences between the English language and culture and Thai culture and having the ability to communicate this information are core tenets of the Act. The standard practice of using English as a foreign language (EFL) for studying other subjects such as math and science, yet developing a broader world view of other cultures cannot be realized if students are not given the proper opportunities to learn the language. At present, Thailand does not require language teachers to pass any proficiency tests so there is no standard by which teachers are held accountable.

Research suggests that many Thai English teachers, as well as citizens, have a low level of English proficiency (Wiriyachitra, 2002; Punthumasen, 2007; Kijchalong, 2007; EF, 2013). Their inability to communicate in English is a problem, which has adverse effects on students' ability to learn to communicate in English. In fact, only approximately 20% of the English teachers in Thailand have a degree in the field of English language education (Punthumasen, 2007). In the area of teacher development, the purpose of the original 1999 National Education Act (ONEC, 1999) was to provide training in language teaching and teaching methodologies so that teachers could develop professionally (Wiriyachitra, 2002).

The problem of having enough proficient English teachers' stills exists today in Thailand. A recent test given to English-language teachers, administered by the Office of Basic Education Commission showed poor results (Kijchalong, 2007). Of the 14,189 teachers who took the exam only 10% scored over 60%. The exam tested teachers on their listening, reading, writing, and speaking abilities.

Thai students have not received adequate instruction in English, which is reflected in achievement scores as seen in Figure 1. The Secretary General Khunying Kasama Varavarn reported in 2007 that scores have continued to fall since 2005. The reduced classroom hours of English instruction was given as the reason for the decline (ibid.).

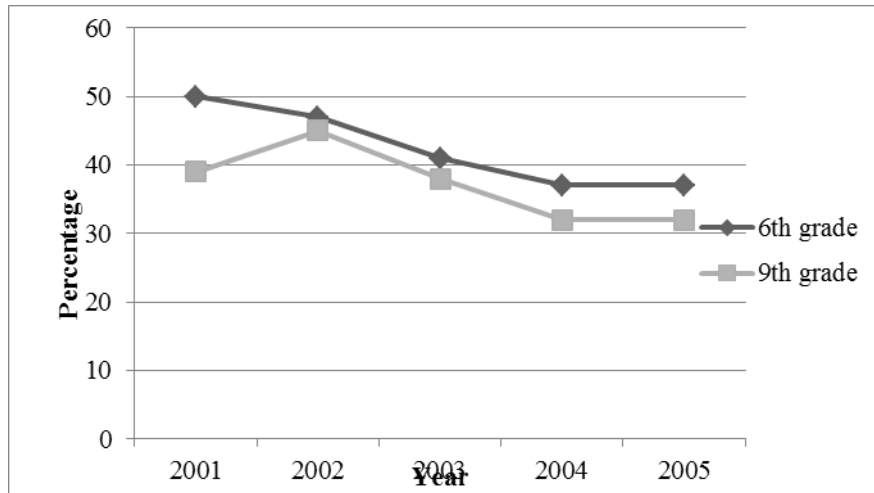


Figure English achievement scores of 6th and 9th grade Thai students from 2001-2005

Similarly poor test results have been observed in students. Test scores (2012 data) for the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) exam, by ranking of ASEAN countries (Brunei scores not reported) ranks Thailand at the seventh position out of nine (Test scores, 2012). English scores from the Thailand O-NET (Ordinary National Education Test) for primary level, to grade 6, for 2010 were dismal, with only 9% of the students making 50% or better, with the average score being 32% (Kaewmala, 2012). Average student English scores for 2011 dropped even lower to 21% (ibid.). Most recently, the Education First Organization (EF, 2013), which is considered the largest English proficiency ranking organization in the world, ranked Thailand English proficiency at 55 out of 60 countries in their annual report, the English Proficiency Index. Data for this report comes from results of a free online proficiency test that is offered by the organization.

Serious consideration is being given to the proper training of English teachers in Thailand. The 1999 National Education Act of Thailand (ONEC, 1999) has called for a more communicative-based approach to the delivery of English (foreign language instruction), which is an aspect of the Basic Education Core Curriculum (2008), with an emphasis on improving oral skills of Thai students, but after ten years of implementation this has not been

successful. Teachers still need training in communicative language teaching (CLT) and extensive training in improving their English proficiency levels before the country will likely see an improvement in the proficiency levels of its students. They need additional training in CLT because the standard practice of teaching a foreign language in Thailand relies on teaching grammar and using rote memorization to learn another language. Most English classes are taught in Thai with limited oral practice (Punthumasen, 2007). Many Thai teachers also do not have training in language instruction. To further compound the issue, at present, local governments still decide how or whether to include English instruction into their curriculum. Consequently, some schools do not teach English as outlined by the Education Act.

To become proficient in a language, practice has to take place. This is where teachers play an important role. Without proficient English teachers to teach, learning is impeded (Anderson, Greene and Loewen, cited in Henson, 2001). The language proficiency of the teachers affects their teaching efficacy which, in turn, affects the achievements of the students and their self-efficacy beliefs to English (ibid.). Briefly, teaching efficacy is the confidence a teacher has in their ability to promote learning in students. Eslami and Fatahi (2008) reveal several studies (Grossman, Reynolds, Ringstaff and Sykes, 1985; Hollow, Anderson and Roth, 1991; Johnson, 1992) that have shown compelling findings of the effect of teachers' beliefs, in many different contexts, on students response to the teaching itself. Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy (1998), also add support to this idea that teachers' beliefs about their abilities influence their teaching practices, which in turn can affect student learning.

There have been many studies on self-efficacy starting with a study by the RAND Corporation (Armor, 1976), followed by Bandura (1977) and then becoming more focused on teaching efficacy (Gibson and Dembo, 1984; Ashton and Webb, 1986; Tschannen Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) but only a small amount of research has been done with the focus on language proficiency levels and teaching efficacy of non-native English speaking teachers (NNEST). In 2004, a study by Butler revealed a gap between primary English teachers, from Korea, Japan and Taiwan, self-reported English proficiency levels and minimum levels of proficiency that they believed were necessary for teaching English. Government officials had asked the teachers to begin focusing on oral communication skills but there were some

questions about the English teachers' confidence in their own communicative language ability and their English teaching skills (Butler, 2004).

Chacón (2005) took this aforementioned research a step further and explored Venezuelan middle school EFL teachers' perceived efficacy and found that their perceived efficacy correlated with their self-reported English proficiency. She also found supportive research that states that “teachers' actions and behaviors are tied to their beliefs, perceptions, assumptions and motivation levels (ibid).” Some researchers have theorized that a belief can be more difficult to change the earlier it is integrated into a belief structure (Pajares, 1992; Bandura, 1993, 1997; cited in Chacón, 2005). Chacón found that:

"the higher the teachers' perceived efficacy in the language skills (speaking, listening, writing, and reading), the higher their sense of efficacy to motivate students and to design instructional strategies. [...] it is important to note that EFL teachers' confidence about their capabilities to teach English affects their perceived efficacy to bring about student change. Lack of competency in English influences teachers' self-efficacy because in analyzing the teaching tasks, teachers will make judgments on their teaching competence to teach students speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English" (2005:269).

Chacon reasoned that when teachers rate their efficacy highly, they will most likely engage students in mastery experiences which, in turn, foster more communicative teaching strategies. She found that because many EFL teachers' communicative competence levels were low, they were not able to use CLT to teach English.

Eslami and Fatahi (2008) followed up with a study in Iran focusing on high school EFL teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and the self-reported English proficiency levels. It also showed that, “a teacher's perceived efficacy was positively correlated with self-reported English proficiency (p.1).” The higher a teachers sense of efficacy the higher their English proficiency. They saw a positive correlation between teachers' efficacy and their use of CLT. Teachers with a lower sense of teaching efficacy tended to use a grammatical teaching orientation.

Elementary Korean teachers were studied by Lee (2009) for English teaching efficacy in relation to attitudes and English proficiency. She found that English proficiency levels affected teaching efficacy, and consequently confidence levels in teaching English.

It is important that the teachers are proficient in the language at a professional level, and that they have confidence in their English language abilities. Elementary Thai English teachers have the added responsibility of being the first foreign language teachers most students are exposed to. For these reasons, the researcher feels it is important to get a snapshot of these teachers' English abilities. Little research has been completed in Thailand in the TESOL field.

Prior studies have used self-reporting teaching efficacy scales based on prior works by Bandura (1997), Gibson and Dembo (1984), and Tschannen-Moran, et al. (1998). This research project used the English-modified Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) as the basis of the teaching efficacy scale for this study, similar to the one used in the Chacón and Eslami and Fatahi studies. The Butler (2004) modified FLOSEM (Stanford Foreign Language Oral Skills Evaluation Matrix; Padilla, Sung, and Aninao, 1997) was chosen to assess teachers' self-reported English proficiency levels.

Proficiency levels have been found to affect a person's sense of efficacy. It is important that elementary school Thai English teachers have good English proficiency, which fosters more confidence in teaching the language. It has been correlated to their English teaching efficacy beliefs (Eslami and Fatahi, 2008; Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk, 2001). They believe when teachers have a high sense of teaching efficacy, they are more apt to teach in a more communicative style, which, in turn, positively affects student achievement. Students' self-efficacy beliefs are bolstered by the high efficacy levels of their teachers. Thus, when students have a higher sense of self-efficacy, they are more likely to believe they can learn English. Student achievement is essential to mastering the language.

To date, and to the researcher's knowledge, there have not been any studies in Thailand that address teachers' self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy. Thus, the aim of this study was to investigate the self-perceived English

proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy of elementary school Thai English teachers, and to determine if there was a correlation between the two.

1.2 Research Questions

This study aimed to quantify elementary school (known as prathom level or grades 1-6 in Thailand) Thai English teachers' perceptions of their level of proficiency in English as well as their self-assessed teaching efficacy in English.

1. What are the self-perceived English proficiency levels of elementary school Thai English teachers, in speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills?
2. What are the self-reported English teaching efficacy levels of elementary school Thai English teachers?
3. Is there a correlation between self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy levels?

1.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were:

1. To investigate the self-perceived English proficiency levels of elementary school Thai English teachers in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
2. To investigate the self-reported English teaching efficacy levels of elementary school Thai English teachers.
3. To determine if there is a correlation between self-reported English proficiency and English teaching efficacy levels of elementary school Thai English teachers.

1.4 Scope of Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceived English proficiency and English teaching efficacy of elementary school Thai English teachers, from northern and central Thailand, through a self-assessment instrument with the objective to determine if there was a correlation between English proficiency and English teaching efficacy. The aim was to study factors that could have an effect on teaching efficacy. This study did not

examine the actual proficiency and teaching efficacy of the participants but relied on their assessment. The tool for measuring the self-reported English proficiency was created and used by Butler (2004). It was as an adaption of the FLOSEM by Padilla and co-workers (1997). The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001), using questions from both the short- and long-form scale, assessed the participants' English teaching efficacy. Data were gathered from 33 elementary school Thai English teachers in the north and central part of Thailand from 2011-2013.

1.5 Definition of terms

Self-perceived English proficiency level: The level of proficiency in this study refers to the self-rated proficiency of the elementary school Thai English teachers and their level of competency in the use of speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English. In this study, the macro skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing were appraised through a self-assessment survey instrument. Language proficiency was determined by teachers' responses to statements that relate to the self-perceived proficiency scale starting at (1) beginner-limited ability to (6) native-like ability. An overall proficiency level was determined from the mean average of scores in the macro skills as reported by each participant. The Butler (2004) instrument, based on the Stanford Foreign Language Oral Skills Evaluation Matrix (FLOSEM; Padilla, Sung, and Aninao, 1997), was used in this study.

Self-reported English teaching efficacy level: English teaching efficacy is defined here as an elementary school Thai English teacher's self-perception (self-reported) about their capabilities to teach and motivate students to learn English. The degree to which teachers believe they can affect change corresponds to the English teaching efficacy level. The model survey instrument used in this study adapted the TSES, by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). The scale was divided into three subscales: student engagement, use of instructional strategies, and personal teaching efficacy. The subscale of personal teaching efficacy was added by the researcher. The verbiage was modified to reflect English teaching efficacy, similar to the instruments used in the Chacon (2004) and Eslami & Fatahi (2008) studies.

Elementary school Thai English teacher: The teachers represented in this study are typically female (85% of the sample) and teach elementary-level English to Thai students. In Thailand this level is also known as prathom, which are grades 1-6 in Thai public schools.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study looks at elementary school Thai teachers' teaching efficacy in an EFL environment through subscales of: student engagement (SE), instructional strategies (IS), and personal teaching efficacy (PTE) in Thai EFL settings to get a better picture of what these teachers believe their English teaching efficacy to be. It also investigates teaching efficacy in relation to language proficiency and other related factors from the perspective of elementary school Thai English teachers.

1. By examining elementary school Thai English teachers' perceived English proficiency and English teaching efficacy, this study can offer more information about Thai teachers teaching efficacy in the EFL field. It can provide a more detailed look at elementary school Thai English teachers' sense of teaching efficacy in relation to other factors such as English proficiency, degree major, years of teaching experience, etc. This information can be of benefit to different interest groups.

2. This study can give a voice to the teachers and addresses the issue of Thai English teachers' sense of proficiency and teaching efficacy in the EFL setting. When it is known how elementary school Thai English teachers perceive their English proficiency and teaching efficacy, better developmental programs and courses can be implemented to improve their teaching of English, thus increasing students' proficiency in English.

3. The students of Thailand will benefit when more teachers understand teaching efficacy and how it relates to student learning. "Teachers with higher levels of efficacy are more likely to learn and use innovative strategies for teaching [. . .] and design instruction that develops students' self-perceptions of their academic skills (Silverman and Davis, 2009)." Teachers with higher English teaching efficacy produce students with higher self-efficacy about learning English. Thailand and ASEAN benefit when students become more proficient in English.

4. School administrators and the Ministry of Education officials will be able see how English teachers respond to this survey research. By assessing the results, professional development programs could be geared toward improving English proficiency and teaching efficacy. Teachers need strong support at the school level, as well as the governmental level, to effectively teach; gaining more support is crucial to teachers' efficacy (Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy, 2000).

5. Teacher education programs could profit from this information. Understanding the relationship between language proficiency and teacher efficacy could influence how some courses are taught. In essence, this information could provide the impetus to improve curriculum design.

6. Creating an awareness about the gap between the English teachers' language proficiency, their abilities to teach English, and actual teaching outcomes or student proficiency is an important consideration in Thailand education system today. Results of this study could be a springboard for better teaching pedagogy. When teachers are better able to deliver more effective EFL instruction, Thailand will produce students with higher EFL proficiency. This can help make Thailand more competitive in the global market in addition to ASEAN.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

Literature relevant to the use of English as a global language, language proficiency, self-efficacy and teaching efficacy are reviewed in this chapter. The theoretical framework relating to language proficiency and teaching efficacy, including related studies, as well as rationale for the methodology are discussed.

2.1 Role of English as a global language

English is the language used worldwide for international communication and business. As a result more and more people are learning the language. In fact, over one billion people are said to speak the language as their native, second, or foreign language, for many only at a basic level (Thirumalai, 2002). Access to information about other cultures in the world has become more convenient through the World Wide Web. It has been a driving force in the spread of English being used as an international language. English is used as the common language on this global platform with over 565 million (English language) users ("Internet Users in the World," 2011). Popular websites like google, facebook, you tube, and wikipedia are English-based and some of the most visited sites by users, based on information gathered from Alexa.com ("Topsites," 2013). In Thailand, there are 17 million internet users accessing websites ("Internet Usage in Thailand," 2014). Many use English to understand the content and communicate with people all over the world. More young people than ever are exposed to various forms of English every day. They are also being exposed to the cultures that go with the language. Within the past five years public schools in Thailand have been equipped with computer rooms that have computers that are connected to the internet (ibid.). There is now a greater need for these young people to be proficient in English so that they can participate in the online community as well as the ASEAN community.

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To help these young people in Thailand be more proficient in English, there is also a greater need for more proficient English teachers. Language proficiency of Thai English teachers is a hotly debated topic. People wonder why Thai students, after having 12 years of English instruction, graduate without actually being able to communicate in English with more than a simple, "Hi, how are you?" To understand this, taking a look at Thai culture may help.

Foley (2005) talks about intercultural communicative competence and how the key concepts of Buddhism guide teachers and learners approaches to learning any subject. Briefly, concepts like karma, hierarchical status, *bunghun*, or "the benefit and benevolence rendered to someone" (ibid, p.228), which is the duty of a teacher to provide knowledge as well as wisdom to all students, and *krengjai*, or respectfully not wanting to cause discomfort. *Krengjai* is what makes Thai students not want to cause conflict or confrontation, and therefore, not want to ask a teacher to repeat something when they do not understand. The learning of English is tied to Thai culture in ways not always seen by the foreign eye. Besides teaching culture associated with English speakers, Thai teachers also need to understand and respect their native culture while teaching English as a foreign language. Thai culture is changing more rapidly than ever because students, now more than ever, are being influenced by the world wide web and peering outside their culture to discover new ways of communicating with the world.

2.2 Language Proficiency

There have been many views on the concept of language proficiency. It has been defined as the ability to communicate in a language through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It includes both knowledge and practice of the language (TEQSA, 2013). Language proficiency has also been defined as "the ability to use language in real world situations in a spontaneous interaction and non-rehearsed context and in a manner acceptable and appropriate to native speakers of the language. Proficiency demonstrates what a language user is able to do" (ACTFL, 2012:4).

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Additionally, Canale and Swain (1980) have defined language proficiency as "communicative competence," with "linguistic competence" being an intrinsic part of the concept (Iyldyz, 2007). Richards, Platt, and Platt (cited in Griffiths, 2003) asserted that proficiency is the level of skill that a person uses to convey a language. De Avila (1997), with a focus on education, states that:

"language proficiency consists of both receptive and productive skills, input and output, information sent and received. It is made up of both oral and literacy skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Proficiency in each of the four domains is viewed as a necessary element to language proficiency, as it contributes to academic success in the specific sense" (p. 2).

Stern (cited in Ilurda, 2000) used 'proficiency,' 'competence,' and 'knowledge of the language' interchangeably and used many different concepts of proficiency, which included mastery of language form (including cognitive, linguistic sociocultural, and affective domains); the ability to use language creatively as a communication tool with less focus on form. His definition is "the actual performance of given individual learners or groups of learners" (ibid, p.341).

Communicative competence is the root of language proficiency. A teacher's communicative competence or ability is affected by their proficiency level in their L2 (second language). And this, in turn, affects their ability to teach English effectively (Lee 2002, cited in Butler, 2004). Initially, communicative competence was coined by Dell Hymes (as cited in Brown, 1994) in response to Chomsky's (1965, *ibid.*) view of competence and performance. Hymes felt Chomsky's theory was limited to knowledge of grammar with performance being a separate component. It offered no connection to the appropriateness of the communication. Hymes felt communicative competence should also include the social meaning associated with the communication. He brought a sociolinguistic perspective to Chomsky's work (Bagaric, 2007). Besides understanding the language, an L2 speaker should be able to use it appropriately in relation to the situation. From this foundation came more research in the field.

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Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) went on to define communicative competence in the area of L2 learning (Yano, 2003). They described four types of communicative competence: grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic, and discourse (the last was added by Canale in 1983). Grammatical competence encompasses “knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology” (Canale and Swain, 1980:29). Sociolinguistic competence requires an understanding of the context in which the communication takes place. Strategic competence relates to the ability to use compensation strategies to make up for breakdowns in communication. Discourse competence deals with the ability to form comprehensible and coherent utterances and being able to manipulate the language to fulfill other communication goals such as reading or writing (Brown, 1994). Canale and Swain were the first researchers to give a better-rounded, multifaceted model of the communicative aspect of language proficiency.

Cummins (1979) has focused on bilingual speakers and L2 proficiency. He has defined two types of language proficiency in the context of English teaching. Basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) are acquired by L2 learners in approximately two years. Learners are able to use the language for oral communication in a relatively short period of time, yet take longer to acquire cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Learning to speak and use a new language in an academic environment is significantly different than learning BICS and takes longer, 5-7 years, to become proficient because factors such as more difficult academic language, absence of non-verbal clues, reading and writing demands, etc. tend to be a hindrance in an academic learning situation (“BICS, CALP, AND CUP,” n.d.). Learning the theory behind the utterances of the language is harder to grasp and consequently takes longer to master skills such as reading and writing.

The term "communicative language ability" (Bachman, 1990) is also a good descriptor for language proficiency and offers a "broader view of language proficiency" (p.4). Llorca (2000) has taken the term communicative language ability and further subdivided it into language proficiency and communicative proficiency. He calls for "the adoption of

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'proficiency' as a middle term between 'competence' and 'performance', a term that may include the notion of 'ability'" (p. 93). By combining two different concepts, (linguistic) *competence* (Chomskyan view) and *communicative language ability* (with subcategories of language proficiency and communicative proficiency), Llurda proposes a broader, multifaceted definition of language proficiency as a solution and way of clearing confusion over the term.

There have also been other contributions to the communicative competence theory by several other researchers, (Widdowson, Savignon, Bachman, Stern, cited in Ohno, 2002) each adding to or defining different facets of the aforementioned models. Language proficiency means more than just being able to understand the linguistics behind the language or being able to speak it. It also encompasses having the ability to use the language in many different contexts and domains: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Of which these are taught to learners by parents, caretakers, and/or teachers.

Generally, teachers are concerned about their level of language proficiency and understand its importance (Norris, 1999). They usually know that a teacher's proficiency has been correlated to students' learning outcomes (Eslami and Fatahi, 2008; Butler, 2004; Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) so there is good reason to be concerned. For students to become more proficient, language acquisition has to occur. Learning a language is different from learning science or math. As such, teachers recognize that knowledge of content is not enough. Language teaching requires the ability to communicate in the language through the use of communication skills. Taken one step farther, "second language education is fundamentally different from other content areas in that it does not constitute a body of content per se, but rather involves the learning or teaching of a vehicle for communicating content" (Tedick and Walker, cited in Norris, 1999).

If teachers have low English language proficiency, they tend to shy away from a communicative style of teaching and opt for a more teacher-centered classroom that relies on more grammar instruction than speaking and listening instruction (Lee, cited in Butler, 2004; Chacon, 2005). Language proficiency is also believed to affect a teacher's self-confidence

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(Eslami and Fatahi, 2008). Lange (cited in Eslami and Fatahi, 2008) said it is a determinant to the amount of English use in the classroom, as well as being a crucial characteristic of a good language teacher.

In this study, language proficiency is considered in the L2 context. Language proficiency is defined by the researcher as the level of competency a person has in the use of a language; it is an intertwining of the ability to use the language, as well as knowledge of the language, or communicative competency. The macro skills, speaking, listening, reading, and writing, comprise aspects of language proficiency. Since all four skills are used in the teaching of English in Thailand, they were the focus and basis of assessing proficiency levels of elementary school Thai English teachers. Competency is considered "the knowledge that enables one to produce and comprehend a language" as defined in the American Heritage Dictionary (2009). This definition is the result of culling of terms discussed by many researchers (Chomsky, 1965; Hymes, 1970; Taylor, 1988; Canale and Swain, 1980 and Canale, 1983; Cummins, 1983; Bachman, 1990; Stern, 1983) as discussed in the research of Llorca (2000).

What level of English proficiency should elementary school English teachers in Thailand have? That is a big question that needs answering. When there are standards to meet teachers will rise to the standard. Teachers' proficiency levels in Thailand, overall, vary greatly because there is no standard to meet. There are no EFL teacher assessment matrices used in Thailand. During teacher training, prospective teachers have to take and pass a proficiency test during their second year; that is all that is required. To become an elementary school teacher in Thailand, the elementary education program requirements include only a two-credit course in English teaching methods and a choice of taking two major electives out of five: Thai, English, social studies, math, and science. Each major area includes 15 credits of specific training. For additional elective choices, there are only six credits offered in English training. This means that there is the possibility that a future elementary teacher has only taken two English course credits. Elementary teachers in Thailand teach many subjects during the day. Some schools have specific English teachers, but many schools do not, leaving the English teaching to teachers not specifically trained in language teaching.

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Consequently, teachers' language proficiency levels may not be good enough to teach their students. How will the Ministry of Education of Thailand deal with this situation? Will a language proficiency scale be adopted to evaluate Thai English teachers in the near future?

Considering the proficiency scale used in this study and the core tenets of the foreign language curriculum of Thailand, what is an acceptable level? The Butler/FLOSEM (2004) assessment uses a scale starting at (1) beginner-limited ability to (6) native-like ability. In Thailand, it is unreasonable to expect teachers to be native-like or even at an advanced level of proficiency considering the training they receive. It may seem unreasonable to even suggest an intermediate proficiency level (3-4 on the Butler scale) across the four domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing; a level that would be appropriate to meet the curriculum guidelines to grade 6 (BIC, 2008). The Thailand basic core curriculum (2008) outlines that grade 6 level students are expected to: understand and act on verbal and written instructions and "communicate about themselves, their families, schools, and environment, foods, beverages, free time and recreation, health and welfare, selling and buying, and climate with vocabulary of around 1050-1200 words" (p. 255). A discussion by the Ministry of Education on the minimum level required to teach EFL would be a starting point, which needs to be started immediately if it has not already been done. The adoption of a language assessment tool is needed.

Assessing language proficiency of teachers is done in many countries around the world. It has been done through proficiency frameworks such as the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), which is an oral communication test for language teachers; the European Common Framework for Reference for Languages, used by language learners as well as teachers, who use it as a standard of reference for proficiency levels, curriculum guidelines, syllabus development, textbooks, etc.; and Canadian Academic English Language Assessment, a Canadian assessment generally given to students entering universities (Wikipedia, n.d).

There are also many well-known English language proficiency tests: IELTS (International English Language Test System), TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign

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Language), and TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) that are used for assessing language abilities and often required for entrance to schools and international businesses.

In summary, language proficiency, as discussed above, is an important factor to consider for Thai English teachers. The level of proficiency elementary school English teachers need has not yet been established. They may need to have an intermediate level of proficiency to be able to effectively teach English according to the core curriculum. This study used a self-reporting, self-perceived proficiency scale as a convenient and reliable way to assess teachers' proficiency levels (LeBlanc and Painchaud, 1985; Mistar, 2011). Different language assessment frameworks and standardized language proficiency tests were discussed to create awareness about ways to assess language proficiency.

2.3 Self efficacy

Language proficiency is considered "a factor related to EFL teachers feeling of self efficacy" (Eslami and Fatahi, 2008). In addition to language proficiency, self efficacy beliefs about L2 also play a significant role in how an L2 speaker uses the language. Efficacy beliefs are subject specific, thus a person may have high efficacy beliefs related to their cooking ability, while also having low efficacy beliefs about their swimming abilities.

Self-efficacy is an aspect of a person's language competence. It is at the center of Bandura's (1977, 1997) Social Learning (Cognition) Theory. It is based on the belief that people learn in a social context and are influenced by their environment. Much of a young person's learning takes place in the classroom, where they learn by observation or modeling from a teacher. He states that it is "the belief in one's capabilities to recognize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" or a person's belief of their capabilities to complete tasks (Bandura, cited in Van Wagner, 2009). It takes the view of human agency, in that people are agents engrossed in their own growth and they can take action to make things happen. Through self-reflection, a major aspect of social cognitive theory, people can make sense of their world by exploring their beliefs, evaluating them and

consequently changing their thinking and behaviors (Pajares, 2002). A person's concept of self-efficacy, in different domains, tends to grow and evolve throughout one's life. If one believes they are not good at something or that they will not succeed at something, it may have a negative impact on how they go about or accomplish those tasks or goals. A person with a strong sense of self-efficacy in a particular area or domain will "do what it takes" to master the goal or task set before them. Someone with a poor sense of self-efficacy will tend to avoid taking risks and may focus on their failings instead of their accomplishments and lose confidence in their abilities. In essence, self-efficacy beliefs help shape the outcomes one expects and how much effort they will put into an endeavor.

Bandura (1977, 1997) also realized the multidimensional aspect of self-efficacy and the dynamic interplay between one's behavior, personal factors such as mood or stress level, and their environment. Pajares (2002) describes Bandura's conception as reciprocal determinism: determined by behavior, environmental factors and personal factors, such as cognitive, affective, and biological events. These interactions result in a triadic reciprocity. This can and has been related to teaching in that "teachers can work to improve their students' emotional states and to correct their faulty self-beliefs and habits of thinking (personal factors), improve their academic skills and self-regulatory practices (behavior), and alter the school and classroom structures that may work to undermine student success (environmental factors) (ibid.:1)." Schools can also have a positive impact by helping to, "develop a collective belief about the capability of their students to learn, of their teachers to teach and otherwise enhance the lives of their students, and of their administrators and policymakers to create environments conducive to these tasks (ibid.:3)." Academic learning is influenced by one's environment and their beliefs of efficacy in a particular area.

There are four sources where individuals form their self-efficacy beliefs as defined from the psychological perspective of Bandura. They are: mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal (Bandura, 1977). Briefly, mastery experience is a positive belief that is the result of past performances of tasks that resulted in success; vicarious experience refers to observing others successfully model skills, to gain a sense of confidence in doing a similar task themselves; verbal persuasion is provided by

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others to give feedback or support to a person; while emotional arousal is generally related to stressful and threatening situations that arouse fear and thus, inhibit performance. Although Bandura used psychological experiments involving threatening situations, examples can be seen from a more positive perspective. When people have early success accomplishing a task (mastery experience) such as learning something new, they are more likely to do it again and have a more positive attitude about it than if they were not successful. Mastery experiences can be enhanced by watching others successfully complete the task (vicarious experience), thus gaining confidence in their own perception of their ability to accomplish the same task. As an example, when seeing role models, be it at the familial, governmental, or academic level, model the use English on a daily basis, more students are more likely to try to learn English too. When learning the language, encouragement and praise (verbal persuasion) can go a long way in boosting a person's confidence. Yet, when students experience stress or fear (emotional arousal), anxiety levels usually increase and can inhibit learning. When emotional arousal is reduced by learning coping skills such as learning strategies, there is more of a chance of mastery in a quicker time. When the emotional arousal is positive in nature, such as experiencing success in communicating in the new language, anxiety can be reduced, thus increasing the chance of mastery experiences in learning the language.

Just as a person's self-efficacy beliefs influence their beliefs about how good they may be at accomplishing certain tasks, the same can be said of teachers and their beliefs about their teaching abilities. Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs about their teaching abilities are increased when they have more knowledge about teaching, which can affect how they relate to students. Teachers who have high levels of teaching efficacy will persevere in their attempt to reach students; they want their students to have mastery experiences because they know student achievement is enhanced. These mastery experiences are just as crucial to students as they are to teachers. Teachers' beliefs about the effectiveness of their teaching abilities are the core of teaching efficacy.

2.4 Teaching efficacy

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It could be that a lack of mastery experiences have had adverse effects on Thai English teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy beliefs toward teaching English. Because some have not had positive or successful experiences in teaching English, these failures have lowered their sense of English teaching efficacy. It could be that by watching others model an appropriate teaching style such as CLT through what Bandura calls vicarious experience, and being supported by verbal persuasion as teachers learn a more communicative style of language teaching, their fear and anxiety levels can be reduced, thereby making them feel more confident of their language teaching abilities. Their mastery experiences in teaching English could very likely increase. By being more confident in their abilities, they would more likely be able to impart that confidence in language learning to their students. Consequently, Thai English teachers would be in a better position to achieve the goals of the 1999 National Education Act (ONEC, 1999).

Lee Schulman's (1986) influential work on teacher knowledge has provided the foundation for defining the basis of teacher knowledge. He focuses on content knowledge in teaching. This is the amount of knowledge a teacher holds in a certain subject area. He refers to Schwab's (1978, as cited in Schulman, 1986) definition, "to think properly about content knowledge requires going beyond knowledge of the facts or concepts of a domain. It requires understanding the structures of the subject matter". Schulman states that, "The teacher need not only understand that something is so; the teacher must further understand why it is so" (1986:9). Pedagogical and curricular knowledge are included under the content knowledge umbrella. Pedagogical knowledge is the understanding of the concepts and curricular knowledge is the vehicle in which these concepts and knowledge is delivered.

Teachers may have the content knowledge of the English language, but sometimes lack the confidence to deliver that knowledge in a form that will promote communicative competence in their students. The ability to teach a language is different from teaching other subjects such as math, reading, sciences, etc. To become competent, one needs to use the language to communicate orally, as well as having the ability to comprehend what is being said. Teachers need to have confidence in their speaking ability to effectively teach a language. A teacher's efficacy beliefs "can potentially influence both the kind of environment

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that they create as well as the various instructional practices introduced in the classroom" (Bandura, cited in Eslami and Fatahi, 2008).

The concept of teacher efficacy has its origins in a study published by RAND Corporation researchers in 1976 (Armor, cited in Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy, 1998). This study included a questionnaire that had two items added to it just before publishing. Those two items had their theoretical base in a study by Rotter (1966; *ibid.*) and his idea of locus of control in social learning theory. These items stated below had a great impact on the theoretical concept of teacher efficacy

Item 1: *"When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment."*

Item 2: *"If I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students."* (p.4)

Gibson and Dembo (1984), filling a need for a more exact questionnaire created a survey that incorporated the two items of the RAND study and Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy. They showed how the RAND study and Bandura's work correlate on outcome expectancies and self-efficacy dimensions. They assigned the term general teaching efficacy (GTE) to Item 1 of the RAND study. It assesses outcome expectancies as defined by Bandura and is an externally driven construct. Item 2 assesses self-efficacy which is labeled as personal teaching efficacy (PTE). Being of a more personal nature that is controllable by the teacher, it is considered an internal construct. Gibson and Dembo developed additional items and created the Teacher Efficacy Scale (1984). They believed that efficacy judgments were contextually based and should be measured that way (Henson, 2001). This scale became the standard in the field and was used by many researchers in their studies for many years.

A study by Kubanyiova (2006) showed that, "insecurity in one's English proficiency is a substantial part of [...] the teachers' lack of teaching efficacy" (p.10). Studies have correlated a teacher's language proficiency level to their ability to teach English effectively

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(Eslami and Fatahi, 2008; Kamhi-Stein and Mahboob, Soodak and Podell, cited in Eslami and Fatahi, 2008). Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy (1998) proposed an integrated model of teacher efficacy. They reviewed the history of teacher efficacy from its beginnings in the RAND study (cited in Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy, 1998), with the work of Rotter (cited in Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy, 1998) and his social learning theory as the theoretical framework, and the work of Bandura (1977) and his social cognition theory; both as psychological frames of reference. Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy (1998) say the former study showed that a “teachers' sense of efficacy had a strong positive effect not only on student performance but on the percent of project goals achieved, on the amount of teacher change, and on the continued use of project methods and materials after the project ended” (p. 3-4). The two items of interest in the RAND study reflects PTE, or a teacher's personal belief about their teaching ability, and GTE, the belief that the motivation and learning of students was the responsibility of the students; it was not a consequence of their own teaching. The result of this research demonstrated the impact of efficacy on student achievement (ibid.).

Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy (1998) have proposed an integrated model of teacher efficacy that combines the conceptual framework of the Rand research and Bandura's work as well as suggesting new areas of research. They see teacher efficacy as context-specific because teachers have differing levels of teaching efficacy depending on the teaching situation. A teacher may be highly efficacious teaching math or Thai but have a low sense of teaching efficacy when teaching English. They used Bandura's four categories of experience or sources of efficacy in their model while also focusing on analysis of the teaching task and assessment of personal teaching competence.

The analysis of the teaching task is similar to GTE in that it deals with the teacher's ability to cope with the circumstances of the given situation. The assessment of personal teaching competence is associated with PTE. Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy agree with Bandura (cited in Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy, 1998) that self-efficacy is specific to a particular task. They also concur that it, “has to do with self-perceptions of competence rather than actual level of competence” (ibid, p.7). They believe

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the interaction of all these components shapes teacher efficacy. “Greater efficacy leads to greater effort and persistence, which leads to better performance, which in turn leads to greater efficacy” (ibid.:22). Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) created a Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale that has subsequently been used by many researchers. It has been modified to be used in EFL/ESL settings also.

Teachers will be more likely to have a higher sense of teacher efficacy when they have opportunities to participate in teacher training programs that give teachers more learning opportunities in the communicative approach to teaching and pedagogic principles concentrating on learner-centeredness, because they will be more prepared for the challenges of teaching and more specifically teaching English. As teachers learn new strategies for English teaching their overall teaching will improve and, in turn, student achievement will improve (Guskey, 1988).

2.5 Self-reported teaching efficacy

The use of self-report assessments in teaching efficacy scales is convenient and allows busy teachers to complete assessment surveys at a time that is favorable for them. Self-assessment tools have been shown to be reliable and give consistent and uniform results (LeBlanc & Painchaud, 1985; Mistar, 2011). It has been used as a tool in classrooms where students rate themselves and their learning with good success. Mistar (2011) found a positive correlation between self-assessed scores for language proficiency and actual test results. There has also been research that has refuted the reliability of self-assessment saying among other things that the respondent may try to please the teacher/other by marking themselves higher than they may be (Cohen, cited in Mistar, 2011). All in all, there has been more positive reports of positive correlation than not (ibid.). The use of a self-assessment tool in this study was a fast and reliable way to investigate teachers' self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy.

The self-reporting Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) was used in this study. It measured the extent to which teachers believe they can affect learning in students. The scale was modified to reflect English teaching

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efficacy beliefs with subscales of student engagement, instructional strategies, and personal teaching efficacy.

2.6 Related research

Three studies formed the basis of this study. Butler (2004), Chacon (2005), and Eslami and Fatahi (2008) studied nonnative EFL teachers to learn more about their proficiency levels (Butler, 2004, Eslami and Fatahi, 2008) and self-efficacy beliefs (Chacon, 2005, Eslami and Fatahi, 2008) since these factors have been shown to affect teachers teaching abilities.

Butler (2004) asked elementary teachers in the Republic of Korea, Taiwan, and Japan to evaluate their English proficiency and to rate what they thought were minimum proficiency levels for English teachers. She expanded the Foreign Language Oral Skills Evaluation Matrix (FLOSEM) by Padilla, Sung, and Aninao (1997) to include the reading and writing domains. The self-reported data that was gathered showed that most teachers thought their proficiency levels were lower than what is needed to actually teach English. They reported that they felt less proficient in oral skills, which was not unexpected, even though it is known that most Asian countries focus on grammar skills more than speaking skills. The results were of concern because if teachers did not think their proficiency levels were acceptable; their teaching quality could affect students learning, motivation, and success at learning to speak English.

Teachers' perceived teaching efficacy was correlated to perceived English proficiency levels in the Chacon (2005) and Eslami and Fatahi (2008) studies. Chacon focused on middle-school teachers in Venezuela and Eslami and Fatahi sampled non-native English high school teachers in Iran. Both studies used an English-modified Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The wording was changed to reflect experiences in an EFL classroom. "School work" was replaced with "English" and "English" was added to several items. The efficacy scale was subdivided into student engagement, classroom management, and instructional strategies. Both studies also found

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that teaching efficacy beliefs were affected by language proficiency levels; and when teachers rated themselves with a high efficacy rating, they were more likely to use communicative language teaching (CLT).

As stated, Eslami and Fatahi (2008) investigated English proficiency levels and efficacy beliefs of EFL teachers in Iran. They used the teaching efficacy scale of Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) and a proficiency scale similar to Butler (2004). They found positive correlations between the teachers' self-assessed proficiency levels and perceived self-efficacy beliefs. Teachers who rated themselves highly in speaking, listening, and writing proficiency also reported that they were more efficacious in their use of instructional strategies. There was also a significant correlation found between the teaching efficacy subscales--student engagement, classroom management, and instructional strategies--and the application of CLT strategies. This suggested that the more efficacious a teacher felt the less prone they were to use a grammar-oriented approach, in favor of a more communicative teaching style. Teachers believed they were more efficacious when they perceived their proficiency levels as high.

2.7 English teaching in the Thai context

Scores for TOEFL examinations, which reflect English proficiency levels, show that Thailand lags behind many other countries in ASEAN. Of the nine ASEAN nations listed (Brunei had no statistics), Thailand ranked eighth (Prapphal, 2002). The Education First Organization (2013) also ranked Thailand 55 out of 60 countries for English proficiency levels. Even though English is taught for 12 years, there seems to be a problem with students' ability to learn the language.

The English language basic education core curriculum of Thailand recognizes that elementary education is "one of the most important foundations for children to gain a better standard of living and welfare once they become adults" (Nomnian, 2013, p. 584). Foley (2005) believes that English proficiency is an essential aspect of Thai students learning. There are four tenets of the basic core curriculum (BIC, 2008) for language learning. It

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professes: language for communication, or the use of the macro skills to exchange information, express feelings, and being able to have interpersonal relationships; language and culture, or learning about the cultural similarities and differences to Thai culture; language relationship to other learning, use of foreign languages for other subjects and expanding world views; and language and relationship with society and other global communities, or the use of a foreign language to connect with the world through further education and career options. These strands aim to promote higher English proficiency and a positive attitude toward English and better preparation for a more global citizenship (Nomnian, 2013).

Traditionally Thai language teaching has relied on grammar instruction and rote learning. Often the learning of vocabulary is not in context of a situation, it is disassociated from the communicative aspect of the language. Wiriyachitra (2002) states that Thai teachers do not like to teach listening and speaking skills. It has not prepared students for a more global world. Communicative language teaching, which was incorporated into the Thai curriculum in 1996 has not been fully embraced (Punthumasen, 2007). They still teach by the grammar-translation method. Often teachers teach English in Thai (Segovia and Hardison, 2009). In addition, students do not have chances to practice English with native speakers on a regular basis. There are many obstacles that inhibit the learning of English. Biyaem (cited in Wiriyachitra, 2002) and others say that heavy instruction schedules, inadequate resources and equipment, large class size, and poor language skills hinder teaching English (Punthumasen, 2007; Noom-ura, 2013). The lack of English qualifications among elementary school teachers is also seen as a problem (Baker, 2008). As mentioned earlier, the influence of Buddhism in the culture also has an impact on the way subjects are taught in Thailand.

In many Thai public schools there are no specialized English teachers as such. The elementary school teachers are often responsible for teaching several subjects: math, science, Thai, reading, Thai culture, etc. during their work day. The addition of teaching English can be seen as an extra burden. Teaching a language is different from teaching math or science, which does rely on rote learning of facts. Language acquisition requires more than rote learning, the language has to be practiced to gain full benefit. Young learners are also still

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learning their own language and its structure, much less focus goes to learning English because, many times the parents and community members do not speak English, thus, making it hard for them to practice.

The Thai National Education Act of 1999 called for more learner-centered methods along with a more communicative approach to learning EFL (Punthumasen, 2007). Unfortunately, these standards have not been implemented successfully (Graham, 2013). Using learner-centered methods continues to be a challenge for many teachers (Kimhachandra, 2010). In fact, teachers have expressed concerns about insufficient training, resources, and professional support as well as low proficiency levels (Segovia and Hardison, 2009). There have been few studies on the teaching English in Thai elementary schools. One study was found; Kuhasuwan (2006) focused on teaching vocabulary strategies to elementary level students. More effective learning strategies were used but teachers still promoted a traditional and passive style of learning. It was recommended that teachers become more of a facilitator to allow students to participate in more communicative activities among themselves.

2.8 Summary

One's self-efficacy beliefs determines how much effort will be put forth, how long they will persevere, and how flexible they are in completing tasks. A teacher's self-efficacy beliefs about teaching, in turn, have an influence how they approach the teaching of a particular subject. Because research has shown that a teacher's self-efficacy has an effect on learning outcomes of students, it is important to assess teachers efficacy beliefs to know more about how they operate in the classroom. Since efficacy levels vary according to the subject area, looking at language teachers sense of efficacy in teaching a foreign or L2 may produce information that can be used for future teacher professional development programs. This chapter has examined the theoretical background behind language proficiency, self-efficacy, and teaching efficacy, which have been the foundation of limited research in the ESL field. Researchers in other countries that teach EFL have investigated and found a correlation between the two. This information highlights the need for more effective teaching and

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professional development programs to increase communicative competence among EFL teachers in Thailand.

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Chapter 3

Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methods used in this quantitative study to better understand elementary school Thai English teachers' perception of their English proficiency and English teaching efficacy. The participants and instruments are described below.

3.1 Subjects

The subjects of this research came from a population of elementary school Thai teachers who teach English. A cross-sectional sample was taken of 33 elementary school Thai English teachers by convenience and snowball sampling methods (Mertler and Charles, 2008). Some of the sample was found at a TESOL conference, through teachers who went to the conference and to teachers who said they would distribute the surveys to other teachers in northern Thailand. Other participants came from an elementary school in central Thailand. Of the 33 who returned the survey, only 30 completed the language proficiency section, while all 33 completed the other sections of the instrument.

Elementary school Thai English teachers were chosen because they are most Thai students' first English teachers. It is important for these teachers to have a good command of the language (proficiency) and good teaching efficacy because they set the foundation for students' future language learning.

3.2 Research Instruments

3.2.1 Survey instrument

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To answer the research questions, two self-reporting scales were used in this study. Also included in the survey instrument were questions to gather personal information from the participants.

The survey instrument used in this study included three sections. The first section was in the form of a questionnaire to gather demographic information about the participants. The second section was comprised of a self-perceived English proficiency scale to investigate teachers' perceived levels of proficiency in the four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The proficiency scale was used to answer research question one. The third section included an English teaching efficacy scale, known as the Teaching Efficacy Scale (TSES), by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). It was modified to assess English teaching efficacy specifically. The teaching efficacy scale was used to answer research question two.

The demographic information section was adapted from a National Education Association questionnaire (Bhutan, 2004). Typical questions requested information about gender, age, education level and education major. Open-ended questions included: name of school, province, major, courses taken related to English teaching methods, teaching theory, workshops taken that focused on English teaching, where the participant may have traveled abroad and how long, number of hours spent teaching English and other subjects, and any comments they may have wanted to share. The demographic information section was written in English and translated to Thai to make sure that it was clear and easy to understand for Thai teachers of all proficiency levels. The translation was completed by a professional translator (Thai national) and reevaluated and confirmed as an acceptable translation by another translator (Australian national). The actual questionnaire is shown in Appendix A.

The first research objective was to investigate the self-perceived English proficiency level of elementary school Thai English teachers. The instrument used to assess the teachers' proficiency levels was a self-perceived proficiency scale. It is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Self-perceived English proficiency scale

Skill	Scale level	Statements
Listening	1	I can understand a limited number of high frequency words and a common conversational set of expressions such as, “How are you?” or “My name is...”
	1.5	Between 1 and 2
	2	I can understand simple questions and statements in short dialogues or passages if they are repeated at slower-than normal speed.
	2.5	Between 2 and 3
	3	I can understand the main point(s) of a short dialogue or passage if spoken at slower-than-normal speed. I may need some repetition.
	3.5	Between 3 and 4

Skill	Scale level	Statements
	4	I can understand most of what is said (all main points and most details) when the conversation is at a near normal speed
	4.5	Between 4 and 5
	5	I can understand nearly everything at normal speed, although occasional repetition may be necessary.
	5.5	Between 5 and 6
	6	I can understand everything at normal speed like a native speaker.
	Speaking	1
1.5		Between 1 and 2

	2	I can participate in a simple conversation on familiar everyday topics at slower-than-normal speed. I must frequently pause during conversation.
	2.5	Between 2 and 3
	3	I can express myself using simple language but make mistakes and pause a lot when I try to express complex ideas.
	3.5	Between 3 and 4
	4	I can effortlessly express myself at near normal speed. Occasionally, I have to slow down when expressing complex ideas and less-common expressions.
	4.5	Between 4 and 5
	5	I am generally fluent, but occasionally have minor pauses when I search for the correct manner of expression.
	5.5	Between 5 and 6
	6	I have native-like fluency.
Reading	1	I can recognize a limited number of high frequency written words and understand English signs used on the street.
	1.5	Between 1 and 2
	2	I can understand simple directions and statements in short passages if they are written in simple sentences.
	2.5	Between 2 and 3
	3	I can understand the main point(s) of a short passage written in ordinary English if I can have some assistance such as the use of a dictionary and a grammar book, although there are usually some parts that remain unclear to me.
	3.5	Between 3 and 4
	4	I can read and understand most of what is written in regular English texts, although depending on the genre of the texts, I may encounter some unclear words and may

need to consult a dictionary in order to comprehend the texts.

4.5 Between 4 and 5

Skill	Scale level	Statements
	5	I can read nearly everything with ease, although it is still slower for me to read in English than in Thai; I occasionally may encounter some unfamiliar words and expressions.
	5.5	Between 5 and 6
	6	I can read various kinds of English texts at a normal speed and with ease, just like I read in Thai.
Writing	1	I can spell a limited number of high frequency words and common phrases.
	1.5	Between 1 and 2
	2	I can write a short paragraph using simple sentences with basic structures, but I frequently make mistakes in grammar and vocabulary.
	2.5	Between 2 and 3
	3	I can write letters and short essays using relatively simple language. I can produce a few complex sentence constructions but with noticeable mistakes in grammar and vocabulary. I usually take a long time to write when I try to express complex ideas.
	3.5	Between 3 and 4
	4	I have enough vocabulary and grammatical knowledge to write English with relative ease; however, I occasionally make some noticeable mistakes in grammar and

	vocabulary.
4.5	Between 4 and 5
5	I can write English almost like a native speaker, but occasionally I may have minor unconventional uses of vocabulary and expressions.
5.5	Between 5 and 6
6	I can write in English just like I can write in Thai.

Note: This instrument is adapted from the Butler (2004) proficiency scale based on the Foreign Language Oral Skills Evaluation Matrix (FLOSEM; Padilla, Sung, and Aninao, 1997).

The statements used to investigate the self-perceived English proficiency level of elementary school Thai English teachers, through the four domains of language skills, shown in Table 1, were written in English and translated to Thai for Thai teachers of all proficiency levels (see Appendix B).

Of the 33 surveys that were returned in the final study, 30 participants completed the proficiency scale, with 3 participants not completing this section of the instrument. A statistical program was used to calculate the internal consistency, or reliability, of this section of the survey. The Cronbach's alpha was .96, which demonstrated that the English proficiency scale was considered reliable.

For the first research objective, a self-perceived proficiency scale used by Butler (2004) and Lee (2009), and modeled after the FLOSEM by Padilla, Sung, and Aninao (1997) was used. It was chosen because it had been successfully used with Asian teachers from Taiwan, Japan, and Korea. The researcher believed it would work better than the CERF, Common European Reference Framework that is used in western countries. The original matrix included the following sections: listening comprehension, oral fluency (this was renamed speaking in the current study), vocabulary in speech, pronunciation, and grammar in speech. Butler (2004) expanded the FLOSEM beyond the oral skills of listening and oral fluency (speaking), by creating similar descriptors for reading and writing and including them. Each of the four sections, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, had six

descriptive statements, with a half number between each descriptor for teachers that felt they were between levels (Butler, 2004). Participants were asked to rate their abilities by circling one number (e.g., 1, 1.5, 2, 2.5, etc.) in each section that best described their language proficiency level, as shown in Table 2.

The level of proficiency descriptors given by Butler were not given for each numbered statement but represent a continuum of proficiency from extremely limited ability to native-like proficiency similar to the original FLOSEM (as stated in Padilla & Sung, 1999), and shown in Table 2.

Table 2 The level descriptors of self-perceived English proficiency for the four language domains

Level	Level descriptor
<i>1</i>	<i>Extremely limited ability (Padilla & Sung, 1999)</i>
1.5	Low beginner
2	Mid beginner
2.5	High beginner
<i>3</i>	<i>Low intermediate (Butler, 2004)</i>
3.5	Mid intermediate
<i>4</i>	<i>High intermediate (Butler, 2004)</i>
4.5	Low advanced
5	Mid advanced
5.5	High advanced
<i>6</i>	<i>Native-like proficiency (Padilla & Sung, 1999)</i>

In Table 2, the italicized descriptors, level 1 and 6 were mentioned in the Padilla, Sung, and Aninao study, while level 3 corresponds to low intermediate proficiency and level 4 corresponds to high intermediate, as defined by Butler (2004). The proficiency scale was supplemented, by the current researcher, with descriptors generally used to define language proficiency and similar to the descriptors mentioned by Butler.

The second research objective was to investigate the self-reported English teaching efficacy levels of elementary school Thai English teachers. The instrument used to gather information to answer the research question is discussed below and shown in Table 3.

A self-reporting teaching efficacy scale (see Appendix C) was used to answer research question two. The scale was an English modified version of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). Questions from both the short- and long- form were used. Some of the questions were also used in the Chacon (2005), Eslami and Fatahi (2008), Lee (2009), and Mirsanjari, Karbalaci, and Afraz (2013) studies. The modification to English simply added the word "English" to some of the questions, as discussed in Chapter 2. Also, in question seven, the word capable was replaced with proficient to be more consistent. The scale was used in this study was divided into three subscales: student engagement, instructional strategies, and personal teaching efficacy. The questions that relate to each section are shown in Table 3.

The researcher chose to focus more on student engagement, instructional strategies, and personal teaching efficacy as they were more in line with the research on proficiency and teaching efficacy. The researcher added three new questions that specifically focused on personal teaching efficacy. The purpose of the questions was to get a sense of how confident the participants are about their English teaching abilities. When teachers are confident about their teaching abilities, they perceive themselves as skillful. They feel like competent teachers (Moore, 1952). The self-reported English teaching efficacy scale is shown in Table 3.

Table 2 Self-reported teaching efficacy scale

Items of Self-reported Teaching Efficacy	Scale								
	S o m e o n e c o u n t r y c a n d o t k n o w h o w m u c h t e y a g r e e 								
Student Engagement									
1. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in learning English?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2. How much can you do to make the English class enjoyable for all students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3. How much can you do to make students believe that they can do well in English?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4. How much can you do to make students appreciate the potential benefits associated with learning English?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
6. How much can you do to get students to turn in assignments or papers promptly?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13. How much can you do to influence student performance in English class?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
15. How well can you get students to work together during English class?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Instructional Strategies

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Items of Self-reported Teaching Efficacy	Scale								
5. How much can you provide appropriate challenges for very proficient students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
7. How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies in your English class?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when your students are confused?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
12. How well can you implement alternative instructional strategies when a certain strategy does not work?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
14. How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Personal Teaching Efficacy									
16. Overall, how confident are you in your English abilities to teach your current level(s) of students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
17. Overall, how confident are you of your English abilities to teach intermediate or upper-intermediate level students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
18. Overall, how confident are you in your abilities as a teacher teaching subjects in Thai.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

* This is an English-modified version of the Teaching Efficacy Scale by Tschannen-Moran

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and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) with personal teaching efficacy statements added by the researcher.

A Likert scale was used for the evaluation of the efficacy rating. Number 1 represented the lowest rating level and had a descriptor of ‘nothing’ at all meaning that the respondent believed there was no chance of affecting student outcomes, 3 equated to ‘very little,’ 5 to ‘some influence,’ 7 to ‘quite a bit,’ and 9 meant that the efficacy for teaching English was high, or the teacher could affect ‘a great deal’ of influence in student outcomes. The English teaching efficacy scale was subdivided into statements that reflected efficacy in student engagement, instructional strategies, as well as personal teaching efficacy for teaching English and Thai. The subscales represented in Table 3 were categorized as such and used by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). The Chacon (2005) and Eslami and Fatahi (2008) studies also used some of the same questions in the same subcategories.

The third objective was to determine if there was a correlation between the self-reported English proficiency and English teaching efficacy of elementary school Thai English teachers. The answer to this question was derived from the data gathered from research questions one and two. To interpret the data, correlative analysis was used for the two objectives (SPSS, 2008).

3.2.2 Observations

Observation was also used to examine and corroborate the self-reported English proficiency and teaching efficacy results given by two teachers. Two brief, one hour each, observations were made during the study to confirm data entered on the survey instrument, the self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy scales, by the participants. After surveys were retrieved from the school, they were reviewed and a convenience sampling was used to determine candidates’ availability for observation. The researcher scheduled afternoon observations, on two different days, with two teachers, who responded positively to being interviewed. Because it was the end of the school year, the teachers had review lessons planned, in preparation for end of year exams. Field notes were taken during the observation gathered information about the class environment, seating arrangement, type of teacher-student interaction, lesson plan, student engagement,

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instructional strategies, and observed speaking proficiency and teaching efficacy. In addition to field notes the observer used the survey instrument's proficiency and teaching efficacy scales to rate the teachers. The results would be compared to the participants responses.

3.3 Data Collection

Data were collected, initially through a pilot study and then through the final study. Instruments were hand delivered to either the schools, respondents, and some surveys were delivered by a second party. More information is given in the following sections.

3.3.1 Pilot Study

Before distributing survey instruments, school directors were given a letter requesting permission to distribute the surveys (Appendix B) and each survey instrument had a cover letter (Appendix C) detailing the purpose of the research survey and a request to participate in the research. The survey was written in English, with a Thai translation, to make sure teachers could understand the verbiage of the instrument. A convenience sample was used for the pilot study. The bilingual survey was given to three schools in central Thailand. A government, private, and demonstration school participated. The surveys were distributed in February and March, 2010. The surveys, which included a good-quality pen as a thank you gift, were given to either the school director or department head with instructions given on how to complete the survey. The researcher requested to come back in two weeks to retrieve the surveys. It actually took three weeks or more to get the completed surveys back.

Eight surveys were given to the government school and six surveys were returned. All sections of the instrument were completed. At the private school, nine surveys were dropped off with the request of returning within a week to pick up completed surveys. A week later, the researcher was informed that not all surveys were completed yet. Another week was given to complete the surveys. In the third week after distribution, surveys were retrieved as completed. Several incorrectly completed (6) surveys were accepted without being able to return to the school, as it was not convenient to return because the school year was ending. The six incomplete surveys were missing responses to the English proficiency section. All

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other sections were complete. The demonstration school was given eight surveys. Of the eight surveys returned, six had incomplete or incorrectly completed sections. The researcher was able to return to the school to give specific instructions to the teachers who did not complete the surveys correctly. Of the surveys resubmitted (one teacher was not present to complete the survey), three were complete and acceptable. A total of twenty surveys were returned and analyzed for the pilot study. Of the twenty surveys returned, there were nine surveys with an incomplete or incorrectly completed English proficiency section. These nine surveys were still analyzed for the other two sections: English teaching efficacy and teacher demographic information.

The pilot test revealed problems with the wording of the English proficiency scale directions. Several respondents circled every number and half number in the section. Originally the directions were, "On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) rate your English abilities in the following areas. Circle one number in each section that best describes your English proficiency." The directions were not comprehensible to many participants. The instructions were then changed to, "Rate your English proficiency in the following areas. Circle **one** number in each section—Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing—that best describes your English proficiency" in the final study. The format and wording of the proficiency scale stayed the same (as seen in Table 1). Also some stilted Thai translations in various statements were revised to be better understood.

3.3.2 Final Study

Snowball and convenience sampling techniques were used for the final study. Thirty-five surveys were handed out at the TESOL Conference in Bangkok in 2012. Each questionnaire included a stamped, addressed (to the researcher) envelope for easy return. They were given to either elementary school Thai English teachers or to department heads of two government universities in northern Thailand. The department heads that the researcher spoke with said that they would give them to teachers, whom they were in contact with, to complete. The researcher made an effort to review the instructions with the receivers of the surveys. Eight surveys were returned from one professor and six from the other professor. Seven other respondents at the TESOL Conference completed and returned surveys. Twenty-

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two surveys were returned over the next two months, with one uncompleted survey returned with a note apologizing for not participating. Four surveys were given to other teachers the researcher came in contact with (2011-2013) and eight to a government demonstration school in Bangkok (2013), with a privacy envelope included with those surveys. Each survey packet included either a nice pen, candy, two twenty baht notes, or a pencil/utility bag, with a pen included, as thank you gifts. Of the 48 surveys distributed, 34 were returned resulting in a 71% return rate. Three returned surveys did not have the proficiency section completed, but all other sections were complete. A sample of 30 was used for the proficiency scale results and a sample of 33 was used for the teaching efficacy scale. Surveys were tabulated using a statistical analysis program (SPSS, 2008).

3.4 Data analysis

Statistical analysis was used for the analysis of the results. Demographic data made use of frequency statistics to get a clearer picture of the results. Research objective one, investigation of self-perceived English proficiency, used descriptive statistical analysis, as well as frequency statistics, to interpret the four domain results. An overall proficiency mean average was computed from the four domains. The second research objective, the self-reported English teaching efficacy investigation, also made use of frequency and mean average statistical analysis to report results. The mean average was also figured for each subscale of the teaching efficacy scale: SE, IS, and PTE. A Cronbach's alpha value was determined to establish internal reliability for research objectives one and two also, The third research objective, to determine whether there was a correlation between perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy, made use of correlation statistical analysis in the form of a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. One way variance, ANOVA, was used to report statistical significance between dependent and independent variables.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

The Cronbach's alpha quotient measures the internal consistency of the language and teaching abilities sections of the instrument (Lee, 2009). The four language proficiency

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statements had a Cronbach's alpha of .96, and for the 18 items in the English teaching efficacy part of the survey, the Cronbach's alpha was .91.

In summary, one survey instrument consisting of three sections (demographic information, self-perceived language proficiency scale, and self-reported teaching efficacy scale) was distributed to elementary school Thai English teachers. There was a 71% return rate, or 33 returned surveys, with all but 3 surveys completed correctly and completely. There were 30 completed language proficiency scales and 33 completed teaching efficacy scales.

Chapter 4

Results of the Study

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the survey instrument used to gather data related to the research questions of this study. The data were analyzed by quantitative and qualitative means. Initially the demographics of the elementary school Thai English teachers will be discussed followed by the perceived English proficiency level and self-reported English teaching efficacy data. Analysis of the data was by descriptive statistics such as frequencies and means, as well as correlative statistics and one-way ANOVA.

4.1 Demographics of Participants

The first section of the questionnaire asked for personal information in order to get a better picture of the respondents. Questions asked about: gender, age, education level, education major, English-related courses completed, travel abroad, teaching experience, hours spent teaching English, as well as general questions about teaching English. Question 1 asked at which school the respondent taught. That will not be reported here for confidentiality reasons. Table 4 gives data on gender, age, education level and major.

Table 4 Demographic data for gender, age, education level and education major

Background (n = 33)	Frequency	Percent
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Gender

Female	28	85
Male	5	15

Age (years)

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20-30	10	30
31-40	7	21
41-50	7	21
51+	9	27

Education level

Bachelor	18	55
Master	14	42
PhD	1	3

Education Major

English Major	19	58
Non-English major	14	42

As shown in Table 4, the majority of participants are female (85%), as is the norm in elementary teaching. The age groups 20-25 and 26-30 were combined into one group (20-30), since there was only one respondent in the 20-25 group, making the group more closely matched the other groups: 31-40 and 41-50, which have a 10 year spread. Most age groups were fairly evenly spread. Of all the participants surveyed, 14 of the teachers hold a master degree and one participant holds a PhD degree. Four teachers have English-related masters degrees in Teaching English as a Second Language, English teaching, English, and Teaching English as an International Language with the others having degrees in English, English education, and business English. Degrees other than English mentioned were physical education, elementary education, kindergarten, sociology, educational research, and early childhood education.

Professional development is an important aspect of a teacher's academic life. It is important to continue to develop professionally and to continue improving English proficiency. Questions 5 and 6 asked participants whether they had taken any English teaching methods, learning (acquisition), or teaching theory courses, while question 7 asked

if participants had taken any English teaching related workshops. Results are shown in Table 5. The English-related courses listed by the respondents are shown in Table 6.

Table 5 University courses related to English teaching

Related course type (n=33)	Frequency	Percent
English teaching methods	19	58
Language theory/teaching theory	21	64
English teaching workshops	29	88

As shown in Table 5, almost all of the participants have taken either courses related to English teaching methods, language teaching theory, or an English teaching workshop(s). Many have taken more than one type of course and most teachers (88%) have taken a workshop in English teaching. Only one participant, an English major, reported that she had not taken any of these courses or workshops. A vast majority of teachers have participated in professional development training. Table 6 shows the type of university courses or workshops related to English as listed by respondents. Not every respondent listed courses taken.

Table 6 English-related courses and workshops taken by respondents

Course type	Course name
--------------------	--------------------

Teaching methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Curriculum and Instruction of Specific Subject - General Methods of Teaching -Assessment in English Teaching -Fundamental English -Evaluation -Teaching English as a Foreign Language Methodology -Material Development -Instructional Media -Testing and Evaluation -Listening and Speaking Reading and Writing -Educational Research Methodology -Principles of Teaching -Methods of Teaching English for Secondary Level -English for Beginners
Language theory or teaching theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Theories and Methods of English Language Teaching -Learning theory -Introduction to Foreign Language Acquisition -Socio-Linguistics -Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -English Teaching for Primary School -Funny English Teaching Techniques -Backward Design -Teaching Techniques -Phonics and Literacy -Creativity in the Classroom -TKT (Teacher Knowledge Test Preparation Course) -Teaching English in Learning Reform -(Helen Deron's) English Teaching Methodology -English for Young Learners -Teaching English as a Foreign Language -Techniques and Games
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The courses or workshops taken are varied, as seen in Table 6. Teaching English in learning reform, techniques and games, teaching techniques, and creativity in the classroom are some examples.

For question 8, participants were asked about their travel to other countries. Travel abroad presents opportunities for exposure to different languages and cultural exchange. Table 7 shows the type of countries, English-speaking or EFL-speaking, and the amount of time respondents spent on trips abroad.

Table 7 Travel abroad experience

Type of travel	Frequency	Percent
Travel abroad (n=33)		
Yes	24	73
No	9	27
To at least one English-speaking country (as primary or official language)	10	42

To EFL countries only (primary language other than English)	13	58
Countries visited (n=34)		
English-speaking country (as spoken or official language)	8	24
English spoken as foreign language (primary language other than English)	26	76
Duration of trips (trips listed: n=33)		
<1 week	7	21
1-2 week	8	24
3-4 week	1	3
1-2 month	4	12
3-6 month	5	15
7-12 month	0	0
1 year +	1	3
N/A	7	21

Table 7 shows that 24 participants traveled abroad, as reported in question 8 of the questionnaire section of the survey. Of those 24 travelers, 10 traveled to 8 different English-speaking countries (New Zealand, Australia, Canada, USA, UK, Singapore, Hong Kong, India). Eight traveled to ASEAN countries (not shown on Table). Most traveled for two weeks or less.

As teachers become more experienced, they generally have more confidence in their teaching abilities. Question 9, which requested information from participants about teaching experience, is reported in Table 8.

Table 8 Participants' teaching experience

Teaching experience (years)	Frequency	Percent
1-3	6	18
4-6	5	15
7-10	4	12
10-15	5	15
16+	13	40

Table 8 shows that many teachers (55%) have over 10 years of teaching experience. There is a small percentage of new teachers (18%) who have just entered the field with three years of less of teaching experience.

Question 10 asked participants about weekly English teaching hours, which is reported in Table 9.

Table 9 Hours spent teaching English each week

English teaching time (hours/week)	Frequency	Percent
<10	10	30
10-15	18	55
16-20	5	12

(n=33)

Over half (55%) of the teachers teach 10-15 hours a week with and 12% teach English 16-20 hours a week, as shown in Table 9. In addition to information on hours spent teaching English, question 11 asked about hours spent teaching in Thai. Since that was not deemed relevant to the study that question was not analyzed and information is not reported.

In the teacher questionnaire, there were also questions to gather information about how teachers rate the number of English teaching hours (Q12), adequacy of syllabus content (Q13), comfort level teaching English (Q14), additional training needs (Q15), and major

hindrances to effective English teaching (Q16), as shown in Figures 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, respectively.

To get a better idea of teachers opinions on the amount of time allotted to English teaching, data is reported in Figure 3.

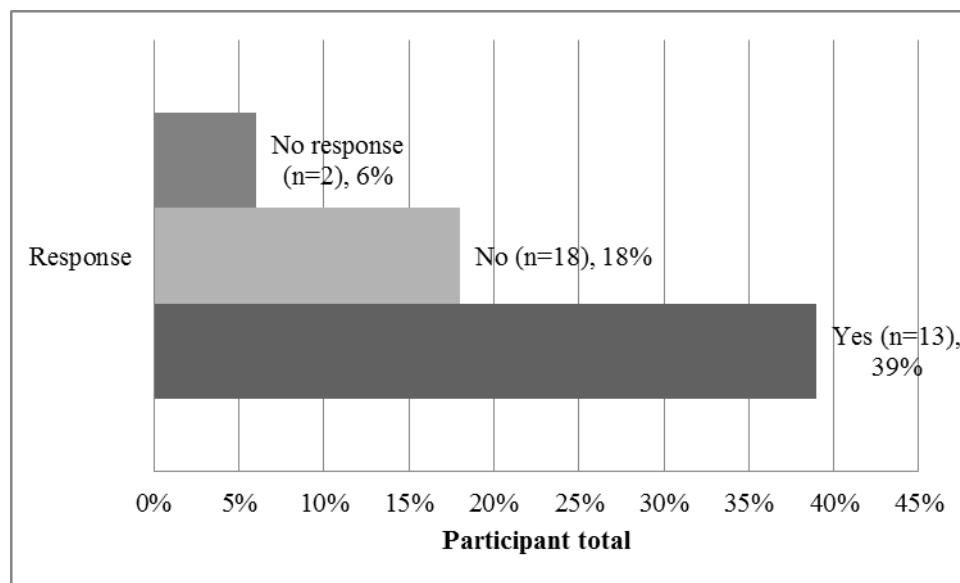


Figure 3 Responses to the number of hours allocated for English teaching

In Figure 3, responses to the question regarding the number of hours allocated to teaching English show that a majority (55%) of the teachers believe there are not enough hours devoted to teaching English. Teachers were also asked whether they believed the content of the English syllabus was adequate. Results of these responses are given in Figure 4.

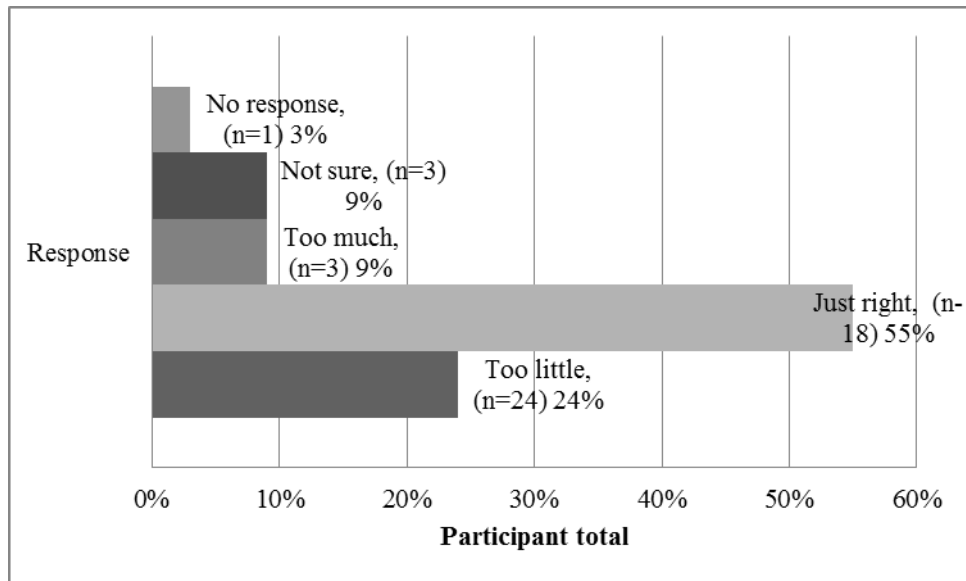


Figure 4 Responses to adequacy of content of English syllabus

In Figure 4, data show that most respondents believe that the syllabus content is just right, with about a quarter of the respondents stating that there is not enough content covered in the syllabus.

To get a better picture of how teachers feel about teaching English, question 14 asked how comfortable the teachers were teaching English. Their responses are shown in Figure 5.

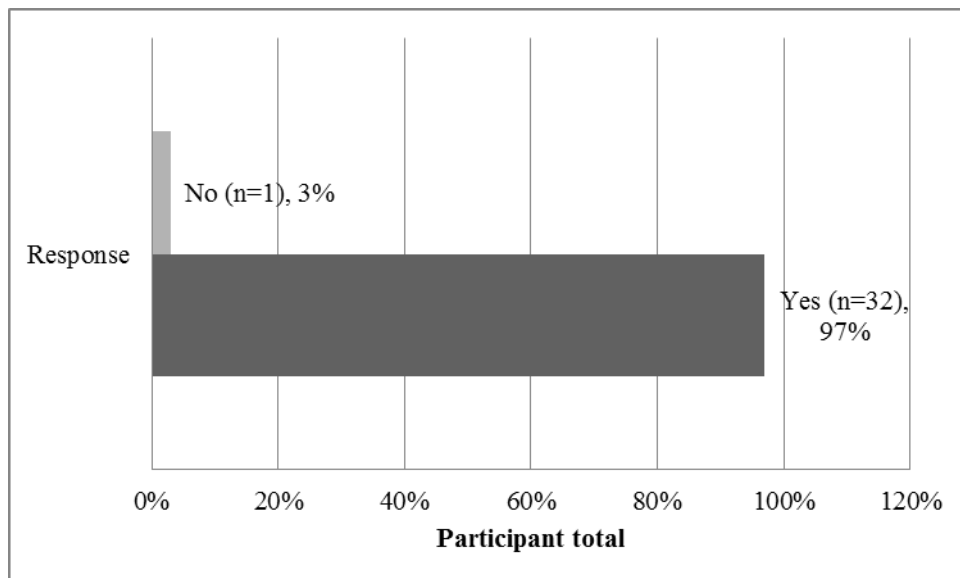


Figure 5 Responses to how comfortable a teacher is teaching English

According to Figure 5, almost every teacher feels comfortable teaching English. The respondent that is not comfortable teaching English is over 50 years old, has an elementary education degree, and has been teaching for over 16 years. That respondent also expressed that a lack of confidence in speaking English was a problem for her.

Most teachers believe there is room for improvement in their teaching. They will take courses to develop professional. Areas where teachers would like additional training (Q15) are reported in Figure 6.

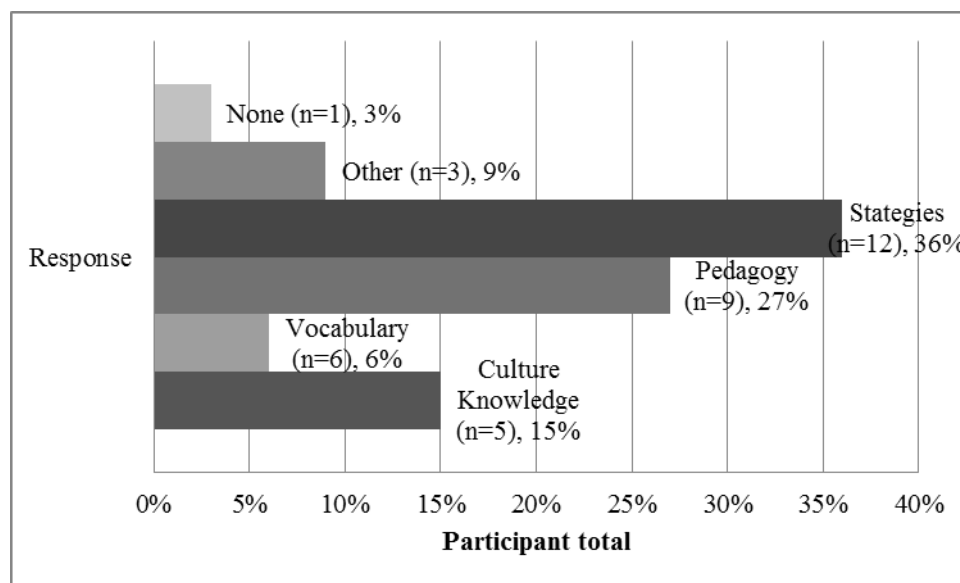


Figure 6 Responses areas of teaching teachers would like additional training

The question about additional training needs, represented in Figure 6, allowed for as many responses as each participant felt necessary. There were 40 items circled instead of the normal 33 given for other questions. Teaching strategies and pedagogy were areas that teachers wanted the most additional training (68% of all responses). Fifteen percent of the respondents expressed an interest in completing more training in knowledge of the culture. Three respondents filled in the 'Other' line saying they would like additional training in: pronunciation, classroom discipline and management, and English for everyday use. Besides have additional training needs, there are generally other factors perceived as needing attention.

Sometimes teachers believe factors such as large class size, limited resources, knowledge, confidence, etc. make it difficult to teach effectively. Responses to question 16, which asked for the major hindrance to teaching of English, are reported in Figure 7.

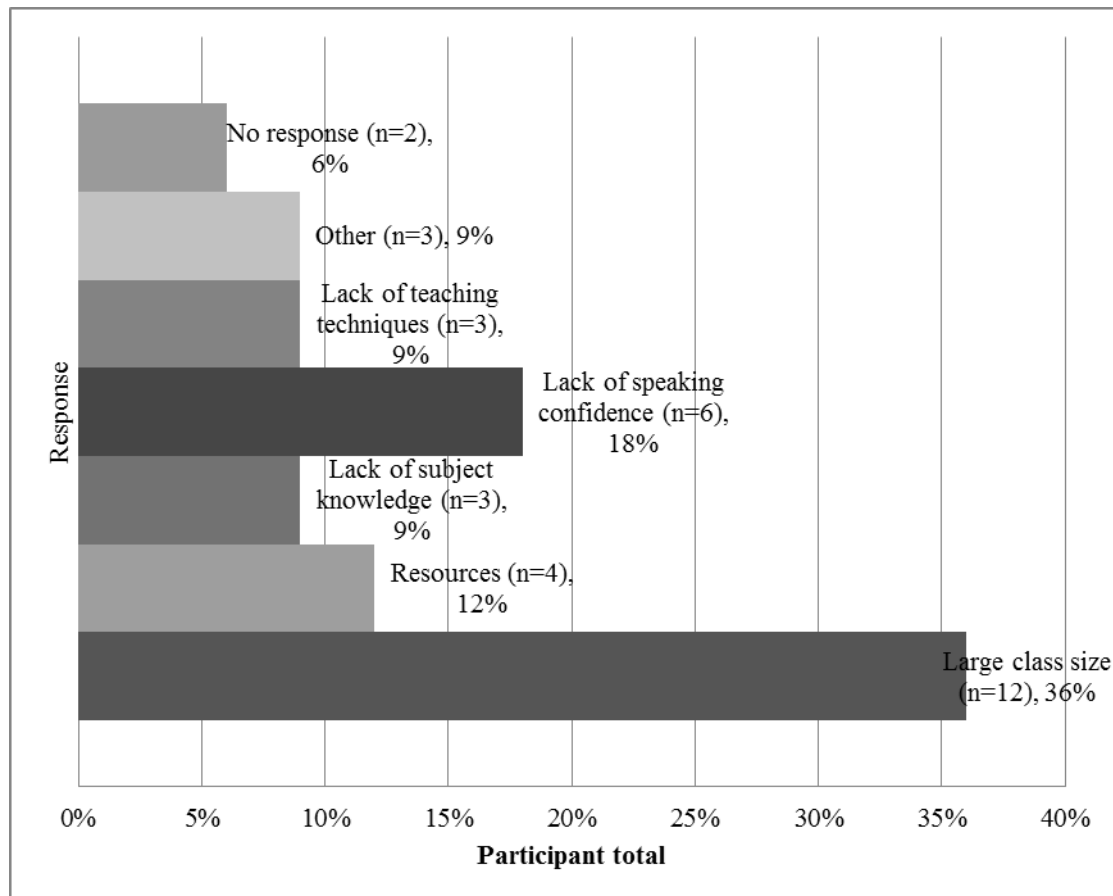


Figure 7 Responses to major hindrances to effective teaching

From the responses to major hindrances to effective teaching, presented in Figure 7, over a third of the respondents believed that large class size was a major hindrance while 18% expressed that lack of confidence in speaking English was a problem. Other responses written in, but not displayed on this chart were: environment, inadequate time to prepare an efficient teaching plan, and lack of English environment, in terms of people to speak with.

In order to better understand elementary school Thai English teachers, the teachers were asked to write any comments they may have about teaching English (Q17). Nine

participants responded to this question. They responded in Thai and English. The Thai answers were translated and all responses are given below:

1. Number of English hours per week is not enough.
2. In the 5th and 6th grade, they should study more about reading and writing skills.
3. Students should be taught by a foreign teacher at least an hour per week.
4. Workshops on English Teaching Techniques should be provided.
5. School hours are too little to practice the continuous learning skill.
6. An e-learning program for students at each level should be provided.
7. The teachers in school have to be the models to students, such as speaking English so the students will imitate the teachers. And the teachers should emphasize the importance of English language knowledge also.
8. From my point of view, English shouldn't be a compulsory subject. This is related to the aspect of motivation. Thai kids have been forced to study for a long time and they didn't start from "What I want to learn". They started from "what the adult wants me to learn." Again, I think that the student in the city may be interested in learning English more than the student in the suburb area. They always speak Thai to their father, mother, and friends. Once they find their motivation, then they will start to look at English in a pleasurable way, not this kind of "every day" English. But most of all, I'll do my best. Sorry for the tone of this comment. (e-mail address given)
9. For primary school, the number of class may be or should be 10-20 students per class.

10. Because of the course specifications which emphasize grammar, teachers must follow and help students pass their exam. Course detail should emphasize communication skill to improve their English in daily life.

11. English teachers should be persons who have had practice in English teaching. They may have more techniques for students to study English.

12. Thailand cannot use English language in everyday life like a second language because Thais' are afraid to use it and too shy. They are afraid to say wrong sentences or wrong words.

These responses show that teachers have valid concerns about the teaching of English. Comments suggest that the teaching hours are not sufficient, class size should be smaller, there should be more instruction in reading and writing skills for upper grades, and teachers should be good models by speaking English themselves. Teachers would also like more training in language teaching methods and more opportunities to practice speaking English themselves. One respondent wrote about seeing inclusion of EFL in the curriculum from a student's perspective, commenting that students do not always understand the significance of learning another language, especially while they are still learning their own language.

4.2 Results of the study

The results of this study are presented based on the three research questions mentioned in Chapter 1 and are reported below. Data were gathered to see how the teachers perceive their English proficiency and English teaching efficacy. These data were analyzed to determine if there was a correlation between the two items. Independent variables such as gender, age, education level, education major, and teaching experience were also investigated to determine their effect on self-perceived English proficiency and English teaching efficacy.

4.2.1 Self-perceived English proficiency levels

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The data gathered for research question 1, "What are the self-perceived English proficiency levels of elementary school Thai English teachers in Thailand, in speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills?" are reported here.

The Butler (2004)-modified FLOSEM (1999) was the instrument used for the self-perceived English proficiency levels. Of the 33 participants, only 30 filled in the proficiency section of the survey. As mentioned earlier, language proficiency is divided into four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening and reading are considered receptive skills and speaking and writing are known as productive skills. The results of the perceived listening proficiency section are reported in Table 10. The frequency is given for each level that was chosen. The descriptors, as mentioned in Chapter 3, and again reported here, which correspond to the Butler (2004) instrument have been provided in the following answers.

Table 10 Self-perceived listening proficiency scale

Proficiency Level	Proficiency descriptor	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
1.0	Limited ability	0	0	0
1.5	Low beginner	0	0	0
2.0	Mid beginner	1	3.0	3.3
2.5	High beginner	0	0	0
3.0	Low intermediate	4	12.1	13.3
3.5	Mid intermediate	5	15.2	16.7
4.0	High intermediate	8	24.2	26.7
4.5	Low advanced	5	15.2	16.7
5.0	Mid advanced	3	9.1	10.0
5.5	High advanced	3	9.1	10.0
6.0	Native-like proficiency	1	3.0	3.3
Total		30	90.9	100.0
Missing		3	9.1	
Total		33	100.0	

The lowest rating for listening, a receptive skill, is one score of 2 (mid beginner) and the highest was one score of 6 (native-like proficiency), as shown in Table 10. As seen in the boxed area, just over 60% of the reporting respondents rated themselves between 3.5 (mid intermediate) to 4.5 (low advanced). The ability to understand what is being said in the target language of English is important. The mean and median for the 30 participants of this section are reported in Table 11.

Table 11 Overall average for self-perceived listening proficiency

Descriptive Statistics	Self-perceived listening proficiency
Mean	4.12
Median	4.00

(n=30)

The mean average in listening was 4.12, which corresponds to Butler's high intermediate level. This score indicates that the respondents believe they possess good English listening skills. They can understand most of what is being said in a conversation at near normal speed (Butler, 2004).

Speaking proficiency, a productive skill, is crucial to being able to successfully teach others another language. The perceived speaking proficiency of the elementary school Thai English teachers is reported in Table 12.

Table 12 Self-perceived speaking proficiency

Proficiency level	Proficiency descriptor	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
1.0	Limited ability	0	0	0
1.5	Low beginner	0	0	0
2.0	Mid beginner	1	3.0	3.3
2.5	High beginner	0	0	0
3.0	Low intermediate	3	9.1	10.0

3.5	Mid intermediate	10	30.3	33.3
4.0	High intermediate	6	18.2	20.0
4.5	Low advanced	4	12.1	13.3
5.0	Mid advanced	4	12.1	13.3
5.5	High advanced	2	6.1	6.7
6.0	Native-like	0	0	0
proficiency				
Total		30	90.9	100.0
Missing		3	9.1	
Total		33	100.0	

Data from Table 12 shows that the highest frequency of participants (33%) rate themselves at 3.5 (mid intermediate), 20% at level 4, 13.3% at level 4.5 (low advanced), and another 13.3% at level 5 (mid advanced) for speaking proficiency, meaning that the vast majority (80%) of the reporting participants rate themselves as having mid intermediate to mid advanced speaking proficiency. The averaged data for speaking proficiency are described in Table 13.

Table 13 Overall average for self-perceived speaking proficiency

Descriptive statistics	Speaking
Mean	3.97
Median	4.000

(n=30)

For speaking proficiency the overall mean score is 3.97, with a median score of 4, as shown in Table 13. This information is representative of a high intermediate proficiency rating for the sample. This means that teachers can express themselves “at near normal speed but may have to slow down when expressing complex ideas and less common expressions” (Butler, 2004).

Another receptive skill is the reading skill. The reading proficiency level is a good indicator of how well a person is able to read and understand, or comprehend, what is being

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conveyed. Good reading ability is the foundation to learning new information about the target language. Table 14 shows the self-perceived reading proficiency scores of the 30 respondents who completed this section.

Table 14 Self-perceived reading proficiency

Proficiency level	Proficiency descriptor	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
1.0	Limited ability	1	3.0	3.3
1.5	Low beginner	0	0	0
2.0	Mid beginner	1	3.0	3.3
2.5	High beginner	1	3.0	3.3
3.0	Low intermediate	3	9.1	10.0
3.5	Mid intermediate	0	0	0
4.0	High intermediate	12	36.4	40.0
4.5	Low advanced	5	15.2	16.7
5.0	Mid advanced	4	12.1	13.3
5.5	High advanced	2	6.1	6.7
6.0	Native-like proficiency	1	3.0	3.3
Total		30	90.9	100.0
Missing		3	9.1	
Total		33	100.0	

Table 14 shows that 70% of the respondents rate themselves between 4 (40%), 4.5 (17%), and 5 (13%) for reading proficiency, with the highest frequency at 4 (40%). This shows that the teachers believe their proficiency levels are at high intermediate level or higher. The mean average for reading proficiency is reported in Table 15.

Table 15 Overall average for self-perceived reading proficiency

Descriptive Statistics	Reading
Mean	4.03

Median 4.00

(n=30)

As shown in Table 15, at a median score of 4, this shows that overall the respondents believe they are of high intermediate proficiency in reading skills. The teachers who participated in this study can understand most written English texts, depending on the complexity of the genre. They still may need to use a dictionary to understand some words (Butler, 2004).

While speaking and listening are easier to master, reading and writing are often more challenging and take more time to master. The writing skill tends to be hard to master in a native language, much less a foreign language. Writing proficiency is the result of concentrated practice and general knowledge of the conventions of the language. Results of self-perceived writing proficiency of the respondents are shown in Table 16.

Table 16 Self-perceived writing proficiency

Proficiency level	Proficiency descriptor	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
1.0	Limited ability	0	0	0
1.5	Low beginner	0	0	0
2.0	Mid beginner	0	0	0
2.5	High beginner	0	0	0
3.0	Low intermediate	8	24.2	26.7
3.5	Mid intermediate	5	15.2	16.7
4.0	High intermediate	7	21.2	23.3
4.5	Low advanced	5	15.2	16.7
5.0	Mid advanced	1	3.0	3.3
5.5	High advanced	4	12.1	13.3
6.0	Native-like proficiency	0	0	0
Total		30	90.9	100.0
Missing		3	9.1	

Total	33	100.0
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Data in Table 16 shows that a large percentage, 83%, of the respondents rated themselves between 3.0 and 4.5 or low intermediate to low advanced level, respectively. There is a broader range from 3 (27%), 3.5 (17%), 4 (23%), to 4.5 (17%). The overall mean of all respondents for writing proficiency is shown in Table 17.

Table 17 Overall average for self-perceived writing proficiency

Descriptive Statistics	Writing
Mean	3.97
Median	4.000

(n=30)

As shown in Table 17, the mean for writing proficiency, a productive skill, is the same as the other productive skill, speaking. The median score of 4 represents a high intermediate proficiency level. People at this level have “sufficient vocabulary and grammatical knowledge to write in English with relative ease. Occasionally they will make noticeable mistakes in grammar and vocabulary” (Butler, 2004).

The mean average of each participant was figured to get an overall score in each category of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The overall self-reported proficiency level of all participants is reported in Table 18.

Table 18 Descriptive statistics for self-perceived English proficiency in all

English skills	Mean	SD
Listening	4.12	.90
Speaking	3.97	.81
Reading	4.03	1.05
Writing	3.97	.84
Overall	4.02	.74

(n=30)

In Table 18, it can be seen that all domains are rated closely. Self-perceived listening proficiency was rated the highest, followed by reading, and speaking and writing. The overall mean score for English proficiency is 4.02, which is considered high intermediate by Butler (2004). Generally people at this level have enough vocabulary and grammatical knowledge to listen and converse in English at near normal speed, as well as understand what is read, with the use of a dictionary, most of the time, and write with ease, making grammatical mistakes occasionally (Butler, 2004).

Summary

A self-perceived language proficiency scale was used to determine the perceived language proficiency of elementary school Thai English teachers as put forth in the first research question and objective. The descriptive statistics show that teachers rated their English proficiency in this order: listening (\bar{x} =4.12), reading (\bar{x} =4.03), with speaking and writing being equal (\bar{x} =3.97). This corresponds to a high intermediate level of proficiency, as reported by Butler (2004), in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

4.2.2 Self-reported teaching efficacy

This section of the study reports on data gathered to answer research question 2, "*What are the self-reported English teaching efficacy levels of elementary school Thai English teachers?*"

The study used one of the versions of the questionnaire from the Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) study. Questions were used from both the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES; Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) short- and long-form questions to assess the teachers' sense of English teaching efficacy. The questions use a Likert scale, with 1 = 'nothing' at all, 3 = very little, 5 = some influence, 7 = quite a bit, and 9 = a great deal, for answers. The questions were modified with a focus on teaching efficacy in the English classroom similar to the Chacon (2004) and Eslami and Fatahi (2008) studies. The questions were meant to be a measurement of teaching efficacy with subscales of student

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engagement (SE), instructional strategies (IS), with personal teaching efficacy (PTE) questions 16, 17, and 18 added by the researcher of this study. Descriptive statistics, with questions arranged in the subscales, are shown in Table 19.

Table 19 Descriptive statistics of elementary school Thai English teachers' self-reported English teaching efficacy

Self-reported English efficacy questions	Mean	SD
Student engagement		
1. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in learning English?	6.85	1.23
2. How much can you do to make the English class enjoyable for all students?	7.03	1.10
3. How much can you do to make students believe that they can do well in English?	6.24	1.64
4. How much can you do to make students appreciate the potential benefits associated with learning English?	6.79	1.41
6. How much can you do to get students to turn in assignments or papers promptly?	6.55	1.28
13. How much can you do to influence student performance in English class?	6.61	1.17
15. How well can you get students to work together during English class?	6.82	1.72
Instructional strategies		
5. How much can you implement alternate teaching strategies in your English class?	6.85	1.20
7. How much can you provide appropriate challenges for very proficient students?	7.00	1.09
8. How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?	7.39	1.09
9. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies in your English class?	6.67	1.02
10. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when your students are confused?	7.09	1.13

11. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	7.03	1.13
12. How well can you implement alternative instructional strategies when a certain strategy does not work?	6.91	1.04
14. How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?	6.94	.933
Personal teaching efficacy		
16. Overall, how confident are you in your English abilities to teach your current level(s) of students.	7.58	1.22
17. Overall, how confident are you of your English abilities to teach intermediate or upper-intermediate level students.	7.15	1.40
18. Overall, how confident are you in your abilities as a teacher teaching subjects in Thai.	7.39	1.25
Overall mean score	7.02	1.23
1=nothing at all, 3=very little, 5=some influence, 7=quite a bit, 9=a great deal		

Table 19 shows that the mean average for all questions is in a close range. A low mean score of 6.24 in the student engagement section represents that teachers believe they have more than "some influence" but not "quite a bit" of influence relating to the question, "How much can you do to make students believe that they can do well in English?" The highest mean score of 7.58, corresponding to personal teaching efficacy beliefs show that they have "quite a bit" of confidence in relation to the question, "Overall, how confident are you in your English proficiency to teach your current level(s) of students?" The overall mean score for the English teaching efficacy scale is 7.02, which means that teachers believe they have "quite a bit" of influence with their teaching of students. The overall score was then used to determine if there was a correlation between self-perceived English proficiency and English teaching efficacy of elementary school Thai English teachers (research question 3).

The mean average for each subcategory, SE, IS, and PTE, of the English teaching efficacy scale was also calculated and is reported in Table 20.

Table 20 Overall average for subscales of the English teaching efficacy scale

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Subscale of English teaching efficacy	Mean	SD
Student Engagement (SE)	6.70	.92
Instructional Strategies (IS)	6.98	.80
Personal Teaching Efficacy (PTE)	7.37	.99

Teachers' self evaluations, according to subcategory, give a more detailed look at their sense of teaching efficacy. Table 20 indicates that teachers believe they are more effective in their use of IS (6.98) than ability to engage students (6.70), yet rate themselves the highest for personal teaching efficacy (7.37), or belief that they have a greater influence in student outcomes than research might suggest. The teachers represented in this study believe their personal teaching efficacy, use of instructional strategies, as well as being able to successfully engage students to a lesser extent, have 'quite a bit' of influence on students learning of English (Butler, 2004).

Summary

This part of the study displayed the results of the self-reported English teaching efficacy scale. It showed that teachers believe they have a higher sense of efficacy in PTE, which was rated at a mean score of 7.37, or just more than 'quite a bit' of influence on their ability to affect student outcomes. Instructional strategies were also rated at 'quite a bit' of influence, with the ability to engage students being rated the lowest at just under the 'quite a bit' of influence level. This shows that teachers have higher than average confidence in their own teaching effectiveness and believe that their IS are effective for achieving good student outcomes.

4.2.3 Correlation between self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy

The third research question, "Is there a correlation between self-reported English proficiency levels and self-reported English teaching efficacy?" will be the focus of this section. Results of data collection will be presented. Statistical analysis was performed using

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the Pearson product-moment correlation method to determine if there was a correlation between English proficiency and English teaching efficacy. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 21.

Table 21 Pearson correlation of English proficiency to English teaching efficacy

Variable	Statistical model	Overall proficiency	Overall English teaching efficacy
Overall self-perceived English proficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	.135
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	.476
	N	30	30
Overall self-reported English teaching efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.135	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.476	-
	N	30	33

($p < .05$)

Table 21 shows that there was no correlation found between overall self-perceived English proficiency and overall self-reported English teaching efficacy. However, it was prudent to find some other findings of the independent variables collect from demographic data of the participants to compliment the finding of a correlation between self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy of elementary school Thai English teachers. The independent variables of gender, age, education level, education major and teaching experience were selected as they were perceived to be related to one's English proficiency and English teaching efficacy.

4.2.3.1 Investigation of independent variables

Independent variables such as gender, age, level of education, education major, and teaching experience were also investigated, using frequency statistics, in relation to the proficiency domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and teaching efficacy

subcategories of student engagement (SE), instructional strategies (IS), and personal teaching efficacy (PTE).

Gender was analyzed to see if there was any variation between males and females in their reported perceived English proficiency levels. Table 22 shows the mean average for the four domains of proficiency.

Table 22 Descriptive statistics of self-perceived English proficiency in relation to gender

Gender	N	Self-perceived		
		English proficiency	Mean	SD
Female	25	Listening	3.96	.80
		Speaking	3.88	.78
		Reading	4.06	.87
		Writing	3.86	.74
		Mean	3.94	.80
Male	5	Listening	4.9	1.08
		Speaking	4.4	.89
		Reading	3.9	2.27
		Writing	4.5	1.17
		Mean	4.43	1.80

Table 22 shows that males rate their proficiency levels higher than females in listening, speaking, and writing, but somewhat lower in reading (0.07 variance in the mean). The overall self-perceived proficiency of males is 4.43, close to low advanced level, while females rate their English proficiency at 3.94 overall, which is closer to high intermediate proficiency. The responses of males and females, as shown in Table 23, were calculated to see if there were any differences in their self-rating of English teaching efficacy.

Table 23 Descriptive statistics of self-reported English teaching efficacy in relation to gender

Gender	N	Self-reported English		
		teaching efficacy	Mean	SD
Female	25	SE	6.82	.92
		IS	7.01	.85
		PTE	7.33	1.01
		Mean	7.05	.93
Male	5	SE	6.03	.69
		IS	6.88	.50
		PTE	7.60	.92
		Mean	6.84	.70

In contrast, Table 23 shows that females rate their SE close to the "quite a bit" of influence value, where as the males believe they were between having "some influence" and "quite a bit" of influence. For IS, again females rate themselves higher by reporting that they have "quite a bit" of influence; with the males rating themselves close behind. The males rate their PTE (7.6) at a slightly higher level beyond "quite a bit" of influence, while the females (7.33) are closer to the "quite a bit" descriptor level. Overall females rated their English teaching efficacy higher at 7.05, which corresponds to "quite a bit" influence.

With age comes more life experience. Age was investigated to see if there was any difference in proficiency level between age groups. Table 24 shows frequency statistics for each age group.

Table 24 Descriptive statistics of self-perceived English proficiency in relation to age

Age group (years)	N	Self-perceived English proficiency	Mean	SD
20-30	10	Listening	4.45	.64
		Speaking	4.10	.61

		Reading	4.55	.64
		Writing	4.15	.82
		Mean	4.31	.68
31-40	7	Listening	3.71	.90
		Speaking	3.93	.79
		Reading	3.29	1.73
		Writing	3.57	.84
		Mean	3.63	1.07
41-50	6	Listening	3.75	1.13
		Speaking	3.50	.84
		Reading	3.75	.88
		Writing	3.58	.58
		Mean	3.65	.86
51+	7	Listening	4.36	.94
		Speaking	4.21	1.04
		Reading	4.29	.99
		Writing	4.43	.89
		Mean	4.32	.97

Table 24 shows that the 20-30 age group has the highest self-perceived level of proficiency (4.45) in the listening domain. This age group also has the same level of proficiency in the reading domain. The proficiency level is close to the low advanced level (Table 16). The 50+ age group has the highest self-reported proficiency in the speaking and writing domains with reported levels of 4.21 and 4.43, respectively. These levels are between high intermediate level and low advanced proficiency levels. Overall the youngest and oldest age group rate their English proficiency extremely close at 4.31 and 4.32, respectively. Age was also investigated for a relationship to the English teaching efficacy subscales of SE, IS, and PTE. Frequency statistics are shown for SE, IS, and PTE in Table 25.

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Table 25 Descriptive statistics of self-reported English teaching efficacy in relation to age

Age group (years)	N	Self-reported English teaching efficacy		
			Mean	SD
20-30	10	SE	6.27	.55
		IS	6.59	.51
		PTE	7.03	.87
		Mean	6.63	.64
31-40	7	SE	6.82	.91
		IS	6.88	.80
		PTE	7.38	.95
		Mean	7.02	.87
41-50	7	SE	6.37	1.09
		IS	6.63	.74
		PTE	6.90	1.18
		Mean	6.63	1.00
51+	9	SE	7.33	.88
		IS	7.79	.57
		PTE	8.11	.62
		Mean	7.74	.69

As seen in Table 25, the 51+ age group rate themselves highest in the SE and IS subscales of the teaching efficacy scale. For SE, they rate themselves as being able to have "quite a bit" of influence, whereas for IS and PTE they believe they could have more influence than "quite a bit" yet not quite believing that their teaching could have a "great deal" of influence on student outcomes. The 20-30 age group report the lowest rating of efficacy in SE and IS, while the 41-50 group rate their PTE the lowest of all age groups.

Besides age, level of education was investigated to see if there was any relationship to English proficiency. Data were gathered and are reported in Table 26.

Table 26 Descriptive statistics self-perceived English proficiency in relation to education level

Level of education	N	Self-perceived English proficiency	Mean	SD
Bachelor	16	Listening	3.94	.83
		Speaking	3.94	.93
		Reading	3.91	1.37
		Writing	3.97	.78
		Mean	3.94	.98
Master	13	Listening	4.23	.95
		Speaking	3.92	.64
		Reading	4.08	.84
		Writing	3.89	.92
		Mean	4.03	.84
PhD	1	Listening	5.5	-
		Speaking	5	-
		Reading	5.5	-
		Writing	5	-
		Mean	5.25	-

The PhD respondent has the highest self-reported rating in all domains, as shown in Table 26. There is only a slight difference in the mean average between the self-reported ratings of the Bachelor- and Master-level group in all domains. They rated their proficiency levels at a median average of 4 (not shown in Table), or high intermediate level, in all domains. To determine if level of education had an effect on English teaching efficacy, data were calculated and are shown in Table 27.

Table 27 Descriptive statistics of self-reported English teaching efficacy in relation to education level

Level of education	N	Self-reported English teaching efficacy		
			Mean	SD
BS	18	SE	6.44	.74
		IS	6.88	.62
		PTE	7.35	.76
		Mean	6.89	.71
MS	14	SE	7.02	1.08
		IS	7.14	1.02
		PTE	7.40	1.28
		Mean	7.19	1.13
PhD	1	SE	6.85	-
		IS	6.62	-
		PTE	7.33	-
		Mean	6.93	-

Table 27 shows that SE is rated the highest at 7.02 by the Master-level group. The MS group also has the highest self-reported rating for IS, yet the Bachelor-level group report the highest PTE score. The Master-level group has a higher overall self-reported teaching efficacy (7.19).

Education major was also investigated in relation to English proficiency and teaching efficacy. Data were analyzed to see if education major such as non-major or English major had an affect on perceived English proficiency. Descriptive statistics are shown in Table 28.

Table 28 Descriptive statistics of self-perceived English proficiency in relation to education major

Education		Self-perceived		
major	N	English proficiency	Mean	SD
non-English	13	Listening	4.00	.82
		Speaking	3.92	.81
		Reading	4.19	.1.01
		Writing	3.96	.83
		Mean	4.02	87
English	17	Listening	4.21	.99
		Speaking	4.00	.83
		Reading	3.91	.1.28
		Writing	3.97	.87
		Mean	4.02	.99

Table 28 shows that there is little variance in self-reported proficiency levels in listening, speaking, reading, and writing between respondents with an English major degree and another type of degree. Both groups rate themselves at 4.02, high intermediate proficiency. Frequency statistics were used to determine if there is any relation between education major and the teaching efficacy subscales, and are reported in Table 29.

Table 29 Descriptive statistics of self-reported English teaching efficacy in relation to education major

Education		Self-reported English		
major	N	teaching efficacy	Mean	SD
non-English	14	SE	7.19	.65
		IS	7.28	.75
		PTE	7.40	.84
		Mean	7.29	.75

English	19	SE	6.33	.94
		IS	6.77	.79
		PTE	7.35	1.11
		Mean	6.82	.95

Interestingly, non-English majors perceive their English teaching efficacy to be higher than the English majors in SE, IS, and PTE, as shown in Table 29. Overall the non-English majors rate their English teaching efficacy at 7.29, while the English majors rate themselves at 6.82. The mean variance for SE was 0.76, 0.51 for IS and 0.05 for PTE between the two groups.

To determine if the number of years of teaching experience had any bearing on proficiency levels, data was gathered and results are shown in Table 30.

Table 30 Descriptive statistics self-perceived English proficiency in relation to teaching experience

Teaching experience (years)	N	Self-perceived English proficiency	Mean	SD
1-3	6	Listening	3.83	.61
		Speaking	3.92	.58
		Reading	4.00	.63
		Writing	3.75	.94
		Mean	3.88	.69
4-6	5	Listening	4.70	.57
		Speaking	4.20	.67
		Reading	3.70	2.08
		Writing	4.30	.76
		Mean	4.23	1.02
7-10	4	Listening	4.25	1.19
		Speaking	4.25	.87

		Reading	4.38	1.60
		Writing	3.75	.96
		Mean	4.16	1.16
10-15	5	Listening	3.30	.84
		Speaking	4.15	.88
		Reading	3.70	.97
		Writing	3.80	.76
		Mean	3.74	.86
16+	10	Listening	4.35	.91
		Speaking	4.15	.88
		Reading	4.25	.83
		Writing	4.10	.91
		Mean	4.21	.88

Teachers with 4-6 years of teaching experience, as shown in Table 30, have the highest self-assessment for English proficiency in the listening and writing domains, while teachers with 7-10 years experience have the highest self-reported proficiency in the speaking and reading domains. Teachers with 4-6 years of teaching experience perceive their English proficiency to be the highest overall at 4.23, or just over high intermediate. Teaching experience was also investigated in relation to self-reported English teaching efficacy and is reported in Table 31.

Table 31 Descriptive statistics self-reported English teaching efficacy in relation to teaching experience

Teaching experience (years)	N	Self-reported English teaching efficacy	Mean	SD
1-3	6	SE	6.21	.56
		IS	6.65	.33
		PTE	6.83	.46

4-6	5	SE	6.09	.66
		IS	6.38	.67
		PTE	7.20	1.17
7-10	4	SE	7.00	.72
		IS	6.88	.80
		PTE	7.25	.83
10-15	5	SE	6.66	1.09
		IS	6.83	.76
		PTE	7.33	1.15
16+	10	SE	7.08	1.01
		IS	7.47	.83
		PTE	7.74	1.06
		Mean	7.43	.97

Teachers with more than 16 years of teaching experience rate themselves the highest in all subscales, SE, IS, and PTE, for English teaching efficacy with a mean average score of 7.43, as shown in Table 31. The 4-6 years teaching experience group has the lowest self-reported teaching efficacy in SE and IS, while the 1-3 year experience group reports the lowest PTE rating.

The report of descriptive statistics for independent variables presented above show more specific information about the participants in relation to their self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy. The research then further investigated whether these independent variables were statistically significant when compared to self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy. Cross tabulation analysis and one way ANOVA were employed to determine statistical significance between them. It was found that there were some statistically significant findings in relation to the independent variables of gender, age, education level, education major, and teaching

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experience, and English proficiency and English teaching efficacy. At the domain level for the proficiency scale there were some statistically significant findings and are presented here. One-way ANOVA was used to determine a relationship between the five variables and English proficiency and English teaching efficacy and is presented below.

One-way ANOVA was conducted to investigate the effect of gender in relation to English proficiency, as shown in Table 32.

Table 32 One-way ANOVA on gender differences in relation to self-perceived English proficiency

Skill	Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Listening	Between Groups	3.68	1	3.68	5.11	.032*
	Within Groups	20.16	28	.72		
	Total	23.84	29			
Speaking	Between Groups	1.13	1	1.13	1.77	.194
	Within Groups	17.84	28	.64		
	Total	18.97	29			
Reading	Between Groups	.007	1	.01	.01	.940
	Within Groups	31.86	28	1.14		
	Total	31.87	29			
Writing	Between Groups	1.71	1	1.71	2.55	.122
	Within Groups	18.76	28	.67		
	Total	20.47	29			

($p < .05$)*Statistical significance

Table 32 shows a statistically significant finding between gender and the listening domain. One-way ANOVA for English teaching efficacy was also determined for gender in relation to English teaching efficacy and is shown in Table 33.

Table 33 One way ANOVA test on gender difference in relation to self-reported English teaching efficacy

Subscale	Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
SE	Between Groups	2.633	1	2.633	3.298	.079

	Within Groups	24.745	31	.798		
	Total	27.378	32			
IS	Between Groups	.071	1	.071	.108	.745
	Within Groups	20.453	31	.660		
	Total	20.524	32			
PTE	Between Groups	.302	1	.302	.302	.587
	Within Groups	30.978	31	.999		
	Total	31.279	32			

($p < .05$)

Table 33 shows that there was no statistical significance found between gender and the English teaching efficacy subscales of SE, IS, or PTE. One-way ANOVA was also used to see if age had an effect on self-perceived English proficiency and is shown in Table 34.

Table 34 One-way ANOVA on age in relation to self-perceived English proficiency

Skill	Variance	Sum of		Mean Square	F	Sig.
		Squares	df			
Listening	Between Groups	3.456	3	1.152	1.469	.246
	Within Groups	20.386	26	.784		
	Total	23.842	29			
Speaking	Between Groups	1.924	3	.641	.978	.418
	Within Groups	17.043	26	.655		
	Total	18.967	29			
Reading	Between Groups	6.124	3	2.041	2.062	.130
	Within Groups	25.743	26	.990		
	Total	31.867	29			
Writing	Between Groups	3.805	3	1.268	1.979	.142
	Within Groups	16.662	26	.641		
	Total	20.467	29			

($p < .05$)

There are no statistically significant findings for age in relation to English proficiency, as seen in Table 34. Self-reported English teaching efficacy was also analyzed and results are shown in Table 35.

Table 35 One way ANOVA test on age in relation to self-reported English teaching efficacy

Subscale	Variance	Sum of		Mean	F	Sig.
		Squares	df	Square		
SE	Between Groups	6.316	3	2.105	2.899	.052
	Within Groups	21.062	29	.726		
	Total	27.378	32			
IS	Between Groups	8.428	3	2.809	6.736	.001*
	Within Groups	12.095	29	.417		
	Total	20.524	32			
PTE	Between Groups	7.592	3	2.531	3.098	.042*
	Within Groups	23.687	29	.817		
	Total	31.279	32			

($p < .05$)*Statistical significance

Table 35 shows that age was found to have a statistically significant effect on the use of IS and PTE in English teaching efficacy. Additionally, education level was analyzed in relation to self-perceived English proficiency, as shown in Table 36.

Table 36 One-way ANOVA on education level in relation to self-perceived English proficiency

Skill	Variance	Sum of		Mean Square	F	Sig.
		Squares	df			
Listening	Between Groups	2.596	2	1.298	1.650	.211
	Within Groups	21.245	27	.787		
	Total	23.842	29			

Skill	Variance	Sum of		Mean Square	F	Sig.
		Squares	df			
Speaking	Between Groups	1.106	2	.553	.836	.444
	Within Groups	17.861	27	.662		
	Total	18.967	29			
Reading	Between Groups	2.209	2	1.105	1.006	.379
	Within Groups	29.657	27	1.098		
	Total	31.867	29			
Writing	Between Groups	1.155	2	.578	.808	.456
	Within Groups	19.311	27	.715		
	Total	20.467	29			

($p < .05$)

As shown in Table 36, there are no statistically significant findings between education level and English proficiency. Statistical analysis of education level and self-reported English teaching efficacy are reported in Table 37.

Table 37 One way ANOVA test on education level in relation to self-reported English teaching efficacy

Subscale	Variance	Sum of		Mean Square	F	Sig.
		Squares	df			
SE	Between Groups	2.711	2	1.356	1.649	.209
	Within Groups	24.667	30	.822		
	Total	27.378	32			
IS	Between Groups	.670	2	.335	.506	.608
	Within Groups	19.854	30	.662		
	Total	20.524	32			
PTE	Between Groups	.024	2	.012	.011	.989

Within Groups	31.256	30	1.042
Total	31.279	32	

($p < .05$)

Again, there are no statistically significant findings between education level and self-reported English teaching efficacy, as shown in Table 37. The independent variable of education major was also analyzed for statistical significance and results are reported in Table 38.

Table 38 One-way ANOVA on education major in relation to self-perceived English proficiency

Skill	Variance	Sum of		Mean Square	F	Sig.
		Squares	df			
Listening	Between Groups	.312	1	.312	.372	.547
	Within Groups	23.529	28	.840		
	Total	23.842	29			
Speaking	Between Groups	.044	1	.044	.064	.801
	Within Groups	18.923	28	.676		
	Total	18.967	29			
Reading	Between Groups	.362	1	.362	.322	.575
	Within Groups	31.505	28	1.125		
	Total	31.867	29			
Writing	Between Groups	.001	1	.001	.001	.977
	Within Groups	20.466	28	.731		
	Total	20.467	29			

($p < .05$)

Table 38 data show that there is no statistical significance between education major and English proficiency. Table 39 shows results of statistical analysis between education major and self-reported teaching efficacy.

Table 39 One way ANOVA test on education major in relation to self-reported English teaching efficacy

Subscale	Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
SE	Between Groups	6.004	1	6.004	8.708	.006*
	Within Groups	21.374	31	.689		
	Total	27.378	32			
IS	Between Groups	2.072	1	2.072	3.482	.072
	Within Groups	18.451	31	.595		
	Total	20.524	32			
PTE	Between Groups	.023	1	.023	.023	.880
	Within Groups	31.256	31	1.008		
	Total	31.279	32			

($p < .05$)*Statistical significance

Table 39 shows that there is a statistically significant effect of education major in relation to the SE subscale in English teaching efficacy. Teaching experience was also investigated for statistically significant findings, as shown in Table 40.

Table 40 One-way ANOVA on teaching experience in relation to self-perceived English proficiency

Skill	Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Listening	Between Groups	6.133	4	1.533	2.165	.102
	Within Groups	17.708	25	.708		
	Total	23.842	29			
Speaking	Between Groups	3.883	4	.971	1.609	.203
	Within Groups	15.083	25	.603		
	Total	18.967	29			

Skill	Variance	Sum of		Mean Square	F	Sig.
		Squares	df			
Reading	Between Groups	1.554	4	.389	.320	.862
	Within Groups	30.313	25	1.213		
	Total	31.867	29			
Writing	Between Groups	1.342	4	.335	.438	.780
	Within Groups	19.125	25	.765		
	Total	20.467	29			

($p < .05$)

Teaching experience does not effect English proficiency, as shown in Table 40. Self-reported teaching efficacy was also analyzed in relation to teaching experience and is reported in Table 41.

Table 41 One way ANOVA test on teaching experience in relation to self-reported English teaching efficacy

Subscale	Variance	Sum of		Mean Square	F	Sig.
		Squares	df			
SE	Between Groups	5.518	4	1.380	1.767	.164
	Within Groups	21.860	28	.781		
	Total	27.378	32			
IS	Between Groups	5.800	4	1.450	2.757	.047*
	Within Groups	14.724	28	.526		
	Total	20.524	32			
PTE	Between Groups	3.751	4	.938	.954	.448
	Within Groups	27.529	28	.983		
	Total	31.279	32			

($p < .05$)*Statistical significance

There is a statistically significant finding between teaching experience and use of IS in the self-reported English teaching efficacy scale, as shown in Table 41.

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Summary

It was found that there is a statistical significance for gender and listening proficiency, while age group had a significant effect on IS and PTE. Education major is statistically significant in relation to SE, and teaching experience has a significant effect on IS.

4.4 Observations

In order to triangulate the data given by the respondents, two observations, one of a lower grade level teacher and one of a higher grade level teacher were completed. This was done to determine if the self-reported data was comparable to data gathered from observation. A description of the observations follows.

4.4.1 Observation 1

The first observation was with a female teacher who is between 26 and 30 years old. She has had 3 years teaching experience and holds a master degree in TESL. She is a full-time English teacher having 18 contact hours a week. The class included 36 students, aged 7-8 years old. Four to six students sat at each table. It was a large classroom and the teacher did not always see what was happening at the back tables. The walls had cabinets and windows on two sides. At the front wall there was a chalkboard and a bulletin board. The bulletin board had students work on it. The back wall had a decorated bulletin board and shelving. The English classroom had a computer and projection screen. Students came from their home room to attend this class.

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher came in and the students all said, "Good afternoon, teacher." During the first part of the one-hour lesson, the class worked together. The teacher was at the front of the room giving a teacher-centered lesson. The lesson was being shown on a screen. The students were prompted to say, "What is it?" and the teacher asked the students to write A, B, or C, whichever one was correct. She then showed the correct answer. Students seemed to like this activity. Next, the teacher asked, "What's

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wrong?" showing pictures and the corresponding word, which was missing a letter. For example, words such as compute_ and ca_ were shown below the corresponding picture. She asked, "What is it?" The students answered together. The teacher was modeling the format of the test they would be taking in a few days. She showed different styles of questions and answers.

The next part of the lesson was set up so that students would work individually. A jumbled sentence was displayed and students were asked to write the jumbled sentence correctly. An example was: 'your name write' for 'Write your name.' Then the teacher began writing jumbled sentences spontaneously. The students liked guessing what the teacher wrote.

During the next part of the lesson the class worked together. The teacher had students come up to and tell her what day or month she had highlighted. Then she asked a table at a time to give the correct answer together. The students liked this activity and were able to read questions. They knew enough words to give answers.

This was a teacher-centered lesson, in which the students actively participated and most enjoyed it. The mean score of the teacher's self-perceived English proficiency was 4.75 (between low and mid advanced proficiency), with the observer giving a higher score for domains observed: listening and speaking. The observer, based on the observation and a short conversation afterward, rated her listening and speaking skills at at least 5.5 because she had close to native-like proficiency in those domains. The other domains were not observed. The self-reported English teaching efficacy by the teacher was: 7.85 for SE (between 'quite a bit' and 'a great deal'), 6.86 for IS (close to 'quite a bit'), and 7.33 for PTE (slightly more than 'quite a bit'). The observer rated SE at a mean average of 7.16 and IS at a mean average of 8.8 based on what was observed.

4.4.2 Observation 2

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The next observation was with the second teacher, who had a sixth grade class. It was also a review class. This teacher is female, between 26 and 30, and had 5 years teaching experience. She was teaching English for 18 hours a week. She graduated as an English major and is working on a masters degree.

The afternoon class included 30 sixth grade students. Students sat in rows. The room was orderly and clean and light. There were windows at the back of the room. The front of the room had a chalk board and bulletin boards. One bulletin board was teacher made and the other had some student work on it. Before the class began, the teacher was joking with some of the students.

The teacher had a review lesson planned. She told the class that tomorrow they would have to answer and spell, in English, 26 questions. She would only say the question and the students would have to listen carefully to be able to answer the questions. She said she would not write words or questions on the board. Then, in jest, she said, "If you don't do well you will have to wear a sign saying, 'I am a lazy girl/boy' on your shirt all day. It means you didn't pay attention in my class, it means you are lazy." The teacher asked for understanding in English and Thai. The teacher continued to joke with the students, but students did not seem to be too interested in her jokes. The focus of the lesson was: as + adjective + as. The students were not prepared and many did not know the answers to the review questions asked.

Next reading and bookwork were assigned, the teacher asked individual students to read from the book. Then the teacher asked questions and a few students would go to the board to write answers. The students seemed to enjoy going to the board but generally weren't paying too much attention and were chatting to each other in Thai if they weren't called upon. This part of the lesson lasted about 15 minutes. Students then worked in a workbook and the teacher circulated around the room checking work and helping when needed.

The teacher spoke in English a lot, but also spoke in Thai a lot considering it was an English lesson. The teacher also talked much more than students. There was very little oral practice on the part of the students. Students were heard speaking in Thai during class and only spoke in English to answer questions. The teacher had a self-perceived English proficiency score of 4.5 or low advanced proficiency, with the observer giving the same score. Self-reported English teaching efficacy by Teacher 2 was \bar{x} =5.71 for SE, \bar{x} =7.14 for IS, and 6.66 for PTE. The observer rated SE at \bar{x} =5.66 and IS at \bar{x} =6.2, which was lower than the self-rating by the teacher because the teacher was not using instructional strategies that helped students practice and learn the language to the fullest advantage.

4.5 Summary

This chapter discussed the demographics of the elementary school Thai English teachers, along with results of the quantitative and qualitative data gathered to answer the research questions, which were related to self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy. Notes and comparison data from observations gave a more detailed view of the elementary school Thai English teacher participants of this study. It was found that Thai English teachers rate their overall proficiency level at approximately 4, or high intermediate level, for the four macro skills. Results of the self-reported English teaching efficacy scale showed that the teachers believed they could do 'quite a bit' to improve student outcomes when learning English as a foreign language. In regards to research question three, there was no correlation found between self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy. Even though there was no correlation, a more in depth look was taken of the independent variables of gender, age, education degree, education major, and years of teaching experience in relation to self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy. It was found that there was statistical significance between gender and the listening domain, age and the English teaching efficacy subscales of instructional strategies and personal teaching efficacy, education major and student engagement, and teaching experience and instructional strategy use (English teaching efficacy scale).

Chapter 5

Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendations

Introduction

This study has focused on how elementary school Thai English teachers rate their English proficiency and English teaching efficacy in order to get a better picture of the teachers' perceived proficiency level and teaching efficacy beliefs. This chapter presents a summary of the findings with discussion and conclusions. The recommendations based on these findings are provided in this chapter.

5.1 Summary of the study

English proficiency levels of elementary school Thai English teachers have been criticized for many years. The objectives of this research were to 1) investigate the self-perceived English proficiency levels of elementary school Thai English teachers, 2) investigate the self-reported English teaching efficacy beliefs of elementary school Thai English teachers, and to 3) determine if there was a correlation between the self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy of elementary school Thai English teachers. Self-assessed language proficiency has been shown to be closely correlated to professional language proficiency tests and is a valid and reliable way to assess a person's language proficiency (Mistar, 2011). The examination of teaching efficacy is based on the self-efficacy theory, which has its foundation in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1997). Bandura believed that self-efficacy beliefs determine how much a person will persevere to accomplish an expected outcome. Mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional state are important tenets of self-efficacy, as described by Bandura (1997). The term teacher efficacy was initially used by Armor and coworkers in the

RAND study (1976, in Fives, 2003). Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (1998) stated that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs relate to how they teach and outcomes attained.

This study used a mixed methods design using a quantitative survey and qualitative class observation to get more detailed information (Creswell, 2005). The quantitative part of this study was a survey questionnaire that asked elementary school Thai English teachers to include demographic information, rate their English proficiency and English teaching efficacy. Only 30 teachers of the 33 who completed the English teaching efficacy completed the English proficiency portion of the survey. Two observations were completed and analyzed qualitatively to “offer many different perspectives on the study topic and provide a complex picture of the situation” (ibid., p.510, as cited in Lee, 2009). Information was gathered that could be used by teachers, school officials, English education program directors, and Ministry of Education officials to improve the teaching of EFL in Thailand. The results of the survey were obtained by using Open Office Suite, and SPSS (v.11.5 and 17), for descriptive and correlative analysis, which helped to answer the research questions and objectives presented in Chapter 1.

The purpose of the first research question and objective was to determine the self-perceived English proficiency levels for listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The elementary school Thai English teachers were asked to complete a quantitative survey instrument, which included an English proficiency self-assessment scale. This scale was an extension of the original FLOSEM (Padilla, Sung, and Aninao, 1997), with sections created by Butler (2004) to assess reading and writing proficiency, in addition to listening and speaking (oral) proficiency descriptors of the original matrix.

Using the Butler adapted self-perceived English proficiency scale, elementary school Thai teachers rated the receptive skills of listening (\bar{x} =4.12) and reading (\bar{x} =4.03) slightly higher than the productive skills of speaking (\bar{x} =3.97) and writing (\bar{x} =3.97). Based on the descriptors, provided by Padilla and Sung (1999) and Butler (2004), which are based on a continuum from 1, equating to extremely limited ability, to 6, corresponding to native-like proficiency, a score of 4 corresponds to a high intermediate proficiency level. The overall

mean average for self-perceived English proficiency in this study was 4.02, which means the respondents believed they have a good command of the language. When compared to the proficiency self-ratings results from other studies (Butler, 2004; Chacon, 2005; Eslami and Fatahi, 2008; and Lee, 2009), the elementary school Thai English teachers in this study rated themselves similarly to the Taiwanese teachers and lower than teachers in Venezuela and Iran. Thai English teachers had proficiency scores higher than teachers in Korea, Japan, and Iran. Results from other studies suggest that other countries also have teachers with low proficiency levels, but this study suggests that the elementary school Thai English teachers believe they have an overall high intermediate proficiency level.

The way in which teachers perceive their English teaching efficacy is a good indicator of how much influence they feel they have in helping students achieve learning objectives. The second research question and objective was to ascertain what the self-reported English teaching efficacy levels of the elementary Thai English teachers are. Included in the survey instrument was a teaching efficacy scale, using short- and long-form questions from the TSES by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). This scale primarily measured the influence a Thai English teacher has in regards to student engagement and effectiveness of instructional strategies that are used in teaching English. Three additional questions that focused on overall confidence levels in teaching English at the current grade levels, as well as higher grade levels, and confidence in teaching other courses in Thai were added to the English teaching efficacy survey section and categorized as personal teaching efficacy.

Anderson and colleagues (cited in Henson, 2001) have reported that a teacher's sense of efficacy has an influence on students' sense of efficacy. As self-efficacy is context specific, a teacher's sense of teaching efficacy in English, for example, is important in relation to students' efficacy beliefs. Teachers with a high sense of teaching efficacy will experiment with and try different instructional methods (Guskey, 1988) and usually have more confidence in their teaching ability (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). That confidence is felt by the students, thus building their confidence in the subject area being taught.

The elementary school Thai English teachers, who responded to the survey in this study, have above average English teaching efficacy in student engagement, instructional strategies, and personal teaching efficacy. They rated themselves as having 'quite a bit' of influence in student learning of English, with an overall mean average of 7.02 out of 9 points.

The third objective of this research was to determine if there was a correlation between self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy. Even though a correlation was not found between overall self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy, the researcher further investigated independent variables that were perceived to be highly related to one's English proficiency and English teaching efficacy. There were correlations between some of the independent variables and English proficiency and English teaching efficacy. When comparing the four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, to gender, it was found that the five males in the study rated their proficiency levels higher than the twenty five female respondents. The mean average for the males was 4.43, which is between the high intermediate and low advanced proficiency levels, while the females had a mean average of 3.94, which corresponds closely to the high intermediate level. When considering age, the 20-30 years and 50+ groups both rated themselves highly in all four domains, at mean 4.31 and 4.32, respectively, which corresponded to between high intermediate and low advanced proficiency level. The middle age groups, 31-40 and 41-50, assessing their proficiency levels lower, at 3.63 and 3.65, respectively. Those overall scores were closer to the mid intermediate range. The youngest age group (20-30 years) has most likely has been exposed to English more, possibly through required English university courses and growing up in the age of the world wide web. The middle groups, 31-40 and 41-50, may not have had university courses related to English teaching when becoming teachers. Their university years were before the updated curriculum reform in 1999. It is interesting that the 50+ age group rated themselves more highly than the other groups, considering that many of these teachers may not have had the same exposure to English. The reason may be that they have a stronger sense of commitment to learning the language than the middle groups. They most likely have more years of teaching experience and feel confident of their English teaching abilities because they are more experienced. The level of education did not have any significant influence on proficiency ratings. Teachers

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with a bachelor degree rate their overall proficiency levels (\bar{x} =3.85) only slightly lower than the master degree group (\bar{x} =4.03), with a mean variance of 0.18. The Ph.D holder rated herself at an overall score of 5.24, which is between mid- and high-advanced proficiency levels. This would suggest that this person has confidence in her language abilities. The education major did not have an influence on self-perceived English proficiency, in that both groups, non-English and English majors, alike rated themselves at a \bar{x} =4.02, or high intermediate level. The years of teaching experience a teacher has did not show statistical significance in relation to proficiency. The overall proficiency mean for each group was closely clustered with only a 0.35 variance of mean score. The highest mean average was with the group that has 4-6 years of teaching experience, followed closely by the 16+ group (\bar{x} =4.21), then 7-10 (\bar{x} =4.16), 1-3 (\bar{x} =3.88), and finally the 10-15 group (\bar{x} =3.74). Statistical analysis suggests that teaching experience does not have an influence on English proficiency levels.

In relation to gender, the females believed their English teaching efficacy (7.05) was higher than the males (6.84). A '7' on the Likert scale corresponds to the belief that they can do "quite a bit" to influence student outcomes. Female teachers self-reported the ability to engage students (6.82) and use of instructional strategies (7.01) higher than males, while males believed their PTE (7.60) to be strong, when considering the variable of age.. The oldest group, 51+, had the highest self-reported English teaching efficacy in each subscale: SE (7.33), IS (7.79), and PTE (8.11). They rated themselves between providing 'quite a bit' of influence and 'a great deal' of influence. The 20-30 and 41-50 age groups rated themselves the lowest at 6.63 each. In relation to education level, the master-level respondents had the highest overall self-rating of English teaching efficacy at \bar{x} =7.19, with the other education levels close behind at \bar{x} =6.93 for the Ph.D and \bar{x} =6.89 for the bachelor-level respondents. They were all in or extremely close to the 'quite a bit' range. Regarding education major, the non-English majors believed their English teaching efficacy (\bar{x} =7.29) to be higher than English majors (\bar{x} =6.82). When comparing teaching experience to English teaching efficacy, the 51+ age group with the most years of experience, 16+ years, rated their teaching efficacy the highest at 7.43, or having between 'quite a bit' and 'a great deal' of influence on student outcomes. The 7-10 years teaching experience group rated themselves at 7.04 ('quite a bit'),

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with 10-15 years of teaching experience at 6.94 (almost 'quite a bit'), and 1-3 and 4-6 years of teaching experience at 6.56, or between 'some' and 'quite a bit' of influence. All in all the teachers were found to have strong English teaching efficacy beliefs.

One-way analysis of variance, or ANOVA, between the five variables: gender, age, level of education, education major, and teaching experience, and English proficiency and English teaching efficacy revealed some statistically significant findings. There was a statistically significant finding (.032) between gender and the listening domain of English proficiency at $p < .05$, yet none for gender and English teaching efficacy. One-way ANOVA between age and self-perceived English proficiency showed not significant findings, while age and English teaching efficacy showed statistical significance in instructional strategies (.001) and personal teaching efficacy (.042). There was no significance found between education level and English proficiency or English teaching efficacy. Education major and proficiency were not significant, but education major and SE in the teaching efficacy scale showed significance at .006 between groups. Teaching experience and proficiency were not statistically significant, but IS in teaching efficacy was significant at .047 between groups.

Observations were completed to help triangulate the quantitative data gathered. Two teachers led teacher-centered lessons with different results. The teacher in the first observation (Teacher 1) has a master's degree in TESL and teaches English for 18 hours a week. The class observed had 36 students ages 7-8 who were grouped (4-6) at large tables. This teacher was able to successfully engage her students through a fun review lesson that incorporated different teaching strategies. This teacher-centered class did allow for quite a bit of student talk time. The teacher modeled the expected responses first and the students then followed with appropriate responses. She was able to engage most of the students the whole class. They enjoyed answering the questions asked. Teacher 1 rated her overall English proficiency at $\bar{x}=4.75$ or between low and mid advanced proficiency with the observer rating the teacher at 5.5 for listening and speaking because her diction was close to that of a native speaker and she understood everything said with ease. Her self-reported English teaching efficacy in SE was 7.85, which means more than 'quite a bit' but not quite 'a great deal'; IS was 6.86, which is close to 'quite a bit'; and PTE was 7.37. As an observer, the researcher

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rated Teacher 1 with an overall proficiency at $\bar{x}=5.5$ (only listening and speaking were assessed) and SE at $\bar{x}=7.16$, lower than the teacher self-rating, and IS at $\bar{x}=8.8$, which was higher than the teacher rated herself. Teacher 1 used instructional strategies that had the students remembering and using the words and sentences being taught.

Teacher 2 teaches English for 18 hours a week and has an English degree. She was teaching a class of 30 sixth grade students. Students were seated in rows. The room was neat and orderly. Teacher 2 used different teaching strategies but with limited success. Students did not seem to be prepared and did not participate as well as the other class that was observed. The teacher was trying to joke with the class but they did not seem to understand or be interested. In this class the teacher spoke in Thai quite a bit. She talked a lot more than the students. There was almost no oral practice among the students, only for a select few to answer questions. This could have been this way because of the nature of the lesson, a review for an exam. The self-perceived English proficiency of Teacher 2 was $\bar{x}=4.5$. The observer was in agreement with this, also rating the teacher at $\bar{x}=4.5$ in listening, speaking, and writing, based on the observation. For English teaching efficacy the teacher self-rated SE at $\bar{x}=5.71$ (between 'some influence' and 'quite a bit' of influence) and IS at $\bar{x}=7.14$ (close to 'quite a bit' of influence), and PTE at $\bar{x}=6.66$. The observer rated SE at 5.66, fairly close to what the teacher rated, and IS at 6.2, less than the rating of the teacher because the strategies she used did not seem to be successful in helping the students learn and use English, based on the observation.

5.2 Conclusion

The objectives of this study were to determine the self-perceived English proficiency levels and self-reported English teaching efficacy of elementary school Thai English teachers. It also aimed to confirm a correlation between the self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported teaching efficacy levels of the participants. This study adds to the limited research that has been completed in regards to the relationship between self-perceived language proficiency and self-reported language teaching efficacy in the EFL field. It was found that the elementary school Thai English teachers in this study rated their overall

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English proficiency level at 4 (median average), or high intermediate level. The receptive skills of listening and reading were rated the highest at 4.12 and 4.03, respectively, while both productive skills of speaking and writing were rated at 3.97. All domains were matched closely. The participants of this study rated their overall English teaching efficacy at 7 (median average), which means that they believe they can do 'quite a bit' to influence student outcomes. Their personal teaching efficacy was rated the highest at 7.37, followed by instructional strategies at 6.98 and student engagement at 6.7. While a correlation between language proficiency and teaching efficacy was not found, there were some statistically significant correlations between independent variables gender, age, education major, and teaching experience in this study. There was statistical significance between gender and listening proficiency. In regards to English teaching efficacy, it was found that age had significant differences on IS and PTE, as education major had a significant effect on SE, while teaching experience was found to significantly effect IS.

5.3 Discussion

Participants in this study have taken many different types of English-related courses. They have reported taking teaching methods, language learning and theory, and professional development workshops. It was interesting that not many of the courses listed by the participants related to CLT or learner-centeredness as outlined in the new core curriculum guidelines. Where are the communicative language teaching, techniques for a learner-centered classroom, and language improvement courses? It would seem that if the Ministry of Education wants a more communicative approach to foreign language learning that they would offer courses to help train more teachers. Teachers need support through curriculum changes in the way of courses in the areas where the change is taking place. Giving teachers a place to practice English—whether it is through practical application such as speaking one-to-one or in an online-based chat forum, which could help create a good support system between teachers all over Thailand—will motivate teachers to practice and improve their English skills, consequently building their confidence in speaking English. Teachers have shown that they do like to travel abroad by the responses given in the survey. Offering an immersion-based course abroad, during the summer vacation, could also be a good

proficiency builder. However, traveling for a week or two a year is not enough to help improve communication skills. More needs to be done.

In addition to English-related classes, teachers expressed an interest in taking classes on teaching strategies and language pedagogy. They want to improve their teaching style, but will have a difficulty if there are no courses offered for them. Already Thai teachers face many obstacles in teaching, such as large class size and lack of resources. These items were listed as the top two responses for the question about hindrances to teaching. Maybe discussions, involving teachers and administrators, on ways to improve the teaching atmosphere are needed at district and national levels. At the core of all these discussions, there needs to be the recognition that something needs to be done to help improve teachers' English proficiency so that English instruction can improve also.

5.3.1 Self-perceived English proficiency

In answer to research question 1, what are the self-perceived English proficiency levels of elementary school Thai English teachers, the findings show that the teachers rate their overall English skills at level 4, corresponding to a high intermediate level of proficiency. The results of this study show that some elementary school Thai English teachers rate themselves higher than other Asian teachers represented in other studies (Butler, 2004; Lee, 2009). South Korean, Taiwanese, and Japanese elementary school teachers (Butler, 2004) generally rate themselves lower than Thai teachers, with the exception of Taiwan in the reading domain. It is interesting to note that in all studies the respondents rated themselves higher in the receptive skills, listening and reading, and lower in the productive skills, speaking and writing. In the Butler (2004) and current study, teachers had high to low ratings in this order: listening, reading, speaking, writing. Two-thirds of the participants in the current study rated their listening skill at 4 or higher. This suggests that the teachers are more confident in their listening abilities than the other skills and is agreement with another study (ibid.). Ratings of 4 in speaking say that the teachers rate themselves quite high in comparison with reports that Thai English teachers' proficiency levels are low. These high ratings may be an indicator of teachers' proficiency levels increasing to an acceptable level for teaching. This figure is still respectable and worthy of notice. Again, when teachers

perceive themselves to have higher proficiency, they are more likely to try innovative instructional strategies and include more communicative lessons in their syllabus. Reading (4.03) and writing levels (3.97) in the current study are similar to the ratings of Taiwanese teachers for reading (4.07) and writing (3.68). The overall proficiency rating for Taiwan was 3.87, which was closest to high intermediate level, Korea was 3.03, or low intermediate level, and Japan was 2.67, between high beginner and low intermediate level (Butler, 2004). Lee's (2009) study shows that South Korean teachers rated themselves at 3.10, or closest to low intermediate, while the overall proficiency self-rating of the Thai teachers was 4.02, which correspond to high intermediate level. At high intermediate level a person can understand what is being said and speak at near normal speed and read most texts and write with relative ease, sometimes needing to consult a dictionary and making some grammatical mistakes, respectively (Butler, 2004).

What was found was that the Thai teachers have high intermediate self-assessed proficiency levels. This is a positive finding and one that needs to be recognized. Teachers are becoming more aware of the importance of their proficiency level and how it, in turn, has an effect on their students' proficiency levels. This study supports the opinion that Thai teachers proficiency levels are getting better. When proficiency continues to improve, teaching efficacy beliefs also tend to be higher. And when teaching efficacy levels are higher, teachers are more likely to take risks with their teaching. They will try to implement new teaching strategies such as CLT, which is under the Thailand curriculum guidelines, and allow for a more student-centered environment in Thailand EFL classrooms. Providing chances for mastery experiences are what is needed. Mastery experiences come from successfully using and experimenting with the language. Students need those chances to communicate in English, not just to learn the mechanics of the language. More proficient teachers are more confident and more willing to communicate in English, thus modeling the language and helping students to become more proficient by actually practicing English in the classroom. When they feel more confident with using English in the classroom, they are more likely to practice outside the classroom. These are the experiences teachers strive for.

As of yet, there is not a baseline for English proficiency levels of teachers in Thailand. The Thailand Ministry of Education would seem to be in agreement with Thomas (1987), who believes that when the level of proficiency is higher than the curriculum being taught, it should be an acceptable level for teaching in elementary school. Thomas also states that they should have 'language awareness' (p.34) or understanding of the language system being taught, as well as knowledge of teaching or pedagogical skills. These competencies are crucial to improving student outcomes. Lee (2009) found that when teachers had adequate English proficiency, they had a stronger belief in their ability to use instructional strategies and English to carry out lessons. When teachers have limited proficiency the transfer of knowledge is not as effective. It affects the students' ability to acquire the new language (Nel and Muller, 2010). The importance of teachers' language proficiency cannot be overlooked. The question of what English proficiency level do teachers need to successfully teach in Thailand still needs careful consideration. Should language teachers have to pass a proficiency assessment test to teach English? There was no literature found on the administration of an English proficiency test for Thai English teachers. That is an idea that is long overdue for consideration by the Ministry of Education. To assure that teachers have an acceptable proficiency level, support not only needs to there for the teachers by way of a strong foundation in pedagogical training in general, but also for training specific to language teaching. Additionally, teachers need to be able to practice the language to become more proficient. Opportunities for continued language acquisition are important and critical to the job.

5.3.2 Self-reported English teaching efficacy

Research question two utilized data from the self-rating English teaching efficacy scale. It has been established that teaching efficacy is specific to content area. The teaching efficacy scale was divided into three subscales: student engagement (SE), instructional strategies (IS), and personal teaching efficacy (PTE). The data of the first two subscales, SE and IS, which used the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) in the EFL context and are shown in

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Scores for SE show that teachers in Iran (Eslami and Fatahi, 2008) and Venezuela (Chacon, 2005) believe they are more efficacious than the Thai teachers in the present study. This could be that they are teaching at high school and middle school level, respectively, and need to be more proficient to teach at those levels. Korean elementary teachers (Lee, 2009), and middle school Iranian teachers (Mirsanjari, Karbalaei, and Afraz (2013) rated themselves in SE lower than the elementary school teachers of Thailand. The teachers in Iran (Eslami and Fatahi, 2008) and Venezuelan teachers (Chacon, 2005) also rate themselves higher in IS than the Thai teachers, Korean, and middle school Iranian teachers.

The elementary school Thai English teachers perceived themselves to have higher teaching efficacy than teachers in the Lee (2009) and Mirsanjari, Karbalaei, and Afraz (2013) studies. They believed that they could have 'quite a bit of influence' whereas the respondents in the Lee (2009) and Mirsanjari, Karbalaei, and Afraz (2013) only believed they would have 'some influence'. Conversely, the high school English teachers in the Eslami and Fatahi study (2008) and middle school English teachers Chacon study (2005) overall rated themselves slightly more efficacious than the Thai teachers, who were closely rated at being able to affect 'quite a bit' of influence on students. Because teaching efficacy is related to how confident a teacher feels in their teaching abilities, these results suggest that the Thai English teachers are more confident in their English teaching abilities than Iranian (Mirsanjari, Karbalaei, and Afraz (2013) and Korean (Lee, 2009) teachers.

Elementary school Thai English teachers seem to be more confident in their use of IS than ability to engage students, yet rate themselves the highest for PTE, or belief that they have a greater influence in student outcomes than research might suggest. In fact, the questions related to English PTE had the highest overall mean score on the teaching efficacy scale. Thai English teachers are confident that their English teaching abilities and believe they are more 'quite a bit' confident at teaching English at the elementary level. This is another positive finding in this study. By having teachers who are confident in their teaching abilities, they are good models for students as well as teachers that do not have as much confidence in their own English teaching abilities. Personal teaching efficacy is what powers teachers to excel in their field. The Thai teachers also believe that their instructional

strategies could have 'quite a bit' of influence, showing confidence in their abilities. These high efficacy beliefs are displayed in the classroom and students respond positively to these beliefs (by developing positive self-efficacy beliefs themselves). This was collaborated by two classroom observations that were completed. Students were more engaged when teaching strategies were more effective. More engagement means more exposure to the language. More exposure brings more opportunities for language acquisition, which is the key to improved proficiency. During one observation, students were eager to give answers when everyone was allowed to participate. They were practicing English with the teacher and each other. In the classroom where one student was called on at a time, opportunities for communication between students and teacher did not take place.

5.3.3 Relationship between self-perceived English proficiency and self-reported English teaching efficacy

In regard to research question three, self-perceived English proficiency has been shown to have a positive correlation to English teaching efficacy in some studies (Chacon, 2005; Eslami and Fatahi, 2008; Lee, 2009). However, in this study, a statistically significant relationship was not found. This is consistent with findings from a study by Shim (2001, as cited in Mirsanjari, Karbalaeei, and Araz, 2013) who studied the self-efficacy beliefs of middle and high school teachers in Korea. The small sample size could have been a significant factor for not seeing a statistical significance between the two, English proficiency and English teaching efficacy. Additionally, teachers' limited language acquisition pedagogy and content knowledge about language teaching could affect the way they responded to questions and explain why there was no correlation between English proficiency and English teaching efficacy.

Five independent variables, gender, age, education level, education major, and teaching experience were further investigated in relation to English proficiency and English teaching efficacy and there were statistically significant findings between gender and listening proficiency, age and IS and PTE, while education major affected SE, and teaching experience and IS were correlated.

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5.3.4 Observations

The teachers that were observed were energetic and seemed to enjoy teaching. In a short interview after the observation, one teacher commented on how supportive the school administration was. They supported professional development and wanted their teachers to continually improve their teaching strategies. The government school had a good feel to it, it was a warm environment. Their classrooms were inviting places. The students were happy and student work was proudly display throughout the school. The teachers provided lessons using different teaching strategies to keep students engaged.

5.4 Limitations of the study

The small sample size is the greatest limitation of this study. Findings cannot be generalized to the population. It has been suggested that a correlation was not found because of the sample size. The findings are also based on self-reported data, which can be restrictive in itself. Another possible limitation is that teachers may have scored themselves according to what they thought was the best, reasonable answer due to peer and cultural pressure. With the relative consistency of the scores, that does not seem to be the case. Additionally, it is advisable to further investigate the findings by additional qualitative studies that focus on observing the teachers to collaborate their self-assessments.

5.5 Implications

Based on the findings, elementary school Thai English teachers are more proficient than studies may suggest and they report that they have relatively high teaching ability. These results are based on self-assessed reports and need to be substantiated with formal observational studies to confirm the information gathered in this report. Because teaching efficacy is domain specific, and teaching efficacy relates to student achievement, teachers would benefit from more focused professional development programs. Moreover, the participants stated that they would like more professional training. Needs analyzes need to be completed to understand teachers specific needs in order to create programs and professional development courses that match those needs.

Education programs need to change or implement new courses that focus on improving teacher efficacy by providing training in CLT and a more learner-centered approach to teaching. Segovia and Hardison (2009) and others (Punthumasen, 2007) support training of teachers in the learner-centered approach, something that is unfamiliar to many Thai teachers. Standards for acceptable proficiency levels are needed produce more qualified language teachers. Teachers of EFL need programs and courses in listening, speaking, reading, and writing to prepare them in all aspects of language teaching.

5.6 Recommendations

Implementation of change takes time. Changing from a teacher-centered environment to a learner-centered one, where more communication practice takes place, is happening in Thailand slowly, but surely. Elementary school Thai English teachers are improving their proficiency levels. They are incorporating CLT into the classroom on their own terms. To increase the rate of CLT in the classroom, more training needs to take place. Teachers, traditionally teach how they were taught. This type of teaching is not right for language learning and needs to change; and the only way it is going to change is by offering considerable training and additional support to the teachers during the transition phase. The beliefs that teachers have about teaching and learning can affect how they adapt to changing approaches to teaching (Bolitho, n.d.). By providing teachers with professional development opportunities to learn more about CLT and student-centered classroom environments, more students will benefit.

Thai English teachers would benefit by continuing to improve their English proficiency, participating in professional development programs, talking to other English speakers at every opportunity, and traveling to English-speaking countries for language immersion. Requesting professional development in language teaching pedagogy, CLT, and learner-centered approaches would assist in the transition to a more learn-centered classroom. Students would be the ultimate beneficiaries of this professional development. Students' participation in a communicative English class would provide practical application of the language, which would, in turn, enhance proficiency at an increased rate. The use of kinesthetic learning, with more physical response has been shown to improve retention and

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would be advantageous to incorporate into the classroom (Asher, 1969). More communicative tasks such as role plays and using more authentic language from media and technology would help students see and experience how English in daily lives is important. These activities engage the students; they have to actually use the language to complete the tasks. The Ministry of Education would do well to offer more support to teachers by offering professional development and encouraging them to participate. Further review of the curriculum to evaluate its effectiveness may be beneficial. Developing and establishing baseline English proficiency standards, and instituting standardized language proficiency tests for teachers who teach other languages than Thai, would help to produce more qualified English teachers. An evaluation of the courses taught in teacher education programs for English teachers would help to make programs, thus courses, more effective. Matching the program to the communicative-based curriculum guidelines could advance English teaching effectiveness also. Training programs could empower teachers to continue to improve their English skills, which will be a step toward raising the teachers' sense of English teaching efficacy. Empowered teachers can then foster empowered students; and empowered students will be more prepared to successfully compete in the ASEAN community as well as other international communities.

More importantly, students need to see English being modeled in everyday life so that they can see and understand the connection to learning another language. Teachers could talk to each other in English in the halls and public places at school. The principal could model speaking English also. Another suggestion would be for the national leaders to model English through public service announcements and written communications. Newspapers could introduce an English learning section in the paper as other countries have done. The researcher saw newspapers in Korea that had a page devoted to English practice. When students see role models speaking English, they will start speaking English too.

Further studies are recommended to determine the effectiveness of teaching English at all grade levels. Observational studies, which include interviews that assess teachers' use of communicative strategies and the evaluation of the learn-centered classroom would also be beneficial.

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