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e-Proceeding



**3RD INTERNATIONAL
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EDUCATION AND
LANGUAGE FOR
STUDENTS & ADULT
LEARNERS (ELSA)**

*“Digital
Transformation in
Language and
Education”*

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***The 3rd International Conference on Education and
Language for Students and Adult Learners (ELSA)
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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ESL PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS: IMPACT ON TEACHING SKILLS

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Abstract

To enhance the country's education quality, Malaysia's Ministry of Education requires in-service primary school English language teachers to enrol in a four-year degree programme. This study explored the impacts of professional development on English language (ESL) primary school teachers' teaching competency after completing their four-year degree program. The observation data collection method was employed in this study. The purpose of these observations is to gain some insights into the teacher's competency in teaching and language skills. Three in-service primary school English language teachers participating in professional development were selected for classroom observation. The teacher observation form adapted from the Teaching Practice Evaluation Form of Education Faculty of University Technology MARA was used to assess the teachers' performance. The results show that the teachers had achieved the required skills in teaching and language proficiency, though they still needed to improve their technological skills. The study concludes that the training related to technology-enhanced teaching must be improved if the professional development program is to have the most significant impact. This study is beneficial to ESL programme administrators who intend to promote higher levels of commitment through a more holistic understanding of the needs and barriers of their teachers participating in professional development.

Keywords: Professional development, impacts, ESL, primary school teachers, teaching skills.

INTRODUCTION

Numerous studies have been conducted on the characteristics of effective professional development for teachers (Manit & Chowwalit, 2016) where teacher professional development is a crucial factor in teachers' improvement in their abilities of delivering high standards of teaching and student learning. (Fabrizz et al., 2020) concluded that the professional development course favoured participants' teaching-related self-efficacy, self-concept, and subjective teaching knowledge.

Describing the fundamental elements of professional development is crucial to examine its effects (Fabrizz et al., 2020). Through professional development programmes, teachers are able to learn new responsibilities, polish existing practices, develop new instructional strategies, and grow professionally and personally (Jerrim et al., 2023). It is clear that experienced and new teachers have different professional development needs and goals when the application of professional development activities in language teaching environments is

considered.

Numerous different attempts have been made to provide quality teaching through professional development. Furthermore, educators and researchers believe that quality teaching is the key to improving student learning (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). However, researchers have not observed the actual classroom events that take place upon the teachers' return to their classrooms after their professional-development experiences. This research intends to develop an understanding of how the professional development program impacts the teachers' teaching and language competency.

Teacher Professional Development

Researchers and educators generally agree that one of the most effective ways to improve teaching and learning is to provide teachers with access to high-quality professional development opportunities. Many academics who studied the complex process of change referred to the value of professional development in improving education (Sancar et al., 2021). The factors contributing to good teacher professional development have been well documented (Manit & Chowwalit, 2016). Teacher professional development is an essential component to improve the standard of the teachers' teaching that positively impacts student learning. However, (Ishola Ibrahim, 2015; Loucks and Melle (1982) found that the precise impact of professional development had not been thoroughly investigated.

The aforementioned constraint should be addressed in future studies. As stated by Coffey (2021) the major problem with professional development emerges only when the implementation phase begins. The concern should be placed on whether new knowledge and skills are applied in the classrooms rather than whether the teachers receive a high-quality education or learn a variety of innovative techniques of instruction while participating in professional development (Eun, 2010). The importance of concentrating on teachers' knowledge and abilities in the classroom becomes apparent when the teacher's teaching practice is considered the contextual factors impacting the application of the instructors' knowledge and capability. Nonetheless, most studies in this field are yet to focus on the impact of professional development on a teacher's teaching skills.

Osei-Owusu (2022) investigated the impact of teachers' professional development on academic performance in senior high schools in Ghana and the mediating role of teachers' professional knowledge. A survey was conducted, and questionnaires were retrieved from 4,102 teachers in selected public schools in Ghana. As a result, it was found that professional knowledge partially mediated the relationship between professional development and academic performance. Thus, it was concluded that professional development leads to improvement in the academic performance of students through their enhanced professional knowledge. This study could be improved by taking the students' perceptions of teachers' skills into account rather than solely focusing on the teachers' perceptions of their student's academic performance. Based on the design of this study that employed a structured questionnaire as the data collection tool, the teacher's perception has led to the conclusion that they had improved the student's academic performance

without assessing the student's perceptions.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed the observation data collection method. Observations were carried out to investigate the teaching skills of the teachers. The findings from the observations were useful to better understand the teachers' impacts of the professional development program on their teaching competency. Three in-service English Language Primary school teachers who had been involved with professional development first-degree programmes had been selected to be observed in this qualitative research design. The instrument used to assess the teacher's teaching and language skills was adapted from the Teaching Practice Evaluation Form of Education Faculty of University Technology MARA. The observation was done with the purpose to evaluate the performances of the teachers with respect to criteria expected within the framework given, i.e., teaching and language skills. Teachers would be assessed based on the criteria below:

1. Language skills:
 - a. Command of subject-matter
 - b. Speech and Language
2. Teaching skills:
 - a. Set Induction
 - b. Presentation
 - c. Pace of teaching
 - d. Use of teaching aids
 - e. Teaching Method and Strategy

MAIN RESULTS

Narrative Report on Observation of the First Participant

I observed the class of the first participant, Maria, as a compulsory subject of English language. The topic taught to the students was 'Greetings'. The respective teacher warmed up the class by asking some questions in order to attract the attention of students. She wrote the question 'How do you greet your parents when you get up in the morning?' on the board and asked them to share the answer orally. Then only, he entered into a new chapter i.e., Greetings. First of all, the teacher explained the objective of the lesson both verbally and written as she wrote on the board 'at the end of the lesson, you will be able to tell different ways of greetings in Malaysia based on the relationship of the persons. Then, she brainstormed with the class to share about different ways of greetings. Then after, she also added some points and clearly defined the term in the class. Furthermore, she also encouraged them to give examples from their real lives and locality. Moreover, the teacher shared the different ways of greetings in other countries. Following that, worksheets were distributed to each of the five groups consisting of four

students. For the writing activity, the students were required to match the correct greetings to the time of the day in the pictures. Finally, the respective teacher summarised the content and elaborated the key points to the class.

On the basis of aforementioned, I can conclude that it was a wonderful class presentation as the teacher followed the student-centred technique. The opening outlined the topic and objective of the class. She provided as many opportunities to students in order to interact in the class where students were active. Thus, the atmosphere of the class was participative. The picture cards and the worksheets were the materials provided to the students; the content was clear to them. Moreover, students and teachers both were interested and enthusiastic in the class where humour was used appropriately.

The respective teacher was happy to address the questions and had good eye contact with the students. The teacher provided the appropriate examples related to life experiences and local community. She emphasised the importance of greetings by explaining them clearly in the class. The teacher encouraged the students to answer the given questions verbally. Indeed, the delivery was paced to students' needs.

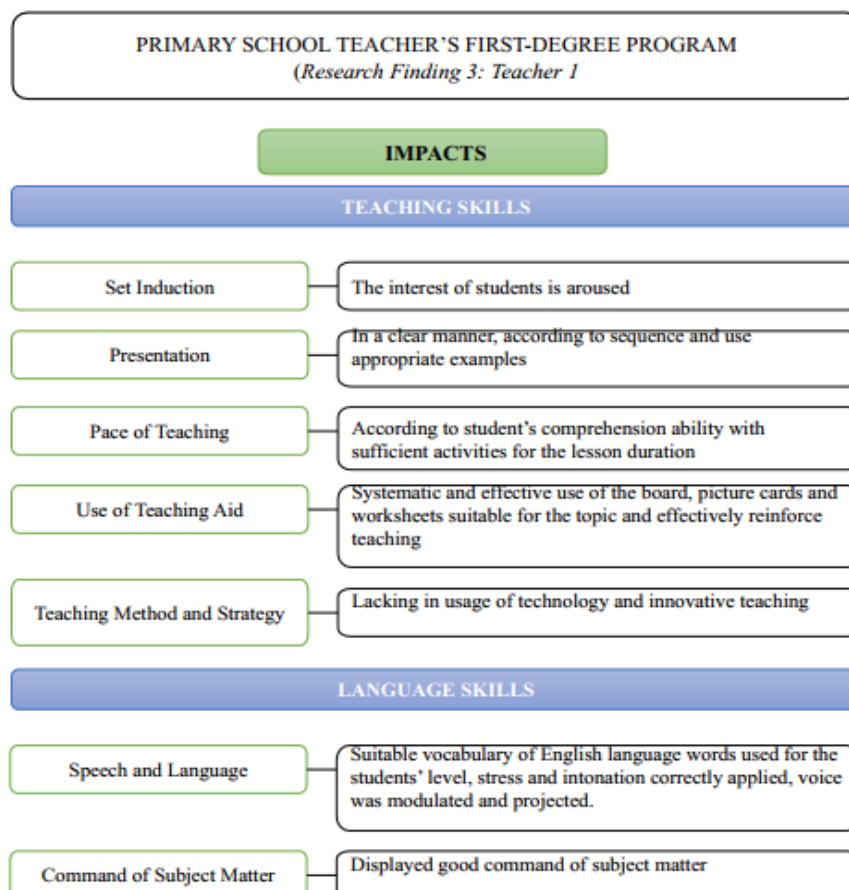
Narrative Analysis on Language and Teaching Skills

Language skills

The teacher displayed good command of the subject matter where an air of confidence was shown in her conduct of teaching Year two students in a primary school. Her explanations on the topic were well received by the students. It was proven when the students managed to give correct answers orally and on the worksheets. Speech and Language- Suitable vocabulary of English language words used for the level of her students. Stress pattern and intonation generally was correctly applied. Good pronunciation. Voice is well modulated and projected.

Teaching skills

The set induction has managed to arouse the interest of students to learn further on the lesson of the day. She had started her lesson by greeting the class in a lively tone and positive note. After exchanging pleasantries, followed with asking few questions on greetings, she introduced the topic for the lesson of the day, i.e., Greetings. The lesson was presented in a clear manner and according to the sequence and use of appropriate examples. She explained how to greet people according to the time of the day, in a confident manner. Lessons are paced according to the students' comprehension ability and sufficient activities for the duration of lesson was given. The teacher makes systematic and effective use of the board. Code-switching was noticeable in her instructions to students. Teaching aids are suitable to the topic and used effectively to reinforce teaching. Teaching methods and strategy are not varied, though. The usage of technology and innovative teaching are still lacking.



Narrative Report on Observation of the Second Participant

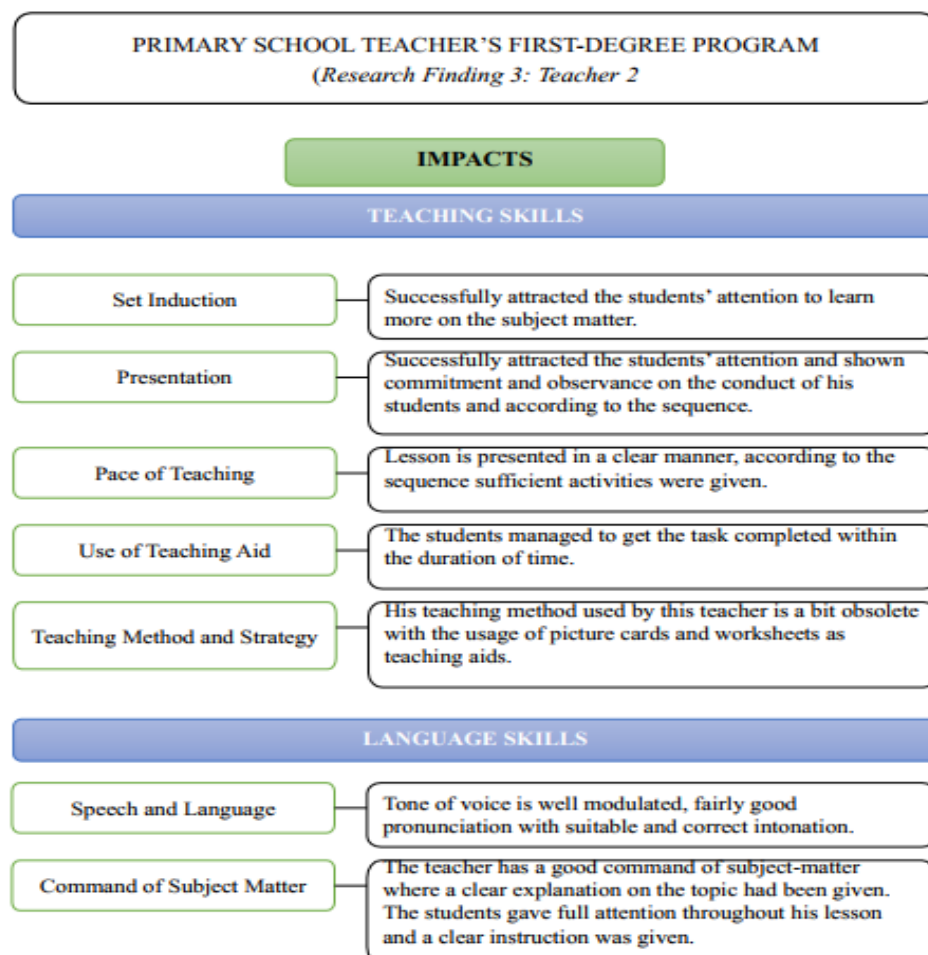
Language skills

This teacher has a good command of subject-matter where a clear explanation on the topic was given. The students gave full attention throughout his lesson and a clear instruction had been given on matching activity on different types of transportations. Speech and Language-Tone of voice was well modulated, fairly good pronunciation with suitable and correct intonation.

Teaching Skills

This teacher has good command of subject matter. For the Implementation stage of set induction, she had started out her lesson by enquiring the students' background knowledge of the topic of the lesson, which is type of buildings, orally. The students were eagerly answering his questions. Hence, he had successfully attracted the students' attention to learn more on the subject matter. He had also shown commitment and observance on the conduct of his students. Code-switching had been applied in giving instructions for the students to understand the teacher's instructions on the tasks given. For the record, he was teaching a Year four class, of an average group of students who had limited English language competency. The lesson was presented in a clear manner and according to the sequence and she had used appropriate examples that suited the level of students. Sufficient activities were given for the 30 minutes class, where the

students were asked to complete a worksheet on the topic. Based on my observation, the students managed to get the task completed within the duration of time given. Somehow, the teaching method used by this teacher was a bit obsolete with the usage of textbooks and worksheets as teaching aids. It is recommended that he incorporate technology in his teaching methodology. Hence, his claims of gaining new ideas in teaching did not tally with his actual teaching.

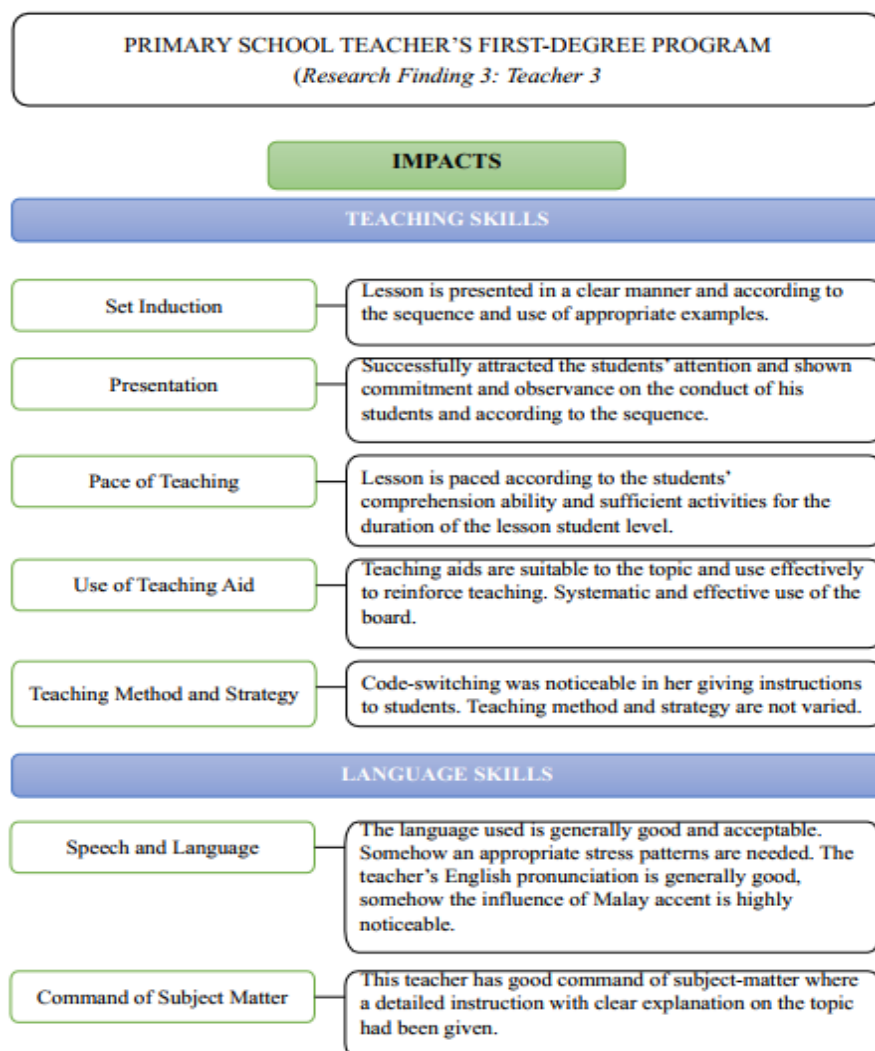


Narrative Report of Observation on the Third Participant

Language Skills

This teacher has good command of subject-matter where a detailed instruction with clear explanation on the topic was delivered to the students. The students had a fun time learning from this teacher as she had the experience and her own way of tackling different levels of students' abilities in learning. That was noticeable when she had grouped her students into three, mixed-ability groups. When asked the reason for the strategy, she explained that it would give the weaker students an opportunity to mingle freely with the brighter ones and to prevent the feeling of inferiority complex. Speech and Language-Tone of voice was well modulated, fairly good pronunciation with suitable and correct intonation. The language used was generally good and acceptable. Somehow

appropriate stress patterns are needed. The teacher's English pronunciation is generally good, somehow the influence of the Malay accent is highly noticeable. Practising correct pronunciation is important to an English language teacher. BBC Learning English would be a good resource for the teacher.



Teaching skills

She has a strong voice but there is warmth in it. Her eyes were fixed on each and every one of her students tenderly. That was enough to attract her student's attention before she started testing her student's background knowledge on the number of seasons in the four- season countries. I could see that she was very much in control of her class. The set induction was a good starter. Lesson was presented in a clear manner and according to the sequence and use of appropriate examples, where she had explained appropriately of the different weathers in the countries of four seasons with the aid of attractive colourful picture cards showing the of the different weathers.

Her lesson was paced according to the students' comprehension ability and sufficient activities were provided for the duration of the lesson, which was 30 minutes. The teacher made systematic and effective use of the board. Her marker

pen handwriting on the board was of the correct size, clear enough even to those who were sitting at the back of the classroom. It was essential for a primary school teacher to use a clear and correct size of handwriting when they use a board for their teaching aid.

That is for the benefit of the students to grasp the content of the teacher's writing on the board. Code-switching was noticeable in her instructions to the students. Teaching aids used were suitable to the topic and were used effectively to reinforce teaching. Her teaching method and strategy were not varied, though. The usage of technology and innovative teaching are still lacking.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the teachers have improved their teaching and language skills. They have become more confident and committed and gained new ideas in their teaching. Based on the assessment of the teachers via classroom observation, it is proven that teaching aids chosen were suitable to the topics and used effectively to reinforce teaching. However, teaching methods and strategies used are not varied, and the usage of technology and innovative teaching are still lacking and need to be improved. Hence, it is recommended that teachers in primary school be provided with program enhancement, the usage of technology and innovative teaching for their professional development. The usage of technology in teaching modifies pedagogical approaches with the use of computers and the internet, which eventually increases the effectiveness of teaching and learning (Omar & Ab. Rashid, 2019). To prevent our education system from becoming obsolete, we must begin to comprehend the impact of the technology on education (Bansal, 2023). The Ministry of Education believes that the use of ICT in teaching and learning in schools as well as in managing educational institutions and administrative sectors are the prerequisites for making Malaysia a high-income country (MOE, 2013). Hence teachers need to keep abreast with technology by applying it in their teaching to produce interesting lessons in order to capture their students' interest in learning.

This research would be helpful to investigate the current practices of the professional development of primary school English teachers in Malaysia and find out whether the objectives are fulfilled through the professional development courses organised by the Ministry of Education.

BIODATA

Ruzana Omar is an English language lecturer at the Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia. She obtained her first degree in TESL from Universiti Putra Malaysia and her Master's degree at MARA Institute of Technology, Malaysia exploring professional development activities amongst Secondary school English language teachers. Her research interests include teacher education, professional development, and English language teaching. She has

expertise and vast experience in teaching English for Critical Academic Reading, English for Report Writing, English for Academic Purpose and Integrated Language Skills in higher institution. She has 31 years of teaching English language that shape her philosophy in English language teaching that teaching is an art of life. She has also published 12 journals relating to English language teaching, Grammar teaching pedagogy, e-learning, teacher education, and teacher professional development. Her latest journal, Towards the Sustainability of English Language Teachers Professional Development via Professional Development Programs: Extrinsic and Intrinsic Satisfaction, has been published in Frontiers Psychology, ranked by Journal Citation Indicator (JCI) Impact Factor indexing at Q1 Quartile.

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Tarikh : 20 Januari 2023

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