

## Exploring Pre-service Teachers' Beliefs about English Teaching Competence, Perceived Competence, and Actual Competence

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The present study explores what constitutes pre-service teachers' beliefs about English teaching competence, perceived English teaching competence, and actual English teaching competence, how these variables are related, and how beliefs function in self-evaluation. Eighty-eight pre-service elementary school teachers participated in the study. They were asked to perform the teaching task and respond to the surveys about beliefs and self-evaluation. The scores of beliefs, self-evaluation, and actual teaching ability were calculated and analyzed. The results are as follows: Pre-service teachers' three variables, beliefs about English teaching competence, perceived English teaching competence, and actual English teaching competence, are separate constructs consisting of different components; there are correlations between some of these components and actual English teaching competence. Also, this study revealed that one of the components—perceived competence about their skills of designing and teaching effective English lessons—best explains actual English teaching competence. Additionally, it was found that pre-service teachers make some errors when they evaluate their English teaching competence, which causes tendencies such as overestimation or underestimation of their competence, and that their beliefs play a role in these self-evaluation tendencies.

**Keywords:** pre-service elementary school teachers, beliefs, perceived competence, actual competence, language teaching competence

### 1 Introduction

In Korea, pre-service elementary school teachers are educated to achieve teacher competences necessary for all subjects including English. To achieve English teaching competence, they take related courses and take part in teaching practicum where they can gain experience in teaching English. Through these experiences, they grow to be an effective English language teacher. Pre-service teachers' teaching experiences include not only teaching

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English at local elementary schools as a student teacher but also an English teaching demonstration as part of university course requirements.

Throughout the process of developing their English teaching competence, pre-service elementary school teachers shape their own concept not only of English learning and teaching but also of language teacher competence (Jo, Kim, & Joo, 2017). Since teaching itself includes thought and action (Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999), what they believe and perceive in language teaching may influence the process where they develop their teaching competence. Throughout the process, pre-service teachers often evaluate and reflect on their competence by comparing themselves to peers or in-service teachers. When they evaluate their own English teaching competence, they rely on what they know about and believe in English learning and teaching gained through various sources of information (Steyn & Mynhardt, 2008). Their self-evaluation may make them feel frustrated or confident in their teaching and may positively or negatively influence their teaching motivation and identity as a future English language teacher.

Just as self-evaluation makes language learners more aware of their learning and help them to develop autonomy in their learning, it may also make language teachers aware of their teaching and contribute to their teaching competence (Borg & Edmett, 2018) and the same is true of pre-service teachers. When pre-service teachers compare their teaching ability with others' and evaluate their own teaching ability, they become more aware of their present level of teaching competence and can recognize better what to focus on in developing their competence effectively. If self-evaluation or self-perception of their own teaching competence is included in teacher education programs, pre-service teachers will take more responsibility in developing their professionalism as a language teacher.

When considering self-evaluation or self-perception of ability, it should be noted that there are gaps between self-evaluation of competence (perceived competence) and performance (actual competence) and that self-evaluation is not always accurate (Borg & Edmett, 2019; Mabe & West, 1982; MacIntyre, Noels, & Clement, 1997; William, Mercer, & Ryan, 2015). Since pre-service teachers are in the process of developing competence which is yet imperfect, the difference between perceived competence and actual competence may become larger and the self-evaluation may be more inaccurate. However, even though there are gaps between the two variables, investigating these gaps will enhance our understanding of pre-service teachers' knowledge and beliefs about English teaching and about competence necessary for a language teacher. Also, since teachers' beliefs provide a base for their classroom actions (Richards & Lockhart, 1996), it is worthwhile exploring how their beliefs about and self-evaluation of English teaching competence are related and how their beliefs function in evaluating their own competence.

To understand better pre-service elementary school teachers' beliefs about English teaching competence and their perceived English teaching competence in relation to their actual English teaching competence, the present study raises the following research questions:

1. What are the components of pre-service elementary school teachers' beliefs about English teaching competence? What are the components of their perceived English teaching competence?
2. What are the correlations among pre-service elementary school teachers' beliefs about English teaching competence, perceived English teaching competence, and actual English teaching competence?
3. What components of beliefs about English teaching competence and perceived English teaching competence predict pre-service teachers' actual English teaching competence?
4. What is the role of beliefs about English teaching competence in pre-service teachers' self-evaluation of English teaching competence?

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Language teacher competence**

What consists of language teacher competence has been presented or argued by various studies. The concept of language teacher competence is broad and consists of knowledge, attitudes, perception, and affect (Jo, Kim, & Joo, 2017). For this reason, it is difficult to define the scope of it. For example, Richards (2011) presented a list of language teacher competences required in English teaching: language proficiency, content knowledge, teaching skills, contextual knowledge, language teacher identity, learner-focused teaching, pedagogical reasoning skills, and theorizing from practice. The Cambridge English Teaching Framework (Cambridge Assessment English, 2018) suggested five categories of language teacher competence: the category of learning and the learner, the category of teaching, learning and assessment, the category of language ability, the category of language knowledge and awareness, and the category of professional development and values. The Higher Education Council (HEC) in Turkey where English is a foreign language as in Korea set the four areas of competence and performance standards necessary for language teacher qualification: content and pedagogical knowledge area, planning, teaching, classroom management and communication area, monitoring, assessment, and reporting area, and other professional requirement area (Yüksel, 2014).

Such language teacher competence was studied as professional knowledge related to language teaching, and language "teaching" competence (knowledge and skills necessary for organizing and teaching contents according to learners and learning situations) is emphasized as the

core of language “teacher” competence (Ball, Thames, & Phelps, 2008). Teaching competences and teacher competences are distinguished from each other. Teacher competences as a wider systemic view of teacher professionalism include knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for teaching while teaching competences as practical competence are linked with the skills of teaching (European Commission, 2013). Based on this distinction, Rossner (2017) proposed that language teachers are required to attain key teaching competences consisting of four subcategories (methodology, assessment of learning, lesson and course planning, and interaction management and monitoring).

## **2.2 Language teachers’ beliefs**

Language teaching reflects language teachers’ beliefs or knowledge since the latter functions as a framework or schema when teachers implement teaching action (Richards & Lockhart, 1996). Language teachers’ knowledge or beliefs form out of various sources of experience such as teacher education and training, teaching experience, experience as a language learner, and language education practices (Wilén Hutchinson, & Ishler, 2007). Language teachers’ beliefs consist of beliefs about (English) language, teaching, learning, educational program and curriculum, and language teaching as a profession (Richards & Lockhart, 1996) and these beliefs influence their teaching practices and professional development; therefore, beliefs change of teachers brings about change in their teaching practices (Kaymakamoğlu, 2018; Richards, Gallo, & Renandya, 2001).

As for language teachers’ beliefs about teaching, Richards and Lockhart (1996) suggested some aspects of teaching about which their beliefs can be examined: the role of teacher, teaching method to be implemented, teaching resources to make use of, definition of effective teaching, classroom management approach, and qualities of a good teacher. According to Richards and Lockhart, teachers’ beliefs about these aspects of teaching influence their classroom actions. Also, the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) report (OECD, 2009) suggested the framework for the analysis of teachers’ knowledge/beliefs and teaching practices. The framework shows how language teachers’ knowledge and beliefs such as content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge are related with teacher classroom practice including structuring, student orientation, and enhanced activities.

## **2.3 Language teachers’ self-evaluation**

As mentioned in the introduction, language teachers often evaluate their language teaching competence when they compare their teaching with peers’ or reflect on their teaching, and such subjective self-rating (perceived language teaching competence) does not coincide with an objective rating of

proficiency (actual language teaching competence). In research on developing a self-assessment tool (SAT) for English language teachers, Borg and Edmett (2019) found that English teachers around the world evaluated their competence generally as high (3.00 on the four-point scale). Likewise, Kim (2019) found that pre-service elementary school teachers in Korea showed an overall high level of perceived language teaching competence (4.18 on the six-point scale). The fact that the subjective rating mean of the total group of teachers was high does not imply that teachers or pre-service teachers always tend to rate their ability higher than the actual ability level. According to MacIntyre and his colleagues (1997), language learners sometimes make errors such as evaluating their proficiency as higher or lower than the actual level. The researchers argued that such errors result from systematic tendencies to overestimate or underestimate.

Concerning the inaccuracy in self-evaluation, several reasons have been suggested. For instance, Borg and Edmett (2019) proposed some reasons including limited knowledge about self or threats to self-esteem. Of the two reasons, the former means that teachers or pre-service teachers inaccurately predict their ability when they do not recognize their own present level of proficiency or do not have enough awareness of it. This is related to the results of Blanche and Merino's research (1989) reporting that the accuracy rate increases when given appropriate, specific assessment tools and chances of evaluating based on various external criteria that can give them objective perspectives. Then, if provided with appropriate tools with external criteria, it is more likely that teachers can evaluate their ability more accurately and raise their awareness of it, and can benefit in developing their language teaching competence.

Previous studies (Kim, 2006; MacIntyre et al., 1997) that investigated the relationship between perceived competence and actual competence suggested that the affect variable such as language anxiety correlated with the two variables and that it may systematically cause a tendency of over- or underestimation. Another variable—beliefs—may be considered in the discussion of the relationship between self-evaluation and competence development. According to cognition theory, beliefs about competence may cause motives to improve the self and efforts to learn (Zingoni & Byron, 2017). If pre-service elementary school teachers' beliefs about competence correlate with actual and perceived competence, it is possible that their beliefs play some role in evaluating their competence.

### **3 Research Method**

#### **3.1 Participants**

Eighty-eight pre-service elementary school teachers, 22 males and 66 females, participated in the study. They were all year 4 undergraduate students,

studying at one of the national universities of education in Korea. They attended 2 credit hours of English courses and 6 credit hours of English education courses before they participated in the study. Also, they completed 200 hours of teaching practicum in local elementary schools. During the study, they were tasking the course of English teaching practice. Their English proficiency was advanced intermediate, and they received the grade 1.7 out of 9 grades (stanine score of 1.7) on the English subject test of Korea College Scholastic Ability Test.

### 3.2 Procedure

To investigate the pre-service elementary school teachers' beliefs about English teaching competence, their perceived English teaching competence, and their actual English teaching competence, the data were collected in the following order. First, they were asked to perform the task of teaching an English lesson. The task required them to plan a lesson by applying the given teaching conditions including the grade of elementary school students, learning objectives, key expressions, and language skills to be taught, and to teach the lesson according to the plan. Their teaching task was evaluated by the researcher and an elementary school teacher with five years of teaching experience. After they completed the task, they were asked to respond to the surveys: the beliefs about English teaching competence and the perceived competence of English teaching. The survey items from Kim (2019) were used to measure the pre-service elementary school teachers' beliefs and perceived competence concerned. Each survey consists of 15 items as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Survey Items for English Teaching Competence

Item number	Description of skills
B01 <sup>a</sup> /P01 <sup>b</sup>	Designing and teaching activities appropriate for learning objectives
B02/P02	Designing and teaching well-structured lessons
B03/P03	Eliciting utterances by using appropriate questioning strategies
B04/P04	Interacting with students and having them interact with each other
B05/P05	Checking students' understanding and using appropriate strategies accordingly
B06/P06	Using non-verbal (contextual) clues to help students understand and learn
B07/P07	Organizing students in various ways for effective learning
B08/P08	Using technology in a way for effective learning
B09/P09	Using modeling and demonstration for students' better understanding
B10/P10	Using English correctly in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar
B11/P11	Using English fluently
B12/P12	Adjusting English according to the level of students' English proficiency

Exploring Pre-service Teachers' Beliefs about English Teaching  
Competence, Perceived Competence, and Actual Competence

B13/P13	Appropriate eye contact; appropriate body movement and positioning in the classroom
B14/P14	Managing the class in a confident and enthusiastic manner
B15/P15	Pacing the lesson according to the students' understanding and learning

*Note.* a. B stands for the items for beliefs about English teaching competence; b. P stands for the items for perceived English teaching competence

The participants were asked to express the degree of their agreement to the statement: "I believe that the following skills are important requirements for English teaching competence." Also, they were asked to evaluate their competence by responding to the statement: "I am good at the following skills." For both surveys, they answered by choosing one of the six anchors of "strongly agree", "agree", "moderately agree", "moderately disagree", "disagree", "strongly disagree". The three sets of scores (beliefs, perceived competence, actual competence) of the pre-service teachers were collected on the six-point rating scale. After calculating each set of scores, factor analyses were conducted to find out what constitutes the pre-service teachers' beliefs about English teaching competence and their perceived English competence. Then, correlation and regression analyses were conducted to find out variables predicting the pre-service teachers' actual English teaching competence.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Descriptive statistics

Table 2 shows the pre-service elementary school teachers' mean scores of perceived English teaching competence, actual English teaching competence, and beliefs about English teaching competence. As shown in the table, the mean score of beliefs about competence was the highest while the mean score of actual competence was the lowest. The mean score of perceived competence was lower than that of actual competence, which implies that overall, the pre-service teachers might overestimate their English teaching competence. (See Appendices A and B for descriptive statistics of each item.)

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Three Variables

	<i>N</i>	<i>min</i>	<i>max</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Beliefs about English teaching competence	84	2.87	5.93	4.91	.5043
Perceived English teaching competence	86	1.20	5.27	3.91	.7585
Actual English teaching competence	87	2.57	4.07	3.56	.2927

#### 4.2 Components of actual ELT competence

To analyze what components the pre-service teachers' beliefs consist of, factor analysis was conducted. As shown in Table 3, their beliefs were made up of the following four components: beliefs about interaction and structuredness, beliefs about students' understanding, beliefs about teachers' English proficiency, and beliefs about organizing students and using technology for learning. (See Appendix C for factor analysis matrix.)

Table 3. Components of Beliefs about English Teaching Competence

Category	Item
Beliefs about interaction and structuredness (BELTC-1)	B01, B09, B12, B13, B14
Beliefs about students' understanding (BELTC-2)	B02, B03, B04, B05, B06
Beliefs about teachers' English proficiency (BELTC-3)	B10, B11, B15
Beliefs about teachers' organizing students and using technology for learning (BELTC-4)	B07, B08

B01, B09, B12, and B14 from the category of the beliefs about interaction and structuredness and B03, B04 and B05 from the category of the beliefs about students' understanding were higher than the total mean score (4.91) of the beliefs about English teaching competence. On the contrary, B07 and B08 from the category of the beliefs about organizing students and using technology for learning and B10 and B11 from the beliefs about teachers' English proficiency were lower than the total mean score of the beliefs about English teaching competence. These findings lead to the interpretation that the pre-service teachers highly evaluate the role of interaction in classrooms and structuredness of the lesson whereas they do not consider teachers' English proficiency or skills of organizing students and using technology as a crucial requirement when it comes to teaching elementary school students.

The factor analysis was conducted again to analyze the components of the pre-service teachers' perceived English teaching competence. Based on factor analysis, it was found that their perceived competence consists of three components such as skills of designing and teaching effective English lessons, interactive instruction skills, and English proficiency and teaching attitudes, as shown in Table 4. (See Appendix D for factor analysis matrix.)

Table 4. Components of Perceived English Teaching Competence

Category	Item
Skills of designing and teaching effective English lessons (PETC-1)	P01, P02, P07, P08, P09, P12
Interactive instruction skills (PETC-2)	P03, P04, P05
English proficiency and teaching attitudes (PETC-3)	P06, P10, P11, P13, P14, P15



Among three categories of perceived English teaching competence, the category of skills of designing and teaching effective English lessons included the items (P01, P02, P07, P08, P12) whose mean score each was higher than the total mean score (3.91) of perceived competence. On the other hand, the category of English proficiency and teaching attitudes included the items (P10, P11, P13, P14, P15) of which each mean score was lower than the total mean score of perceived ELT competence. Also, the items (P03, P04, P05) with the mean score lower than 3.91 were found in the category of interactive instruction skills. From these findings, it can be inferred that the pre-service teachers might have evaluated their competence as relatively low in terms of English proficiency and teaching attitudes as well as interactive instruction. It also can be inferred that they might have evaluated their competence as relatively high in terms of designing and teaching effective English lessons.

#### 4.3 Relationship among beliefs about competence, perceived competence, and actual competence

To investigate which components of perceived English teaching competence and beliefs about English teaching competence explain the pre-service teachers' actual English teaching competence, the analyses were conducted in the following order: First, the mean scores of the beliefs and perceived competence categories were calculated; then, the correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among each category of beliefs and perceived competence and the actual competence. Lastly, regression analysis was conducted to find out the component(s) predicting the actual competence. Table 5 shows the mean score of each category of perceived competence and beliefs about competence.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Each Factor

	<i>N</i>	<i>min</i>	<i>max</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
BETC-1	81	2.80	6.00	5.25	.56149
BETC-2	79	2.40	6.00	5.09	.61826
BETC-4	86	1.50	6.00	4.76	1.10811
BETC-3	83	3.00	6.00	4.61	.81564
PETC-1	84	1.33	6.00	4.32	.80744
PETC-3	85	1.00	5.50	3.65	.92139
PETC-2	83	1.00	5.33	3.60	1.07919

*Note.* BETC-1: Beliefs about interaction and structuredness; BETC-2: Beliefs about students' understanding; BETC-3: Beliefs about teachers' English proficiency; BETC-4: Beliefs about organizing students and using technology for learning; PETC-1: Skills of designing and teaching effective English lessons; PETC-2: Interactive instruction skills; PETC-3: English proficiency and teaching attitudes

Overall, the mean scores of all the categories of beliefs about competence were higher than those of the categories of perceived competence. Among the beliefs categories, the category of beliefs about interaction and structuredness (BETC-1) showed the highest mean score and the category of beliefs about teachers' English proficiency (BETC-3) showed the lowest. As for the pre-service teachers' perceived competence, the category of skills of designing and teaching effective English lessons (PETC-1) indicated the higher mean score than the other two categories: English proficiency/teaching attitudes (PETC-3) and interactive instruction skills (PETC-2).

Table 6 shows how each component of beliefs and perceived competence correlates with actual competence.

Table 6. Relationships Among Beliefs, Perceived Competence, and Actual Competence

	BETC-2	BETC-3	BETC-4	PETC-1	PETC-2	PETC-3	AETC
BETC-1	.549**	.601**	.074	.158	.187	.217	.198
BETC-2		.420**	-.002	.086	.079	.175	.087
BETC-3			.038	.102	.171	.237*	.123
BETC-4				.830**	.166	.512**	.445**
PETC-1					.415**	.631**	.549**
PETC-2						.592**	.298**
PETC-3							.371**

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$

The analysis of correlation showed that three out of four components of beliefs about English teaching competence (BETC-1, 2, 3) correlated with each other and that only one component of beliefs about competence (BETC-4) correlated with actual competence. The analysis also showed that all the components of perceived English teaching competence (PETC-1, 2, 3) had correlations not only with each other but also with actual competence. There were found correlations in two pairs of perceived competence and beliefs (BETC-4 and PETC-1, BETC-3 and PETC-3). From the findings of correlation analysis, it can be inferred that the stronger the pre-service teachers' beliefs about organizing students and using technology for learning (BETC-4) are, the higher their actual English teaching competence level is. In addition, it can be inferred that the higher the pre-service teachers evaluate their skills of designing and teaching effective English lessons (PETC-1), skills of conducting interactive instruction (PETC-2), and their English proficiency level and teaching attitudes (PETC-3), the higher their actual English teaching competence level is.

#### 4.4 Predictor of actual ELT competence

A stepwise regression analysis was conducted to find out which component best predicts the actual English teaching competence among 4 components (BETC-4, PETC-1, PETC-2, and PETC-3) which had correlations with it. The results of the analysis are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7. Predictors of Actual English Teaching Competence

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.561 <sup>a</sup>	.315	.306	.24713

a. Predictor: (Constant) PETC-1

b. Dependent variable: actual English teaching competence

#### ANOVA<sup>b</sup>

Model	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1 Regression	2.158	1	2.158	35.334	.000 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	4.703	77	.061		
Total	6.861	78			

a. Predictor: (Constant) PETC-1

b. Dependent variable: actual English teaching competence

#### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
		<i>B</i>	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.697	.149		18.128	.000
	PETC-1	.201	.034	.561	5.944	.000

a. Dependent variable: actual English teaching competence

According to Model 1, PETC-1 is the component that predicts actual English teaching competence. The regression analysis result means that one of the components of perceived English teaching competence, that is the skills of designing and teaching effective English lessons, explains 31.5 percent of the pre-service teachers' actual English teaching competence ( $R = .561$ ,  $R^2 = .315$ ). When all four components (BETC-4, PETC-1, PETC-2, and PETC-3) were entered into the regression equation in one step (enter method), the explanatory power was 32.4 percent for actual English teaching competence ( $R = .569$ ,  $R^2 = .324$ ).

The analysis leads us to the interpretation that how well pre-service teachers teach English lessons in elementary school (AETC) can be predicted by how they evaluate their skills of designing and teaching effective English lessons (PETC-1) rather than by how they evaluate their English proficiency level (PETC-3) or interaction skills (PETC-1). Particularly, pre-service

teachers' actual English teaching competence can be predicted by how they evaluate their skills of designing and teaching activities appropriate for learning objectives (P01), of designing and teaching well-structured lessons (P02), of organizing students in various ways for effective learning (P07), of using technology in ways contributing to learning (P08), of providing modeling and demonstration for students' better understanding (P09), and adjusting English language to the level of students' English proficiency (P12). In other words, it is possible to suggest that those who highly evaluate their skills of designing and conducting effective English lessons attain a higher level of English teaching competence.

#### 4.5 The role of beliefs about competence in self-ratings of competence

To investigate the role of beliefs about English teaching competence in pre-service teachers' self-evaluation of their competence, the analysis was conducted in the following order as MacIntyre and his colleagues (1997) did in their study on the role of anxiety in language learners' self-ratings of language proficiency. First, the differences (residuals) between the actual English teaching competence mean scores and the perceived English teaching competence mean scores were calculated by conducting the regression analysis (actual competence as a dependent variable and perceived competence as an independent variable). Next, the participants were divided into two groups according to their scores of beliefs about English teaching competence: high belief group and low belief group. The mean score of the residuals of the high belief group was .3649 (positive) while that of the low belief group was -.2708 (negative) as shown in Figure 1.

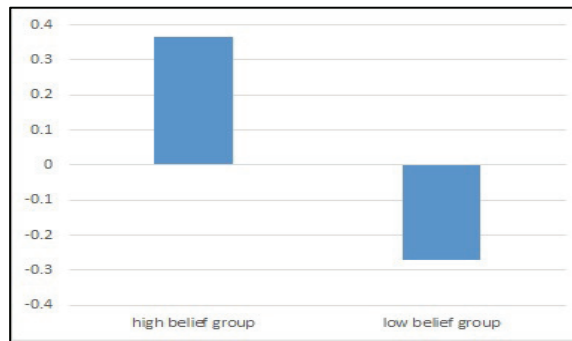


Figure 1. Residual means of the high and low belief groups

Positive residual score means overestimating actual English teaching competence and negative residual mean score means underestimating actual English teaching competence. A t-test was conducted to compare the residual mean scores between the groups, and the result is as shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Comparison of the Residual Means Between the High Belief Group and Low Belief Group

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig</i>
High belief group	.3649	1.0179	2.218	.031
Low belief group	-.2708	.9884		

The difference between the residual means of the two groups was statistically significant. Therefore, the result suggests that the pre-service teachers of the high belief group tend to overestimate their actual English teaching competence while those of the low belief group tend to underestimate their actual competence. That is, the stronger the pre-service teachers' beliefs about English teaching competence, the more likely to overestimate their competence they are; the weaker their beliefs about English teaching competence, the more likely to underestimate their competence they are.

## 5 Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the study are discussed and interpreted as follows: First, pre-service elementary school teachers participating in this study have high levels of beliefs about their English teaching competence. They show very strong beliefs about competence necessary for foreign language teaching. Compared to their beliefs, their self-evaluation level of their own English teaching competence is low, and their actual competence is lower. This implies that the present level of their English teaching ability is far below the level which they think should be; that they are very aware of the difference between their present level and the level they should attain.

Second, the pre-service elementary school teachers' beliefs about English teaching competence and their perceptions of their own competence were constructs consisting of several components. According to the results, the pre-service teachers believe that interaction with students during class and planning and implementing well-structured lessons are very important requirements; however, they believe that the elementary school language teachers are not required to use a high level of English proficiency. Such beliefs are very interesting when considering the results about perceived English teaching competence components: The pre-service teachers evaluate their competence of planning and implementing effective lessons as high while they evaluate their English proficiency as low. This implies that they think that teaching ability is more crucial than English proficiency when it comes to elementary school English education (Kim, 2019) and therefore they are qualified to teach English to elementary school students.

Third, the pre-service teachers' actual English teaching competence had a partial correlation with their beliefs about English teaching competence, and had an overall correlation with their perceived English teaching

competence. Among the components of beliefs and perceived competence, the component of perceived competence about designing and teaching effective English lessons was the best predictor that explains actual competence. This suggests that those who evaluate their skills of designing and teaching effective lessons as high are likely to actually teach better than those who evaluate their English proficiency as high. Although there are correlations between each component of perceived competence and actual competence and one of them is the best predictor of actual competence, the two variables—perceived competence and actual competence—are not the same construct. There are differences between these variables. The fact that there are differences between the two variables means that pre-service teachers make mistakes when they evaluate their English teaching competence and do not predict it correctly (McIntyre et al., 1997). That is, some pre-service teachers evaluate their competence as higher than their actual level (overestimation) while others evaluate their competence as lower (underestimation).

If overestimation or underestimation is systematic and self-evaluation shows a tendency, it may be because there are some variables that influence pre-service teachers' self-evaluation: for example, affect variables such as language anxiety as suggested in previous studies (Kim, 2006; McIntyre et al., 1997) or cognition such as social comparison (Wheeler & Suls, 2005) or self-efficacy (Bandura, 1988; Steyn, & Mynhardt, 2008). In the present study, it was proven that beliefs about English teaching competence correlated with perceived and actual competence. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the variable beliefs about English teaching competence may be the one affecting self-evaluation bias in evaluating English teaching competence. The comparison of the perceived and actual competence difference scores between the high and low belief groups shows that beliefs about English teaching competence may affect the tendency to overestimate or underestimate actual English teaching competence.

Although overestimation is a mistake just as underestimation, the former can play a beneficial role in developing language teaching competence unlike underestimation because beliefs and actual competence correlate with each other and strong beliefs about competence are related with overestimation tendency. In this study, the comparison between the belief groups showed that those who have strong beliefs about English teaching competence have the tendency to overestimate their competence, and the correlation analysis showed that the stronger the pre-service teachers' beliefs are, the higher their actual competence level is. This leads us to the conclusion that beliefs about English teaching competence can play a positive role in developing English teaching competence.

Since language teaching is a complicated process where a lot of variables should be considered to achieve desired learning outcomes, language teaching competence is a complicated construct consisting of

various components related to language teaching. Also, language teaching competence is performed through the interaction of various elements such as knowledge and understanding, values and attitudes, skills and abilities, and experience acquired through teacher education (Rossner, 2018). Therefore, developing English teaching competence and attaining a desired level of competence is a very challenging task for pre-service elementary school English teachers. This suggests that teacher education should provide effective programs that motivate pre-service teachers to make their efforts for their professionalism. Such programs should include raising their awareness of what a language teacher needs to know and be able to do (conceptualizing English teaching competence and recognizing the importance of achieving it) and helping them understand what they know and can do at present level as a language teacher (self-evaluation of English teaching competence) to move up to a higher level. Since teaching involves both thought and action and the interaction between them, language teaching competence should be developed not only by cultivating practical skills and but also by enhancing awareness of the self as a language teacher and the construct of language teaching competence.

This study examined pre-service elementary school teachers' English teaching competence in terms of their beliefs about competence, perceived competence, and their relationships with actual competence, mainly focusing on their competence in the context of microteaching. If English teaching competence is investigated within the context of practicum—teaching English at elementary schools—in the future study, it may give us a better understanding of pre-service teachers' developing language teaching competence. Also, exploring the relationship between English teaching competence and other variables supposedly influencing it may contribute to our understanding of their competence.

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## Appendix A

### Descriptive Statistics of Beliefs about English Teaching Competence

	<i>N</i>	<i>min</i>	<i>max</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
B01	84	3.00	6.00	5.76	.52913
B12	82	2.00	6.00	5.44	.77136
B03	84	2.00	6.00	5.38	.80518
B14	83	2.00	6.00	5.25	.92187
B04	82	3.00	6.00	5.23	.79036
B05	82	2.00	6.00	5.18	.80320
B09	83	3.00	6.00	4.95	.83962
B02	84	2.00	6.00	4.90	.84481
B15	83	3.00	6.00	4.89	.91080
B13	82	3.00	6.00	4.84	.88149
B10	83	2.00	6.00	4.73	1.08295
B06	81	3.00	6.00	4.72	.88367
B11	83	2.00	6.00	4.22	1.02467
B07	83	2.00	6.00	4.07	.92107

## Appendix B

### Descriptive Statistics of Perceived English Teaching Competence

	<i>N</i>	<i>min</i>	<i>max</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
P08	86	1.00	6.00	4.76	1.31002
P07	86	2.00	6.00	4.76	1.14723
P12	86	1.00	6.00	4.29	.99252
P01	85	2.00	6.00	4.14	.88846
P02	86	1.00	6.00	4.06	.94998

P06	86	1.00	6.00	3.94	1.34037
P09	85	1.00	6.00	3.92	1.40756
P05	84	1.00	6.00	3.77	1.27394
P03	84	1.00	6.00	3.76	1.22837
P15	86	1.00	6.00	3.73	1.09999
P14	86	1.00	6.00	3.66	1.26128
P10	86	1.00	6.00	3.65	.99134
P13	85	1.00	6.00	3.54	1.28687
P11	86	1.00	6.00	3.36	1.15721

**Appendix C**

**Varimax-Rotated Factor: Beliefs about English Teaching Competence**

Items	Components			
	1	2	3	4
B14	<b>.728</b>	.219	.297	-.083
B01	<b>.707</b>	.184	-.185	.210
B12	<b>.664</b>	.261	.261	-.053
B13	<b>.662</b>	.140	.331	.113
B09	<b>.477</b>	.104	.158	.092
B05	.149	<b>.826</b>	.217	-.033
B03	.133	<b>.818</b>	.142	.003
B04	.173	<b>.814</b>	.186	-.124
B02	.312	<b>.573</b>	-.032	.284
B06	.447	<b>.507</b>	-.003	.131
B10	.252	.106	<b>.785</b>	.118
B11	.118	.275	<b>.741</b>	.186
B15	.543	.082	<b>.558</b>	.179
B08	.107	.021	.173	<b>.878</b>
B07	.087	-.009	.140	<b>.873</b>

**Appendix D**

**Varimax-Rotated Factor: Perceived English Teaching Competence**

Items	Components		
	1	2	3
P14	<b>.825</b>	.222	.077
P11	<b>.787</b>	.233	.162
P13	<b>.703</b>	.282	.241
P10	<b>.633</b>	.227	.358
P06	<b>.546</b>	.506	.126
P15	<b>.511</b>	.408	.321
P04	.169	<b>.863</b>	.159
P03	.168	<b>.853</b>	.144
P05	.314	<b>.755</b>	.124
P02	.170	.217	<b>.785</b>
P01	.005	.187	<b>.781</b>
P07	.439	-.171	<b>.655</b>
P12	.273	.422	<b>.636</b>
P08	.535	-.144	<b>.573</b>
P09	.219	.324	<b>.513</b>

Exploring Pre-service Teachers' Beliefs about English Teaching  
Competence, Perceived Competence, and Actual Competence

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