

Beyond Language Barriers: Teaching Self-Efficacy Among East Asian International Teaching Assistants

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The present study examined roles that perceived English fluency and sociocultural adaptation difficulty play in predicting self-efficacy beliefs for teaching in a sample of 119 international teaching assistants (ITAs) from East Asian countries of China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan. Results showed that a positive relationship between perceived English fluency and teaching self-efficacy was not apparent until the moderating influence of sociocultural adaptation difficulty was examined. More specifically, at high levels of adaptation difficulty, positive relations between English fluency and teaching self-efficacy were found; however, as sociocultural adaptation difficulty decreased, the effect of perceived fluency in English on efficacy decreased. Implications for ITA training as well as limitations of the study were discussed.

In higher education in the U.S., the number of international teaching assistants (ITAs) teaching undergraduate courses has increased over the past three decades (McCroskey, 2003). An ITA faces additional challenges to those faced by TAs in general, as he or she plays a dual role as both an international graduate student and a new teacher. For instance, ITAs vary in their English competency, and an inadequate level of language skills (e.g., pronunciation, vocabulary, listening comprehension skills, and coherence) could be an obstacle for effective instruction (Gorsuch, 2003). Another source of challenges for ITAs is their lack of knowledge and familiarity with respect to western practices of interactive learning, communication values, and student behaviors (Fitch & Morgan, 2003). In general, American students tend to interact with teachers and ask frequent questions throughout a given classroom period (Spack, 1997). Conversely, many international students, especially East Asian students, are unaccustomed to playing an active part in classroom lectures and prefer instead to listen and talk with their peers. Different communication styles and behaviors can create the potential for negative interactions, misunderstandings, and decreased teaching effectiveness (Liu, Sellnow, & Venette, 2006; McCroskey, 2003).

ITAs may also encounter undergraduate students/faculty members who have formed negative perceptions of them. Using interview methods, Jenkins (2000) found that academic faculty did not feel satisfied with their ITAs' low levels of English proficiency and acculturation. The faculty members in this study attributed those problems to the ITAs' lack of motivation, isolationism, and unwillingness to cooperate with faculty. McCroskey (2002) found that American students indicated a lower willingness to enroll in classes taught by international teachers, as well as reticence to initiate communication with those teachers. Students also reported that they learned less from international teachers as compared to American

teachers. In a later study, McCroskey (2003) noted that negative reactions to international teachers were correlated with instructional communication patterns (e.g., lack of assertiveness, responsiveness, immediacy, and clarity). Similarly, a quality study conducted by Fitch and Morgan (2003) revealed that, overall, undergraduate students perceived ITAs negatively due to their language barriers, lack of clarity, poor classroom-management skills, and unfair grading.

Previous research has focused on ITAs' language difficulties as well as undergraduate students' and faculty's perceptions of ITAs. However, little research has directly sampled ITAs and examined their actual teaching experiences in the U.S. Gathering information on their own perspectives and attitudes, such as teaching self-efficacy, will provide useful knowledge with respect to the unique needs of ITAs for supervising faculty, advisors, counselors, and ITA educators.

In order to fill this gap in the literature, the present study conducted a survey of ITAs, especially from East Asian countries including China, Japan, Korean, and Taiwan. For the remainder of the paper, East Asian international teaching assistants are referred as EAITAs. There are three reasons for focusing on this population: 1) in the 2006-2007 academic year, this population comprised 33% of the total international enrollment in U.S. institutes of higher education, accounting for more than 194,000 students (Institute of International Education, 2007); 2) previous research has found that Asian international students tend to experience more acculturative stress than European international students. This is due to more significant discrepancies in language, culture, and communication styles between most Asian countries and America than discrepancies between Europe and America (Toyokawa & Toyokawa, 2002); and 3) Asian teachers have been perceived less positively than Latin American and European teachers as a result of low cultural similarity (McCroskey, 2003).

This study examined EAITAs' perceived self-efficacy beliefs for interactive engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. Teacher self-efficacy refers to the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the ability to affect students' performance and motivate student learning (Bandura, 1996; Brouwers & Tomic, 2003). Teacher self-efficacy has been related to student outcomes, such as achievement, motivation, and students' own sense of efficacy (Anderson, Greene, & Loewen, 1988; Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989). In addition, teachers' efficacy beliefs also relate to their behaviors in the classroom. For example, efficacy beliefs influence teachers' commitment to teaching and persistence when things do not go smoothly (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Teachers with a higher sense of efficacy are more likely to utilize new methods to better meet the needs of their students.

Perceived English Fluency

For ITAs, English proficiency is emphasized due to its importance in presenting subject material and interacting with students. Halleck and Moder (1995) suggested that a threshold level of English proficiency might be necessary for ITAs to successfully fulfill their teaching responsibilities and benefit from training with regard to teaching strategies. McCroskey (2003) also noted that ITAs who do not possess an adequate level of English were more likely to be anxious about communication and, consequently, less willing to initiate communication with their students. For those reasons, there has been a consistent emphasis placed on the testing of ITAs' oral proficiency. It is not uncommon for international students who are non-native speakers of English to undergo an evaluation of their spoken English abilities to be a teaching assistant. Many institutions require students to take an English course based on their results of the evaluation. Thus, this study first examined whether EAITAs' English fluency would be positively associated with their sense of efficacy for teaching. English fluency was self-assessed because such assessments are more efficient and easier to administer than other types of proficiency assessment and show reasonably acceptable correlations with other objective measures (Leblanc & Painchaud, 1985). In addition, teachers' perceptions of their language proficiency and not necessarily the actual language proficiency would more likely influence their perceived self-efficacy (Brinton, 2004; Kamhi-Stein & Mahboob, 2005).

Perceived English Fluency and Sociocultural Adaptation Difficulty

Many ITAs earned their bachelor's degrees outside of the United States and their familiarity with college education has come from their

previous learning experiences overseas (Liu, Sellnow, & Venette, 2006). In particular, EAITAs have been educated in a culture that views teachers as highly respected authorities. As a result, they tend to experience difficulty adjusting to the informal and interactive learning environments of American universities (McCrosky, 2003). Such low cultural similarity contributes to social difficulty and to inaccurate attribution of meaning in ITA-student interaction that is likely to intensify EAITAs' uncertainty and anxiety about teaching in the U.S. (Roach & Olaniran, 2001). Thus, in this study, sociocultural adaptation difficulty was expected to be negatively associated with EAITAs' teaching self-efficacy. Sociocultural adaptation has been operationalized as acquisition of culture-specific skills and the ability to negotiate and "fit in" with the host culture (Ward, 1996; Ward & Kennedy, 1999). In contrast to psychological adjustment (defined as emotional well-being and satisfaction), sociocultural adaptation has been viewed as a process of learning and acquiring the social and communication skills of the host culture. Length of residence in the new culture, cultural knowledge, extraversion, and language ability were found to predict sociocultural adaptation (e.g., Ward & Kennedy, 1999; Ward, Leong, & Low, 2004; Ward & Rena-Deuba, 1999).

In addition, sociocultural adaptation difficulty was hypothesized to interact with perceived English fluency to predict EAITAs' teaching self-efficacy. For example, EAITAs with high sociocultural adaptation difficulty often feel less efficacious about teaching because they lack culture-specific social and communication styles and knowledge about U.S. culture. Despite high adaptation difficulties, however, a high level of perceived English fluency might result in increased teaching self-efficacy. This is because language ability can serve as a useful tool to interact with students, present subject material to students, and manage classrooms. In contrast, a low level of perceived English fluency might have the opposite effect on teaching self-efficacy. Accordingly, it was hypothesized that the positive influence of perceived English fluency on teaching self-efficacy would be stronger for EAITAs with higher adaptation difficulties than for those with lower adaptation difficulties.

The Present Study

In summary, the main purpose of this study was to explore the sense of efficacy for teaching among a group of EAITAs at U.S. universities. Self-reported English proficiency and sociocultural adjustment

difficulty were also examined as predictors for teaching self-efficacy. Specifically, it was hypothesized that perceived English fluency would be positively and sociocultural adaptation difficulty would be negatively associated with teaching self-efficacy. In addition, sociocultural adaptation difficulty was hypothesized to moderate the association between perceived English fluency and teaching self-efficacy.

Method

Participants and Procedures

The international students' offices and ITA training centers at the top 25 U.S. universities hosting the largest number of international students (Institute of International Education, 2007) were contacted via emails. They were asked to forward an invitation email message to EAITAs. A total of 119 EAITAs (49 males, 70 females) participated in the study. They ranged in age from 23 to 47 years ($M = 34$, $SD = 4.35$). With regard to home country, 46 (39%) identified themselves as coming from China, 35 (29%) from Korea, 23 (19%) from Japan, and 15 (13%) from Taiwan. Participants reported being in the U.S. for an average of 5.32 years ($SD = 3.34$) and teaching in the U.S. for an average of 4.48 semesters ($SD = 3.86$).

Instruments

Participants were asked to complete the demographic questionnaire, the Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS; Ward & Kennedy, 1999), and Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Demographics questionnaire. Demographic questions included sex, age, home country, years in the U.S., field of study, semesters spent teaching in the U.S., and previous teaching experiences in home country. Perceived English fluency was measured by the composite scores of the three questions, which would be rated on a 4-point, Likert-type scale as follows: (a) "What is your current level of fluency in English?" (b) "How comfortable do you feel communicating in English?" and (c) "How often do you communicate in English?" These questions were used in Constantine, Okazaki, and Utsey's study (2004). Higher scores indicated greater perceived English fluency.

SCAS. EAITAs' sociocultural adaptation difficulty was measured with the SCAS. The SCAS, a 23-item measure, assesses individuals' sociocultural adaptation in terms of the amount of

difficulty experienced in a variety of situations (e.g., "finding food that you enjoy," "understanding the U.S. value system"). Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*no difficulty*) to 5 (*extreme difficulty*). Total scores can range from 23 to 115, with higher scores representing greater difficulty in negotiating the host culture (i.e., poorer sociocultural adaptation). Previous research has showed that the SCAS has good reliability and validity across a diversity of sojourner samples (Ward & Kennedy, 1999). For example, Ward and Kennedy (1999) reported coefficient alphas ranging from .84 to .91.

TSES. EAITAs' sense of efficacy for teaching was assessed with the TSES-short form. The TSES-short form is a 12-item self-report scale that was developed to measure teachers' level of self-efficacy beliefs. Each item is rated on a 9-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*nothing*) to 9 (*a great deal*). The TSES yields three subscales including efficacy for student engagement (i.e., "How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in the course materials?"), instructional strategies (i.e., "How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies in your class?"), and classroom management (i.e., "How much can you do to get students to turn in assignments or papers promptly?"). Scores for each of the three subscales can range from 4 to 36 with higher scores indicating greater efficacy beliefs. In their validation sample, Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) reported a coefficient alpha of .90. They also reported evidence of construct validity (e.g. correlation of .64 with the well-established Gibson and Dembo's Personal Teaching Efficacy scale).

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Variables measured on continuous scales were checked for normality. The results indicated that there were no problems with respect to skewness ($< .65$) and kurtosis (< -1.04). One-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) suggested that there were no main effects or interactions of the demographic variables (i.e., sex, age, years in the U.S., semesters spent teaching in the U.S., and previous teaching experiences in home country) on the main measures (i.e., perceived English fluency, sociocultural adaptation difficulty, and teaching self-efficacy) with one exception: a significantly positive main effect was detected for semesters spent teaching in the U.S. Consequently, semesters spent teaching in the U.S. was used as a covariate in the main regression analysis.

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, Reliability Coefficients, Range, and Intercorrelations

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	-	.31**	-.15	.17	.19*	.19*
2		-	-.57**	.38**	.27**	.29**
3			-	-.47**	-.38**	-.35**
4				-	.86**	.82**
5					-	.86
6						-
Mean	4.48	9.17	60.26	13.73	14.01	14.02
SD	3.86	2.45	20.18	3.50	3.17	3.50
α	N/A	.86	.96	.90	.84	.86
Possible Range	N/A	3 -12	23-115	4 -36	4 -36	4 -36
Sample Range	1-20	4 -12	29-114	5 -20	6 -20	5 -20

Note. 1 = Semesters Teaching in the U.S; 2 = Perceived English Fluency; 3 = Sociocultural Adaptation Difficulty; 4 = Efficacy for Student Engagement; 5 = Efficacy for Instructional Strategies; 6 = Efficacy for Classroom management

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

In addition, means, standard deviations, and zero-order intercorrelations were calculated (see Table 1). The means in the three subscales of teaching efficacy (i.e., student engagement, classroom management, and instructional strategies) suggested that participants judged themselves more efficacious for instructional strategies ($M = 14.01$) and classroom management ($M = 14.02$) than for student engagement ($M = 13.73$). This finding indicates that the participants judged their ability to motivate students to learn and study course materials as low while they perceived themselves more capable in designing instructional strategies, providing explanations, and assessing students as well as managing student behavior.

Main Analysis

Three parallel hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted to test whether sociocultural adaptation difficulty would moderate the positive relationships between perceived English fluency and three dependent variables (i.e., efficacy for student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management). As recommended by Frazer, Tix, and Barron (2004), all of the predictors and moderator were standardized before the two-way interaction terms were created. For each hierarchical regression, semesters spent teaching in the U.S. was entered as a covariate in Step 1. In Step 2, a block of two main effects (i.e., perceived English fluency and sociocultural adaptation difficulty) was entered. In Step 3, one two-way interaction term (i.e., Perceived English Fluency X Sociocultural Adaptation Difficulty) was entered.

Efficacy for student engagement. In Step 2, results indicated that perceived English fluency and sociocultural adaptation difficulty explained an additional 15% of the variance in efficacy beliefs for student engagement, in addition to the variance accounted by semesters teaching in the U.S (See Table 2). Examination of the beta weights in the final model of this analysis suggested that contrary to the hypothesis, perceived English fluency was not significantly associated with efficacy for student engagement. However, sociocultural adaptation difficulty was a significant predictor of efficacy for student engagement. In Step 3, the increment effect of the hypothesized two-way interaction term was statistically significant ($\Delta R^2 = .07$).

To further explore the two-way interactions, the relation between perceived English fluency and efficacy for student engagement was plotted at low (-1 SD) and high ($+1$ SD) levels of sociocultural adaptation difficulty. As shown in Figure 1A, the positive relationship between perceived English fluency and efficacy for student engagement was significant at a high level of sociocultural adaptation difficulty ($\beta = .35$, $sr^2 = .31$, $p < .05$). However, the association between perceived English fluency and efficacy for student engagement was not statistically significant at a low level of sociocultural adaptation difficulty ($\beta = -.18$, $sr^2 = -.12$, $p > .05$).

Efficacy for instructional strategies. In step 2, perceived English fluency and sociocultural adaptation difficulty explained an additional 7% of the variance in efficacy beliefs for instructional strategies.

Table 2.
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Self-Efficacy for Student Engagement,
Instructional Strategies, and Classroom Management

Dependent Variable	Model	Independent Variable	ΔR^2	ΔF	B	SE	β	
Student Engagement	1	Covariate	.03	4.15*				
	2	Main Effects	.15	10.22**				
	3	Two-way Interaction	.07	9.84**				
			Final Model					
			Semesters teaching			.49	.33	.13
			English Fluency			.41	.38	.11
Instructional Strategies	1	Covariate	.04	5.43*				
	2	Main Effects	.07	4.50*				
	3	Two-way Interaction	.04	5.97*				
			Final Model					
			Semesters teaching			.62	.31	.18*
			English Fluency			.06	.37	.02
Classroom Management	1	Covariate	.04	5.47				
	2	Main Effects	.06	4.13				
	3	Two-way Interaction	.05	7.35				
			Final Model					
			Semesters teaching			.65	.33	.18
			English Fluency			.27	.40	.07
		Adaptation Difficulty			-.61	.39	-.16*	
		English Fluency						
		X Adaptation Difficulty			1.10	.40	.24**	

Note. Control Variable = Semesters teaching in the U.S; English Fluency = Self-rated English fluency; SCAS = Sociocultural adaptation difficulty

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Sociocultural adaptation difficulty (but not perceived English fluency) negatively predicted efficacy for instructional strategies. In Step 3, the two-way interaction significantly predicted efficacy for instructional strategies ($\Delta R^2 = .04$). The same procedure described above was used to plot the two-way interaction. As illustrated in Figure 1B, neither of the two simple slopes at low ($\beta = -.12$, $sr^2 = -.09$, $p > .05$) or high levels of sociocultural adaptation difficulty ($\beta = .18$, $sr^2 = .12$, $p > .05$) was significantly different from zero.

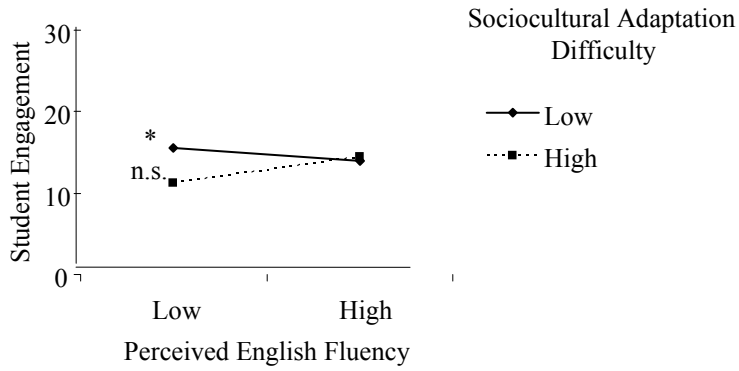
Efficacy for classroom management. In step 2, perceived English fluency and sociocultural adaptation difficulty accounted for an additional 6% of the variance in efficacy beliefs for classroom management. Examination of the beta weights in the final model of this analysis suggested that contrary to

the hypothesis, neither perceived English fluency nor sociocultural adaptation difficulty was significantly associated with efficacy for classroom management. In step 3, the two-way interaction significantly predicted efficacy for classroom management ($\Delta R^2 = .05$).

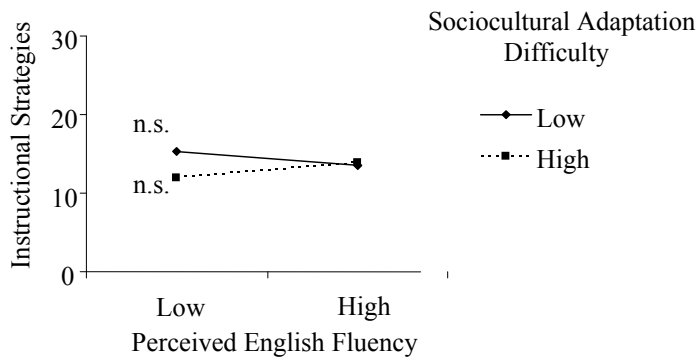
The results of simple slope analysis indicated that among EAITAs with high levels of sociocultural adaptation difficulty, the association between perceived English fluency and efficacy for classroom management was significantly positive ($\beta = .33$, $sr^2 = .29$, $p < .05$; See Figure 1C). In contrast, among those with low levels of sociocultural adaptation difficulty, the association between perceived English fluency and efficacy for classroom management was not statistically significant ($\beta = -.17$, $sr^2 = -.11$, $p > .05$).

Figure 1. Relationships between Perceived English Fluency and Efficacy Beliefs for Engagement (Panel A); Instructional Strategies (Panel B); Classroom Management (Panel C). * $p < .05$.

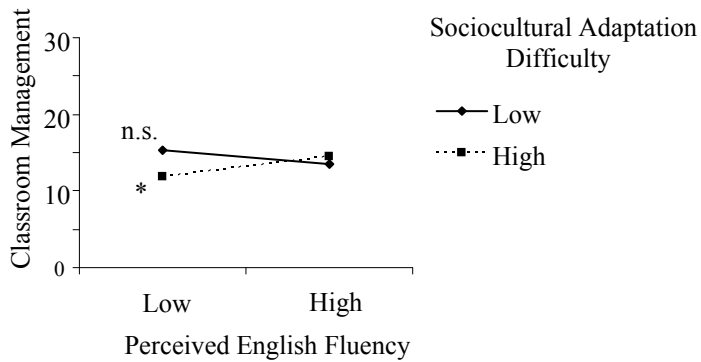
Panel A



Panel B



Panel C



Discussion

The results of the present study suggest the following areas of interest. First, the study shows that EAITAs feel more efficacious in managing student behaviors and applying instructional strategies than in motivating and engaging students to learn. Second, in contrast to the first hypothesis, no positive relationship was found between perceived English fluency and efficacy beliefs for teaching. This result is different from the findings of other studies, which show that fluency in English was the central predictor of ITAs' teaching performance. This might be explained by the fact that this study focused on EAITAs' own efficacy beliefs while other studies examined undergraduate students'/faculty's perceptions toward ITAs and ITAs' classroom behaviors/teaching skills. As expected, sociocultural adaptation difficulty was negatively associated with EAITAs' sense of efficacy. In other words, the lower the level of sociocultural adaptation difficulty, the more efficacious the EAITAs felt.

Moreover, consistent with the second hypothesis, an examination of sociocultural adaptation difficulty revealed the presence of a significant positive relationship between perceived English fluency and teaching self-efficacy. Specifically, among those EAITAs with high levels of adaptation difficulty, positive relations between perceived English fluency and efficacy for student engagement and classroom management were found; however, as sociocultural adaptation difficulty decreased, the effect of perceived English fluency on efficacy decreased. Such a moderating effect of sociocultural adaptation difficulty was not found for efficacy related to instructional strategies.

Another notable finding was the positive association between the number of semesters spent teaching in the U.S. and teaching self-efficacy. This can be explained by Bandura's (1986) assertion that efficacy beliefs are primarily shaped by an individual's previous performance and experiences. Those EAITAs who start their teaching assistantship with lower self-efficacy engage in tasks and activities, interpret the results of their actions and use their interpretations to develop beliefs about their capabilities to engage in subsequent tasks and activities. In addition, through teaching experiences, they are likely to become more knowledgeable about and familiar with American classrooms, thus increasing their sense of efficacy. In contrast to the time spent teaching in the U.S., length of residence in the U.S. was not a significant predictor of EAITAs' teaching self-efficacy.

Implications

Overall, this study underscores the complexity in understanding EAITAs' teaching self-efficacy. The ITAs' problems are often seen as linguistic ones and are defined in terms of English pronunciation and fluency. Given the findings of this study, it should not be assumed that a belief in his or her proficiency in English entails that an EAITA will not experience challenges and will feel confident with respect to teaching. Rather, sociocultural adaptation (e.g. knowledge and use of culturally appropriate social and communication skills) is an important predictor of EAITAs' perceived self-efficacy in teaching.

The results of this study have potentially useful implications for ITA training programs. Despite their traditional focus on developing competence in the English language, more and more ITA training program centers have attempted to offer not only linguistically-oriented training but also an orientation to American classroom culture and communication styles. Tools that have been used include, but are not limited to, small group tutoring sessions, classroom communication activities, and mock teaching.

However, given the evidence pointing toward the importance of sociocultural adaptation for increasing EAITAs' feelings of self-efficacy, more emphasis is required to assist EAITAs in improving their sociocultural adaptation. For example, in addition to English proficiency, EAITAs' levels of knowledge regarding North American practices of interactive learning and student behaviors need to be assessed as part of ITA screening. Based on the results of this screening, EAITAs can then be assigned to programs and workshops with varying emphasis on linguistic skills and cultural components. In addition, ongoing support services need to be offered for EAITAs, including seminars on teaching pedagogy and cultural competency as well as teaching consultation services given varying needs of EAITAs based on their English fluency, sociocultural adaptation, and teaching self-efficacy.

In particular, EAITAs with lower levels of sociocultural adjustment are more susceptible to the negative effects of inadequate English competence on their teaching self-efficacy than those with higher levels of sociocultural adjustment. It is more feasible to increase levels of sociocultural adjustment than fluency in English because sociocultural adjustment involves specific skills and knowledge that can be easily learned. Thus, with those EAITAs who are inadequately fluent in English, strong emphasis on enhancing culture-specific social and communication skills is particularly necessary as this will result in greater efficacy for teaching. The ITA trainers might act as cultural

interpreters and must be willing to address a “wide range of culture-related issues beyond issues related to linguistics and pedagogy” (Althen, 1991).

As indicated above, previous studies have demonstrated that teaching self-efficacy beliefs influence teachers’ commitment to teaching and persistence when things do not go smoothly in the classroom and that teachers with a higher sense of efficacy tend to utilize new methods to meet the needs of their students. Thus, ITA training programs might need to include interventions that will more directly increase EAITAs’ self-efficacy.

According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacy is affected by four main sources: (a) performance accomplishments, (b) modeling or vicarious learning, (c) verbal persuasion, and (d) emotional arousal. Of the four, performance accomplishments, or successfully executing desired behaviors, have been considered the most influential source of self-efficacy. Through training programs that provide direct, teaching-based activities appropriate for American classrooms, such as developing microteaching skills and delivering practice lectures, EAITAs competence and confidence can be enhanced. The other three sources of efficacy also need to be considered. For instance, ITA training programs might need to include activities that have EAITAs observe other instructors teaching (*modeling or vicarious learning*), receive ongoing supervision (*verbal persuasion*), and learn ways to cope with their anxiety, stress, arousal, and/or other mood states (*emotional arousal*).

The findings of this study also have implications for department faculty, who might need to be educated about the variables that affect EAITAs’ teaching self-efficacy beliefs. In addition, supervising faculty of EAITAs might need to help EAITAs address their sociocultural adjustment difficulties and increase their feelings of self-efficacy through interventions that focus on modeling or vicarious learning and verbal persuasion. Varying the difficulty and complexity of the demands of the EAITAs’ role in accordance with their levels of teaching experience, fluency in English and sociocultural adaptation may help to optimize the EAITAs’ sense of self-efficacy and teaching effectiveness.

Limitations

Although much is shared in terms of challenges and experiences in the U.S. among EAITAs, they vary in terms of home country, field of study, cultural values, and interest in teaching. Future research will need to look at whether these results can be replicated with larger samples of EAITAs and to explore the within group differences among them. Another limitation of this study was the use of three questions to

measure perceived English fluency. Although the reliability for English fluency in the study was satisfactory, inclusion of more refined questions would increase the accuracy of assessments of EAITAs’ perceived English abilities. Third, the measure used to assess EAITAs’ teaching self-efficacy, the TSES, has mainly been used and validated with people from western cultural backgrounds. Thus, TSES may not be culturally valid when applied to other cultures. More research to examine the applicability of the TSES is needed. However, most scholars have acknowledged the concept of self-efficacy and confirmed the validity of the scales that measure self-efficacy with Korean people (Schwarzer, Born, Iwawaki, Lee, Saito, & Yue, 1997).

In addition, there are several limitations related to the online survey methodology and the corresponding small sample size. It was difficult to determine actual response rates because the author did not send the invitation email and had no information regarding how many EAITAs were originally contacted to participate. Given that the total number of participants was 119 from 25 institutions, it is estimated that only 4 or 5 students per institution responded to the survey. Thus, the research findings of the study cannot be generalized to all EAITAs. In particular, the study participants were not randomly selected but recruited from particular institutions. Similarly, self-selection bias is another limitation of the study. Participants’ decisions to participate in the study might be correlated with traits that affect the study, making the participants a non-representative sample. Therefore, future studies using more representative samples including the ones teaching on smaller campuses are warranted. Lastly, all data presented in this study was based on self-report, so it carries all of the limitations that are involved in self-report questionnaires. However, that can also be a strength as the findings of this study offered information regarding the subjective judgments and experiences of EAITAs regarding their English fluency, sociocultural adaptation difficulties, and teaching efficacy as opposed to the EAITAs’ teaching performance or perceptions of U.S. undergraduates/faculty that have been discussed in previous research.

Future Research Directions

Despite these limitations, the present study contributes to our understanding of teaching self-efficacy and variables that predict teaching self-efficacy among EAITAs. However, based on these findings, semesters spent teaching in the U.S., sociocultural adaptation difficulty, and perceived English fluency explained 25% of the total variance of self-efficacy for student engagement and 15 % of the total variance of

self-efficacy for instructional strategies and classroom management. Future researchers might consider examining the influences of other individual variables (e.g., perfectionism, social self-efficacy, teaching skills, language competence measured by objective measures) on EAITAs' teaching self-efficacy. In addition, it might be useful to examine whether contextual variables (e.g., relationships with supervising faculty, support of department) significantly influence EAITAs' teaching self-efficacy. Finally, it would be interesting to examine the disparate findings between undergraduate student and faculty perceptions of EAITAs' teaching self-efficacy and the EAITAs' perceptions of their own self-efficacy.

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