

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GRADES 10 AND 11 STUDENTS’
PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS IN LAI
ZA HIGH SCHOOL AND MAI JA YANG HIGH SCHOOL IN
KACHIN STATE, MYANMAR**

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was twofold: firstly, to determine Grades 10 and 11 students’ perceptions of English teacher effectiveness using Danielson’s (2011) framework for teaching model and its domains (i.e., planning and preparation, classroom environment, and instruction) in Lai Za High School and Mai Ja Yang High School in Kachin State, Myanmar; and secondly, to identify whether there were significant differences in Grade 10, Grade 11, and Grades 10 and 11 students’ perceptions of English teacher effectiveness between the same schools. This quantitative study used the Students’ Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness Questionnaire (SPTEQ, Sprague, 2013). The respondents were 184 Grades 10 and 11 students in Lai Za High School and 220 Grades 10 and 11 students in Mai Ja Yang High School during the academic year 2017-2018. The research findings indicated that, in Lai Za High School, on average, Grade 10 students perceived their English teachers as neither effective nor ineffective, while Grade 11 students perceived their English teachers as effective. In Mai Ja Yang High School, both Grades 10 and 11 students, on average, perceived their English teachers as effective. Independent samples *t*-tests revealed that there were significant differences in Grade 10 and Grades 10 and 11 students’ perceptions of English teacher effectiveness between Lai Za High School and Mai Ja Yang High School, whereas no significant difference in Grade 11 students’ perceptions of English teacher effectiveness was noted between Lai Za High School and Mai Ja Yang High School.

Keywords: Students’ Perceptions, Teacher Effectiveness, High School, English Language Teaching, Lai Za High School, Mai Ja Yang High School, Myanmar.

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Introduction

Effective teachers are defined as those competent in subject matter, committed to improving students' learning, taking responsibility to supervise the students, thinking analytically on every student's practice, and supporting students to improve their achievement (Akiri, 2013). Teachers have been evaluated for their effectiveness of teaching by administrators for many decades (Keane & Labhrainn, 2005). According to Goe, Bell and Little (2008), a traditional method of teacher evaluation has been administrators writing summative assessments, mainly based on classroom observation. However, administrators' teacher evaluations of teacher effectiveness show a low reliability, whereas students' perceptions are regarded as the most crucial way to measure teacher effectiveness (Peterson, 2000). In Myanmar, English language is taught as a foreign language, beginning from Kindergarten and upwards. Grades 10 and 11 are secondary high school level in the Myanmar education system. Before 1981, English language teaching focused on reading and writing; but from that year, the focus shifted to develop all four language skills (i.e., listening, reading and writing and speaking).

However, according to the researchers' experience, the vast majority of high school students, particularly in Kachin State, are not able to use English language even at a beginner level after they finish their senior year of high school. On the other hand, according to Sein (2015), about 60% of English teachers in Myanmar do not receive English language teaching methodologies training and they lack practical teaching skills and required English language skills. Compared with other subjects, teachers need the most training in English (Sein, 2015).

With respect to English language teaching methodology, teachers are encouraged to use the child-centered approach to teach all subjects. However, teachers frequently directly translate the meaning of English words and sentences with Myanmar language, and students are encouraged to memorize the words and the sentences with equivalent Myanmar meaning. As a result, grammar translation method, memorization and rote learning have become major teaching methodologies in teaching English language in Myanmar. Communicative and interactive language approaches have not been applied when teaching English language, and Burmese language has become the medium of instruction when teaching English, which may impact negatively on how students perceive their English language teachers (Akiri, 2013; Sein, 2015).

This evidence of ineffective teaching is a concern for the principals of both Lai Za and Mai Ja Yang High Schools, in Kachin State, Myanmar. Therefore, the researchers decided to develop a research study to examine and compare Grade 10, 11 and Grades 10 and 11 students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness between Lai Za and Mai Ja Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar.

Research Objectives

The following are the research objectives developed for this study.

1. To determine the Grades 10 and 11 students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness in Lai Za High School, Kachin State, Myanmar.
 - 1.1. To determine the Grades 10 and 11 students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness regarding planning and preparation in Lai Za High School, Kachin State, Myanmar.
 - 1.2. To determine the Grades 10 and 11 students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness regarding classroom environment in Lai Za High School, Kachin State, Myanmar.
 - 1.3. To determine the Grades 10 and 11 students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness regarding instruction in Lai Za High School, Kachin State, Myanmar.
2. To determine the Grades 10 and 11 students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness in Mai Ja Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar.
 - 2.1 To determine the Grades 10 and 11 students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness regarding planning and preparation in Mai Ja Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar.
 - 2.2 To determine the Grades 10 and 11 students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness regarding classroom environment in Mai Ja Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar.
 - 2.3 To determine the Grades 10 and 11 students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness regarding instruction in Mai Ja Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar.
3. To identify if there is a significant difference in Grade 10 students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness between Lai Za High School and Mai Ja Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar.
4. To identify if there is a significant difference in Grade 11 students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness between Lai Za High School and Mai Ja Yang High School, Kachin State, Myanmar.
5. To identify if there is a significant difference in Grades 10 to 11 students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness between Lai Za High School and Mai Ja Yang High School in Kachin State, Myanmar.

Theoretical Framework

This research was based on the following theories: Danielson's (2011) framework for teaching, communicative language teaching (CLT) by Canale and Swain (1980), and

perceptual learning theory by Gibson (1969).

Danielson's (2011) framework for teaching.

Danielson's (2011, as cited in Olson, 2015) framework for teaching is a framework to evaluate and supervise the effectiveness of teachers' teaching. This framework is based on the constructivist theory of learning, covers the following four domains.

1. Planning and preparation.
2. Classroom environment.
3. Instruction.
4. Professional responsibilities.

This proposed study focused on three domains only (i.e., planning and preparation, classroom environment, and instruction) which occur directly in front of the students. Domain 4 (professional responsibilities) was not included in this study because most of its activities, of a technical nature, are carried out outside of the classroom.

Domain 1: Planning and Preparation. The domain of planning and preparation stresses that a teacher must intensely comprehend the discipline they are instructing. According to Balan, Manko, and Phillips (2014), planning and preparation plays a crucial role in effective teaching. Through good preparation, teachers are able to facilitate and organize their classroom activities effectively. In order to be effective in instruction, Brown, Callanhan, Harder, Orlich, and Trevisan (2012 as cited in Balan et al., 2014), stated that a significant amount of time is required in preparation.

According to Danielson (2011), all aspects of instructional design, teaching strategies, learning activities, and teaching resources have to be appropriate to the content as well as the students, and they must also align with long term instructional goals. Instructional outcomes must be reflected by the content as well as the process of assessment method. Student progress should be documented during and at the end of the lesson. Danielson (2007) also claimed that in designing assessment strategies, it is important to consider the teacher's use of formative assessment so as to offer diagnostic opportunities. Teachers can make instructional modifications if students can demonstrate their level of comprehension during an instructional process.

Domain 2: Classroom environment. Danielson (2009) stated that Domain 2 emphasizes classroom interaction between the teacher and the students. Teachers who are proficient in this area enable a classroom in which students feel secure and content. Nougaret et al. (2005) also agreed that effective teachers are those who efficiently manage the classroom environment and who have good interactions with their students. They also have the capability to create a safe learning environment in which students feel comfortable taking risks, a warm and caring atmosphere, in which

both teacher and students are able to work together effectively (Danielson, 1996). Keith, Tormatzky and Pettigrew (1974, as cited in Nougaret et al., 2005) reported that student learning achievement is higher when the teacher creates a positive and safe learning environment.

Domain: 3 Instruction. Effective instruction requires effective teaching and evaluation strategies, appreciating the students and their learning needs, and encouragement and supporting students' difficulties (Darling-Hammond, 2012, as cited in Balan et al., 2014). Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2007, as cited in Balan et al., 2014) revealed that students' learning progress can be promoted by using several instructional strategies. Glickman et al. (2007, as cited in Balan et al., 2014) also pointed out that the purpose of evaluation is to improve instructional strategies. Domain 3 describes how the plans that teachers designed while enacting Domain 1 will be implemented. Teachers effectively implement those plans designed in Domain 1 through their instructional skills in Domain 3 (Danielson, 2009).

Communicative language teaching (CLT). CLT is a framework to develop learners' functional language abilities through participation in communicative events (Canale & Swain, 1980). This means that in classroom environment, learners are able to interact with each other to make meaning instead of merely reciting dialogues.

Perceptual learning theory. This theory proposes that cognitive processes (e.g., remembering, reasoning, conceptualizing, and problem solving), are obtained through perception. Gibson's (1969, as cited in Adolph & Kretch, 2015) definition of perceptual learning has three fundamental parts. To start with, perceptual learning is durable. Second, it is perceptual. Third, it is the consequence of training or experience.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of this study, describing graphically the two selected schools, as well as the two research variables addressed in this research. Teacher effectiveness serves as the independent variable, and students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness serve as the dependent variable for the present study.

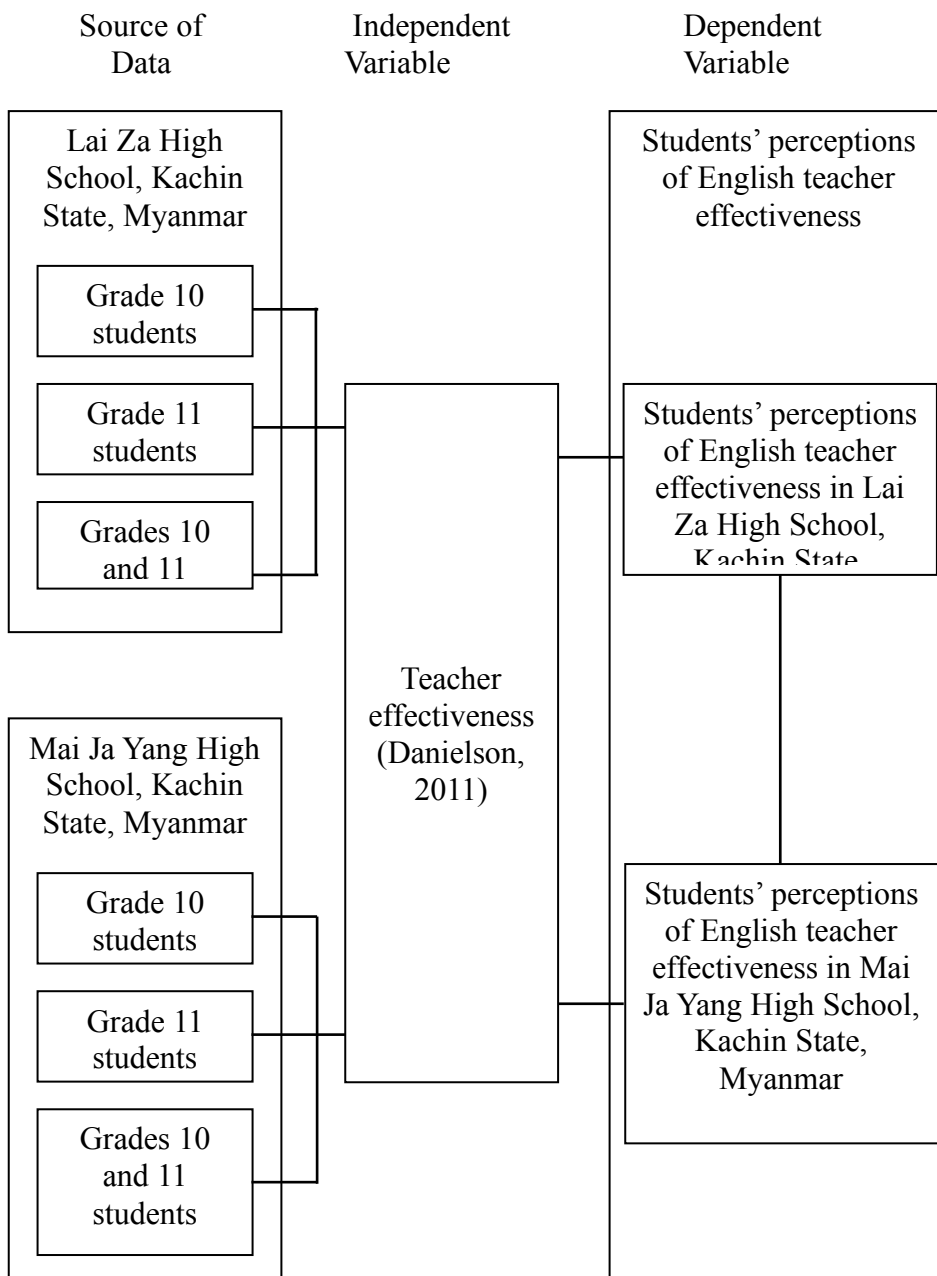


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for this study.

Literature Review

A previous research conducted by Akram et al. (2016) sought to find how students perceived their English teacher under five elements of teacher effectiveness: subject matter knowledge, instructional planning and assessment, learning environment, and effectiveness of communication in secondary/higher secondary schools of the district

of Khanewal in Pakistan. The result of the survey showed that a majority of the students perceived their English teacher as effective.

Another researcher, Chamundeswari (2015) sought to find whether there was a significant difference in students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness among three different types of schools in India. The result of the study showed that there was no significant difference in students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness among students at the higher secondary level in the three different types of schools.

Methodology/Procedure

Population and sample.

This research was conducted on a purposive population sample of 184 students (Grade 10 = 83 students, Grade 11 = 101 students) from Lai Za High School and 220 students (Grade 10 = 105 students, Grade 11 = 115 students) from Mai Ja Yang High School (totaling 404 students) enrolled in the target schools during the second semester of the academic year 2017-2018.

Research instrument

A research questionnaire was used as the primary data collection instrument for this study. The questionnaire was an adaptation by the researcher of a previous instrument developed by Sprague (2013). Sprague (2013) used the Students' Perceptions of Teacher Effectiveness Questionnaire (SPTEQ) to conduct her study. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *never*, 2 = *sometimes*, 3 = *often*, 4 = *almost always*, 5 = *always*), and covered Danielson's (2011) three domains of teacher effectiveness: 13 items related to Domain 1, 21 items related to Domain 2, and 31 items related to Domain 3 (totaling 63 items for the three domains).

Among the original 63 items of Sprague's (2011) SPTEQ, the researcher removed some of the items which were found not relevant to the local educational context (e.g., "my teacher used technology in class that helped me learn (computers, sensors, videos, etc.")). After this process, a questionnaire comprised of 33 items resulted. This 33-item instrument was translated into Kachin language by the first author, and back-translated and validated by two Burmese scholars with strong backgrounds in English to Kachin translation. After this validation, a pilot study followed, resulting in a total Cronbach's alpha of .92, with partial Cronbach's alphas of .77, .64 and .88 for the items in Domains 1, 2 and 3, respectively.

The collected quantitative data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics (means, and standard deviations) and statistical hypothesis testing (independent samples *t*-tests) in order to address this research's objectives.

Findings

In the following sub-sections, the findings regarding each research objective will be summarized.

Research Objective 1

- Grade 10 students from Lai Za High School, on average, perceived their English teachers as neither effective nor ineffective.
- Grade 11 students from Lai Za High School, on average, perceived their English teachers as effective.

Research Objective 1.1.

- Grade 10 students from Lai Za High School, on average, perceived their English teachers as neither effectiveness nor ineffective regarding planning and preparation.
- Grade 11 students from Lai Za High School, on average, perceived their English teachers as effective regarding planning and preparation.

Research Objective 1.2.

- Grade 10 students from Lai Za High School, on average, perceived their English teachers as effective regarding classroom environment.
- Grade 11 students from Lai Za High School, on average, perceived their English teachers as effective regarding classroom environment.

Research Objective 1.3.

- Grade 10 students from Lai Za High School, on average, perceived their English teachers as neither effective nor ineffective regarding instruction.
- Grade 11 students from Lai Za High School, on average, perceived their English teachers as neither effective nor ineffective regarding instruction.

Research Objective 2

- Grade 10 students from Mai Ja Yang High School, on average, perceived their English teachers as effective.
- Grade 11 students from Mai Ja Yang High School, on average, perceived their English teachers as effective.

Research Objective 2.1.

- Grade 10 students from Mai Ja Yang High School, on average, perceived their English teachers as effective regarding planning and preparation.
- Grade 11 students from Mai Ja Yang High School, on average, perceived their English teachers as effective regarding planning and preparation.

Research Objective 2.2.

- Grade 10 students from Mai Ja Yang High School, on average, perceived their English teachers as effective regarding classroom environment.

- Grade 11 students from Mai Ja Yang High School, on average, perceived their English teachers as effective regarding classroom environment.

Research Objective 2.3.

- Grade 10 students from Mai Ja Yang High School, on average, perceived their English teachers as neither effective nor ineffective regarding instruction.
- Grade 11 students from Mai Ja Yang High School, on average, perceived their English teachers as neither effective nor ineffective regarding instruction.

Research Objective 3

Regarding to this research objective, it was found, from the comparison done using a two-tailed independent samples *t*-test, that there was a significant difference in Grade 10 students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness between Lai Za High School and Mai Ja Yang High School.

Research Objective 4

Regarding to this research objective, it was found, from the comparison done using a two-tailed independent samples *t*-test, that there was no significant difference in Grade 11 students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness between Lai Za High School and Mai Ja Yang High School.

Research Objective 5

Regarding to this research objective, it was found, from the comparison done using a two-tailed independent samples *t*-test, that there was a significant difference in Grades 10 to 11 students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness between Lai Za High School and Mai Ja Yang High School.

Discussion

The findings of the current study revealed there were significant differences in Grade 10 and Grades 10 to 11 students' overall perceptions of English teacher effectiveness between Lai Za High School and Mai Ja Yang High School. On the other hand, no significant difference was found in Grade 11 students' overall perceptions of English teacher effectiveness between Lai Za High School and Mai Ja Yang High School. Based on that, this section discusses the findings obtained from the current study, placing such findings in context of previous research.

Lai Za High School

The SPTEQ findings from Research Objectives 1.1 and 1.3 revealed that Grade 10 students from Lai Za High School, on average, perceived their English teachers as neither effective nor ineffective regarding planning and preparation and instruction. These findings agree with the statement of Danielson (2009), that planning and

preparation and instruction are linked to one another. Teachers usually implement their teaching depending on what they prepared and planned (Danielson, 2009). If the teacher have effective plan, instructional procedure will also be well-implemented (Danielson, 2009). According to these statements, Grade 10 English teachers in Lai Za High School did not seem to have plan well for their instructional procedures, so the implementation of their instructional procedures, was not perceived as very effective by students.

However, Grade 11 students perceived their English teachers as effective regarding planning and preparation, while they perceived their English teachers as neither effective nor ineffective regarding instruction. In other words, even though the English teachers were perceived by students as having planning well for their instruction, their instructional procedures were perceived as not being implemented effectively. These findings do not agree with the statement of Danielson (2009) concerning the link between planning and preparation and instruction.

Moreover, according to the findings of Research Objectives 1.2 and 1.3, both Grades 10 and 11 students perceived their English teachers as effective regarding classroom environment while, they perceived their English teachers as neither effective nor ineffective regarding instruction. In other words, Grades 10 and 11 English teachers were perceived by students as having a good interaction and communication with their students, whereas they were perceived as not being able to effectively implement their instructional procedures. According to Nougaret et al. (2005), teachers who are efficient in classroom environment are able to interact well with students and, are able to create safe and positive learning environment. Consequently, such learning environment contributes students higher achievement of their learning. Based on these findings, despite the fact that students perceived their English teachers as effective regarding classroom environment, according to standardized examination registered by KIO Education Department (2015), students' achievement on English subject was lower than others subject. In this regard, all of the English teachers teaching in Grades 10 and 11 received CCA and RWCT training, in which they might have learned about how to interact with students and how to manage classroom environment, so they could be doing well regarding classroom environment. On the contrary, none of the teachers in Grades 10 and 11 from Lai Za High School received English language teaching training as informed by the principal of Lai Za High School. Therefore, lower achievement on English subject and, students perceiving their English teachers as neither effective nor ineffective regarding instruction could be due to the lack of access to subject matter training on English language teaching in Lai Za High School.

Mai Ja Yang High School

Based on the SPTEQ findings from Research Objectives 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3, both Grades

10 and 11 students perceived their English teachers as effective regarding planning and preparation and classroom environment, while both Grades 10 and 11 students perceived their English teachers as neither effective nor ineffective regarding instruction. These findings do not agree with either Danielson's (2009) statement concerning the link between planning and preparation and instruction, or Nougaret et al.'s (2005) statement of the connection between good communication between teachers and students and academic achievement since lower achievement in English subject is still occurred in both schools (KIO Education Department, 2015). A possible reason of these research findings is that all of Grades 10 and 11 English teachers received CCA and RWCT training in which they might have learned lesson planning and managing classroom environment. However, according to the principal of Mai Ja Yang High School, only three out of five English teachers from Grades 10 and 11 received the SEP, which program is only aimed for primary and middle school English teachers.

Moreover, these findings seem to contradict the findings obtained by Akram et al. (2015), which indicated that secondary and higher secondary students perceived their English teachers as effective under five elements of teacher effectiveness (i.e., subject matter knowledge, instructional planning and strategies, assessment, learning environment, and effectiveness of communication). In this research study, even though students perceived their English teachers as effective regarding planning and preparation and classroom environment, students from both Grades 10 and 11 perceived their English teachers as neither effective nor ineffective regarding instruction.

Comparison Between Lai Za High School and Mai Ja Yang High School

Based on inferential statistics applied to the SPTEQ findings, there were significant differences in Grade 10 and Grades 10 to 11 students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness between Lai Za High School and Mai Ja Yang High School. The SPTEQ finding revealed that Grade 10 and Grades 10 to 11 students' overall perceptions of English teacher effectiveness in Mai Ja Yang High School were significantly higher than Grade 10 and Grades 10 to 11 students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness in Lai Za High school. A possible reason of this research findings could be due to the fact that English teachers in Lai Za High School lack access to English language teaching training, compared to those English teachers from Mai Ja Yang High School, as informed by the principals of Lai Za High School and Mai Ja Yang High School. Based on these findings, this study seems to contradict the results obtained by Chamundeswri (2015), who found that there was no significant difference in students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness among students at the higher secondary level in three different types of schools in India.

Moreover, the inferential statistics applied to the SPTEQ finding revealed that

there was no significant difference in Grade 11 students' perceptions of English teacher effectiveness between Lai Za High School and Mai Ja Yang High School. According to the researcher's experience, most of Grade 11 teachers apply exam-based teaching strategies (e.g., rote learning, memorization and recitation and so on) in order to make students pass the national standardized examination. Therefore, a possible reason could be due to the fact that both English teachers from Lai Za High School and Mai Ja Yang High School seem to implement similar teaching strategies, following the same formats of standardized test. Moreover, both Lai Za High School and Mai Ja Yang High School seem to assign experienced teachers in Grade 11, considering the more experienced the teachers are, the more they are able to teach students for passing the national standardized examination.

This finding agrees with the results obtained by Chamundeswri (2015), that there was no significant difference in students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness at the higher secondary level in the three different types of schools in India.

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