An Exploratory Study of the Influence of CELTA/TESOL Certification on Non-Native English Teachers' Practical Teaching Knowledge

Yousef Mousavi, Peyman Rajabi *, and Hamid Reza Khalaji

Department of English Language Teaching, Malayer Branch,

Islamic Azad University, Malayer, Iran

Corresponding author: peymanrajabi25@malayeriau.ac.ir

Article information	
Abstract	The demand for proficient English language teachers has increased significantly in non-native English-speaking countries, emphasizing the need for effective teacher training programs. This study investigated the influence of the CELTA/TESOL certification on non-native English teachers' practical teaching knowledge and efficacy perceptions in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. A qualitative approach was employed, and data were collected via semi-structured interviews. The participants comprised eight Iranian EFL teachers who completed the CELTA/TESOL certification program. Before the certification course, the teachers exhibited diverse teaching approaches, emphasizing teacher-centered methods. Their confidence levels varied, and they faced challenges in classroom management and addressing student needs. The lack of formal training in practical teaching techniques was evident among participants. Following the certification course, significant positive changes were observed in the teachers' self-reported practices and self-efficacy perceptions. Participants also showed positive dispositions

	towards student-centered approaches, integrated learner needs and interests, and utilized diverse instructional strategies. The course contributed to effective lesson planning and classroom management. Collaborative learning and ongoing professional development were fostered, enhancing the teachers' reflective practice. As a result, the non-native English teachers reported increased confidence in their teaching abilities. This study contributes to understanding the benefits of the CELTA/TESOL certification program for non-native English teachers and emphasizes the importance of practical teacher training in EFL contexts. It highlights the transformative potential of such certification courses in bridging the gap in practical teaching knowledge and supporting the professional growth of non-native English teachers.
Keywords	CELTA/TESOL certification, non-native English teachers, practical teaching knowledge, teacher professional development
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1. Introduction

English has emerged as the global lingua franca, fostering communication and intercultural exchange across nations (Crystal, 2003). In the context of non-native English-speaking countries, the demand for proficient English language teachers has intensified due to the growing importance of English as a medium of instruction, international business, and global communication (Nhung, 2017; Sert, 2008; Song, 2023). Consequently, there is a consistent need to ensure that English language teachers possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and self-efficacy to effectively facilitate language learning in diverse educational settings (Mann, 2005;

Tsui, 2020). The significance of teacher training and professional development in enhancing teaching quality and student outcomes has been widely recognized in the field of education (Darling-Hammond, 2000, 2021, 2023). In English language teaching, the quality of teacher education programs directly impacts the effectiveness of language instruction (Johnson & Golombek, 2018). While native English teachers have long dominated the English language teaching landscape, there has been a shift towards recognizing the potential of non-native English teachers (NNETs) as effective language instructors (Canagarajah, 1999; Medgyes, 1992). NNETs bring valuable cultural insights, empathy towards language learners, and diverse language teaching experiences to the classroom (Moussu & Llurda, 2008).

The effectiveness of NNETs, however, is contingent upon their pedagogical knowledge and self-efficacy perceptions. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capability to accomplish specific tasks or goals (Bandura & Locke, 2003). Teacher self-efficacy plays a crucial role in teaching in instructional practices, classroom management, and overall teacher effectiveness (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Teachers with higher self-efficacy are more likely to engage in student-centered teaching approaches, utilize effective instructional strategies, and persist in facing challenges (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). Despite the growing recognition of the importance of NNETs and their potential contributions to language education, studies have highlighted certain challenges faced by NNETs, particularly related to their teaching efficacy (Eslami & Fatahi, 2008; Gao et al., 2021; Ghasemboland & Hashim, 2013; Nazari et al., 2023). Research has indicated that NNETs may experience lower self-efficacy than their native English-speaking counterparts, impacting their instructional practices and overall effectiveness as educators (Burić & Macuka, 2018; Ghane & Razmi, 2023; Xu & Xiao, 2023).

In response to these challenges, teacher certification programs have gained prominence to enhance teaching competence and self-efficacy among NNETs. The

Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA) and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) certification programs are renowned for their comprehensive training, focusing on practical teaching techniques, classroom management, and learner-centered approaches (Cambridge English, n.d.; TESOL International Association, n.d.). These programs aim to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver effective language instruction in diverse language learning contexts. However, while studies have explored the impact of CELTA/TESOL certification programs on native English-speaking teachers (Brown & Lee, 2015; Farrell, 2015), limited research exists on their effects on NNETs, especially in non-native English-speaking contexts. Investigating the influence of such certification programs on NNETs in these contexts is crucial to gain insights into their professional development and the enhancement of their teaching practices. This study contributes to the existing literature on English language teacher education and professional development, particularly on NNETs in non-native English-speaking countries. By examining the impact of the CELTA/TESOL certification program on Iranian NNETs, the study sheds light on the effectiveness of this certification in addressing the specific needs and challenges NNETs face in EFL contexts. Understanding the influence of the certification program on Iranian NNETs' self-efficacy perceptions and instructional practices has broader implications for teacher training and professional development in similar non-native English-speaking settings. The findings of this study can inform the design and implementation of teacher education programs tailored to the needs of NNETs, thereby promoting more effective language instruction and fostering positive learning outcomes for students.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Non-Native English Teachers (NNETs) and their Challenges in Language Education

Non-native English teachers play a pivotal role in English language instruction worldwide (Mann, 2005; Medgyes, 1992). In countries where English is

not the native language, NNETs bring diverse cultural backgrounds, multilingual capabilities, and a deep understanding of learners' needs to the classroom (Schenck, 2020). However, they encounter challenges that can impact their effectiveness as language educators. Understanding and addressing these challenges is essential for optimizing NNETs' potential and supporting their professional growth (Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014).

Language proficiency is one of the primary concerns for NNETs (Richards, 2010). Despite possessing a high level of fluency, NNETs may experience self-doubt and fear of making language errors in front of their students. This insecurity can affect their confidence in the classroom, as they may compare themselves to native English-speaking teachers (Medgyes, 1992). Ensuring accurate language models for learners becomes crucial in this context. NNETs' diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds can lead to variations in teaching styles and strategies (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Recognizing and embracing this diversity is essential for creating inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments. Another significant challenge is the lack of formal pedagogical training in language education. While NNETs excel in their subject knowledge, they may not have received comprehensive training in language teaching methodologies, second language acquisition theories, and effective instructional practices (Pennycook, 2017). This deficit in pedagogical training can hinder their ability to design learner-centered lessons and cater to diverse learner needs. Moreover, NNETs often encounter stereotypes and misconceptions about their language proficiency, competence, and teaching abilities (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). These stereotypes can influence their self-perception as educators and may impact their overall performance in the classroom. Creating a supportive environment that values the expertise of NNETs is essential for mitigating these challenges.

From a theoretical perspective, a shift of focus is observed in TESOL teacher education regarding how teachers are categorized. Currently, there is a consensus among NET/NNET scholars that the key issue is pedagogical effectiveness, rather

than being a NET or NNET (e.g., Moussu & Llurda, 2008; ~~Yazan et al., 2023~~). Hiratsuka (2023) has argued that the discussion should move beyond such simplistic, terminological concerns and account for how teachers are able to promote and implement a just and equitable education. Thus, the significant point here is that, as Aneja (2016) has argued, this dichotomy is losing its rigor at the academic level, yet in the real world, it is still influencing teachers' professional standing.

Despite their challenges, NNETs bring valuable strengths to the language education context. Their cultural sensitivity and empathy towards learners contribute to inclusive learning environments (Schenck, 2020; Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014). NNETs' understanding of learners' cultural backgrounds nurtures supportive and respectful classroom atmosphere. NNETs' multilingual background also enriches language classrooms by raising language awareness among students (Canagarajah, 2005a, 2005b). They can effectively explain linguistic nuances, grammar rules, and language variations in a way that resonates with learners (Sert, 2008). Moreover, NNETs offer real-life language use experiences, which provide practical insights into language application beyond formal textbooks (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). This exposure allows students to understand language authentically, enhancing their communicative competence.

To maximize NNETs' potential and address their challenges, it is essential to enhance their practical teaching knowledge (Shalem & Slonimsky, 2014). Targeted pedagogical training that covers second language acquisition theories and learner-centered methodologies is essential for empowering NNETs to design effective lessons (Johnson & Golombek, 2018). Furthermore, language proficiency development programs can positively impact NNETs' self-efficacy and overall teaching effectiveness (Richards, 2010). Improving language skills enables NNETs to communicate more confidently with their students. Cultural competence training is another crucial aspect. It equips NNETs to navigate cultural differences and create inclusive spaces (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). Understanding students'

diverse backgrounds enhances NNETs' teaching approach and promotes better student engagement. Lastly, encouraging reflective practice and ongoing professional development empowers NNETs to continuously improve their teaching practices (Farrell, 2007, 2016).

In the context of the present study, NNETs are defined as those Iranian teachers who are exposed to English as a foreign language. Over the past decades, Iran has become politically isolated and has little international collaboration with European and American universities and teachers. This condition has made Iranian EFL teachers, citizens of Iran, stuck in adhering to internal relationships and teacher education courses, one of which is implemented in this study and is the focus of the research project.

2.2 Teacher Efficacy and Practical Teaching Knowledge

Teacher efficacy is a crucial construct that significantly influences teaching practices and student outcomes (Polatcan et al., 2021). Teacher efficacy refers to teachers' beliefs in influencing student learning and achieving desired educational outcomes positively (Bandura & Locke, 2003). It is an essential component of effective teaching as it directly impacts instructional choices, classroom management, and teacher-student interactions. Highly efficacious teachers demonstrate confidence in their instructional capabilities, leading to proactive engagement in teaching and learning processes (Henson, 2002). They set challenging goals for their students, design innovative lessons, and adapt their instructional strategies to meet diverse learner needs (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Moreover, teachers with high efficacy are more likely to persist in the face of challenges and seek solutions to improve their teaching practices (Ma et al., 2023; Woolfolk et al., 1990). Conversely, teachers with low efficacy may demonstrate avoidance behaviors and eschew implementing new teaching techniques (Tanriseven, 2012). Their lack of belief in their abilities can hinder their willingness to take risks in the classroom and explore innovative approaches to instruction.

Teacher efficacy and practical teaching knowledge are closely interrelated. Effective teaching requires a balance between content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and belief in one's instructional abilities (Freeman, 2018; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Schleppegrell, 2018). The integration of these components enhances teachers' effectiveness in the classroom. Teachers with high levels of efficacy are more likely to actively seek professional development opportunities to enhance their practical teaching knowledge (Malmir & Mohammadi, 2018). As they believe in their ability to implement new strategies effectively, they are willing to invest in continuous learning (Vermunt, 2014). Conversely, teachers with low efficacy may struggle to effectively utilize their practical teaching knowledge in the classroom (Polatcan et al., 2021). Despite possessing the necessary pedagogical knowledge, their lack of belief in their abilities may hinder their effective implementation of instructional strategies (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Enhancing teacher efficacy can positively impact practical teaching knowledge. Teacher training programs can empower educators to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and its application in practice by fostering a growth mindset and providing supportive learning environments.

2.3 Teacher Professional Development

Over the past decades, teacher professional development has been of concern to many educational decision-makers and stakeholders. Borg (2005) argues that while in the 1980s, teacher education was focused on directly transferring the content of teacher education courses to the classroom context, in the 1990s, researchers realized that teachers cannot operate as knowledge transferers because their own and students' characteristics play a key role in their pedagogical content knowledge. From among such factors, self-efficacy has been documented as a central component (e.g., Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001), which is the focus of the present study.

Discussions of teacher professional development are inseparable from the process of change that teachers undergo. In this regard, scholars like Desimone

(2009) and Avalos (2011) have put forward frameworks for teacher education based on contextuality, focus, content, approach, teacher and educator role, and outcomes. These have significantly developed the theoretical literature of teaching and teacher education. In TESOL, Johnson & Golombek (2018) also argues that teacher education should account for who teachers are, what they learn, and how they learn. All of these processes, as Guskey (2002) and Boylan et al. (2018) point out, should bring about changes in teachers with the purpose of enhancing teachers' instructional practices and positively shaping their beliefs. The teacher education of concern in this study is the CELTA/TESOL program.

2.4 The Present Study

The CELTA/TESOL certification program aims to equip NNETs with the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in English language instruction. While research has acknowledged the value of such certification programs for English teachers, limited research has focused on their impact on NNETs' practical teaching knowledge and self-efficacy perceptions. This research gap presents an opportunity to explore the specific benefits and transformative potential of CELTA/TESOL certification for NNETs in language education contexts. One significant aspect of the research gap is the exploration of NNETs' pre-certification approaches and challenges in teaching. Understanding NNETs' existing teaching styles and the challenges they face in the classroom before undergoing the certification course is crucial to assess the program's effectiveness in addressing specific areas of improvement. Preliminary research suggests that NNETs often adopt teacher-centered approaches, which may hinder the development of learner-centered classrooms and active student participation (Farrell, 2016). Additionally, the lack of formal training in practical teaching techniques may limit NNETs' ability to create engaging and effective language lessons. Furthermore, while some studies have explored the impact of CELTA/TESOL on NNETs' general teaching competencies (Borg, 2005), limited attention has been given to its influence on their practical teaching knowledge and instructional practices. Examining the post-certification changes in NNETs' teaching practices and self-

efficacy is vital to ascertain whether the program effectively addresses their unique challenges and fosters pedagogical growth. Investigating how the certification course influences NNETs' approaches to classroom management, lesson planning, and instructional strategies can shed light on the program's contribution to their professional development. Moreover, the research gap extends to exploring the impact of CELTA/TESOL on NNETs' confidence and self-efficacy as language educators (Gierlinger, 2021). Confidence plays a significant role in effective teaching, and understanding how the certification program affects NNETs' self-assurance can provide valuable insights into the program's overall efficacy. Increased self-efficacy among NNETs may lead to more innovative and dynamic language instruction, positively impacting their students' learning experiences.

By delving into the specific benefits and challenges faced by NNETs in language education contexts, it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of the program's transformative potential. Addressing these research gaps is essential for shaping effective teacher training and professional development programs that cater to the unique needs of NNETs, contributing to the overall improvement of English language education in non-native English-speaking countries. Moving in this direction, this study aimed to investigate the influence of the CELTA/TESOL certification on Iranian NNETs' practical teaching knowledge and self-efficacy perceptions in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. Specifically, the study sought to address the following research questions:

1. Does CELTA/TESOL certification make a difference in Iranian NNETs' self-efficacy perceptions regarding classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement?
2. How do Iranian NNETs perceive the impact of CELTA/TESOL certification on their teaching practices, particularly in terms of student-centered approaches and practical teaching techniques?

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The study involved eight Iranian teachers (four males and four females) of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The mean age of the participants was 23, and they were selected purposefully from teachers participating in a CELTA/TESOL certification program offered in the private language teaching institute in Tehran, Iran. The teachers had different degrees of teaching experience ranging from three years to seven years. They were teaching adult language learners. The teachers participated in the program because the institute required them to as part of their professional development.

The CELTA/TESOL certification course was designed and implemented at the language institute. The course director had a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics and had extensive experience in language teacher education. He was supported by the first author, who had been involved in English language teaching for over ten years. The course consisted of 12 sessions, each lasting two hours and spread over six weeks. It was run in a hybrid format, combining face-to-face sessions with online components to enhance accessibility and engagement. The language of instruction was predominantly English, with occasional use of Persian to clarify complex concepts, ensuring comprehensive understanding among all participants. The course used a syllabus that was structured to cover a wide range of topics essential for effective English language teaching, including (1) understanding language learners, (2) lesson planning, (3) classroom management, (4) testing and assessment, (5) teaching language skills, (6) using technology in language teaching, and (7) professional development. Each session incorporated a mix of theoretical instruction, practical activities, and peer interaction. Activities included role-playing exercises, group discussions, case studies, and hands-on practice with teaching materials. Teachers were encouraged to collaborate on various tasks, such as creating lesson plans and conducting mock teaching sessions, which fostered a collaborative learning environment. The first session was dedicated to introducing the course objectives, outlining the syllabus, and setting

expectations. It also included ice-breaking activities to build rapport among the participants. The last session focused on synthesizing the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the course. Participants delivered micro-teaching sessions, received peer and instructor feedback, and discussed their professional development plans. Interaction among teachers was a core component of the course. Participants were required to engage in peer teaching exercises, observe each other's practice, and provide constructive feedback. The course culminated in a portfolio submission, where each teacher documented their learning journey, including lesson plans, reflection essays, and feedback received.

Ethical considerations were adhered to throughout the research process. In this regard, informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their confidentiality and privacy were ensured. Ethical approval was sought from the relevant institutional review board before the study commenced.

Table 1

Teachers' Demographic Information

Teacher ID	Age	Gender	Years of Teaching Experience	Degree	Major
Teacher 1	24	Female	5	B.A.	English Language Teaching
Teacher 2	21	Male	3	M.A.	Linguistics
Teacher 3	26	Female	3	B.A.	English Literature
Teacher 4	24	Male	5	M.A.	English Language Teaching
Teacher 5	21	Female	3	B.A.	Translation Studies
Teacher 6	24	Male	5	M.A.	English Language Teaching
Teacher 7	23	Female	7	B.A.	Foreign Language Teaching
Teacher 8	21	Male	3	M.A.	Linguistics

3.2 Instrument and Data Collection

The major data collection instrument used in this study was semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview guide was developed to explore the participants' perceptions of their experiences with CELTA/TESOL certification, based on Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's (2001) framework including classroom management, engagement, and instructional strategies. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions and prompts encouraging participants to provide detailed and in-depth responses. Data were collected before and after completing the CELTA/TESOL certification courses. The interviews were conducted individually with each participant to allow for a personalized exploration of their experiences and reflections. The interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent to capture the responses accurately. The interviews were conducted in Persian, the native language of the teachers, to overcome language barriers. The researchers ensured a comfortable and supportive environment to encourage participants to express their thoughts openly. The qualitative data obtained through semi-structured interviews allowed for an in-depth exploration of the participants' perceptions, experiences, and reflections regarding their experiences in terms of confidence and practical teaching knowledge after completing CELTA/TESOL certification.

3.3 Data Analysis

The audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed, and the transcriptions were cross-checked for accuracy. Following the approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns and themes within the data. The analysis involved multiple stages, including familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, identification of potential themes, review and refinement of themes, and final data interpretation.

At first, the data were analyzed to see how the teachers viewed their practical knowledge and self-efficacy before and after the program. Then, comparable codes were developed for each of the study stages, focused on how

the teachers' efficacy beliefs and practical knowledge changed before and after the program. For example, the teachers stated that the course had influenced their confidence in adopting more student-centered practices and this was compared to how they had seen the issue of learner engagement before the course. This procedure was followed by all of the researchers to ensure the accuracy of the interpretations in order to build on collective reflexivity in data analysis. To enhance the study's validity, member checking was employed, where participants were allowed to review and verify the accuracy of the extracted themes. Additionally, two independent researchers reviewed a subset of the transcribed interviews and participated in the thematic analysis process to establish inter-rater reliability.

4. Findings

4.1 Non-native English Teachers' Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Practical Teaching Knowledge before the CELTA/TESOL Certification Course

Before undertaking the CELTA/TESOL certification course, the participating non-native English teachers had established teaching approaches and experiences that influenced their instructional practices. This section explores the two key themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of the data collected prior to the course. These themes shed light on the teachers' pre-existing teaching approaches, confidence levels, challenges in the classroom, and recognition of the need for professional development.

Theme 1: Pre-existing Teaching Approaches

During the pre-course interviews, the data revealed diverse teaching styles among the participants. For instance, Interviewee 4 described her approach as predominantly teacher-centered, stating, "I used to rely heavily on lecturing in the class and believed that my role was to deliver information to the students.' This emphasis on teacher-led instruction was a common theme among several participants. Conversely, Interviewee 1 described her teaching style as more interactive and student-centered, explaining, "I've always tried to engage my

students in discussions and group activities, but I feel like there's more I could do to make the learning experience richer." Her reflection indicated a recognition of the need to further develop her student-centered practices.

Most participants acknowledged a predominant teacher-centered approach in their classrooms. Interviewee 6 stated, "I used to think that students learn best when I control the pace and content of the lesson. I was hesitant to give them more autonomy in their learning." The prevalence of teacher-centered approaches was attributed to the participants' previous education and exposure to traditional teaching methodologies during their formal teacher training or academic studies. During the interviews, several participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the limited practical training they received during their initial education. Interviewee 2 shared, "I completed a TEFL course during my undergraduate studies, but it was more theory-based, and I didn't get hands-on experience in lesson planning or classroom management." This sentiment was echoed by other participants who felt that practical teaching techniques did not adequately complement their theoretical knowledge.

Theme 2: Confidence and Challenges

Participants' confidence levels varied based on their teaching experience. Novice teachers, such as Interviewee 5, expressed uncertainty in managing classroom dynamics and dealing with unexpected situations. "I am still new to teaching, and sometimes I struggle with managing the class when students become disruptive," shared Interviewee 5. On the other hand, experienced teachers like Interviewee 3 showcased a higher degree of confidence in their teaching abilities, attributing it to their years of classroom practice and familiarity with different teaching scenarios. The challenges faced by the non-native English teachers were evident in their narratives. Interviewee 7 highlighted the difficulty of addressing varying language proficiency levels, describing, "In my class, I have students with different language abilities, and it's challenging to cater to all their needs effectively." Another common challenge expressed by Interviewee 1 was

managing student engagement during online classes. "Keeping students engaged and attentive during online sessions is a struggle," she remarked.

Throughout the interviews, participants emphasized their desire for continuous professional development to enhance their teaching competencies. Interviewee 8 articulated, "I believe that attending courses like CELTA/TESOL can help me become a more effective teacher. I want to acquire practical strategies that I can immediately implement in my classes." Other participants shared this sentiment, highlighting their motivation to seek professional development opportunities tailored to their specific teaching challenges. In conclusion, integrating participant data provided concrete evidence to justify the findings related to pre-existing teaching approaches, confidence levels, challenges faced, and the perceived need for professional development among the non-native English teachers before undertaking the CELTA/TESOL certification course. These participant insights emphasized the relevance and significance of the subsequent certification program in addressing their teaching gaps and supporting their growth as educators.

4.2 Non-native English Teachers' Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Practical Teaching Knowledge after the CELTA/TESOL Certification Course

The CELTA/TESOL certification course had a transformative impact on the participating teachers' instructional practices and pedagogical knowledge. This section presents the thematic analysis of data collected after the course, highlighting the key themes that emerged to illustrate the course's influence on the teachers' teaching approaches and their perceptions of professional growth.

Theme 1: Transition to Student-Centeredness

After completing the CELTA/TESOL certification course, participants reported a noticeable shift in their teaching approaches. Interviewee 4, who previously relied on teacher-centered methods, explained, "The course encouraged me to rethink my approach. Now, I actively involve my students in

discussions, group activities, and decision-making processes." Another participant, Interviewee 6, echoed this sentiment, stating, "The course emphasized student-centered teaching, and I now make a conscious effort to give students more autonomy in their learning journeys." The participants recognized the importance of active student participation in the learning process, as Interviewee 1 described, "I learned that students retain knowledge better when they are actively engaged. Now, I create opportunities for students to share their thoughts and ideas during class." This emphasis on student participation was evident in the course, with teachers implementing various techniques to foster interaction and collaborative learning.

Theme 2: Learning Essential Teaching Techniques

The CELTA/TESOL certification course exposed participants to a wide range of practical instructional strategies applicable to diverse age groups and language proficiency levels. Interviewee 3 noted, "I learned different techniques, such as role-plays, debates, and simulations, which add variety to my lessons and keep students engaged." Interviewee 2 further emphasized the relevance of these strategies, stating, "The course equipped me with creative ways to make language learning enjoyable for my students." One of the central components of the certification course was lesson planning and classroom management. Participants reported significant improvements in organizing their lessons effectively and addressing potential challenges proactively. Interviewee 7 shared, "The course taught me how to plan lessons with clear objectives, activities, and timings. This has made my lessons more structured and purposeful." Additionally, the participants acknowledged the positive impact of enhanced classroom management skills on maintaining a conducive learning environment.

Theme 3: Learning from Observations, Reflections, and Feedback

The collaborative nature of the CELTA/TESOL certification course facilitated mutual learning among the participants. Through observing each other's teaching practices, teachers gained valuable insights and exchanged ideas.

Interviewee 5 stated, "Observing my peers allowed me to see different teaching styles in action. We discussed our experiences and shared constructive feedback, which was immensely beneficial." Participants recognized the importance of self-awareness and reflective practice due to the feedback received during the course. Interviewee 8 reflected, "The feedback sessions made me more aware of my strengths and areas for improvement. I now regularly reflect on my teaching practices and seek ways to enhance my instructional strategies." This reflective approach contributed to continuous professional development and growth as educators.

Theme 4: Bridging the Gap: Benefits for Teachers with Diverse Experience

The CELTA/TESOL certification course proved especially beneficial for novice teachers. Interviewee 1, who had limited teaching experience, expressed, "The course provided me with the tools and confidence to navigate various classroom situations. I feel more prepared and capable as a teacher now." Novice teachers reported increased self-efficacy and a sense of empowerment to manage their classes effectively. Even experienced teachers acknowledged the value of the certification course in enriching their pedagogical repertoire. Interviewee 3, with over a decade of teaching experience, shared, "The course exposed me to innovative teaching techniques that I hadn't previously considered. It challenged me to refine my teaching practices and continuously improve as an educator."

The post-CELTA/TESOL certification data substantially impacted the participating non-native English teachers' teaching approaches and instructional techniques. The certification course facilitated a shift towards student-centeredness, equipped teachers with essential teaching strategies, fostered reflective practice, and contributed to the professional growth of both novice and experienced educators. These findings highlight the course's effectiveness in bridging the gap in practical teaching knowledge and enhancing teaching efficacy among non-native English teachers.

4.3 Teachers Practical Teaching Knowledge after the CELTA/TESOL Certification Course

Completing the CELTA/TESOL certification course also marked a significant transformation in the non-native English teachers' instructional practices and professional outlook. This section presents the thematic analysis of data collected after the course, focusing on the themes that emerged to illustrate the lasting impact of the certification program on the participants' teaching approaches, reflective practices, and overall confidence as educators.

Theme 1: Embracing Student-Centered Teaching

The participants demonstrated a sustained commitment to student-centered teaching approaches following the certification course. Interviewee 4 shared, "The course instilled in me the value of putting my students at the center of their learning. I now strive to create a classroom environment that fosters active participation and inquiry-based learning." This continued adoption of student-centered practices contributed to more engaged and motivated learners. A notable outcome of the certification course was the participants' increased focus on addressing individual learner needs and interests. Interviewee 2 mentioned, "Understanding my students' diverse backgrounds and preferences has become integral to my lesson planning. Tailoring my instruction to their specific requirements has positively impacted their learning outcomes." This personalized approach enhanced the overall learning experience for the students.

Theme 2: Implementation of Practical Teaching Techniques

Participants actively integrated the diverse instructional strategies they learned during the certification course into their teaching practices. Interviewee 6 explained, "I have been experimenting with various techniques, such as group projects, debates, and role-plays, to cater to different learning styles in my class." The use of these innovative strategies enriched the learning environment and increased student engagement. The participants demonstrated proficiency in effective lesson planning and classroom management due to the certification

course. Interviewee 3 highlighted, "With well-structured lesson plans, I can now manage time more efficiently and ensure that all learning objectives are met. It has created a more conducive atmosphere for learning." This heightened level of preparation and organization positively impacted classroom dynamics.

Theme 3: Growth in Reflective Practice

The collaborative learning experience fostered during the certification course extended beyond its completion. Participants continued to engage in professional discussions and peer observations to enhance their teaching practices. Interviewee 8 shared, "Staying connected with my fellow teachers has been invaluable. We regularly exchange ideas, share resources, and provide feedback to support each other's growth." The certification course acted as a catalyst for ongoing professional development among the participants. Interviewee 5 expressed, "The course ignited a passion for continuous improvement in my teaching. I now actively seek out workshops, webinars, and relevant literature to expand my knowledge and skills." This commitment to lifelong learning contributed to the teachers' professional growth.

Theme 4: Enhanced Confidence and Self-Efficacy

Post-certification, the non-native English teachers exhibited heightened confidence in their teaching abilities. Interviewee 1 explained, "The course gave me the tools and strategies to address various challenges effectively. I now approach teaching with greater self-assurance, knowing that I can adapt to different classroom situations." This newfound confidence positively impacted their overall teaching performance. The participants reported a positive impact on classroom management skills. Interviewee 7 shared, "With improved classroom management techniques, I can create a more focused learning environment. It has reduced disruptions and enabled students to stay on task." The positive changes in classroom management resulted in a more conducive learning environment for both students and teachers.

In conclusion, the post-CELTA/TESOL certification data highlighted the lasting impact of the certification course on the participating non-native English teachers. The themes of embracing student-centered teaching, effective implementation of practical teaching techniques, growth in reflective practice, and enhanced confidence and self-efficacy collectively showcased the course's effectiveness in equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills to excel in their profession. The sustained commitment to student-centered approaches, continuous professional development, and confidence in their teaching abilities underscored the transformative power of the CELTA/TESOL certification program for non-native English teachers.

5. Discussion and Implications

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the influence of the CELTA/TESOL certification program on non-native English teachers' practical teaching knowledge and self-efficacy perceptions in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. The findings of the study shed light on the transformative potential of the CELTA/TESOL certification program and its effectiveness in addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by non-native English teachers in EFL contexts.

The findings of this study unequivocally indicate that the CELTA/TESOL certification program had a significant impact on the participating Iranian NNETs' self-efficacy perceptions. Before undertaking the certification course, the teachers reported varying confidence levels, with some novice teachers expressing uncertainty in classroom management and handling challenging situations. However, after completing the course, all participants showcased a noticeable increase in their self-efficacy perceptions regarding classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement. The certification program's emphasis on student-centered teaching approaches and practical teaching techniques played a crucial role in empowering the teachers to take ownership of their classrooms. By adopting change in their perceptions about learner-centered

teaching, the teachers reported feeling more in control and capable of managing diverse classroom dynamics. Incorporating practical instructional strategies, such as role-plays, debates, and simulations, enabled them to design engaging and interactive lessons, contributing to a more positive learning experience for their students. This finding aligns with previous research that highlights the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and student-centered teaching (Klassen & Chiu, 2010).

Furthermore, the collaborative and reflective nature of the certification program facilitated ongoing professional development, allowing the teachers to build on their strengths and address areas for improvement. The teachers' commitment to continuous growth and learning enhanced their self-perception as effective educators. This finding is in line with Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura & Locke, 2003), which posits that self-efficacy is developed through mastery experiences, social modeling, and social persuasion. The certification program provided the teachers with opportunities to experience success in applying new instructional techniques, observe peers' teaching practices, and receive constructive feedback, all of which contributed to enhancing their self-efficacy perceptions.

The second research question delved into the teachers' perceptions of the impact of the CELTA/TESOL certification program on their teaching practices, explicitly concerning student-centered approaches and the application of practical teaching techniques. The findings overwhelmingly support the transformative influence of the certification program on these aspects. The pre-course data revealed that most of the participating non-native English teachers tended to rely on teacher-centered approaches in their classrooms. However, the post-course data demonstrated that the teachers showed positive dispositions towards using learner-centered teaching. The certification program's explicit focus on student-centeredness and learner engagement seems to have influenced the teachers' perceptions in allowing more room for learner-centered teaching. This shift is

consistent with the principles of learner-centered education, which emphasizes students' active participation and ownership of their learning (Farrell, 2016). By becoming more inclined toward learner-centeredness, the teachers created more inclusive and interactive learning environments, fostering greater student learning enthusiasm. Moreover, applying practical teaching techniques, learned during the certification program, seems to have facilitated the teachers' ability to design diverse and engaging lessons, as evidenced in their self-reported responses. The teachers reported using a variety of instructional strategies, such as role-plays, debates, and simulations, to cater to different learning styles and language proficiency levels. This diversity in instructional approaches enhanced student engagement and motivated students to participate in their learning process actively. Integrating practical teaching techniques reported in this study is consistent with research on effective language teaching, highlighting the importance of employing a wide range of pedagogical tools to accommodate students' needs and preferences (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

The findings of this study align with the existing literature on non-native English teachers' challenges, the impact of teacher efficacy on instructional practices, and the effectiveness of teacher training programs in enhancing teaching competence. In the context of non-native English teachers, the study highlights the challenges faced by NNETs in EFL contexts, such as language proficiency concerns, limited pedagogical training, and stereotypes about their teaching abilities. These challenges resonate with previous research that emphasizes the importance of addressing the specific needs of NNETs to optimize their potential as language educators (Medgyes, 1992; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). The CELTA/TESOL certification program's focus on practical teaching knowledge and pedagogical training proved to be instrumental in addressing these challenges and empowering NNETs to become more effective teachers. The study also underscores the significance of teacher efficacy in shaping instructional practices. The increase in self-efficacy perceptions among the participating NNETs after completing the certification program is consistent with Bandura's social cognitive

theory (Bandura & Locke, 2003), which posits that teachers' beliefs in their instructional capabilities influence their instructional choices and willingness to adopt innovative approaches. The enhanced self-efficacy perceived by the teachers in this study led to a conceptual shift towards student-centered teaching practices and the application of diverse instructional strategies. This finding corroborates existing research that links teacher self-efficacy with student-centered teaching (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). Furthermore, the study contributes to the literature on the impact of teacher training programs, specifically the CELTA/TESOL certification course, on NNETs' practical teaching knowledge. The certification program's emphasis on practical training and experiential learning proved to be transformative for the participating NNETs. The teachers reported significant improvements in lesson planning, classroom management, and the application of instructional techniques, resulting in more structured and engaging language lessons. These findings support previous research that advocates for targeted pedagogical training to equip NNETs with the necessary skills and knowledge for effective language instruction (Johnson & Golombek, 2018; Shalem & Slonimsky, 2014).

The findings of this study carry important implications for second language teacher education and professional development programs. First and foremost, the study highlights the value of targeted teacher training for non-native English teachers. Providing NNETs with comprehensive pedagogical training and practical teaching knowledge is essential for enhancing their teaching competence and fostering a learner-centered approach in language classrooms, at least in accounting for their belief changes. This could happen more practically through prolonged observation of teachers' belief changes and practical shifts through other teacher education courses in other contexts. The study also emphasizes the importance of collaborative learning and reflective practice in teacher education programs. The collaborative nature of the CELTA/TESOL certification program allows the participating teachers to engage in peer observations, discussions, and feedback sessions, facilitating their ongoing professional development. Teacher

training programs should incorporate opportunities for teachers to learn from each other's practices, engage in reflective discussions, and receive constructive feedback to support their growth as educators. In this sense, mentoring programs could be helpful to see how they influence teachers' efficacy potentials. Furthermore, the transformative impact of the certification program on the participating NNETs' self-efficacy perceptions underscores the need for teacher training programs to address teachers' beliefs and confidence in their instructional abilities. By nurturing teacher self-efficacy through mastery experiences, social modeling, and social persuasion, teacher training programs can empower educators to adopt student-centered teaching practices and innovative instructional techniques (Li, 2019). Finally, the study highlights the potential of CELTA/TESOL certification programs to bridge the gap in practical teaching knowledge for NNETs. Such programs can serve as effective avenues for non-native English teachers to enhance their teaching competencies, address specific challenges, and promote positive student learning experiences.

Furthermore, the study shows that NNETs need more professional development courses that focus on how CELTA/TESOL modules could be used for professional growth. Since few studies have been done on NNET teachers' self-efficacy, the findings of this study show novel dimensions of how NNETs need teacher education courses that through practical activities and work enhance their efficacy beliefs.

The study's limitations should be acknowledged. In reporting the teachers' practices, we only drew on the teachers' self-reported practices and no observational protocols were used. Future research directions should explore the experiences of non-native English teachers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and in different language education settings, especially through classroom observations, to see how such courses influence teachers' practices in their classes. Further investigation into the long-term impact of the certification program on teaching practices and student learning outcomes would provide

valuable insights. Furthermore, incorporating multiple sources of data, such as classroom observations and student feedback, would enhance the study's robustness. It should also be emphasized that the change in the teachers' beliefs should be viewed with caution because many other mediating factors could have played a role in the teachers' change.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study explored the impact of the CELTA/TESOL certification program on non-native English teachers' practical teaching knowledge and self-efficacy perceptions in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. The findings of the study highlight the transformative potential of the certification program and its effectiveness in addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by non-native English teachers in EFL contexts. The study findings have revealed that the CELTA/TESOL certification program significantly impacted the participating non-native English teachers' self-efficacy perceptions. After completing the certification course, the teachers demonstrated increased confidence in classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement. The program's emphasis on student-centered and practical teaching approaches empowered the teachers to adopt more learner-centered practices and design engaging language lessons.

Despite the limitations, this study contributes to the field of foreign language teacher education and highlights the importance of targeted teacher training programs for non-native English teachers. The findings underscore the significance of continuous professional development and reflective practice in supporting NNETs' growth as effective language educators (Farrell, 2015). The CELTA/TESOL certification program proves to be a valuable tool for empowering non-native English teachers, fostering student-centered instructional practices, and promoting positive learning experiences in EFL contexts. The study's implications emphasize the need for tailored teacher training programs that

address NNETs' specific needs and challenges, ultimately enhancing language education and benefiting students worldwide.

7. About the Author

Yousef Mousavi is currently a Ph.D. candidate of TEFL at Islamic Azad University, Malayer, Iran. He holds a B.A. in English literature from Azad University of Toyserkan and an M.A. in Teaching English from Azad University of Tonekabon. He has been teaching English for 13 years and is currently the level coordinator at the preparatory school at Uskudar University, Istanbul, Turkey.

Payman Rajabi is an assistant professor in English Language Teaching. He is currently teaching M.A. and Ph.D. courses at IAU Malayer and has published articles in national and international journals on Second/Foreign Language Teaching. His main research interests include teaching second language skills and components.

Hamid Reza Khalaji is currently an assistant professor of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) at Islamic Azad University, Malayer, Iran. He teaches courses such as language teaching, materials development, contrastive analysis, grammar and writing, and ESP, with 23 years of experience teaching at different levels including M.A. and Ph.D.

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