

# Looking through the Lenses of Non-Native English Teachers: Native English Trainers in the Pro-ELT Programme

Saiful Islam Ahmad Sukri, Melor Md. Yunus

Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Malaysia

Email: neeraz87@yahoo.com

**How to cite this paper:** Sukri, S. I. A., & Yunus, M. M. (2018). Looking through the Lenses of Non-Native English Teachers: Native English Trainers in the Pro-ELT Programme. *Creative Education*, 9, 1396-1410. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2018.99104>

**Received:** June 27, 2018

**Accepted:** July 22, 2018

**Published:** July 25, 2018

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## Abstract

The world has held a strong predisposition towards native English-speaking teacher trainers in an endeavour to leapfrog the competencies of non-native English-speaking teachers. In the Malaysian context, realizing the acute decline in English proficiency among English teachers, the Ministry of Education recruited native English-speaking trainers through the implementation of an in-service training programme or better known as Pro-ELT (Professional Up-skilling for English language teachers). However, there have always been mixed results in regard to the outcomes of the Pro-ELT Programme. To this view, the study employed individual semi-structured interviews which were conducted with 5 Pro-ELT programme participants. The findings illuminated that all the study participants held positive perceptions of their native English-speaking trainers in the Pro-ELT Programme mainly because of their competencies, exemplary qualities and the confidence that they cultivated in the participants to communicate in English. Nevertheless, there is clamour for the recruitment of local trainers to better optimize the impact of the Pro-ELT Programme. Implications of the study and suggestions for future research are also discussed.

## Keywords

Teachers' Views of Professional Development Programme, Pro-ELT, Native English-Speaking Trainers, Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers, In-Service Training Programme

## 1. Introduction

In this era and age, the importance of mastering the English language cannot be over accentuated and thus, efforts made to be proficient in the target language

should be expedited for its utilitarian values (English Language Standards & Quality Council, 2015; Thirusanku & Yunus, 2014; Yunus & Sukri 2017). Failing to do so would leave the nation in dire straits. Shockingly, even though numerous initiatives have been made to enhance the standards of English, the results have been quite disheartening and discouraging (English Language Standards & Quality Council, 2015). Moreover, there is no doubt that there is an acute deterioration in the grasp of English in many parts of the world such as Thailand (James, 2015), Turkey (Koru & Akesson, 2011), Indonesia (Wati, 2011), Japan (Steele & Rong, 2016), Hong Kong of China (Yeung, 2013), Philippines (Madrunio, Martin, & Plata, 2016), to name a few.

Likewise, the downtrend in the command of English is rampant in Malaysia where it was once well-known for her quality English. To date, the majority of Malaysian students and local graduates have been found to be incompetent users of the English language and the fact that they are struggling to form a proper English sentence (Meikeng, 2015; Musa, Koo, & Azman, 2012), let alone to communicate fluently in English is utterly worrying. Recently, a recent move by the newly appointed Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Mahathir Mohamad who mandates all top civil servants to take English competency examinations has foregrounded the significant values of English in the public sector on the one hand and spoken much volume about the parlous state of the Malaysian English education system on the other hand (The Star, 2018).

Unarguably, the attrition in English proficiency afflicting thousands of Malaysians stems from the quality of English teachers and therein lies the crux and core of the problem. As a matter of fact, two-thirds of the Malaysian English teachers demonstrated an atrocious performance in the Cambridge Placement Test (CPT), aimed at measuring English proficiency level against the CEFR (Jalleh, 2012). Cognizant of the enormity of the matter at hand, the Education Ministry of Malaysia launched an in-service training programme for English teachers who have yet to achieve the targeted level of English proficiency in 2013. This initiative or more popularly known as Pro-ELT (Professional Up-skilling for English Language Teachers) is implemented with the primary objective of harnessing English teachers' command of English measured against the 6-levels Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR) ranging from A1 (Breakthrough), A2 (Wastage), B1 (threshold), B2 (Vantage), C1 (Effective) to C2 (Mastery). To this end, the British Council is appointed to train English teachers in the Pro-ELT Programme. Even though Pro-ELT has been in operation for 5 years, it has been reported to be of little avail. Moreover, in the 2017 Cambridge Baseline Report, it was reported that, the number of Pro-ELT programme participants meeting the required English proficiency level, C1, is disappointingly low and hence defeats the aspiration of the nation to produce linguistically proficient English teachers by 2025 (Abdullah & Alias 2017).

Since the Pro-ELT Programme is in partnership with the British Council, there has been a growing chorus of concern regarding the quality of British Council trainers who are mostly native speakers of English. This is not in the

least surprising as prior to Pro-ELT, there have been cases where local teachers had a difficult time working under the tutelage of native English-speaking trainers. To explicate, Senom, Othman and Siraj (2016) discovered that some of the trainers in the Native Speaker Programme (NSP) were found to be inconsiderate, intimidating and unaware of the local teachers' struggles to effectively deliver English lessons. In support of that, Halim (2016) disclosed that there were incidents manifested in the acts of sleeping in the class, changing their teaching options from English to the Malay language teaching and to the extent asking for transfer to other school owing to the fear and discomfort of being observed while teaching. All of these have rendered support to the contention that native English-speaking trainers are incapable of establishing rapport (Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014), crucial for the success of the programme (Noor, Narodin, Rajab, & Hamid, 2018). Even though such occurrences transpired in the NSP, there is no guarantee that the Pro-ELT programme participants would not suffer the same fate given the fact that the selection of trainers is very much based on the native-speaker status or the country of origin than the actual training capability in the EFL context (MELTA, 2010).

To begin with, a competent English trainer must first and foremost have a laudable command of English. As reiterated by Richards, Conway, Roskvist and Harvey (2013), being equipped with a commendable level of English proficiency would enable one to become good language models, thus having no difficulty in sustaining the use of English in giving instructions and explanations, adapting genuine English teaching materials, among others. This is supported by Canh and Renandya (2017) in which teachers with sound English at disposal are found to be more confident and thus increase students' participation in classroom activities. In the same vein, Zhang (2017) argued that the high level of English proficiency that lecturers possess is among the prime factors of the effective delivery of courses. In fact, it is common sense to expect those who are entrusted with the responsibilities of honing language skills to be the master of the target language as it is the fundamentals of being effective language trainers or teachers.

In addition to fulfilling the requirement in the aforementioned paragraph, good language trainers should be able to facilitate language learning (Borko, Jacobs, & Koellner, 2010; Rodriguez & McKay, 2010). With this quality, it would help the trainees or programme participants to put skills they have learned into practice with ease and subsequently engender an increased level of satisfaction with the programme undertaken. This can be made possible by offering feedback to support the learning process and providing them with opportunities to be in control of how they want to chart their own learning, thus assuming the role of active learners (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017; Yunus & Arshad, 2015). Moreover, ones learn best in a supportive learning environment. This is particularly true in the case of learning a target language when it is often regarded as an anxiety-provoking experience (Rossi, 2015). In relation to that, from the perspective of Rodriguez and McKay (2015), effective trainers should not only guide and question but also listen to what trainees want to share. Non-

etheless, many have been deprived of such opportunities for feedback or role-modelling (Cimer, Cakir, & Cimer, 2010; Ingvarson, Meiers, & Beavies, 2005; Vernon-Dotson, Floyd, Dukes, & Darling, 2014). More tragically, there were accounts where the programme participants' queries were ridiculed and humiliated for being incompetent (Gravarni, 2012). Thus it is understandable why programmes designed have yet to yield fruitful results.

In respect to training in-service teachers in the studied context, trainers who are deemed efficacious are associated with their school-based work experiences (Mohamad, Rashid, Yunus, & Zaid, 2016; Vethamani, 2011). By sharing a relatively similar background, this would help cultivate a deep understanding, tolerance and harmony between trainers and trainees. In other words, both have the experience of being teachers generally and teaching English as a second language particularly. Referring to the latter, as outlined by MELTA (Malaysian English Language Teaching Association) (2010) in its report on the role of native speakers teachers and trainers in second and foreign language teaching, it is crucial for those recruited teachers and trainers to possess the minimal of 3 years experience in training English as a second language or hold evidence of formal learning of any second language. This is because different contexts of English language teaching entail different challenges. In respect to the former, Vethamani (2011) illuminated that English language teacher educators in Institute Teacher Education who previously worked as teachers and language officers made significant inroads into teacher training. This springs from the fact they had been exposed to real teaching and thus gained a deep understanding of the current school system. Within the same line of thoughts, Gravarni (2012) noted that tutors with experience in secondary education were reacted more favourably than those with theoretical knowledge, insensitive to teaching realities. This is inevitable as adults learn better when it is of immediate relevance and great value to their concrete working experience (Knowles, 1984). Therefore, it can be surmised that not only should good English language trainers have a high level of proficiency in the English language and know how to be a side on the guide, they should also have gained some experience of being in teachers' shoes or in this context, the struggles that non-native English speaking teachers have to contend with.

Of great concern is the obsession that the world has had for native English-speaking trainers and to the extent that homegrown talents are undermined by their own kinds (Althobaiti, 2017; Braine, 2010; Kamhi-Stein, 2016). Moreover, with the Pro-ELT Programme in place, this has reaffirmed the fact that Malaysia has never ceased to regard the native English speaking trainers very highly in the hopes that the locals can greatly profit and progress to their greater heights from their training sessions with the so-called gurus of the English language. Even though they have always been favoured and idolized in the field of English language teaching, that does not mean the non-natives are neither competent, reliable nor infallible. Instead, extant literature has shown that both natives and non-natives have an equal share of strengths and limitations (Senom,

Othman, & Siraj, 2016; Shin, 2008; Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014; Halim, 2016). In greater details, while the natives are renowned for their superiority in linguistic competence concerning their impeccable standard of grammatical accuracy and gold-standard pronunciation (Nguyen, 2017), they are struggling to explain complex linguistic items, establish a good relationship with the non-natives and lacking sensitivity to the local educational context (Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014). On the other hand, their non-native counterparts, who have unjustly been labelled as ill-proficient users of English with flawed grammatical and pragmatic knowledge, imperfect pronunciation and limited knowledge about target cultures (Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014), are more emphatic to the language learners and adroit at shedding light on the nuances of English grammar (Anderson, 2016; Dixon, 2017; Shin, 2008) as well as easy to communicate with where occasional code switching might be of great help (Zhang, 2017). In respect to the latter, non-native English learners are more drawn to English educators who are not only kind and forbearing but also motivate and inspire them in the pursuit of learning English (Lamb, 2013). Even if so, it is crucial to iterate that competence in English is not necessarily based on the country of origins as both native and non-natives have an equal chance to be competent in the target language (Dixon, 2017).

Even though the Pro-ELT Programme has commenced since 2013, none of the studies have delved into the issue of Pro-ELT trainer competencies from the perspectives of the programme participants. Not only is there a scarcity of studies on Pro-ELT, most of the existing studies have been done and given meaning by the Pro-ELT trainers (English Language Teaching Centre, 2015), thus failing to increase the sense of transparency on the one extreme and reaffirming the bureaucratic and authoritative nature of teacher education in the Malaysian context on the other extreme (Hwa, 2017; Meng & Moses, 2017; Tagg, 2016; Petras, Jamil, & Mohamed, 2012). Therefore, it is not in the least startling that there have always been inconsistent results reported concerning the Pro-ELT Programme (Noor et al., 2018) and thus, this matter deserves to be resolved by bringing to the forefront of the unheard voices of English teachers who have often been silenced and sidelined in many in-service training programmes (Cheung, 2013; Ghasemi & Hashemi, 2011; Loh & Liew, 2016; Wyatt & Ager, 2016). Furthermore, there is a felt need to revisit the centrality of the Pro-ELT trainers, realising the astronomical amounts of money have been earmarked for the utilisation of foreign expertise (Sukri, Yunus, & Abdul Rahman, 2017; Jamil, 2014) so as to ensure every penny is worth invested in current straitened times and most importantly to align the Malaysian educational practice with an international trend towards greater democracy, accountability and transparency. In view of all the above, the undertaking study is aimed at addressing the research question below.

1) What are the English teachers' perceptions of the Pro-ELT Programme trainers?

## 2. Methodology

The study is qualitative in nature and thus, it employed individual semi-structured interview involving 5 participants. Even though the number of participants is very limited, the fact that the aforesaid research instrument is critical to highlight teachers experience with a new reform cannot be overemphasized (Desimone, 2011). The chosen participants in the study were of purposive sampling based on pre-determined criteria which is vital to understand the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). In other words, to participate in the study, they first must have already attended the Pro-ELT programme in 2013, thus representing the pioneer batch of the Pro-ELT Programme and second, they must be trained by the British council trainers. Three of them were secondary school English teachers and the rest primary school English teachers. Their years of teaching experience were varied ranging from 10 to 25 years and all of them were English optionists. The interviews were conducted at the participants' respective schools and the questions asked centred around the perceptions they held about the Pro-ELT trainers they were assigned with. Pseudonyms such as P1, P2, P3, P4 and P5 were used to ensure anonymity and secure their identities. The responses elicited from the participants were analysed thematically in an effort to address the aforementioned research question of the study.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

### 3.1. Unparalleled Competencies

When asked about the trainers that they had worked with in the Pro-ELT Programme, the very first impression that conjured up was their unparalleled competencies. This indirectly accounts for the obsession with native English-speaking trainers (Althobaiti, 2017; Braine, 2010; Kamhi-Stein, 2016). To start with, P2 stated that Mrs. Carey was proficient in the English language not only because she is the native Speaker of English but she had been trained to teach English professionally

P2 *"Mrs Carey was a very competent in the English language. This is not because she is from the United Kingdom but her area of expertise is English language teaching and that made a whole lot of difference"*.

P5, who was also under the guidance of Mrs. Carey for a few months, added that the competencies that she had were also contributed by her experience of teaching and training students and working adults in non-English speaking regions, which foregrounded the characteristics of ideal trainers expressed in the reviewed literature (MELTA, 2010; Mohamad et al., 2016; Vethamani, 2011).

P5 *"I look up to her as she is not a typical trainer that I have encountered before. I learn best from her as she had been handling language programme for teachers in Thailand and Vietnam for quite some time. Moreover she herself was a teacher who taught English to both the natives and non-natives in her country."*

Thus, it can be concluded that she is indeed a well-experienced trainer and it

is proven when both P1 and P2 improve one band upper from B2 to C1, thus meeting the level of English proficiency as required by the Ministry of Education.

P1 *“Mrs. Carey was of great help as I eventually managed to make progress from B2 to C1. I profusely thank her for everything.”*

More significantly, P2 informed that there were a few teachers who made a profound leap from B1 to C2 thanks to the effective training sessions handled by Mrs. Carey.

P2 *“Her competency as an English language trainer for me is without flaws. Can you imagine how a few Pro-ELT participants who were in her class made a drastic improvement from B1 to C2? Of course, credits should go to Mrs. Carey besides the concerted efforts on the parts of the learners.”*

In the same vein, P3 and P4 were grateful to have a wonderful trainer, Mr. Scott who were not only very responsive but also share tips and techniques on how to ace English easily for the benefits of the teachers and the students likewise. Apart from that, he facilitated teacher learning very well by using his own teaching materials in addition to the British Council’s. With such facilitation, from the lens of Borko et al. (2010) and Rodriguez and McKay (2010), it makes him a good language trainer.

P3 *“Mr. Scott has never turned down our enquiries and he would simplify complicated language concepts, such as tenses, prepositions, etc. His explanations were always on-point and he did not mind explaining the same things until we fully understood them.”*

P4 *“To me, It is a great blessing to have Mr. Scott as my trainer who constantly share tricks and tips to master English throughout the Pro-ELT Programme. To add, he was a passionate English language trainer as I remember there were quite a number of times that a few teachers managed to have personal coaching with him even though the lesson was over. In fact, he felt delighted to do so. Besides, he facilitated teacher learning very well as he used his own materials alongside the provided modules by the British Council.”*

To conclude both the trainers really took the roles assigned very seriously and very much committed to making the Pro-ELT Programme a success as conceded by P2:

*“Mrs. Carey every now and then mentioned that we should not be so hard on ourselves when learning English as it is our second language. As much as we eagerly want to achieve C1, she also enthusiastically wanted to make Pro-ELT a platform for us to gain as much knowledge and skill as possible. Conversely, she would not be hesitant to ask for apology if she makes mistakes in training us to become proficient in the English language. To her, it is such a sinful act.”*

In consideration of the above, this adds support to Lamb (2013) whereby trainers whom the trainees find inspiring would give them a jolt to pursue excellence in learning the English language.

### **3.2. Personal Qualities**

Not only were the trainers competent, but they also demonstrated exemplary



qualities that made learning easier and more effective. The participants all agreed that they did not feel judged when making mistakes owing to the fact that the trainers treasured the mistakes made. In this vein, it can be implied that the trainers are aware of the fact that emotional variables are inherent in language learning (Rossi, 2015). They also added that when correcting the errors, the trainers adopted a pragmatic approach as they patiently corrected them contrary to how they fixed their students' errors in classrooms. Furthermore, they kept reassuring that it is part of learning to make mistakes and should instead celebrate them. Suffice to say, mistakes are the greatest teachers and via the programme, they were taught that it is not all about the score that they have badly wanted to achieve but what matters the most is to enjoy the whole learning process to the fullest be it success or failure. However, they were afraid that they would not be able to translate the enlightenment gained during Pro-ELT upon their return to school in view of the exam-oriented system that has long been practiced in the Malaysian education system.

Contrary to Walkinshaw & Oanh (2014), they found out that both of the trainers had been very warm and welcoming since the very first day the Pro-ELT Programme started. For instance, Mrs. Carey did not have much difficulty to mingle with the local teachers and in fact she was very approachable. In support of that, P1 explained that Mrs. Carey had never humiliated them for their poor English but instead she went all out helping each and every one of them. Such claim was reaffirmed by P2 when she told that Mrs. Carey was very sincere to help one of the participants who had low self-esteem in speaking English in public. Furthermore, what made Mrs. Carey endearing to the majority of the participants is the fact that she was a very good listener in which she listened very attentively to the problems that they are faced with at schools and she did take pride in offering solutions to the issues raised. In this sense, such description fits the character of an efficacious trainer who is supposed to be a good listener as noted by Rodriguez and McKay (2015). Thus, to those who have been trained by Mrs. Carey, she is not just a trainer but she is "*a sister, a companion and a beacon of hope*". In fact, they have still kept in touch with Mrs. Carey although they all successfully completed the programme 5 years ago.

Similarly, Mr. Scott was also highly respected not just because of his expertise but also his admirable traits. As far as P3 could recall, for instance, Mr. Scott had never been late to class and he himself set up all the learning equipment while waiting for the programme participants to arrive. Besides, P3 also describe Mr. Scott as a very strict and yet caring trainer. This is echoed in the interview with P5 when he said that Mr. Scott "*would be very furious if any one of us played with mobile phone while he was delivering his lesson*". However, one particular disposition about Mrs. Scott that garnered much respect and admiration is the fact that he was very concerned about the participants' psychological state of being. Thus, he usually inquired over the participants' well-being instead of hastily discussing the lesson of the day. That is also the reason why both P3 and P5 described their relationship with Mr. Scott as tough love, requiring them to discip-



line themselves while in class on the one strand and at the same time allowing themselves to be loved and protected on the other strand. To emphasize, even though at the beginning, most participants loathed the way Mr. Scott treated them, they finally agreed that what he did was nothing but for their own best interests.

### 3.3. Confidence in Speaking English

It is compelling to note that the favourable perceptions of the Pro-ELT trainers arise from the increased confidence to communicate in English. From the point of view of P5, Pro-ELT, unlike other language courses or programmes that he had attended, has developed a newfound confidence to speak in English in a setting where English is scarcely used. He also added that “*the trainer plays a very pivotal role to encourage the consistent use of English throughout the Pro-ELT Programme.*” Besides, the fact that the trainers who are of native speakers of English proved to be of great assistance which effortlessly creates an authentic English-speaking environment, integral to sustaining the use of English and increase participation in training activities (Richards et al., 2013). This is reverberated in P2 who truly relished the opportunity to be trained by the native-English speaking trainer as she “*could listen to the lived Queen’s English*” even though at first she had difficulty getting used to the British English accent. This is very much predictable as they are renowned for their gold-standard pronunciation (Nguyen, 2017). The same sentiment is also expressed by P3 in which he regarded the Pro-ELT Programme as once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that afforded him to observe how the trainer’s intonation, pauses, etc transpires in actual discourse. In this sense, he was more intrigued to something that was real and tangible as he “*had only learned the arts of communication theoretically*” while receiving pre-training many years ago. In a way, this reinforces the idea that adults learn better when they perceive learning session valuable and relevant to their concrete working experience (Knowles, 1984).

Apart from that, P1 opined that she could sense her speaking skills were getting better because the trainer provided aplenty tasks that necessitated her to converse in English in contradiction to what previous studies had found (Cimer et al., 2010; Ingvarson et al., 2015; Vernon-Dotson et al., 2014). However, she admitted that it was very excruciating to speak English all the time in the beginning as she had been used to speaking in the Malay language on a daily basis. Luckily, Mrs. Carey continually pushed her to continue using English as “*she did not find her faults when speaking English but was more concerned about the message of the speech.*” In other words, she taught me to be happy and proud of myself so long as the message is delivered and understood. She further added “*that is the beginning of me finding courage to use English as often as possible and it is better late than never*”. Parallel to P1, P4 concurred that the recruitment of the native English-speaking trainers itself sets Pro-ELT apart from other language programmes where the participants had no other option nor alternative to survive rather than to use English when talking to the trainers. In his case, the

fact that the trainer loved public speaking and enjoyed listening to the oral presentations immensely helped bolster the participants' level of confidence to interact with each other in the target language.

### 3.4. A Clamour for Local Trainers

In spite of the abovementioned positive remarks about the Pro-ELT trainers, 3 participants suggested that the Ministry of Education should consider employing local trainers in the Pro-ELT Programme. As explained by P3, such proposal should be given due consideration on the grounds that *“they are of similar cultural backgrounds and above all they are well-versed with the Malaysian educational system.”* This resonates well with P5's standpoint wherein *“at times, even though their ideas are of more practical value concerning the way English should be evaluated, such does not correspond well to the realities of English assessments in the local context.”* Taking cognizance of the arising concerns, this in one form or another agrees to the contention that non-natives might be insensitive to the local educational context (Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014).

Additionally, P4 argued that the *“experience that both the local trainers and Pro-ELT programme participants had in common when learning and teaching English as a second language would, to a great extent, help to attain the ultimate objective of the Pro-ELT Programme”* besides *“reducing communication breakdown which might negate the effectiveness of the lesson every now and then”*, thus bearing resemblance to Zhang (2017) who opined that infrequent code switching can come in handy.

However, P1 believed that both natives and non-native English speaking trainers do complement one another best and would be a boon for the local teachers where their *“learning will be facilitated by the best of the best trainers locally and internationally.”* In fact, she supported the collaboration between both parties where the competencies of Malaysian English teachers are not only locally lauded and lionized but most importantly, go bally recognized. Moreover, competencies in the English language do not purely depend on the country of origin as both native and non-natives can be equally competent in the language (Dixon, 2017). In as much as there is no criticism nor repulsion against the Pro-ELT trainers, it can be concluded with certainty that the deployment of native and non-native English speaking trainers would seemingly render the Pro-ELT programme more impactful, rewarding, enriching and fulfilling.

## 4. Conclusion

In encapsulation, this qualitative study has offered profound insights into the perceptions of trainers in the Pro-ELT Programme through the lenses of 5 primary and secondary school English teachers. It is found that all the interviewed participants of the study responded positively to the Pro-ELT trainers due to 3 factors emerged from the thematic analysis of qualitative data conducted which encompass the trainers' competencies, exemplary qualities and the confidence that the trainers cultivated to communicate in English. Nevertheless, there is

clamour for the recruitment of local trainers to better optimize the impact of the Pro-ELT Programme.

Thereby, in light of these findings, there are three implications that can be derived from the study. First, it is imperative to take note of teachers' voices as they are at the forefront of education in which the success of educational reform lies in their hands. Second, it is of paramount importance to constantly monitor the quality of the programme so that any arising problems can be averted and resolved immediately (Salehi, Davari, & Yunus, 2015). Equally important is continued support from all walks of life that should be made available to raise the bar for English education system in Malaysia in general and English teaching profession in particular. Correspondingly, the onus, in actuality, is on the public to uniformly and wholeheartedly support the ongoing English education reform for a better future that will in turn lay the foundations for teachers of English to better support students learning. Moreover, it is irrefutable that a great education starts at home and therefore, each and every being has an important role to play in bolstering the quality of English that has increasingly plummeted over the years or to be specific since the 1970s (Yunus & Sukri, 2017).

On a different note, it is worth mentioning that the study has its own limitations that restrict the generalization of the findings discovered. To compensate for the aforesaid matter, it is recommended for other researchers to employ a different research design and involve more respondents in different geographical settings. In doing so, this might offer a wider and richer spectrum of insights into the Pro-ELT Programme which has saddeningly received least attention and focus albeit its immense significance in the professional lives of English teachers. Needless to say, more studies looking into the state of the Pro-ELT Programme are sorely needed as time is at a premium and most importantly, "one's effort in education can matter to the quality of lives lived" (Britzman & Dippo, 2000: p. 33).

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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