

## **Perceived Teachers' Self-disclosure, Writing Performance and Gender of Malaysian ESL Undergraduates**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This exploratory study aimed to determine the relationship between perceived teacher self-disclosure, writing performance, and gender of Malaysian English as a Second Language (ESL) undergraduates. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to 75 students who had enrolled in a university writing course at the end of their terms. Fifty-seven students had responded. The Perceived Teachers' Self-Disclosure Scale, which indexes three aspects of teacher self-disclosure namely amount, relevance, and negativity was used to determine the undergraduates' perceptions of their perceived teachers' self-disclosure. Scores for writing performance were gathered from the results obtained by the students in their final examination for the writing course. The relationship between perceived teacher self-disclosure and writing performance was analyzed using the Pearson Product-moment Correlations test. The difference between perceived teacher self-disclosure and gender was analyzed using the independent sample *t*-test. The results showed a small, positive correlation between two aspects of teacher self-disclosure (amount and relevance) and writing performance. The results from this study demonstrated that ESL students perceived that relevant teacher self-disclosure, relating to course content, had important

implications for their writing performance. Thus, teacher self-disclosure is an important element of classroom instruction that could be used to enhance content knowledge, especially in idea generating, self-voice and opinion among ESL students in a writing class. The results also showed a significant difference in one dimension of teacher self-disclosure, negativity, and gender. Further comprehensive studies should be conducted

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to gauge the implications of perceived teachers' self-disclosure to the teaching and learning aspects in ESL writing classrooms.

*Keywords:* ESL undergraduates, negativity, perceived teachers' self-disclosure, relevance, writing performance

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## INTRODUCTION

As learning is aided by mediating adults (Tan, 2013), teachers are a significant factor that enable learning in most cultures. As such, in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom, teachers play a profound role not only as educators, but also as facilitators to disperse knowledge to their students. Teachers' socio-communicative behaviors have considerable effect on students' emotional development and their cognitive aspect of learning (Wang & Dishion, 2012). One such behavior is self-disclosure, which is common in everyday interpersonal conversations and one that dictates the nature of social interactions. Through self-disclosure, teachers impart their personal experiences, stories and opinions as information to clarify and explain course content to their students (Downs, Javidi, & Nussbaum, 1988; Webb, 2014).

Chala and Chapeton (2012) and Hyland (2003) pointed out that writing was not only the sole production of functional linguistics but also social discourse. They contended that a person's literacy was socially situated as they were controlled by factors such as history, time, space, and the culture where it was acquired. As such, a writer's social experiences and interpretations are

important tenets of his thoughts as they are reproduced in the form of written and reading texts. In the social constructionist's perspective, it is pertinent that teachers and students consistently construct meanings through teacher narratives, dialogues, and humor. Thus, the socially constructed experiences of students are transferred into second language (L2) writing as prior knowledge and content knowledge by the ESL students. This is important as students in universities are expected to produce writing that is specific to their disciplines and the social discourse that they are in.

In Malaysian universities, academic writing courses are offered to teach undergraduates to produce writing that fulfills the required writing norms of the academic fields that they are pursuing. As students enter tertiary education in Malaysia, their writing tasks become more demanding as they are required to comprehend academic texts, prepare assignments and write research papers. In order to produce written work that is clear, matured, meaningful and coherently expressed with the required academic vocabulary, they need to employ an array of skills such as summarizing, synthesizing, paraphrasing as well as citing and referencing. Adding to that, in most private institutions of higher learning, the medium of instruction is English; therefore, students who predominantly come from the Bahasa Melayu-based national schools are often plagued with many problems such as limited vocabulary, lack of knowledge in word usage, word order, and transferring of information from L1 to L2 (Chan &

Abdullah, 2004). Therefore, ESL writing is often seen as difficult and problematic, contributing to negative attitudes, low motivation and poor writing performance among Malaysian undergraduates (David, Siew, & Azman, 2015; Mah & Gek, 2015; Maarof & Murat, 2013). The challenges faced by these students point to the need to find new ways of improving the pedagogical practices of writing instructors that can help to improve the writing performance of their students.

Furthermore, studies pertaining to teachers' self-disclosure as a tool of instructional communication in areas of ESL teaching and learning, especially ESL writing, are lacking. Past studies on teachers' self-disclosures in the ESL classroom have examined aspects of pre-service teachers' attitudes toward self-disclosure (Zhang, Shi, Luo, & Ma, 2008), speaking skills (Pishghadam & Torgabeh, 2009), learner autonomy (Serag, 2011), content relevance (Shrodt, 2013), attitude toward language learning (Farani & Fatemi, 2014), and appropriateness of teacher's self-disclosures (Rahimi & Bigdeli, 2016).

Hence, this study aimed to fill the research gap by determining if there was a relationship between perceived teachers' self-disclosure (PTSD), gender and the writing performance of ESL undergraduates based on the three aspects of PTSD proposed by Martin and Cayanus (2008), which are amount, relevance and negativity. The study was guided by the following research questions:

- Is there a significant relationship between PTSD and ESL undergraduates' writing performance?
- Is there a significant difference between PTSD and gender?

This study's framework was represented by two variables: (1) perceived teachers' self-disclosure (amount, relevance and negativity) that is the independent variable, and (2) writing performance that is the dependent variable. The conceptual framework (Figure 1) is explained by the relationship between perceived teachers' self-disclosure and writing performance. Based on the above, the null hypotheses were:

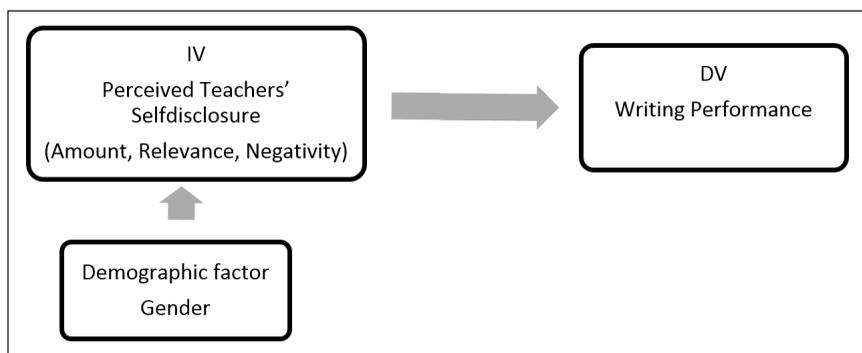


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no positive relationship between perceived teachers' self-disclosure (amount, relevance and negativity) and undergraduates' writing performance.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between perceived teachers' self-disclosure (amount, relevance and negativity) and gender.

### **Writing Skills in Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia**

The English language is the medium of instruction in most universities in Malaysia. As such, students often have to access learning materials in the English language. They also have to read a wide variety of content materials, and produce reports and project works in English. In the teaching and learning of ESL, it is important for students to master the four crucial language skills, which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In order to equip undergraduate students with the required linguistic competence in the English language, most Malaysian universities offer English language courses to their students (Zin & Rafik-Galea, 2010). Upon entering universities, students are required to undergo compulsory proficiency courses to enhance their English language skills such as the Intensive English programs. These are offered as prerequisite courses before students enroll into English courses for specific or academic purposes. These courses, for example, Academic Writing, or Communication and Study Skills, equip students with the necessary skills needed

to handle course and reference materials relevant to the writing conventions of the student's area of study (Wong & Thang, 2008). English for Occupational Purposes (EOPs) courses may also be offered to students. According to Sarudin et al., (2013), the EOP courses are an initiative of the higher educational institutions in the effort to equip their students with employability skills such as soft-skills, critical thinking and problem solving and effective communication. These courses include Communicative English, Business English, Technical Writing, Report Writing, Writing for Public Relations, and Feature Writing, among others.

### **Factors Contributing to Poor Writing Performance among Malaysian ESL Undergraduates**

Poor writing performance among Malaysian ESL undergraduates are contributed by factors such as lack of writing readiness among undergraduates (Nik, Hamzah, & Rafidee, 2010), the inability to gauge university expectations (Giridharan, 2012) and the difficulty in producing ideas (Hiew, 2012). In a diagnostic study conducted on 69 undergraduates at a Malaysian university on students' written summaries, Ashrafzadeh and Nimehchisalem (2015) reported that undergraduates lacked organization and vocabulary skills that contributed to ineffective paraphrasing ability in ESL summary writing. Kho-Yar and Tan (2015), on the other hand, found that undergraduates had difficulties in meaningful application of grammar in their writing, resulting in

writing that lacked grammatical accuracy. In a survey conducted on 138 first year Malaysian undergraduates from various faculties, David, Siew, and Azman (2015) found that the respondents believed writing as the most difficult task to master, citing lack of self-efficacy, vocabulary, exposure, social communication, and weak syntax as contributing to their low proficiency in ESL writing. In gauging factors of poor writing performance among UiTM undergraduates, Mah and Gek (2015) conducted a systematic literature review on SIL's learner domain and outlined seven factors that contributed to poor writing performance. They included writing complexity, literacy, information literacy, students' proficiency levels, critical thinking abilities, inter-language interference, and writing anxiety. Poor writing performance in ESL writing was also contributed by syntactic errors contributed by students' first language interference, grammar, vocabulary repetition, lexical choice and poor sentence skills (Gedion, Tati, & Peter, 2016).

### **Perceived Teachers' Self-disclosure**

Self-disclosure is the central element of Irvin Altman and Taylor's (1973) Social Penetration Theory. Griffin (2010) defined Social Penetration Theory as "the process of developing deeper intimacy with another person through mutual self-disclosure" (p.114), while Jourard (1971), Cozby (1973), Wheelless and Grotz (1976) explained that self-disclosure was the exchange of any messages about the self that a person communicated to one another on the basis

of trust and interpersonal solidarity. The variety of topics (breadth) and the intimate details (depth) of the information shared between two or more individuals determines the nature of social relationships. Using the "onion model", Altman and Taylor (1987) demonstrated that people's interpersonal relationships gradually moved with the exchanging (disclosure) of their personal information, akin to the peeling of the layers of an onion. They suggested that relationships developed as the outer layers of the onion, which connoted the general information of oneself was disclosed to the core layers which connoted the most intimate information of a person. These exchanges are usually mutual and are governed by the mechanism of cost and rewards. When disclosures are rewarding, more information is disclosed between the communicators. When the disclosures are deemed as costly, the relationships are discontinued.

Teachers, without doubt, are the first and foremost point of contact for students in the educational setting. Whitaker (2004) asserted that the teacher-student relationship was vital to improve education. In order to enable the transfer of knowledge, explaining and elaborating course content, clarifying course expectations, ensuring proper feedback mechanisms are established and to test out the efficiency of course outcomes, teachers need to work interdependently with their students.

According to Sorenson (1989), teachers spend most of their classroom contact hours by conversing with their students, while

teaching, instructing or informing. This interaction builds an ongoing interpersonal relationship between teachers and students alike. For example, teachers may voice out their opinions, emotions, or experiences while explaining course content, important concepts or exemplifications. Therefore, teachers' self-disclosure is the "teacher statements made in the classroom about oneself that reveals information that would otherwise be inaccessible to students," (Sorenson, 1989, p. 260).

Allport (1996) defined perception as the way one evaluated or judged others. In the social front, Baron and Byrne (1997) defined perception as a social behavior through which we tried to learn and understand others. Marzano and Marzano (2008) emphasized that teachers must also be aware that the positive attitudes they reflected in class such as showing teaching enthusiasm and creating a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom garnered positive outcomes from students. Stipek (2002) observed that when students had positive perceptions toward their teachers' behaviors, they performed better than their peers who had a negative predisposition toward their teachers. If perceptions are positive, it leads to favorable behavioral, cognitive, or relational outcomes (Cayanus, Martin, & Weber, 2003; Cayanus & Martin, 2008). Therefore, this study posits that when ESL students perceived their teachers' self-disclosures as positive, it would improve the overall learning atmosphere, which would improve their academic performance.

It is important to point out that ESL learners are faced by a number of challenges throughout their language learning processes. According to Krashen (1981), apart from linguistic limitations, second language learners often have to deal with negative psychological and emotional factors such as attitude, motivation, stress, anxiety and self-beliefs. Mazer, McKenna-Buchanan, Quinlan, and Titsworth (2014) reported that learners exhibited negative emotions when teachers lacked immediacy and positive communicative behaviors. Thus, teachers need to eliminate these factors from hindering the students' learning process especially in improving their writing performance.

Studies done by Hartlep (2001) and Deiro (2005) showed that perceived teachers' self-disclosure had a positive impact on the overall class environment. Classes where students reported positive perceptions toward their teachers' self-disclosure reported better understanding, respectfulness to teachers, improved examination performance and recall of lecture materials. Shrodt (2013) conducted a study on 362 undergraduates to test the extent to which students were comfortable with teachers' self-disclosure and content relevance. The results indicated that content relevance emerged as the moderating factor between appropriate teacher self-disclosure and credibility. The extent of students' comfort with teacher's self-disclosure, on the other hand, moderated students' perceptions on appropriateness of teachers'

self-disclosure, instructor competency, and trustworthiness. The findings of this study confirm the findings of Downs et al. (1988), and Webb (2014) where relevance is an important aspect of perceived teachers' self-disclosure in explaining course content, which in turn increased credibility and maintained students' attentiveness in class. Relevance also was reported to correspond positively with constructs such as students' trait motivation (Frymier & Schulman, 1995) and course interest (Cayanus et al., 2003).

Teachers' self-disclosure has also been studied in the area of language learning. In a quasi-experimental study conducted on a group of 48 female students who were enrolled in a 22-session intermediate level English class, Farani and Fatemi (2014) had studied the impact of teachers' self-disclosure on EFL students' attitude toward language learning. In the experimental group, the teacher was instructed to self-disclose on the challenges he or she faced as a language learner. An attitude questionnaire was administered as the pre-test and post-test. A significant difference was reported in the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test for attitude among students from the experimental group. Therefore, this study concluded that teachers' self-disclosure had a positive impact on the students' attitude toward English language learning. The researchers also had observed students in the experimental group and recorded their reactions and feedback to their teachers' self-disclosures. They found that when the teachers self-disclosed about their

language learning difficulties, the students vocalized their concerns openly. When the students became eager to communicate with their teachers, it also improved class participation.

Similar effects of teachers' self-disclosure had also been studied in another quasi-experimental study conducted on the speaking skills of EFL learners by Pishghadam and Torghabeh (2009). A 5-point scale teacher self-disclosure questionnaire (Goldstein & Bennasi, 1994) was distributed to 60 female university students aged 19-29 years who were intermediate-level English language learners. The IELTS (2006) speaking module was used to measure the students' speaking abilities as pre-test and post-tests. Teachers in the experimental group were instructed to self-disclose information on their profession, attitudes, feelings and obstacles they faced. Students were then interviewed to gauge the effect of teachers' self-disclosure on their speaking ability. Students in the experimental group felt that their teachers shared more information than others. They also demonstrated active turn taking and were more conversant in classroom discussions, expressive and asked more questions. The results from the speaking test showed improvements among the students in the experimental groups. This implies that teachers' self-disclosure is an important factor that eliminated negative emotional issues such as stress and anxiety during face-to-face communication with teachers during speaking tests.

### Teachers' Self-disclosure and Gender

Understanding gender dynamics is important to establish successful social interactions (Gaia, 2013) as experiences of intimacy within interpersonal relationships are innate to both the physical and psychological well-being of individuals. Past research on self-disclosure and gender found that women generally self-disclosed more than men (Cooper & Simmonds, 2003; Dindia, 2000; Dindia & Allen, 1992). In contrast to previous findings, Rahimi and Bigdeli (2016) found that there was no significant difference recorded in the perceptions on the appropriateness of self-disclosure between male and female Iranian teachers. Similarly, Paluckaitė and Žardeckaitė-Matulaitienė (2016) had conducted a focus group interview among 226 male and female students and 51 male and female teachers to analyze the differences in the perceived appropriateness of teachers' self-disclosure. Their study surmised that both male and female teachers and students similarly perceived teachers' self-disclosure as a knowledge-building and personal experience sharing process. However, the interviewees contended that teachers' self-disclosures should be relevant, less frequent, and positive.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

A quantitative methodology was employed to conduct this study. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect the data. 75 final year Malaysian undergraduates enrolled in an advanced level writing program at a private institution of higher

learning were selected through purposive sampling. Respondents were required to write their ID numbers on the survey form in order to record the final scores they had obtained for this subject. A total of 66 questionnaires were returned but only 57 ( $N=57$ ) were deemed usable for this study. Forms bearing the respondents' names, returned blank with unmarked responses and those missing were accounted as unusable. The respondents consisted of 17 male and 40 female students.

The students' final examination scores from the advanced writing course were collected and classified as *Low Performance* (0–49), *Moderate Performance* (50–69), and *High Performance* (70–100) in accordance with the participating private higher institution's internal scoring range. The average score obtained ( $M=2.05$ ) for the course was moderate performance (50%–69%).

Cyanus and Martin's (2008) Perceived Teacher Self-Disclosure Scale was adopted in this study to measure the students' perceived teachers' self-disclosure. It comprises 14 items (Amount (items 1–4), Relevance (items 5–9) and Negativity (items 10–14)) and uses the Likert scale that ranges from 1 (Completely Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Moderately Disagree), 4 (Undecided), 5 (Moderately Agree), 6 (Agree) to 7 (Completely Agree) to gather respondents' level of agreement to the statements. The reliability ( $\alpha$  values) of this scale is 0.80 for amount, 0.88 for relevance and 0.84 for negativity. The questionnaire specifically measures three domains of

perceived teachers' self-disclosure, in relation to classroom and course content disclosures. They are amount, which are the opinions and preferences on an array of categories or topics that teachers disclose in the classroom. These are measured by statements such as "My instructor often gives his/her opinions about current events." Relevance, which is the student's perceptions of whether or not the teachers' self-disclosure is useful and relevant to course content, are measured by statements such as "My instructor uses his/her own experiences to introduce a concept." Also termed as "valence" (Lannutti & Strauman, 2006), negativity includes the positive or negative information that teachers reveal about themselves to their students. These are measured by statements such as "My instructor usually reveals undesirable things about him/herself."

### Data Analysis

The Pearson Product-moment Correlations was used to determine the relationship between PTSD and writing performance and answer the first research question. An independent samples *t*-test was used to determine the difference between PTSD and writing performance of the male and female students and answer the second research question.

## RESULTS

The results of the study are presented based on the order of the two research questions guiding the study as previously stated.

### (RQ1) Relationship between Perceived Teachers' Self-disclosure and Writing Performance

The results in Table 1 show that there was a moderately negative relationship between the overall PTSD and the students' writing performance which was  $r = -0.50$ ,  $n = 57$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ . Although the first null hypothesis which stated that there was no positive relationship between perceived teachers' self-disclosure and undergraduates' writing performance had been accepted, a closer analysis of the three aspects of PTSD of amount, relevance, and negativity and the students' writing performance revealed different correlations. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient analysis indicated that there was a slight positive relationship between amount and the students' writing performance which was  $r = 0.171$ ,  $n = 57$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ . This suggested that students positively identified with their teachers' attitudes, opinions, or preferences toward the disclosed topics, therefore perceiving them favorably. The results also indicated a slight positive relationship between relevance and the students' writing performance which was  $r = 0.125$ ,  $n = 57$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ . This suggests that the students perceived the disclosed topics as related to the course content. However, the results indicated a negative relationship between negativity and students' writing performance which was  $r = -0.219$ ,  $n = 57$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ . This suggested that teachers generally refrained from making negative disclosures about themselves to their students.

Table 1  
*Relationship between perceived teachers' self-disclosure, amount, relevance, negativity and writing performance*

	1	2	3	4
1. Total PTSD	-0.50**			
2. Total Amount		0.171**		
3. Total Relevance			0.125**	
4. Total Negativity				-0.219**

\*\* $p \leq 0.05$  (two-tailed)

### (RQ2) Difference between Male and Female Undergraduates' Perceptions toward Teachers' Self-disclosure in Terms of Amount, Relevance and Negativity

In relation to the second research question, the independent samples *t*-test conducted in order to determine whether there was a difference between the male and female undergraduates' perceived teachers' self-disclosure yielded the results as shown in Table 2. The results indicated that the Sig. (two-tailed) value obtained was 0.791. Thus, there was no significant difference in the scores obtained for males ( $M=20.64$ ,  $SD=4.07$ ) and females ( $M=20.35$ ,  $SD=3.18$ );  $t(55) = 0.296$ ,  $p = 0.5$ , two-tailed for amount. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between perceived teachers' self-disclosure for amount and gender had to be accepted. This possibly means that

both male and female students similarly perceived that the frequency of teachers' self-disclosures and the array of topics their teacher shared in the writing classroom were well managed within the course context.

The result shown in Table 3 indicates that the Sig. (two-tailed) value obtained was 0.443. Thus, there was no significant difference in the scores obtained for males ( $M=26.76$ ,  $SD=3.96$ ) and females ( $M=27.62$ ,  $SD=3.80$ );  $t(55) = -0.772$ ,  $p = 0.5$ , two-tailed) for relevance. Therefore the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between perceived teachers' self-disclosure for relevance and gender had to be accepted. This could mean that both male and female students similarly perceived that their teacher's personal opinions and experiences disclosed in the writing classroom were relevant to exemplifying, explaining, and elaborating the course content.

Table 2  
*Difference between male and female undergraduates' perceived teachers' self-disclosures for amount*

		<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (two-tailed)
TotalAM	Equal variances assumed	1.519	0.223	0.296	55	0.768
	Equal variances not assumed			0.268	24.685	0.791

Table 3

*Difference between male and female undergraduates' perceived teachers' self-disclosures for relevance*

		<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (two-tailed)
TotalRV	Equal variances assumed	0.270	0.605	-0.772	55	0.443
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.759	29.140	0.454

The result shown in Table 4 indicates that the Sig. (two-tailed) value obtained was 0.027. Thus, there was a significant difference in the scores obtained for males ( $M=7.78$ ,  $SD=1.18$ ) and females ( $M=11.52$ ,  $SD=5.94$ );  $t(55) = 2.27$ ,  $p = 0.5$ , two-tailed) for negativity. Therefore, the null hypothesis

stating that there is no significant difference between perceived teachers' self-disclosure for negativity and gender was rejected. This suggests that male and female students perceived their teachers' negative self-disclosures about themselves differently.

Table 4

*Difference between male and female undergraduates' perceived teachers' self-disclosures for negativity*

		<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (two-tailed)
TotalNG	Equal variances assumed	3.787	.057	2.272	55	.027
	Equal variances not assumed			2.039	24.322	.052

## DISCUSSION

Teacher communication is an important instructional tool that influences the overall climate of teaching and learning. In Maarof and Munusamy's (2015) study of UKM undergraduates' learning experiences and difficulties concerning ESL, it is interesting to find that the undergraduates cited learning environment, quality of education, role of educators and teaching approaches as their main areas of concern. This study aimed to determine if there was a relationship between PTSD and ESL undergraduates' writing performance and if male and female undergraduates had different perceptions toward PTSD. The

results from this study is significant as it demonstrates that teachers did self-disclose in the ESL writing classroom, and as an instructional communication tool, is able to bridge the gap between teachers and students.

The first research question inquired whether there was a relationship between perceived teachers' self-disclosure, the aspects of amount, relevance and negativity and writing performance. The study found that perceived teacher self-disclosure had a positive impact on two domains that were amount and relevance. These results indicated that the amount of different topics of disclosures and the sharing of opinions

on those topics that the teachers disclosed in their classrooms helped students in their writing. Also, the teachers had self-disclosed their personal experiences while trying to exemplify, explain, and elaborate course content and link them to the real world. These relevant self-disclosures that were related to course content helped students to understand and internalize important concepts and ideas related to their learning. The results support the studies conducted by Frymier and Schulman (1995), Downs et al. (1988), and Cayanus, Martin, and Weber (2003). However, the findings from this study contradict those of Shrodt (2013), where relevance was deduced as less important than valence (positive statements). This present study indicates that amount and relevance are more significant in promoting learning in the ESL writing class. In contextualizing content to prior knowledge and the world at large, the teachers in this study employed self-disclosure during brainstorming sessions, idea development, when providing opinions during feedback and when explaining or exemplifying course content. The findings also showed that the students preferred disclosures that were relevant to course content and teaching material rather than other aspects of self-disclosure. The results also indicated that there was a negative relationship between the students' writing performance and negativity, implying that students perceived their teachers' self-disclosures as positive. This is explained by the fact that teachers are usually mindful of their disclosure topics and the depth of their disclosures, cautiously

adhering to instructional needs within the classroom context and professional limitations (Petronio, 2002).

The second research question inquired whether male and female undergraduates had different perceptions toward their teachers' self-disclosures. The results indicated that both male and female students perceived that there was no difference in their teachers' self-disclosures in terms of amount and relevance. This suggests that teachers' opinions and use of examples and experiences in explaining course content are neutral and is not affected by their own gender biases. However, the results also indicated that female students perceived their teachers' self-disclosures as more positive compared to the male students. Again, this study confirms the findings of Dindia and Allen, (1992), Dindia, (2000), and Cooper and Simmonds, (2003) that women are more positively inclined toward self-disclosure than men. Although the results of this study are in contrast with recent findings of Rahimi and Bigdeli (2016), and Paluckaitė and Žardeckaitė-Matulaitienė (2016), it must be acknowledged that teachers' self-disclosure and student outcomes are moderated by other variables in varying contexts such as age, the nature of disclosure and relationships, cultural boundaries, bias, and perceptions towards the discloser (Collins & Miller, 1994). The study also indicated that male and female students differ in their perceptions of teachers' self-disclosure. Because writing strategies are different between male and female students (Melor & Siti, 2014), further research should

be carried out to find out other aspects of PTSD that can improve instructional strategies when approaching male and female students in the ESL classroom.

## CONCLUSION

It was evident from this study that teachers do self-disclose in the Malaysian ESL classroom during the teaching process and self-disclosure has had an effect on the way students perceived their teachers. This study suggests that ELT practitioners can potentially use self-disclosure more actively and intentionally as an instructional communication tool in the writing classroom. In order to maximize the positive benefits of teacher self-disclosure on students' writing performance, ELT practitioners would need to ensure that the amount of topics for self-disclosure is sufficient and relevant to the course content. This study also suggests that the affective aspects of teaching and learning that could be conveyed through teachers' self-disclosures should be considered and implemented in the teaching and learning of ESL, apart from cognitive and behavioral aspects. This study also concludes that male and female students differ in their perceptions toward instructional and socio-communicative strategies of teachers. Since this study was limited to only three aspects of perceived teachers' self-disclosure, further research should also be conducted to find out other factors that are essential for a comprehensive understanding of teachers' self-disclosure and its impact to the teaching of ESL writing in the Malaysian classroom.

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