ESL PRIMARY CLASSROOM: KNOWLEDGE OF COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (CALP) OR ACADEMIC LANGUAGE AND BASIC INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS (BICS) OR SOCIAL LANGUAGE AMONG PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS.

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Abstract
This paper discusses the knowledge of pre-service teachers on Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) or academic language and Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) or social language in ESL primary classrooms. The discussion is based on the responses by 36 teacher trainees enrolling Degree in Teaching TESL from Institute of Teacher Education Dato' Razali Ismail Campus (IPGKDRI). The aim is to gain insights of their current knowledge of CALP or academic language and BICS or social language. The data were collected using an online questionnaire which consists of 24 questions with 6 open-ended and 18 closedended questions and were analysed quantitatively. The findings show that teacher candidates have some knowledge of CALP and BICS and realize how understanding of the differences would help them determine their pupils' performance in English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom also improve their teaching practices. Two implications were derived from the findings of this study. First, it draws the pre-service teachers' attention on their basic knowledge of CALP and BICS hence they will be

encouraged to seek for more information on CALP, BICS and second language acquisition (SLA) independently to improve their own teaching practices. Second, it provides teacher trainers with the idea that they could improve their practicum mentoring skills by sharing input about CALP and BICS in ESL primary classroom with their teacher trainees and provide proper trainings on devising activities and lesson planning are needed to ensure the prospective teachers are well-versed and confident to teach English Language at schools. All in all, the study was proven to be beneficial for teacher training program as a whole.

Keywords: academic language, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), social language, Basic Interpersonal Communication (BICS), teacher training program

INTRODUCTION

In Malaysia, English language is considered as secondary importance after Malay language. Since Malaysia is a multiracial country, English language probably becomes the third language for some people yet it also can be a

foreign language for those who are living in a remote area (Eshtehardi, 2014). Hence, it is a need for second/third or foreign language teachers to have good knowledge of the target language, a repertoire of various pedagogical skills, as well as good understanding of content-cultural knowledge. This is the goal of educators and teacher trainers of Institutes of Teacher Education Malaysia (IPGM), to uphold the mission and vision of the Ministry of Education that is to produce more teachers with good command of English.

Teaching English as a second language or to the speakers of other languages (TESL or TESOL) has been fundamental in Malaysian Education system. English has become a global language which every individual learner needs to acquire for their future life benefits. English language is not only a language used for international trade but also

language for education and solidarity between groups of professionals. In Malaysia, all educational institutions have made English language as one of the compulsory subjects for all learners. English has been formally introduced to children in elementary school for six years followed by another five years in secondary school. This is to prepare them for their tertiary level of education which uses English as the medium of interaction for most of the courses offered.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Theories of Second Language Acquisition (SLA)
There are two underlying theories of a second language acquisition as introduced by Jim Cummins in 1979 and 1981, the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) and Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). He also proposed that CALP and BICS are two distant second language skills that play great role in second language teaching and learning. As highlighted by Cummins in his two studies, educators and policymakers frequently conflated both theories thus contributed to the second language learning difficulties encountered by second language learners (in Street & Hornberger, 2008). This statement was supported by Aukerman (2007) who stated that distinguishing the two theories may help to draw educators' attention to their children's language learning difficulties and performance. Haynes (2009) and Shoebottom (1996-2014) further suggested the need to understand the difference between CALP and BICS does exist when learners who are proficient in their English spoken are mistakenly assumed to be proficient in their academic language too and vice versa. Thus, the researcher believes that the knowledge of CALP and BICS may help the pre-service teachers to differentiate between academic language and social language, to see the importance of developing both language abilities and to determine the best strategies to optimise their students' second language learning.

In addition, Aukerman (2007) and Halbach (2012) mentioned in their studies, there are scholars who viewed BICS and CALP as interchangeably concepts as both language abilities seemed difficult to be distinguished and they believed children would acquire the social language first before building up their academic language. However, Cummins emphasised that the BICS-CALP sequence was not fixed as children of the native language may have the virtual knowledge of the

language (BICS or social language) when they come to schools whereas the non-native children of English may not have it yet thus they will need to develop their academic language to enable them to apply the knowledge learnt in their BICS. Therefore, clearly defining what BICS and CALP will be useful for the beginning teachers to design differentiated learning classroom for their pupils besides assisting themselves to improve their oral proficiency in various discourse (Olivier, 2002).

Teachers' oral proficiency in both discourses must be good as they may be the source of English or knowledge provider for their students. In the following, the two terms, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) or Academic Language and Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) or Social Language are briefly explained.

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) / Academic Language

Academic Language or Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) entails a person's knowledge about language forms and rules and is context-reduced communication (Cummins in Olivier, 2002). CALP is the way language is used in the school or the work setting that is more formal and conforms to some societal standard which permits more self-correction than social language (Everhart, 2010). This concept contains two components which are academic language and academic content. Krashen and Brown (2007) defined academic language as complex syntax, academic vocabulary, and a complex discourse style, whereas academic content as the content of subjects for examples algebra, history, and literature.

Bailey (2007) also added that academic language proficiency refers to students' understanding and ability "to use general and content-specific vocabulary, specialized or complex grammatical structures – all for the purpose of acquiring new knowledge and skills, interacting about a topic, or imparting information to others" (as cited in SERP Institute, 2012). CALP will help students in seeking information, comparing, ordering, classifying, analysing, inferring, justifying and persuading, solving problems, synthesizing, and evaluating information for their learning (O'Malley & Pierce 2002 in Everhart 2010). In summary, students with CALP are ready and have better chances to learn new knowledge through listening and reading (i.e. receptive skills) and to express or share their

thoughts and beliefs through oral discussions and written (i.e. productive skills).

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) / Social Language

On the other hand, Social Language or Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) refers to a person's communicative ability, which enables him/her to function in daily interpersonal exchanges, and occurs in context-embedded communication (Cummins, in Olivier, 2002). BICS is the way language is used in daily communications with peers and others who we meet, and it can involve writing but less formal than academic language.

As highlighted by Belinda Hill (June 2008), learners who developed their BICS would have better pragmatic skills as it involves conversational skills such as adjusting language based on situation; using language for different reasons including greeting people through saying or waving, commenting, requesting by pointing to an object, answering a question through actions or gestures, and asking for information; participating in a conversation, for examples, introducing and maintaining topics, making relevant contributions to a topic, taking turns equally during the conversation; using facial expressions and eye contact; and adapting to conversation rules that may vary across cultures and within. In conclusion, learners with good social language will have better interpersonal skills, improve their adaptability level in a new setting or environment, and be socially accepted by the community they are living with.

Generally, people view primary schools as the places where most children will first encounter formal English language lessons and structured syllabus after moving from kindergartens or preschools. It is known by educators that children come to school with their sets of schemata or prior knowledge of certain subjects in their first language. Children will develop their early language skills from home and academic language more from their schooling years. For students in rural areas, they may have had little to no exposure to English until they enter school (Brown, 2012). In Malaysia, this kind of students may only have an opportunity to socially adjust themselves to the classroom setting and everyday classroom communication during English lessons. Therefore, teachers of English language do play an important role in building up

their students' competency in the target language, academically and socially.

The Ministry of Education has emphasised the need of having well-rounded and high quality English teachers who will be able to articulate and teach the language (Thirusanku & Melor, 2014). Teachers should be equipped with knowledge and skills in nurturing the new 21st century generations in which the teaching and learning process should not occur only inside classrooms but also outside the classrooms. In regards to preservice teacher training, school attachments i.e. School Based Experience (SBE) and Practicum, are the practical learning for the teacher trainees to apply the pedagogical theories learnt in class. For TESL teacher trainees, these are the best platforms for them to gain as much experience of teaching English. The researcher believes that it is essential for pre-service teachers to have the knowledge on SLA specifically CALP and BICS to improve their instructional language when they teach English to young learners and to monitor the pupils' performance during teaching and learning (TnL).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the level of pre-service teachers' understanding of CALP and BICS in ESL primary classroom, whether the teacher trainees are able to differentiate the two language abilities or not. Thus, the study was guided by the following research question:

1. What is the level of pre-service teachers' understanding of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) and Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)? Are they able to differentiate the two sets of skills?

METHOD AND PROCEDURES
Research Participants
The study was conducted to two groups of teacher trainees of Institute of Teacher Education Dato' Razali Ismail Campus (IPGKDRI) majoring in Degree of Teaching (PISMP) TESL; one group is in their third year and another group is in their final year of degree study. Both groups have had experience going to schools for Practicum. For the final year students, they were placed in schools in Terengganu in order to complete their final

Practicum of 12 weeks. These particular teacher trainees have gone through Practicum 1 for a month and Practicum 2 for two months in the previous two semesters. However, for the third year students, they only went through Practicum 1 for a month in the previous semester. Since they do not involve in Practicum this semester (January-May 2017), they just continue their learning as usual in the campus.

In this study, a total number of respondents involved were 36 pre-service teachers. The pre-service teachers are students of Degree in Teaching Program (Program Ijazah Sarjana Muda Perguruan/PISMP) TESL Semester 6 (June 2014 in take) and PISMP TESL Semester 8 (January 2014 in take). These groups of all third and fourth year students majoring in TESL Degree were involved in the survey. The respondents of this study are chosen using purposive sampling method. Since only PISMP TESL pre-service teachers from IPGKDRI were involved in this study, the findings cannot be generalised to other groups of teacher trainees in other institutions or countries.

Data Collection Procedure

This study uses a quantitative research approach. In collecting data for this study, an online questionnaire was used. Table 1 below showcases the data collection method of this study.

Table 1   Data Collection Method

Instrument	Descriptions	Source (adapted and adopted from)
Questionnaire	25 items: 7 open-ended questions and 18 closedended questions	✦ "Checklist for Language Skills" by Bernhard and Loera (1992)
	✦ Section 1: Demographic Profile (6 questions)	✦ a study done by Olivier (2002), an e-
	✦ Section 2: Background Knowledge on CALP and BICS (3 questions)	book (Chapter 2: How Students
	✦ Section 3: Understanding Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) or	Acquire Social and Academic Language in Getting

Academic Language (5 questions)	Started With English Language Learners: How Educators Can Meet the Challenges by Judie Haynes, 2007),
✦ Section 4: Understanding Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) or Social Language (5 questions)	
✦ Section 5: Wrapping Up (6 questions)	✦ a study done by Naomi Lee (2011).

Questionnaire

An online questionnaire was employed by the researcher in this study. According to Wiersma and Jurs (2009), "there are two general types of items used for questionnaires that are open-ended questions and close-ended questions which also known as selected response or forced-choice items". Thus, for the purpose of this study, a questionnaire is designed to have both open-ended and close-ended questions for the respondents to complete. For open-ended items, the respondents are given the freedom of response thus requiring them to construct the response. This type of questions will reflect the respondents' attitudes and opinions about having English language learners in their classroom, their understanding of second language acquisition and cultural differences, and their view of their role as ESL teachers. Nevertheless, for selected response items, the respondents need to select from the options provided. This will determine the respondents' background knowledge of CALP and BICS, also their current teaching strategy in teaching the target language. Using this type of questionnaire will help gaining insight about the teachers' backgrounds, attitudes, opinions and their roles towards English language teaching and learning.

The questionnaire for this intended study consists of 25 questions with few items; 7 open-ended questions and 18 closed-ended questions. 13 of the closed-ended questions were selected and adapted based on few references: "Checklist for Language Skills" by Bernhard and Loera (1992), a study done by Olivier (2002), an e-book (Chapter 2: How Students Acquire Social and Academic Language in Getting Started With English Language Learners: How Educators Can Meet the Challenges by Judie Haynes, 2007), and a study done by Naomi Lee (2011). These 25

questions are divided into five main sections that are Section 1: Demographic Profile (6 questions), Section 2: Background Knowledge on CALP and BICS (3 questions), Section 3: Understanding Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) or Academic Language (5 questions), Section 4: Understanding Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) or Social Language (5 questions), Section 5: Wrapping Up (6 questions).

Data Analysis

For the data analysis, all data received from the online questionnaire will be auto-analysed by Google. All collected data from the online questionnaire (especially the closed-ended items) will be reported using descriptive analysis (i.e. frequency and percentages). For the open-ended items of the online questionnaire, thematic analysis will be applied in analysing the collected data. Thematic analysis refers to the process of 'identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes the data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79).

RESULTS

This section provides an overview on the demographic profile and characteristics of the research sample, which focused on 36 teacher trainees. For data analysis, item no. 1 was not included as names of all respondents are confidential. While for item no. 3, the response of all respondents was the same as they are from the same institution, IPGKDRI, so it was also not included in the table. Therefore, the data analysis from items no. 2, 4 and 5 showcases the demographic profile of the research respondents as below. Refer Table 2.

Table 2 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

ITEMS	Aspects	No. of respondents (%)			
2	Gender	Male	11 (69.4)	Female	25 (30.6)
4	PISMP In Take	Semester 6 15 (41.7) June 2014		Semester 7 January 2014	21 (58.4)

5	No. of Practicum Completed	Once	15 (41.7)	Thrice	21 (58.4)

Based on Table 2, total number of research respondents is 36 students; 11 male (30.6%) and 25 female (69.4%). All respondents are students of Institute of Teacher Education Dato' Razali Ismail Campus (IPGKDRI). 15 (41.7%) of the respondents are from PISMP TESL semester 6, June 2014 in take which have undergone practicum at schools once, while 21 (54.8%) others are from PISMP TESL semester 7, January 2014 in take which have undergone practicum at schools thrice.

Table 3 No. of Respondents Encounter CALP and BICS Terms

ITEM 7	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not Sure (%)
Have you come across the terms, 'Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency or academic language' and 'Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills or social language'?	11 (30.6)	24 (66.7)	1 (2.8)

Table 3 above indicates that 24 (66.7%) of the respondents have never come across the terms 'Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) or academic language' and 'Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) or social language'. Another 11 (30.6%) respondents have encountered the two terms and only one (2.8%) is not sure.

Item no.8 is an open-ended question where it requires all respondents to define the two terms of language abilities based on their prior knowledge. According to R1, he explained that *"academic language is usually used in academic writing and academic interactions…The main purpose of academic writing is to convey the academic content hence, the language is formal and standardised worldwide…the sentences should be free from any major grammatical mistakes which can distort the meaning conveyed."* Other respondents stated that *"academic language is the formal language used for academic purposes such as in examination"*

(R12), *"written assignments, speech, presentation or interviews for job"* (R35) and *"teaching in the classroom"* (R5). It also *"deals with facts and needs broad and matured vocabulary"* (R31) apart from having *"a set of jargons that is used in context"* (R3) or *"according to the field"* (R25). The term academic language also refers to *"the usage of formal English abiding the accuracy use of the language"* (R16) and *"the use of language with correct language aspects such as grammar and pronunciation"* (R22).

Moving on to the definition of social language given by the respondents, majority of respondents viewed BICS as *"a language which is used for the purpose of social interaction [therefore], the language is normally informal and is being produced in a relaxing manner…it is acceptable for the users to have minor grammatical mistakes in the language production as long as the intended meaning is perceived by the receiver.*

Short forms are also acceptable [and] this language is regarded as interactional form of language" (R1), *"a language used in everyday conversation"* (R4) which is *"more relaxed and stress-free language"* (R8). In comparison to academic language that focuses on accuracy, *"social language focuses more on fluency and the ability to converse in English"* (R16). Since the purpose of social language is to *"[convey] message to people"* (R32), *"the vocabulary used is simple"* (R31) compared to academic language.

Based on the written responses, these respondents were able to define the two terms well. Therefore, in conclusion, academic language can be defined as language that is used formally; to convey academic content; in schools and for teaching and learning; in speech, written assignments, presentation or job interviews; accurately in terms of grammar, structure and pronunciation; is standardised worldwide; contains different types of jargon; deals with facts; and requires broad and high level of vocabulary. Whereas, social language was defined as language that is used informally; spontaneously; for social interaction purposes or daily communication; it focuses more on fluency and meaning-transfer; and reflects conversation in real life situations.

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Pupils' Acquisition of CALP and BICS

ITEM 9		TRUE (%)	FALSE (%)
1	Parents of English language learners should be encouraged to speak their primary language (i.e. first language) at home.	15 (41.7)	21 (58.3)
2	Learners who have strong literacy skills in their native language will learn English faster.	20 (55.6)	16 (44.4)
3	Learning academic subjects in their native language helps English language learners learn English.	20 (55.6)	16 (44.4)
4	English language learners need one to three years to master social language in the classroom.	22 (61.1)	14 (38.9)
5	Learners need more than two to three years in bilingual or ESL classes to succeed in school.	29 (80.6)	7 (19.4)
6	Learners do not always acquire social language naturally in informal contexts. They may need to be taught how to communicate appropriately in social situations.	30 (83.3)	6 (16.7)
7	Although English language learners may speak English on the playground, this does not mean they have mastered the academic language of the classroom.	35 (97.2)	1 (2.8)

Item no.9 requires the respondents to choose either True or False for seven statements related to pupils' acquisition of both language abilities; academic language and social language. Table 4 shows that only 15 (41.7%) respondents believe that for learners to acquire both, parents of English language learners should speak the target language rather than their first language at home. However, a mismatch could be identified when 20 (55.6%) respondents believe that learners will learn English language faster if they have strong literacy skills in their native language. This might be the reason why 20 (55.6%) respondents believe that

academic subjects should be taught using learners' native language as it would help them learn English language better. More than half of the total respondents (above 60% to nearly 100%) have strong beliefs that learners need the most of three years to acquire academic language and social language in formal education. Also, being able to perform better in one of the skills does not mean the learners have mastered the other skill too. Overall, for item no.9, the average percentage for the respondents' understanding of pupils' acquisition of both language abilities is only 67.9%.

For item no.10, the respondents need to identify the definitions, roles or functions of 'academic language' based on their existing knowledge. Table 5 shows the analysis of item no.10.

Table 5 Academic Language or CALP

ITEM 10	No. of Respondents		
	YES (%)	NOT SURE (%)	NO (%)
1 The primary language used by a student to learn in school.	15 (41.7)	11 (30.6)	10 (27.8)
2 It is the language of the academics that students need to learn to succeed in life.	15 (41.7)	12 (33.3)	9 (25)
3 Needed beyond school settings.	20 (55.6)	6 (16.7)	10 (27.8)
4 School or instructional language.	29 (80.6)	4 (11.1)	3 (8.3)
5 Language of content areas.	29 (80.6)	5 (13.9)	2 (2.6)
6 Language used in content areas classes.	30 (83.3)	6 (16.7)	0 (0)
7 Vocabulary of curricular materials.	30 (83.3)	5 (13.9)	1 (2.8)
8 Modeling correct grammar, pronunciation, asking challenging questions, providing direct instruction.	31 (86.1)	5 (13.9)	0 (0)
9 Curriculum based vocabulary.	33	3 (8.3)	0 (0)

As shown in Table 5 above, there are six statements out of 22 that received high percentages range from 80% to 92%. The respondents referred 'academic language' as 'language used in content areas classes', 'school or instructional language', 'curriculum based vocabulary', 'modeling correct grammar, pronunciation, asking challenging questions, providing direct instruction', 'language of content areas', and 'vocabulary of curricular materials'. Nonetheless, there are two statements that have the lowest percentage of respondents referring it to 'academic language' with 41.7% respectively. The statements are 'the primary language used by a student to learn in school' and 'it is the language of the academics that students need to learn to succeed in life'. Referring to the current context of the respondents, they might relate 'academic language' to their pupils learning in primary level of education in Terengganu schools whose teachers' instructional language should be very simple and short. Not only that, since the respondents were placed in primary schools where majority pupils are Malays, English language hardly becomes the primary language for the pupils to learn in school. Thus, this situation makes using English language as an academic language as less important and not a priority for pupils to use it to become successful. This is proven by 27.8% of the respondents who thought that pupils do not need English language as an academic language beyond school settings. Overall, for item no.10, the average percentage for the respondents' understanding of academic language or CALP definitions, roles or functions is only 69.1%.

From identifying the definitions, roles or functions of 'academic language' based on the respondents' existing knowledge, they were required to do the same for item no.15, for 'social language'. Table 6 below shows the analysis.

Table 6 Social Language or BICS

ITEM 15	No. of Respondents		
	YES (%)	NOT SURE (%)	NO (%)
1 Language skills needed in social situations.	35 (97.2)	1 (2.8)	0 (0)

2	Language that is used on the playground, at the canteen/cafeteria, on the school bus, at events, playing sports, and talking on the telephone.	35 (97.2)	1 (2.8)	0 (0)
3	The day-to-day language needed to interact socially with other people.	34 (94.4)	2 (5.6)	0 (0)
4	Vocabulary used is not very cognitive	29 (80.6)	5 (13.9)	2 (5.6)
5	Social language tasks are context reduced.	26 (72.2)	8 (22.2)	2 (5.6)
6	It includes skills such as comparing, classifying, synthesizing, evaluating, and inferring.	13 (36.1)	16 (44.4)	7 (19.4)

As shown in Table 6, there are four statements that received high percentages range from 80% to 97%. The respondents referred 'social language' as 'language skills needed in social situations' (97.2%), 'language that is used on the playground, at the canteen/cafeteria, on the school bus, at events, playing sports, and talking on the telephone' (97.2%), 'the day-to-day language needed to interact socially with other people' (94.4%), and 'vocabulary used is not very cognitive demanding' (80.6%). However, since BICS or social language includes more low order thinking skills (LOTS) and its tasks are context embedded, only 19.4% and 5.6% respectively of the respondents were able to identify the two statements related to 'social language' correctly. Overall, for item no.15, the average percentage for the respondents' understanding of social language or BICS definitions, roles or functions is only 65.7%.

CONCLUSION

Analysing few items (i.e. items no. 8, 9, 10 and 15) of the online questionnaire resulted in several conclusions. First, half of the pre-service teachers do not believe that having strong literacy skills in L1, teaching academic subjects using L1 or having parents speak using their L1 at home will help ELLs to develop their CALP and BISC or to learn

English language faster than others. This reflects the view of the teacher trainees towards the roles of English language in general. Second, the findings show that the teacher trainees could not identify how pupils acquire CALP and BICS and distinguish both terms accurately from the statements given. Nevertheless, although less than one third of the respondents had come across with the CALP and BICS terms (as shown in Table 3), they were still able to define and explain the differences between both language abilities well even though not very specific or in detailed. Thus, the researcher concludes that the level of pre-service teachers' understanding of CALP and BICS is at medium or average level with 67.6% only.

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