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**Identifying the Needs of Reticent Pre-Service English  
Teachers for Remediation Course Development**

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**Abstract**

The development of any intervention to remedy student reticence should be based on students' real needs. This is to avoid the risk of making generalisation and hasty decision in designing course contents. This study investigated reticent pre-service English teachers' needs with the view of developing a remedial course to alleviate reticent behaviour and to improve oral participation in English for Academic Purposes classrooms. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, this study employed a survey, a semi-structured interview and a focus group discussion to collect data from pre-service English teachers and English instructors in a Malaysian state university. The findings revealed that the pre-service English teachers' reticent behaviour was caused by virtual of their negative beliefs towards oral participation, lack of discussion skills and fear of negative evaluation. Additionally, the findings also implied that training in oral participation skills alongside

relevant linguistic knowledge is needed for remediation of reticence as the reticent pre-service teachers encountered difficulties in asking questions, contributing ideas and providing connected utterances during open-class discussions. This study highlights the needs for further research in this domain in order to inform the development of intervention to remedy student reticence.

**Keywords:** reticent behaviour, needs analysis, pre-service teacher, oral participation

## **Introduction**

The ability to participate orally in class has been associated with the success of students in language learning. When students orally participate in class, they are required to engage with their teachers or peers, which in turn develops the students' communicative competence in class (Chang & Goswami, 2011; Richards, 2006). This implies that active oral participation helps students to enhance their ability to express and clarify intentions, thoughts and opinions towards the subject matter in class (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Operating from this assumption, students are always encouraged and expected to contribute to classroom discourse, especially in English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms that operate within the communicative approach (Soo & Goh, 2017). Nonetheless, despite the students being aware of the importance of oral contribution and knowing that oral participation is encouraged, compulsory and sometimes graded, the reality observed occurring in the classrooms reveals that only some students are ready to engage in using the target language whilst some are greatly hesitant to do so (Liu, Zhang & Lu, 2011; MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei & Noels, 1998). The latter situation is typically termed 'student reticence', which is a phenomenon common in the ESL/EFL classrooms in Asia.

Reticent students are reluctant to express ideas, ask questions and engage with others in whole-class discussion (Karas 2017; Shea, 2017). This phenomenon is claimed to have negative