

ستكشاف العلاقة بين الكفاءة الشخصية والإنجاز الأكاديمي
لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لليبيين
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المخلص باللغة العربية :

دراسات قليلة درست الكفاءة الشخصية لطلاب اللغة الانجليزية وركزت البحوث بدقّة أكبر علي العلاقة بين الكفاءة الشخصية لمتعلمي اللغة الاجنبية والإنجاز الأكاديمي لطلاب اللغة الانجليزية ، ونظرا لحقيقة أن فهم تصورات الطّلاب واعتقاداتهم أمر مهم ؛ لأن التّركيز في العملية التعليمية التربوية أنتقل من أن تكون مداراة من قبل المدرس إلي موجه من قبل الطالب الهدف من هذا البحث تجري الكفاءة الشخصية للطلاب فيما يتعلق بإنجازهم الأكاديمي في اللغة الانجليزية. بيانات الدراسة الحالية تم جمعها من استبيان الكفاءة الشخصية في اللغة الانجليزية ، ثلاثة وثلاثون طالبا من جامعة الزاوية شاركوا في هذه الدراسة ، و أظهرت النتائج أن هناك علاقة إيجابية بين الكفاءة الشخصية والإنجاز الأكاديمي في اللغة الانجليزية.

Investigating the Correlation between Libyan EFL Learners' Self-Efficacy and their English Language Achievement

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Abstract

Few studies have examined the self-efficacy of foreign language students and more precisely research has focused on the relationship between self- efficacy and the academic achievement of language students. Due to the fact that, understanding students' perceptions and their beliefs is significant for the reason that the focus of education has shifted from a teacher-directed to learner-oriented classroom. The aim of this research is to investigate the self-efficacy of the students in relation to their achievement in English. Data of the current study are collected from the Questionnaire of English Self-Efficacy (QESE). Thirty three students from Azawiya University participated in this study. The results revealed that there is a positive correlation between self- efficacy and academic achievement in the English language.



Introduction

This study has investigated the relationship between self- efficacy and the achievement of foreign language students. It is divided into two main parts. The first provides a review of the literature. The second part focuses on methodology and research design which includes: data collection, instruments, findings and data analysis. Finally, the conclusion will constitute the ultimate part of the paper as well as some recommendations for further research will be provided.

Self-Efficacy & Social Cognitive Theory

The concept of self-efficacy has its roots in the socio-cognitive theory and Bandura (1977) was first proposed this theory in his cited article Self-efficacy. According to Malinen et al., (2012), self-efficacy is a judgment of competence to execute a given sort of performance. It is defined to gain a measure of control over person's thoughts, feelings and actions (Mahyuddin et al., 2006).

Most of psycholinguists maintain that students' self-efficacy beliefs and the confidence are related to academic outcomes and then they influence their academic behaviors and performances. Therefore, many studies have been conducted on this concept of self-efficacy in the academic settings like (Mahyuddin et al., 2006; Mills et al., 2007; Graham, 2012). Furthermore, Bandura(1994) confirms that self-efficacy beliefs determine how people think, feel, stimulate themselves and behave. In his studies (ibid) points out that self-system is comprised from a person's abilities, attitudes, and cognitive skills. This kind of system plays a main role in how a person identifies situations and how s/he performs in response to serious situations. A person's belief in his/her ability to succeed in a specific situation is a central part in self-system. Consequently, self-efficacy can have an influence on everything. It is considered main to understanding the students' actions (Tilfarlioğlu & Cinkara, 2009).

It has been noted by Bassi et al. (2007) that Bandura's social-cognitive theory outlines the principal role of student's self-efficacy opinions, namely their supposed competences to exercise control over their level of functioning and environmental demands. These beliefs effect cognitive, motivational, affective, and decisional processes. For instance, self-efficacy beliefs

influence what students do by affecting their choices, their effort, their persistence and perseverance they exert in the face of adversity, and the anxiety they experience. Therefore, students with a strong intelligence of academic self-efficacy prove to undertake challenging tasks and expend great effort. While those with low self-efficacy, on the other hand, may choose to complete the necessary and uncomplicated academic tasks and expend minimal effort or they may choose to completely avoid the completion of an academic assignment and frequently show a lack of interest in learning the English Language (Mills et al, 2006).

Gavora (2011) states that Bandura's theory of self-efficacy has two components: efficacy expectation and outcome expectation. The first is the conviction that one has the ability, knowledge, and skills to successfully perform actions required to produce desired outcomes. The second represents persons' estimate of the results that influence performing a task at the self-expected level of performance. And so, the outcome expectation has to do the belief that a given behavior or action will actually lead to an expected outcomes.

The Sources of Self-Efficacy

This research focuses on the importance of self-efficacy because when seeking the background experiences of students, one must investigate their previous performances. As Bandura (1994) states that self-efficacy is based on four main sources of information: an individual's past performance, Indirect experiences of observing the performances of others, verbal persuasion that one's own certain abilities, and emotional cues from which individuals judge their ability . It could be noticed that the experience of mastery is the most significant factor determining a person's self-efficacy. Success increases self-efficacy, whereas failure decreases it. It is suggested that students become more effective when they feel able to understand and learn material, and less effective when they feel unable to do so. In the case of students, when the result of a performance is perceived as successful, the student feels that he/she can perform a specific task in a successful manner and feel confident about it. Students interpret their results and use these interpretations to develop beliefs about their own ability to perform in



consequent tasks. The interpreted results of one's own performances create a kind of self-efficacy (Van Dinther et al, 2011).

In addition, Bandura, (1997), finds another source of generating self-efficacy through observational experiences provided by social models, it is called vicarious experiences. Students gain information about their personal abilities by observing others. A student would say "If they can do it, I can do it as well." Consequently, efficacy beliefs can depend on the extent to which persons see similarities between themselves and those whom they observe (Hutchison et al, 2006:42). Therefore, the same thing could be applied to people who are not sure about their abilities for they would be more sensitive to it.

Furthermore, when studying Bandura (1994) further ways of strengthening people's beliefs is social persuasion where students have what it takes to succeed. This involves convincing people that they have the ability to succeed at a specific task. Accordingly, the verbal judgments of others can also effect self-efficacy beliefs. Bong & Skaalvik (2003: 26) state that "Persuasive communication and evaluative feedback is most effective when people who provide the information are viewed by students as knowledgeable and reliable, and the information is realistic" (in Van Dinther et al,2011: 98).As a result, what others say can affect our beliefs about our abilities.

However, Bandura (1977; 1994) argues that emotional cues dictate self-efficacy. There are some actions such as anxiety, stress, fatigue, or other emotions, which can also have an influence on persons' self-efficacy beliefs. This last source of self-efficacy is produce from students' physiological, emotional and mood states. For instance, students with low self-efficacy may see discussing an idea in front of others more difficult than they really are. As this situation for students with low self- efficacy may increase in body temperature, cause changes in heart rate. These types are regarded as signs of inability. Therefore, the fourth way of adjusting self-beliefs of efficacy is to decrease people's stress responses and change their negative emotional tendencies and misinterpretations of their physical conditions. According to Bandura's four hypothesized sources of self-efficacy, students' past experiences alone are not enough to form their self-efficacy beliefs. Somewhat, students cognitively evaluate their past experiences together with environmental and individual factors to establish beliefs about their abilities.

Accordingly, it is anticipated that socialization experiences may have a significant role in the development of self-efficacy beliefs.

Self –Efficacy and other types of Self-Beliefs

The research objectives aim at studying the self-efficacy of foreign language learners. In order to effectively understand of the participants' levels and including their personal qualities, characteristics, and/ or competencies. These items include self-concept, and self –esteem. In order to reveal self-concept this includes one's beliefs in physical and mental qualities, strengths and weaknesses, and likes and dislikes (Zimmerman and Cleary, 2006). Self-concept principles diverge from self-efficacy beliefs in that self-concept includes judgments of self-value (ibid), while self-efficacy is a cognitive judgment of ability. Self- concept also describes what a person knows and understands about himself/herself in terms of his/her opinions and feelings(Choi, 2005).

The other construct is self-esteem which is used in psychology to “describe a person's overall sense of self-worth or personal value” (Branden, 1969: 26). It is often seen as" a personality trait, which means that it tends to be stable and enduring. Self-esteem can involve a variety of beliefs about the individual, for example, the appraisal of one's own appearance, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors."(Creaby, 2016:9). Furthermore, self-esteem is frequently considered as the evaluative constituent of self-concept. Consequently, it means the way on how one rate oneself, accepting oneself, feeling confident, and liking oneself. The most specific point about self-esteem is that it can change. Simply, self-esteem is how much one values oneself (Augestad,2017). To sum up, self-efficacy is independent of self-esteem and self-concept which seem to be more general than self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is associated with individuals' “beliefs in their capabilities to exercise control over their own functioning and over events that affect their lives” (Bandura, 1994: 73).

Self-Efficacy and language Achievement

The relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement is one considered by several educators as a well-established fact. Many research results (e.g. Millis, et al., 2007) indicate that self-efficacy beliefs effect action of students in general, and students' academic performance in particular.





Additionally most of these studies have reached the conclusion that academic achievement and self-efficacy are positively correlated. Zimmerman and Cleary (2006), suggest that academic achievement and self-efficacy affect each other and insist on the idea that Self-efficacy is a significant forecaster of academic achievement. Correspondingly, Stevick (1980) points out that language learning success is generally depending on what goes on inside the individual learner.

A review of literature shows that beliefs regarding self-efficacy are good forecasters of academic performance. Whereas there are sufficient reasons to view the learners' English self-efficacy as powerful sufficient to forecast EFL performance, it seems that the area has not received sufficient attention in Libya. So, the results of this study could sensitize Libyan students' internal feelings and beliefs about themselves and relate the results with their achievement tests in diverse study materials.

The Research Objectives

Accordingly, the present study focuses on how the concept of self- efficacy and achievement are related to each other. Thus the determination of studying these two concepts where the main focus when a group of students from the third year at English Department were examined at Azawiya University under the proficiency of their language level, and the correlation between self-efficacy and the students' achievement. The objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the level of self-efficacy of students in the English language department.
2. To find out if there is any relationship between the students ' self-efficacy and their EFL achievements.

Methodology and Research Design

For the study a descriptive survey type of research was adopted. 33 students from Faculty of Arts, Azawiya University during the academic year 2021 participated in the study. The sample was selected randomly. The rationale of study was explained to the participants. Instructions about the questionnaire were given to participants orally. It was explained to them that all information would be kept confidential and would be used only for research purpose. About all the participants completed the questionnaires.

Instruments

Two instruments were used in this study. The first instrument was the questionnaire of English self-Efficacy. The second focused part was on students' final marks. The questionnaire has 30 items and is scored according to a 7-point Likert- type scale. The students were asked if they could perform a specific task related to English. These items are scored from 1(I cannot do it at all) to 7(I can do it very well).The scale was designed to measure the following four skills: self-efficacy for listening (questions 1,2,3,4,5,6,7, and 8); self –efficacy for speaking (questions 9,10,11,12,13,14,15, and 16); self-efficacy for reading(questions 17,18,19,20,21,22, and 23); self-efficacy for writing in English (questions 24,25,26,27,28,29, and 30).

For evaluating academic achievements, the researcher works in the examination committee so she was able to access final exams' papers of third year students at the department. These exams belonged to the 2020-2021 academic year, for five main language subjects. These subjects were (Grammar, Linguistics, Conversation, Reading, and Essay Writing). These courses include a review and expansion of basic grammatical structures, extensive practice in speaking and writing, and reading and discussions of various literary and cultural texts. For analyzing data, some descriptive statistics were performed using SPSS software in order to investigate whether there was any relationship between the students' level of self- efficacy and their performance on the achievement test. Some statistical analyses such as Pearson's product moment correlation method, some descriptive statistics, means and rank order) were conducted using SPSS software.

Findings and Data Analysis

One of the current study aims is to find out the level of self-efficacy of students in the English language at Azwiya University. It is obvious from the analyzed data that the participants in the current study have high self-efficacy levels that range between (3.33 and 5.36) with a total mean = 4.39.

Results of the items are presented in groups according to the four language skills as it is shown in table (1) below:



Table (1): The mean and standard deviation of the four language skills

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Listening (1,2,3,4,5,6,7, and 8)	3.66	1.389
Speaking (9,10,11,12,13,14,15, and 16)	4.04	1.581
Reading (17,18,19,20,21,22, and 23)	4.93	1.063
Writing (24,25,26,27,28,29, and 30)	5.05	1.223
Over all self-efficacy	4.39	1.127

The means in the subscales suggest that students judged themselves more effective in reading (M: 4.93) and writing (M: 5.05) than listening (M: 3.66) and speaking (M: 4.04), though the difference is not that great among the four language areas. The reason is that the students are practicing reading and writing in the learning process more frequently than listening and speaking. This because there are no listening materials is given to the students and the majority of the students feel too shy to speak in conversation classes. This fact is known by both the students and the teachers, so such results are expected.

Also, for the second main purpose of the current study, a relation was carried out between the students' achievements and the self-efficacy questionnaire. The results revealed that there was an important correlation coefficient (0.824).

The data has shown that an important positive correlation was found between self- efficacy and academic achievement in the English language. The results of this study are consistent with a number of other studies (Mahyuddin et al., 2006; Ghorbandordinejad & Afshar, 2017). In the previous studies students who believed that they had the ability to learn a foreign language may have used this as a motivation to study the foreign language, therefore they got better grades than those who doubted their ability. Or maybe these students had positive past language learning experiences, and have believed that they had the motivation to learn a foreign language, and so continued to receive good grades.

The majority of the previous studies have proven that student's self-efficacy and goal- setting are related to each other. It is obvious from the participants' responses that the stronger the self-efficacy the more likely the students select stimulating tasks, persist at them and perform them successfully. Accordingly it is the teachers' task to guide the unmotivated students to identify

challenging related to their interests, and inspire them to work towards their goals. Doing this will improve their self-confidence believing that they could learn English, (self-efficacy) and give them a sense of success and achievement.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The main goal of this study was to investigate how Libyan EFL students attribute successes and failures in their language classes. We examined how well self-efficacy would predict students' achievement levels in authentic EFL classes. As Bandura (1997) indicated, self-efficacy, expectations of success and achievement are related. Students who have high self-efficacy tend to have positive outcome expectations. Although many researchers suggest that self-efficacy alone is predictive of academic success, for example, (Bandura, 1986), this study has indicated that language and emotion are two related systems in use, in that one system influences the performance of the other. Thus it is necessary to illuminate the significant role of self-efficacy in increasing students' ability to learn English as a foreign language. And it is the EFL teacher's responsibilities to increase their students' awareness about self-efficacy throughout:

- Helping the students to maintain relatively high and accurate self-efficacy beliefs.
- Insisting on difficult academic tasks that most students can achieve such as class work, asking questions by using English only in addition to other school activities' such as talking with schoolmates during lessons .

The findings of this study are of great significance as they inform educators and researchers as to the importance of monitoring students' perception of themselves.



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