

The correlation between self-efficacy and English proficiency of university English students

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ABSTRACT

Self-Efficacy in English language proficiency may affect the level of success in student English language learning. For this reason, the purpose of this study was to find out whether self-efficacy significantly correlates with the English language proficiency of English language education students. This study used a quantitative and correlation approach, with data collection methods using a questionnaire. Fifty English education students at one of the Purwokerto universities were the research subjects. They filled out the self-efficacy questionnaires and took the EPT test, which was held by the English language education study program. This study using Pearson Product Moment analysis to identify whether there is a significant correlation between the two variables. Hypothesis Null is accepted with the statement that the two variables have no significant correlation. The result shows that there is no significant correlation between self-efficacy and English proficiency of university English students

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1. Introduction

Self-efficacy is a way of thinking (Bandura, 1994). Cimpirich et al. (2011) also think that measuring individuals' ability to plan and carry out actions that lead to specific goals is essential. Furthermore, it serves as a critical component in the source of human action (human agency).

Similar to what Bandura et al. (1999) assert, "what people know, believe, and feel will determine how they behave". Thus, self-efficacy becomes a person's assurance in their ability to do each activity successfully. Telling that they will not be able to do the job, there is no effort, and avoiding efforts that make the person give up. This negative attitude can reduce the achievement of the efforts they have to go through

Bandura (1999) also identifies that self-efficacy affects individuals making decisions and taking action. Someone with high self-efficacy will believe that "I can do it." In contrast, someone with low self-efficacy will believe that "I cannot do it." Different self-efficacy activities exist for different circumstances. Students who feel confident in their ability to finish tasks and overcome challenges will exert more effort than those who feel insufficiently confident. As a result, even when faced with external challenges, learners or students with a higher level of self-efficacy will have higher intents and be more likely to complete the work. Students with low self-efficacy often blame themselves.

Self-efficacy is valued since it can affect behavior directly and indirectly. Graham (2022) points out that one can accomplish this through influencing other essential objectives and desires, resulting in expectations and inclinations toward affective and perceptual strengths and opportunities in the

social environment. Because of this, EFL students should have confidence in their abilities and work harder when they make mistakes rather than attributing their errors to a lack of knowledge. Theoretically, self-efficacy can improve students' predictive learning and learning processes.

Based on the reasonable assumption that students' thoughts about themselves play a significant role in their academic success or failure, student concentration can be seen as a crucial aspect of their self-motivation. Students' sense of self-efficacy also influences student engagement during learning. That shows the students' self-efficacy when it comes to learning English. For students to succeed in the learning process, self-efficacy is crucial. It also serves as a vehicle for developing behavioral, cognitive, and motivational attachments to other students in the classroom (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003). With self-efficacy, students have the confidence to learn foreign languages and act as a driving force for learning and one of the most critical factors for successful language learning (Raofi et al., 2012).

As English language learners acquire English as a second language, they progress through five language proficiency levels: beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, early advanced, and advanced (Little, 2007). The rate of progression through each English proficiency level varies according to the individual characteristics of each English language learner. The research on second language acquisition in Thomas and Collier (1997) demonstrates that high English proficiency levels can be achieved typically within four to seven years, provided that effective English language development occurs consistently.

English language proficiency refers to a student's capacity to create and communicate meaning using the language in oral and written contexts. This test also can assess the general knowledge or skills commonly required or prerequisite to entry into (or exemption from) a group of similar institutions. To measure students' English proficiency, the university where the researchers conduct research uses the English Proficiency Test (EPT) to measure their English proficiency. The EPT test was developed using the TOEFL test as a standard structure and measured skills. The TOEFL test has inspired other types of proficiency tests conducted by other organizations worldwide.

Each student's proficiency level is also different and is significantly influenced by various factors related to the learner himself. Yuntao (2019), in his research, revealed that their motivation to learn a language could be one of the factors that can affect language proficiency, Learning strategies, students' beliefs about learning English, and the distance between students' first language and English. The researchers' sample was an EFL student who made English their second language.

Language proficiency can also be influenced by factors from the learners themselves but from where they gain knowledge, namely the teacher and how the teacher teaches English; judging from teacher quality; teacher academic knowledge and skills; teacher teaching approaches, research, and providing feedback. These are all external factors of English proficiency (PhuongPhuong et al., 2019).

Several indicators indicate a person may have low self-efficacy regarding taking English tests such as the TOEFL. Individuals with low self-efficacy may engage in negative self-talk, saying they cannot do well on the test or will fail. Bandura (1977) stated that low self-efficacy beliefs could affect one's low academic achievement. Individuals with low efficacy may also experience setbacks or failures in learning English and may feel discouraged or defeated when faced with challenges (Haerazi & Irawan, 2019). Low self-efficacy can impact individual motivation, engagement, and achievement in preparing for an English ability.

In this study, the English proficiency will use the English Proficiency test. That is a paper-based test conducted by a university to measure all aspects of English, especially for academic needs. The university sets a minimum score of 500 as the requirement for thesis defense. If the student cannot reach the target, it is recommended to retake the test. Many students take the test over and over again in order to reach the limit. However, some students only do it once and pass the predetermined limit.

They impact their ability to do a task successfully. One of the components of self-efficacy, precisely the success and failure of prior learning, will be the subject of this study. Their results on their English proficiency test will be influenced by how they respond to a task. Students' reaction to their mastery of English reflects their distrust during their English language instruction. They demonstrate their proficiency in English, mainly based on the results of their assignments and

assessments. English self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to use the language effectively, and it significantly impacts how students behave during the learning process (Firdausih & Patria, 2019).

Following the literature previously, this study attempts a correlation study to respond to a research question, is there any significant correlation between self-efficacy and English proficiency of English university students? Furthermore, English students can use these results to measure achieving the target score they must pass.

2. Method

This study uses a quantitative research method and a correlational research method approach. The primary data source is data collected from respondents. The researchers included fifty students from eight semesters from the English education department at a private university in Purwokerto as participants. They are students studying English and taking an English Proficiency test to fulfill their graduation requirements. All identities and information are confidential and will be classified.

The questionnaire contains ten questions about self-efficacy, covering three dimensions of self-efficacy, namely level, strength, and generality, distributed to fifty students in their eighth semester of English education via the Google form. Each question will be scored on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 points (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree). Furthermore, questions adapted from Novrianto et al. (2019) to determine the level of self-efficacy of students are in the table below:

Table 1. Transcribed Self-Efficacy Level

Criteria	Range Score
Low	1-16
Moderate	17-34
High	35-40

The second data source is the EPT score. EPT is a prerequisite for English education students to graduate in the location where this research was conducted. To graduate, students must have taken the exam at least five times and received a score of 500. Researchers did not conduct EPT tests on students to obtain their EPT scores. Instead, the researcher will use the score test data from the English Language Education Department study program. Furthermore, the score will be classified according to the level set by the CEFR, as shown in the table below:

Table 2 TOEFL: ITP – CEFR equivalence

CEFR Level	Score TOEFL:ITP
A1	Up to 337
A2	333-459
B1	460-542
B2	543-626
C1	627-667
C2	No C2 level for the TOEFL:ITP

Then the two data will be tested with assumptions first to determine whether the data distribution is normal and has a linear relationship. After that, it can only be known whether the two variables have a significant correlation using Pearson-Product Moment.

3. Findings and Discussion

The normality test aims to determine the spread of the data distribution. This analysis is used to find out whether the data used is normally distributed or not. The results of this test are interpreted, if the data is normal then $\text{sig} > 0.05$, if $\text{sig} < 0.05$ means the data is not normal. From the results of the calculation of the normality test, the data is obtained as follows:

Table 3 The Results of Normality Test Self-Efficacy and EPT

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Self-Efficacy	.092	50	.200	.975	50	.375
EPT	.110	50	.185	.955	50	.57

*, This is a lower bound of the true significance.

Based on the table above it can be concluded that the significant value (sig= 0.57) for the EPT and significant value (sig=0.37) for Self-Efficacy are greater than 0.05 then it can be said that the distribution of research data is normally distributed. In the output above it is known that the Self-Efficacy data has a significant value of 0.375. And the student's English Proficiency represented by EPT Scores is 0.57, has a significance value of more than 0.05 so the data for both variables are declared normally distributed.

The second prerequisite test is the linearity test, which aims to determine whether the two variables to be subjected to the correlational procedure show a linear relationship or not. For the linearity test, if the probability is less than 0.05 then the two data are not linear. The calculation of the linearity test data is as follows:

Table 4. The results of linearity test

ANOVA Table						
		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
EPT *	(Combined)	92958.880	19	4892.573	2.016	0.042
Self-Efficacy	Linearity	1723.181	1	1723.181	0.710	0.406
	Deviation from	91235.699	18	5068.650	2.089	0.036
	Linearity					
	Within groups	72792.000	30	2426.400		
	Total	165750.880	49			

Based on the table 4, it can be stated to be linear if the significance of the linearity is greater than 0.05. In the results of the linearity test the significance value is 0.406 so it is bigger than 0.05 and it means that the data has linear relationship.

From the results of the assumption test, it can be seen that the data is normally distributed and has a linear relationship. So the research will use Pearson Product Moment to determine the correlation between self-efficacy and students' English proficiency. The result of linearity test can be seen in the table below:

Table 5. The result of correlation between two variables

		Self-Efficacy	EPT
Self-Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	0.102
	Sig. (1-tailed)		0.241
	N	50	50
EPT	Pearson Correlation	0.102	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.241	
	N	50	50

Table 5 shows that the correlation index value was found to be 0.241. The results are carried out using a software system, which means that there is little possibility that there will be no different between the calculations of the correlation results. In terms of results, it shows a significant value of 0.241 with a significant value of more than 0.05, proving there is no significant correlation between self-efficacy and English proficiency of English students. With these results, self-efficacy can also be interpreted to predict students' English proficiency by 24%. In comparison, 76% is explained by other variables not measured in this study, such as cognitive aspects, motivating aspects, affective aspects, etc.

To clarify the results, it can be seen from level self-efficacy and English proficiency in table below:

Table 6 English students' self-efficacy level

No	Category	Amount	Percentage
1	Low	0	0%
2	Moderate	15	30%
3	High	35	70%
		50	100%

Table 7 English proficiency level for English students

No	Category	Amount	Percentage
1	A1	0	0%
2	A2	34	68%
3	B1	13	26%
4	B2	3	6%
5	C1	0	0%
		50	100%

When looking at the correlation results, it shows that there is no significant correlation between self-efficacy and the English proficiency of English students. However, the self-efficacy Level of English student shows that they are at a high level. It means they have high confidence in their ability to carry out a task (Haerazi & Irawan, 2019). This high-efficiency level also allows them to get high English proficiency test results.

However, it was found that 68% of English education students were at A2. According to Little (2007), the second level of CEFR, A2 or elementary/primary, is someone with limited English skills. It means that eighth-semester students of English education only understand sentences and communicate in simple sentences. Of course, this is a disappointing result for final-semester students of English education.

Based on the test hypothesis in this study, the aspects contained in the self-efficacy variable have no connection with the aspects involved in the English proficiency variable because this research objective looks at students' self-efficacy level in general. So the self-efficacy questionnaire includes the three aspects Bandura proposed: level, generality, and strength. Meanwhile, the aspects tested in English proficiency are the same as in EPT: reading comprehension, writing structure and expression, and listening.

One of the aspects contained in the self-efficacy variable is level. When faced with an easy or difficult task, they will arrange it according to their ability. When asked about their abilities, they know how to deal with unexpected situations, and 58% said they are confident. Their beliefs provide insight so they know what to do if faced with an unexpected situation.

Another aspect is generality. It is an aspect of self-efficacy that describes the level of strength and confidence or individual expectations about life. This aspect is usually directly related to the level aspect; the higher the task's difficulty level, the weaker it is to complete it, so there is a delay. The questionnaire results show that more than 50% of the students in this sample also chose the option agreeing that they can solve various problems if they do it (questionnaire no.2), and 53% of them can find ways to solve problems if something hinders their goals.

Seeing the high level of student efficacy and the low level of student proficiency, the aspect of self-efficacy used cannot fully measure student English proficiency. According to Bandura (1977), four distinct sources contribute to the formation of self-efficacy. These sources include a) mastery experience, b) vicarious experience, c) social persuasion, and d) physiological state. Research conducted by Raoofi et al. (2012) also examines other aspects of self-efficacy that can increase student efficacy. With the guideline that self-efficacy is a robust indicator of proficiency in genuine linguistic competencies and academics.

Other studies investigating the self-efficacy impact of linguistic proficiency have also focused on gender (Cubukcu, 2008; Mills et al., 2006). The two studies allow this research not to correlate because Cubukcu (2008), in his research, proved that gender plays an essential role in the results of his research, while Mills et al. (2006) argue that gender has no effect. The sample consisted of 88% female and 12% male students. There is a gender imbalance that might affect this study's results.

The use of aspects of self-efficacy who want to know their level of self-efficacy, in general, may also be a problem. Using language-focused self-efficacy might produce a different result. For example, the effect of self-efficacy can be measured in reading (Mills et al., 2006, 2007), listening (Magogwe & Oliver, 2007; Mills et al., 2006; Rahimi & Abedini, 2009), or in mathematics and education in general (Chen, 2020; Cubukcu, 2008; Saracaloğlu & Dinçer, 2009) which shows that self-efficacy strongly predicts performance.

Self-efficacy testing that refers to English proficiency can also be used, such as aspects affecting students' English proficiency or using an English language assessment model other than EPT. For example, self-efficacy can measure the effect of English proficiency on learner motivation (Teng et al., 2021; Torres & Alieto, 2019; Yamashiro & McLaughlin, 2001), Larner's strategy (Bonyadi et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2015), beliefs in learning English (Genc et al., 2016; Teng et al., 2021), or the distance between students' first language and English (Chularut & DeBacker, 2004; Wang et al., 2008).

Puong et al. (2019) in their study also added that students with low English proficiency could be seen from where they increase their knowledge, namely teachers. English proficiency can also be influenced by the quality of the English teacher, the knowledge and academic skills of the teacher, the teacher's teaching approach, research, and providing feedback.

4. Conclusion

This study was conducted to determine the correlation between self-efficacy and English proficiency among university English students. The correlation results showed a significant value of 0.241; there was no significant correlation between self-efficacy and English students' English proficiency. With these results, it can also be interpreted that self-efficacy can only predict students' English proficiency by 24%. In comparison, 76% is explained by other variables not measured in this study.

This research has several areas for improvement. Therefore, the researcher suggests changing the focus of the research. Self-efficacy can measure students' abilities from several aspects, such as focusing on gender and questionnaire instruments that measure other aspects of self-efficacy. Students' English proficiency can also be evaluated through various factors that can measure their level of proficiency. For example, self-efficacy can be measured based on reading, listening, writing, and speaking. In addition, it pays more attention to the effect on students' English proficiency. Alternatively, it can measure another type of assessment, the English test.

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