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THE IMPACT OF SELF-EFFICACY ON IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNER'S LISTENING COMPREHENSION ABILITY

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ABSTRACT

The present investigation was an attempt to study the effect of self-efficacy on Iranian EFL learner's listening comprehension ability. To that end, an OPT test was administered to 100 university students learning English language in institutes. Learners who scored between one above and below the standard deviation were selected. 40 learners were selected and they were divided into experimental and control group, each group contained 20 learners. A listening comprehension test was administered to both groups as a pre-test to take their initial knowledge of listening comprehension. The listening section of the TOEFL test was selected to test the listening ability of the participants. A self-efficacy questionnaire was also distributed among the participants. The experimental group received treatment in order to help them improve their self-efficacy beliefs in ten sessions. The control group received no treatment. Finally both groups sat for the post-test of the same listening comprehension test. The results were analyzed through ANCOVA and it was explored that self-efficacy had a positive effect on Iranian EFL learner's listening comprehension ability.

Key Words: *Self-efficacy, Listening Comprehension Ability, Learner's Belief*

INTRODUCTION

Listening comprehension is one of the most significant skills of a good language learner in normal daily life. It is a major component in language learning and teaching and is seen as the promoter of language learning. Although listening is now well recognized as a critical dimension in language learning, it still remains one of the least understood processes. According to Morley (2001), during the 1980s, special attention to listening was incorporated into new instructional frameworks, that is, functional language and communicative approaches. Throughout the 1990s, attention to listening in language instruction increased dramatically.

Listening comprehension is now generally acknowledged as an important facet of language learning; nevertheless, "much work remains to be done in both theory and practice" (Morley, 2001). The importance of listening in language learning can hardly be overestimated, as people always do more listening than other skills. Through reception, we internalize linguistic information without which we could not produce language (Douglas Brown, 2001).

Statement of the Problem

Listening involves a complex process that allows us to understand and interpret spoken messages in real time by making use of a variety of sources such as phonetic, phonological, prosodic, lexical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic (Lynch, 1998). On the other hand, it is well documented that language learning success or failure is influenced by the affective side of the learner. Many times affective factors come to impede the listening process. Of the factors impeding the process may be self-efficacy, which is defined as "beliefs in one's capabilities to recognize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy beliefs are assumed to influence task choices and goals setting, effort in pursuit of goals, persistence, resilience in the face of difficulties and the final outcome (Schunk and Meece, 2006).

According to Pajares and Schunk (2001), self-efficacy provides the foundation for human motivation, well-being and achievement. Individuals tend to select tasks for which they feel competent and confident, and high efficacious individuals tend to contribute more effort, persist longer and rebound faster when

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they encounter problems or setbacks (Pajares and Schunk, 2001). It was found that students with high self-efficacy tend to perform better than those low scoring self-efficacious students do (Pajares, 2006) although there is no absolute connection between self-efficacy and achievement, because self-efficacy reflects how capable individuals believe they are, rather than how capable they really are (Pajares, 2006).

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The purpose of the present study aims at realizing whether EFL learner's self-efficacy affect listening comprehension ability or not. Since self-efficacy is a prerequisite to learning on the whole, and language learning in particular it is of significance to both learners and teachers. Due to the relationship between self-efficacy and learning a foreign language and consequently on achieving better marks in testing, it has positive wash-back effects. It contributes to all stakeholders in the process of teaching and learning.

Review of the Related Literature

Mill's (2004) quantitative study investigated the relationship between French reading and listening self-efficacy and French reading and listening proficiency of American college students. The results showed that French reading self-efficacy is a predictor of French reading proficiency but French listening self-efficacy is not a predictor of listening comprehension. Rahil mahyuddin, Habibah Elias, Loh sau cheong, Muhd fauzi muhamad, Nooreen noordin and Maria chong Abdullah (2006) conducted a research on the relationship between student's self-efficacy and their English language achievement. In Malaysia, English is a second language but since 2003, English is the medium of instruction for mathematics and science subjects for year one, form one and form six students. Based on this scenario, it is therefore pertinent to find out whether performance in the English language is largely determined by their perceived English language efficacy. A descriptive-correlational study was conducted on 1,146 students from eight secondary schools in the Petaling district, Selangor. The instruments used to measure self-efficacy were the Self-efficacy Scale developed by Bandura (1995) and the Self-efficacy Scale developed by Kim and Park (1997). The findings showed that 51 percent of students had high self-efficacy while 48 percent showed low self-efficacy. Correlational analysis showed positive correlations between several dimensions of self-efficacy that is, academic achievement efficacy with academic performance in English language. In conclusion, achievement in English language will improve when students have high self-efficacy in the language.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study, the data were gathered through questionnaires to boost understanding and interpretation of the results. The questionnaires were distributed among the students in the classes. They were asked to choose the reason or reasons they might not learn English as efficiently as their other courses and determine the effect of self-efficacy from their own points of view. After they completed the questionnaires, they were divided into experimental and control groups, male and female, and the experimental groups received treatment, that is, they were instructed how to improve their self-efficacy beliefs. Then the results obtained from the groups were analyzed through SPSS software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Analysis Procedure

SPSS software was used to analyze the results obtained in this research. For the present research and the hypotheses that were going to be tested, paired-sample t-test was considered appropriate. A Paired-samples t-test (also referred to as repeated measures) is used when the researcher has only one group of people (or companies, or machines etc.) and collects data from them on two different occasions or under two different conditions.

Pre-test/post-test experimental designs are an example of the type of situation where this technique is appropriate. The researcher assesses each person on some continuous measure at Time 1 and then again at Time 2, after exposing them to some experimental manipulation or intervention. This approach is also used when the researcher has matched pairs of participants (i.e. each person is matched with another on

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specific criteria, such as age, sex). One of the pair is exposed to Intervention 1 and the other is exposed to Intervention 2. Scores on a continuous measure are then compared for each pair. Paired-samples t-tests can also be used when the researcher measures the same person in terms of his/her response to two different questions.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for the Proficiency Test

N	Mean	SD
100	32	10.32

A descriptive statistical analysis was done on the collected data of OPT test. The results are shown in table 1.

Table 2: Number of Students Participated in Pre-test and Post-test Case

	Included		Excluded		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Pre-test Group	40	100.0%	0	0%	40	100.0%
Post-test Group	40	100.0%	0	0%	40	100.0%

Table 2 represents the number of participants in the present research. All participants took part in pre- test and post-test in this study.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for the Pre-test and Post-test

Group	Pre-test	Post-test
Experimental	59.9	68.4
N	20	20
SD	4.8	4.7
Control Mean	58.45	58.1
N	20	20
SD	5.64	5.2
Total Mean	59.15	63.25
N	40	40
SD	5.216	7.121

The descriptive statistical analysis done on the collected data of pre-test and post-test is shown in the table 3. The mean and standard deviation of each group are included.

In this study, in order to investigate the research hypothesis “self-efficacy has no effect on Iranian EFL learner’s listening comprehension ability”, the differences between mean scores of pre- test and post-test of control and experimental group were calculated through ANCOVA.

Before running ANCOVA, the following hypotheses were examined:

Linear relationship between variables (pre-test and post -test)

Equality of variances

Homogeneity of regression

In order to examine the equality of variances, Levine’s Test of Equality of Error Variances of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

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Table 4: Levine’s Test of Equality of Error

F	df1	df2	sig
.26	1	38	.61

According to table 4 the calculated F is not meaningful. So there is equality of variances and ANCOVA can be run.

Table 5: Test of between – subject’s effects

Source	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Corrected model	1879.82	3	626.61	230.95	.00
Group (a)	17.86	1	17.86	6.6	.015
Pretest (b)	802.94	1	802.97	95.95	.00
pretest (ab)	.41	1	.41	.15	.7
Error	97.68	36	2.71		
Total	46200	40			

As table 5 shows, between subjects effect (a, b) is not significant (F=0.15, sig=0.7). It shows that the data supports homogeneity of regression. Therefore, covariance should be run just for between – subjects effect of post-test and the group to show whether mean scores of the two groups are the same or not. The result of this analysis is demonstrated in table 6.

Table 6: Mean and Corrected Mean of Listening Comprehension Ability

Source	Post-test		Corrected mean	
	M	SD	M	SE
Experimental	38.4	4.7	37.77	.36
Control	28.1	5.11	28.72	.36

Table 6 shows the corrected means of dependent variable of listening comprehension ability. The data demonstrate that the means of experimental group are upper than control group. Sum of analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) of listening comprehension ability in experimental a control group after eliminating between-subjects effect is demonstrated in table 7.

Table 7: Sum of Analysis of Covariance Source Type III Sum of Squares

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	M	F	Sig	Eta
Corrected Model	1879.415	2	939.71	354.48	.00	.95
Pre-test	818.52	1	818.52	308.76	.00	.89
Group	805.48	1	805.48	303.84	.00	.89
Error	98.08	37	2.65			
Total	46200	40				

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As it can be seen, the corrected model ($F = .00$, $F = 354.48$) is statistically significant. The results ($F = 303.84$, $F = .00$, $\text{Eta} = .89$) show that there is a difference between two groups. It means that there is a significant difference between experimental and control group.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the results of ANCOVA analysis revealed that English listening Self-efficacy had significant impacts on English listening final performance. That is, it was a significant predictor of English listening final performance. Those participants with a stronger sense of English listening self-efficacy achieved accordingly as measured by their English listening final performance, and therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.

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