

THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG LEARNERS' SELF-EFFICACY, THEIR ENGLISH PROFICIENCY AND THEIR CONTENT AREA SUBJECT ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract: This study investigated the relationships among the learners' self-efficacy, their English proficiency and their content area subject achievement. The researcher took the data of those variables and tested the hypothesis using 32 samples of English Study Program students at STAIN Tulungagung. The results obtained revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between the learners' self-efficacy and their achievement in content area subject, but no significant relationship between their self-efficacy and their English proficiency. The learners' English proficiency was also correlated with their content area subject achievement. Thus, in general, it can be concluded that the three variables have relationships although they have different degree of relationships.

Keywords: Self-Efficacy, English Proficiency, Content Area Subject

In Indonesia, even though English is considered as a foreign language, it is widely used in many areas, such as economy, business, politics, education, etc. Educational field, without exception, also takes advantage of English language in its development. Most of educational books and references are written in English. Not only in written forms, but English is also used orally and actively in many instructional activities. This practice can be seen easily in English departments in almost all higher educational institutions, and some bilingual schools or international-standard schools that emerge lately. Therefore, it can be said that using English for instruction is a popular trend nowadays.

Without abandoning the important use of English in international-standard schools or bilingual schools, the use of English in English educational department is of our concern in this study. In English language department, there are mainly two kinds of subjects; they are those concerning the language skills improvement such as speaking class, reading class or writing class, and those of using English as the medium to transfer the subject material such as morphology class, linguistic class, instructional evaluation class, or curriculum design class. The latter subjects can be referred as content area subjects.

English has a very important role in the content area subjects because all their materials as well as the teaching learning activities are in English. So, the students must acquire English well in order to master the subject matter

content. On the contrary, when the students are not capable of English, it will hinder the students' achievement in content area subjects.

Besides the ability to master the language, there are some other factors considered influential in the students' learning success. These factors belong to affective variables, such as motivation (Dornyei, 2001), attitude, anxiety, self belief, needs etc. Dealing with self-belief, Brown (2001:62) states that learners' belief that they indeed are fully capable of accomplishing a task is at least partially a factor in their eventual success in attaining the task. According to Bandura (as cited in Mahyudin et. al., 2006), learner beliefs, known as self-efficacy, is a term used to refer to a person's beliefs concerning his or her completion of a task and his or her perceived competency level with performing the task. Further, he emphasized that self-efficacy has the potential to play a key role in the learning process by helping or hindering learners' progress.

Some previous studies have also dealt with the important role of self-efficacy in language learning like what have been done by Anyadubalu (2010) and Mahyudin et.al. (2006). The findings showed that self-efficacy is a predictor in students' English language achievement. In other word, achievement in English language will improve when students have high self efficacy in the language.

While there is ample reason to view the role of self efficacy as a predictor in students' language achievement, a little attempt has been made to examine the role of self-efficacy in students' content area achievement. Therefore, this study is intended to find out not only the relationship between the learners' self-efficacy and their English proficiency, but also the relationship between their self-efficacy and their content area achievement.

Based on the above explanation, the problem of the study can be formulated as follows: (1) What is the relationship between the learners' self-efficacy in content area subject and their English proficiency at the English Study Program of STAIN Tulungagung?, (2) What is the relationship between the learners' self-efficacy in content area subject and their content area achievement at the English Study Program of STAIN Tulungagung?, (3) What is the relationship between the learners' English proficiency and their content area achievement at the English Study Program of STAIN Tulungagung?

METHODOLOGY

The research design employed in this study was correlation study. It is used to determine relationships and patterns of relationship among variables in a single group of subjects (Ary, D. et. al., 2002: 355). The variables involved in this study are learners' self-efficacy, their English proficiency and their content area achievement.

Dealing with population and sample of this study, the fifth semester students of regular English Study Program at STAIN Tulungagung were considered as the population of this study. There were all 100 students in these regular classes and classified into 3 classes (class B, C, and D). The one international class (class A) which consists of students who had passed the placement test during the enrolment was excluded in this study since the

students in this class are considered better than those in regular classes in terms of their English proficiency. The three regular classes, on the other hand, are assumed to be homogenous because they have similarly average English proficiency, and therefore, were considered as the population of this study. All these students were taking Instructional Evaluation 1 in the fifth semester. They also had taken TOEFL test in the previous semester.

The sampling procedure was done to choose the sample for this study. Since there were three classes, cluster sampling was applied in this study. According to Ary et.al., (2002:168) a common application of cluster sampling is the use of intact classrooms as clusters. Then, among the clusters, one cluster is chosen randomly and once the cluster is selected, all the members of the cluster must be included. Class D was finally chosen randomly as the cluster and the 32 students in that class were considered as the sample.

Regarding the data and the sources of the data, there were three kinds of data involved in this study; they were the students' responses from the self-efficacy questionnaires, their TOEFL scores as the indication of their English proficiency, and their scores in the Instructional Evaluation test.

The data collection was done in October until November 2012. In collecting the data, the researcher utilized questionnaires and tests as instruments. Before explaining each instrument in this study, the procedure of data collection is described.

Since the fifth semester students had already taken their TOEFL test which was held by the Language Unit of STAIN Tulungagung, the researcher just needed to obtain the students' TOEFL scores with the permission granted by the Language Unit of STAIN Tulungagung.

Then, the students' content area achievement was gotten by testing the students about their mastery of Instructional Evaluation materials after they discussed them for about 2 months. Finally, right after finishing the Instructional Evaluation test, the students were given questionnaires to measure their self-efficacy level.

The detailed description of each instrument is explained as follows:

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was used to get the students' self-efficacy level and was constructed based on self-efficacy questionnaires about *Listening Skill* developed by Rahimi and Abedini (2009). To fill the questionnaires, the students were required to read a statement and decide if they (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) slightly agree, (4) agree, or (5) strongly agree.

Then, a pilot study was conducted to see how well the questionnaire was adapted and how much time was needed to fill it out. There had been 20 items for the questionnaire before the pilot study. The analysis of the data collected from pilot study showed that some items of the questionnaire were proved to be invalid and therefore, 7 among 20 items were dropped. Thus, only 12 items were used to measure the students' self-efficacy level. Then, students' responses of the 12 item questionnaires were analyzed for its reliability and it was proven to be reliable with the Cronbach's Alpha figures of 0.835.

Tests

There were two tests employed in this study. They were achievement test and TOEFL test.

The achievement test was used to measure the students' content area achievement. The test dealt with the materials of Instructional Evaluation course and had 20 items. The questions of the test required the students to provide correct short answers. A correct answer was given one point and the incorrect one was not given any point.

Before being used as the instrument of the research, it had gone through validity check. The test items were considered valid in terms of content validity since all items represented the materials of the Instructional Evaluation course having been explained before. In terms of construct validity, the students were required to write short answers to the questions. This form of testing is considered appropriate to measure the students' knowledge of Instructional Evaluation materials. Therefore, the test items were deemed to be valid.

Besides, to ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, it was tried out to a group of students. After being analyzed statistically, the result showed that the 10 items were invalid statistically and therefore deleted. The valid items were then analyzed for the reliability level and resulted in 0.875 which was considered very reliable.

The second test applied in this study was TOEFL test. It was used to know the students' English proficiency. This kind of test is considered valid and reliable. For that reason, no validity and reliability testing was done for this instrument.

After all the needed data had been collected, they were analyzed quantitatively. Because this study was correlation one, the Pearson Product Moment formula was used. This is in line with the statement of Ary et. al., (2002:146) that such formula is the most commonly used correlation index. This study employed SPSS 17.0 to do such statistical formula.

By using this formula, it could be identified the correlation between the students' self-efficacy scores and their TOEFL scores, the correlation between the students' self-efficacy scores and their Instructional Evaluation test scores, and the correlation between the students' TOEFL scores and their Instructional Evaluation test scores.

When the correlation coefficient had been obtained, the hypothesis was tested. Using SPSS program, it could be identified whether the null hypothesis is rejected or accepted.

The null hypothesis for this study can be stated as the followings:

1. The learners' self-efficacy scores in content area subject are not positively correlated with their English performance scores.
2. The learners' self-efficacy scores in content area subject are not positively correlated with their content area achievement scores.
3. The learners' English proficiency scores are not positively correlated with their content area achievement scores.

FINDINGS

Before the correlation coefficients are described, the regular students scores for each variable are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The Students' Self Efficacy Scores, their TOEFL Test Scores and their Instructional Evaluation Test Scores

No.	Initials	Self-Efficacy Scores	TOEFL Scores	Test	Instructional Evaluation Test Scores
1.	NP	41	440		9
2.	NH	43	430		3
3.	NN	38	477		9
4.	NM	48	440		5
5.	NS	38	393		6
6.	NP	39	393		5
7.	NR	47	427		6
8.	NH	42	427		3
9.	RG	33	420		5
10.	RP	39	447		9
11.	RE	37	527		9
12.	RD	39	440		4
13.	RR	35	403		1
14.	RN	34	413		8
15.	RS	33	403		5
16.	SB	36	430		1
17.	SH	32	420		5
18.	SA	30	367		0
19.	SY	32	440		1
20.	SK	42	417		8
21.	SN	36	430		3
22.	SS	42	420		9
23.	SG	36	407		5
24.	TP	35	437		3
25.	TN	35	390		6
26.	UM	29	383		0
27.	UH	35	390		5
28.	YM	33	407		5
29.	YR	40	503		7
30.	YS	31	523		8
31.	ST	37	393		8
32.	SAW	43	500		7
Mean Score		37.19	429.28		5.25

Table 1 above indicates that the mean score for the learners' self-efficacy results was 37.19, their TOEFL mean score was 429.28 and their evaluation test mean score was 5.25.

After the statistical calculation was done, the correlations among these variables were gotten and presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The Correlations among the Students' Self Efficacy Scores, their TOEFL Test Scores and their Instructional Evaluation Test Scores

		selfefficacy	evaluation	Toefl
Selfefficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.372*	.244
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.036	.178
	N	32	32	32
Evaluation	Pearson Correlation	.372*	1	.452**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.036		.009
	N	32	32	32
Toefl	Pearson Correlation	.244	.452**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.178	.009	
	N	32	32	32

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

It can be seen from the above table that the correlation between the regular class students' self-efficacy scores and their TOEFL score was 0.244. This coefficient was positive but very low. This showed that the first null hypothesis of this study, that the learners' self-efficacy scores in content area subject are not positively correlated with their English performance scores, was accepted since it was not significant at 0.05 level.

The second null hypothesis dealing with the correlation between the regular class students' self-efficacy and their evaluation test scores was tested. It was obtained that the correlation coefficient was 0.372. This was the indication that the second null hypothesis was rejected and, thus, the alternative hypothesis was accepted. There was the relationship between the students' self-efficacy and their evaluation test scores.

Finally, the third null hypothesis stating that the students' TOEFL scores are not correlated with their Evaluation test score was also tested. It was gotten that its coefficient was 0.452. So, the null hypothesis was rejected. It means that the students' TOEFL scores were significantly and positively correlated with their Evaluation test scores.

DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships among the learners' self efficacy, their English proficiency and their content area achievement. The result of hypothesis testing showed positive relationships among the three variables although they have different levels of relationships.

The relationship between the learners' self efficacy and their English proficiency indicated by their TOEFL scores showed that there is low positive relationship (correlation coefficient of only 0.244). This low correlation shows insignificant relationship between the learners' self efficacy and their English

proficiency. This means that it cannot be guaranteed when the learners' self-efficacy increase, their English proficiency also increase. Likewise, the decrease in learners' self efficacy is not likely the decrease in their English proficiency.

This finding contradicts with other research finding showing that there was strong relationship between the learners' self-efficacy level and their English proficiency as found by Anyadubalu (2010) and Tilfarlioglu & Cinkara (2009). The low correlation between learners' self efficacy and their English proficiency as the finding of this research may be caused by the fact that the self-efficacy questionnaires given to the students mainly dealt with their content area subject. Besides, TOEFL test was administered long time before the students got the self efficacy questionnaires. It is reasonable, then, that their perceived self-efficacy is not strongly correlated with their TOEFL scores because the students were not aware of their personal belief of their English proficiency when they gave responses to the questionnaires. Thus, this finding cannot be used to claim that it does not support the theory of self-efficacy proposed by Bandura (1993) and the results of most previous studies.

Despite insignificant relationship between self-efficacy and English proficiency, there is a significant positive correlation between the students' self-efficacy scores and their content area scores with correlation coefficient of 0.372. This means that, as the scores on the self-efficacy questionnaire increase, their content area scores increase. Moreover, as their scores of the self-efficacy decrease, their content area scores decrease. This indicates that students with high self-efficacy beliefs reported feeling relatively more efficacious than students with low self-efficacy beliefs in managing academic activities. This finding confirms the link between students' self-efficacy beliefs and their actual performance and attainments as stated by various researchers (Tilfarlioglu & Cinkara, 2009, Anyadubalu, 2010).

From the relationships discussed before, the correlation coefficients were not very high compared to those previous self-efficacy research findings. This fact suggests several things such as the learners' personal character and their social culture. The students' personal character can be the source of low self-efficacy level. There were some good students who always got good results in their most tests, but they had lower self-confidence than their friends. They tend to consider themselves as having lower ability than their friends.

The other factor that may cause the students not to give true judgment about themselves is the local culture. This is supported by Erdem and Demirel (in Awaluddin, 2012) saying that the concept of self-efficacy may be influenced by unique characteristics of various cultures. Some societies tend to be more inferior or superior than the others and this influence the students' judgment about themselves.

The last relationship concerned in this study is between the learners' English proficiency and their content area subject achievement which resulted in higher correlation coefficient (0.452) than the other two relationships. This significant positive correlation indicates that the learners who have high English proficiency have also high achievement in content area subject. In addition, the ones with lower English proficiency are likely to have lower achievement in content area subject. Such relationship makes sense since English language is

used as the medium to convey information in content area subject (Brown, 2001:49). The higher the learners' English proficiency, the easier for them to understand the materials, to get the points of teacher's explanation, to understand the questions of the test, and to provide accurate answer for the questions. This is in line with Lee's statement that in order not to fall behind peers in academic contents, the students in content area subjects should develop their English language proficiency and literacy skills in the context of content area instruction.

Finally, from the above findings it can be inferred that because of the importance of self-efficacy in students' learning, the teachers should help students to build healthy and strong self efficacy. This can be done by expressing high opinions and expectations of students, encouraging them, praising their good works and rewarding their little positive efforts (positive reinforcement). This will

boost students' level of self confidence, self esteem, and self efficacy which will in turn maximize their performances in learning English as a foreign language.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the previous research findings, it can be concluded that the learner's self-efficacy, their English proficiency, and their content area subject achievement have positive relationship although they have different level of relationships. The detailed conclusions are as the followings:

1. The relationship between the learners' self-efficacy in content area subject and their English proficiency at the English Study Program of STAIN Tulungagung was positive. However, it was not significant because the coefficient was only 0.244.
2. The relationship between the learners' self-efficacy in content area subject and their content area achievement at the regular class of STAIN Tulungagung was significantly positive. It was 0.372
3. The relationship between the learners' English proficiency and their content area achievement at the regular class of STAIN Tulungagung was significantly positive. It was 0.452

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the previous research finding and discussion, the study has resulted on several suggestions as follows:

For the teachers, especially English language teachers and content area course teachers, it was suggested that they keep on motivating and supporting their students, so that the students have high level of self-efficacy and can make use this self-efficacy for their academic improvement.

For the learners, they should be able to improve their own self-efficacy and self-confidence to enhance a better learning process. They also need to improve their English proficiency in order to be successful in their content area subjects and other subjects using English as a medium of instruction.

For future researchers, it was recommended to have future studies which will verify the findings of the present study with some improvement

on the instruments. In the present study, the statement of the questionnaires can be subject to criticism. The items of the questionnaires were only twelve. The more items provided, the more valid the result will be. This is because there are more indicators of the students' self-efficacy level. Besides, the fact, that some students with lower achievement had high self-efficacy level or the other way around, may be caused by their inconsistent judgment in responding the self-efficacy questionnaires. The statements with similar meanings sometimes were responded differently by the students. They were not very careful in understanding the statements of the questionnaires. Therefore, it is suggested for future researcher to make sure that the respondents have the same interpretation of the statements in the self-efficacy questionnaire.

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