

Self-efficacy in Second/Foreign Language Learning Contexts

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Received: August 17, 2012 Accepted: August 31, 2012 Online Published: September 12, 2012

doi:10.5539/elt.v5n11p60 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n11p60>

Abstract

This study reviews the empirical literature of self-efficacy, a central component of social cognitive theory, in the area of second language learning by focusing on two research questions: first, to what extent, has self-efficacy, as a predicting variable, has been explored in the field of second language learning? Second, what factors affect learners' self-efficacy beliefs in learning a foreign/second language? On addressing the research questions, 32 articles published between 2003 and 2012 were selected. The articles were classified into two main categories – effects of self-efficacy and factors affecting self-efficacy. Then each category was divided into certain subcategories for discussion. The findings of the review revealed that several factors enhance the level of students' self-efficacy, and self-efficacy is a strong predictor of performance in different language skills and tasks. Limitations of the empirical studies discussed and directions for further investigation are also presented.

Keywords: self-efficacy, a foreign language learner, language learning context

1. Introduction

There is a considerable body of research on individual differences in the area of foreign language learning. Individual differences encompass a wide scope of domains including, personality traits, learning styles, learners' beliefs, strategies, aptitude, age, motivation. Research indicates that individual differences predict success in language learning. Individuals learning a foreign language have a lot of differences in their rate of learning and the ways they follow to develop their skills (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003; Sawyer & Ranta, 2001).

In order to understand why some learners learn language more successfully than others, with almost the same aptitude and capabilities, researchers have focused their attention on the learners' perceptions of the task (Williams & Burden, 1997), learners' beliefs in their abilities to perform a task (Bandura, 1997) and other individual differences such as learning strategies (Cohen, 1998; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990) and motivation (Dörnyei, 2001, 2005; Gardner, 2000). Although learning process is multifaceted and complicated as it involves different variables such as relevant knowledge, skills, intelligence and cognitive abilities, researchers are increasingly directing their research efforts towards the important role of learners' thoughts and beliefs in learning and education (Schunk, 2003). Self-efficacy as individuals' beliefs in their abilities to perform a task (Bandura, 1986) proves to be a principal variable in predicting learners' performance. SE appears to play a vital role in predicting learners' performance in educational contexts and it can predict performance even better than actual abilities (Bandura, 1997), or aptitude (Schunk, 1991). Apart from influencing students' learning, self-efficacy also affects motivation as it has been substantiated by a solid body of research (Pajares, 1996; Schunk, 2003).

SE is a significant component of social cognitive theory. SCT suggests reciprocal interactions among these influences: environment, behaviour, and personal factors including physiological, cognitive and affective aspects (Bandura, 1986). In this theory, human beings have the ability to affect and shape their environment rather than passively react to it. With reference to the interaction among the three forces (personal, environmental and behavioural), individuals' beliefs in their capabilities to perform a task (e.g. self-efficacy) determine the efforts and engagement they exert for the task (Bandura, 1999, Schunk 2003).

Given significant role of self-efficacy, it seems relevant to do a comprehensive review on the role of self-efficacy in learning a second/foreign language to gain a clear understanding of the development of

self-efficacy in learning a second/foreign language, the ways in which self-efficacy affects language learning; and how language teachers can help the learners to create positive beliefs about their abilities to learn a foreign language. This review investigates research studies of self-efficacy in foreign language context by narrowing the focus on two research questions: To what extent, has self-efficacy, as a predicting variable, been explored in the field of second language learning? What factors affect learners' self-efficacy beliefs in learning English as a foreign language?

2. Self-efficacy and Second/Foreign Language Learners

2.1 *The Construct of Self-efficacy*

Self-efficacy, as a key element of social cognitive theory, refers to “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Learners’ beliefs in their capabilities affect performance tremendously. Learners’ beliefs can predict performance better than their real ability (Bandura, 1997; Schunk, 1991). This is of considerable importance for educators in that students with high self-efficacy actually engage in doing a task, therefore they achieve higher score than those learner with low self-efficacy, even though they may have low ability. Self-efficacy is a motivational variable in learning and it seems almost impossible to examine some aspects of human functions such as learning, motivation and academic performance regardless of the role of self-efficacy beliefs of the learners (Pajares & Urdan, 2006).

Bandura (1986) proposed that, within this triadic reciprocity (interaction between three above mentioned factors), individuals are endowed with five capabilities which help them to determine their own action: symbolizing capability, forethought capability, Self-regulatory capability, vicarious capability, and self-reflective capability. Among the five capabilities, self-reflection is the most significant and central capability in determining human behaviour. Self-reflection enables human beings to assess, interpret and self-evaluate their motivation, thoughts and behaviour. One of the most powerful arbiters of self-reflection is self-efficacy which is a strong predictor of success (Bandura, 1986).

Bandura (1997) noted four sources which affect the development of self-efficacy beliefs: a) mastery experience, (b) vicarious experience, (c) social persuasion, and (d) physiological states. People who have experienced successful performance in accomplishing a task, tend to have high self-efficacy, therefore past experiences play a vital role in developing self-efficacy beliefs.

When learners observe their friend and peers perform a task successfully; they develop positive beliefs about their own capabilities in performing the task and hence this experience can enhance the learner’s self-efficacy. Encouragement and positive feedback affects self-efficacy. Learners develop high self-efficacy concerning a specific task when they receive encouragement from mentors, advisors, or superiors who are valued for their expertise in the particular domain assessed. Lastly, physiological and emotional states such as fatigue and anxiety affect self-efficacy. Learners who have low anxiety during a task performance, feel at ease and tend to perceive the situation as pleasant, therefore they strengthen their self-efficacy beliefs.

2.2 *Foreign/Second Language Learners’ Self-efficacy Beliefs*

Self-efficacy is task-specific and differs from context to context. Bandura (1986) posited that various ways are required to assess self-efficacy when tasks vary because assessment of self-efficacy is task-specific. Therefore, self-efficacy needs to be measured specifically rather than generally. Since language learning differs from other types of learning (Williams, 1994), more attention needs to be paid to how learners develop self-efficacy and what factors affect their self-efficacy in second/foreign language contexts.

While a large number of researchers have investigated the role of self-efficacy in different areas of learning, less research has focused on self-efficacy beliefs in the context of foreign language learning. However, there has been a growing interest in self-efficacy beliefs within the field of second language learning in the last ten years. Research results from several areas indicate that self-efficacy is a key factor that affects learners’ interest, persistence, extent of effort students invest in learning, the goals they choose to pursue and their use of self-regulated strategies in performing a task (Carmichael & Taylor, 2005; Lane, Lane, & Kyprianou, 2004; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003; Pajares, 1996, 2003; Schunk, 2003).

In foreign language learning contexts, Research studies have examined self-efficacy in relation to a limited number of variables namely learning strategies, performance, causal attributions, and language anxiety. Still not many research studies have been directed towards the development of self-efficacy in these contexts. Moreover, most of the studies have investigated the correlational relationship between learners’ self-efficacy beliefs and these variables, and only a few studies have focused on the casual relationship between self-efficacy and mentioned variables. Research indicates that self-efficacy in the second language context influences learners’

motivation and learning. Self-efficacy, as a central element of human agency, mediates between learners' aptitude, past achievements and subsequent performances (Bandura, 2006).

Among the different findings, the most consistent one is that learners' self-efficacy for foreign language affects performance in different language domains (Abedini & Rahimi 2009; Hsieh, 2008; Hsieh and Kang 2010; Mills, Pajares, & Herron, 2007, 2006; Tilfarlioğlu & Cinkara, 2011; Wang, Spencer, & Xing, 2009). Considering the critical role of beliefs and thoughts, it is necessary to do much research on learners' self-efficacy and how to develop it in educational settings such as schools and universities.

3. Method

For this review, research synthetic techniques were used to collect a thorough if not exhaustive collection of current research on self-efficacy. We searched the following databases: ERIC, Academic Search Premier, Educational Search Complete, PsycINFO, SCIEDIRECT, SAGE and SCOPUS using the combinations of the following key terms "second language", "foreign language" and "self-efficacy". We selected empirical studies from 2003 up to 2012. During this phase 58 hits were found. In the second selection stage, studies were selected based on the following criteria: (1) the field of study had to be second /foreign language learning (2) the variable 'self-efficacy' had to relate to the definition of Bandura's self-efficacy construct; and (3) one of the main variables of the study had to be self-efficacy; that is studies had to deal with self-efficacy as either a dependent or independent variable.

By addressing these criteria, abstracts and initial paragraphs of the studies were read to exclude the irrelevant ones. Twenty seven studies were thus selected and included in this review. In the third stage, the reference lists of the selected studies were explored carefully for additional studies and 3 articles were added in this way. Finally, to ensure a complete search and inclusion, the Google scholar database was searched and two relevant articles were found. To analyse the studies, each selected study was coded based on the following characteristics: the sample size, design features and study type, context of learning, task or skill type. Since the selected studies were based on various types of research designs (e.g., experimental, correlational), we preferred to do a narrative review. This type of review method summarizes the existing literature on a specific topic; and gives a systematic and comprehensive overview of the topic from a theoretical point of view. The narrative reviews usually use qualitative approach as well as provide in-depth and up-to-date knowledge (Dochy, Segers, Van den Bossche, & Gijbels, 2003).

In order to critically examine the research topic and also to scrutinize the scope of the research carefully, we examine each study carefully and classify them according to the identified themes, as Creswell (1994) states that the objective of research review is to summarize the knowledge gathered concerning a specific topic and to identify the important issues that have not been explored adequately. This investigation pays to discover a general portrait of where the self-efficacy is located in the contexts of language learning, and to what extent it has been researched in these contexts as it is supposed to be the most influential predictor of performance after aptitude. On the basis of the identified themes of the selected studies, the results of the review will be presented in the following section.

4. Results

Following the criteria used for the present study, a total of thirty two studies were selected for inclusion in this review (see Appendix A). The selected studies were carefully examined, and the specific characteristics of each study was identified and compared with another to draw out the differences. After some description about the characteristic features of the studies, the results will be presented. The studies were categorized into two groups: the effect of self-efficacy and factors affecting self-efficacy. Each of the groups was classified into subcategories, as shown in Table 1.

4.1 Characteristics Features of the Studies

The final sample for this review consisted of empirical studies published between 2003 and 2012. 66% of the studies were conducted between 2009 and 2012 (July). This shows that the last three years have experienced a drastic increase in the number of research studies on self-efficacy in the field of foreign language compared with the period from 2003 to 2008. With regard to the context of foreign/second language, most of the research studies investigated self-efficacy beliefs in relation to English language rather than other languages. The selected studies were conducted in the context of the following languages as a second or foreign language: English (27 studies), French (4 studies), Spanish (one study) German (one study) and Chinese (one study). It should be noted that in one study the sample consisted of three different groups of students who were studying one of these languages (German, Spanish and French) as a foreign language.

With respect to the type of studies in the selection, the following features were identified: 28 without-intervention studies and 7 with-intervention studies. Only two qualitative studies were found in the selected sample, i.e. Wang and Pape (2007) and, Graham (2006), but 5 mixed-method studies were identified: Siew and Wong (2005), Çakır and Alıcı (2009), Egel (2009), Matthews (2010), and the rest were quantitative studies. And lastly, among all of selected studies, only two studies, Çakır and Alıcı (2009) and, Wang and Pape (2007), have evaluated the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and self-efficacy sources.

Table 1. Classification of Studies Based on Identified Themes

| Category | Sub-category |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Effects of self-efficacy | Effects of self-efficacy on performance |
| | Effects of self-efficacy on affective domain |
| Factors affecting self-efficacy | Contextual variables and sources of self-efficacy |
| Strategies | Styles |

4.2 Effects of Self-efficacy

We found within our selection twenty studies in which researchers examined the relationship between self-efficacy and performance or affective factors. These studies were categorized into two groups: Effects of self-efficacy on performance and Effects of self-efficacy on affective domain

4.2.1 Effects of Self-efficacy on Performance

In this analysis, 12 articles were found to have examined the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and performance as indicated by either course grades in the foreign language (Mahyuddin, et al., 2006; Mills, Pajares, & Herron 2007; Hsieh & Schallert 2008) or proficiency in a specific domain of the target language – reading (Mills, Pajares & Herron 2006; Mills, Pajares, & Herron 2007) listening (Abedini & Rahimi 2009; Mills, Pajares & Herron 2006; Magogwe & Oliver, 2007; Tilfarlioğlu & Ciftci 2011). Findings of these studies were in agreement with research in other domains such as math and education in general (Dennissen et al., 2007; Multon et al., 1991; and Pajares, 1996; Pajares & Schunk, 2001) which indicated that self-efficacy strongly predicted performance.

Mills, Pajares and Herron (2006) surveyed 95 college students who were learning French as a foreign language in the USA. The study found that there was a significant positive relationship between reading self-efficacy beliefs and reading proficiency, whereas listening self-efficacy was positively correlated with listening proficiency only for the females. Hsieh and Schallert (2008) also demonstrated that among the different variables used in the study as predictors of achievement, self-efficacy was the strongest predictor of English achievement among South Korean students.

Tilfarlioğlu and Ciftci (2011) surveyed 250 university students in Turkey. The survey study yielded results in agreement with that in Hsieh and Schallert (2008). In a similar vein, Tilfarlioğlu and Ciftci (2011) conducted a study on 250 students in Turkey. According to the findings of the study, there was a positive relationship between academic success as defined by grades and learners' self-efficacy beliefs. In another study, Abedini and Rahimi (2009) also examined the relationship between self-efficacy and performance. The results of the study showed that Iranian students' self-efficacy beliefs were positively correlated to their Listening proficiency.

Nariman-Jahan and Rahimpour (2010) revealed the importance of learners' self-efficacy in predicting their achievement. In the line with previous research, the results of this study indicate that learners' self-efficacy is significantly related to their performance in learning English. However, Anyadubalu (2010) in a study that involved 318 students in Thailand found no significant relationship between self-efficacy and English language performance hence the result was not in line with previous studies which indicated that there is a significant relationship between self-efficacy and performance. He claimed that these results were possible because the participants were young (12) and the collective society as cultural factor appears to discourage students to make decision on their own.

4.2.2 Effects of Self-efficacy on Affective Domain

There is a considerable body of educational research that supports the idea that learners' self-efficacy influences their motivation to learn (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Pajares, 2003; Schunk, 1991). There is a limited number of studies that investigated the effect of self-efficacy on motivation within foreign language learning contexts. This

review found 7 articles that attempted to investigate the effects of self-efficacy on anxiety (Mills, Pajares & Herron; 2006; Erkan & Saban, 2011; Anyadubalu, 2010; and Çubukçu 2008) and attributions (Hsieh & Kang, 2010; Hsieh & Schallert 2008; and Graham, 2006).

Research indicates that self-efficacy beliefs affect the attributions learners make for their success and failure in a given task. According to the results of these studies, students with different levels of self-efficacy make different attributions for their success and failure in learning second language. For example, Hsieh and Schallert (2008) conducted a study on self-efficacy and attributions. In the study, 500 undergraduate students learning French, Spanish and German as a foreign language in the USA were examined. The study found that ESL learners who attributed their failure to lack of effort as a controllable attribution had higher self-efficacy than learners who did not attribute their failure to effort.

Similarly, a recent study into self-efficacy and attributions (Hsieh and Kang 2010) found that Korean students who had higher self-efficacy made more personal control attributions such as effort than those with lower self-efficacy. In contrast, students who had lower self-efficacy made more external attributions such as to the teacher for their success and failure in their test. Graham (2006) also, in her qualitative research of students learning French in the UK, found that students with low self-efficacy tended to attribute their failure to low ability, a factor which is beyond students' control, whereas students with high self-efficacy attributed their failure to controllable attributions such as insufficient effort or lacking in the use of appropriate strategies.

Some studies have investigated self-efficacy in relation to anxiety. Erkan and Saban (2011) surveyed 188 EFL students in Turkey to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy and anxiety. The study found that there is a negatively significant relationship between learners' writing self-efficacy beliefs and their writing anxiety. Mills, Pajares and Herron (2006) also examined the relationship between self-efficacy and anxiety. The study revealed that students' self-efficacy was negatively associated with their reading and listening anxiety. Nevertheless, Çubukçu (2008) found that there is not any relationship between self-efficacy and language anxiety. He maintained that the results might be due to cultural and educational contexts in which students were raised in Turkey, (students were studying at a boarding school and they were from villages and small towns), students' Shy personality, lack of frequent chance to express themselves in their classes, their preference to speak Turkish due to lesser anxiety and stress. Overall, except Çubukçu (2008)' study, self-efficacy in these studies was negatively related to anxiety (Erkan & Saban, 2011; Lucchetti, Phipps, & Behnke, 2003).

4.3 Factors Affecting Self-efficacy

In this review of research, we found several studies that attempted to investigate factors affecting learners' self-efficacy within the contexts of second language learning. These studies were classified into three categories: strategies, styles, and contextual variables.

4.3.1 Strategies

Researchers also attempted to investigate whether strategies and strategy training could enhance learners' self-efficacy in learning a foreign language. We found 6 articles within our selection, in which researchers were interested to investigate the effects of strategies on self-efficacy beliefs through the use of surveys (Yilmaz, 2010; Wang & Li, 2010; Wong, 2005; Su & Duo, 2012; and Magogwe & Oliver, 2007) and also there was one qualitative study (Mathews, 2010). Besides these survey studies, we found 7 intervention studies, in which researchers examined the effects of strategy training on self-efficacy beliefs (Graham, 2007; Chularut & DeBacker, 2004; Chan & Lam, 2008; Shang, 2010; Khajavi & Ketabi, 2012; Goker, 2006; and Zheng et al. 2009).

Results from the survey studies suggested that the use of strategies is significantly related to self-efficacy beliefs. For example, Magogwe and Oliver (2007) did a longitudinal study on 480 Botswana students who were learning English as a second language. The study found that there is a significant relationship between Botswana ESL learners' strategy use and their self-efficacy beliefs. In Taiwan, Su and Duo's (2012) study of 200 students, found that learning strategies are significantly associated with self-efficacy beliefs. Wong (2005) interviewed 6 Malaysian participants to explore their language learning strategies and self-efficacy beliefs. The study revealed that high-self-efficacy learners used more language learning strategies. Furthermore, Wang and Li (2010) discovered that reading self-efficacy was positively correlated to reading strategies namely metacognitive, social/affective and cognitive strategies. Readers who had high efficacy used more reading strategies than reader who had low self-efficacy.

Similarly, Yilmaz (2010) also found that learners who had higher self-efficacy beliefs showed more use of different kinds of learning strategies. He carried out a study on 160 Turkish students and found that all types of

learning strategies: memory, compensation, cognitive, metacognitive, social and affective strategies were strongly related to self-efficacy beliefs. In a qualitative study, Mathews (2010) found that factors such as short tutoring sessions, deep-level questioning, explicit explanation of structural rules, and considering foreign language as a learnable model, all affect students' self-efficacy.

In studies with intervention, the following findings were reported. In a study conducted on thirty two undergraduate students in Cyprus, Goker (2006) found that peer coaching training enhanced the self-efficacy of the treatment group. Graham (2007) investigated the effects of strategy training on listening self-efficacy with 12 students learning French as a foreign language in UK. The study found that students who had received feedback showed higher level of self-efficacy for listening, although the difference when compared with non-feedback group was not great. Khajavi and Ketabi's (2012) investigation on whether concept mapping strategy would improve learners' self-efficacy revealed that Iranian EFL learners who received concept mapping strategy showed greater self-efficacy than the control group.

Additionally, Zhenget al. (2009) found that students who participated online in a 3D game-like virtual world, Quest Atlantis (QA), obtained higher scores than the non-QA group in self-efficacy concerning skilful use of English, attitude toward English, and self-efficacy toward electronic-communication. The findings also indicated that the virtual world provides opportunities for learners throughout the globe to enhance the level of their confidence and comfort and they can easily overcome cultural obstacles faced in the process of learning English. Furthermore, Studies by Shang, (2010); and Chularut & DeBacker, (2004) demonstrated the effectiveness of strategies on self-efficacy beliefs within the context of foreign language learning.

4.3.2 Contextual Variables and Sources of Self-efficacy

In terms of the factors that impact the development of self-efficacy beliefs, a very little limited number of studies in the area of second language learning have been conducted on the four main sources of self-efficacy proposed by Bandura (1995). Findings of these studies indicate that both internal and external factors such as, learners' interest, successful experiences, peers' successful performance, knowledge in the content area, positive feedback from others, social and cultural context all affect the development of learners' self-efficacy beliefs.

Çakır and Alici (2009) found that past successful experiences and social persuasions are influential variables that affect learner's self-efficacy. The study also indicated that students' perception of their self-efficacy was higher than their instructors' judgment about students' self-efficacy. Some studies pointed out a variety of factors affecting self-efficacy beliefs. In a qualitative study, Wang and Pape (2007) investigated the factors that affect the development self-efficacy of three young Chinese students learning English as second language in the US. The study revealed that factors such as learners' past experience, interest, attitudes toward English language, social persuasion, task difficulty, and social and cultural setting affected learners' self-efficacy.

Moghari et al. (2011), in their survey study of 741 Iranian students learning English as a foreign language, found that academic emphasis and teacher's trust in parents and students had a direct and positive effect on learners' English self-efficacy. Moreover, Egel (2009) interviewed 20 Turkish undergraduates about their self-efficacy beliefs. Interestingly, the study found that teachers' self-efficacy and ability had effects on learners' English language self-efficacy. Greta (2009) also reported that classroom climate, interaction between learners and as well as interaction between teachers and learners affected learners' self-efficacy.

4.3.3 Styles

Although learning styles and self-efficacy in second language have been investigated separately, there is a general lack of research conducted on the relationship between learning styles and self-efficacy in language learning. We found only one study has examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy in second language learning. Moafian and Ghanizadeh (2009) found that there is a significant relationship between EFL participants' emotional intelligence and their self-efficacy. The study also revealed that the three components of emotional intelligence namely emotional awareness, interpersonal relationship and problem-solving were good predictors of self-efficacy. Research has consistently documented the link between sources of self-efficacy namely mastery experience, vicarious experience social persuasion and emotional and physiological states.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This review found a number of limitations concerning previous empirical studies on self-efficacy within the contexts of second language learning. The first limitation relates to surveys and self-reported data. The results of survey studies indicate that self-efficacy beliefs predict performance or strategy training affects self-efficacy. However, the validity of these results relies to some extent on the learners' honesty. Respondents usually have a

tendency to provide socially desirable answers, and hence tend to give a good picture of themselves through their answers (Hancock & Flowers, 2001; Rosenfeld, Booth-Kewley, Edwards & Thomas, 1996). Furthermore, the vast majority of the studies used questionnaire to capture learners' self-efficacy beliefs whereas only interviewing with learners and teachers can provide deep insight into learners' beliefs.

Another limitation concerns correlational studies. Correlational analyses cannot determine the causal relationship between self-efficacy and other variables; they simply show the extent of relatedness of the variables (Green & Salkind, 2005). The third limitation lies in sample size and generalizability of the previous studies. Although all selected survey studies revealed that there is a significant relationship between some factors and students' self-efficacy, the limitations such as sample size and use of correlational methods affected the validity of the research.

Except for Magogwe and Oliver's (2007) study, almost all of the others examined self-efficacy over a short period of time. They examined short-term influences on the self-efficacy and thus, these studies did not examine whether students' beliefs and perceptions change over a longer period of time.

With regard to the factors affecting self-efficacy beliefs, most of the studies investigated the strategies or strategy training that affect students' self-efficacy, only studies by Çakır and Alıcı (2009) Wang and Pope (2005), Moghari et al. (2011), Egel (2009), and Greta (2009) investigated factors at the level of instructor or learner's classroom interactions. The findings of these studies concur on the four sources of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) which affect the development of self-efficacy beliefs. However no study has examined the combined effects or separate effects of sources of self-efficacy on the development of self-efficacy beliefs.

With respect to the effect of self-efficacy on performance, findings of these studies (Mahyuddin, et al., 2006; Hsieh & Schallert 2008, Mills, Pajares & Herron 2006, 2007; Abedini & Rahimi 2009 Tilfarlioğlu & Ciftci 2011; Tilfarlioğlu & Cinkara 2009) indicate that self-efficacy strongly predicts performance. Findings of these studies are in agreement with self-efficacy research in other domains such as math, science, and L1 writing (Dennissen et al., 2007; Multon et. al, 1991; Pajares, 1996; Pajares & Schunk, 2001). However Anyadubalu (2010) found no relationship between self-efficacy and performance. Although he referred to the age of participants and students' background culture (collectivist society) as contributing factors to the results, self-efficacy measurement could be another influencing factor. One of the main issues with self-efficacy research in foreign language education and in educational research in general is how it is measured (Pajares, 1996). Many have created surveys under the guise of self-efficacy – but are instead evaluating other variables such as motivation, engagement, etc. It should also be noted that most studies examined the relationship between self-efficacy and performance in reading and listening skills, fewer studies have investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and performance in writing and speaking. One reason could be that reading and listening are more easily evaluated by objective tests and the evaluation is easy to handle for large populations. On the other hand, it is difficult to measure speaking proficiency and writing proficiency because they are measured by subjective tests affected by raters. Nevertheless, it seems necessary to examine self-efficacy beliefs in relation to these skills too. As Bandura, 1997, 1986) noted that self-efficacy is generally considered as a task-specific construct. This means one's self-efficacy to get good marks in writing may differ from his self-efficacy in reading comprehension. Self-efficacy beliefs differ from one particular domain of language to another one.

Based on the findings of this analysis we can come to the following conclusions. First, in studies with intervention, it is concluded that it is possible to affect learners' self-efficacy in the field of second language learning. The intervention studies indicated a significant relationship between the intervention set by researcher and learners' self-efficacy beliefs. Second, student self-efficacy has appeared as one of the most influential independent variables on learner's performance and achievement within second language learning contexts. Third, contextual variables such as classroom interaction, teacher efficacy play a vital role in stimulating students to exert the required effort in performing a specific task when students have experienced previous success in the specific task. Fourth, in studies without intervention, most studies showed a significant relationship between self-efficacy and other variables, but no one explicated causal relationship between self-efficacy and other variables. Fifth, most of the studies assessed learners' self-efficacy beliefs in a short term period; they have not examined long-term influences.

6. Pedagogical Implications for L2 Learning/Teaching

Since self-efficacy is one of the most influential factors for L2 learning, it appears to be very important for the teacher to help students develop their self-efficacy. Teachers can enhance the level of students' self-efficacy through several feasible teaching techniques. Performance accomplishment is a key factor for developing self-efficacy. Learners who have repeated experiences of success have higher self-efficacy than those students

who experience repeated failure. Teachers should give learners some tasks that they can perform (Dörnyei, 2001), hence learners can build successful experiences. As persuasion is one of the four sources of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986), positive feedback and encouragement from the teachers can enhance students' self-efficacy. Self-efficacy can also be developed through vicarious experience. Students should be provided with opportunities to observe their friends and classmates do tasks successfully, these opportunities help learners to foster positive beliefs about themselves.

7. Suggestions for Future Research

The findings of this review present some suggestions for further research. Because of the limitations of surveys and questionnaires, it seems necessary to conduct qualitative research to investigate the construct of self-efficacy more deeply among learners. Since the studies investigated self-efficacy on the short term bases, it appears to be essential to do research in which self-efficacy is examined over long-term periods.

Another line of research is to investigate how the classroom interactions between tutor and tutee or learner and peers can enhance self-efficacy. More research is needed to show how learners' self-efficacy beliefs toward a specific task in classroom context and out of the class context can be developed and enhanced. Furthermore, more research is required to find the casual relationships between self-efficacy and other variables rather than just establishing a simple relationship. Finally it seems necessary to examine self-efficacy beliefs with the interaction of learning style, personality types, and cultural and social variables. Establishing that these variables influence learners' self-efficacy will help and guide educational and program planners in paving the way for the development of learners' self-efficacy.

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Appendix A. Summary of reviewed studies

| Study | participants | context | type of data | basic findings |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| Khajavi & Ketabi (2012) | 60 intermediate students (Iran) | Participants received strategy instruction in concept mapping | Survey | Students who received concept mapping showed greater self-efficacy than the students in control group |
| Su & Duo (2012) | 200 students (Taiwan) | Students completed two questionnaires | Survey | There was a positive relationship between self-efficacy and language learning strategy |
| Erkan & Saban (2011) | 188 undergraduates (Turkey) | Students completed the questionnaires and they were then given 45 minutes to write a composition on a given topic | Survey | Writing anxiety was negatively related to writing performance and also the relationship between writing anxiety and writing self-efficacy was negatively significant |
| Tilfarlıoğlu & Ciftci (2011) | 250 university students (Turkey) | Students completed questionnaires | Survey | There was a significant relationship between self-efficacy and learner autonomy, and also a positive correlation between self-efficacy and academic success |
| Moghari et al. (2011) | 741 high-school students (Iran) | Students completed a questionnaire and they also took exams | Survey | Academic emphasis and teacher's trust in parents and students had a direct and positive effect on English language self-efficacy. Also perception of academic emphasis /trust and perception of teacher self-efficacy had an indirect positive effect on English language achievement through student self-efficacy |
| Matthews (2010) | 29 tutees (USA) | Students received tutoring sessions, and completed pre-tutoring and post-tutoring questionnaires | Video tape transcription and survey | Motivationally effective sessions on self-efficacy were short and concentrated on deep understanding of the foreign language through explicit explanation of structural rules and deep questioning |
| Anyadubalu (2010) | 318 middle-school students | Students were given the questionnaires to mark their responses | Survey, students' course grades | There was no significant relationship between self-efficacy and English |

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| | (Thailand) | | | | language performance , but there was a significant moderate negative relationship between English language anxiety and self-efficacy |
| Yilmaz (2010) | 140 undergraduate students (Turkey) | The students filled out a questionnaire | Survey | | Learners' self-efficacy beliefs were strongly correlated to the use of different kinds of learning strategies |
| Wang & Li (2010) | 182 sophomores (China) | Students completed the questionnaires | Survey | | Reading self-efficacy was significantly positively correlated to reading strategies. Highly self-efficacious readers showed more use of reading strategies than those who had low self-efficacy |
| Shang (2010) | 53 freshmen (Taiwan) | Students received reading strategy instruction and completed questionnaires | Survey | | A significant relationship was found between the use of reading strategies and self-efficacy beliefs |
| Hsieh & Kang (2010) | 192 ninth-grade English learners (South Korea) | Learners answered attribution and self-efficacy ratings upon receiving test grades | Survey | | ESL Learners with high level levels of self-efficacy make more internal and personal attributions than low efficacious learners, and also among unsuccessful learners, high efficacious ones make more personal control attributions than those with low level of self-efficacy. And self-efficacy predicted achievement |
| Nariman-Jahan&Rahimpour (2010) | 144 undergraduates (Iran) | Participants were requested to execute three tasks: a narrative task, a personal task, and decision-making task and fill out the self-efficacy questionnaire | Survey, learners' grades | | A significant relationship was found between self-efficacy and writing performance in narrative and personal tasks ,but there was no relationship between self-efficacy and decision-making tasks concerning concept load, fluency, difficulty , and accuracy in both participants with high and low levels of proficiency |
| Çakır & Alıcı (2009) | 39 undergraduates (Turkey) | Participants completed a questionnaire and interviews with their instructors were also conducted | Interview and survey | | Students' perception of their self-efficacy was higher than their instructors' judgment about students' self-efficacy |
| Greta (2009) | 150 undergraduate students (USA) | Students responded to an online questionnaire | Survey | | Learner showed slight self-efficacy for those things which their instructors thought learners were able to do |
| Egel (2009) | 67 undergraduate students (Turkey) | Participants completed a questionnaire and 20 were invited for interview. | Interview and survey | | Self-efficacy beliefs of the students at the ELT department of UU were high and that they seem rather confident about their efficacy and no significant difference between the two |

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| | | | | groups. The interviews of the research have provided evidence that the student teacher's efficacy also depends on mentor's behavior |
| Wang, Spencer, & Xing (2009) | 45 English-speaking students (China) | students completed a questionnaire and took tests | Survey | Among learners' metacognitive strategies and beliefs, self-efficacy was the best predictor of achievement |
| Zheng et al. (2009) | 61 students (China) | Students participated online in 3D game-like virtual world, Quest Atlantis (QA) during their study hall time an average of 60 minutes once a week for 25 weeks | close-ended and open-ended questions, essay, survey | Students who participated online in 3D game-like virtual world, Quest Atlantis (QA), obtained higher scores than the non-QA group in self-efficacy concerning skilful use of English, their attitude toward English, and self-efficacy toward electronic-communication |
| Abedini & Rahimi (2009) | 61 freshmen undergraduates (Iran) | Students completed questionnaires and took TOEFL test | Survey, learners' grades | Listening comprehension self-efficacy was significantly related to listening proficiency |
| Moafian & Ghanizadeh (2009) | 89 teachers (Iran) | Participants completed questionnaires | Survey | There was a significant relationship between the teachers' emotional intelligence and their self-efficacy and also it was found that problem solving was a good predictor of teachers' self-efficacy |
| Hsieh & Schallert (2008) | 500 undergraduates (USA) | Questionnaires were given to the students as they received their tests from their teacher and asked them to fill them out immediately before any verbal feedback was given by the teacher | Survey, learners' course grades | Among the different variables of the study as predictors of achievement, self-efficacy was the strongest variable in predicting of achievement, and supported by ability as an internal attribution. ESL learners who attributed their failure to lack of effort had higher self-efficacy than learners who did not make effort attributions for their failure |
| Çubukçu (2008) | 100 junior level students (Turkey) | Students were asked to respond to a questionnaire | Survey | There was no relationship between foreign language learning anxiety and self-efficacy |
| Chan & Lam (2008) | 79 students (Hong Kong) | Students received summative feedback and formative feedback and then they completed a questionnaire | Survey | Participants who received formative feedback showed higher level of self-efficacy than those who received summative feedback |
| Magogwe & Oliver (2007) | 480 students (Botswana) | Students completed questionnaires | Survey, learners' grades | There was a dynamic relationship between use of language learning strategies, proficiency and self-efficacy |
| Mills, Pajares, & Herron (2007) | 303 college students (USA) | Students completed the questionnaires and the instructor also provided the researcher with | Survey, learners' grades | Self-efficacy for self-regulation was a stronger predictor of language achievement than French anxiety in reading |

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| | | | students' final course grades | | and listening, and French learning self-concept. Female students reported greater self-efficacy for self-regulation, interest, value, and enjoyment in learning about both the French language and culture than did male students |
| Graham (2007) | 112 students aged 16 to 17 (UK) | Learners received strategy training with feedback on their listening strategy use and on the reflective diaries, and took performance test | | Performance tests and survey | Students who had received feedback showed higher level of self-efficacy for listening, although the difference with non-feedback group was not great |
| Wang & Pape (2007) | 3 students (US) | Students' activities and performance in class and at home were investigated | | Interview, observation | Variables such as interest, attitude toward English, social and cultural setting, social persuasion, and task difficulty affect self-efficacy beliefs |
| Graham (2006) | 10 students (UK) | Students were interviewed | | Interview, questionnaire | Students with low self-efficacy attributed their failures to uncontrollable factors such as lack of ability. |
| Mahyuddin, et al. (2006) | 1,146 students (Malaysia) | Students completed the questionnaires and also the instructor provided the researchers with students' final course grades | | survey, students' course grades | There was a positive relationship between self-efficacy and academic performance in English language |
| Mills, Pajares & Herron (2006) | 95 college students (USA) | Students completed a questionnaire (twice), and their reading and listening proficiency was evaluated | | Survey, learners' grades | There was a significant positive relationship between reading self-efficacy beliefs and reading proficiency, whereas listening self-efficacy was positively correlated with listening proficiency only for the females, and there was a significant relationship between listening anxiety and listening proficiency |
| Goker (2006) | 32 undergraduate students (Cyprus) | EFL students received a peer coaching training program | | Video-tape and audio-tape data and survey | Peer coaching training enhanced the self-efficacy level of treatment group |
| Wong (2005) | 74 pre-service teachers (Malaysia) | ESL Participants answered a questionnaire, some of them were invited for interview | | Interview, open-ended questions and survey | Pre-service teachers who had higher self-efficacy, showed more frequent use of language learning strategies than did those pre-service teachers who had low self-efficacy |
| Chularut & DeBacker (2004) | 79 students (USA) | Students received concept-mapping strategy and then they were asked to answer a questionnaire | | Survey | Students in treatment group showed greater self-efficacy than control group |