



การศึกษาการรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองในด้านทักษะภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียน
ที่มีระดับความสามารถทางด้านภาษาแตกต่างกัน

A Study of English Language Skills Self-efficacy of EFL Learners
with Different Levels of Language Proficiency

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การวิจัยมีวัตถุประสงค์ (1) เพื่อศึกษาการรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองในด้านทักษะภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 4 (2) เพื่อเปรียบเทียบการรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองในด้านทักษะภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนที่มีความสามารถทางด้านภาษาแตกต่างกัน กลุ่มตัวอย่างเป็นนักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 4 จากโรงเรียนในเครือบดินทรเดชา 6 โรงเรียน จำนวน 269 คน เครื่องมือวิจัย คือ แบบวัดการรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองในด้านทักษะภาษาอังกฤษ สั่งเคราะห์มาจากหลักสูตรแกนกลางการศึกษาขั้นพื้นฐาน พุทธศักราช 2551 การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล ได้แก่ การหาค่าความถี่ ร้อยละ ค่าเฉลี่ย ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน และการวิเคราะห์ความแปรปรวนทางเดียว

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า 1) นักเรียนกลุ่มเก่งมีการรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองในด้านทักษะการฟังสูงที่สุด ในขณะที่นักเรียนกลุ่มปานกลางและกลุ่มอ่อนมีการรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองในด้านทักษะการอ่านสูงที่สุด 2) มีความแตกต่างกันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญในเรื่องการรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองด้านทักษะภาษาอังกฤษของผู้เรียนที่มีความสามารถทางภาษาต่างกัน โดยค่าเฉลี่ยรวมของนักเรียนในกลุ่มเก่งจะมีความแตกต่างอย่างมีนัยสำคัญจากนักเรียนในกลุ่มปานกลางและกลุ่มอ่อน

คำสำคัญ: การรับรู้ความสามารถของตนเองด้านทักษะภาษาอังกฤษ, ความสามารถทางภาษา, มัธยมศึกษา

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Abstract

This study aimed 1) to explore self-perception on English language skills self-efficacy of Thai grade tenth learners and 2) to compare English language skills self-efficacy of learners with different levels of language proficiency. The participants were 269 of Grade 10 learners at six schools under the name of “BODINDACHA” school. The research instrument was an English Language Skills Self-Efficacy questionnaire analyzed from the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008). The data were analyzed using frequencies, percentage, means, standard deviation and One-way ANOVA.

The results showed that 1) high proficiency EFL learners ranked listening skill self-efficacy as the highest. Whereas, the highest ranked skill of mid and low proficiency groups was reading skill self-efficacy. 2) There was a significant difference of the average overall English language skills self-efficacy among three groups of learners. The overall language skills of high proficiency group significantly differed from mid and low proficiency groups.

Keywords: English language skills self-efficacy, language proficiency, secondary level

Introduction

It is now globally recognized that English language plays a significant role in today's world. English has become one of the international languages used by people from all around the world, and it is widely accepted as the primary international language for all kinds of professional and personal goals (Alawiyah, 2018; Wang & Rajprasit, 2015). In Thailand, English has been increasingly defined as a basic skill required for every student at every level of education system. In recognition of its importance, English is one of the eight learning areas for basic education at all levels which prescribed as the fundamental learning content for the foreign language learning with the ultimate goal of enabling learners to acquire a desired attitude towards foreign language, the ability to use foreign language for communicating in various situations and purposes, seeking knowledge, engaging in a livelihood and pursuing further education at higher levels (Ministry of Education, 2018).

Even though there has been an increasing demand for studying English, the academic English proficiency of Thai students are unsatisfactory (Wang & Rajprasit, 2015; Wiriyachitra, 2002). The National Institute of Educational Testing Service (NIETS), a public organization in charge of preparing the Ordinary National Education Test (ONET) especially for Grade 12 students throughout Thailand, announced the results of the exams taken from the 2013-2017 academic years that the mean score for the five key subjects especially English were below 30. Moreover, in the 2018 academic year, the average English scores of Thai students was 31.41, and there has been a criticism for students' extremely poor performance on the O-NET tests (National Institute of Educational Testing Service, 2018). Moreover, according to the EF English Proficiency Index for students, the world's largest ranking of countries and regions in accordance with their English skills, it is annually reported that from 88 countries/regions, Thailand is in the 64th and in Asia, is located in the 16th from 21 countries. It can be shown

that the level of English language proficiency of Thais is in the low proficiency comparing to other countries (Education First, 2018).

Considering about factors involving students' failure in learning English, it is likely that students lack opportunity to use English in their lives and they have poor knowledge of English language. English language is too challenging for Thai students to be competent because of their lack of opportunity in using English, unchallenging English lessons, feeling too shy to speak English, being passive learners, and, most importantly, lack of responsibility for their own learning (Biyaem, 1997; Wiriyachitra, 2002; Wang & Rajprasit, 2015). Thus, various studies were conducted in order to identify the causes of this problem at all levels of the educational system, including the basic education level, and to encourage the learning abilities of the students, such as an investigation into English language learning and teaching techniques, English language learning strategies, and addressing schemata in English learning (Wang & Rajprasit, 2015). Based on Mills et al.(2006) research has shown that self-efficacy has a considerable impact on learning outcomes, with a stronger sense of self-efficacy found to lead to higher levels of achievement, a greater willingness to face challenges and to exert effort to accomplishment. Brown (2006) also mentions that it is essential for learners to have the belief in their own capability in order to succeed at learning a language. Importantly, when learners lose momentum in the face of a number of forms of self-doubt, the most important role of successful teacher is to facilitate high levels of self-efficacy in their students.

During the past few decades, self-efficacy has emerged as a highly effective predictor of students' learning achievement (Zimmerman, 2000; Hsieh & Kang, 2010; Wang & Rajprasit, 2015). Self-efficacy refers to people's belief in one's own capabilities to successfully perform behaviors at designated levels (Bandura, 1986, 1977; Dullas, 2018; Schunk & Pajares, 2002). In accordance with Dullas (2018), self-efficacy is having a capacity of control over an individual's thoughts, feelings, and actions. In the field of language learning, self-efficacy has been defined as the ability to communicate in English achieved by mastering reading, writing, speaking, and listening skill (Abrar & Mukminin, 2016; Habibi et al., 2016; Haryanto & Mukminin, 2012). To be successful English language learners, Hsieh and Kang (2010) states that self-efficacy of students plays a crucial role in students' action, motivation, and achievement in language learning. Pajares (1996) notes that people with low self-efficacy may perceive that things are tougher than those with high self-efficacy have the feeling of serenity in reaching difficult tasks and activities. As a result, high self-efficacy individuals are likely to put more efforts and commitment in doing the tasks to achieve their goals, whereas those with low self-efficacy do not want to struggle with difficulties in order to accomplish their learning (Eggen & Kauchak, 1999; Sağlam & Arslan 2018).

There have been several studies focusing on self-efficacy and English language skills. More specifically, self-efficacy has been examined as a predictor of successful academic

achievement (Schunk, 1991, 1996, as cited in Brown, 2006). It has a considerable impact on learning outcomes, with a stronger sense of self-efficacy found to lead to higher levels of achievement, a greater willingness to face challenges and to exert effort (Mills et al., 2006). In the study of Shell et al. (1989), they measured self-efficacy in terms of perceived capability to perform various types of reading activities and found that self-efficacy belief predicted 32% of the variance in reading achievement. However, most studies in language learning have explored the learning performance within each aspect of language learning. This research study, however, investigated the language self-efficacy within each aspect and overall English language learning by comparing groups of English including low, mid, and high achieving students.

Self-efficacy belief has received the increasing attention in the area of educational research. Although studies on students' English language skills self-efficacy, and their relationship with a number of variables such as motivation, autonomy, and anxiety etc., have been conducted, the differentiation of the four skills of English language and the self-efficacy among students with different levels of English language proficiency is still limited, especially in the Thai basic education system. Moreover, none of these studies have been done with grade tenth EFL learners who have dedicated their approximately 10-year period of time in learning English. Therefore, this study will rationally focus on the students' English language skills self-efficacy, four skills, and the differentiation of such self-efficacy among students with different levels of English language proficiency, including the low-proficiency, mid-proficiency and the high-proficiency, for Thai grade tenth EFL learners with the intention to better understand students' English language skills self-efficacy and improve the language instruction appropriately to students' different levels of English language proficiency.

Research Objectives

1. To explore self-perception on English language skills self-efficacy of Thai grade tenth learners
2. To compare English language skills self-efficacy of learners with different levels of language proficiency

Methodology

Participants

The target population was 4,200 grade tenth upper secondary students in six schools under the name of "BODINDACHA" school in the academic year 2019. The participants comprised a total number of 269 grade tenth upper secondary students in schools under the name of "BODINDACHA", which met the minimum required samples from G*power analysis for calculating statistical power and determining sample size of the statistical test. They were

selected based on random sampling technique. The three groups of students (high, mid, and low language proficiency) were categorized based on their grades of Fundamental English course in the first semester of 2019 academic year as follows: 1) high-proficiency students were those who obtained their grades of 3.50 to 4.00, 2) mid-proficiency students were those who obtained their grades of 2.00 to 3.00, and 3) low-proficiency students were those who obtained their grades of 1.00 to 1.50.

Instruments

Self-Efficacy Language Skills for Grade Tenth EFL Learner questionnaire was developed by the researcher. It was adapted from an English Language Skills Self-Efficacy questionnaire provided by the benchmark of grade 9 graduates from the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008) (Ministry of Education, 2018). The questionnaire comprised of two main parts: a) *Part I Demographic Information* consisted of 5 items which obtained information about the participants' school name, gender, fields of study, latest English Subject grade and the number of years spending on learning English and b) *Part II English Language Skills Self-Efficacy* consisted of 97 items, including listening skill (17 items), speaking skill (29 items), reading skill (17 items), and writing skill (17 items). A five-point Likert-type scale was used to measure the degree of agreement in the second section of the questionnaire, ranging from one (Strongly Disagree) to five (Strongly Agree). To avoid any English language barrier and misunderstanding, the questionnaire was translated into Thai to ensure the accuracy of Thai version.

These items were validated by three experts in the field of English language teaching using the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC). They were validated in terms of content validity, face validity and clarity of items. All items had the index of IOC higher than 0.5. The items were tried out to check its reliability with 30 grade tenth students. The reliability of these items were measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to analyze the internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability score ranged from 0.83-0.98, showing very good reliability. The highest reliability scores were listening skill self-efficacy (0.98), followed by speaking skill (0.95), writing skills (0.87) and reading skills (0.83).

Data Collection

The survey was carried out in the second semester in the academic year 2019. The questionnaire was distributed online to grade tenth students in 6 schools under the name of "BODINDACHA" school.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using Program R version 3.6.0 to calculate frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation for descriptive statistics. Also, data of inferential statistics using One-way ANOVA were analyzed to compare mean differences of the overall English language skills self-efficacy from three groups of students (low, mid and high

proficiency). The interpretation of mean scores analyzing language skills self-efficacy was as follows: very high (4.50-5.00), relatively high (3.50-4.49), moderate (2.50-3.49), relatively low (1.50-2.49), and very low (1.00-1.49).

Results

The data were analyzed into two parts: 1) Demographic information of the participants and 2) English language skill self-efficacy of grade tenth learners.

1. Demographic information of the participants

Participants were 269 grade tenth EFL learners, including male (40%) and female (60%). The majority of the participants studied Sciences and Mathematics (34%), followed by Arts-Mathematics (31%), Arts and Language (21%) and Sciences and Engineering (10%), respectively. Most of them received grades 3.50 to 4.00 in English subject (54%), followed by grades 2.00 to 3.00 (34%). They had experiences in learning English more than 12 years (69%). However, there were only 10% of participants learning English language less than 12 years.

2. English language skill self-efficacy of grade tenth learners

In this part, the results were presented into two parts in accordance with the research questions including 1) self-perception of English language skills self-efficacy among low, mid and high proficiency learners and 2) Comparison of English language skills self-efficacy among low, mid and high proficiency Thai EFL learners.

2.1 Self-perception on English language skills self-efficacy among low, mid and high proficiency learners

With regard to learners' perception of language skills self-efficacy. High proficiency learners' perception was relatively high for the overall English language self-efficacy ($M=3.88$, $SD=0.74$). Listening skill received highest ratings ($M=3.95$, $SD=0.78$), followed by relatively high self-efficacy in speaking skill ($M = 3.87$, $SD=0.78$) and relatively high self-efficacy in writing skill ($M=3.86$, $SD=0.80$), respectively. Moreover, the lowest ranked self-efficacy of high proficiency EFL learners was reading skill ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 0.77$). For the mid proficiency EFL learners, the overall English language self-efficacy was moderate ($M=3.49$, $SD=0.71$). Learners' perception of reading skill was relatively high and received the highest self-efficacy skill ($M=3.52$, $SD=0.79$), followed by the relatively high self-efficacy in speaking skill ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 0.76$). However, learner's self-perception of language self-efficacy in listening skill ($M=3.47$, $SD=0.70$) and writing skill ($M=3.44$, $SD=0.81$) were moderate. Self-efficacy in writing received the lowest rank for mid proficiency EFL learners. Regarding low proficiency EFL learners, their self-perception was moderate for the overall English language self-efficacy ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 0.88$). The highest rank of self-efficacy was moderate reading skill ($M=3.49$, $SD=0.88$), followed by moderate writing skill ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 0.95$), moderate speaking skill ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.90$), and moderate listening skill ($M=3.40$, $SD=0.91$), respectively. The details are shown in Table 1.

Table 1*Descriptive statistics of self-efficacy in accordance with their grades of English subject*

English language skills self-efficacy	High proficiency EFL learner			Mid proficiency EFL learner			Low proficiency EFL learner		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level
	Listening	3.95	0.78	Relatively high	3.47	0.70	Moderate	3.40	0.91
Speaking	3.87	0.78	Relatively high	3.51	0.76	Relatively high	3.42	0.90	Moderate
Reading	3.82	0.77	Relatively high	3.52	0.79	Relatively high	3.49	0.88	Moderate
Writing	3.86	0.80	Relatively high	3.44	0.81	Moderate	3.47	0.95	Moderate
Overall self-efficacy	3.88	0.74	Relatively high	3.49	0.71	Moderate	3.45	0.88	Moderate

2.2 Comparison of the overall English language skills self-efficacy among low, mid and high proficiency Thai EFL learners

This section was analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to compare mean differences of English language skills self-efficacy among low, mid and high proficiency Thai EFL learners. It was shown that there was a significant difference of the overall English language skills self-efficacy at the $p < .05$ level [$F(2, 266) = 9.474, p=0.001$] among three groups of learners as presented in Table 2.

Table 2*One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of English language skills self-efficacy among low, mid and high proficiency Thai EFL learners*

Source of Variation	Sum Sq	Df	Mean Sq	F	Sig.
Between Group	10.79	2	5.393	9.474	0.001*
Within Group	151.43	266	0.569		
Total	162.22	268			

* $p < .05$

Tukey Post-hoc comparison was carried out to compare significant differences among three groups. Table 3 showed that there was a significant difference between high proficiency Thai EFL learners and low proficiency Thai EFL learners ($p = 0.011$). The average language skills self-efficacy of high proficiency group was 0.430 higher than the low proficiency group. Furthermore, there was a significant difference between high proficiency Thai EFL learners and mid proficiency Thai EFL learners ($p=0.001$). The average language skills self-efficacy of high proficiency group was 0.391 higher than mid proficiency learners. On the contrary, there was no statistically significant difference between the mid proficiency group and the low proficiency group on an average language skills self-efficacy.

Table 3*Tukey multiple comparisons of means*

Group	Tukey multiple comparisons of means			
	Mean-Diff	Lower	Upper	<i>p-value</i>
Mid-Low	0.039	-0.329	0.408	0.965
High-Low	0.430	0.078	0.782	0.011
High-Mid	0.391	0.154	0.627	0.001

Discussion

1. Self-perception on English language skills self-efficacy among low, mid, and high proficiency groups

1.1 Listening skills self-efficacy as the highest rank for high proficiency group and the lowest rank for low proficiency group

The interesting results of the study found that high proficiency learners perceived that their listening self-efficacy was relatively high. Whereas, listening skill self-efficacy of mid and low proficiency learners were at moderate level and ranked third for mid proficiency learners and ranked the lowest for low proficiency learners. This might be explained as listening is more challenging skill than others and cannot be developed easily but requires repetition and practices to be skill mastered (Hasan, 2000; Graham, 2011; Wang et al., 2013;). High proficiency learners may have more opportunity to expose to target language in a variety of context and have more control over their listening tasks; on the other hand, mid and low proficiency learners probably have limitation in using target language and rely on practicing target language in classroom. They could not understand what they listen and how to manage listening tasks because they do not aware of the cognitive aspects of listening process that make them lose control over listening task and have lower levels of self-efficacy. According to Graham (2011), a low sense of self-efficacy for listening are made by the way in which listening is taught in classrooms. English instructors have no certainty on how to teach listening skill in classroom. They probably emphasize quantity of practice based on a text or a dialogue rather than developing listening as a skill mastered. Students do not have an active role in the process of listening instruction and they may not feel confident about their abilities in listening skills and may increase students' level of listening anxiety and leads to high level of anxiety.

1.2 Reading skills as the lowest rank for high proficiency group and the highest rank for mid- and low proficiency groups

Findings related to self-perception on reading skill also have arisen curiosity. The result signifies that high proficiency learners ranked the lowest mean in reading self-efficacy, whereas reading self-efficacy was the highest mean for mid- and low proficiency groups. The finding agrees with Hager (2017) that investigated the relationship of reading self-

efficacy and reading achievement of second grade students in central Montana. The results showed a non-significant positive relationship between students reading self-efficacy and student reading achievement. In contrast, Naseri (2012) studied the relationship between reading self-efficacy beliefs, reading strategy use and reading comprehension level of Iranian EFL learners and found the significant relationship between student's reading self-efficacy and their reading comprehension of Iranian EFL senior and junior learners. The reason might be due to students have different views in reflecting their own reading skills self-efficacy. High performance in one reading assessment does not equate to high performance in another (Hager, 2017; Mondri, 2013). Moreover, the importance of motivational issue can influence reading skill self-efficacy of mid- and low proficiency students. They probably have more confidence and personal control over their reading skills and have high self-perception of reading outcomes than any other skills. Several studies have found that self-efficacy is considered as a task-specific construct because good marks in one particular skill may differ from self-efficacy in other skills (Hager, 2017; Raoofi et al., 2012). Thus, self-efficacy beliefs differ from one particular domain of language to another one.

2. Comparison of English language skills self-efficacy among different groups of English proficiency

One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that there was significant difference between high and mid proficiency learners, but there was no statistically significant difference between mid proficiency learners and low proficiency learners. Unlike high proficiency group, both mid- and low-proficiency groups reported moderate level of self-efficacy. This finding is not coherent with Magogwe and Oliver (2007) that studied the relationship between language learning strategies, proficiency, age and self-efficacy of EFL learners in Botswana. The results showed that although the higher proficiency led to the higher language self-efficacy, there were no significant differences between the means of three proficiency groups, including good, fair, and poor secondary students in Botswana. The discrepancy in the results might be because self-perception about language self-efficacy are context-specific and there was distinction between groups of students from various language background. According to Raoofi et al. (2012), contextual variables, including classroom interaction, teacher efficacy, play a vital role in enhancing students' effort in performing a specific task. Self-efficacy of high proficiency learners may have a wide range of language learning both in classroom and outside the classroom, whereas self-efficacy of mid and low proficiency learners is probably limited only in classroom context.

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to investigate language skills self-efficacy among three groups of proficiency. The present study provides firmly evidence for language skills self-efficacy in Thai context that self-efficacy in learning a foreign language was significantly

associated with English proficiency. The higher the proficiency, the higher the language skills self-efficacy. Those high proficiency group are highly efficacious students who ranked listening skill self-efficacy as the highest. Whereas, the highest ranked skill of mid and low proficiency groups was reading skill self-efficacy. Moreover, the overall language skills of high proficiency group significantly differed from mid and low proficiency groups. Consequently, self-efficacy has a great impact in academic settings and more work needs to be done to develop a strong sense of EFL learners' self-efficacy.

In a practical way, the results may be used in the future to inform language pedagogy. Instructors, who have strong impact on the development of learners' self-efficacy, can help to strengthen learners' self-efficacy by providing appropriate instructional lessons and feedback of their performances. Also, they should pay more attention on low efficacious learners to help them develop higher levels of self-efficacy by encouraging them to view success and failure outcomes of their language learning. Moreover, instructors should play a role as a facilitator to help students gaining control over themselves and find their own learning techniques to improve language skills self-efficacy.

Recommendation for Future Research

1. The study did not investigate other variables influencing language skills self-efficacy. More research is required to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy and other variables such as learning style, personality types, and cultural and social variables which guide the way for the development of learners' self-efficacy.

2. The study conducted survey study to investigate language skills self-efficacy. In order to find out more in-depth information, qualitative data such as classroom observation and interviews should be collected in further study to better understanding the participants and capture insightful information into learners' beliefs related to language skills self-efficacy in English language learning.

3. The study focused language skills self-efficacy of Grade tenth students. Future research should carry out with other groups of EFL learners such as primary students, lower secondary students or tertiary students for broadening the impact of self-efficacy.

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