

A STUDY ON THE SELF EFFICACY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS OF STUDENTS IN HUNAN S ECONOMICS UNIVERSITY, CHINA

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Abstract: This study aimed to investigate the level of self-efficacy of English language skills of students in Hunan S Economics University and compare the differences of self-efficacy levels with different demographic factors. A quantitative method was used to survey 379 students at Hunan S Economics University through questionnaires. Through data analysis of 379 valid questionnaires, descriptive analysis, independent samples t-test, and One-way ANOVA analysis of variance, this study analyzed the current level and differences of English language skill self-efficacy of university students in Hunan S Economics University with their gender, grade, major category, and residence. The study found that the current level of English language skill self-efficacy of university students in this university was relatively high. In addition, there were significant differences in English language skill self-efficacy of university students with different grades. In terms of genders, subject categories, and residence, no significant difference in their level of self-efficacy was found. According to the research results, it can enrich relevant research, broaden the scope of research, and pave the way for future research. The study also provided the suggestions and educational intervention measures for educational practice to help university students improve their sense of self-efficacy in English language skills and improve their academic achievements and academic achievements.

Keywords: University students, English Language Skills Self-Efficacy, Hunan S Economics University

Introduction

Globally, English, as the main language for international communication, has become increasingly important in English education in China. International research shows that English language skill self-efficacy will directly affect students' academic achievements and career development. Through questionnaires and field observations, researchers from different countries have made in-depth studies on the level of English learners' self-efficacy in English skills and how self-

efficacy affects their performance in academic and professional fields. International research Bandura & Zimmerman (1992) shows that self-efficacy is closely related to students' academic performance, academic satisfaction, and subject selection. Bandura (1994)'s social cognitive theory proposed that individuals form their belief in their own ability by observing the successful experience of others and their own experience, and this belief directly affects their academic performance.

Ellis (1997) believed that in the field of English learning, university students' sense of self-efficacy in English language skills has an important impact on their learning motivation, academic performance and learning engagement. Pajares (2003) stated that students' self-efficacy of English language skills is very important for English learning. With the popularization of English learning and the advancement of globalization, researchers are interested in the influencing factors, levels, and promotion methods of university students' self-efficacy in English language skills. They are committed to understanding the challenges university students face in English learning and exploring how to improve students' self-efficacy in English language skills, so as to promote them to learn English more actively and effectively. Researchers usually use questionnaires, experimental research, interviews and other methods to collect and analyze university students' English language skills self-efficacy data. They may combine other variables, such as gender, learning motivation, learning strategies, to explore the relationship between self-efficacy and these factors.

The study of English language skill self-efficacy is not limited to one country or region. Many international comparative studies have explored the similarities and differences of university students' English language skill self-efficacy in different countries, cultures, and educational systems. This will help to understand more comprehensively the international background and influencing factors of English language skill self-efficacy. In general, the international research background of university students' self-efficacy in English language skills reflects the importance of English in the world and the role of individual self-confidence and beliefs in English learning. These studies will help to improve English education methods, improve students' English learning motivation and learning effectiveness, so as to better adapt to the challenges of the globalization era.

Research on Chinese university students' self-efficacy in English language skills is an important area because English plays an important role in Chinese higher education. Students' self-efficacy refers to their assessment of their confidence and ability to accomplish a specific task or achieve a specific goal. In English language learning, self-efficacy is recognized as an important factor in students' motivation and achievement. In this regard, the study may involve the following aspects: The study may use appropriate questionnaire instruments to measure Chinese university students' self-efficacy in English language skills. For example, the existing English language skills self-efficacy measurement tools, such as the English Language Skills Self-Efficacy Scale, can be used. It can also investigate the formation mechanism and influencing factors of self-efficacy, as well as the mechanism and process of

self-efficacy influencing organizational behavior (Hui, 2011).

Research explored the factors that affect Chinese university students' self-efficacy in English language skills, such as learning strategies, learning resources, learning environment, and motivation. Understanding these factors can help to develop targeted teaching and counseling strategies to improve students' self-efficacy in English language skills. The study can explore the relationship between Chinese university students' self-efficacy in English language skills and their academic achievement. This could help to understand the impact of self-efficacy on academic achievement and performance. The study could explore effective educational interventions to help improve Chinese university students' English language skill self-efficacy. These may include providing support and encouragement, establishing a positive learning environment, and fostering students' motivation. The self-efficacy of Chinese university students in English language skills can be compared with that of university students in other countries or regions to understand the influence of cultural and educational backgrounds on self-efficacy. These studies can provide valuable information for improving the English education and learning environment of Chinese university students, so that they can achieve better performance and higher motivation in English learning.

Hunan, as a representative of central China, is facing a series of challenges and opportunities in English education. With the continuous development of Hunan's economy, there is a growing demand for English language talents. However, the economic and cultural diversity of the region also brings about differences in students' English learning, which requires more accurate English education management strategies. The research in Hunan focuses on understanding the current situation of local English learners' self-efficacy in language skills. Through surveys and observations of students, researchers have tried to understand the level of self-efficacy of students in Hunan in English language learning. This provides the basis for an in-depth study of the management of English language education in Hunan.

Based on the comprehensive knowledge of the research on English language skills self-efficacy in international, Chinese and Hunan regions. Through in-depth research on English language education management, this study aims to provide strong support for improving students' English language skills self-efficacy in Hunan Province in theory and practice. This research direction may help to build a bridge between theory and practice, promote the innovation and development of English education management, and provide useful experiences for English education in Hunan and the whole country. From the perspective of educational management, this dissertation will study the current situation of self-efficacy in English language skills in Hunan, its influencing factors, and possible solutions. By integrating international, Chinese, and local literature, we will be able to gain a more comprehensive understanding of this issue and provide targeted recommendations for the management of English language education in Hunan. Through this study, we hope to provide a reference for English education

administrators in China and other countries, and to promote the development and implementation of more effective management strategies.

Research Objectives

(1) To investigate demographic background factors of the students at Hunan S Economics University in China, including their gender, grade, major category, and residence.

(2) To determine the level of English language skill self-efficacy of university students at Hunan S Economic University.

(3) To analyze the differences of English language skill self-efficacy among students at Hunan S Economics University with different demographic background factors.

Literature Review

Research on English Language Skills Self-efficacy

Most of the international studies on self-efficacy are correlation studies, and most of them start from the general level of English self-efficacy, and some of them combine the self-efficacy in the four levels of English listening, reading, and writing. Firstly, Li (2004) analyzed the self-efficacy of English independent learning of higher vocational students and showed that the main sources of self-efficacy are goal setting, verbal persuasion, and the level of higher vocational education. Secondly, Mao Meina (2007) analyzed the sources of English self-efficacy through the questionnaire survey and found that the main sources of English self-efficacy are alternative experiences, verbal persuasion, goal setting, and the use of learning strategies. Next, Liu (2009) found that learning strategies, learning resources, and goal setting were the main factors affecting English self-efficacy through a survey of English majors. After that, Xie (2010) analyzed the factors influencing junior high school students' English self-efficacy: personal traits, personality, experiences, and interactions in life.

The four dimensions of the English language skills self-efficacy scale compiled by Saglam & Arslan (2018) are reading skills, writing skills, oral skills and listening skills. The author will carry out relevant studies on English language skills self-efficacy and its causes, learning anxiety, strategy use, and performance at home and abroad from the above four dimensions. Finally, the relevant literature on English language skills self-efficacy from a macro perspective is sorted out and elaborated.

Research on the Measurement of Self-efficacy of English Language Skills

The international research is Pintrich's (1990) learning scale incentive strategy, which has 44 items, including five sub scales: self-efficacy scale, intrinsic value scale, test anxiety scale, cognitive strategy uses scale and self-regulation scale. The second is Morgan and Jinks (1999) Student Efficiency Scale, which has a total of 30 items, including three dimensions: talent, background, and effort. This scale contains more information about learning self-efficacy than Pinrich (1990). Then SağLam &

Arslan (2018) developed the English language skill self-efficacy scale for higher education students. The scale has good reliability and validity. It is divided into four dimensions according to English skills, namely reading skills, writing skills, oral skills and listening skills. The first scale developed relatively early and widely in China was Liang (2000), who developed the academic self-efficacy scale according to the learning characteristics of Chinese university students and referring to relevant dimensions in the academic self-efficacy questionnaire of Pintrich & DeGroot (1990). Academic self-efficacy is divided into two independent dimensions: self-efficacy of learning ability and self-efficacy of learning behavior. Although this scale is used in many studies, it was not selected in this study due to its timeliness and application scope. The second one is Bian's (2003) Learning Self-Efficacy Scale, which belongs to the scale of self-efficacy in the field of general learning. However, there are limitations in this scale. Although it is designed to measure the self-efficacy of Chinese foreign language learners, it is mainly applicable to primary and secondary school students. An (2006) developed the English Self efficacy Questionnaire based on the current situation of Chinese university students' English learning. However, this scale is only suitable for Chinese young learners of foreign languages. The latest measurement research, Liang & Chen (2018), based on the conceptual structure of university students' autonomy in English learning and academic self-efficacy, developed a self-efficacy measurement tool that conforms to the characteristics of contemporary university students' English learning from the three levels of making English learning plans, using English learning strategies and English learning behavior. But with Duygu Sağ Compared with the English language skill self-efficacy scale compiled by SağLam & Arslan (2018), the subjects are more and more complex, so this study chose the latter as the survey tool.

Research on Differences of Students' Self-Efficacy of English Language Skills with Different Demographic Factors

This research takes university students as the research object, focusing on exploring the influence of different gender background variables on English language skill self-efficacy. Through literature review, represented by the research of An (2006) and other scholars, previous research shows that there are significant differences between men and women in the level of English learning self-efficacy. It pointed out that male and female students behave differently in the way of thinking and social roles. At the same time, Zou (2018) pointed out in the research that there are talent differences between boys and girls in language learning, among which women are better at learning languages, which may affect the level of English language self-efficacy. These findings provide a strong basis for the study to further understand the significant differences between gender and English language self-efficacy.

The present study is devoted to an in-depth investigation of university students' self-efficacy in English language skills in the context of different grade levels. An (2006) pointed out in his English self-efficacy questionnaire development study that as students grow older, their learning strategies

increase, which in turn affects the level of self-efficacy in English learning in a different way. Taking this theory into consideration, this study will investigate the differential effects of different grade levels on self-efficacy in English language skills.

Da (2006) pointed out that there was no significant difference in the level of self-efficacy of English learning between liberal arts and science students. Zou (2018) pointed out in the research that the self-efficacy level of liberal arts students is higher than that of science students, and the level of arts and sports is far lower than that of arts and science students, mainly because students' English scores are generally low when they enter school. In this study, this theoretical framework will be used to collect the level data of English language skill self-efficacy of students in different disciplines through questionnaires, so as to further understand the situation of students' self-efficacy in English language skills.

Zou (2018) pointed out in her study that the level of self-efficacy of rural students is higher than that of urban hukou ones, which may be due to the fact that rural students are more hard-working and diligent in studying, which leads to the higher level of self-efficacy in English language skills of rural students than that of urban students. In this study, this theoretical framework will be used to collect data on students' self-efficacy in English language skills in different hukou locations through questionnaires, so as to gain a deeper understanding of the students' self-efficacy in English language skills.

Methodology

This research took the students at Hunan S Economics University, a total of 30015 students as the research object. According to different gender, grade, major category, and residence, are selected by convenient sampling. The study selected the mature scale developed by previous researchers, SağLam & Arslan (2018)'s questionnaire on the Development of Higher Education Students' Self Efficacy Scale of English Language Skills includes reading self-efficacy, writing self-efficacy, speaking self-efficacy and listening self-efficacy. All these scales had Cronbach α coefficient over 0.8, the KMO value was 0.981, thus, the reliability and validity were at a good level.

Results

Demographic Analysis of Questionnaire Participants

In this questionnaire survey, there were 379 samples of college students, 188 boys and 191 girls, with a relatively balanced proportion of male and female students. The proportion of grade levels of the university students participating in the study was relatively even, with the highest proportion of 28.76% being in the fourth year of university. In the survey on major categories, the proportion of arts and sciences is relatively concentrated, accounting for 35.09% and 42.22% respectively; the proportion

of arts and sports was relatively low, accounting for 22.69%, which was a relatively small group in the survey.

Descriptive Statistics on the Levels of Students' Self-efficacy in English Language Skills

The overall level of English language skill self-efficacy of university students at Hunan S Economics University was relatively high. From the items of each sub dimension, the self-efficacy mean score of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills was higher than 3.7, and the total motivation level reached 3.79. Therefore, the overall level of self-efficacy of English language skills of university students in Hunan S Economics University was high, as Table 1 shows.

Table 1: The Level of Students' Self-efficacy in English Language Skills

Dimension	Mean	SD
Reading Skills Self-Efficacy	3.88	0.892
Writing Skills Self-Efficacy	3.89	0.925
Oral Skills Self-Efficacy	3.83	0.871
Listening Skills Self-Efficacy	3.84	0.908

Discussion

1) There is no significant difference in the overall self-efficacy of English language skills and the four sub dimensions of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills between university students of different genders. These findings were consistent with the research results of Yang (2015) and Zou (2018). However, previous research by An (2006) and Zou (2018) showed that female university students' English learning self-efficacy was significantly higher than that of male university students.

2) There are significant differences in English language skill self-efficacy among university students of different grades. The level of self-efficacy of sophomores, juniors and seniors is higher than that of freshmen. It is conceivable that with the rise of grade, seniors not only accept the baptism of four-year English courses and examinations, but also need strong English skills when they are about to enter the society to seek competitive jobs. However, the level of self-efficacy of sophomore students is higher than that of junior students. Zou (2018) agreed with this point.

3) There is no significant difference in the self-efficacy level of English language skills among university students of different disciplines. In terms of the overall level of English language skills self-efficacy, the mean score of science students is higher than that of arts and arts and sports, and arts and sports are the lowest. First of all, the English scores of arts and sports students are generally low when they enter school. Secondly, based on the comprehensive two universities, there are many science majors, and the level of students in English skills is evenly distributed. However, in terms of speaking and writing, the mean score of liberal arts students is higher. Speaking and writing are two dimensions

of language output skills, so liberal arts students have more advantages in language output than science students and art students. Yang (2015) and An (2006) has the same research results and explanations. But Zou (2018) pointed out that the mean score number of liberal arts students is higher than that of science students and arts and sports students. While Zhang's (2010) indicated that the English learning self-efficacy of art university students is at a lower level than that of arts and science university students.

4) There is no significant difference in the level of self-efficacy of English language skills among university students in different registered permanent residence. From the overall level of English language self-efficacy, the mean score value of rural area is slightly higher than that of urban hukou. First of all, the scope of this research is the second private college of Hunan S Economics University. Most university students have urban hukou, and their English scores may be low. In addition, rural students have to pay attention to English learning if they want to "go out". English is a subject that can be learned well if you work hard enough. In order to be more competitive in the college entrance examination, rural students may pay more attention to improving English scores and mastering skills. Zou (2018) shows that rural students are more able to bear hardships and stand hard work and face setbacks more directly. In terms of reading skills, the mean score value of rural hukou is lower than that of urban hukou, which may be due to the uneven educational resources between urban and rural areas.

Conclusion

1) There is no significant difference in the overall level and each sub dimension of the self-efficacy of English language skills among university students of different genders.

2) There are significant differences in the overall level of English language skill self-efficacy among university students of different grades. The overall level of English skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills of sophomores, juniors and seniors are higher than freshmen; In addition, in terms of speaking skills, junior students were better than sophomores.

3) There is no significant difference in the overall level and each sub dimension of university students' English language skill self-efficacy in different disciplines. In terms of the overall level of English language skills self-efficacy, the mean score of science students is higher than that of arts and arts and sports, and arts and sports were the lowest. However, in terms of speaking and writing, the mean score of liberal arts students is higher.

4) There is no significant difference in the overall level and each sub dimension of university students' English language skill self-efficacy in different registered permanent residence. From the perspective of the overall level of English language self-efficacy, the level of rural area students was slightly higher than that of urban students. The reading skill dimension is opposite.

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