

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENGLISH SELF-EFFICACY AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE PERFORMANCE AMONG CHINESE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract

This quantitative study investigated the relationship between Chinese university students' English self-efficacy and English language performance. All the data were collected from a questionnaire of English self-efficacy (QESE) and National College English Test (CET) among 387 university students in China. Principal component analyses showed that the QESE included four sub-dimensions, English self-efficacy in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was

used to test the validity of the scale. The descriptive analysis showed Chinese university students have a moderate level in English self-efficacy. Female students were more self-efficacious than male students by Independent Samples t-test. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient analysis showed that Chinese university students' English self-efficacy was significantly correlated with their English language performances. What' more, Multiple regression analysis showed that speaking and listening statistically significantly predicted English performances among Chinese university students. Pedagogical implications and future research are discussed at the end of this paper.

Key words: relationship; English self-efficacy; language performance; Chinese university students

1. Introduction

English as a foreign language is an important subject in present Chinese college education. According to Chinese higher education system, each undergraduate and postgraduate should choose one foreign language as the selective course, and English will be the most popular one. According to the report of department of education in Chinese government, there are around fifteen billion university students learning English as a foreign language in 2019. English learning population have formed a big group in China. However, the present situation of Chinese English learners are faced with various difficulties. Many university students are taught in big classes due to the shortage of standard English teachers and teaching facilities. Students spent much time in learning words and grammars, and they still have difficulties in practical communication in English. IELTS committee in 2018 reported that the total mean score of academic IELTS 2018 in China mainland is 5.78, lower than the world's mean score of 6.05. The mean scores of the Chinese students in academic IELTS are listening(5.89), reading(6.17), writing(5.39) and speaking(5.39). The report showed that Chinese university students ranked the thirty-third place of the top 40 countries of the world academic IELTS in 2018. The report also showed Chinese students have unbalanced abilities in the four language skills. Among the various factors affecting the university students' foreign language learning, many scholars have found that self-efficacy was a significant predictor of foreign language achievement. Self-efficacy is significantly correlated with students' performance.

Self-efficacy is defined as a person's judgment of his or her capabilities to complete a specific task with the skills he or she possesses by American psychologist Bandura. It refers to an individual's confidence in a certain behavioral ability in a specific situation, that is, whether he believes that he has enough ability to complete a specific task or not (Bandura, 1977). Bandura (1997) suggests that self-efficacy beliefs can influence one's decisions, expended effort and perseverance, resilience to adversity, thought processes, affective states, and accomplishments. Schunk (1991) contends that self-efficacy beliefs may better forecast success than prior achievements, skills, or knowledge. For these reasons, highly efficacious students usually meet challenges and are more persistent while lowly efficacious students are more likely to

avoid difficult tasks. Previous studies showed that self-efficacy is predictive of students' academic achievement. As soon as the concept of self-efficacy was established, it was widely concerned by the scholars in the field of psychology and education (Stevens, Olivarez, Lan, & Tallent-Runnels, 2004).

Most previous studies applied the general self-efficacy scales or abstract academic self-efficacy to test the students' beliefs about their abilities in performance (Wang & Hannon, 2014; Feldman, 2015; Wargo, 2016; Doménech, 2017), and these scales in these studies were invented from general perception, and these items were not specific to the practical certain subjects. English as a popular foreign language in the world, the efficacy of English learning should be analyzed based on the features of its nature and learning mechanism. Bandura (2006) claimed that the most accurate measurement of self-efficacy needed to be tailored to the particular domain of interest. Many self-efficacy scales about English study may have been tested valid in previous research, but cannot address the specific context of language learning (Wang, 2017). Thus, English language learners' self-efficacy should be studied from the four language skills and specially in Chinese foreign language learning contexts.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Self-Efficacy

Depending on the social cognitive theory which explains how people develop social, emotional, cognitive behavioral capabilities, how people regulate their own lives, what motivates them, Bandura forms his new ideas of social cognitive theory by adding concerns with cognitive factors such as beliefs, self-perceptions, and expectations to social learning theory (Bandura, 1997). Among the relationship of human behavior, environment and personal thought, the human's thought regulated their behaviors to affect the environments. In return, the change of the environments will influence human's thought on the world and activate the next behaviors. Self-efficacy mechanism as the factor of the human thoughts which judge and regulate one's behaviors was the core of social cognition theory.

According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy referred to people's confidence in whether they can use their skills to complete a certain task. Jin & Gui (2014) held the view that the essence of general self-efficacy was the degree to confidence of an individual in his or her own behavioral ability in various situations. Cheng (2017) also defined self-efficacy from two aspects: firstly, self-efficacy did not refer to the real ability of an individual, but the comprehensive information result obtained after the individual measures and evaluates, which was a subjective feeling. Secondly, the results could affect the behavior of individuals in specific tasks.

From the various studies of self-efficacy, researchers mainly focus on the four aspects, the process of self-efficacy, the form of self-efficacy, the role of self-efficacy in the object and the scope of self-efficacy. They all involve self-evaluation of one's own ability, referring to the one's self-awareness. In short,

self-efficacy refers to how confident an individual is about his or her ability to act in a given situation.

According to Bandura, self-efficacy has four different sources. The most influential one is described as “enactive mastery experience”. People will strengthen their beliefs when they overcome the difficulties during the process to success. While easy success will make them feel easily discouraged by failure. If one relates to the task in question and has succeeded in completing similar or identical tasks then self-efficacy will be high. The second is described as “Vicarious experience”. Self-efficacy arises when people watch peers whom they deem to be similar to them, successfully perform the task in question. The third source is “Social persuasion”. People who are persuaded verbally that they possess the capabilities to master given activities are likely to mobilize greater effort and sustain it. And the final source of self-efficacy is “mental and emotional states”. Positive mood enhances perceived self-efficacy, while despondent mood diminishes it. According to Bandura’s theory, there is a cyclic relationship, with positive experiences leading to greater self-efficacy, which in turn leads to more commitment to subsequent tasks, and a greater likelihood of success. Therefore in the classroom, if a teacher is able to provide challenging and yet positive learning experiences, self-efficacy should experience growth. (Leeming, P, 2017)

2.2 Measurement of Self-Efficacy

In recent years, various scholars have adopted different research scales to measure the students’ self-efficacy. Three important scales are will be introduced in the study.

The questionnaire of Self-efficacy is a 9-item subscale from MSLQ (Pintrich,1990). This scale refers to students’ perceived confidence and competence in performance of class work, with some statements such as “I expect to do well in this class.” “I am sure I can do an excellent job on the problems and tasks assigned for this class.” Each item was answered 7-point ratings, from “Not at all true, to Exactly true.” This scale was firstly designed for primary, high school students and also applied for college students in other studies. Commonly, this is the one of the most popular scale to test students’ beliefs about their study and most studies reveal that the self-efficacy was significantly correlated with academic performance and had important role to predict achievements for students in many different countries(Obrentz , 2012; Partin and Haney , 2012).

General self-efficacy scale (GSES) was compiled by Schwarzer (1999) and contains 10 items and adopts Likert four-level scoring system. Jin Xia(2009) used this scale to study the relationship between general self-efficacy and mental health, which found that general self-efficacy had a predictive effect on mental health. Nicole Azizli (2015) used this scale for data analysis in relationships between general self-efficacy, planning for the future, and life satisfaction, finally concluded that general self-efficacy is directly related to life satisfaction.

The English self-efficacy questionnaire (ESEQ) was developed by Wang, C

(2004) to measure the self-efficacy of students from four dimensions with 32 items. Each item admits participants to use their capabilities to accomplish certain tasks which view English as a foreign language. The four dimensions were analyzed as self-efficacy for listening, self-efficacy for speaking, self-efficacy for reading, self-efficacy for writing. Atefeh Nasrollahi (2013) conducted a questionnaire survey on Iranian college students and found that self-efficacy in English learning was significantly correlated with achievement. Jin Guanghua (2004) also obtained a positive correlation between self-efficacy and English performance by this scale.

2.3 Previous Studies on Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Foreign Language Achievement

As one of the important emotional resources, self-efficacy is an important intrinsic motivational factor that affects learning. The stronger the learners' self-efficiency, the higher the goals, and the stronger self-regulation ability of learning. Zimmerman (2000) pointed out that students' self-efficacy influences their learning motivation through autonomous learning processes such as goal setting, self-monitoring, self-evaluation and strategy application. Self-efficacy also affected students' use of self-directed learning strategies. Self-efficacy had a corresponding impact on the planning, behavior and self-reflection of learning. Self-efficacy promoted cognitive participation, and the enhancement of self-efficacy could promote the application of students' cognitive strategies so as to improve their academic performance (Wang & Bai, 2017).

Many previous studies had revealed that there were positive correlation between self-efficacy and academic performance. Ramezan Jahanian and Setareh Mahjoubi (2013) argued that the students' self-efficacy and achievement was significantly positive correlation, that is to say, if students' self-efficacy had been reduced, students' confidence also would be weakened, which led to a decline in academic performance. Therefore, they suggested that appropriate teaching methods and encouraged training environment can enhance students' self-efficacy, which will help improve the students' academic performance. Atefeh Nasrollahi (2013) conducted a survey on 112 students from three different universities in Iran. He found that self-efficacy was significantly correlated with language ability. The study also indicated that liberal arts students reported lower levels of self-efficacy than engineering and medical students. Du Wei (2010) studied the relationship between self-efficacy and academic performance of 85 college students. The results showed that students with different academic performance had a significant differences in their levels of self-efficacy, and students with higher grades had a significantly higher self-efficacy than those in the lower group. However, Wu and Zhang (2009) found that there was no correlation between self-efficacy and academic performance, but self-efficacy can indirectly affect academic performance by affecting autonomous learning ability.

As English has been widely used in the world, many countries view it as their

second language in business and academic contexts. Malaysian scholar Rahil Mahyuddin (2006) researched 1,145 middle school students with different ethnic groups and found a significant positive correlation between middle school students' English self-efficacy and English achievement. Among them, the Indian students' self-efficacy was significantly higher than Chinese and Malays, while Malays' was significantly higher than that of Chinese. Chuang Wang (2013) conducted a survey on 200 Chinese college students and 160 German college students and found that Chinese students reported a lower level of self-efficacy beliefs but their English proficiency was not significantly different in comparison to German. Statistically significant relationships were noted between self-efficacy, use of SRL strategies, and English language performance. It was interesting to find that female students reported higher levels of self-efficacy beliefs but gained lower scores on the English language test in both countries. Another study of him also found that a strong correlation between students' self-efficacy beliefs in English listening, speaking, reading, writing tasks and English achievements. Zhang & Yu (2010) discussed the relationship between college freshmen's self-efficacy in English learning and their English learning performance. The results showed that college freshmen's self-efficacy in English learning was generally at a medium level, and there was a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy in English learning and English score in college entrance examination. In addition, English self-efficacy can also affect English listening, speaking, reading and writing performance. He also found that male students were not significantly different from female students in English self-efficacy. This result showed that there was no significant difference between urban and rural students' English self-efficacy. Zhang Zhu (2016) found that the self-efficacy of spoken English in non-English major universities was at a medium level, and there was a significant positive correlation between the self-efficacy of spoken English and the score of spoken English. Wang Dan (2014) found that high school students had a better general self-efficacy in writing and listening, but the worst self-efficacy in reading and speaking. Kitikanan, P. (2017) researched about the scores of each aspect of self-efficacy. It was found that these L2 Thai learners had the amounts of self-efficacy for each language aspect not very different from one another. The self-efficacy of each aspect is relatively high. She also revealed that self-efficacy in each language aspects showed strong positive correlation to the overall English learning achievement, which is consistent with some previous studies (Li & Wang, 2010; Woodrow, 2011). To sum up, few researches focus on features of Chinese university students' English self-efficacy, and it is important to explore the detailed efficacy in English listening, speaking, reading and writing skills for present Chinese students and their relationship with language achievement.

3. Methods

3.1 Research question

1. What is the general levels of university students' English self-efficacy?
2. Is there any difference in the levels of the English self-efficacy between male and

female students?

3. What is the relationship between English self-efficacy and English language performance?
4. Which dimension of English self-efficacy significantly affect English language performance most?

3.2 Instruments

The new Questionnaire of English Self-Efficacy (QESE) includes 22 items. Each item asks students to make judgments about their capabilities to accomplish certain tasks using English in listening, speaking, reading, and writing contexts. The revised questionnaire was translated into Chinese by two PHD researchers and made some changes to fit Chinese college students' characteristics for content validity in this study. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to show construct validity of instrument has. The English Self-efficacy has four sub-dimensions as Listening Efficacy (5 Items), Speaking Efficacy (8 Items), Reading Efficacy (5 Items), and Writing Efficacy (4 Items). Students were asked to rate their capabilities on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (I cannot do it at all) to 7 (I can do it very well). Finally, all the scores were added up, and the total reflected the students' level of self-efficacy. The more scores the scale reported, the higher English self-efficacy the students had.

3.3 English Language Performance Test

All participants' English performance was collected from the National College English Test (CET) which was is a large-scale standardized exam administered by the Ministry of Education in China. The CET result is a widely recognized English exam in Chinese universities and colleges, and it is reported that nearly 10 million people took CET exams in 2017 alone. This English test is comprehensively to assess students' English proficiency against the teaching goals prescribed by College English Syllabus and Teaching Requirements. This test has two levels of CET-4 and CET-6, as the general level and higher level. The CET test consists of four sections, Listening and reading each account for 35 percent; writing and translation together make up the remaining 30 percent. The highest possible score is 710. The results of CET-4 were chosen as the students' English language performance.

3.4 Data Analytical Procedure

First of all, After the permission by the authority in some chosen universities in Hubei Province, the research team sent the questionnaire to the sample students who registered the online English course in a MOOCs platform by e-mail with the help of www.wenjuan.com, a free survey website. Then, the participants were given five days to fill out the questionnaire and reply back to the research team. Then, the researcher collected the questionnaire and found that out of all 500 questionnaires, 113 were invalid. The rest included 98 questionnaires for male students and 289 questionnaires for female students. Finally, the data was input into SPSS 23.0. Firstly, confirmatory

factor analysis (CFA) by AMOS was used to certify the validity of the scale, and reliability analysis was reported afterwards. Then, descriptive analysis was used to answer question 1. One-Way ANOVA analysis was used to answer question 2. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to answer question 3. Finally, Multiple regression analysis was used to answer question 4.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) by AMOS was conducted to test the construct validity of QESE. The results indicated that the two-level four-construct model was not rejected, suggesting that the model adequately represented the factorial structure of self-efficacy (Chisq/df = 4.041 , RMSEA = .089, CFI = .853, IFI = 0.854 , TLI = 0.840 and AGFI = 0.711) for the Chinese students; From Table 3.1, it can be concluded that Cronbach’s alpha of this questionnaire is .962. According to Sileyew K. (2019), the reliability coefficient of 0.70 and above is considered “acceptable” in most research situations. That indicates that the instrument of this study has high internal reliability and high consistency between 22 items. The Cronbach’s Alpha of speaking and listening, reading, and writing is .929, .906, .889 and .841, which showed that the sub-construct of QSES had good reliability.

Table 3.2 Reliability Statistics

Reliability	Cronbach’s Alpha	N of Items
English self-efficacy	.962	29
Speaking	.929	11
Listening	.906	8
Reading	.889	5
Writing	.841	5

4. Data Analysis

4.1 The General Levels of Students’ English Self-efficacy

Table 4.1 presents that the mean value for overall English self-efficacy is 4.49, the minimum value is at 1.90, and the maximum value is at 6.93. And mean value in four sub-dimensions are 4.33 (speaking), 4.21 (listening), 4.63 (reading) and 5.15 (writing).

Table 4.1 Mean and Deviation of English Self-Efficacy

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Speaking	387	1.27	7.00	4.33	.94988

Listening	387	1.38	6.88	4.21	.99925
Reading	387	1.60	7.00	4.63	1.09462
Writing	387	2.20	7.00	5.15	1.05884
English Self-efficacy	387	1.90	6.93	4.49	.89419

According to Dawes (2007), The standards of the levels in 7-points Likert were Low level (1-3), Moderate level (3.01-5), High level(5.01-7) . As shown in Table 4.1, analysis for the full samples in study shows that the level of English self-efficacy (4.49) is moderate. A majority of 260 respondents (67.2%) shows a moderate level of English self-efficacy, few respondents of 15 (3.9 %) shows a low level of English Self-efficacy and about 112 respondents reported high self-efficacy. The average scores of sub-dimensions of English self-efficacy are speaking (4.33), listening (4.21), reading (4.63) and writing (5.15) . That means the four sub-dimensions are at moderate levels.

4.2 Differences in English Self-Efficacy between Male and Female Students

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to explore the differences of English self-efficacy in male and female students.

Table 4.2 Means of English Self-efficacy by male and female students

	Gender	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
English Self-Efficacy	Male	98	4.155	1.010	.102
	Female	289	4.696	.838	.049
SPEAKING	male	98	4.032	1.038	.105
	female	289	4.525	.886	.052
LISTENING	male	98	3.984	1.113	.112
	female	289	4.459	.993	.058
READING	male	98	4.124	1.208	.122
	female	289	4.801	1.002	.059
WRITING	male	98	4.651	1.182	.119
	female	289	5.206	.983	.058

Table 4.3 Independent Samples T-test on the sub-dimensions of English Self-efficacy by male and female students

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
SELF-EFFI CACY	Equal variances assumed	6.011	.015	-5.242	385	.000	-.54199	.10338	-.74526	-.33872
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.782	144.863	.000	-.54199	.11333	-.76599	-.31800
SPEAKING	Equal variances assumed	4.390	.037	-4.548	385	.000	-.49277	.10835	-.70579	-.27974
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.206	147.760	.000	-.49277	.11715	-.72427	-.26126
LISTENING	Equal variances assumed	.712	.399	-3.973	385	.000	-.47584	.11978	-.71134	-.24034
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.755	152.667	.000	-.47584	.12672	-.72620	-.22549
READING	Equal variances assumed	5.161	.024	-5.469	385	.000	-.67620	.12364	-.91930	-.43311
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.990	144.882	.000	-.67620	.13552	-.94406	-.40835
WRITING	Equal variances assumed	6.877	.009	-4.583	385	.000	-.55537	.12119	-.79366	-.31709
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.185	145.112	.000	-.55537	.13269	-.81763	-.29312

Since the assumption of homogeneity of variances for the English efficacy is not met (Levene's $F = 6.011$, $p = .015 < .05$), the results of "Equal variances not assumed"

are reported here. It showed that there was a significant difference in the total English self-efficacy for male students ($M=4.154$, $SD=1.01$) and female students ($M=4.696$, $SD= 0.84$) conditions; $t(144.86) = -4.782$, $p = .000$.

The above tables also showed that there was a significant difference in the English speaking self-efficacy for male students ($M=4.032$, $SD=1.04$) and female students ($M= 4.524$, $SD=0.89$); $t (147.760)= -4.206$, $p = .000$. That means that the female students had higher significantly speaking efficacy than male students; The results also revealed that there was a significant difference in the English listening self-efficacy for male students ($M=3.984$, $SD=1.12$) and female students ($M=4.460$, $SD=0.99$); $t (385)= -3.973$, $p = .000$.;There also was a significant difference in the English reading self-efficacy for male students ($M = 4.12$, $SD=1.21$) and female students ($M= 4.80$, $SD= 1.00$); $t (144.882) = - 4.990$, $p = .000$. That means that the female students had higher significantly reading efficacy than male students. Furthermore, the above tables showed that there was a significant difference in the English writing self-efficacy for male students ($M = 4.65$, $SD=1.18$) and female students ($M= 5.21$, $SD= 0.98$); $t (145.112) = - 4.185$, $p = .000$. That means that the female students had higher significantly writing efficacy than male students.

4.3 The Relationship between English Self-efficacy and English Language Performance

In order to answer this questions, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to assess the relationship between student' English self-efficacy and English language performance. According to Cohen's (1988), the Pearson correlation method is the most common method to test the correlation, and the absolute value of the Pearson coefficient determines the strength of the correlation. He stated that the value is between - 1 and 1, where 0 is no correlation, 1 is total positive correlation, and -1 is total negative correlation. If the absolute value is between 0.1- 0.3 ,that is small correlation. If the value absolute value is between 0.3-0.5, that means moderate correlation. If the value absolute value is above 0.5, that means strong correlation.

Table 4.4 Correlation between English Self-Efficacy and English language Performance

		ESEF	ELP
ESEF	Pearson Correlation	1	.576**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	387	387
ELP	Pearson Correlation	.576**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

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

ESEF: English Self-Efficacy; ELP: English language Performance

From table 4.4, it can be found that $r = .576^{**}$, $p = .00 < .05$ which demonstrates a significant positive correlation between English self-efficacy and English language performance. That is to say, if a student's self-efficacy in English learning is improved, his language performance will also be improved. This result is consistent with some other studies, such as Rahil Mahyuddin (2006) and Zhang Shufen & Yu Wendu (2010).

4.4 The Dimensions of English Self-efficacy affecting the Foreign Language Performance

Multiple regression analysis was used to answer research question. This statistical technique is used to find out the change in two or more dimensions or factors of independent variables that contribute to change in a dependent variable (Chua, 2013). According to the multiple regression analysis, the F value and the significance level, and coefficient of determination, R^2 are required to be shown for reporting multiple regression analysis. As for Cohen's bench mark (1988), the value of $R^2 < .13$ it means small, and the value of R^2 is between $.13 - .26$, meaning moderate. Finally, value of $R^2 > .26$, it means large.

In this study, the multiple regression analysis was an extension of bivariate correlation to identify predictor dimensions of English self-efficacy which have contributed to the changes on English language performance.

Table 4.5 Multiple regression (Stepwise) between English self-efficacy and English language Performance

Variable	(Unstandard) B	(Standard) β	t	Sig.	R^2	Contribution (%)
Speaking	25.969	.335	4.875	.000	.309	.307
Listening	19.492	.277	4.021	.000	.337	.333
Reading		.094	1.373	.171		
Writing		.056	.974	.331		

The results of the regression indicated that the English self-efficacy in speaking and listening from the four dimensions are the significant predictors on English language performance in this samples. There was a positive and significant relationship between English self-efficacy in speaking and listening and English language performance [$F(2, 384) = 97.474, p = .000$] at the significance level of $p < .05$. The results showed that English self-efficacy in speaking and listening accounted for 33.3% of the variance in English language performance. This displayed that as much as 66.7% of the variance on English language performance was unable to be predicted by English self-efficacy as it might be instigated by other factors or variables not examined in this study. In this case, the two sub-dimensions of English self-efficacy were self-efficacy in reading and writing that were not contributed to the change in English language performance. Hence, the standard multiple regression model for this study is:

$$\text{English language performance} = 0.335 (\text{Speaking}) + 0.227 (\text{Listening}).$$

Table 4.6 Multiple regression (Stepwise) of ANOVA result

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Regression	703863.650	2	351931.825	97.474	.000
Residual	1386434.396	384	3610.506		
Total	2090298.047	386			

Note. Sig.= significant

5. Discussion and Implication

As a new way to explore the internal mechanism of self-efficacy, the study revealed the Chinese university students' English self-efficacy from four sub-dimensions. The study amended traditional instruments and certified that the new scale with two-latent four-construct model has good validity and reliability and fit the Chinese samples. This study has found that students' English general self-efficacy is at the average level, which is consistent with findings of Wang & Huang (2014). That means the Chinese university students have paid more and more attention to English study and they are at a merely confident with their language performances depending on the increasing learning hours and improved learning facilities. Specifically, the research also has found that students' English listening and speaking self-efficacy is lower than writing and reading self-efficacy, which proved that IELTS' report in 2018. The reason is that English is learnt as a foreign language in China, and students have less time in practicing listening and speaking, while reading and writing are commonly used in many exams. As for the gender differences in English self-efficacy, the study found that the girls' overall self-efficacy in English is higher than boys', and this is consistent with other findings of Li (2018) and Wang (2014). The girls also had higher self-efficacy than boys in the listening, speaking, reading and writing aspects. That means the university girls have stronger confidence and more diligence than boys. Thus, the male university students should be given much care and increased by their English self-efficacy in future.

It is also found that students' English self-efficacy is significantly positively correlated with their English language performance. That is to say, their English self-efficacy is improved to some extent, so their English language performance will be improved accordingly. This result is consistent with many existing research results at home and abroad. For example, Bai Hongmin (2016), Atefeh Nasrollahi (2013), Kitikanan, P., & Sasimonton, P. (2017) also believed that self-efficacy has a positive relationship with English performance. Most students believe that self-efficacy in English learning will affect their interests, goal and efforts in English learning, which will affect their academic performance eventually. By the multiple regression analysis as a new way, it is interesting to reveal that listening and speaking efficacy are significant predictors on English language performance in this samples among the four sub-dimensions of English self-efficacy. As for the reforms of English teaching

and learning, more attention should be put into the listening and speaking abilities. To offer more opportunities for students experience the real daily uses of English. Finally, English self-efficacy may not be the major predictors for English language performance, so the other factors in the cultural and societal context should be considered, such as levels of goal orientation, attributions, fear of failure, and social values that may play more weights in the levels of academic performance of Chinese university students.

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