The impact of self-efficacy in enhancing English proficiency among Uzbek high school students.

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Abstract. Self-efficacy plays an important role in enhancing English language proficiency. It is one of the important factors in increasing efficiency in SLA. Conducting different research and case studies in this field and comparing the results and distinguishing unique nuances among these researches are important to the development of this subject in SLA. In addition to this, the impact of self-efficacy among EFL teachers needs to be further explored as they are involved in various teaching and learning processes. Furthermore, various self-efficacy tests should be conducted among students, and the direct collaboration of psychologist with EFL teachers is likely to prevent difficulties in learning a second language in this process.
Keywords: Self-efficacy, cognitive activity, self-confidence, oral proficiency.

Introduction.

Several factors are playing an important role in second language acquisition. As English teachers, we have to consider all the perspectives of our students, especially personality factors. Self-efficacy is one of them. It has a great impact on academic success. Bandura (1977) stated that self-efficacy could be a personal judgment of value that's communicated within the attitudes that one holds toward himself. He defined it as one's beliefs judging his completion of a task and believed that has an impact on the learning process by developing a learner's progress (Bandura, 1993).

The self-system plays a very important role in how a person comprehends situations and how he or she acts in response to difficult situations. Believing in your ability is the key to succeeding in any situation form and it is vital in the self-system. Self-efficacy has an impact on the SLA process. There have been numerous researches about the role of self-efficacy and its impact on learning the English language. Learners' personality factors, such as self-efficacy, play a significant role in the learning process. Those who have enough self-efficacy level can succeed in language learning, while learners with low self-efficacy see things through a negative filter which may cause failure in learning a new language. According to Huang and Chan (1996), students with high self-efficacy performed better in foreign language learning.

In my case study, I aimed to analyze the impact of self-efficacy in enhancing English oral proficiency in one of the high schools situated in the Rishtan district. I explored high school learners' self-efficacy level and their oral production in school. Self-efficacy was analyzed as having some contribution to the students' English speaking skills. I decided to do a case study about students' self-efficacy because self-efficacy did affect the students' psychology in learning it. Students with low self-efficacy can be the reason for the failure of the teacher's goal. Therefore, I decided to

focus on the students' self-efficacy and select two students with high and low self-efficacy levels from class 10"A" of the school № 34. The case study includes the literature review, the learners' profile, the research design and data collection along with the outcomes and the conclusion with further suggestions.

Literature review.

There have been many pieces of research conducted on the impact of self-efficacy in second language acquisition. Self-efficacy has been defined as the "belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3) Brown (1987) assumed that self-efficacy is the most inescapable aspect of human psychology. He stated that every successful cognitive activity can't be carried out successfully without some degree of self-efficacy, self-esteem, and faith in one's own capacities.

Mahyuddin, Elias, Cheong, Muhamad, Noordin, and Abdullah (2006); Schunk & Swartz, (1991) researched the connection between ESL Malaysian learners' self-efficacy with English language achievement. The consequences showed a remarkable correlation between self-efficacy and oral proficiency. This confirms the fact that students with high self-efficacy are more willing to speak a foreign language with confidence not only inside, but also outside of the classroom. Wong (2005) found that the learners' self-efficacy also has a significant impact on their writing quality, students with high self-efficacy levels show a better degree of writing development in writing than students with low self-efficacy for writing. Kim and Lorshbach (2005) also explored the connection between self-efficacy and English proficiency level in the EFL classroom and findings showed a strong correlation between them. They found that high self-efficacy belief contributes to the students' self-confidence in their oral speech and their oral proficiency are better than those with low self-efficacy.

Margolis and McCabe (2006) said that giving difficult tasks build self-confidence and increase attention in students in the classroom. Williams (1994) also investigated the impact of self-efficacy on the students' English proficiency and the results showed a positive and considerable connection between self-efficacy and students' oral proficiency in English language. The findings also showed that girls exhibited higher self-efficacy in areas related to language than boys. Schunk (1985) indicated that the students' self-efficacy beliefs can influence their language achievement negatively or positively. Mahar (2016) stated that using different learning strategies may help students to sustain their interest in the lesson. Margolis and McCabe (2006) found that self-efficacy directly contributed to the academic achievements of students. Başaran and Cabaroğlu (2014) revealed that self-efficacy does influence the process of foreign language learning in the classroom. Taki and Esmaeili (2017) reported that learners' self-efficacy or their beliefs about self-efficacy as a language learner has an impact on their EFL achievements.

Many types of research have been investigated about the role of self-efficacy in improving English skills such as listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Baleghizadeh and Masoun (2013) explored the impact of high self-efficacy beliefs on students' speaking skills who were learning English language. The results showed

that it had a positive relationship with the learners' English speaking skills. They concluded that self-efficacy and language learning strategies are worthy of exploring as it has a clear impact on SLA. Zheng, et al. (2009) investigated the connection between students' self-efficacy and its effect on their speaking skills in the English language. He concluded that self-efficacy is considered one of the essential motives to acquire the language.

Learners' profile.

The students that were under scrutiny were in their 16-year-old. Their names are Khasan and Badiuzzamon. If I describe them, Khasan has better level in English grammar, reading, writing, and speaking skills than others. He attends extra English courses to develop his integrated skills from English. He appears to have strong self-efficacy and a strong belief in his English knowledge. Badiuzzamon is a passive student in this class. It seems to me that he has low self-efficacy as he is shy. He says that he worries about making mistakes when he has to speak in English. He shows a great degree of anxiety and lack of confidence in terms of his speaking abilities. His writing, reading, and listening are more satisfactory than his oral performance. Khasan is a very diligent pupil. He loves reading books and learning new languages. He wants to be a military journalist in the future. His memory is very good. Khasan says that he wants to start learning the Russian language after having mastered English. He also wants to study the art of public speaking, believing that this skill will help him to become a professional in his job. He also adds that he is now regularly involved in sports. Overall, he is an active learner, clever, and has a high level of self-efficacy. As for, Badiuzzamon, he is a very calm, but intelligent boy. It is possible to know through his thoughts in his written work that he is a profound thinker. He wants to be a translator in the future. He can read and write Arabic. However, Badiuzzamon is a shy student. Overall, he is intelligent, but his self-efficacy is low.

Methodology.

In this section, I decided to gain data about my learners' self-efficacy level and its impact on SLA. The reason was that I wanted to explore the participants' differences and the role of self-efficacy in their academic success. Therefore, the case study aimed to check the correlation between self-efficacy and English proficiency in Uzbek learners and to study the connection between self-efficacy and English speaking skills. So, I wanted to check the two participants' self-efficacy to find out whether it affected their English proficiency or not. I planned to make them sit together and ask Khasan to help Badiuzzamon to do his assignments. They would work collaboratively. I used three approaches to gain data collection. Firstly, I planned to take a test to gain information about their self-efficacy level. They would be given 13 questions with five answers and they would have to choose the answer (number) which express their feelings. They had enough knowledge of English, so the questions would be in the target language.

Secondly, I wanted to check their difference in writing. First, I would tell some information about "Identifying your skills", then they should write a synopsis about what they understand from the lesson. Then, they would be asked to find information

about "What is the concept of Self-efficacy" and write a summary about it and its impact. The essay was to be written in English to analyze their writing level and the structure of the essay is would be optional with the word limit of 300 words. Finally, I was going to ask them to change their role in the classroom. I gave students next week's topic. The topic would be given to the students a week ago, in advance. Khasan would help Badiuzzamon to understand it. Khasan was very active in the classroom and joined every debate or discussion in the classroom, would change his role with Badiuzzamon prefers to sit quietly during the lesson. Bediuzzaman would have to join discussions and debates. He would have to speak about whether he would make mistakes or not. But it would be very important that he had his impact on the lesson.

Data collection.

The data collection started from preparing a questionnaire for the participants as the first part of the research. This questionnaire included 13 questions that were designed to determine the test taker's reaction to real-life situations. A copy of the test is given in Appendix I. From the overall perspective, we can notice that the students seemed to have different levels of self-efficacy and self-confidence as they chose very different answers. I found that Badiuzzamon's self-efficacy level is low, while Khasan's is so high. Badiuzzamon has a barrier that stops him from improving and showing his oral proficiency in English. They have answers differing to a great extent in the questionnaire, but both of them strongly agreed that ability grows with effort. The questionnaire results display agreement with the theory that self-efficacy improves learners' oral performance skills. When self-efficacy is low, students won't engage in tasks that may help them enhance their speaking ability. I concluded about Khasan's results from the questionnaire indicate that he has very high self-efficacy. He recognizes his inner value and it shows in his personal life, relationships, and school success. He exudes confidence and believes enough in himself to pursue things wholeheartedly. Such a healthy self-efficacy likely allows him to handle stress effectively and maintain an overall sense of well-being. He should value and nurture this quality; it will take him far in life. This is the key to his success. On the other Badiuzzamon has a very low self-efficacy level for himself.

In contrast, the results indicate that the second student, Badiuzzamon has very low self-efficacy. Essentially, he has got himself trapped in a vicious cycle: if he believes himself to be worthless, this will cause him to think and behave in ways that only justify this distorted and false view. Chances are that he is quite frustrated with this situation and would like to change as self-efficacy is key to success in an academic field, a poor sense of self-efficacy will likely make it difficult to find the courage to pursue the career he desires. It's important for him to realize, as difficult as it may be, that the only approval he should be worried about is his own - and that the potential for rejection actually starts with him. In essence, he doesn't respect and approve of himself all that much. I explained his mistakes to him. I also showed him the reason why he couldn't speak English in a simple way, after which realized his mistake.

The second observation involved two writing works. First, write a summary about what they understood from the lesson on "Identifying your skills". Second, they had to find information about "What is the concept of Self-efficacy" and write a brief summary about it. In appendix II, we can see their answers. I did that research three days after the first test in order to check whether my method was working or not. They would work together in order to summarize the lesson. But they had to work themselves in order to find information about "What is the concept of Self-efficacy". In those 3 days, I worked to reduce the students' self-doubt in their speaking and writing skills. We watched some motivational videos in the English language with subtitles. I also shared speeches of successful people in English. We worked on oral proficiency skills in their English language. I gave them information about "Received Pronunciation" which is used by British royal family members, TV and radio channels, such as BBC. Using appropriate grammar is the key to success in speaking skills, especially in official ceremonies and formal meetings. So I introduced them to the role of grammar in oral speech and why do we need it? They understood how grammar is essential in enhancing their speaking skills. Then, they did the assignment. The structure of their summary was very organized and contained very clear ideas with a good range of vocabulary range and grammar. They managed to write their ideas through examples. There was a slight difference between the findings of the first questionnaire task. After having learned some benefits of self-efficacy and self-confidence, Badiuzzamon changed his mind about himself. I found from his summary that he included information that was taken from other sources, such as internet materials, psychology books, which means that he started to work on himself.

In the final stage, they were required to be active during the English class. I made a presentation about "Environmental problems" and included some pictures to describe it. Khasan was very active during the class as he had been. I tried to give Badiuzzamon more opportunities to speak about the topic. After having one-week individual lessons with me, he changed his role in the classroom. He was very active. He made some mistakes in his speech, but he did something that he had never done before. He spoke in English in the lesson. He answered three questions which were about environmental issues. I recorded his answer. Transcripts will be included in the appendix. It is clear that there was much effort made because he changed his role from passive to active. I used the "peer model" that students can learn by watching and observing a peer succeed at a task. Khasan and Badiuzzamon worked well together. Bandura proved that "co-operative and holistic learning structures help students to work in association with each other and feel good about themselves." Goal-setting is also important to build high self-efficacy. Students should accept their failures and criticism positively. Students should look at the bigger picture, high self-efficacy allows them to sort their priorities and focus on them more efficiently. In general, the results show that a high level of self-efficacy has an impact on students' academic success, especially in English oral proficiency. I believe that self-efficacy should be developed not only among students but also among teachers. Doff (1987) believed that a teacher's confidence in the classroom is interfered with by a poor

command of the target language. Poor knowledge of the target language can influence the self-efficacy and professional status of the teacher. It can keep the teacher from fulfilling the pedagogical requirements of a more communicative approach to teaching the language.

Conclusions

In summary, one can infer that the level of self-efficacy is very crucial to help students to enhance their English proficiency effectively. It is interesting to see how a learner can be energized to strive for success and achieve good results with the impact of self-efficacy. I suppose watching and listening to motivational videos are extremely helpful in improving our self-efficacy level because they assist a learner to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem which makes them change their position to the challenges. Developing students' self-efficacy helps us avoid mistakes that we don't want to make and teachers can help with a positive mood which can boost students' beliefs in self-efficacy. It can be seen that self-efficacy affects not only speaking but also reading, writing, and listening. It is also important to know how to develop self-efficacy. As a teacher, we have to know how to use the right techniques. Specific short-term goals are viewed as attainable to improve self-efficacy. (Schunk and Pajares, 2002) Self-efficacious students have better academic achievements than inefficacious students. Self-efficacy needs to be measured specifically because self-efficacy is task-specific. We should pay more attention to how our students develop their self-efficacy and we should also consider what factors can affect their self-efficacy in second language contexts. We should also remember that applying the wrong method or approach can lead to students' failure. Many linguists have suggested that learners' self-efficacy would likely influence the way they use their learning strategies and learn a second language. Language teachers must be aware of personal factors that would contribute to the perceived speaking ability of his or her students and the reasons behind them. English teachers should use moderately- difficult tasks which are slightly above the students' current ability level. Additionally, Self-efficacy has an impact not only on learning a second language but also on the process of teaching language. I had to work more on myself during the case study preparation process. The reason for it was that this topic covers mainly psychological facts and processes. The impact of self-efficacy on second language learning has been studied through the psychological process. Although there have been a lot of researches in this area, this topic has not been fully covered.

Tests or activities to determine students' self-efficacy and the effect of self-efficacy on second language acquisition are not sufficient. Encouraging students to try and give frequent, focused feedback for their answers during the lesson can improve the self-efficacy of struggling students. Working cooperatively with friends in the classroom, selecting small related goals especially in language learning, accepting teachers' feedback during the process of language learning will improve our self-efficacy level. We should tie the course concepts to student interests. By improving students' self-efficacy beliefs, educators may help them to get more in the SLA process. I believe that EFL teachers need high self-efficacy too. I hope that the

findings of this case study prove the impact of self-efficacy beliefs on English oral proficiency in language learning.

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Appendix I

Questionnaire

Self-Efficacy Formative Questionnaire

Please **CHECK ONE** response that best describes you. Be honest, since the information will be used to help you in school and also help you become more prepared for college and careers. There are no right or wrong answers!

Student ID __Rakhimov Khasan__   Date __29.09.2020__

	Not very like me 1	2	3	4	Very like me 5
1. I can learn what is being taught in class this year.	☐	☐	☐	■	☐
2. I can figure out anything if I try hard enough.	☐	☐	☐	☐	■
3. If I practiced every day, I could develop just about any skill.	☐	☐	☐	■	☐
4. Once I've decided to accomplish something that's important to me, I keep trying to accomplish it, even if it is harder than I thought.	☐	☐	☐	☐	■
5. I am confident that I will achieve the goals that I set for myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	■
6. When I'm struggling to accomplish something difficult, I focus on my progress instead of feeling discouraged.	☐	☐	☐	■	☐
7. I will succeed in whatever career path I choose.	☐	☐	☐	☐	■
8. I will succeed in whatever college major I choose.	☐	☐	☐	☐	■
9. I believe hard work pays off.	☐	☐	☐	☐	■
10. My ability grows with effort.	☐	☐	☐	☐	■
11. I believe that the brain can be developed like a muscle.	☐	☐	☐	■	☐
12. I think that no matter who you are, you can significantly change your level of talent.	☐	☐	☐	☐	■
13. I can change my basic level of ability considerably.	☐	☐	☐	☐	■

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Questionnaire

Self-Efficacy Formative Questionnaire

Please **CHECK ONE** response that best describes you. Be honest, since the information will be used to help you in school and also help you become more prepared for college and careers. There are no right or wrong answers!

Student ID Olloyorov Badiuzzamon   Date __29.09.2020__

	Not very like me 1	2	3	4	Very like me 5
1. I can learn what is being taught in class this year.	☐	☐	■	☐	☐
2. I can figure out anything if I try hard enough.	☐	☐	■	☐	☐
3. If I practiced every day, I could develop just about any skill.	☐	■	☐	☐	☐
4. Once I've decided to accomplish something that's important to me, I keep trying to accomplish it, even if it is harder than I thought.	☐	■	☐	☐	☐
5. I am confident that I will achieve the goals that I set for myself.	☐	☐	■	☐	☐
6. When I'm struggling to accomplish something difficult, I focus on my progress instead of feeling discouraged.	☐	☐	■	☐	☐
7. I will succeed in whatever career path I choose.	☐	■	☐	☐	☐
8. I will succeed in whatever college major I choose.	■	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. I believe hard work pays off.	☐	☐	■	☐	☐
10. My ability grows with effort.	☐	■	☐	☐	☐
11. I believe that the brain can be developed like a muscle.	☐	☐	■	☐	☐
12. I think that no matter who you are, you can significantly change your level of talent.	☐	☐	■	☐	☐
13. I can change my basic level of ability considerably.	☐	■	☐	☐	☐

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