

Gender, Self-Efficacy & Language Learning Strategies in Reading: How Two Factors of Individual Differences Work Along In Elf Male and Female Students

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Abstract : The design of the study is ex post facto design. The objectives of the study are to: 1) investigate the difference of the influence of self-efficacy to learning strategy in reading to male and female students; 2) find out whether there is any correlation among self-efficacy, language learning strategy and achievement in reading; and 3) know the difference between male and female respondent related to their self-efficacy, language learning strategy and achievement in reading. The samples were 46 students (22 males and 24 females) in Darul Amal Vocational High School in Metro. Data were collected by giving 25 items questionnaire, in which 5 items were about self-efficacy (QESE) and 20 items were about language learning strategy in reading (LLSQ), and 20 items of test from National examination focused on functional text. Linear regression, Pearson correlation and independent group t-test were used for analyzing the data. The result shows that self-efficacy gives no influence to learning strategy in reading to both gender, but it seems that self-efficacy in female students give more influence to their learning strategy in reading than in male students. Based on significant value of each variable, it seems that self-efficacy somehow correlate with learning strategy although it is not in significant level. After all variables being compared, the result shows that there is no significant difference between male and female students related to their self-efficacy, learning strategy and achievement in reading. Although there is no significant difference between male and female related to all variables, it can be funderlined that more difference between male and female students can be found in their learning strategy in reading. It can be concluded that self-efficacy as psychological aspect in learning gives a little contribution to students' learning strategy for increasing students' achievement, but it gives more influence to students' achievement directly. Therefore, an act from the teacher to build students' self-efficacy is essential by considering some aspects in it.

Keywords - Achievement, gender, language learning strategies, reading, self-efficacy

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I. INTRODUCTION

Researchers tended to investigate teaching paradigm before in which teaching technique and teaching materials became the focus of their research. As the world of education change its perception from teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning, they change their interest gradually to investigate more about psychological condition of learners. In recent years, many researchers believe that one's ability to learn language is not the only factor of language learning success. Thus, they began to find out the role of other aspects in second language acquisition such as individual difference that includes learners' belief or self-efficacy (Tilfarlioğlu & Cinkara, 2009; Rahimi & Abedini, 2009; İnceçay & Genç, 2013; Hetthong & Teo, 2013; Wang *et.al*, 2013; Kargar & Zamanian, 2014; Nosratinia *et.al*, 2014; Tuncer & Doğan, 2016).

According to Ellis (2004), There are seven factors in individual differences; language aptitude, learning style, motivation, anxiety, personality, learner beliefs and learning strategy. Among all those factors, learners belief or self-efficacy is believed as one of the best aspects that can predict learners' performance better than their real ability (Schunk, 1991; Bandura, 1997 in Raofi *et.al* , 2012). Self-efficacy itself is defined as beliefs in one's capability to do or to perform the required action or performance. In this case, it is related to one's belief in their ability to learn language.

The power of self-efficacy in predicting learners' performance in language learning is supported by Rahimi & Abedini (2009) who found that students' self-efficacy in listening achievement has significant relation with students' listening proficiency. Hetthong & Teo (2013) also found that writing efficacy can predict learners' writing performance. In their study, their samples are 51 students in their third year majoring English in Department of Languages and Linguistics. From all seven aspects they investigated, overall performances can be predicted by their writing efficacy.

Most study proves that self-efficacy of individual can predict one's performance and ability in language learning. However, another study from İnceçay & Genç (2013) found that increasing students' writing efficacy by blogging did not give positive effect to their achievement in writing. They demanded the samples to do self-blogging for 14 weeks in one semester to increase their writing efficacy. Although their writing efficacy was increased, they got lower score in post-test indeed. The correlation was not in significant level as well. It proves that self-efficacy might not be able to predict students' achievement in several conditions.

Related to self-efficacy, some researchers have focused their study to investigate not only the relation of self-efficacy with achievement but also to another aspects. Nosratinia *et.al* (2014) conducted a research to investigate association between EFL learners' self-efficacy, meta-cognitive awareness and the use of language learning strategies. Based on their finding, all the three aspects have significant relationship in which $\alpha = 0.80$ between language learning strategy and self-efficacy, while $\alpha = 0.91$ between meta-cognitive awareness and self-efficacy. From their research findings, it should be underlined that meta-cognitive awareness is strongly bonded with self-efficacy itself.

Another study by Tuncer & Doğan (2016) focused on the relationship between academic self-efficacy beliefs, foreign language anxiety and meta-cognitive awareness using standardized regression analysis to find out the influence of one to each other. The research finding shows that academic self-efficacy gave positive impact to foreign language anxiety, while it gave negative impact to meta-cognitive awareness.

Tuncer & Doğan's finding in 2016 controverts with others' finding which states that one of the most important and influential factors of meta-cognitive awareness which helps learners gain enough confidence in order to be autonomous and successful is self-efficacy (Bandura, 1989; Bouffard-Bouchard, Parent, & Larivée, 1991; Coutinho, 2007 in Nosratinia, 2014). Self-efficacy, in which it is supposed to be as the most influential factors of meta-cognitive awareness, indeed, gives negative influence to students' meta-cognitive awareness. It can be assumed that, other than achievement and meta-cognitive awareness, self-efficacy might affect another aspects of students in language learning.

As Lee & Mao (2016) state that self-efficacy influences students' activities, effort and persistence that it can help predict their motivation and academic performance. Based on their statement, it should be underlined that self-efficacy gives indirect influence to students' performance, i.e. self-efficacy might increase another aspects such as motivation, self-esteem or many others that will indirectly change their activities, strategies or motivation in language learning.

Learning strategy as another individual difference can give significant influence to learners' achievement as well since language learning strategy describe how students conduct their self-generated learning to achieve their goal in language learning (Setiyadi, 2014). Oxford (2003) states in her previous study that learning strategies are the particular habits or thoughts learners apply to enhance their language learning ability in a specific instructional design. In other words, students' use of language learning strategies can be used for predicting their performance as well.

Most previous research did not really pay attention to reading. Whereas, reading is one of essential skills in building students' critical thinking since it is believed that reading can help students develop their thinking process that lead to judgemental thinking and problem solution. It can also be used for applying the knowledge and further implication (Russell, 1958 in Chotitham & Wongwanich, 2013), i.e. reading plays the vital role of language learning that can lead the learners to success. Since reading can affect one's thought, it is possible to affect one's psychological learning aspect as well. By reading, students can increase their lexical and linguistic input as well. Moreover, reading can help one's success in academic achievement and future career (Chapman, 2010 in Khamisi *et.al*, 2016). Due to its importance, students' self-awareness in reading should be developed. By gaining more self-efficacy in reading, students can increase their reading awareness (Tuncer & Doğan, 2016).

Related to self-efficacy and learning strategy, Kargar & Zamanian (2014) did a study to investigate the relation between self-efficacy and reading achievement strategies between male and female EFL students. The result shows that there is positive relation between self-efficacy and reading achievement strategies. Their another finding shows that there is no significant difference between male and female students related to their use of reading achievement strategies nor their self-efficacy. It is possible to assume that gender gives no influence to both factors of individual differences in learning, but one case only cannot be used for deducing something generally.

Gender can construct one's social, cultural, and psychological (Mcelhinny, 2003 in Kayaoğlu, 2012). It might be able to affect one's choice in learning too, as Kayaoğlu (2012) mentions that there have been numerous studies done in some other fields to find out the role of gender in learning. Lai and Kuo's (2007) in Kayaoğlu (2012) study shows that males have more positive attitudes towards technological equipments in language learning, whereas females do not feel as confident as males. Another study by Sunderland (2000) and Week (2011) in Kayaoğlu (2012) found that girls were significantly better in learning second or foreign language than boys. Commonly, males have a more negative view and a less aptitude towards foreign language than females.

They tend to use more logic and fit in science than language, but technological equipments in language learning can change their view about it.

All research findings from previous researchs that have been explained above lead the researcher to investigate more about the relationship between self-efficacy and learning strategy in reading and reading achievement. Since there are dual perceptions about the roles of gender in language learning, more investigations are needed to know the difference between both male and female students related to their self-efficacy, learning strategy and achievement in reading. Due to the explanation above, the researcher formulated the research questions as follows:

- a. Is there any difference between male and female students related to the influence of self-efficacy to language learning strategy in reading?
- b. Is there any correlation among self-efficacy, language learning strategy and achievement in reading?
- c. Is there any difference between male and female respondent related to their self-efficacy, language learning strategy and achievement in reading?

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Design

The study used quantitative research which focused in ex post facto design. This design tends to collect the data that already exist in the sample and use statistical formula to analyze the data. Linear regression was used for analyzing the influence of self-efficacy to language learning strategy and achievement in reading. To find out the correlation between self-efficacy, language learning strategy and achievement in reading, Pearson correlation was used for data analysis. While, to compare between male and female related to their self-efficacy, language learning strategy and achievement in reading, comparison analysis by using Independent group t-test was done.

2.2 Sampling Technique

The sampling technique in this research was random sampling in which 46 students (22 males and 24 females) in grade XII of Darul Amal Vocational High School Metro became the samples. The samples were already grouped based on gender since the school uses Islamic base education.

2.3 Instruments

Questionnaire and test were used for collecting the data. The questionnaire was used to get data about students' self-efficacy and learning strategies in reading, while the test was given to get data about students' achievement.

2.3.1 Questionnaire

There were 25 items in the questionnaire, 5 items to find out students' self efficacy (QESE) in reading were adapted from Wang *et.al* (2013) and 20 items to find out students' learning strategies (LLSQ) in reading were adapted from Setiyadi (2014). The questionnaire was in Likert with 5 scales in it. To get the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha in SPSS program was used. Meanwhile, for the validity of the questionnaire, Alpha of each variable were analyzed in SPSS as well. The questionnaire is considered as reliable since $\alpha > 0.600$.

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha Analysis for the Reliability of the questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.882	.888	25

From the reliability analysis result, it shows that coefficient alpha of the questionnaire is 0.882 ($\alpha > 0.600$), it means that all items in the questionnaire are reliable to apply. While the reliability of items about self-efficacy itself is 0.722 and the reliability of items about language learning strategy is 0.904. The questionnaire is reliable to measure whether all aspects or each aspect. Based on Sujarweni (2014), each validity of the item in the questionnaire can be analyzed by comparing between *r value* with *r table* ($r \text{ table} = 0.248$). Most items in the questionnaire were valid since $r \text{ value} > r \text{ table}$.

2.3.2 Test

All items in the test were taken from National examination in 2016, 2014, 2013 and 2012 since they have same amount of answer choices (A, B, C, D, and E). Total of items were 20 questions that focused in functional text only due to the material that samples got in their first semester. The reliability of the test was obtained by using item analysis program from Assessment System Corporation (ASC) which is called as *Iteman*.

To find out content validity of the test, the researcher asked the teacher first and re-checked it using the curriculum and syllabus. To find out construct validity of the test, inter-rater reliability was used by giving judging sheet to the raters. The raters were the teacher of the samples in this research and teacher of another vocational high school. The validity of the test was analyzed by using Cohen Kappa.

Table 2. Cohen Kappa Analysis for the Validity of the test

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Agreement Kappa	.935	.021	20.586	.000
N of Valid Cases	210			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The validity of the test was quite high since the Kappa coefficient is 0.935. It means that the test is valid and reliable enough to apply.

2.4 Procedure

The researcher conducted the research by giving the questionnaire to the sample first because the researcher wanted to know their self-efficacy in normal condition, i.e. their self-efficacy would be affected if the test was given first because it may discourage them. Instruction was given first before they fill in the questionnaire. It took 5 until 10 minutes for the students to fill it. The test was given immediately after the questionnaire.

III. RESULT & DISCUSSION

It has been stated in the methodology that there were 3 analysis done in the study to answer all three research questions. Here are the result analysis:

3.1 *The influence of self-efficacy to language learning strategy in reading on male and female students*

The data from questionnaire and test were analyzed by using linear regression in SPSS. Since the first objective of the study is to find out the influence of self-efficacy to learning strategy in reading between male and female, so linear regression analysis was done to those two genders by dividing the analysis into two groups, male and female.

3.1.1 *Influence of Self-Efficacy to Learning Strategy in Reading (Male Respondents)*

As you can see in table 3.1.1.1 below about model summary for the influence of self-efficacy to learning strategy in reading in male respondent. R square is 0.017, it means that self-efficacy only gives influence about 1.7% reading strategy in male students.

Table 3.1.1.1 Model Summary for the influence of Self-Efficacy to Learning Strategy in Reading (Male)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.129 ^a	.017	-.028	.558

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Efficacy

b. Dependent Variable: Learning Strategy in Reading

In accordance with standard error of the estimate, since the value is 0.558, it means that this model summary gives 99.442% accuracy for the analysis.

Table 3.1.1.2 Coefficient for the Influence of Self-Efficacy to Learning Strategy in Reading (Male)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.723	.534		5.094	.000
	Self-Efficacy	.087	.142	.129	.611	.548

a. Dependent Variable: Learning Strategy in Reading

Based on the table 3.1.1.2 above, significance of self-efficacy influence to learning strategy in reading is 0.548 (sig = 0.548). Since sig > 0.05, it means that self-efficacy gives no influence to learning strategy in reading in male respondents. As it is further analyzed, with t value = 0.611 and t table = 1.676 (in α 0.05), it can be assumed that self-efficacy absolutely gives no influence to learning strategy in reading in the case if the gender of the student is male since $t\ value < t\ table$.

3.1.2 Influence of Self-Efficacy to Learning Strategy in Reading (Female Respondents)

Table 3.1.2.1 Model Summary for the influence of self-efficacy to reading achievement shows that R square = 0.028. It means that self-efficacy gives little influence to learning strategy in reading since its contribution is 2.8%.

Table 3.1.2.1 Model Summary for the Influence of Self-Efficacy to Learning Strategy in Reading (Female)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.167 ^a	.028	-.009		.726

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Efficacy

b. Dependent Variable: Learning Strategy in Reading

As the analysis focuses on standard error of the estimate value, it shows that this model is accurate to measure the influence of self-efficacy to learning strategy in reading since its accuracy is 90.274%.

Table 3.1.2.2 Coefficient for the Influence of Self-Efficacy to Learning Strategy in Reading (Female)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.672	.763		3.503	.002
	Self-Efficacy	.178	.206	.167	.865	.395

a. Dependent Variable: Learning Strategy in Reading

From table 3.1.2.2, It can be assumed that self-efficacy also gives no influence to learning strategies in reading in female respondent since sig > 0.05 and its value is 0.395. The $t\ value < t\ table$ where t value = 0.865 and t table is 1.676. It means that self-efficacy gives no influence to learning strategies in reading in female respondents as well.

According to the result above, it can be assumed that self-efficacy or learner beliefs gives no influence in both male and female students' learning strategy, but it seems that self-efficacy generally takes more role to affect female students' learning strategy in reading than to male students. Female students give more positive attitude to language learning than male (Shoaib & Dornyei, 2005 in Abidin *et.al*, 2012) that their positiveness gives impact to their activities and effort (Lee & Mao, 2016).

3.2 Correlation between self-efficacy, language learning strategy and achievement in reading

To find out the correlation between all variables, *Pearson correlation* was used for analyzing the data.

Table 3.2.1 shows the correlation between each variable as follows:

- Self-Efficacy in reading correlates to Learning Strategy in reading with $r = 0.171$ and *significance value* = 0.226 (sig > 0.05);
- Self-Efficacy in reading correlates to Reading Achievement with $r = 0.012$ and *significance value* = 0.933 (sig > 0.05);

- Learning Strategy in reading correlates to Reading Achievement with $r = - 0.079$ and significance value = 0.578 (sig > 0.05).

Table 3.2.1 Correlations between Self-Efficacy, Learning Strategy and Reading Achievement

		Self-Efficacy in Reading	Learning Strategy in Reading	Reading Achievement
Self-Efficacy in Reading	Pearson Correlation	1	.171	.012
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.226	.933
	N	52	52	52
Learning Strategy in Reading	Pearson Correlation	.171	1	-.079
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.226		.578
	N	52	52	52
Reading Achievement	Pearson Correlation	.012	-.079	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.933	.578	
	N	52	52	52

Since all significance values are higher than 0.05, it can be assumed that there is no significant correlation among each variable. After analyzing r value of all correlation, only correlation between self efficacy to learning strategy in reading and reading achievement is bigger than 0.000. It means that self-efficacy has correlation with learning strategy in reading and reading achievement, but their correlations are too low. Learning strategy in reading has negative correlation with reading achievement. It means that, once the students use more learning strategies in reading, their score will decrease and when they use less learning strategies, their scores will rise. After doing further investigation, it was found that female students tended to use meta-cognitive strategy and male students tended to use social strategy in reading strategy.

Table 3.2.2 The Tendency of Male and Female Students in Reading Strategy

	Sex Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Cognitive Strategy	Male	24	3.04	.550	.112
	Female	28	3.21	.630	.119
Meta-cognitive Strategy	Male	24	3.08	.717	.146
	Female	28	3.43	.742	.140
Social Strategy	Male	24	3.25	.737	.150
	Female	28	3.18	1.335	.252

The research gave quite unexpected finding for male students since Bandura (1989), Bouffard-Bouchard, Parent, & Lariv e (1991) and Coutinho (2007) in Nosratinia (2014) state that self-efficacy is the most influential factor for increasing students' meta-cognitive awareness in which it is one of learning strategy. The negative correlation occurred due to the tendency of male students in using social strategy more than meta-cognitive strategy. While, there was insignificant difference among the use of cognitive, meta-cognitive and social strategy in female students although meta-cognitive strategy is mostly used by them.

This research finding is in line with Kargar & Zamanian's (2014) as well as Hetthong & Teo's (2013) statements that self-efficacy has correlation to learning strategy. Although their correlation is not in significant level, but it is still a prove that self-efficacy is still related to learning strategy as the factors in individual differences (Ellis, 2004) and reading achievement.

Contrast with the relationship between self-efficacy with learning strategy and reading achievement, learning strategy has negative relationship with reading achievement. It refutes Nosratinia's (2014) findings that learning strategy has positive and significant relationship with reading achievement. Logically thinking this is impossible to happen because once the students' use more strategies in learning, they should be able to learn better than the ones who do not use or use less learning strategies. It may happened due to the lack of capability

in comprehending the reading material. As it is known that, no matter how high students' self-efficacy or how many their learning strategy use are, if their aptitude and level of proficiency are low, they will not be able to gain success learning (Blumenthal, 2014).

The statement was supported by the result analysis of students' achievement in which it is divided into three groups. There were 19 students in low group, 21 in high group while the rest were in average group. It shows that there is no significant difference in the amount of low group students and high group students as well. The fact that the amount of low group students is quite high gave the researcher assumption that students' level of self-efficacy and learning strategy usage in language learning will be unsuccessful unless they are supported by one's capability in learning.

3.3 The difference of male and female students' self-efficacy, language learning strategy and achievement in reading

In answering the third question, comparing data using Independent Group t-test was used. As it can be seen in table 3.3.1, there was a slight difference between self-efficacy of male students (mean = 3.75) and female students (mean = 3.71) in which male students tend to have higher self-efficacy than female students. Female students (mean = 3.32) tend to use more learning strategy in reading than male students (3.04). Meanwhile, reading achievement of male students (mean = 21.67) is higher than female students' reading achievement (mean = 20.54).

Table 3.3.1 Group Statistic Comparison

		Sex / Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Self-Efficacy in Reading	Male		24	3.75	.897	.183
	Female		28	3.71	.763	.144
Learning Strategy in Reading	Male		24	3.04	.550	.112
	Female		28	3.32	.723	.137
Reading Achievement	Male		24	21.67	11.389	2.325
	Female		28	20.54	8.090	1.529

Standard error means of students' self-efficacy and students' learning strategy in reading are all considered to be very low, it means that the samples can accurately represent the population. While, there are slight difference of mean between male and female.

Table 3.3.2 Independent Samples t-test

		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-Efficacy in Reading	Equal variances assumed	.924	.341	.155	50	.877	.036	.230	-.426	.498
	Equal variances not assumed			.153	45.476	.879	.036	.233	-.433	.505

		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
Learning Strategy in Reading	Equal variances assumed	6.268	.016	-1.549	50	.128	-.280	.181	-.642	.083
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.582	49.358	.120	-.280	.177	-.635	.076
Reading Achievement	Equal variances assumed	2.447	.124	.417	50	.678	1.131	2.711	-4.315	6.577
	Equal variances not assumed			.406	40.709	.687	1.131	2.782	-4.489	6.751

Focused on the column of Sig. (2-tailed) in table 3.3.2, it can be seen that all values in that column are higher than 0.05 (sig > 0.05). It can be assumed that there is no significant difference between male and female students related to their self-efficacy, learning strategy and achievement in reading. In *t value* column, it can be seen that *t value* of self-efficacy and reading achievement are higher than 0.05 ($t > 0.05$), it means that both self-efficacy in reading and reading achievement in male and female students have no significant difference. While *t value* of learning strategy in reading is in minus. It means that there is difference between learning strategy used by males and female students but the difference is not significant.

IV. CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

The focus of the study is to know how two factors in individual learners work together in male and female EFL students. The objectives of the study are to find out the influence of self-efficacy to learning strategies in reading, to know the correlation between all variables and to compare all variables between male and female EFL students. In some cases, individual difference factors such as self-efficacy and learning strategy might gives influence to students's learning achievement, but those factors themselves will never be any help to their achievement without real effort from them to get more knowledge about the language itself.

Self-efficacy, in which it is expected to be able to affect students' learning strategy in reading and can affect students' achievement in reading indirectly, seems to give better influence to female students than to male students. However, their level of achievement and capability in learning still define their success.

Self-efficacy probably affects only students with high awareness of their own capability and effort, but it cannot be denied that self-efficacy still takes place in students' successful learning. Self-efficacy training that can affect students' motivation in learning and affect students' way in learning is needed in order to build students' meta-cognitive awareness. Further study to find out types of self-efficacy that can give better impact to students' learning strategies and students' awareness should be done in the future in order to help teachers in the class regulate self-efficacy training within the learning process.

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