

CORRELATION BETWEEN EFL STUDENTS' PERCEIVED LINGUISTIC PROFICIENCY AND THEIR LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE IN USING ENGLISH

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Abstract The main aim of this study is to find out the correlation between EFL students' perceived linguistic proficiency and their level of confidence in using English. To achieve that, sixty first year students at the faculty of English language and literature, Ajloun University in Jordan, were selected based on convenience sampling. The subjects were asked to self-assess their linguistic proficiency using five-point Likert scale and to respond to the survey questionnaire. To test the statistical associations between the two variables, ANOVA was used to confirm if there were any statistically significant differences in self- assessment scores among the groups of students having different levels of confidence. To confirm where the differences lie, Post Hoc tests (Turkey HSD and Homogeneous Subsets) were used. NOVA gives an F value of 44.131 with 2 and 57 degrees of freedom ($p < 0.01$), showing that there are differences in self-assessment means among groups. The multiple comparisons among mean differences by the Post Hoc tests (Turkey HSD and Fisher's LSD) show that the group of students who are 'hardly confident' are significantly different from the other two groups of students. The group of students who are 'a little confident' are significantly different from 'hardly confident' students and 'confident' students. Finally, the group of students who are 'confident' differ significantly from the two groups of students who are 'hardly confident' and 'a little confident'. Therefore, all groups differ from one another. The results of the Kendall's

tau-b and Spearman's rho indicate that there is a statistically significant correlation between the students' confidence level and the means of self-assessment scores. In conclusion, the subjects having high self-assessment scores are more likely to have high confidence in using English and vice versa.

INTRODUCTION

Language is studied in psychology as a part of human behavior, hence, language learning is based on the development of psychology theories. During the process of foreign language learning, individual learner's behaviorism is an essential attribute for successful foreign language learning. However, there are always individual differences among foreign language learners. In some occasions, these differences have been called variables. Some variables have stronger impact on an individual learner's behavior than others, among which self-confidence is considered one of the vital influences on a learner's behaviour.

Krashen (1988) assumed that when motivation and self-confidence are presented, language acquisition occurs in a nice atmosphere. During this acquisition, students emerge in the meaningful classroom activities without applying the communication's rules consciously. In this acquisition, the affective filter is low and it is a matter of attitude rather than aptitude. Du (2009) highlighted Krashen's ideas by stating that during the process of acquisition, the affective filter functions as a stop light. When the learners feel the lack of motivation and self-confidence, the affective filter tends to be up. On the other side, when the affective filter is down, the learners feel relaxed and do their best to become active learners. If learners feel good in a language class, they might have more possibilities to reach a better level of proficiency (Martinez & Villa, 2017).

Lee (2013, p. 7) states that: "Another important psychological construct in motivational studies is learners' linguistic self-confidence. Linguistic self-confidence was first described by Clément, Gardner and Smythe (1977) who defined it as self-perceptions of communicative competence or self-assessments of L2 proficiency. They claimed that it is a dimension of motivation and also a state that is free of anxiety. Linguistic self-confidence was found to be a significant motivational factor in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) situations

in which learners do not have direct contact with the L2 community" (as cited in Abdallah & Ahmed, 2015. p. 1094).

In 2012, Al-Hebaish states that in the achievement of foreign language learning, self-confidence is considered a personal factor that plays a supportive role. Some research claimed that “no language learning activities will be carried out successfully without it (Huitt, 2004&Khodadad, 2003, cited in Hayti 2008,; Brown, 1994). It may facilitate or debilitate academic achievement. Foreign language learners who possess general self-confidence perform well and most likely believe themselves to be capable learners. When there is low self-confidence, on the contrary, learners suffer from uncertainty, insecurity, fear and social distance” (Rubio, 2007, p.7). Nazarova & Umurova (2016) also revealed that “Self-confidence is also very important in language learning” (p. 47).

Many researchers have shown that in successful second language acquisition, self-esteem and self-confidence are “important effective variables (Ehrman & Oxford (1995); Hyde (1979); Nunan (1997); MacIntry & Charos (1996); Krashen (1982)” (As Cited in Keeley, 2014. p. 9).It has been found that self-confidence is one of the reasons that are particularly important in learning foreign/second language. Therefore, students who have higher self-confidence have higher English proficiency when compared to students with low self-confidence. Without a doubt, it is considered as a predictor of failure or success in learning a foreign language, therefore, one of the most important affective factors. The relationship between self-confidence and language achievement has been investigated by a large body of studies. These studies have found a positive relationship between the two variables in many different contexts (Basco & Han, 2016; Pramita, 2012; Soureshjani & Naseri, 2011; Koosha et al, 2011).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Koosha et al (2011) tried to find out the relationship between self-confidence and self-esteem of EFL Iranian learners with regard to variables such as gender, age, and speaking skill. Their study has found that there is a noteworthy relationship between self-esteem and speaking proficiency. The result of their study has emphasized that learners are more willing to speak the target

language confidently outside and inside the classroom when they have high self-esteem.

Similarly, Soureshjani and Naseri (2011) had also investigated an EFL classroom for the purpose of finding out the relationship between proficiency level and self-esteem. It is found that the two factors have a strong positive relationship. Pramita (2012) conducted a research in senior high schools in Indonesia, to study the likely cause of self-esteem to the students' English proficiency for second-year students. It is also found that there is a significant and positive relationship between self-esteem and the students' English proficiency.

An investigation was conducted by Basco and Han (2016) to find out the differences based on English proficiency level, year, and gender, in the level of self-esteem, anxiety, and motivation of university English learners. They found that the students had a moderate level of self-esteem, anxiety, and motivation. The findings of the study found a strong negative correlation between anxiety and self-esteem and a positive correlation between motivation and self-esteem. In terms of their level of self-esteem, anxiety, and motivation, no significant difference was found when they were grouped according to the year of study and significant differences among learners were found when they were grouped according to gender and English proficiency level.

Dev and Qiqieh (2016) conducted a study to examine 200 male and female students from Abu Dhabi University (UAE) to investigate the relationship between English Language proficiency, academic achievement, and self-esteem. t test, Pearson's product moment correlation, and chi-square were used to analyze the variables of the study. In addition, to measure the variables, language proficiency tests, self-esteem inventory, and self-rating scale were used. However, they could not find out any positive relationship among the variables investigated, which means, the study found a different result from earlier reports. That language fluency (IELTS) has no direct impact on the ADU students' self-esteem was also revealed.

Al-Hattab (2006) conducted a research on 81 Saudi EFL students in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah region to find out the relationship between writing achievement to the situational self-esteem, global self-esteem, and task self-

esteem. It is found that generally those learners had average self-esteem. There had been also a positive correlation between learners' writing achievement and their situational and task self-esteem and a non-significant relationship between their achievement in writing skill and their global self-esteem. The study suggested that in order to promote self-esteem, students should be in a positive learning environment as provided by teachers (Alrabai, 2017, p. 3).

Higher self-esteem has been found to be coupled with more successful academic accomplishment when regarded to general academic accomplishment. Pullmann and Allik (2008) found that, generally, academic achievements are facilitated by high self-esteem. El-Anzi (2005) suggested that studying these two variables (i.e. self-esteem and academic achievement) together can beneficially serve students, teachers, counselors and anyone working in the school environment. This is as a result of the strong, continuous interaction and positive relationship between them (Alrabai, 2017, p. 2).

As pointed earlier in this study, one significant challenge non-native English students face is their own language proficiency, and issues related to self-confidence may appear as a result of that. Many researches have conducted for the purpose of finding out the role of self confidence in second/foreign language learning. This section offers some results of these studies.

Tunçel (2015) conducted a qualitative research to investigate whether there is a correlation between self-confidence and learning Turkish as a foreign language. To do so, 53 Greek students who are studying Turkish as a foreign language were selected. The findings of this qualitative study revealed that the students with higher self-confidence were more successful than the students with lower self-confidence, and self-confidence led to a more positive outcome in learning foreign/second language.

Naouel (2015) conducted her study hypothesizing that “the more Algerian second year students of English trust their abilities, and the more they believe in their capacities, the more they will be able to enhance their speaking performance in the foreign language”. In other words, more confidence leads to more enhancements in foreign language speaking. To test the research hypothesis, 30 Algerian second year students and 10 teachers of Oral Expression were randomly

selected. The findings of this study revealed that “students of lower self-esteem have a low level of spoken language achievement, despite the fact that they have real linguistic abilities, while students of higher self-esteem attain a good level of spoken language production”.

Zare & Riasati (2012) proposed a study to explore the relationship between language learning anxiety and self-esteem, and whether the learners’ academic levels influence their level of anxiety and self-esteem. To come up with answers, 108 EFL learners were selected based on cluster random sampling. Two questionnaires were employed in the study. The findings revealed that “at the same time as the learners move forward in their academic studies, their anxiety level decreases. It can be explained that as learners progress in their studies, they can improve their language proficiency and get better oriented with their language learning environment and hence experience less anxiety”.

Martínez & Villa (2017) conducted a quantitative study in order to describe the role that self-confidence factor plays when beginner students learn at the language department of Philosophy and Arts School from Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon. In order to achieve that, a hundred and sixty-eight (168) participants were selected. Then, a confidence in speaking questionnaire was administered to the subjects in the third week of classes and re-administered to a hundred and seventy-one (171) in the week 14 to see whether students' sense of confidence in speaking English had changed. This questionnaire was designed for typical university students by Griffiee (1997: 187) which consisted of 12 items with a 5-point Likert scale to report degrees of agreement (5) or disagreement (1) in a Spanish version because the young participants are beginner students who are at their first level of an English course. The quantitative analysis shows that the Cronbach’s alpha of the first application is 0.812 and 0.839 for the second application. This demonstrates a good level of reliability according to George and Mallery (2003). The median in the first application is 32.58 while in the second application it was 33.47. That is, students tend to agree with most of the items provided in the instrument; they show an increase in their self-confidence level. The data collected from the questionnaires was examined according to Griffiee’s confidence construct where three self-confidence variables: ability, assurance and

willing engagement compounded it. The three sets were looked independently and the questionnaire results of the two applications compared. Thereafter, the results of the three sets were looked collectively to define which group of specific aspects of confidence has been most strengthened over the course. In general, students show they feel more ability to speak English in week 14 rather than in week 3; this might be a consequence of being exposed to more knowledge about grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Students also reported feeling more comfortable when speaking English during the second application of the instrument, perhaps to the exposure to the target language and the practice in the classroom. The study also demonstrated that first level students show the common behaviors of beginner students when learning a second language, so their level of confidence is quite low. It can be concluded that more knowledge about language leads to more ability to speak English and both contribute to confidence.

Pramita (2012) conducted this quantitative study with the following research questions; “is there any positive and significant contribution of students’ self-esteem to the students’ English proficiency? (2) Is there any positive and significant contribution of language learning strategies to the students’ English proficiency? (3) Is there any positive and significant contribution of students’ self-esteem and language learning strategies to the students’ English proficiency?” To come up with answers, 160 students from 270 populations were selected using systematic sampling. Three tools were used for data collection namely: TOEFL prediction test, strategy inventory of language learning, and students’ self-esteem questionnaire. Based on this study finding, “there was a positive and significant contribution of students’ self-esteem and language learning strategies on the students’ English proficiency. So that two of these independent variables could be used to determine the English proficiency level of the students. The findings in this study also indicated that the variables of students’ self-esteem and, language learning strategies were significantly associated with students’ English proficiency”. It can be also indicated that the two variables can determine the increasing of English proficiency of students.

Hashemian (2012) conducted this study to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and second language learners’ proficiency level, also to

investigate issues related to it. To investigate that, 120 Iranian second language learners were selected to take part in the study. Three tools were utilized to gather the required data namely 1. Oxford Placement Test 2. Language Learning Strategies questionnaire 3. Self-esteem questionnaire. Then, they were asked to respond to the questionnaires. The participants were instructed that they read the items carefully so as to the result will be of higher reliability. Besides, time was not limited when responding to the items. However, the results of this study revealed that the better predictor of the use of the participants' Language Learning Strategies was proficiency level. It was apparent that there is a strong positive interrelationship between the degree of second language learners' self-esteem and their success in employing effective Language Learning Strategies. A strong positive relationship between learners' proficiency level second language and their self-esteem was shown. In other words, the higher their degree of self-esteem, the higher the proficiency levels of second language learners and vice versa. And finally, a better predictor of Language Learning Strategies use is the proficiency level of second language learners rather than their self-esteem degree.

Tilfarlıoğlu (2014) asked seven research questions to investigate the relationship between foreign language achievement and self-regulation, also to investigate issues related to it. In order to address the research questions, 383 volunteers were selected to participate in this study. Questionnaire was used to collect data. The findings suggest that there is a meaningful positive correlation between self-esteem and success, attitude and success, self-regulation and success. It was also shown that there is a positive relationship between self-esteem and attitude, self-regulation and attitude, self-esteem and self-regulation. Moreover, when these constructs come together, they significantly contribute to foreign language achievement.

Qiang & Huili (2007) conducted this research aiming to investigate the correlation between self-concept and English speaking, self-concept and English listening, self-concept and English reading, and self-concept and English writing. They especially emphasized on the comparison between self-concept and English speaking skill. The 32 students that were selected to participate in this study were non English major. The study utilized three instruments through several stages of

data collection. The statistical analysis showed that self-concept has relationship with listening. Self-concept is also related to listening, and writing. It can be also noticed that students with high self-concept are likely to get better achievements in their English study. The findings revealed that there is an apparent correlation between self-concept and English study for any kind of language skill. Even though there is noticeable variation in the relationship, the results showed that high self-concept leads to excellent English achievement. The one skill that is strongly influenced by self-concept more than any other skill is the listening skill. The researchers concluded that “a positive self-concept plays an essential role in college students’ English study. Generally, a student with high positive self-concept often performs better”. In another point of view, students are also developing their self-concept during the process of English study.

Arnaiz (2012) designed this study to examine students’ self-concept, a key factor to determine the process of foreign language learning, and its relation with the few selected variables. In other words, she tried to reveal the relationship between self-concept and gender, age, mark and language level. For that purpose, the selected participants for this study were 216 students enrolled in different English language courses from six different degree programs in a Spanish university and from whose consent were taken. The only instrument that used in this research to measure the students’ self-concept is the questionnaire Auto concepto Forma 5 (AF5:Self-concept form). The 30 items in the self-concept questionnaire were evaluated on a scale from 1 to 99. The findings reveal that “self-concept levels in students with different marks in English do not differ significantly. These findings contradict previous research showing that positive self-concept was linked to high academic achievement. In terms of differences between the self-concept levels of students with different levels of English, it was observed that those at a higher level have lower academic and global self-concept levels”. However, findings to the contrary can be encountered as shown in this study.

Binalet & Guerra (2014) investigated students’ motivation in learning a second language. For that purpose, in this quantitative study, the researchers selected thirty first year students. There were two instruments used. The first

instrument is an 18-item questionnaire to measure the motivation in learning English, and the second is a grammatical judgment test. Based on this study results, it can be discussed that “the motivational level of the students may not be an effective representative of the linguistic knowledge that they acquire. The result also shows that not all students who reported to have high motivation may do well in judging the grammaticality of the sentences in a grammar-focused exam. Moreover, the scattered dots imply the insignificant notion that motivation is the sole predictor of language learning achievement”. Also, it can be argued that motivation is not the only predictor of success in language learning.

METHOD

The main aim of this study is to find out the correlation between EFL students’ perceived linguistic proficiency and their level of confidence in using English. To achieve that, the study has been designed to answer the following research questions:

RQ1 How confident are the students in using English?

RQ 2 What is the correlation between the students’ perceived linguistic proficiency and their level of confidence?

RQ 3 Does the gender of the students affect their confidence and/or self-assessment?

To answer that, sixty first year students at the faculty of English language and literature, Ajloun University in Jordan, were selected based on convenience sampling. The subjects were asked to self-assess their linguistic proficiency using five-point Likert scale and to respond to the survey questionnaire.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The first research question ‘How confident are the students in using English?’ was addressed in the survey questionnaire. The actual question asked was ‘as a non-native of English, are you confident of using English?’ The students were asked to answer by choosing one of the following possible answers for each language skill: (1) hardly confident; (2) a little confident; (3) confident; (4) very confident.

Figure 1 below shows that there are no students showed a degree of confidence in their English proficiency by selecting the 'very confident'. The biggest group consists of those who selected 'a little confident' with 44 respondents (73.33 %). The second biggest group consists of those who selected 'confident' with 11 members (18.33 %). The smallest group consists of those who selected 'hardly confident' with 5 respondents (8.33 %).

Therefore, it can be discussed that more than two-third 73.33 % of the students feel 'a little confident' with their English proficiency (by choosing the number 2). 18.33 % of the students feel 'confident' (by choosing the answer 3). 8.33 % of the students feel 'hardly confident' with their English proficiency (by choosing the number 1).

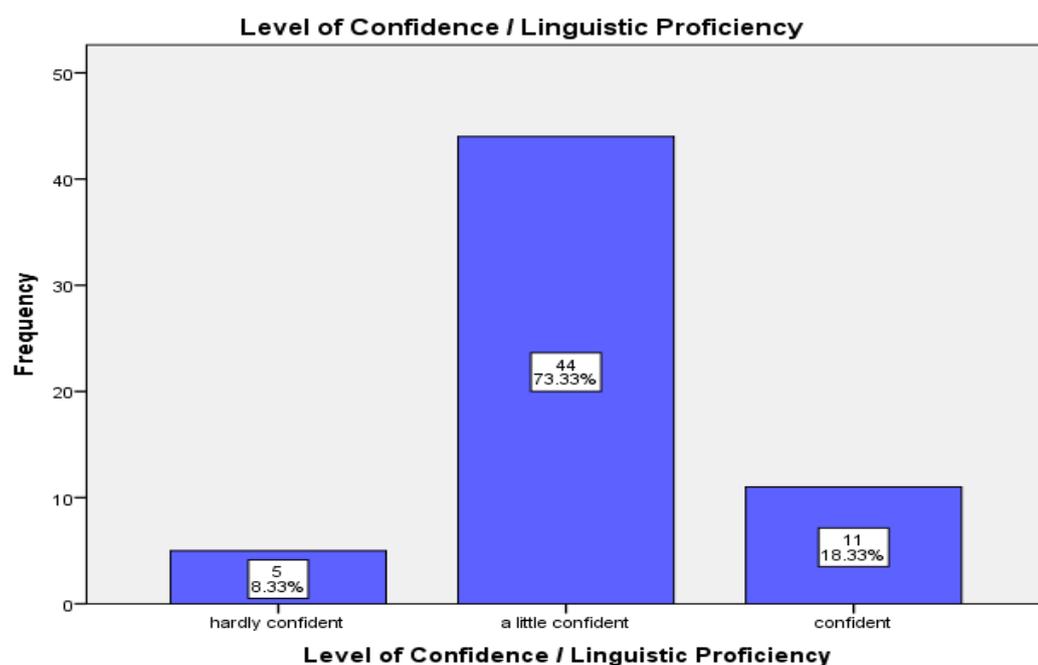


Figure 1 Level of Confidence in Linguistic Proficiency

Apparently, the majority (81.6 %) of the students admitted that they were not confident of their own English proficiency, with 5 students who are 'hardly confident' (8.33%) and more than two-thirds (44) of the students who are 'a little confident' (73.33%). On the other hand, only 11 students (18.3%) showed a degree of confidence in their English by selecting the 'confident' answer and there are no students who selected the 'very confident' answer.

In summary, the majority of the students do not seem to exhibit much confidence in their own English proficiency, by indicating they are 'hardly' or 'a little' confident. However, the students showed a higher degree of confidence in reading and writing skills rather than listening and speaking.

The second research question 'What is the correlation between the students' perceived linguistic proficiency and their level of confidence?' was answered by testing the statistical associations between the two variables: the students' self-assessment scores and their level of confidence. First of all, ANOVA (analysis of variance) was used to confirm if there were any statistically significant differences in self- assessment scores among the groups of people having different levels of confidence in their English proficiency. In this case, because there were four different degrees of confidence level, the subjects were divided into four different groups according to their confidence level. In order to ascertain whether there were differences in self-assessment means among the four groups, ANOVA was used instead of a t-test, because a t-test is for ascertaining the significance of a difference between two groups and ANOVA for between more than two (Kinnear & Gray 1999).

When ANOVA is used, 'the variance of the response variable should be equal in all population subgroups (Peers 1996: 318), which is the homogeneity of variance assumption of ANOVA. In other words, ANOVA assumes that there is homogeneity of variance among groups whose means are compared. Therefore, before ANOVA is used, the homogeneity of variance needs to be confirmed. The Levene statistic is usually used to confirm the homogeneity of variance among different groups before administering ANOVA. If the homogeneity of variance is confirmed through the Levene statistic, ANOVA can be administered to find out whether or not there are differences among group means. However, although an ANOVA test identifies the significance of difference among groups, they do not show where (between which groups) the differences lie. Therefore, when ANOVA finds evidence of differences among different groups, Post Hoc tests (Turkey HSD and Homogeneous Subsets) need to be used in order to confirm where the differences lie.

Table 1: *Homogeneity of Variances Results*
Test of Homogeneity of Variances

SATOTMEAN			
Levene			
Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.819	2	57	.171

In this case, the Levene statistic for the Test of Homogeneity of Variance indicates that there is no evidence for heterogeneity of variance, which allows ANOVA to be administered.

Table 2: *ANOVA Results*

ANOVA					
SATOTMEAN					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.302	2	3.151	44.131	.000
Within Groups	4.070	57	.071		
Total	10.372	59			

ANOVA gives an F value of 44.131 with 2 and 57 degrees of freedom ($p < 0.01$), showing that there are differences in self-assessment means among groups. Therefore, the result of the ANOVA shows that there are statistically significant differences among groups. In other words, students with different levels of confidence have significantly different self-assessment scores from one another.

However, as explained above, these results do not show the direction of the differences. The multiple comparisons among mean differences by the Post Hoc tests (Turkey HSD and Fisher's LSD) show that the group of students who are 'hardly confident' are significantly different from the other two groups of students. The group of students who are 'a little confident' are significantly different from 'hardly confident' students and 'confident' students. Finally, the group of students

who are 'confident' differ significantly from the two groups of students who are 'hardly confident' and 'a little confident'. Therefore, all groups differ from one another.

Table 3: *Multiple Comparisons Results*

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: SATOTMEAN

	(I) confident of using English	(J) confident of using English	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Tukey HSD	Hardly confident	A little confident	-.63034*	.1261	.000	-.9338	-.3269
		Confident	-	.1441	.000	-1.6221	-.9284
			1.27523	.1441	.000	.9284	1.6221
	A little confident	Hardly confident	.63034*	.1261	.000	.3269	.9338
		Confident	-.64489*	.0900	.000	-.8617	-.4281
			1.27523	.1441	.000	.9284	1.6221
LSD	Hardly confident	A little confident	-.63034*	.1261	.000	-.8829	-.3778
		Confident	-	.1441	.000	-1.5638	-.9866
			1.27523	.1441	.000	.9284	1.6221
	A little confident	Hardly confident	.63034*	.1261	.000	.3778	.8829
		Confident	-.64489*	.0900	.000	-.8617	-.4281
			1.27523	.1441	.000	.9284	1.6221

	Confident	-.64489*	.0900	.000	-.8253	-.4645
			8			
Confident	Hardly	1.27523	.1441	.000	.9866	1.5638
	confident	*	3			
	A little	.64489*	.0900	.000	.4645	.8253
	confident		8			

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

To test the strength and direction of the relationships between self-assessment scores and confidence, correlation tests, Kendall's tau_b and Spearman's rho need to be administered. In this case, because the two variables are different in type (self-assessment mean scores can be classified as an interval variable and the level of confidence can be classified as an ordinal: see 3.6.1), use of a more powerful correlation test, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient is not advisable in this case (because Pearson's Correlation Coefficient can be used only between two interval variables, and in this case the two are different types of variables; see 3.6.1). Instead, the correlation tests for ordinal data should be used. So, in this case, the relationship between the self-assessment means (interval variables) and the confidence level (an ordinal variable) was explored using Kendall's tau and Spearman's rho.

Table 4: *Correlations between the Self-assessment Means and the Confidence Level*

Correlations			SATOTME	confident of using English
Kendall's tau_b	SATOTMEAN	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.624**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	60	60
	confident of using English	Correlation Coefficient	.624**	1.000

		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	60	60
Spearman's rho	SATOTMEAN	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.738**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	60	60
	confident of using English	Correlation Coefficient	.738**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	60	60

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

The results of the Kendall's tau-b (0.624; $n=60$; $p<0.01$) and Spearman's rho (0.738; $n=60$; $p<0.01$) indicate that there is a statistically significant correlation between the students' confidence level and their self-assessment means. The correlation between confidence and self-assessment means is modest. Therefore, the subjects having high self-assessment scores are more likely to have high confidence in using English and vice versa.

As the results of the statistical tests show, there are differences in the self-assessment means among groups of different levels of confidence. All the differences in means among groups turn out to be statistically significant at the 0.01 level. In addition, a positive correlation is found between the self-assessment means and the degree of confidence. Therefore, it can be concluded that a higher self-assessment score corresponds to a higher confidence level in the students.

The third research question 'Does the gender of the students affect their confidence and/or self-assessment?' was answered by testing the relationship between the three variables: the students' self-assessment scores and gender, and their level of confidence and gender. The gender of the students was established in the survey questionnaire section 1. As seen in Figure 2, female students outnumbered male students by 43 (71.67 %) to 17 (28.33 %).

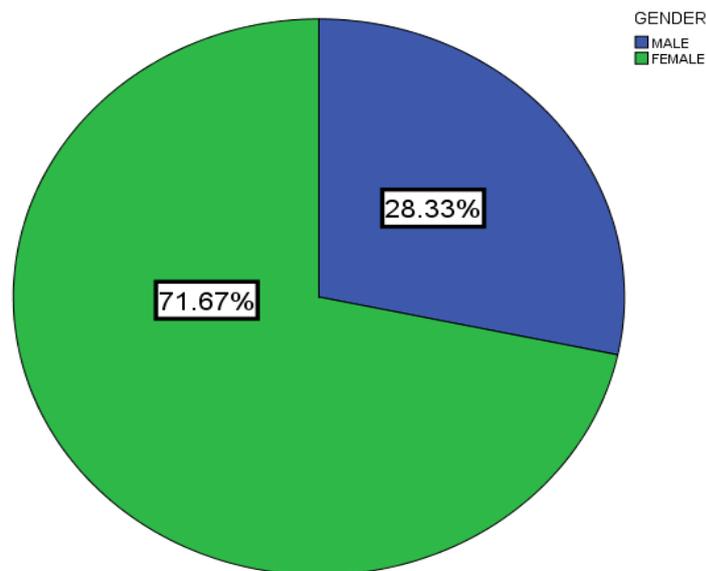


Figure 2 Gender of the students

First of all, a t-test was administered to check if there are any differences in self-assessment scores between the two different groups of gender. The results of the t-test shown below in table 5 demonstrate there are no significant differences in self- assessment scores between female and male students:

Table 5: Independent Samples Test Result

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for		t-test for Equality of Means			95% Confidence			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
SATOTM	Equal variances assumed	.372	.544	-1.220	58	.228	-.14591	.11963	-.38538	.09355
EAN	Equal variances not assumed			-1.244	7	.223	-.14591	.11726	-.38516	.09334

t-value: -1.220. df. 58 (P = 0.228)

The difference in means between the two groups of students based on the gender as shown below in table 6 is 2.93 (for female) to 2.78 (for male), but this difference is not statistically significant ($P > 0.05$). Therefore, it seems that gender does not relate to self-assessment scores.

Table 6: Mean Difference of Self-assessment Scores Based on Gender

Group Statistics

	GENDER	N	Std.		
			Mean	Deviation	Std. Error Mean
SATOTMEAN	MALE	17	2.7890	.40386	.09795
	FEMALE	43	2.9349	.42267	.06446

The relationship between gender and the level of confidence was examined by means of cross-tabulation, a chi-square test, and a phi coefficient test. Because gender is a nominal variable, these tests were chosen in line with several researchers' recommendations.

Table 7: Crosstabulation of Confidence of Using English Based on Gender

Gender * confident of using English Crosstabulation

			confident of using English			
			Hardly confident	A little confident	Confid ent	Total
G E N D E R	M A L E	Count	2	13	2	17
		% within GENDER	11.8%	76.5%	11.8%	100.0%
		% within confident of using English	40.0%	29.5%	18.2%	28.3%
F E M A L E	F E M A L E	Count	3	31	9	43
		% within GENDER	7.0%	72.1%	20.9%	100.0%
		% within confident of using English	60.0%	70.5%	81.8%	71.7%
Total		Count	5	44	11	60
		% within GENDER	8.3%	73.3%	18.3%	100.0%
		% within confident of using English	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The results from the cross tabulation in table 7 reveals that the range of the female students' confidence level is shown to be wider than that of male students. The female student group has 9 'confident' members (20.9 %), more than two-third of the female student group, 31 members, who are 'a little confident' (72.0%) and 3 members who are 'hardly confident' (6.9 %). On the other hand, the male student group has 2 'confident' members (11.7 %), has also the same number 'hardly confident', and more than two-third of the male students (13 students/ 76.4%) state that they are 'a little confident'.

The results of the chi-square tests in table 8 below are discarded because of violation of one of the conditions for a chi-square test (chi-square is not recommended for the data in larger tables where more than 20 % of the expected frequencies are less than 5: see 3.6.1).

Table 8: *Chi-Square Tests Results*

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.925 ^a	2	.630
Likelihood Ratio	.955	2	.620
Linear-by-Linear Association	.909	1	.340
N of Valid Cases	60		

a. 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.42.

However, the results of the phi coefficient in table 9 below show that there is no statistically strong association between the two variables also this association is not statistically significant ($P > 0.05$).

Table 9: *The Result of the Phi Coefficient*

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.124	.630
	Cramer's V	.124	.630
N of Valid Cases		60	

Phi =0.124; n= 60; NS- .630

Therefore, statistical tests do not identify any significant relationship between gender and confidence.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This question was answered by testing the statistical associations between the two variables: the students' self-assessment scores and their level of confidence. First of all, ANOVA (analysis of variance) was used to confirm if there were any statistically significant differences in self- assessment scores among the groups of people having different levels of confidence in their English proficiency. ANOVA shows that there are differences in self-assessment scores among the groups with different levels of confidence. In addition, a modest correlation is found between the self-assessment scores and the level of confidence. Therefore, it can be concluded that students with higher self-assessment scores are more likely to be the ones with higher level of confidence and vice versa. These results corroborate previous research findings that students' language proficiency is closely related to their confidence (Basco & Han, 2016; Pramita, 2012; Soureshjani & Naseri, 2011; Koosha et al, 2011).

Based on the findings of this study, the hypothesis 'there will be a significant positive correlation between the students' perceived linguistic proficiency and their level of confidence' was confirmed (fail to reject). The statistical tests reveal that there are differences in the self-assessment means among groups of different levels of confidence. All the differences in means among groups turn out to be statistically significant at the 0.01 level. In addition, a positive correlation is found between the self-assessment means and the degree of

confidence. Therefore, it can be concluded that a higher self-assessment score corresponds to a higher level of confidence. In conclusion, the results fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Gender does not have any statistically significant associations with students' perceived language proficiency. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, the widespread belief that female is better at language learning is not supported by the results of the study. Or at least the female students do not perceive their proficiency as higher than male students. Gender also does not have any statistically significant associations with the students' confidence in using English. Therefore, it is evident that being a female or a male does not make the person more or less confident in using English.

Confidence in using English is likely to involve perceived competence in English and the lack of anxiety of using it (Clement 1986). Therefore, students might need to improve the spontaneity of using English to boost their confidence. Proficiency (perceived/ actual) seems to need to be boosted first before confidence can be established, because it is a prerequisite for language students' confidence.

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