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**A Study of English Self-efficacy and English Reading Proficiency of Taiwanese Junior High School Students**

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**Abstract**

English self-efficacy has been seen critical in affecting one's English proficiency (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003; Magogwe & Oliver, 2007). In this study, participants were junior high school students in Taiwan who were surveyed about their English self-efficacy and their English reading proficiency. The effect of gender on their English self-efficacy and their English reading proficiency were explored as well. With a quantitative research method, the results indicated that Taiwanese junior high school students had a medium level of English self-efficacy and English reading proficiency. Significant differences favoring females in English self-efficacy were found. However, students' gender was found to have no significant relationship on their English reading proficiency. In addition, Taiwanese junior high school learners' English reading proficiency levels were significantly positively correlated with their English self-efficacy. It is hoped that the findings of this study could provide practical implications for researchers, teachers, and their students in the field of language learning.

**Keywords:** EFL Education; Self-Efficacy; Reading Proficiency; High School Education

**JEL Codes:** I21, Y40

**Introduction**

The Taiwanese government has been devoting a great amount of effort to cultivating people's English proficiency, increasing their motivation and interest in English, promoting the understanding and respect for foreign cultures, and strengthening the national competitiveness (Ministry of Education, 2009). To best achieve this, it is important to understand how

individual learning differences might affect one's English proficiency. One widely discussed learner difference is self-efficacy. Numerous studies have indicated that there is a significant positive correlation between learners' English self-efficacy and their English performance (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003; Magogwe & Oliver, 2007). Wang and Pape (2007) claimed that students who have high self-efficacy are persistent when faced with

challenges and are more successful in academic achievements. However, research on self-efficacy found that many students learning EFL (English as a Foreign Language) have a low sense of self-efficacy to hinder their participation in English learning (Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Rahemi, 2007).

In Taiwan, studies on self-efficacy in academic performance have focused more on science and mathematics than on EFL learning (Liao, 2009). This makes it inappropriate to generalize the findings about self-efficacy in science and mathematics studies to those in EFL settings. In addition, there has been limited research focusing on learner self-efficacy in an EFL context at the junior high school level; hence, the present study aims to identify Taiwanese junior high school students' English self-efficacy and their English reading proficiency. It will also seek to investigate the effect of gender on English self-efficacy and English reading proficiency. Finally, it will explore the correlation between English self-efficacy and English reading proficiency. The current study will put a greater emphasis on Taiwanese junior high school students' English reading proficiency rather than the other skills since it is indicated that EFL learners' reading comprehension level could predict their general English proficiency (Chou, 2008).

The research questions to be addressed are:

1. What is the English self-efficacy level of junior high school students in Taiwan?
2. What is the English reading proficiency level of junior high school students in Taiwan?

3. Is there any significant relationship between Taiwanese junior high school students' gender and their English self-efficacy level?
4. Is there any significant relationship between Taiwanese junior high school students' gender and their English reading proficiency?
5. Is there any significant correlation between Taiwanese junior high school students' English self-efficacy and their English reading proficiency?

It is hoped that the results of this study may not only help Taiwanese junior high school students, but also provide English teachers, educators and researchers in the field with valuable information. Moreover, it is hoped that teachers and educators will be able to utilize the results of this research and help improve the Taiwanese EFL students' English reading proficiency.

## Literature Review

### Self-efficacy and Academic Learning

Self-efficacy refers to the beliefs an individual possesses for success (Mills, Pajares, & Herron, 2006). To be more specific, self-efficacy is a person's judgment of their capability to organize and execute courses of action that are required to attain designated types of performance (Zimmerman, 2000). It would determine the goals individuals set, the effort they expend to achieve these goals, and their willingness to persist in the face of failure (Bandura, 1997). In the learning process, learners with high self-efficacy set higher goals and higher personal standards, while the low

self-efficacious students set easily achievable and short-term goals (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). Students with high self-efficacy participate in tasks more readily, work harder, and persist longer when encountering obstacles than those who doubt their own capabilities (Liao, 2009). Additionally, when students judge themselves as capable of managing learning activities confidently, they are more likely to overcome the difficulties they face and achieve the goals they have set (Liang, 1998).

Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, and Pastorelli (1996) pointed out that self-efficacy plays an important role not only in one's general achievements but also in one's specific performance. For example, Busari (2011) indicated that self-efficacy was positively correlated to students' computer proficiency and their attitude toward using PowerPoint as medium of delivering lecture. There is one more thing to note though. Siegle (2000) indicated that self-efficacy is specific to the task being attempted.

For example, high self-efficacy in mathematics does not necessarily accompany high self-efficacy in English because the skills needed to learn mathematics are different from those needed for languages (Liao, 2009). Therefore, the attention of the present study is confined to exploring students' English self-efficacy rather than self-efficacy in other fields.

#### **Relevant studies on English self-efficacy and academic performance**

Researchers have found that learner self-efficacy is significantly positively

correlated with academic performance (Pajares & Schunk, 2001; Yang, 2004; Wong, 2005). Moreover, they further indicated that raising students' self-efficacy could facilitate their learning performance, while students' self-efficacy could also be greatly enhanced when they obtain a greater proficiency of learning. Based on Chou (2007), both students' English self-efficacy level and their achievements on English learning were at the intermediate level, and their English self-efficacy was significantly correlated with their English proficiency.

As Magogwe and Oliver (2007) indicated, secondary school students had a medium level of English self-efficacy, and there was a positive and significant correlation between English self-efficacy and achievements in English learning. Moreover, they also pointed out that the higher the proficiency, the higher the English self-efficacy. In Rahemi's (2007) study, a strong and positive correlation was found between learner EFL achievements and English self-efficacy. Based on the questionnaire analysis and follow-up interviews, Liao (2009) indicated that learners' English self-efficacy was significantly positively correlated with their English achievements. According to Shang (2010), there was a significant positive relationship between English self-efficacy and EFL reading proficiency. Besides, both Chou (2007) and Liao (2009) yielded that the gender differences did not have a significant effect on the English self-efficacy. However, there has been very little research in the field focusing on students learning English at the junior high school level, and it is risky to apply the results to a different

context. Therefore, more studies on English self-efficacy of EFL students with different backgrounds and their English performance are needed. In this current study, the Taiwanese junior high school students' English self-efficacy will be explored, gender differences with regard to the English self-efficacy will be surveyed, and the relationship between their English self-efficacy and their English reading proficiency will be further studied.

### **Methodology**

The present study employed a quantitative research method to 1) identify the participants' English self-efficacy and their English reading proficiency levels; 2) determine if gender plays any significant role in their English self-efficacy and their English reading proficiency; and 3) examine if there is a significant correlation between their English self-efficacy and their English reading proficiency. Detailed methodology is presented as follows.

### **Participants**

Two hundred and eighty-nine students in a junior high school in New Taipei City, Taiwan were randomly selected to participate in this study. Of the participants, 148 were male (50.2%) and 141 were female (49.8%), from nine different seventh-grade to nine-grade classes. The nine classes were normal class groupings, which meant that the students were randomly grouped, neither on the basis of their performance nor on their perceived ability. According to the national education policy (Ministry of Education, 2009), all the junior

high school students in Taiwan were required to have four to five English classes in school per week, and they were estimated to have been studying English in school since the third-grade. In this study, because of the policy set by the Curriculum Development Committee of this school, the seventh graders had four English classes per week, while the eighth and ninth graders had five English classes per week. All the Taiwanese junior high school students learned EGP (English for General Purposes) rather than ESP (English for Specific Purposes).

### **Instruments**

The instruments of the research were given to all the participants in October, 2010, including the background questionnaire and the English self-efficacy scale. Students' English reading proficiency was assessed through the Reading and Writing component of the YLE (Cambridge Young Learners English) test Starters level. The English self-efficacy scale, adopted from Chang (2004), comprises of twenty-nine items and includes six factors: verbal persuasion, self-affirmation, ability to complete assignments, willingness to learn, perseverance, and learning attitude.

The participants were asked to measure their English self-efficacy with a four-point Likert scale from 1 (never true of me) to 4 (always true of me). Among all the twenty-nine items, nine are reversed statements. A pilot test with twenty-nine students was conducted to ensure the reliability of the English self-efficacy scale. According to Wu (2009), for a complete questionnaire, a good Cronbach's alpha value should be above .80, and Cronbach's alpha

between .70 and .80 is acceptable; for the subscales of a questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha above .70 is good and between .60 and .70 is acceptable. In this study, a good internal-consistency reliability of the complete English self-efficacy scale was identified ( $\alpha = .942$ ), and the internal-consistency reliabilities of its six component scales were acceptable, with the alpha value ranging from .640 to .859. Good construct validity was attested in Chang's (2004) study.

The sample paper of the Reading and Writing component of the YLE test Starters level from the ESOL (Cambridge English for Speakers of Other Languages) Examination Centers was adopted in this study to evaluate the participants' English reading proficiency. The reliability for internal consistency of the Reading and Writing component is good ( $\alpha = .83$ ), and the validity of the test is strong enough to accurately reflect the participants' English reading ability (Bailey, 2006).

#### **Data collection procedure**

The data was collected in October, 2010. The questionnaires and the test were administered during the English classes. The English teachers explained the purpose of the test in Chinese in order to avoid misunderstandings, and the students were advised that their responses to the questionnaires and the result of the written test would be kept confidential and have no influence on their course scores. It took the participants about twenty minutes to finish the questionnaires and the test. Of the 289 questionnaires, only 269 valid questionnaires were subjected to statistical analysis due to the twenty incomplete

questionnaires.

#### **Data Analysis**

SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) 17.0 for Windows was used to analyze the collected data. This study involved several statistical procedures: 1) descriptive statistics, including frequency, means and standard deviations; 2) independent-samples t-test, which was applied to compare the differences of the English self-efficacy and the English reading proficiency between gender; and 3) the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, used to investigate the correlation between the participants' English self-efficacy and their English reading proficiency. A statistical significance criterion of .05 was used for all statistical tests.

#### **Results and Discussion**

##### **English Self-efficacy Level of Taiwanese Junior High School Students**

Based on the English self-efficacy scale measured on a four-point Likert scale, the mean between one and two was seen as a low level of English self-efficacy, the mean between two and three was a medium level of English self-efficacy, and the mean between three and four was considered a high level of English self-efficacy. Table 1 shows that the overall mean of this study's English self-efficacy scale was 2.73 ( $SD = .52$ ), and the means of its six sub-factors were between 2.59 ( $SD = .77 \sim .79$ ) and 2.94 ( $SD = .66$ ), indicating that Taiwanese junior high school students possessed a medium level of English self-efficacy. This was also the case in Chou's (2007) and Magogwe and Oliver's (2007)

studies. In Chou’s (2007) study, the result showed that Taiwanese senior high school students’ English self-efficacy was at a medium level. Magogwe and Oliver (2007) found that students in primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions in Botswana, South Africa also had a medium level of English self-efficacy. Furthermore, in this study, the highest mean of all its sub-factors was the ability to complete assignments ( $M= 2.94$ ,  $SD= .66$ ).

This implied that, compared with the other sub-factors of the English self-efficacy scale, the students showed a relatively higher level of self-efficacy in their ability to accomplish their English tasks. This was also the case in Lin’s (2004) study. The results of her study indicated that Taiwanese elementary school students possessed a relatively higher level of English self-efficacy when it came down to them accomplishing their English homework. In Hackett, Betz, O’Halloran, and Romac’s (1990)

study, they found that self-efficacy was significantly positively correlated with task performance, which in this study would be the English assignments.

A possible explanation for this result may be that of all the sub-factors of English self-efficacy, finishing English assignments seems to be easiest for the students. When this is well done, their self-efficacy is further improved (Liang, 1998). For example, Chang (2004) surveyed the English self-efficacy of fifty Taiwanese junior high school students and discovered that they could find numerous ways to accomplish their assignments, such as discussing with their classmates, looking up the answers in reference books and dictionaries, or even copying others’ answers. When they found that they could easily achieve their assignments, they felt more confident in their ability to complete them. Thus, their English self-efficacy was more likely to be higher.

**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistics of English Self-efficacy

	Frequency	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level	Ranking
Verbal persuasion	269	2.77	.68	medium	2
Self-affirmation	269	2.74	.74	medium	3
Ability to complete assignments	269	2.94	.66	medium	1
Willingness to learn	269	2.59	.77	medium	5
Perseverance	269	2.70	.65	medium	4
Learning attitude	269	2.59	.79	medium	5
Overall English self-efficacy	269	2.73	.52	medium	

**English Reading Proficiency Level of Taiwanese Junior High School Students**

As seen in Table 2, the mean score of the students' English reading proficiency was 67.40 (*SD*= 27.46), which fell into the mid English reading proficiency group, as suggested by Hsieh (2006). According to Hsieh's (2006) study, the top 33% were grouped as high English reading achievers while the bottom 33% were defined as low English reading achievers. The 34% in between were defined as mid English reading achievers. Through the SPSS analysis, it was found that ninety of the participants were high English reading achievers, ninety-two were mid English reading achievers, and eighty-seven were grouped as low English reading achievers. The high English reading

achievers' scores of the Reading and Writing component of the YLE test ranged from ninety to one hundred. The mid English reading achievers' scores on the test ranged from fifty-five to eighty-five. The low English reading achievers' scores on the test were between zero and fifty. Therefore, the mean score of 67.40 (*SD*= 27.46) implied that Taiwanese junior high school students had a medium level of English reading proficiency. A similar result was shown in Cheng's (2009) study in which sixty-eight students from a junior high school in the middle of Taiwan were randomly selected. This study found that their English reading proficiency level was at a medium level (*M*= 70.06, *SD*= 2.43).

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistics of English Reading Proficiency

	Frequency	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level
English reading proficiency	269	67.40	27.46	medium

**Relationship between Taiwanese Junior High School Students' Gender and Their English Self-Efficacy Level**

As shown in Table 3, in all sub-factors of the English self-efficacy scale, the mean of females' English self-efficacy was reported to be significantly higher than that of males on verbal persuasion (Male, *M*= 2.64, *SD*= .74; Female, *M*= 2.89, *SD*= .60), self-affirmation (Male, *M*= 2.57, *SD*= .72; Female, *M*= 2.91, *SD*= .72), ability to complete assignments (Male, *M*= 2.73, *SD*= .65; Female, *M*= 3.16, *SD*= .60), and overall English self-efficacy (Male, *M*= 2.63, *SD*= .53; Female, *M*= 2.83, *SD*= .50). In other words, the English self-efficacy of

females was significantly higher than that of males. The findings of this study were surprisingly opposite to Chou's (2007) and Liao's (2009) studies. In their studies, they surveyed Taiwanese students in senior and vocational high schools, finding that there was no significant relationship between gender and English self-efficacy. The divergent results of this study could be associated with Pajares and Valiante's (2001) study, in which females were found to have superior self-efficacy during middle school years. In the present study, female students appeared to be more confident in their capability to persuade themselves to achieve given tasks, to affirm themselves, and to



finish given assignments than males did. In addition, on the English self-efficacy scale, the only figure that was higher than 3 was ability to complete assignments of females ( $M= 3.16, SD= .60$ ), indicating that they had high English self-efficacy in finishing English assignments. A possible reason may be that females have been historically and culturally expected to abide by certain rules (Liao, 2005). Thus, because of these gender expectations, there is a greater chance of them adhering to these demands to achieve

given assignments. That is to say, it is taken-for-granted for females to complete given tasks, but it is not the case with males. Since female students complete their assignments more frequently than male students, they are surely to obtain more praise than males. Therefore, according to Bandura (1986), that learner self-efficacy could be raised through encouragement, and female students' English self-efficacy could be raised due to the more frequent praise and encouragement.

**Table 3: Results of Gender Differences on English Self-efficacy**

	Gender	Frequency	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t-value</i>
Verbal persuasion	Male	135	2.64	.74	-3.06**
	Female	134	2.89	.60	
Self-affirmation	Male	135	2.57	.72	-3.87***
	Female	134	2.91	.72	
Ability to complete assignments	Male	135	2.73	.65	-5.64***
	Female	134	3.16	.60	
Willingness to learn	Male	135	2.62	.76	.70
	Female	134	2.55	.78	
Perseverance	Male	135	2.63	.70	-1.59
	Female	134	2.76	.59	
Learning attitude	Male	135	2.60	.80	.23
	Female	134	2.57	.79	
Overall English self-efficacy	Male	135	2.63	.53	-3.05**
	Female	134	2.83	.50	

\*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Relationship between Taiwanese Junior High School Students' Gender and Their English Reading Proficiency**

Table 4 shows that students' gender has no significant influence on their English reading proficiency. Although there was no significant relationship between gender and English reading proficiency, the means of females' English reading proficiency was higher than that of males' (Male,  $M= 64.89, SD= 28.76$ ; Female,  $M= 69.92, SD= 25.94$ ). There was a similar result in Lee's (2008) study, implying that in Taiwanese colleges, female students' English reading proficiency was higher than that of males. The results may be attributed to

parents' and teachers' high expectation towards female students. That is, parents, teachers, and the students have been led to believe that, when it comes to learning English, the female students outperform the males (Hsu, 2008). This gender stereotype can restrict how students view themselves and their learning motivation, indirectly affecting their academic performance (Lin, 2009). Thus, male students will become less motivated and confident to learn English due to the lack of the support from their parents and teachers, and female students' English proficiency will accordingly surpass that of males because of the higher learning motivation and

expectation from their parents and teachers. Moreover, both the mean scores of the males' and females' English reading proficiency (Male,  $M= 64.89$ ,  $SD= 28.76$ ; Female,  $M= 69.92$ ,  $SD= 25.94$ ) fell into the mid English reading proficiency group, as suggested by

Hsieh (2006). This was in accordance with Cheng's (2009) finding that Taiwanese junior high school students possessed an intermediate English reading proficiency level.

**Table 4: Results of Gender Differences on English Reading Proficiency**

English reading proficiency	Gender	Frequency	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t-value</i>
	Male	135	64.89	28.76	-1.50
	Female	134	69.92	25.94	

**Correlation between Taiwanese Junior High School Students' English Self-efficacy and Their English Reading Proficiency**

As shown in Table 5, the correlation coefficients of individual sub-factors, ranged from .22 to .31. According to Wu (2009), a high degree of association means that the *r* value should be above .70, while a moderate degree of association would show an *r* value between .40 and .70. An *r* value lower than .40 would suggest a low degree of association. On the one hand, when comparing overall English self-efficacy with its four sub-factors, verbal persuasion, self-affirmation, ability to complete assignments, and perseverance, it was found to have a significant positive correlation with English reading proficiency ( $p < .01$ ). On the other hand, the results of this study did show a low correlation between the students' overall English self-efficacy and their English reading proficiency ( $r= .27$ ,  $p < .01$ ). These findings were in line with Shang's (2010) study. She indicated that English self-efficacy and English proficiency were closely related. That is to say, raising English self-efficacy may indirectly raise one's English proficiency, and when English proficiency is improved, learner English self-efficacy can be improved as well.

One possible reason for this may be that high English proficiency contributes to confidence, and this, in turn, allows the student to believe in their ability to learn English (Chang, 2007). In addition, with high English self-efficacy, learners can achieve given tasks more successfully (Felt & Lirgg, 2001). That is because when learners believe they are capable of learning English well, a self-fulfilling prophecy will be formed, and then there is a greater chance of them achieving the goal (Felt & Lirgg, 2001).

Furthermore, since the correlation between self-affirmation and English reading proficiency was the highest ( $r=.31$ ,  $p < .01$ ), it could be assumed that positive autosuggestion and positive thinking may be the most feasible way to increase learners' English reading proficiency. As Liang (1998) suggested, when learners believe that they can overcome the learning obstacles, their self-efficacy can be improved, thereby promoting learning achievements. Or it could be assumed that among all the sub-factors of English self-efficacy, self-affirmation could be raised most easily

through increasing learners' English reading proficiency. A possible reason for this may be that students have been trained to affirm themselves by seeing visible grades (Wang, 2001).

With regard to the relationship between the sub-factors of English self-efficacy listed below, it could be found that perseverance

had the highest significant correlation with overall English self-efficacy ( $r = .83, p < .01$ ). The result implied that compared with other sub-factors of English self-efficacy, perseverance was the most important factor to promote learner English self-efficacy. Or, it can be assumed that in all the sub-factors of English self-efficacy, English self-efficacy affects one's perseverance the most.

**Table 5: Correlations between English Self-efficacy and English Reading Proficiency**

	ERP	SE_VP	SE_SA	SE_ACA	SE_WL	SE_P	SE_LA	SE_all
ERP	—	.22**	.31**	.23**	.05	.28**	.06	.27**
SE_VP	.22**	—	.68**	.62**	.23**	.70**	.17**	.81**
SE_SA	.31**	.68**	—	.61**	.22**	.71**	.22**	.80**
SE_ACA	.23**	.62**	.61**	—	.28**	.59**	.24**	.77**
SE_WL	.05	.23**	.22**	.28**	—	.32**	.70**	.61**
SE_P	.28**	.70**	.71**	.59**	.32**	—	.26**	.83**
SE_LA	.06	.17**	.22**	.24**	.70**	.26**	—	.54**
SE_all	.27**	.81**	.80**	.77**	.61**	.83**	.54**	—

<sup>a</sup>ERP= English reading proficiency. <sup>b</sup>SE\_VP= verbal persuasion. <sup>c</sup>SE\_SA= self-affirmation. <sup>d</sup>SE\_ACA= ability to complete assignments. <sup>e</sup>SE\_WL= willingness to learn. <sup>f</sup>SE\_P= perseverance. <sup>g</sup>SE\_LA= learning attitude. <sup>h</sup>SE\_all= overall English self-efficacy.

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

**Conclusion**

This study sought to provide evidence on the English self-efficacy and English reading proficiency of junior high school students in Taiwan. The effect of gender on English self-efficacy and English reading proficiency was also investigated since significant relationships have been found between learners' gender and their English self-efficacy and reading proficiency (Green & Oxford, 1995). The findings of this study are summarized as follows:

1. The English self-efficacy level of Taiwanese junior high school students was at a medium level.
2. Junior high school students in Taiwan had a medium level of

English reading proficiency.

3. Significant gender differences favoring female learners in English self-efficacy were found.
4. There was no gender difference in Taiwanese junior high school students on their English reading proficiency.
5. Taiwanese junior high school students' English self-efficacy was significantly positively correlated with their English reading proficiency.

**Pedagogical Implications**

As shown in this study, gender plays a critical role in Taiwanese junior high school students' English self-efficacy. Additionally, their

English reading proficiency was found to be significantly positively correlated with their English self-efficacy. Krashen (1994) indicated that, only when learners have greater self-efficacy can they succeed in EFL learning. Thus, based on the above, pedagogical implications are provided as follows.

First, with regard to the effect of gender on learner English self-efficacy, teachers should make greater effort with male students since they might be at a lower English self-efficacy level than females. For example, teachers can encourage male students more frequently, which could help raise their English self-efficacy. Bandura (1986) suggested that compliments could assist language learners in promoting their self-efficacy.

Moreover, it is strongly recommended that teachers help cultivate their students' English self-efficacy and improve students' English reading proficiency. For example, teachers can provide frequent encouragement. The use of positive verbal praise can raise students' English self-efficacy, which may indirectly promote their English performance, as stated by Bandura (1986) and Hsu (2008). Moreover, teachers can also help build students' successful experiences in achieving English language tasks, thereby raising their self-efficacy and performance (Bandura, 1995; Schunk, 2003; Yuan, 2005). In short, praise from teachers is encouraged to help build students' English self-efficacy and promote successful experiences in English learning.

#### **Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research**

The limitation of the study and suggestions for future research are as follows. First, this study involved only nine classes in one junior high school, and convenience sampling is viewed as "difficult to describe the population from which the sample was drawn and to whom results can be generalized" (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009, p. 136). In other words, it will be not objective to generalize the results of the study to all junior high school students in Taiwan. Therefore, further research, including a wider range of samples from different educational contexts, is encouraged.

Second, all the data of the study was primarily collected by self-report questionnaires. It must be noted that results based on questionnaires have limitations. For example, in a questionnaire, the participants' responses to the closed format questions would be restricted because of limited range of options. Therefore, qualitative methods such as a follow-up interview can be added in future research in order to obtain more in-depth information about students' responses.

Third, only the relationship between English self-efficacy and English reading proficiency was examined in this study. However, EFL learners may attribute their English achievements to factors not covered in this study (Carr, 2010). Therefore, future research can investigate other possible factors which may influence EFL learners' language learning. For example, future studies can examine the relationship between students' living places and their English proficiency. Are there significant differences in English

proficiency between students living in cities versus those living in more rural areas?

Future research can also survey the effect of teachers' teaching style on students' English achievements. Grasha (1996) identified five teaching styles: 1) expert, striving to maintain status as an expert among students by displaying detailed knowledge and by challenging students to enhance their competence; 2) formal authority, concerned with classroom rules for students and providing them with the structure they need to learn; 3) personal model, establishing a prototype for how to think and behave and encouraging students to observe and emulate the teacher's approach; 4) facilitator, guiding students by asking questions, exploring options, suggesting alternatives, and encouraging them to develop their own criteria to make informed choices; and 5) delegator, tending to place primary control and responsibility for language learning on students. These five teaching styles can have an enormous impact on how well students learn (Grasha, 1996). Therefore, future studies would do well to look into the relationships between teaching styles and learners' English proficiency. Furthermore, in future studies, the correlation between parents' knowledge level and children's English performance can also be investigated. This can be an important issue because it takes a closer look at what happens at home between parent and child.

Finally, the fourth issue that should be addressed by future research is, identifying more reasons for the divergent findings of the effect of gender on English self-efficacy between this study and others such as Chou's

(2007) and Liao's (2009) studies. It would be interesting and very useful to find out why certain results of this study were so different from previous ones.

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