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Perfectionism and English Learners' Self-efficacy

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.7358/ecps-2020-021-fara>

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PERFEZIONISMO E AUTOEFFICACIA DEGLI STUDENTI NELL'APPRENDIMENTO DELL'INGLESE

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between students' English self-efficacy and the three types of perfectionism (adaptive, maladaptive, and non-perfectionists). A sample of 114 high-intermediate and advanced ESL students completed two self-reported surveys: the Questionnaire of English Self-Efficacy (QESE) scale and the Revised Almost Perfect Scale (APS-R). Pearson correlation, the hierarchical cluster analysis, MANOVA, and independent samples t-test were run. The main results showed that the total English self-efficacy scale and its four subscales correlated significantly with the Order and High Standards subscales. However, the Discrepancy subscale did not significantly correlate with the total English self-efficacy scale or with any of the four self-efficacy subscales. In addition, there was a significant main effect for perfectionism on students' English self-efficacy: adaptive perfectionists scored higher than both maladaptive perfectionists and non-perfectionists while the non-perfectionists scored the lowest. However, there was not any significant interaction between English levels and perfectionism.

Keywords: Adaptive perfectionism; English as a second or foreign language; English self-efficacy; Maladaptive perfectionism; Non-perfectionism.

1. INTRODUCTION

When students decide to learn a second or a foreign language, they go to language classrooms bearing with them different sets of beliefs about the target language and about their abilities and capabilities of learning this specific language (Horwitz, 1988). Some learners' beliefs (opinions or shared myths) are about the nature of a language; learners, for instance, might believe that language X is easier to learn than language Y, or language Z is more or less romantic than language B (Van Herk, 2012).

Language beliefs that refer to «general assumptions that students hold about themselves as learners, about factors influencing language learning, and about the nature of language learning and teaching» (Victori & Lockhart, 1995, p. 224) play a critical role in language learning. Learners' assumptions and beliefs about language learning contribute to either their success or failure in learning the target language (Horwitz, 1988; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005). This is because successful language learners hold beliefs that are different than those of unsuccessful language learners (Horwitz, 1988; Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005) and because learners' beliefs determine which language learning strategies students use (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005; Suwanarak, 2015).

To that extent, Stevick (1980) argued that learners' beliefs and assumptions contribute to the language learning success more than the strategies and materials that are used in language classrooms. Thus, having the knowledge of how learners' beliefs affect their performance, teachers can improve their teaching strategies and techniques in their classrooms in order to better guide, facilitate, and coach students to improve their language proficiency (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005; Suwanarak, 2015).

Self-efficacy beliefs which are defined as «beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainment» (Bandura, 1997, p. 3) are believed to be good predictors of language learning success (Acikel, 2011) because people's own beliefs about their capabilities affect their affective states, motivations, and actions more than their actual abilities, as Bandura (1997) asserted. Therefore, self-efficacy may predict people's performance and goals since self-efficacy beliefs not only provide them the power to exert effort and spend time to attain their goals but also enable them to regulate their own environment, thoughts, affections, motivation, and actions. The inverse of self-efficacy is that «if people believe they have no power to produce results, they will not attempt to make things happen» (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). The influence

of self-efficacy is applicable to English learning: students' beliefs in their capabilities in speaking, reading, writing, and comprehending English may either boost or inhibit their test results and performance.

Not only personal beliefs but also personality traits affect students' choices of language learning strategies and their language performance. Perfectionism is «commonly conceived of as a personality style characterized by striving for flawlessness and setting of excessively high standards for performance accompanied by tendencies for overly critical evaluations of one's behavior» (Stoeber & Otto, 2006, p. 295).

In theory, self-efficacy has been associated with perfectionism; Burns (1980) hypothesized that an inverse relationship exists between self-efficacy and perfectionism. Self-efficacy is perceived as a predictor of people's goals and performance while perfectionistic thoughts undermine people's self-efficacy (Burns, 1980). This inverse relationship is believed to happened because «the chance that a desired outcome can be achieved is inversely proportional to the stringency of the standard outcome used to measure it» (Bandura, 1997, p. 38). In addition, Burns (1980) claimed that «the higher the standard of success, the less likely it is that a successful result will be perceived as a probable outcome. Thus, the perfectionists minimize outcome efficacy by setting over-ambitious and nearly inaccessible goals» (p. 38).

Perfectionism can be classified into two types: adaptive perfectionism and maladaptive perfectionism. Adaptive perfectionists set high standards of performance but, unlike maladaptive perfectionists, they are aware of their limitations. Due to such differences, researchers argued for a different relationship between self-efficacy and both types of perfectionism (Locicero & Ashby, 2000).

However, scarce literature has investigated the relationship between general self-efficacy and the types of perfectionism (adaptive, maladaptive) and non-perfectionism. Moreover, a review of literature has shown that there is no agreement on the nature of the relationship between self-efficacy and perfectionism. For example, in contrary to Burns' (1980) hypothesis, Locicero and Ashby (2000) found that adaptive perfectionists were higher in both social and general self-efficacy than both non-perfectionists and maladaptive perfectionists and there was no difference between non-perfectionists and maladaptive in their level of self-efficacy was found. Additionally, there is no study, the researcher is aware of, assessed the relationship between English self-efficacy and the types of perfectionism. As a result, this paper aims to examine the interaction between English self-efficacy and perfectionism.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. *Perfectionism*

Defining and measuring perfectionism is arguable. Researchers debate, for example, whether perfectionism is a one-dimensional or multi-dimensional personal construct (Pacht, 1984; Frost *et al.*, 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Slaney *et al.*, 2001; Stoeber & Otto, 2006). In their review paper on perfectionism, Stoeber and Otto (2006) mentioned that researchers have given different labels to the main kinds of perfectionism: active and passive perfectionism, positive and negative perfectionism, positive striving and maladaptive evaluation concerns, functional and dysfunctional, healthy and unhealthy perfectionism, conscientious and self-evaluative perfectionism, personal standards and evaluative concerns of perfectionism, and adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism (these two labels are used in this study).

Hamachek (1978) differentiated between the two forms of perfectionism: adaptive perfectionism and maladaptive perfectionism as follows: Adaptive perfectionists are «those who derive a very real sense of pleasure from the labors of a painstaking effort and *who feel free to be less precise as the situation permits*» (p. 27). Adaptive perfectionists exert their maximum effort in doing their tasks because they love to work hard. They are aware of the conditions of the situation around them; they permit themselves to be «less precise» (p. 27) in performing their actions.

In contrast, maladaptive perfectionists are not satisfied with their work; for them, efforts that they exert in performing any action never appear enough, and thus they never feel satisfied with what they do because «in their own eyes they never seem to do things good enough to warrant that feeling» (Hamachek, 1978, p. 27). Pacht (1984) added that maladaptive perfectionists «demand a higher level of performance than it is impossible for them to obtain» (p. 386). Therefore, they feel confused, anxious, and worried about the completion of a task at hand (Hamachek, 1978).

When maladaptive perfectionists take a language class, they may drop it or feel anxious and maybe depressed because they are not satisfied with their language development. If they miss a half of one point, they may be unhappy since they did not score perfect. Even if they score perfect, they may not feel happy because they believe that they have not achieved what they have expected (Weisinger & Lobsenz, 1981).

Maladaptive perfectionists usually think of the «no win scenario» (Pacht, 1988, p. 387), for they set their goals too high to achieve, and thus

they get frustrated because of both their desire to achieve high standard goals and their failure to achieve these goals. For them, success means to be perfect and when they do «something successfully, they [are] seldom able to savor the fruits of their accomplishments. Yesterday's success [had] no meaning in the lexicon of the perfectionist» (p. 397). They do not enjoy their achievements as long as their achievements are not considered 100% perfect. «The real tragedy [lies] in the fact that, *for the perfectionist, achieving 95% or even 99%* of the goal [is] usually seen as a failure because it [is] not perfect» (p. 387).

Overall, adaptive perfectionists show low level of perfectionistic concerns and high level of perfectionistic strivings while maladaptive perfectionists disclose high level of both perfectionistic strivings and perfectionistic concerns. But non-perfectionists are the ones who have low level of perfectionistic strivings (Stoerber & Otto, 2006, p. 2006).

In the language learning field, few studies have investigated perfectionism in relation to learning English. Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) found that a positive correlation between language learning anxiety and perfectionism. Both anxious students and perfectionists share common characteristics: they procrastinate because they want to do every task perfectly, they show great concerns about their mistakes, they focus on the negative aspects and lament themselves for making mistakes, and they do not celebrate their accomplishments. These characteristics of perfectionism and language learning anxiety «have the potential for making language learning unpleasant as well as less successful for them than for other students» (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002, p. 568).

Confirming Gregerson and Horwitz's results (2002), Pishghadam and Akhondpoor (2011) examined the effect of learners' desires of perfectionism on language learning success, classroom language learning anxiety, and on academic achievement. A negative correlation was found between perfectionism and both learners' GPA and their listening, reading, and speaking skills whereas a positive relationship between language learning classroom anxiety and perfectionism existed.

Wang, Yuen and Slaney (2008) investigated the interaction between perfectionism and the following variables: English and math academic achievement, loneliness, depression, and satisfaction with life. The results showed that adaptive perfectionists were psychologically healthier than both maladaptive perfectionists and non-perfectionists: adaptive perfectionists tended to be more satisfied with their lives, to be less depressed, and to have fewer loneliness feelings. Regarding English and math academic achievements, the researchers did not find any effect for any of the three different types of perfectionism (adaptive, mala-

daptive, and non-perfectionism) on either math or English academic achievements.

To sum up, the scare literature on perfectionism and language learning has shown that a positive correlation between language learning anxiety and perfectionism and this relationship may contribute to an unsuccessful language learning experience (Gregerson & Horwitz, 2002; Pishghadam & Akhondpoor, 2011). While Pishghadam and Akhondpoor (2011) found a negative relationship between perfectionism and English skills, Wang, Yuen and Slaney (2008) found no relationship between perfectionism and English achievements. This discrepancy suggests a need for more studies that assess the interaction between English proficiency and perfectionism.

2.2. *Self-efficacy*

Self-efficacy beliefs have four main constructs: «enactive mastery experience, vicarious experiences; verbal persuasion; and psychological and affective states» (Bandura, 1997, p. 79). Enactive mastery experiences are those that indicate person's capabilities. The information these experiences provide are considered the most influential sources of building self-efficacy beliefs because information is driven from authentic experiences and evidence. Bandura (1997) adds that success is the most robust source of constructing high self-efficacy whereas failure undermines people's self-efficacy, especially if a person puts much effort and have a sense of efficacy in doing the action in which he/she fails to do.

Vicarious experience happens when a person compares his abilities to others Bandura (1997). When a student sees that his/her peer, with similar capabilities, has successfully achieved something, this student believes that he/she can achieve it as well. Similarly, if his/her peer fails, the student may think that he/she will not be able to succeed either. So, making comparisons between students in the classroom is sometimes tricky.

Verbal persuasion can be used to strengthen self-efficacy beliefs by persuading people that they have the ability and capabilities to perform and achieve specific tasks. Positive feedback and encouragement based on reality can thus increase person's self-efficacy beliefs; however, Bandura (1997) cautions against giving verbal encouragement that is not based on «realistic bounds» (p. 101) because if someone is persuaded that he/she can perform a task without having the real capabilities, he/she may fail; this failure will weaken his/her self-efficacy. The consequence, Bandura warns, is that the persuaders' credibility could be shaken and be distrusted; plus, the person may be hesitant and/or afraid to try again. Consequently, giving

positive feedback in the classroom is important, but it should be given with extreme caution, because «it can be conveyed in ways that undermine a sense of efficacy or boost it» (Bandura, 1997, p. 101).

Psychological and affective states entail «physical accomplishments, health functioning, and coping with stressors» (Bandura, 1977, p. 106). People expect to succeed and perform better when they are not stressed, tensed, or agitated. So, to increase and enhance self-efficacy level, teachers should reduce affective filters and stress levels inside classrooms. If a situation makes a person feel uncomfortable, nervous, tense, or anxious, his/her self-efficacy beliefs are lowered. The opposite is also true: thinking negatively of his/her capabilities decreases his/her self-efficacy beliefs but increases his/her stress and anxious levels (Bandura, 1997).

A few studies studied the relationship between self-efficacy and English performance and argued that self-efficacy would be a good predictor of language proficiency and achievement. Acikel (2011), for example, found that language learning strategies and self-efficacy beliefs were good predictors of language proficiency. Along with Acikel (2001), Rahimi and Abedini (2009) found a positive correlation between learners' beliefs about their abilities of listening comprehension and their actual listening proficiency level. In addition, Mahyuddin *et al.* (2006) found in studying 1146 Malaysian a positive relationship between self-efficacy and English language proficiency.

Several studies found a positive relationship between language performance and achievement and self-efficacy. For example, Rahemi (2007) supported Mahyuddin *et al.*'s findings as she found there was a positive correlation between language learning self-efficacy and EFL Iranian achievement. Tilfarlioglu and Cinkara (2009) studied the relationship between undergraduate Turkish EFL learners' self-efficacy and their academic success in EFL. They concluded that learners' self-efficacy has influenced their success in learning English language. Also, Dodds (2011) examined the correlation between Chinese immigrants' English speaking and listening self-efficacy beliefs and their English speaking and listening performance. The results indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between speaking and listening self-efficacy beliefs and English listening and speaking performance.

In addition, Pintrich and De Groot (1990) studied the correlation between self-regulation, classroom academic performance, and motivational orientation. Results revealed that self-efficacy was positively correlated with students' performance and their cognitive engagement and was a good predictor of performance. Affirming Pintrich and De Groot's study (1990), Mills, Pajares and Herron (2006) examined the relationship

between anxiety, self-efficacy and French proficiency in listening and reading skills. They found a positive relationship between reading proficiency and learners' self-efficacy in reading French. In contrast, Tseng (2013) found that there was not any relation between Taiwanese art students' English proficiency levels and their self-efficacy levels.

To sum up, the majority of studies show that self-efficacy was generally seen as a good predictor of English language performance, achievement, and proficiency, and there is a positive relationship between self-efficacy and English achievement.

2.3. *Perfectionism and self-efficacy*

To date, no research study has investigated the relationship between English language learning self-efficacy and perfectionism. However, the relationship between self-efficacy and perfectionism had been reported in other fields: medical, business, psychological, and educational academic fields. Although, in theory, it is hypothesized that an inverse relationship between perfectionism and self-efficacy exists (Burns, 1980; Bandura 1997), a review of the scarce literature has generally yielded that adaptive perfectionism correlated positively with self-efficacy and while there is inconsistency on the relationship between maladaptive perfectionism and self-efficacy.

For instance, Stoeber, Hutchfield and Wood (2008) investigated the relation between perfectionism, general self-efficacy, and the aspiration level in 100 undergraduate students and found that perfectionism striving was positively correlated with both self-efficacy and aspiration level. Additionally, Sarac (2014) found that self-efficacy correlated with perfectionism and that Frost's multi-dimensions of perfectionism were good predictors of the general self-efficacy.

Other studies found that there is difference between adaptive perfectionists and maladaptive perfectionists in regard to their self-efficacy beliefs. According to Locicero and Ashby's (2000) study, the three groups of perfectionism (adaptive, maladaptive, and non-perfectionism) were different in terms of their levels of general self-efficacy: adaptive perfectionists scored higher in general and social self-efficacy than maladaptive and non-perfectionists. No difference between maladaptive and non-perfectionists in their levels of both general and social self-efficacy was shown. Also, Ashby, Locicero, Kottman, Schoen and Honsell (1988) found that adaptive perfectionists scored higher in self-efficacy than both non perfectionists and maladaptive perfectionists (as cited in Ashby & Rice, 2002). Affirming

these studies, Khani, Abdi and Nokhbezare (2013) found a positive correlation between academic self-efficacy and both adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism. But adaptive perfectionists showed a higher sense of self-efficacy than maladaptive perfectionists.

Ganske and Ashby (2007) concluded in their study that adaptive perfectionists were more career decision-making self-efficacious than maladaptive perfectionists and non-perfectionists were but there was not difference between maladaptive and non-perfectionists in terms of their self-efficacious level.

Chan (2007) examined the relationship between general self-efficacy, subject well-being: life satisfaction, positive and negative affect, and two types of perfectionism: positive and negative. Three hundred and seventeen gifted Chinese students completed surveys. The study showed that gifted students tend to be positive perfectionists more than negative perfectionists, and general self-efficacy mediated the relation between perfectionism and subject well-being.

It is also noted that perfectionism and self-efficacy interact with language anxiety differently. Although a positive correlation between anxiety and perfectionism (Gregerson & Horwitz, 2002; Pishghadam & Akhondpoor, 2011), a negative correlation between language anxiety and self-efficacy (Cheng 2001; Woodrow, 2006; Passiatore *et al.*, 2019). Those who show high self-efficacy usually are less anxious but those who tend to be highly perfectionistic become more anxious.

These few research papers showed discrepancy in the relationship between the three types of perfectionism and self-efficacy. Additionally, in English language learning, no research assessed the relation between self-efficacy and the three forms of perfectionism: adaptive perfectionism, maladaptive perfectionism, and non-perfectionism. Therefore, this paper seeks to explore this topic and see how English self-efficacy is related to perfectionism.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As shown in the literature review, both the types of perfectionism and self-efficacy beliefs are found to have an influence on the language learning process (Rubin, 1975; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). While perfectionism may either affect negatively or have no effect on language performance and success (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Wang, Yuen, & Slaney, 2008; Pishghadam & Akondopoor, 2011), self-efficacy correlated positively with

English performance and proficiency (e.g., Dodds 2001, Rahemi, 2007; Tilfarlioglu & Cinkara, 2009).

Although theoretically, a negative relationship between self-efficacy and perfectionism is expected (Burns, 1980), studies showed a positive relationship between adaptive perfectionism and general self-efficacy while there is no difference between maladaptive perfectionists and non-perfectionists in their levels of self-efficacy (e.g., Ganske & Ashby, 2007). Others found that positive relationship between maladaptive and self-efficacy (e.g. Stoeber, Hutchfield, & Wood, 2008). In addition, no study has examined the interaction English self-efficacy and the three types of perfectionism (adaptive, maladaptive, and non-perfectionism). As a result, this study aims to examine the relationship between English self-efficacy and perfectionism. The research questions are:

1. What is the interaction between English self-efficacy and perfectionism?
2. What are the relationships between the subscales of the Questionnaire of English Self-Efficacy (QESE) scale and the subscales of the Revised Almost Perfect Scale (APS-R)?
3. What is the relationship between English self-efficacy and English language level?
4. What is the relationship between students' English levels and perfectionism?

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. *Instruments*

a. The Revised Almost Perfect Scale (APS-R)

Along with Hamchek's (1987) distinction between the two forms of perfections, Slaney, Rice, Mobley, Trippi & Ashby (2001) constructed the Revised Almost Perfect Scale (APS-R). In this scale, they distinguished between adaptive perfectionism and maladaptive perfectionism. One of the main necessities of the establishment of this new scale was to distinguish adaptive perfectionism from maladaptive perfectionism as had not been done in two other scales: Hewitt and Flett's Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (1991) and Frost *et al.*'s Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (1990) (Slaney *et al.*, 2001).

The Revised Almost Perfect Scale has three factors, High Standards, Discrepancy, and Order, which are used to differentiate the two forms of perfectionism (adaptive perfectionism and maladaptive perfectionism). The High Standards subscale measures participants' standards for performance and achievement. The Order subscale assesses participants' desire for neatness and order, while the Discrepancy subscale measures participants' perception of failure in achieving their high standards of performance. The Revised Almost Perfect Scale uses a 7-point Likert scale. The scale is internally consistent, as the Cronbach's alphas of the scores of subscales range from .82 to .92 (Slaney *et al.*, 2001).

The Discrepancy subscale that is used to measure the maladaptive form of perfectionism has 13 items (numbered 3, 6, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, and 23), whereas the Order subscale has 4 items (2, 4, 7, and 10), and the High Standard subscale has 7 items (1, 5, 8, 12, 14, 18, 22). According to Slaney, Rice, Mobley, Trippi and Ashby (2001), both adaptive and maladaptive perfectionists should score high on the High Standard and the Order subscales, but only maladaptive perfectionists score high on the Discrepancy subscale.

b. The Questionnaire of English Self-Efficacy (QESE) Scale

Wang, Kim, Bai and Hu (2014) devised the Questionnaire of English Self-Efficacy Scale to examine Chinese' self-efficacy beliefs about their English language abilities. The scale consists of 32 items that measure learners' English self-efficacy in the four skills, reading, listening, speaking, and writing. A 7-point Likert scale is used from (1) «I cannot do it at all» to (7) «I can do it well». Self-efficacy for speaking English is measured through items 4, 6, 8, 17, 19, 20, 23, and 30; items that assess English reading self-efficacy are 2, 12, 16, 21, 25, 26, 29, and 32. Items that gauge English writing self-efficacy are 5, 7, 11, 13, 14, 18, 28, and 31. English listening self-efficacy items are 1, 3, 9, 10, 15, 22, 24, and 27. The coefficient of the internal consistency of the whole questionnaire was 0.96, and the coefficients of both reading and listening subscales were 0.88. Writing subscale coefficient was 0.89; 0.92 was the coefficient of speaking subscale (Wang *et al.*, 2014).

Because the scale was designed for Chinese students, a few modifications were made to the wording of the scale in this study. For example, in the original scale, item nr. 10 asks about understanding «English TV programs made in China». In this study, «made in China» were deleted because the participants are students learning at one of the intensive language programs in the USA.

4.2. Procedure

After signing the consent form, participants were asked to complete the two surveys. The researcher tried to get a large sample, so the surveys were sent to four different English language institutions at four different universities in Missouri State, USA. Although responses were received from all four institutions, only two of them were ultimately considered in the study because of the low return rate. Ninety-nine students were from a university-based intensive English language program (97% return rate) and 30 students were from the other institution (98% return rate). I got also responses from the other intensive English programs, but their return rates were below 20%. There were therefore excluded from the study.

4.3. Participants

There were 129 participants from two different intensive language programs. Fifty-four students were at the advanced English level, 65 students were high intermediate students, and 10 students were at the intermediate level. However, out of 129 students, five participants were excluded: three students were under the age of 18 and did not provide their parents' consent forms; one student did not complete one of the two surveys; and one participant was detected as an outlier during the statistical analysis process. Also, the 10 intermediate students were excluded as they may cause statistical sampling errors.

Thus, the actual number of participants in the study was 114 students: 62 students were High intermediate, and 62 students were advanced. Among the 114 participants, 108 reported their ages. These participants' ages ranged from 18 to 58 years ($M = 23.37$, $SD = 5.54$). One hundred and twelve students reported their gender: 43 (37.7%) were female and 69 (60.5%) were male students. All participants were international students who came to study ESL at one of the two intensive programs. The majority of the students were either from Saudi Arabia or China (50 and 30, respectively), while the rest of students were from one of the following countries: Japan, Chile, Columbia, Kuwait, Pakistan, Vietnam, South Korea, or Magnolia.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Correlations between the subscales of both the Revised Almost Perfect Scale and the Questionnaire of English Self-Efficacy Scale

As shown in *Table 1*, the three subscales of the Revised Almost Perfect Scale (High Standards, Order, and Discrepancy) were correlated statistically significantly with each other. Supporting Slaney, Rice, Mobley, Trippi and Ashby's (2001) scale construction, High Standards correlated statistically significantly with Order ($r = 0.60, p < .01$) while Discrepancy had a weaker but still significant correlation with both High Standards ($r = .45, p < .01$) and Order ($r = .41, p < 0.01$).

The subscales of the Questionnaire of English Self-Efficacy Scale (English reading self-efficacy, English listening self-efficacy, English speaking self-efficacy, and English writing self-efficacy) correlated statistically significantly with each other and with the total English self-efficacy. For example, English reading self-efficacy was related positively and significantly with English speaking self-efficacy ($r = .75, p < .01$) and with total English self-efficacy ($r = .91, p < 0.01$).

The interaction between the two scales (APS-R and QESE) and their subscales showed that total English self-efficacy and its four subscales correlated significantly with Order and High Standards subscales. However, Discrepancy did not statistically significantly correlate with total English self-efficacy or with any of the four self-efficacy subscales.

Table 1. – Correlation between the subscales of the APS-R and the QESE.

VARIABLE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. High Standards	—						
2. Order	.600*	—					
3. Discrepancy	.449*	.413*	—				
4. Listening SF	.373*	.237*	.145	—			
5. Speaking SF	.432*	.254*	.155	.724*	—		
6. Reading SF	.467*	.369*	.114	.734*	.752*	—	
7. Writing SF	.411*	.245*	.078	.634*	.787*	.793*	—
8. Total English SF	.467*	.306*	.139	.879*	.908*	.909*	.886*

Note: SF = Self-Efficacy; * $p < .01$; $N = 114$.

5.2. Classification of perfectionists

Slaney, Rice, Mobley, Trippi and Ashby (2001) indicated that the Discrepancy subscale score differentiates maladaptive perfectionists from adaptive perfectionists. Participants who score higher in Discrepancy are considered maladaptive perfectionists. The procedure used in Grzegorek, Slaney, Franze and Rice (2014) were followed in this study in order to classify participants into three groups – adaptive perfectionists, maladaptive perfectionists, or non-perfectionists. The researcher used the hierarchical cluster analysis with Ward's (1963) linkage method. The resultant agglomeration schedule suggested two different sets of cluster solutions, a three-cluster solution and a four-cluster solution. In the three-cluster solution, there was a 39% change of agglomeration coefficients, and a 20% change of the agglomeration coefficients in the four-cluster solution. To be consistent with Slaney, Rice, Mobley, Trippi and Ashby's (2001) theory and classification of perfectionism, the three-cluster solution was used.

Table 2. – Perfectionism classification (Mean and Standard Deviations).

Subscales	Adaptive Perfectionists (N = 35)		Maladaptive Perfectionists (N = 37)		Non-Perfectionists (N = 42)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
High Standards	40.14	3.88	38.67	5.69	29.80	3.27
Order	21.74	3.27	20.67	3.66	15.95	2.61
Discrepancy	47.74	5.33	63.48	7.62	44.76	5.52

As indicated in Table 2, the results of the hierarchical cluster analysis differed between adaptive, maladaptive, and non-perfectionists. Non-perfectionist students (cluster 3) scored the lowest on the High Standards, the Order, and the Discrepancy subscales. In contrast, maladaptive perfectionists and adaptive perfectionists scored high in the High Standards and the Order subscales. As mentioned above, since the Discrepancy subscale differentiates the adaptive from the maladaptive, the maladaptive perfectionists are the ones who scores higher in the Discrepancy subscale. Thus, the total number of the adaptive perfectionists (cluster 1) were 35 students, the maladaptive perfectionists (cluster 2) were 37 students, and the non-perfectionists (cluster 3) were 42 students.

5.3. The effect of perfectionism on English language proficiency

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was run to investigate whether or not perfectionism and its three main types (adaptive, maladaptive, and non-perfectionists) affect students' English language self-efficacy and to determine the interaction between English levels and perfectionism and between English levels and English self-efficacy. As shown in *Table 3*, using Pillai's Trace, there was no main effect for self-efficacy on English levels (high intermediate and advanced), $F(4,105) = .274$, $p = .894$, $\eta^2_p = .010$, but there was a significant main effect for perfectionism on English language self-efficacy, $F(8,212) = 2.417$, $p = 0.16$, $\eta^2_p = .084$. However, there was not any significant interaction between English level and perfectionism, $F(8,212) = 1.628$, $p = .118$, $\eta^2_p = .058$.

Table 3. – The interaction between English language self-efficacy and perfectionism.

Effect		F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	2059.038 ^b	4	105	.000	.987
English_L	Pillai's Trace	.274 ^b	4	105	.894	.010
Perfectionism	Pillai's Trace	2.417	8	212	.016	.084
English_L * Perfectionism	Pillai's Trace	1.628	8	212	.118	.058

Note: English_L = English levels; * $p < .05$.

As *Table 4* indicates, Tukey post-hoc tests showed that there were significant differences between the three types of perfectionism. Non-perfectionists scored lower than both adaptive ($p = .001$) and maladaptive ($p = .005$). However, there was no significant difference shown between adaptive and maladaptive in their relationship to English Self-efficacy ($p = .261$).

Table 4. – Post-hoc results for perfectionism (Tukey HSD).

		Mean	Std. Error	Std.	95% Confidence Interval	
(I) Ward Method	(J) Ward Method	Difference			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Adaptive	Maladaptive	5.62008	4.97605	.261	-4.2403	15.4805
Adaptive	Non-perfectionist	19.11429*	4.82993	.001	9.5435	28.6851
Maladaptive	Non-perfectionist	13.49421*	4.75819	.005	4.0655	22.9229

Note: * $p < .05$.

It is noticed that adaptive perfectionists scored the highest while the non-perfectionists scored the lowest, as *Table 5* and *Figure 1* show. For example, the adaptive perfectionists' scores ($M = 44.04$, $SD = 1.20$) in listening self-efficacy are slightly higher than the maladaptive perfectionists' scores ($M = 43.26$, $SD = 1.22$), and the non-perfectionists are scored the lowest ($M = 38.87$, $SD = 1.08$). The following figure shows the pattern of the levels of perfectionism in relation to the self-efficacy of the four skills.

Table 5. – Average self-efficacy scores for English skills to perfectionism.

Subscales	Adaptive perfectionists		Maladaptive perfectionists		Non-perfectionists	
	<i>M</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>
Listening	44.04	1.20	43.26	1.22	38.87	1.098
Speaking	47.60	.985	47.03	.999	42.90	.897
Reading	46.13	.928	44.57	.941	41.10	.845
Writing	46.40	.936	44.68	.950	41.81	.852

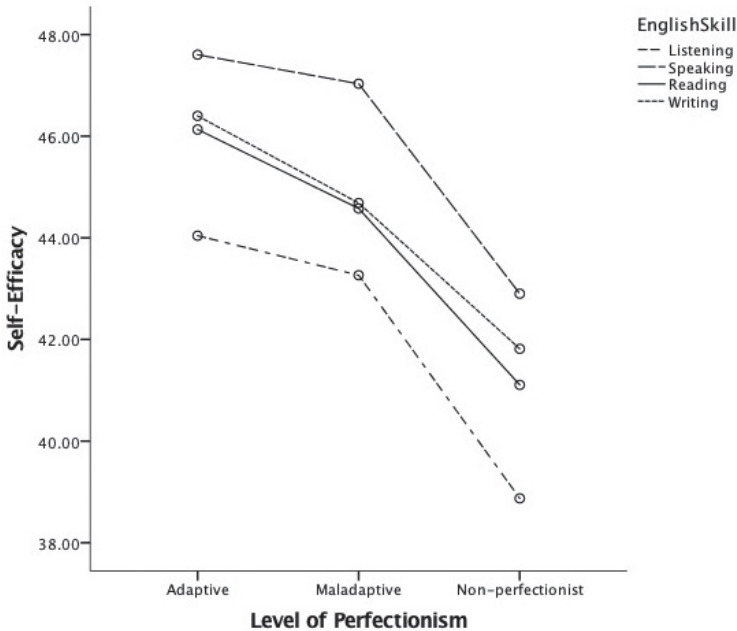


Figure 1. – Levels of perfectionism in relation to self-efficacy of the four skills.

5.4. *The relationship between English self-efficacy and English language levels*

An independent-samples t-test was run to determine whether students' English self-efficacy beliefs differ from high-intermediate level to advanced level. As presented in *Table 6*, scores of both levels met the assumption of normality. There was no violation of homogeneity of variances for English self-efficacy scores for high intermediate and advanced students, as assessed by Levene's test ($p = .58$). As a result, the pooled variance independent samples t-test was used. The two groups: high intermediate and advanced students, did not differ significantly, $t(112) = .321$, $p = .75$, $d = .06$, 95% [CI -7.03, 9.76]. The mean for the high-intermediate group ($M = 175.72$, $SD = 21.58$) was not significantly different than the advanced group ($M = 174.36$, $SD = 23.64$). The Cohen's d effect size was $.06$, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). In contrast to the research hypothesis, the findings showed that there is no difference between high intermediate students' English self-efficacy and advanced students' English self-efficacy. Both groups have almost the same level of English self-efficacy beliefs.

Table 6. – Independent samples t-test.

		Levene's test		t-test for equality of means						
						95% Confidence Interval				
						Std. Error				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)	Mean Diff.	Diff.	Lower	Upper
S	Equal variances	.308	.580	.32	11	.749	1.360	4.239	-7.039	9.760
F	Assumed			1	2					

Note: SF = English self-efficacy.

6. DISCUSSION

The Pearson correlation conducted to answer the question of whether there is a correlation between the subscales of the Revised Almost Perfect Scale (APS-R) and between the overall the Questionnaire of English Self-Efficacy Scale (QESE) and its subscales showed that the subscales of APS-R were correlated with each other, confirming the construction of the APS-R and that the subscales of the overall QESE were also correlated, affirming the construction of the questionnaire.

The correlation between the subscales of the APS-R and the subscales of the QESE was similar to the findings of other studies (Ashby *et al.*, 1988; Locicero & Ashby, 2000; Ganske & Ashby, 2007; Stoeber, Huchtfeld, & Wood, 2008). Total English self-efficacy, reading self-efficacy, speaking self-efficacy, writing self-efficacy and listening self-efficacy were correlated only with adaptive subscales (the Order and the High Standards subscales) and did not correlate with the Discrepancy subscale that distinguishes the maladaptive perfectionists. In other words, total English SF and four skills self-efficacy were related more to students' standards for performance and achievement and to students' desire for neatness and order than to students' perception of failure of achieving their high standards of performance. Students who believe more in their abilities in learning English tend to set high standards of performance and to be neat and more organized and think less of failure.

There is main effect of student's level of perfectionism on students' self-efficacy in learning English. Post-hoc (Tukey HSD) showed that non-perfectionists tend to be less self-efficacious than maladaptive and adaptive students. Although some research studies (Locicero and Ashby, 2000; Ganske and Ashby, 2007) found there is no difference between maladaptive and non-perfectionists, the results of this study showed that non-perfectionists are lower in their English self-efficacy than maladaptive perfectionists, as shown in *Figure 1*.

There is a slight difference, yet not significant, between English self-efficacy of both adaptive and maladaptive perfectionists. Generally, adaptive perfectionists are higher than maladaptive perfectionists in their levels of self-efficacy beliefs, as shown in *Figure 1*. This finding corresponds with other research (Ashby *et al.*, 1988; Locicero & Ashby, 2000; Ganske & Ashby, 2007; Khani, Abdi, & Nokhbezare, 2013).

Contrary to the research hypothesis, that is, when students learn more English, the more they believe in their abilities in learning English, the results refuted this hypothesis. To test this hypothesis, the independent t-test was run. The data revealed that students' English levels (high-intermediate and advanced levels) do not have an effect on their self-efficacy beliefs in English language. There is no difference between high intermediate and advanced students in terms of their English self-efficacy, confirming Tseng's (2013) finding.

Although some studies (Gregerson & Horwitz, 2002; Pishadam & Akhondpoor, 2011) argued that perfectionism is related to student's performance, the results of this study showed that there is no interaction between students' language level and their perfectionistic attitudes, supporting Wang, Yuen and Slaney's (2008) study which claimed that perfec-

tionism does not affect students' achievement in English and Math. Yet, investigating the interaction between students' English self-efficacy, perfectionism and their performance is recommended in order to see whether these variables have an effect on students' performance or not.

7. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to assess the relationship between English self-efficacy and perfectionism groups, the relationship between self-efficacy and English levels groups, and the interaction between perfectionism and students' English level. It is found that students' English level doesn't affect their English self-efficacy, and perfectionism as a personal trait does not significantly vary with students' English level. In general, students moving from High-Intermediate to Advanced did not influence students' English self-efficacy. However, there was a relationship between English self-efficacy and the three types of perfectionism. Adaptive perfectionists tend to be highly self-efficacious students. Non-perfectionists are less self-efficacious students than both adaptive and maladaptive perfectionists.

The limitations of this paper are twofold. First, students completed self-reported surveys. This may affect the accuracy of the representation of students' beliefs. Therefore, using another method such as interviewing students might be useful. Second, only two levels of English proficiency were investigated. A replication of the study where all levels of English proficiency were examined might be useful and insightful.

In addition, it is also recommended to add one or more variables to further understand the relationship between students' perfectionistic tendency and their self-efficacious beliefs in learning subjects other than English as a second language. It may of interest to study the relationship between perfectionism and English self-efficacy as a first and second language, or Math self-efficacy.

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RIASSUNTO

Lo scopo di questo studio è stato quello di esaminare la relazione tra l'autoefficacia percepita nell'apprendimento della lingua inglese (ESL) da parte degli studenti e i tre tipi di perfezionismo («adattivo», «disadattivo» e «non perfezionista»). Un campione di 114 studenti ESL di livello intermedio o avanzato ha completato due questionari self-report: il questionario sulla scala di autoefficacia inglese totale (QESE) e la scala rivista e cosiddetta quasi perfetta (APS-R). Sono state calcolate le correlazioni di Pearson, l'analisi del cluster gerarchico MANOVA ed è stato applicato il test t per campioni indipendenti. I risultati hanno mostrato che la scala di autoefficacia inglese totale e le sue quattro sottoscale sono significativamente correlate alle sottoscale Order e High Standards. Al contrario, la sottoscala Discrepancy non risulta significativamente correlata né con la scala di autoefficacia totale né con le quattro sottoscale. È stato inoltre evidenziato un significativo effetto principale per il perfezionismo sull'autoefficacia percepita nell'apprendimento della lingua inglese da parte degli studenti: i perfezionisti «adattivi» hanno ottenuto punteggi più alti sia dei perfezionisti «disadattivi» sia dei «non perfezionisti», questi ultimi hanno ottenuto il punteggio più basso. Non è però emersa alcuna interazione significativa tra i livelli di autoefficacia inglese e il perfezionismo.

Parole chiave: Autoefficacia percepita nell'apprendimento della lingua inglese; Inglese come seconda lingua o lingua straniera; Perfezionismo adattivo; Perfezionismo maladattativo; Non-perfezionismo.

How to cite this Paper: Farag, I. M. (2020). Perfectionism and English learners' self-efficacy [Perfezionismo e autoefficacia degli studenti nell'apprendimento dell'inglese]. *Journal of Educational, Cultural and Psychological Studies*, 20, 87-109. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.7358/ecps-2020-021-fara>