

Investigating the Relationship between Iranian EFL Learners' Self-Esteem and Productive Skills across Genders

Gholamreza Nourelahi¹, Nasser Ghafoori^{2*}, Nesa Nabifar³

1. Department of English, Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran
2. Department of English, Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran
3. Department of English, Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran

Article history:

Received date: 25 September 2017

Review date: 21 October 2017

Accepted date: 18 November 2017

Printed on line: 28 November 2018

Keywords:

Self-esteem, EFL Learners' Productive Skills, Speaking, Writing, Language Proficiency.

Abstract

Purpose: The current study was conducted to discover the possible relationship between self-esteem and the productive skills of EFL learners in Iran across genders. **Methodology:** The design of the study was ex post facto or correlational design. Three instruments were used for data collection in the present study. A language proficiency test (Oxford Placement Test (OPT)) to measure the participants' proficiency level, Cooper smith Self-Esteem Inventory and finally two tests of speaking and writing adopted from Preliminary English Test (PET). To begin the study, with the purpose of clearing the language proficiency level of the learners, the researchers gave all learners a language proficiency test in Payame Noor University in Tabriz. After the test, 52 candidates whose test scores were between one SD below and above the mean finally were selected as the homogeneous sample for further data collection. Then some parts of the data were collected by Cooper smith's self-esteem questionnaire to find out the participants' self-esteem. Finally, the last part of the data which was the participants' productive skills was gathered by two tests of speaking and writing adopted from PET. To test all the research hypotheses in the current study, the researchers run Pearson correlation analysis as the chief statistical analysis. **Findings:** The results indicated that, there was significant relationship between the self-esteem and productive skills of the learners in both genders. **Conclusion:** feelings of competence, confidence and good directedness influence learners' performance. It means that, self-esteem could have a significant impact on the learners' learning processes.

Please cite this article as: Nourelahi Gh, Ghafoori N, Nabifar N. (2017). Investigating the Relationship between Iranian EFL Learners' Self-Esteem and Productive Skills across Genders, *Iranian journal of educational Sociology*, 1(3), 138-148.

* Corresponding author email: ghafoori@iaut.ac.ir

1. Introduction

Generally speaking, languages are taught in terms of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Speaking and writing are called productive skills, because speakers and writers activate relevant schemata from specific contexts to convey meaning for a definite purpose with an intended audience in mind. They can be contrasted with the receptive or passive skills of listening and reading. Every language user needs to master these skills when learning a natural language. Although English language learners have nearly the same objectives, their methods and learning strategies are remarkably different from each other. Teachers are expected to be aware of differences among learners; furthermore, they must be able to tailor the teaching materials such as textbooks so as to fit the target teaching context (Harmer, 2007).

These days, one of the important purposes in foreign language learning process is to increase alertness about learners' self-esteems and their possible and probable special sound effects on the learning process and successively, on learning results. Additionally, because of the frequent learner variables that seem to impact on the procedure of language teaching (Blair, 1982), the prominence and emphasis on the personality types among students is certainly relevant in modern language teaching and its related and correlated learning settings. The achievement of second language learning is due not only to cognitive elements, but to self-esteem, motivational, personality, and emotional aspects of the students (Brown, 2000; Carrel, P. L., Prince, M. S., & Astica, G. G. 1996), among which self-esteem is one of unlimited significance.

The achievement of second language learning is due not only to cognitive factors, but to self-esteem, motivation, personality, and other emotional factors (Brown, 2000; Carrel, Prince, & Astica, 1996), among which self-esteem is one of unlimited significance. Self-esteem effects on the students' comprehension and proficiency. It can be recognized and accepted that students with high self-esteem usually set higher goals and aims for themselves and become more willing to continue in spite of failure. Moreover, high self-esteem may also help students have the confidence to challenge and encounter difficult situations as well as see satisfaction from their progress and success (Murk, 2006). Oden, Ebuta, and Nta, (2014), add that students who are confident in their academic skills believe in high scores of examinations and quality of their work to earn personal and professional benefits. On the other hand, students who lack self-confidence in their academic skills visualize a low score even before they start an examination or enroll in a course.

According to Eagly (1987) and Eagly and Karau (2002), it is reported in research studies that both boys and girls in their attempts to improve their language performances, girls outscored boys in EFL learning. Thus gender is considered as an imperative biological factor that is of great importance in the process of second language acquisition. There are chief differences in language production of women and men, in a way neither education nor any other attempts can close the gap. A gender difference is an inequality between male and female. According to gender role theory, common gender stereotypes are "cultural expectations for gender appropriate behaviors". Females and males are trained for the appropriate behaviors and manners from the family and within culture they grow up with. As a result, "non-physical gender differences are a product of socialization" (Zoghi, Kazemi, & Kalani, 2013. p.1). Based on the background above, this research is conducted to discover the probable relationship between self-esteem and the productive skills of EFL learners in Iran across genders.

2. literature Review

Self-esteem is a remarkably widespread construct in contemporary psychology (Zeigler- Hill, 2013). Self-esteem is described as the complication of feelings about oneself that guides behavior, influences affective evaluator of individual's evaluator, and drives motivation in learning (Stevick, 1990). Branden (2001)

differentiates self-esteem into two aspects, such as self-confidence which is the sense of efficacy and self-respect which is the sense of worthiness. Frequently, self-esteem is interchangeably used with self-concept, self-competence, and self-efficacy. Consequently, Burns (1979) declares that self-esteem is a negative or positive outlook of an individual towards him or herself. It means an individual who has high self-esteem is self-confident. Those who have low self-esteem ordinarily indicate signs of stress and sadness.

Learning atmosphere can be a dynamic factor conducive to building learners' self-esteem since learners can socialize with each other. Therefore, it helps them become successful and self-confident learners. In consonance with the above view, Schunk (2000) and Hisken (2011) state that students or individuals with high self-esteem are able to successfully complete given tasks academically, whereas others with lower self-esteem tend to give up when faced the challenging tasks. This indicates that the people with higher sense of self-esteem show persistence and flexibility.

There are a few researchers who have attempted to investigate the possible and probable relationship between self-esteem and English success and achievement in terms of different skills or sub-skills. Also, in the context of the mentioned study, some researchers examined this topic in different contexts and on EFL learners' achievements. Some of these studies which are related to self-esteem and productive skills are mentioned below:

A number of studies have been carried out on the effects of self-esteem on language learning in general terms (Demo & Parker, 1987; Kamarzarrin, 1994). These studies reveal that the role of self-esteem as a psychological variable in language learning has been underestimated. Demo and Parker (1987) admit as true that in actual situations both language learning and self-esteem are interrelating variables, in the sense that language learning may influence and affect the degree of self-esteem and vice versa; that is, by strengthening one variable, the other variable will be made stronger. Grodnick (1996) who examined the relationship between self-esteem and writing ability of American learners claimed that there was no significant relationship between self-esteem and writing skill.

In keeping with the study by Branden in (2001) among 50 randomly chosen university scholars about discovering a strong relationship between self-esteem and writing achievement, no significant correlation was described. There was no report related with the low level of self-esteem and its relationship with low level of writing; moreover, there were not any outcome concerns with relationship between high level of self-esteem and high level of writing ability. In another study, Tremblay, Sire, and Balkin, (2000) stated that there was a significant relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of students in Canada.

Moreover, the research remarked above, self-esteem also has positive relationship with English writing and reading achievement in general scope. Al-Hattab's study (2006) showed that the positive relationship arises from circumstances and task self-esteem with English writing achievement. In contrast, there was not significant correlation between the two variables.

Bagheri and Faghih, (2012) research focus on self-esteem and paragraph writing, but they include English language proficiency as their unseen variables in the study. They found relationship between English language proficiency and self-esteem of Iranian EFL language learners. This survey used Coppersmiths' self-esteem questionnaire and Nashre Ebteda version of TOEFL proficiency test (reading sections and structure).

Hetthong and Teo (2013) searched the relationship between self-efficacy and writing performance and explored whether students' overall writing self-efficacy predicts their overall writing performance. The contributors were 51 third-year learners of a Thai university, a paragraph writing test and a questionnaire were used. The results showed a significant positive relationship between writing self-efficacy and writing performance both at the section level and the sub-skill level, additionally, the overall writing self-efficacy predicted the overall writing performance (p. 157).

Kalanzadeh, Mahnegar, Hassannejad, and Bakhtiarvand, (2013) examined the impact of Iranian EFL students' self-esteem on their speaking skill. The participants of this study were selected by using a questionnaire in order to identify and discover the high and low self-esteem ones. Then, a standard spoken

proficiency test was used to measure five sub-skills related to speaking: vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, structure and comprehensibility. After analyzing the data, the results showed a statistically significant correlation between the participants' self-esteem and speaking ability.

In the light of the above considerations and reflections, it is found that most of the studies above revolve around the relationship between self-esteem and some English skills. However, little attention has been paid to know the relationship of more than one skill in English language proficiency and self-esteem among Iranian EFL learners. Therefore, the present study is an attempt to verify and validate the possible and probable relationship between Iranian EFL learners' self-esteem and productive skills across genders. The present research enjoys one more issue, i.e. gender, which was hardly ever considered in the previous studies.

3. Methodology

The design of the study was ex post facto or correlational design in addition we defined the degree of correlations between the variables, specifically students' self-esteem (independent variable) and speaking/writing performances (dependent variables).

The study was conducted in Payame Noor University, in Tabriz, with an initial group of 80 male and female students with the age range of 19-50, majoring in English teaching, Translation, and Literature. The all participants were given a Standard English language proficiency test (Oxford Placement Test). From among the initial group, 16 participants did not continue to cooperate and we had to remove them. Moreover, 12 learners couldn't be placed at the same level of language proficiency as other participants. It means that the language proficiency level of them belonged to very low or high levels of language proficiency, though; they had been placed by the university. At last based on the results, 52 students (32 females and 20 males) who scored within one SD above and below the mean were selected as the homogeneous sample for further data collection.

Three instruments were used for data collection in the present study. The first one was Oxford Placement Test (OPT) to measure the learner's proficiency level the second one was Coppersmith's (1967) self-esteem questionnaire and finally two tests of speaking and writing adopted from PET.

OPT is a Standard English proficiency test designed by Lynda Edwards (2007). The test contains 50 multiple choice questions which assess students' knowledge of key grammar and vocabulary from elementary to intermediate levels, a reading text with 10 graded comprehension questions, and an optional writing task that assesses students' ability to produce the language.

Coppersmith Self-Esteem Inventory is a 50-item measure of attitudes toward oneself. The inventory was originally designed to measure children's self-esteem. The Coppersmith's (1967) self-esteem inventory which was modified by Rydin (1978) for use on adults which includes 58 items. The test has a built in "lie scale" to show if you are trying too much to seem to have high self-esteem. If you answered "like me" to three or more of the following items, retake the test with an eye toward being more realistic in your responses: 1, 6, 13, 20, 27, 34, 41, and 48.

The students choose one of the choices of "like me" and "unlike me" that each is in the place of "yes" and "no" answer. Each of the 58 items scored on 2 points, ranging from 0 to 1 point, which shows the most positive attitudes and the most negative attitudes. The maximum score for this questionnaire is 50 and the minimum is 0. This questionnaire was translated in Persian language to escape any the misunderstanding for

the learners. The validity of the questionnaire was checked by back-translation and experts' views. The reliability of the items was checked thorough Cronbach alpha internal consistency.

Both speaking and writing tests which were from Preliminary English Test (PET 2012), were used in this study. Two main skills of writing and speaking were recognized, and each of these was assessed in a test component of the same name. a) Test of Writing Skill: It contains three writing parts. It is significant that participants understand that writing Part 3 carries 15 marks out of the total of 25. It is recommended that participants expend about 40 minutes on the Writing components.

Part 1 focuses on grammatical precision and requires participants to complete five sentences, all sharing a common theme or topic. For each question, participants are given a complete sentence, together with a 'gapped' sentence below it. Participants should write between one and three words to fill this gap. The second sentence, when complete, must mean the same as the first sentence.

Parts 2 and 3 of the writing component concentrate on extended writing and participants need to think carefully about who the target reader is for each task and try to write in a suitable style and manner. It is important to write clearly so that the answers are easy to read. However, if participants write in upper or lower case, or if their writing is joined up or not, it is not important

As stated above, it is important for participants to spell properly and if a word is misspelled, no marks will be given. Also if learners produce an answer of more than three words, even if their writing includes the correct answer, they will also lose the mark

In part 2, participants are asked to produce a short communicative message of between 35 and 45 words in length. They are told who they are writing to and why, and must include three content points, which are laid out with bullets in the question. To achieve top marks, all three points must be present in the participant's answer, so it is essential that participants read the question carefully and plan what they will include. Their answer should relate to the context provided in the question. Participants are also assessed on the clarity of the message they produce; minor, non-impeding errors are not penalized.

Part 3 of writing offers participants a choice of task: either a story or an informal letter may be written. Both tasks require an answer of about 100 words. Longer answers are not automatically penalized, but may contain some irrelevant material. Participants should be advised to keep to the task set, rather than contain 'pre-learned' text, which may well not fit as part of their answer. Answers that do not fulfill the task will not receive top marks.

b) Test of Speaking Skill: In the PET speaking test, participants are examined in pairs by two examiners. One of the examiners acts as an interlocutor and the other as an assessor. The interlocutor awards 5 marks for global achievement, whilst the assessor awards marks according to four analytical criteria each 5: Grammar and Vocabulary, Discourse Management, Pronunciation and Interactive Communication. The interlocutor runs the test, while the assessor takes no part in the interaction. Examiners do change roles throughout the course of an examining session, but not in the course of the examining of one pair. There are a number of different 'packs' of material that examiners can use.

The test takes between 10 and 12 minutes and consists of four parts which are designed to elicit a varied range of speaking skills from the participants. Participants are assessed on their ability during the test. There are a total of 25 marks. If there are an uneven number of participants at a center, the last Speaking test should be in a group of three instead of a pair. The group of three tests are not an option for all participants, but is only used for the last test in a session, where needed.

The following steps were taken in the present study. Arrangements were made with the officials of Payame Noor University for data collection. The researchers, as part time instructors at Payame Noor University explained both to the officials and the learners that their responses were used only for research purposes. Then, each participant was given the pack of instruments. It should be mentioned that all the participants were told NOT to write their names on the instruments, because it might affect their honesty in responding. Each pack of data had a code, 1,2,3,4, etc.

With the purpose of clearing the language proficiency level of the learners, the researchers gave them the language proficiency tests (Oxford Placement Test). After the test, the candidates whose test scores were between one SD below and above the mean were selected as the homogeneous sample for further data collection. The given time was 65 minutes.

In the next session, the selected participants were given the self-esteem questionnaire and writing test. The researcher prepared it a point to make available the students with some indications concerning the responding process and the significance of their careful answering. The given time for responding was about 65 minutes.

In the third session, 10-12 minutes were given per pair of candidates to produce their speaking performances. In order to asses and score the speaking skill well the participants performances were recorded in the lab and then transcribed and scored. The participant's speaking and writing performances were rated by the scoring format of PET which was explained in the previous part.

After the required data were collected, the researchers entered the data into SPSS statistical software. Descriptive statistics were calculated for all test scores. The normality of the scores distributions was checked through Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality. When the normality assumption was proved, the Pearson correlation coefficient as parametric inferential statistics was calculated in order to investigate the research questions.

4. Findings

52 participants who had initially accepted to take part in the research study were given the self-esteem questionnaire and tests of speaking and writing skills from PET. Table 4.1 below shows the results of descriptive statistics for the self-esteem, writing and speaking test scores of the participants.

Table1. Statistics Descriptive

	N		Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
	Valid	Missing				
Self-esteem	52	0	39.56	7.008	24	49
Writing	52	0	20.42	2.428	15	25
Speaking	52	0	20.15	2.906	14	25

According to the descriptive statistics presented in table 4.1 a total number of 52 participants took part in the study. In this table, mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum have been calculated. As the results shown in disclose, mean score obtained from self-esteem test is 39.56 and its standard deviation is 7.008, minimum is 24 and maximum is 49. Also, mean score obtained from writing test is 20.42, its standard deviation is 2.428, minimum is 15 and maximum is 25. And finally mean score obtained from speaking test is 20.15, its standard deviation is 2.906, minimum is 14 and maximum is 25.

Before finding the relationships between the self-esteem and each language proficiency skill, through the Pearson correlation coefficient test which is a method of parametric inferential statistics, it was essential to check the normality of the scores distribution. For this purpose, the researcher used One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Table 4.2 shows the results of this test.

Table 2. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

	N	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	Sig. (2-tailed)
Self-esteem	52	.780	.576
Writing	52	.913	.375
Speaking	52	.741	.642

As the Table 4.2 shows the null hypothesis in this test was the normality of the variable distribution. If the significance level was greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis would be accepted and it would be concluded that the distribution of the intended variable is normal. Due to the collected significance levels, it can be inferred that all variables were of the normal distribution (Significance level > 0.05). Therefore, the normality assumption could be confirmed.

In order to examine the relationship between self-esteem and the speaking performance of Iranian male EFL learners, Pearson correlation coefficient was run. Table 4.3 shows the test results for the self-esteem and speaking performance among male students.

Table3. Pearson correlation test for Self-esteem and Speaking among male students

		Speaking
Self-esteem	Pearson Correlation	.767**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	20

As the results displayed in Table 4.3 Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.77 and the significance level of the test was 0.001. Since the significance level of the Pearson test was smaller than 0.05 the probability of the variable independence was rejected. That is there is positive relationship between male learners' self-esteem and speaking skill.

In order to examine the relationship between self-esteem and the speaking performance of Iranian female EFL learners, Pearson correlation coefficient was run. Table 4.4 indicates the test results for the self-esteem and speaking performance among male students.

Table 4. Pearson Correlation test for Self-esteem and Speaking among female students

		Speaking
Self-esteem	Pearson Correlation	.664**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	32

As the results displayed in Table 4.4 Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.66 and the significance level of the test was 0.001 Since the significance level of the Pearson test was smaller than 0.05 the probability of the variable independence was rejected. That is there is positive relationship between female learners' self-esteem and speaking skill.

With the intention of assessing the relationship between the self-esteem and writing performance of Iranian male EFL learners, Pearson correlation coefficient test was run. Table 4.5 displays the test results

for the self-esteem and reading performance among female students. For testing this hypothesis Pearson correlation coefficient test was applied.

Table 5. Pearson Correlation test for Self-esteem and Writing among male students

		Writing
Self-esteem	Pearson Correlation	.553*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012
	N	20

As the results shown in Table 4.5 Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.055 and the significance level of the test was 0.012. Attributable to the fact that the significance level of the Pearson test was smaller than 0.05 thus, the probability of the variable independence has been rejected explicitly there is correlation between male learners' self-esteem and writing skill.

With the intention of assessing the relationship between the self-esteem and writing performance of Iranian female EFL learners, Pearson correlation coefficient test was run. Table 4.6 indicates the test results for the self-esteem and writing performance among female students. To test this hypothesis Pearson correlation coefficient test was applied.

Table 6. Pearson Correlation test for Self-esteem and Writing among female students

		Writing
Self-esteem	Pearson Correlation	.577**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	32

As the results shown in Table 4.6 Pearson correlation coefficient was .058 and the significance level of the test was 0.001. Caused by the fact that the significance level of the Pearson test was smaller than 0.05 thus, the probability of the variable independence has been rejected explicitly, there is correlation between female learners' self-esteem and writing skill.

5. Conclusion

The first and second research questions of the current study concerned with the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' self-esteem and speaking skill in both genders. There are several studies on the relationship between self-esteem and speaking performance, but there are not across genders studies on the field. Speaking accurately and fluently has always been a significant and important concern in foreign contexts (Gan, 2012) and also in the United Kingdom (Latham, 2005). Proper statistical procedures and processes were followed to achieve the essential answers for the research question.

Based on the findings of the current study, there was positive relationship between self-esteem and speaking performance of both male and female learners. The findings are in line with some studies. For example, Ahangari and Nourealhi (2016), reported learners with high self-esteem performed better than the students with low self-esteem. As it is clear, self-esteem played a very significant and main role in learners' spoken production. Even though, in line with Bachman and Palmer (1996) and Çetinkaya (2007), self-esteem is the first and key factor in speaking performance. Consequently, the researchers came to the conclusion that self-esteem might possibly play a basic role as well.

This study was also in proportion to McCroskey and McCroskey's (1986a, 1986b) findings that willingness to communicate is positively associated with self-esteem and self-perceived communication competence. It

is verified that as Chan and McCroskey (1987) comprehended, learners with higher self-esteem were more likely to have more speaking performance in class than those who had lower self-esteem. In relation to the consequences of this study, as Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide and Shimizu (2004) claim, students who show willingness to communicate in various contact situations are more inclined to initiate communication in the classroom.

As this study has confirmed, in keeping with Yashima's (2002) research, students' self-confidence and self-esteem in L2 communicative competence is important for their readiness and willingness to be involved in L2 communication. GÜRLER (2015) also came to the similar conclusions in his study on the relationship between self-esteem and speaking. He further adds that there are slight differences in departments and genders. Our findings also are in agreement with those of Kalanzadeh et al (2013). They reported that based on the results obtained from the participants' responses to the self-esteem questionnaire and their performance on a standard oral proficiency test, it was concluded that there was a high correlation between the participant's self-esteem and their oral performance. The reviewed studies didn't report any negative relationship between self-esteem and speaking performance.

The third and fourth research questions of this research were related to the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' self-esteem and writing skill in both genders. Regarding the relationship between self-esteem and writing skill also very limited studies have been carried out. The results of the present study do not support Davies and Brember's statement concerning the correlation between self-esteem and school achievement. Santrock (2007) quoted that Davies and Brember (1999), stated that high self-esteem has no relationship on school accomplishment including writing skill; and the efforts deployed to increase the learner's self-esteem cannot improve school enactment.

Due to the findings of the current study, there was correlation between self-esteem and writing skill both in female and male learners. The findings of the current study do not differ from those of other studies. For example, this study is in proportion to Fahim and Khojaste Rad's (2011) findings. Since they reported that there was a positive relationship between self-esteem and paragraph writing scores by utilizing Pearson-product moment formula. It followed that there was a relationship between self-esteem and the writing scores.

Also the findings of the study are consistent with the theory presented by James as quoted by Mruk (2006) that self-esteem can motivate a person to become an expert in a certain ability and self-esteem can be the cause of failure or success because it is possible to change. Besides that, the findings of the current study support the theory presented by Dusek (1996) maintained that self-esteem involved in the student's academic achievement, in which writing ability was one of academic needs. Dusek (1996) investigation about the correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement pointed out that the students with higher self-esteem got better academic achievement than those with lower self-esteem. It was reinforced by Brown (2000) that emphasized the influence of self-esteem in learning to write. He mentioned that self-esteem is one of the affective factors that influenced the success of learning to write in English which differs with the findings of the current study.

They further add that: "as the study shows, based on the relationship between self-esteem and writing, it would be said if educators and instructors are given more guidance concerning their own behaviors and outlooks to increase learners' self-esteem that obviously at the same time is a stimulate for evolving their writing skills. The more they feel safe in class the more they are motivated to participate in writing activities. Besides, teachers are essential to develop great willingness to appreciate students' efforts in the practice of writing because it helps, if they show any kind of development in the course of their writing, and brings them a high level of self-esteem, as well". The reviewed studies didn't report any negative correlation between self-esteem and writing performance.

This study was conducted to find the relationship between Iranian EFL Learners' self-esteem and their productive skills across genders. The results indicated that, there was statistically significant relationship between self-esteem and the both speaking and writing performances of the learners in both genders. With the intention of finding obvious verification for the research questions, the collected data were analyzed through Pearson correlation coefficient test. As it is crystal clear, from the results point of view, we can conclude that having a high self-esteem may assurance the high quality of productive skills. All in all, it must be highlighted that the effect of high self-esteem had strong sound effects on speaking and writing performances of the learners.

It can be also concluded that feelings of competence, confidence and good directedness influence learners' performance. It means that, self-esteem could have a significant impact on the learners' learning processes. Besides, teachers and educators can increase learners' self-esteem and decrease their level of anxiety by adopting a helpful method and also through being sincerely interested in their learners and their learning processes.

The findings obtained from the study can encourage educators to act innovatively in the realm of EFL teaching and learning to improve students' English learning as well as to assist them in removing the psychological barriers in learning English. Furthermore, the findings of the study may help to attract a significant attention to the relationship between affective factors and language learning.

This study profits the vital stage of validating the possible relationship between Iranian EFL Learners' self-esteem and their productive skills across genders. It offers a good underpinning for further investigations on these subjects, by taking learners' self-esteem effects into account. We can accomplish that this study may be a significant source for the upcoming researchers in Iran who want to find the correlation between self-esteem and language learning of English as a Foreign Language learners

The findings of the present study also include some invaluable pedagogical implications that should be taken into account by all open-minded stake-holders including EFL educational policy makers, materials developers, syllabus designers, textbook writers and EFL teachers who are inclined to view second language learning from a new and more wide-ranging view and set themselves free of the impeding burden of out-of-date and traditional methods of language education.

Regarding the limitations of the study as the recommendation for further researcher, it should be noted that the number of the participants was the major limitation of the current study. Since the population of the study was not large, thus the findings should be generalized by caution. Next it was the level of the participants. In order to use the results for a wider population, the study should be replicated at all proficiency levels. The third limitation was the honesty of the learners in answering the self-esteem questionnaire. Another point is the site of the study which was only Payame Noor University. There should be studies with more and various sites. The last but not least suggestion regarding the limitation of the study was the time limitation. Because of the time constraint, the researcher only worked on self-esteem and productive language skills, but it could be more effective to work on other personal factors and receptive language learning skills.

References

- Ahangari, S., & Nourealthi, G.R. (2016). Investigating the relationship between self-esteem and speaking performance of Iranian EFL learners. *Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods*, 6 (1), 34-40.
- Al-Hattab, A. A. M. (2006). *Self-esteem and writing achievement of Saudi EFL students in secondary schools*. Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah: Taibah University.
- Bachman, L. F., & Palmer, A. S. (1996). *Language testing in practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bagheri, M. S., & Faghih, M. (2012). The relationship between self-esteem, personality type and reading comprehension of Iranian EFL students. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2 (8), 1641-1650.
- Blair, R. W. (1982). *Innovative approaches language teaching*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Branden, N. (2001). *The psychology of self-esteem* (32nd Ed.). New York: Jossey Bass, Inc.
- Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.
- Burns, R. B. (1979). *The self-concepts: Theory, measurement, development and behavior*. New York: Longman.
- Carrel, P. L., & Monroe, L. B. (1993). Learning styles and composition. *Modern Language Journal*, 77(2), 148-162.
- Carrel, P. L., Prince, M. S., & Astica, G. G. (1996). Personality type and language learning in an EFL context. *Language Learning Journal*, 46, 75-99.
- Coopersmith, S. (1967). *The antecedents of self-esteem*. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co.
- Davis, J., & Brember, I. (1999). Reading and mathematics attainments and self-esteem in years 2 and 6-an eight-year cross-sectional study. *Educational Studies*, 25, 145.
- Demo, D. H., & Parker, K. D. (1987). Academic achievement and self-esteem among black and white college students. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 127, 345-355.
- Dusek, J. B. (1996). *Adolescent Development and Behavior* (3rd ed.). New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc.
- Eagly, A. H., & Karau, S. J. (2002). Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders. *Psychological Review* 109(3):573-98.
- employee benefit satisfaction, and its effects on work attitudes, *Group and Organization Management*, 25(3) 273-290.
- Fahim, M., & Rad, S. K. (2011). *The Relationship between Self-Esteem and Paragraph Writing of Iranian EFL Learners*. Scientific Research, 24-29.
- Ghafoori, N., & Nourelahi, G. R. (2015). Investigating the relationship between self-esteem and reading performance of Iranian EFL learners. *Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods*, 4(5), 34-40.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching*. 4th ed. London: Longman.
- Hetthong, R., & Teo, A. (2013). Does writing self-efficacy correlate with and predict writing performance? *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 2(1), 157167.
- Hisken, L. J. (2011). *The correlation between self-esteem and student reading ability, reading level, and academic achievement*. Missouri: University of Central Missouri.
- Kalanzadeh, GH. A., Mahnegar, F., Hassannejad, E., & Bakhtiarvand, M., (2013). The influence of EFL student's self-esteem on their speaking skills. *The International of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World*, 2(2), 76-83.
- McCroskey, J. C., & McCroskey, L. L. (1986a). *Correlates of willingness to communicate*. Paper presented at the annual convention of the Western Speech Communication Association, Tucson, AZ.
- McCroskey, J. C., & McCroskey, L. L. (1986b). *Self-report as an approach to measuring communication competence*. Paper presented at the annual convention of the Central States Speech Association, Cincinnati, OH.
- Murk, J.C. (2006). *Self-esteem research, theory, and practice* (3rd Ed.): Toward a positive psychology of self-esteem. New York: Springer Publishing Company.
- Oden, S. N., Ebuta, C. N., & Nta, E.G. (2014). Student's self-efficacy beliefs and their reading comprehension performance: A Nigerian Perspective. *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 7(1) 75-83.
- Rahimi, A., & Abedini, A. (2009). The interface between EFL learners' self-efficacy concerning listening comprehension and listening proficiency. *Novitas Royal*, 3(1), 14-28.
- Ryden, M. B. (1978). An adult version of the Coppersmith self-esteem inventory: test-retest reliability and social desirability. *Psychological Reports* 43:1189-1190.
- Santrock, J. W. (2007). *Adolescence* (11th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill Schunk, D. H. (2000). Self-efficacy and cognitive achievement: Implications for students with learning problems. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 22(1), 14-22.
- Stevick, E. (1990). *Humanism in language teaching* (3rd Ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tremblay, M., Sire, B., & Balkin, D. (2000). The role of organizational justice in pay and
- Yashima, T., Zenuk-Nishide, L., & Shimizu, K. (2004). Influence of attitudes and effect on L2 communication: A study of Japanese high school students. *Language Learning*, 54 (1), 119-152.
- Zeigler-Hill, V. (2013). *Self-esteem*. London, England: Psychology Press.
- Zoghi, M., Kazemi, S. A., & Kalani, A. (2013). The effect of gender on language learning. *Journal of Novel Applied Sciences*, 2(4), 1124-1128.