

DOY FO EMMAN EHL N
IN THE NAME OF GOD



University of Sistan and Baluchestan
Faculty of Humanities
Department of English Language and Literature

We hereby approve that this thesis by Mehri Izadi entitled:

**The Relationship Between Listening Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Iranian
EFL Students and Their Use of Listening Strategies**

be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Art
(M.A.) in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL).

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Zahedan, Iran

January, 2012



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M.A. Thesis

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DEDICATION

To my mother, who did the best,

To my father, who provided the best,

To my brother and sisters, who worried the most,

To my friends, who helped the most

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My deepest appreciation and thanks go to my family; to my mother and father, who are the best parents one can ever have. I should thank them for their unconditional love, encouragement, support, and good humor. I could never have done this without them. To my brother and sisters, who sustained me throughout my study with their unspoken love and supports as well as faith in my abilities. I should thank them for always being there when I needed them.

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ABSTRACT

In learning a second language, social-cognitive theorists argue that students should believe they can learn. According to them, learners must have confidence as well as motivation in learning. These perceived beliefs, namely self-efficacy, determine learners' preferences and efforts and play a significant role in students' performance and success. This study was an attempt to explore the relationship between Iranian EFL students' listening self-efficacy beliefs and their listening strategy use. In order to conduct the study, one hundred students from University of Sistan and Baluchestan and Islamic Azad University of Zahedan took part in the study. Two instruments were used in the study. First, a listening self-efficacy questionnaire was used to determine the students' listening self-efficacy beliefs and then a listening strategy questionnaire was used to elicit information on the strategies used by the students in listening. The results showed that the students had relatively high self-beliefs of their listening abilities and they mostly used meta-cognitive strategies. The findings of this study are consistent with the tenets of social-cognitive theory: learners with higher levels of self-efficacy use more types of learning strategies and perceive themselves as more confident learners. In a sense, the effective use of learning strategies has been closely linked to the development of sense of self-efficacy and leads to expectations of successful learning. The results showed that there was a significant positive relationship between the students' listening self-efficacy beliefs and their use of listening strategies, and students with higher listening self-efficacy tended to use meta-cognitive strategies more than the students with lower listening self-efficacy. The implications of this study are extended to language classroom teaching since teachers may better perceive their students' self-efficacy and the impact of self-efficacy based on this

study. Teachers may incorporate teaching listening strategies in the class and enhance their students' self-efficacy beliefs by providing them with accurate and continuous feedback. In sum, the results point out the importance of nurturing learners' self-efficacy beliefs and its impact on successful learning experiences and achievements.

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LIST OF ABBRIVATIONS

Abbreviations

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
TOEFL	Testing of English as a Foreign Language
IELTS	International English Language Testing System

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

For students to learn they must first want to learn and believe that they can learn. In other words, students must have the motivation to learn and the confidence in performing given learning tasks. Pajares (1996) pointed out that motivation and effort, “which is one of the most crucial influences on performance” (p. 9), are interconnected. That is, as learners are more motivated, they try more and get better results. Nevertheless, learners can be motivated for a variety of reasons, but make minimum effort in learning. One of the explanations of this phenomenon could be that the effort of the learners is influenced by some internal factors, such as his/her internal feeling of confidence (Pajares, 1996). That is, learners, even though motivated by other reasons, may make minimum effort because they do not believe that they have the ability to accomplish the learning tasks.

According to Pajares (2003), self-beliefs are strong influential factors on academic achievements. “Of all beliefs, self-efficacy is the most influential one which plays a powerful role in determining the choices people make, the effort they will persevere in the face of challenge, and the degree of anxiety or confidence they will bring to the task at hand” (Bandura, 1997, p. 397). It is this perceived self-efficacy that helps explain why people’s behaviors differ widely even when they have similar knowledge and skills (Bandura, 1997). Oxford and Shearin (1994) refer to it as “a broadened view of expectancy which is drawn from social cognition

theory” (p. 21). Lorschach and Jinks (1999) defined self-efficacy as “a sense of confidence regarding the performance of specific tasks” (p. 158). According to Bandura (1989) self-efficacy refers to “people’s judgment of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance” (p. 395). Delcourt and Kinzie (1993) noted that “perceived self-efficacy reflects an individual’s confidence in his or her ability to perform the behavior required to produce specific outcomes” (p. 36).

Efficacious feelings have been found to promote behavioral, cognitive, and motivational engagements in the classroom (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003), which, in turn affect learners’ academic performance. Previous research has supported a consistent link between strong efficacy beliefs and achievement (Multon, Brown & Lent, 1991; Pajares, Miller & Johnson, 1999). In addition, efficacy beliefs are one of the most important predictors of motivation and performance (Graham & Weiner, 1996; Pajares & Miller, 1994). Researches on the relationship between second/foreign language learners’ self-efficacy and their learning strategies have shown that learners’ self-efficacy correlates with the language learning strategies they use (National Capital Language Resource Center, 2000a, 2000b; Li & Wang, 2010). Learners with higher levels of self-efficacy reported using more types of learning strategies, especially functional practice strategies (Li & Wang, 2010). That is, students with strong self-efficacy beliefs would actively increase their exposure to English outside the classroom, for example, listening to English radio programs and encourage themselves to speak English with others. In addition, students who reported greater strategy use perceived themselves as more confident learners (National Capital Language Resource Center, 2000a, 2000b). The research reviewed has consistently documented the positive link between second/foreign language self-efficacy and learning strategies used by learners. It seems that using learning strategies

results in successful learning experiences and achievement which, in turn, raises learners' language learning self-efficacy (Zimmerman, 1990). Zimmerman (1990) claimed that "effective use of learning strategies has been closely linked to the development of sense of self-efficacy leading to expectations of successful learning" (p. 4). Nevertheless, learners' levels of self-efficacy could be the factor that determines their choice of learning strategy use, which, ultimately, results in better learning outcomes.

One of the skills which is highly affected by and dependent on self-efficacy is listening. Of the four language skills, listening is perhaps the most critical for language learning (Vandergrift, 1999, 2003b; Goh, 1998). Listening is a highly integrative skill, and research has demonstrated its crucial role in language acquisition (Vandergrift, 1999, 2003b; Goh, 1998; Underwood, 1989; Rost 2007; Feyten 1991). According to Brown and Yule (1983), listening skill plays a significant role in communication and is considered one of the indispensable skills for learners in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Listening could be extremely challenging as it highly depends on one's knowledge of linguistic, socio-cultural and contextual elements in order to understand and interpret the meaning conveyed (Vandergrift, 1999; Underwood, 1989). Considering the role of listening in important standardized examination e.g. TOEFL, IELTS, Richards (2003; cited in Chen, 2008) pointed out that listening ability importantly functions in second language proficiency and achievement in comparison with speaking, reading and writing. Although there is no complete understanding of the listening process and there are various definitions of listening skill, the development of listening skill is a major concern in language education and plays an important role in language teaching (Richards, 2003; cited in Chen, 2008). Foreign language listening

comprehension is a complex process influenced by linguistic and cognitive factors, and affective and motivational factors.

According to Flowerdew and Miller (2005; cited in Chen, 2007) one of the major preoccupations of second language acquisition (SLA) with regard to the four skills has been an emphasis on how to acquire good listening strategies in English. Listening strategies according to Vandergrift (1997) and National Capital Language Resource Center (2003) are techniques or activities that contribute directly to the comprehension and recall of listening input. Strategies associated with listening skills have been divided into three groups: meta-cognitive (paying attention and self-monitoring), cognitive (taking notes and summarizing), and socio-affective listening strategies (using laughter, taking risks wisely and working with peers) (Oxford, 1990; Vandergrift, 1997). Strengthened listening enables EFL learners to make more progress and obtain greater development in all academic domains. Research concerning the influences of affective and motivational factors on the development of listening processes and learners' listening abilities is limited. Therefore, it is worthwhile to study the development of learners' listening abilities by integrating motivational processes with cognitive processes. The present study investigated the impact of Iranian EFL students' listening self-efficacy beliefs as a motivational factor on their selection of listening strategies as a cognitive factor. The results are helpful for both teachers and students to improve listening abilities and performances.

1.2 Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Study

Although numerous motivational studies have been conducted in the field of second/foreign language acquisition, little attention has been paid to self-