



The Relationship among Iranian EAP Learners' Self-confidence, Language Achievement, and Gender

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ABSTRACT

The study probed the relationship between Iranian EAP learners' self-confidence and language achievement of hotel-management students concerning their gender. Initially, 100 BA male and female students at two non-governmental universities of Darvishi and Pardisan in Mashhad-Iran participated in the study. Based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table of random sampling, 80 participants were considered as the target sample. The data were gathered through administering two instruments including Moradi et.al's (2014) language learners' self-confidence questionnaire and an EAP language achievement test, derived from Rashidi (2017). The data were analyzed using SPSS 24. The study followed a quantitative descriptive design. The findings indicated positive significant relation between learners' self-confidence and language test scores. Concerning gender, there did not exist any significant difference in self-confidence. The findings also proved the significant predicting role of self-confidence for language proficiency level of the participants. The findings have some implications for EAP teachers, syllabus designers, and international tourism industry authorities. The findings suggest the significance of non-linguistic factors including self-confidence in language learning process.

KEYWORDS: Language Learner Achievement; Language Learners' Self-Confidence; Self-Confidence

INTRODUCTION

Language could be a very important tool, which is utilized to communicate with people in daily social affairs. Sensible communicative interaction in every foreign language is crucially important in today's world due to the effect of globalization. Language learning could be a complicated process (Young, 1999), affected by psychological features, representing the most important sources of variations among individuals in the process of learning a foreign/second language (Tallon, 2009). Brown (2000) and Skehan (1989) believed that psychological features can have potential effect on language learners' behavioral and emotional domains. There exist a wide range of affective factors including emotional, motivational, states of anxiety, and personality types, related to degree of self-confidence. Among the most influential emotional factors, self-confidence can be considered as the foremost one, which affects language learning process considerably. Self-confidence is one of the central drives, which might exercise a permanent definite influence on an individual's personal life. Dörnyei (2005, p.211) believed that the notion of self-confidence is close to the notion of self-esteem. Lack of each psychological character may cause a typical stress on a persons'



understanding of related skills, a unique person should have. Basically, there exist psychological and social developmental processes, enabling individuals to evaluate themselves in private manners and develop different emotional states in them. However, there still exist hospitable differences, relying on particular private situations (Reasoner, 2007).

Carver and Scheier (1994) outlined self-confidence as one's general analysis of himself/herself, whether or not he/she accepts or not accepts himself/herself, likes or dislikes himself/herself (Higgins, 1996, p.1073). Geisinger (2010) viewed it as the manner one feels regarding oneself or the "sense of private value and ability that any individual feels in relation to self-concept" (p. 289). Pierce and Gardner (2004) viewed it as the extent that a person feels concerning his/her ability, importance, and value. Self-confidence comprises attitudes and judging opinions, which individuals have once they experience living in the real world. It includes the beliefs on the way the people will expect feeling of success or failure (Harris, 2009, p.9). General self-confidence is concerned with the attitudes and beliefs of one person towards himself/herself.

Self-confidence is generally grown throughout the childhood period, emerging from the combination of interpersonal and intrapersonal experiences (Brown, 1994; Harris, 2009). The relevant literary materials demonstrate various sources, which self-confidence may be originated from. The foremost vital factors, influencing self-confidence are: (1) personal successful experiences, which can greatly improve the extent of self-confidence, while the feeling of failure can potentially exert a negative influence (2) social communicative messages, which received from other individuals, can affect the degree of self-confidence. Community, home, school, and peers can be considered as the main factors for self-confidence development. Applying positive supporting ideas for others is considered crucially important for increasing self-confidence, whereas receiving stressful debilitating information significantly reduces the degree of self-confidence (Bandura, 1982; Brockner, 1988; Glenda & Anstey, 1990; Pierce et al., 1989).

Self-confidence is considered as a unique factor in an individual, playing highly supporting role in the process of learning a language. The findings of some studies revealed that language learning tasks can be rarely accomplished in a successful way without enough self-confidence (e.g., Brown, 1994). The degree of learners' self-confidence can facilitate or debilitate the academic achievement in any field of study. Second language learners with sufficient degree of self-confidence can inevitably act well due to great belief in themselves as potentially capable learners. However, if there is low degree of self-confidence, "language learners may suffer from feeling of insecurity, uncertainty, anxiety, and great social and personal distance". (Rubio, 2014, p.7). Among language abilities, the successful accomplishment of oral activities is assumed to be closely related to the degree of self-confidence. Language learners are not able to speak fluently and freely without some influential extent of self-confidence (Brown, 1994). The impact of self-confidence on improving the other components of a target language is so influential that many scholars have made deliberate and serious attempts to investigate it in different language-learning settings. In the world of increasing globalization in different areas of business and science, the influential ability to communicate the messages through English, which is a lingua franca, is of vital importance. As tourism and hospitality industry are among the most fundamental sources of finance or income for many countries, knowing and learning an international foreign language such as English can be of great contribution to the economic industrial issues. The individuals in this industry should be able to use English very effectively and on a wider basis, use it to boost international mass tourism. In Iran, as one of the countries with many attractive historical contexts, effective communication through English can substantially develop hotel management invitation, provision, and promotion process, leading to the attraction of many international tourists. Certainly, the absorption of many tourists can increase the income of the country substantially. Therefore, international hotel managers and staff should be provided with effective English language use training programs, enabling them to interact successfully with tourists, which can inevitably have a strong lasting impression on the tourists. Sometimes, many tourists are encouraged to come back again and visit many more historic monuments and places. In this case, tourism industry can be improved, which can contribute considerably to the economic problems of the country.

Thus, learning English is of significance for hotel-management students as well as exposing to English teachers' effective instruction, which can develop their self-confidence and enable them to be



involved in appropriate authentic communication in less stressful situations (Canagarajah, 2014). Additionally, lack of sufficient fluency in spoken English inevitably decreases the degree of language learners' self-confidence, leading to major problems in dealing with daily social affairs in new cultural contexts (Banjong, 2015). Low self-confidence exerts a negative influence on both personal life and academic success of individuals. In modern days, concerning financial problems and significant development in educational affairs, many individuals are unluckily unable to get the desired academic goals. In many cases, the language barrier is considered as a major challenge for them, especially in proving themselves and achieving high scores in academic settings. They might face many problems such as lack of understanding academic subjects due to many new unknown technical terms and concepts. They may get tired of having to look up every unknown word in different monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, which may get them highly discouraged and unsure of themselves. In such a difficult failing situation, language learners lose their self-confidence substantially, which make them unable to conduct academic affairs effectively. Language learners with low self-confidence are not able to cope with learning and test-taking challenges, leading to demotivation and negative attitudes toward language learning. In fact, developing communicative language abilities in language learners is dependent on the interaction among linguistic, social, cultural, and psychological factors. As mentioned before, self-confidence is one of the most important psychological factors, affecting language-learning process. Thus, the present study is an elaboration on the relationship between language learners' achievement and self-confidence concerning gender differences. The study was conducted in the academic university settings in two universities in Mashhad-Iran, where the hotel-management students were doing English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course. Achieving high language proficiency is of significance for hotel management students, enabling them to have better influential communicative behaviors with others, particularly tourists. As they have to exchange information with many tourists, they should have high self-confidence to deal with social and communicative affairs. Hence, the study investigated the predicting role of self-confidence for language proficiency.

The findings of the present study can provide useful information about the way language should be taught effectively concerning psychologically affective variables, which substantially affect the process of language learning. The findings prompt curriculum planners, syllabus designers, and language teachers to tailor the best teaching and learning materials and methodologies to fulfill the actual linguistic and non-linguistic needs of language learners. The findings can add new perspectives, adding to the existing knowledge. The findings are also significant since the influential role of self-confidence in an academic EAP setting has been rarely investigated.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The subject of self-confidence in the process of language learning has stimulated the interest of many researchers as an affective paradigm, related to psychosocial factors such as language learners' motivation and attitude for second language use (e.g., Clément, 1980; Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997). Through a contextual model, offered by Clément (1980, 1986), self-confidence was conceptualized as the key component, which determines language learners' motivation to learn a target language in particular multicultural settings. In such cases, language learners' self-confidence can be essentially improved due to the frequent pleasant social communication with special L2 community members. Therefore, the more confidential feeling, second language learners have the greater communicative competence they can get along with sufficient psychological and cross-cultural adoption (Clément, 1986; Clément & Kruidenier, 1985; Noels, Pon, & Clément, 1996; Yang, Noels, & Saumure, 2005).

Norton (1997; 2000) explored self-confidence using a different angle, related to the power status among the individuals that may inevitably restrict the probable opportunities of second language learners to utilize the language outside the academic instructional setting, in a real target context. Using the helpful experiences of some women, immigrated to Canada, and using their diaries and opinions mentioned in an in-depth interview, Norton found that marginalization conditions were the most essential reason for the immigrant women's inability to speak comfortably and fluently with Canadian interlocutors of speech. The immigrant women mentioned their low degree self-confidence concerned with the feeling of inferiority to the native speakers of Canada, as the main cause of their communication failure despite their great motivation to



learn English like a native speaker. Norton concluded that self-confidence and anxiety should not only be considered as inherent psychological traits, but also, they should be considered as socially constructed traits, affecting language learners' motivation to learn a target language.

Concerning the psychological social aspects of self-confidence and self-efficacy, these variables have been interchangeably applied with more emphasis on self-efficacy, which improves motivation for language learning process (e.g., Chularut & DeBacker, 2004; Cotterall, 1999; Ehrman, 1996; Ehrman, Leaver & Oxford, 2003; Oliver, Purdie & Rochecouste, 2005). The reason as Bandura (1997) believed is partly relevant to the language learners' beliefs in the process of learning a language, which have been emphasized with regard to social cognitive aspects for maximizing optimal learning. In addition, concerning the strong psycho/social dimension, self-confidence has been greatly investigated in terms of the cognitive and psychological realizations language learners have in the process of learning a target language (e.g., Ellis, 2008; Freeman & Freeman, 2007; Magogwe & Oliver, 2007; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003). In fact, before Norton's (1995; 1997; 2000) work, there are few academic studies on the stages of self-confidence development in learning a target language.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF LANGUAGE LEARNERS' SELF-CONFIDENCE

Learning a language is a complicated process (Young, 1999), impacted by a variety of nonlinguistic factors such as cognition, affection, emotion, etc., which constitute the essential elements of language learning differences (Tallon, 2009). Brown (2007) believed that the affective dimension is related to the emotional states of human behaviors, consisting of many personality facets. Self-confidence can be viewed as one fundamentally effective variable, influencing the process of learning a language. It is one essential paradigm in individuals, which can impose a significant effect on an individual's life quality. Dörnyei (2005, p. 211) indicated that self-confidence is much related to self-esteem, both of which focus on the perception of an individual about his/her abilities. Mainly, self-confidence is a social phenomenon, in which an individual evaluates himself/herself concerning some values that can actually lead to different states of emotion, which can be extensively fixed. However, they are eager to big change concerning particular in person circumstances (Rubio, 2004).

Murray (2006) stated that self-confidence is one's own belief, reliant on selective, motivational, perseverant, vulnerable behavior along with subjective patterns of expectations and ambitious effects of a person's self on himself/herself (Ansari & Oskrochi, 2004). Generally speaking, a self-confident person is more probably able to get the desired results. Adalikwu (2012) believed that self-confidence enables a person to succeed in accomplishing a task with regard to his/her past experience of success or failure in accomplishing the same or similar tasks. Hence, in the cases that students feel confident about their potential abilities without paying attention to their own past experiences, they are likely to succeed in the process of learning. Lawrence (2006) also confirmed that self-confidence comprises many ideas that a person has about his/her peculiar potentials and capabilities.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SELF-CONFIDENCE

Within the past two decades, many studies have investigated gender and age differences in terms of self-confidence (Feingold, 1994; Kling et al., 1999; Orth, Robins, & Widaman, 2012; Orth, Trzesniewski, & Robins, 2010; Robins et al., 2002; Shaw, Liang, & Krause, 2010; Trzesniewski, Donnellan, & Robins, 2003; Twenge & Campbell, 2001). The findings proved a significant gender gap in self-confidence in that males had higher degree of self-confidence than females did. The gap suddenly shows itself in adulthood and exists in the early and middle stages of adulthood before approaching the old age, when self-confidence nearly disappears (Kling et al., 1999; Robins et al., 2002; Zeigler-Hill & Myers, 2012). For both genders, self-confidence is high in the period of childhood. It gradually expands in their adulthood before tending to reduce in the period of old age (Orth & Robins, 2014; Robins & Trzesniewski, 2005; Wagner, Gerstorf, Hoppmann, & Luszcz, 2013). A few systematic studies showed high self-confidence in the complete span of life, and many studies indicated the expansion of self-confidence within specific stages of life, particularly within the late adolescence and early adulthood (e.g., Chung et al., 2014; Erol & Orth, 2011; Hutteman,



Hennecke, Orth, Reitz, & Specht, 2014 ; Lehnart, Neyer, & Eccles, 2010; Wagner, Lüdtke, Jonkmann, & Trautwein, 2013).

The wide gap in self-confidence between two genders as well as the wide differences in self-confidence with regard to the individuals' age has led many researchers to investigate the underlying basic causes for these differences. For example, what is the reason for higher self-confidence of males than females? Up to now, many researchers have worked on the probable causes, but there still does not exist any totally confirmed theoretical frameworks, offering logical explanations (Orth & Robins, 2014; Zeigler-Hill & Myers, 2012).

SELF-CONFIDENCE AND THE PROCESS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

A variety of research carried out by different scholars have proved positive correlation coefficient (Klein & Keller, 1990; Lawrence, 1996) as well as negative correlation coefficient (Roy et al., 2003) between self-confidence and the process of foreign language learning. Rubio (2007) considered the problem due to the difficulty of semantic understanding of self-confidence. Rubio (2007) believed that self-confidence is concerned with psycho/social dimensions, and low degree of self-confidence probably exerts a negative influence on the process of learning a foreign language. Rubio (2007) asserted that low degree of self-confidence can lead the individuals to some negative psychological conditions such as the feeling of insecurity, fear, anxiety, and antisocial behaviors, which probably happens in every foreign language learning context too. Low degree of self-confidence may lead language learners to unsatisfactory efficient start in learning process, partly due to lack of sufficient motivation (Bong, 2008; Pajares & Miller, 1994). The foreign language learners, lacking enough self-confidence probably show negative feelings and biases towards the course and classroom. A learner with low self-confidence has constant interfering negative feelings such as stress of failure, inadequacy, humiliation, and anxious behavior towards the teacher and course, which leading to refraining from speaking skill and active involvement in classroom activities. Low self-confidence can also lead to the great feeling of stress in learning a target language (Bağış, 2007; Gardner & Peter, 1989; Horwitz et al. 1986). The potential capabilities of highly anxious language learners cannot appear due to low degree of self-confidence. Highly anxious students cannot properly socialize and avoid active class participation. Rubio (2007) also believed that there existed a relation between the process of foreign language learning and atmosphere of the classroom. Second language classrooms should improve self-confidence in language learners. Hence, providing language learners with secure and stress-free classroom situation is of significant importance. Therefore, interactive language teachers' behaviors, corrective feedback, question and answer activities, and language teaching activities can significantly affect language learners' self-confidence. Concerning Bandura's (2006) perspective on the relation between classroom environment and language learners' self-confidence, it is proved that there is a strongly positive relation between the individuals' degree of self-confidence and the social group, they belong to. Arnold (2007) emphasizes that a good communicative behavior with language learners is an influential key of success for every language teacher. Only stress-free situation and appropriate teaching-learning environment can enhance self-confident degree in language teachers and learners. Teachers with high degree of self-confidence can feel safe in language classes and can successfully express their teaching materials without any disturbance to the language learners' self-confidence and calmness. Language teachers' confidence as well as calmness can significantly promote language learners' degree of self-confidence (Krashen, 1982; MacIntyre & Clement 1977; Öner, 2008).

Many studies on the effect of self-confidence have indicated that teachers with high degree of self-confidence can exert a significant influence on their students' success as well as motivational behavior (Chacon 2005; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Eryaman et al. 2013). Teachers with high degree of self-confidence are not naturally complicated. They provide their students with a relaxing stress-free classroom atmosphere full of entertaining teaching-learning activities without feeling of boredom and disinterest. Clear explanation of language teaching and learning activities can substantially decrease language learners' stress and anxiety, which leads to the enhancement of their self-confidence and influential language learning process. Concerning the mentioned points, self-confidence plays an important role in language learning process. Self-confidence is a psych/social entity, which exerts substantial influence on all social daily



activities in general and language learning in particular. Thus, the present study seeks the significant relationship between self-confidence and general language ability of language learners in an Iranian academic setting of EAP learners across genders. As self-confidence inevitably affects the process of language learning, the statistical degree that it can explain the variances in the EAP learners' language achievement scores is also investigated.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Q1. Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL learners' self-confidence and general language achievement?

Q2. Is there any significant difference between Iranian EFL learners' self-confidence in terms of gender?

Q3. Is Iranian EFL learners' self-confidence a significant predictor of general language achievement?

METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS AND SETTING

Initially, one hundred students participated in the study. They were BA hotel management students at Darvishi and Pardisan universities of Mashhad-Iran. They were junior students, doing EAP course. With regard to the Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table of random sampling, 80 students were selected, as the target sample of the study. Fifty participants were females, and 30 were males. Their age ranged from 20 to 30 with different language learning experiences. Concerning the fairness and ethics of research, the participants were briefed on the aim of the research. Also, they were assured that their information would be secured and would not be revealed anywhere. All participants of the present study filled out the questionnaire and answered the test.

LANGUAGE LEARNERS' SELF-CONFIDENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

The Persian version of language learners' self-confidence questionnaire, designed by Moradi, et al's (2014) was used to gather data regarding language learners' self-confidence. The questionnaire comprised 20 items in the 5-point Likert scale. The answers are classified as *strongly agree 5, agree 4, neutral 3, disagree 2, and strongly disagree 1* with certain numerical values to spot the students' self-confidence degree. The participants had to answer the questionnaire in 15 minutes. The instrument had been utilized and strictly validated by some previous studies. The reliability index of the questionnaire, reported by Moradi et al (2014) was $\alpha = 0.78$.

LANGUAGE LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENT TEST

The general language achievement test, which was a teacher-made test, was derived from an EAP source, entitled "English for Hotel Staff", compiled by Rashidi (2017). The test is comprised of 40 multiple choice items of both grammar and reading comprehension. The test contains 15 multiple-choice grammar test items as well as 25 reading comprehension test items in a multiple-choice format. It included 4 reading comprehension passages. The reliability index of the test measured by Kr-21 formula is $\alpha = 0.86$, which is an acceptable value. The test was reviewed by some EFL university teachers, and the necessary revisions were done to remove the language ambiguities. The time allotted to answer the test was 60 minutes.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The participants were first briefed on the aim of the research, and the way they had to answer the reading comprehension test and the self-confidence questionnaire. The given time to answer the questionnaire was 20 minutes. The given time to answer the reading comprehension test was 60 minutes. The researchers were present at the time of administering the test along with the questionnaire. The participants were reassured that their data would remain confidential. Therefore, they could comfortably fill out the questionnaire without being judged. The data were collected in the winter semester in 2022 at Darvishi and Pardisan non-governmental universities in Mashhad-Iran.



DATA ANALYSIS

The gathered data were statistically examined through version 24 of SPSS. Kolmogrow-smirnov test was run to check the normal distribution of data. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to show the mean scores and standard deviations of the learners' scores in language test and self-confidence questionnaire. In addition, correlation coefficient test was used to investigate the significance of the relation between the variables of the research. An independent T-test was also utilized to investigate the probable significant difference in language learners' self-confidence concerning gender.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This research was conducted via a quantitative design, using a test and a questionnaire. As the correlation coefficients between the variables were calculated, the research had a correlational design. The variables were the participants' language achievement, self-confidence, and gender.

RESULTS

The gathered data were statistically investigated by using 24th version of SPSS. The results of the descriptive as well as inferential statistics are indicated in the given tables in the result section.

TESTS OF NORMALITY

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was applied to prove the normality of the data distribution. The given findings are revealed in Tables 1 and 2.

Table.1
Test of Normality of the Participants' Self-confidence

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		Self-confidence
N		80
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	80.3750
	Std. Deviation	14.86085
Test Statistic		.135
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.001 ^c



Figure 1. Distribution of the Learners' Self-confidence

Table 2.
Test of Normality of the Participants' Language Achievement
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Language Achievement
N		80
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	34.8375
	Std. Deviation	5.37327
Test Statistic		.209
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000 ^c

As shown in the Tables 1 and 2, the significant value of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is smaller than 0.05. The significant values of the participants' self-confidence and general language achievement are $p = .001$ and $p = 0.000$ successively. Therefore, the collected data, related to the participants' self-confidence and language achievement test, proved that the data of the study was not distributed in normal way. Thus, non-parametric statistical analyses should be used.

To investigate the first research question, at the first step, the descriptive statistics of the two variables were calculated. So as to make a comparison between variables, without the loss of any generality, the measurement scales were changed into interval scale, through using the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{mean of a variable} - \text{min of scale}}{\text{max of scale} - \text{min of scale}} \times 100.$$

For example, the variable "self-confidence" has 30 questions in Likert scale 1-5. The minimum and maximum of sum of the scores that an individual can have is ($Min = 30$ and $Max = 150$), respectively. Obviously, the corresponding mean of scores is between ($M = 1$ and $M = 5$) for a respondent. Using the above-mentioned formula, the mean of scores can be changed into interval scale. Thus, $M = 80.3$ $Sd = 14.86$; $Min = 30.00$; and $Max = 115.00$. The descriptive statistics are indicated in Table 3.

Table 3
The Descriptive Statistics of the Participants' Self-Confidence

N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
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Self-confidence	80	30.00	115.00	80.375	14.86085
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Also, based on the findings shown in Table 4 among 80 hotel management students, who had done general language achievement test in total of 40 score, the maximum score was ($Max = 40$), and the minimum score was ($Min = 22$), the mean score was ($M = 34.8375$), and the standard deviation was ($Sd = 5.37327$).

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics of Language Achievement Test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
Language	80	34.8375	5.37327	22	40

In this section of the study, concerning non-normal data distribution of self-confidence and language achievement, the relationship between the learners' self-confidence and general language achievement scores was calculated by Spearman correlation coefficient (non-parametric) analysis. The statistical results, shown in Table 5, proved a high significant relation ($p < .05$) between the learners' self-confidence and language scores or achievement. As a result, high self-confidence can increase the score of learners' language achievement and vice versa.

Table 5
Correlation Coefficients between Learners' Self-confidence and Language Achievement

		Self-confidence	language
Spearman Correlation Coefficient	Self-confidence	1.000	.606**
	e	.	.000
	N	80	80

As the finding revealed in Table 5, the correlation coefficient between learners' self-confidence and language scores was significant with an index of $r = .606$ at $p < 0.05$ level, ($p = 0.000$).

The second research question is related to the significant relation between language learners' self-confidence and gender. Table 6 shows the frequency of the participants, with regard to gender.

Table 6
Frequency of Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	30	37.5	37.5	37.5
Female	50	62.5	62.5	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Initially, 100 students participated in the study. Based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table of random sampling, 80 were randomly selected, as the target sample of the study. The valid number of the participants was reported as 80 Iranian students. 50 of the participants were females and 30 males. Table 7 shows the correlation coefficient between language learners' gender and their self-confidence.



Table 7
Correlation between Language Learners' Self-confidence and Gender

	Self-confidence	Gender
Spearman	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.0503**
	N	80

Table 8 shows the descriptive statistics of female and male language learners' self-confidence.

Table 8
Descriptive Statistics for Self-confidence in Male and Female Learners

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Self-confidence	Male	30	72.7143	13.65912	5.16266
	Female	50	72.1918	7.58957	.88829

To check whether there existed any significant gender differences in the learners' self-confidence, an independent sample T-test was conducted. The results are shown in table 9. The statistical findings show that the relationship is not significant at $p = 0.05$ level. The descriptive statistics proved that men have more self-confidence than women. The correlation coefficient is not fairly high ($r = .503$, $p = .000$), as shown in Table 7. Table 9 also shows the results of an independent sample T-test to check the probably significant differences between the mean scores of the male and female learners concerning self-confidence.

Table 9
The Independent Sample T-test for the Differences between Males and Females in Self-confidence

	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.	Mean (2-tailed) Difference
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances						
test for Equality of Means						
Equal variances assumed	.747	.391	1.098	78	.277	.385
Equal variances not assumed			1.115	77.94	.270	.385

The results, shown in Table 9, proved that there did not exist any significant difference between language learners' self-confidence concerning gender since $t = 1.098$ at $p = 0$.



To offer a statistical model, indicating the relation between general language achievement and self-confidence as well as the predicting power of self-confidence for reading proficiency of the participants, a linear regression analysis was used. The findings are indicated in Table 10.

Table 10
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.361 ^a	.130	.121	.62280

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-confidence
Dependent variable, General Language Achievement

The results confirmed that self-confidence, as the independent variable, is a positive predictor of the dependent variable or general language achievement since 12.1 % of the variance in the participants' general language achievement can be explained by self-confidence concerning adjusted R Square (*R Square* = .121). In other words, 12 % of the variation in general language achievement is related to the participants' self-confidence.

Table 11 shows the ANOVA to confirm the significant relationship between self-confidence, as the independent variable, and general language achievement, as the dependent one.

Table 11
ANOVA for Self-confidence as the Significant Predictor of General Language Achievement

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	5.698	1	5.698	14.691	.000 ^b
Residual	38.012	78	.388		
Total	43.710	79			

a. Dependent Variable: General Language Achievement

b. Predictors: (Constant), Self-confidence

Since *F* (14.691, 78) is significant at (*p* =.000), significant relationship existed between general language achievement and self-confidence of the participants. Hence, self-confidence is a significant predictor of general language achievement.

DISCUSSION

The statistical findings of the study proved a positive significant relation between language learners' self-confidence and language success, which is in accordance with the previously conducted studies on the facilitating and contributing impact of self-confidence on the process of learning a language (e.g., Bong, 2008; Pajares & Miller, 1994; Rubio, 2007). On the contrary, low degree of self-confidence decreases language learners' motivation and leads to their inability to start successful process of language learning. The results are also in line with Rubio (2007), asserting that low degree of self-confidence may exert a negative influence on the second language learning process concerning the negative psychological conditions such as senses of insecurity, stress, and antisocialism. Rubio considered self-confidence as a



cognitive condition, which strongly affects language learning process. Therefore, lack of enough self-confidence negatively affects the second language learning process due to some psychological and social factors.

The findings of the present study demonstrated the positive significant relationship between the participants' language achievement and self-confidence, implying the fact that self-confident students are enthusiastic, study harder, highly motivated, and less stressful, dealing with learning challenges autonomously and strategically. They have effective interpersonal/intrapersonal relationships, take social responsibilities, and cope with stressful situations in a confident manner, offering the most effective solutions. They have creative thinking and are purposeful in language learning process, enabling them to confront the potential learning difficulties. In fact, there is a mutual relationship between language success and self-confidence. It means that language success improves self-confidence and high self-confidence leads to language success.

The findings of the study showed very little differences between males and females in self-confidence with slightly more self-confidence in males than females. Thus, the findings are in accordance with the previously related conducted studies (e.g., Bong, 2002; Feingold, 1994; Kling et al., 1999; Orth, Robins, & Widaman, 2012; Orth, Trzesniewski, & Robins, 2010; Robins et al., 2002; Shaw, Liang, & Krause, 2010; Trzesniewski, Donnellan, & Robins, 2003; Twenge & Campbell, 2001; Zimmerman and Kitsantas, 2005), which did not report significant differences between males and females' self-confidence in language learning process. The lack of significant gender differences in self-confidence can be due to the fact that self-confidence is not an innate ability, in which people are born with. Actually, it is boosted as the result of emotional and social interaction with people. The findings of the study did not confirm the significant differences between the male and female language learners in terms of self-confidence, which can be due to purposiveness of language learning in the academic context. In other words, the participants were BA students of Hotel Management, studying English for Academic Purposes (EAP). This means that the learners were completely aware of the need to learn English to fulfill their academic as well as occupational affairs in hotel industry. Therefore, regardless of their gender, they were determined and motivated to learn English for future success in hotel industry.

CONCLUSION

The study was a statistical exploration of the probable significant relationship between Iranian language learners' self-confidence and language achieved success in an EAP context of hotel-management students at BA level in Mashhad-Iran. The participants were studying English for Academic Purposes (EAP course), who answered a language achievement test and a one to five Likert-scale self-confidence questionnaire. The participants were from unequal proportion of male and female students. Using non-parametric statistical analysis, the findings demonstrated the existence of a positive significant correlation between the participants' language achievement, measured by a language test and their self-confidence, measured by Moradi, et al's (2014) self-confidence questionnaire. To put it simply, there exists a mutual relation between language learners' self-confidence and their language achievement level. The more the learners are self-confident, the more they are competent in language performance. The study results provide language teachers with useful insights for selecting the most appropriate methodology as well as teaching materials to enhance linguistic competence of language learners through great attention to the psychological non-linguistic factors such as self-confidence, the effect of which should not be taken for granted. In other words, language teachers should give careful attention to the psychological non-linguistic factors, which have inevitable effect on learning a target language. Through encouraging the students to participate in group-work activities, giving indirect friendly corrective feedback along with positive reinforcement to language learners, language teachers can help less-confident learners improve their self-confidence.

As the present research explored the relation between self-confidence and general language achievement scores of hotel-management students, the findings have some useful hints for improving international hotel-management industry to attract many tourists, which inevitably leads to steady economic growth in our country-Iran. As many hotel management students may apply for a job related to hotel industry



or tourist industry, they have to work in the international hotels with many tourists, with whom they should communicate to conduct their affairs. Therefore, they should have high linguistic competence as well as high self-confidence to deal with tourists' affairs. New lines of research are also suggested for future studies. As the effect of self-confidence on learning different components of language has not been investigated broadly in a systematic way, new studies can be conducted to elaborate on this issue using mixed method designs, in which the underlying causes of low self-confidence can be identified to offer probable effective solutions. In addition, new studies can be conducted on the interaction among self-confidence and many psychological cognitive factors such as language learning anxiety, motivation, self-esteem, learning styles, language learning strategies, language learning attitudes and beliefs, and so forth. The results of new studies can certainly provide researchers with new perception of the substantial role of self-confidence in language learning process, which should not be taken for granted in language teaching/learning programs. Thus, holding relevant workshops and seminars for language teachers are firmly suggested to familiarize them with the activities and tactics that develop language learners' self-confidence.

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