Students' English business communication self-efficacy and their career aspirations

[1]Hartono*, [1]Huyi Intan Sari
*English Education Study Program of Universitas Islam Sultan Agung
Semarang, Indonesia*

*Corresponding author
Email: hartono@unissula.ac.id

Abstract
Self-efficacy, which is defined as people's judgment on their ability to carry out tasks and exercise control over events, is believed to be determinant in the success of learning and career aspiration. The study was conducted to measure students' self-efficacy in making English business communication, their career aspiration, and the relationship between them. Sixty one students served as the respondents for the study. Data were collected by using Likert-typed questionnaires after students attended an ESP designed to improve their English business communication skills. It found that students had high self-efficacy in making English business communication and high career aspiration. Between these variables lies a significant positive correlation in moderate level (0.611).

Keywords: *English communication skill; self-efficacy; career aspiration*

INTRODUCTION

One factor believed to play role in determining the success of learning, including learning English is self-efficacy. It is a construct derived from socio cognitive theory (SCT) of Bandura (Bandura, 1997), defined as the people's judgment on their ability to accomplish certain tasks successfully and exercise controls over events which will influence their life (Bandura, 1989). SCT states that people's belief about their abilities is a powerful drive which influences and shapes the motivation to act, the efforts exerted and the persistence they endure in time of troubles.

SCT suggests the existence of a triadic reciprocal interaction between environments, behaviors, and personal factors. In reciprocal interaction, the factors involved affect each other bi-directionally. For example, environment affects behaviors and at the same time it may be affected by behaviors. Functional dependence exists and everything affects everything else. Personality factors as expectations, belief, self-perceptions, goals and intentions shape how people may behave in a certain situation and this behavior in turn influences their thought patterns and emotional reactions. However, it doesn't mean that the strength of one factor in influencing the other is equal and occurs simultaneously.

Self-efficacy is a context and domain specific (Sabokrouh, 2014). Rather than being a trait which is stable, self-efficacy beliefs are specific to a particular situation (Fisher, 2014). A student may have a high level of self-efficacy when he is required to perform a certain task but his efficacy can be very low when he is required to do another. In this way self-efficacy is different from self-esteem. While self-efficacy is a person's judgment of his ability, self-esteem is a person's judgment of his worth whether he likes or dislikes. When, for example, a person's self-efficacy in speaking English is low, it doesn't necessarily mean that he loses his self-esteem.

There are four sources of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). The first is mastery experience. It is the experience of doing the task required. Successful completion of task grows the efficacy, failure decreases it. If a student successfully performs a presentation task for example, her efficacy in the presentation increases. However, as a strong sense of efficacy develops, a failure may not have much impact on efficacy (Bandura, 1986). This enactive mastery experience becomes the most authentic evidence and the most reliable indicator of someone's self-efficacy (Schunk, 1991). The second source is vicarious experience. It is the experience of watching or witnessing somebody else performing a task. If someone sees her peer or colleague who he thinks has the same capability as he does successfully performing a task, he will become positive about his ability. He will have the confidence to be able to accomplish the same. Watching another person completing a task he will have to do serve as a diagnostic indicator for his ability. The third source of self-efficacy is verbal persuasion. Encouragement and verbal supports from people around will strengthen the belief. If people around are positive about his capability, he will likely be able to sustain a greater effort to do rather than when people around are doubtful about him.   The last source of self-efficacy is physiological and affective states. Someone who is physically and mentally fit will have higher self-efficacy than someone who experiences fear, stress, anxiety, fatigue, pains and aches.

Studies found that self-efficacy is related to other constructs in psychology for example motivation (Ersanli, 2015; Husain, 2014; Pajares, 2003; Shi, 2016). A study by Ersanli of 257 students of grade 8 of elementary schools in Turkey found a negative correlation between self-efficacy and language learning motivation, while the study of Husain involving 135 undergraduates of Business schools found that self-efficacy and motivation were significantly correlated. Studies also found a correlation between self-efficacy and achievement (Alawiyah, 2018; Mills, Pajares, & Herron, 2007; Murtiningsih, 2011; Shi, 2016; Yusuf, 2011). The population of the study of Alawiyah, for example, was 470 students of English education study program. It focused on speaking self-efficacy and speaking achievement. It found that between self-efficacy and achievement, there was a significant positive correlation and students' speaking self-efficacy influenced their speaking achievement. The study of Mills, et al. which involved 303 college students found similar result. Self-efficacy for self-regulation can serve as a better predictor of language achievement than self-efficacy for obtaining grades. The study of Murtiningsih investigated students' self-efficacy in making English speeches and their performance and it found that positive correlation existed

between these variables. Self-efficacy is also correlated to the length of time a student completed an academic product. The study of Rahmadini, which investigated students of English Education who were doing final project, found that there was a strong correlation between self-efficacy and the duration of final project completion (Rahmadini, Hartono, & Rohmaniyah, 2019).

The present study investigated correlation between self-efficacy and career aspiration. This is important because studies on such topic up to the present time are still rare, while theoretically, career decision is influenced by self-efficacy. In relation to career behavior as career choices and decision, performance and persistence, research has shown that self-efficacy is an important factor. It has become one of major variables used in understanding and facilitating individual career development (Hackett & Betz, 1995).

Career aspiration is an individual's desire to select a specific career (Farmer, 1985) which provides impulse for career-related behaviors leading to career success (Rojewski, 2005). It is a path that someone wants his career to follow. Choosing and deciding career is one among important things in people's life which usually requires serious thoughts and considerations as career influences and even determines how they will live in the rest of their life, their life styles, mental health, physical well-being, etc. (Hackett & Betz, 1995). This paper adopts the definition of career aspiration as a continuous variable with different dimensions rather than as a point-in-time expression of vocational preference (Johnson, 1995). Relevant to the English language learning for ESP, career aspiration in this paper is, therefore, defined as the degree to which students aspire to professions or jobs which involve the use of English communication skills.

Many factors involved in the process of an individual's career aspiration and choices. Winkel & Hastuti categorize them into two broad groups namely internal factors and external factors. The internal factors among others are life values, intelligence, interest, characters, and physical states, while the external factors are the society, socio-economic of the country, socio-economic status of the family, education and peers (Winkel & Hastuti, 2004). Other factors which may contribute are psychological states, work experience, employment knowledge, hobbies and skills (Ebtanastiti, 2014), also career perceptions, welfare, and achievement (Ardyani & Latifah, 2014). Home environment and media also give crucial influences to career decision making since home lays the foundation for one's personality and values, while media provide information about social travails, global issues, trends and fashions, the glamour of cultures and glitters of consumer words (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017).

A study by Kaur, which involved 200 adolescent students, found that self-efficacy and occupational aspiration were positively correlated. According to him, this significant relationship determined that self-efficacy will positively change the occupational or career aspiration (Kaur, 2018). A similar study, as by VK & Padmanabhan, with participants of 250 students of various higher secondary schools also concluded the existence of a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and career aspiration (VK & Padmanabhan, 2016). Reddan also proved that self-efficacy plays role in people's career decision making (Reddan, 2015).

Relevant to career choice decision, self-efficacy postulates three important behavioral consequences. The first one is approach versus avoidance behavior; the second is quality of performance of behaviors in the target domain, and finally persistence in the face of obstacles or disconfirming experiences. Low self-efficacy on certain domain related to behaviors required in career will lead to avoidance of behavior, poor performance, low persistence and a tendency to give up when facing problems and failure. On the other side, highly efficacious individual on certain domain of behaviors will tend to approach, perform highly and persist there even in the time of troubles. Someone with a poor self-efficacy in behavioral domain of speaking, for example, will not approach a career which requires intensive talks and negotiation with people from diverse background. Only highly efficacious speaking individuals will likely approach the career.

Having considered all the descriptions and arguments presented, the research focused to find (1) the level of students' self-efficacy in business communication, (2) the students' careers aspirations profile, and (3) the correlation between students' self-efficacy and their career aspiration.

METHOD
Context and design of the study
As employability of graduates has become a serious concern, Diploma 3 of Accounting Program of Universitas Islam Sultan Agung equips students with English communication skills through the course of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) for Business and Accounting. Developing English communication skill is prioritized because nowadays communication skill is a key attribute sought by many employers (Grant-smith, Cathcart, & Williams, 2016). Employers are looking for applicants having good communication skills because they believe that communication skill is a key factor for success (Luthy, 2000; Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 1997). The learning outcomes prescribed in the course among others are students are able to develop English communication skills related to businesses as making business talks, chairing and participating in a business meeting, making business presentations, introducing and selling products and the likes.

This was a quantitative study adopting descriptive and correlational designs. It is descriptive because the data of the variables are described based on certain criteria and it is correlational because in the end, the data of the variables are correlated to see whether significant correlation between the variables exists. Data were collected at the end of the semester.

Participants
Participants of the study were 61 students who were taking ESP for Business and Accounting at Diploma 3 of Accounting at Faculty of Economics and Business Universitas Islam Sultan Agung. Twelve students were male and the rest were female. When they started the program, averagely their English communicative competence was about lower to higher intermediate level.

Instruments

The data for the study were collected by using two Likert-typed questionnaires. The first one was to collect English communication self-efficacy while the second was to collect career aspirations. They were written in Bahasa Indonesia as the participants' native language to assure the comprehensibility of the message. Since self-efficacy is domain specific, and as Bandura argues that the strength of it as a predictor variables lies in its specificity so that it is necessary to develop measures which are specific to each skill (Bandura, 1997; Leeming, 2017), the 15 statements in the questionnaire of self-efficacy were developed based on the skills involved in English business communications. Respondents were required to respond to the statements based on their perceived ability to do the tasks mentioned from Scale 1 to 7 (*1: I am absolutely not able to do the task, 2: I am not able to do the task, 3: I may not be able to do the task, 4: I may be able to do the task, 5: Basically, I am able to do the task, 6: I am able to do the task, 7: I am surely able to do the task*). Test of validity using Pearson correlation resulted in p>0.254 with 0.5% level of significant, while the Cronbach's alpha for reliability was 0.929.

The second questionnaire was also Likert-typed. It has 10 items of statements requiring responses on the level of agreement from Scale 1 to 7 (*1: I absolutely don't agree, 2: I don't agree, 3: I may not agree, 4: I may agree, 5: Basically I agree, 6: I agree, 7: I absolutely agree.*) The questionnaire did not specifically mention what careers the participants wished to pursue, rather it offered them with tasks required by the career. The validity test results in p≥ 0.244, and the Cronbach's alpha for reliability is 0.769.

Data analysis

This study applied 2-step data analysis. On the first step, the data, both the students' self-efficacy and career aspirations, were analyzed descriptively. On the second step, they were correlated to find whether there was a significant correlation between the variables by using Pearson's product moment. For all data analyses, SPSS software was used.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

The first objective of the study is to investigate the level of students' self-efficacy in making English business communication. This efficacy was measured by 15 indicators of tasks involved in business communication. This approach refers to the fact that self-efficacy is domain specific (Sabokrouh, 2014), therefore, the indicators for measurement must specifically address the skills involved in the task completion. The 15 indicators cover functional tasks involved in business communication as making self-introduction, introducing company, opening and closing meetings, making presentations, introducing products, responding to talks or presentation, presenting data, etc.

The descriptive analysis of self-efficacy results in the minimum, maximum and average scores as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive analysis of self-efficacy

		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self-efficacy	61	48.00	99.00	78.51	11.85
Valid N (listwise)	61				

With 15 indicators of 7 scales (1-7), the minimum score a respondent could have achieved was 15 and the maximum score was 105. However, the data show that the minimum score was 48.00 and the maximum one was 99.00, while the mean score was 78.51 with standard deviation 11.85. If the mean score is used to indicate the level of self-efficacy of respondents in making English business communication in 5 possible levels of efficacy based on the hypothetical means of categories (very low, low, moderate, high, and very high), the score belongs to "high category because it lies in the range between 67.6 and 82.5. The data show that the students have high level of self-efficacy in making English business communication.

If respondents' self-efficacy is grouped into 5 levels of categories of very low, low, moderate, high, and very high, their distribution of self-efficacy is presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2**.** The respondents' self-efficacy distribution

		Freq.	%	Cum. %
Valid	Very low	0	0	0
	Low	1	1.6	1.6
	Moderate	12	19.7	21.3
	High	20	32.8	54.1
	Very high	28	45.9	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	

Respondents with very high self-efficacy constitute the highest number (45.9%) followed gradually by the high (32.8%), moderate (19.7), and low (1.6). No respondent had very low of self-efficacy.

The second objective was to profile the students' career aspiration. This was measured by 10 indicators of career characteristics with scale of agreement from 1 (absolutely don't agree) to 7 (absolutely agree). The result is summarized in Table 3 below:

Table 3. The respondents' career aspiration profile

No	Indicators	Mean
1	I like a job which involves interactions with many different people.	5.08
2	I like a job which involves talking to many different people.	5.52
3	I like a job which involves the use of English orally.	4.70
4	I like a job which involves the use of written English.	4.57
5	I like a job which involves working with people from different countries.	5.25
6	I like a job which having good English communication skill is an advantage.	5.84
7	I like a job which requires English communication skill.	4.80
8	I like a job in which English communication skill affects the level of salary.	5.54
9	I like working in an international company.	5.77
10	I like working overseas.	5.16

The data show that the students aspire positively on career referred by the indicators. The descriptive analysis of career aspiration results in minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviation as follows:

Table 4. Descriptive analysis of career aspiration

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Job aspiration	61	35.00	67.00	52.25	8.22
Valid N (listwise)	61				

For 10 indicators with 7 scales of response (1 to 7), the hypothetical minimum and maximum scores are 10 and 70. The data show that the minimum score is 35, the maximum is 67, and the mean is 52.25. Using 3 categories of low, moderate, and high, the students' career aspiration is high.

The last objective was to find out the correlation between students' self-efficacy in making English business communication and their career aspiration. To achieve the purpose, scores of students' self-efficacy were correlated to scores of career aspiration using Pearson product moment correlation. The result is presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Correlation between Self-efficacy and career aspiration

		Self-efficacy	Job aspirations
Self-efficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.611**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	61	61
Job aspirations	Pearson Correlation	.611**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	61	61

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 above shows that the two variables are positively related. Correlation coefficient of 0.611 belongs to moderate level (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012).

Therefore, it can be concluded that self-efficacy in making English business communication moderately correlates to career aspiration.

Discussion

The first objective of this study was to investigate the level of students' self-efficacy in making English business communication and it was found that their self-efficacy is high which means that students have strong beliefs that they are able to make English business communication. This strong belief can be the result of the learning since the data were collected in the end of the course so that most students had got turns to practice the skills, watched their friends performing the communication practices, and got encouragement from the teacher. As Bandura states, self-efficacy originates from four sources namely inactive mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and affective states (Bandura, 1997). During the learning, the students were exposed to mastery experience as they had to make practice either individually or in pairs and developed vicarious experience by watching their peers' practices and performances. When successfully doing the task, their self-efficacy increased. In many opportunities during the topic or skill presentations and student practice, the teacher also tried to build students' confidence in completing the task by verbally convincing them that they would be able to do the tasks. Leeming suggested that if students be given a change to practice the language and experience mastery experience, they would make progress (Leeming, 2017). Since self-efficacy is positively related to performance and achievement (Hsieh & Kang, 2010; Shi, 2016), we could expect that this high level of self-efficacy would lead the students to perform and achieve well on the task.

The study also found that the students' career aspiration on jobs or professions characterized by items of the questionnaires is high. As data in Table 3 show, all indicators used in the questionnaire for career aspiration were rated moderate to high (>4.5) of scale 1 to 7. However, a closer look to the data shows a small difference between groups of indicators. Indicators 3, 4 and 7 which all involve the use of English (oral, written and communication) were rated lower (4.70, 4.57, and 4.80) than other indicators. This could be interpreted as they were not very convinced yet with their English skill. While on one side, they aspired highly to have jobs which involved interacting, talking to different people from different countries as working overseas or at international companies, on the other side when it came to English communication skill both orally or written, their aspiration was a little lower.

There is a moderate level of correlation between self-efficacy and career aspirations. The finding can be explained in term of behavioral consequences of perceived self-efficacy (Betz, 2000; Reddan, 2015), that self-efficacy can serve as a predictor of behavior. Students who believe that they have the ability to do tasks involved in the jobs successfully will approach the job, on the contrary, students who believe they don't have the ability to do so will avoid it. Self-efficacy energizes persons to perform on the job optimally and persist in time of troubles because of their confidence that they have abilities to cope them. The higher someone perceives efficacy to fulfill occupational roles, the better she prepares herself educationally for her career and the more

energies she has to challenge career pursuit (Pinguart, Juang, & Silbereisen, 2014). This finding of the positive correlation supports previous findings concluded by the study of VK & Padmanabhan and also the study of Kaur which also found a positive significant correlation between self-efficacy and career aspiration of higher secondary school students (Kaur, 2018; VK & Padmanabhan, 2016).

CONCLUSION
This study investigated self-efficacy of students in making English business communication, their career aspirations, and the relationship between their self-efficacy and career aspirations. The data were collected as the students completed the course of ESP for Business and Accounting which focused on developing English communication skills related to business fields. It was found that their self-efficacy in making English business communication was high, so was their career aspiration. These two variables were positively correlated. The findings support the conclusions of previous studies. This study doesn't compare students' self-efficacy before and after attending the course so it could not be concluded that the source could enhance self-efficacy but it can be topics for the future studies.

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