

**The Relationship between Self-Efficacy Beliefs in Learning English as a Second Language and Achievement of Sri Lankan Undergraduates**

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**Abstract**

Self-efficacy (SE) is the belief that an individual holds his/her own ability to carry out a function or a goal. This adds to the conventional linguistic pedagogical difficulties learners face when learning English as a Second Language (ESL). Therefore, it has been identified as a significant factor that influences an individual when they learn ESL. Hence, the present study investigated the relationship between ESL learners' SE beliefs in learning ESL and achievement. The Questionnaire of English Self-Efficacy (QESE) which has four subscales measuring reading, writing, listening and speaking SEs was administered to collect data and a Researcher Developed Questionnaire (RDQ) was employed in order to gather details about the participants' linguistic background, personal, environmental, and behavioural factors that affect the SE, and their listening and speaking preferences, which gathered demographic information of the participants. Moreover, achievement was measured using the Grade Point Average on ESL of the end semester examination, which assessed students' four skills. Data were collected from 306 second-year basic and intermediate level ESL learners studying at the Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya. The questionnaire was distributed in Sinhala and Tamil medium as the sample included both Sinhala and Tamil native speakers. Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS.17). Results showed a significant positive correlation between English speaking, listening, reading, and writing SEs and achievement in learning ESL. Furthermore, total English SE (the combination of all four self-efficacies) was positively and strongly correlated with achievement in English language learning. In addition, the results also indicated a significant difference between SE for students who had previous exposure to English speaking environments and those who did not have such an opportunity. Moreover, the present study indicated lower SE in understanding English spoken by native English speakers than local speakers. Thus, Sri Lankan ESL teachers could achieve more from facilitating the ESL learner accordingly by ensuring socio-cultural familiarity or Sri-Lankanization of ESL material while maintaining a conducive environment.

**Keywords:** *Self-efficacy, English as a second language, achievement, ESL learner*

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