On the Relationship between Self-efficacy, Perfectionism, and English Achievement among Iranian EFL Learners

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between self-efficacy, perfectionism, and English language achievement among Iranian English Foreign Language (EFL) learners. A sample of 400 third-grade high school students (females) was assessed for their levels of self-efficacy and perfectionism using Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (SEQ) and Almost Prefect Scale-Revised (APS-R), respectively. Participants' scores on their final English test were also used as the measurement of their English achievement. In order to achieve the goals of the study, SPSS version 19 was used. With regard to the research questions addressed in the current study, two main questionnaires (i.e., SEQ and APS-R) were utilized and accordingly several data analytic approaches were used. Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to answer first and second questions to examine the relationship between learner self-efficacy and English achievement and the extent of the relationship between perfectionism and English achievement. The results revealed strong correlations between learners' self-efficacy and English achievement ($r = .303$, $p < .01$). It meant that the respondents with higher foreign language self-efficacy were likely to have higher English scores. Also, perfectionism was found to be negatively correlated with English achievement ($r = -.064$, $p < .01$). Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis (HMRA) was used in order to address the third research question to investigate the mediating role of perfectionism on the relationship between EFL learner self-efficacy and English achievement. However, the results of Model summary and ANOVA shed the light on the issue that there is not any relationship among learners' self-efficacy and English language achievement as mediated by perfectionism.

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1. Introduction

A massive body of literature has addressed the issue of interaction of individual differences and language learning (e.g., Alptekin & Atkan, 1990; Dörnyei, 2005; Jamieson, 1992). Individual differences are expected to bring about the success or failure of second language learning (Ellis, 1985). One of the areas of individual differences is the affective domain or the internal aspect of learner beliefs, self, feelings and emotions (Brown, 2000). According to Dornyei (2005), identifying and taking into consideration the Individual differences is the most important predictors of success in language learning. Arnold (2000, P. 2) also argued the importance of affective factors in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) by emphasizing that not only consideration about affective factors would result in more effective language learning, but also cares about the whole-person development. The role of individual differences in all the process, course, and results of language learning is noteworthy outstanding. Self-efficacy is one of the important personality constructs. Bandura (1986) defined self-efficacy as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (p. 391) and considered it to be the central element in the Social Cognitive Theory. Since Bandura introduced the concept of self-efficacy in 1977, the role of self-efficacy in learning has been investigated by many educational researchers (Linnenbrick & Pintrich, 2003; Mills, Pajares, & Herron, 2007). These studies revolved around one concept and all emphasized that self-efficacy is an indispensable part of learning and a good predictor for the success of the learner. This study also responded to this call for further research on the concept of perfectionism. To develop a greater understanding of this multifaceted construct, various researchers have provided multidimensional definitions of perfectionism covering its many qualities. For instance, Frost, Marten,

Lahart, and Rosenblate (1990) described six components of perfectionism: high standards, concern over mistakes, doubts about actions, perception of parental expectations, perception of parental criticism, and emphasis on order and organization. Hewitt and Flett's (1991) definition of perfectionism focused on the interpersonal aspects of the construct and identified three dimensions, which they labeled self-oriented perfectionism, other oriented perfectionism, and socially prescribed perfectionism. However, both of these depictions view perfectionism emphasizing its self-destructive nature. In contrast, perfectionism has been the focus of psychologists and they view it more positive and adaptive qualities.

Many attempts have been taken to improve foreign language learning in Iran, but still there exist solemn difficulties among EFL learners (Fahim & Sa'eepour, 2011). Many reasons have cited to explain the source of these difficulties, but the most important reason is the false disposition of Iranian national system of education. In this system, students are taught 'what to think' rather than 'how to think' about specific subject matters. In spite of a large body of studies in Iran regarding the role of self-efficacy (Bonyadi, Nikou, & Shahbaz, 2012; Hashemi & Ghanizadeh, 2011; Rahemi, 2007; Rahimi & Abedini, 2009) and perfectionism (Akhondpoor & Pishghadam, 2011; Ghafarsamar & Shirazizadeh, 2010; Khodarahimi, 2010; Roohafza at al., 2010). Few studies have investigated the relationship of these two variables together on students' language learning achievement. The lack of research-based evidence points to the need for the study that aims mainly at examining the relationship between self-efficacy, perfectionism, and English learning achievement. For the purpose of this study, following research questions were posed:

1. What is the relationship between third-grade high school students' self-efficacy and their English achievement?

On the Relationship between …

2. What is the relationship between third-grade high school students' perfectionism and their English achievement?

3. What is the relationship between third-grade high school students' self-efficacy and their English achievement as mediated by perfectionism?

1.1 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is considered as an important motivation constructs which was derived from social cognitive theory developed by Bandura (1997). Based on Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), when individuals face a certain task, they analyze it, set their own goals, plan systematic strategies, and aim at attaining the desired outcome (Bandura, 2001; Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006). According to SCT, human functioning is a product of a dynamic interaction of a) personal factors including cognitive, affective, and biological case, b) behavior, and c) environment (Pajares, 2002). These Three factors influence each other in a reciprocal manner. That is, how individuals explain their performance outcomes changes their environments and self-beliefs. These environments and self-beliefs, in turn, inform and alter individuals' subsequent performance. This is originated from Bandura standpoint that people do not merely show reaction to their environmental influences or inner forces as behaviorist theories dictate but use self-regulation, self-reflection, self-organization, and proactivism for function and development (Bandura, 1977). Accordingly, Bandura devised the theory of social learning as SCT in order to cite its differences from the principles of other social learning theories of the time and prove the important role of cognition which plays in people's capabilities to actualize reality, self-regulate, perform behaviors, and comprehend information (Pajares, 2002). Bandura (1997b) defines self-efficacy as

one's beliefs of their capability to learn or perform tasks at designated levels. Definition of self-efficacy has been attempted by many authors, but they all paraphrase and refer to Bandura's definition. Schunk (2001) affirmed that self-efficacy is a construct in Bandura's theory of human functioning and referred to it as "beliefs about one's capabilities to learn or perform behaviors at designated levels" (p. 126). Pintrich and Schunk (1996) rendered another side of Bandura's (1986) definitions which self-efficacy means "judgments of people of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (p. 88).

Bandura (1997) maintains that self-efficacy will have impact on students' aspirations, their level of interest in academic accomplishments, and how well they prepare themselves for future careers. He identified two main types of self-efficacy, that is, the one pertaining to achievement in specific subject areas such as language or science and the one that is related to self-regulate learning and the extent to which an individual feels successful on tasks. Self-efficacy, also called perceived ability, refers to the confidence people have in their abilities that they can successfully perform a particular task (Bandura, 1997). Students with low self-efficacy quit more easily in their academic pursuits than students with high self-efficacy. Several studies (DeBacker & Nelson, 1999; Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990) have demonstrated that females have lower levels of self-efficacy in math and science courses compared to males. Studies (Andrew, 1998; Bandura, 1997) have attributed self-efficacy to both general academic achievement and science achievement. For example, in a meta-analysis, there found a significant relationship between self-efficacy, academic performance, and persistence for a number of disciplines (Multon, Brown, & Lent, 1991). As there is a

On the Relationship between …

common ground between self-efficacy and academic achievement, educators should first become informed of the students' self-efficacy levels and then exert efforts to help them to raise their self-efficacy level.

According to Bandura (1997), there are four main sources of self-efficacy/perceived ability: enactive mastery experience, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states. The first way to construct this ability is through enactive mastery experiences. Enactive mastery experience is considered the crucial source of self-efficacy as it is the personal experience of success or failure. Bandura (1997) clarifies it by saying that "successes rebuild a robust belief in one's personal efficacy" and "failures undermine it, especially if failures occur before a sense of efficacy is firmly established" (p. 80). That is, experience of success would trigger to promote self-efficacy whereas failure lowers it. The second way is through vicarious experiences. Vicarious experience is the social comparability between the self and those enjoying the same capabilities (Bandura, 1997). Similarly, witnessing the failure of a similar person in spite of the effort, would lead to decrease in their self-efficacy (Brown & Inouye, 1978). The third way of strengthening self-efficacy is verbal persuasion. Individuals verbally encouraged by explaining that they have the ability to make the given task, would do their best to demonstrate themselves and this will promote their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). These encouragements should be 'within realistic bounds' (Bandura, 1997, p. 101). Psychological and affective state of the person is the last source of self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) argues that psychological, affective, and mood states like anxiety, fatigue, and nervousness can influence self-efficacy. Negative thoughts and emotions in one's would double the stress and lead to inadequate performance and failure

(Pajares, 2002). To sum up, it can be said that self-efficacy is the interplay of information taken inactively, vicariously, socially, and physically. After formed, self-efficacy improves the quality of human functioning.

1.2 Self-efficacy and Foreign Language Learning

As mentioned earlier, self-efficacy affects the choices of the individuals, the effort they put on the task and their thoughts and emotional reactions. The importance of self-efficacy cannot be denied. Consequently, it has been studied in relation to achievement and particularly English achievement.

Huang and Chang (1998) conducted a research to study the relationship between reading and writing self-efficacy and achievement with four ESL students from highest-level reading and writing classes. After the interviews, class observations, examination of writing assignments and two questionnaires, it was seen that students' self-efficacy was greatly dependent on their interest and the teachers' support. In 2005, Ho investigated the relationships between self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and English and mathematics performance of middle school students' in Taiwan. The result driven from the study showed that self-efficacy was considered as an important factor for performance of English and mathematics.

Also, Rahemi (2007) examined English self-efficacy and EFL achievements among students with low proficiency levels majoring in humanities at the senior high school. The study included a structured questionnaire and a measure of EFL achievements and an interview with the English teachers. The analysis of the result showed that students of humanities had no tendency toward English and did not enjoy positive

English self-efficacy. Besides, EFL achievements were greatly affected by English self-efficacy. Another study was done by Rahimi and Abedini (2009) with the aim of examining the relationship between EFL learners' self-efficacy beliefs concerning listening comprehension and listening proficiency. The analysis of the data gathered showed that listening comprehension self-efficacy is significantly related to listening proficiency. Similarly, an investigation into the relationship between EFL students' emotional intelligence and their sense of self-efficacy beliefs was done by Hashemi and Ghanizadeh (2011). The researcher based this study on the assumption that one of the several factors that self-efficacy associates with is the individual's emotional states. 97 EFL university students participated in this research, they were chosen by convenience sampling from different universities in Iran. The participants were asked to complete the Bar-On EI test as well as the Learners' Self- Efficacy Survey. The result showed that there is a significant relationship between EFL learners' emotional intelligence and their self-efficacy beliefs. And more specifically, self-actualization and stress tolerance (two components of emotional intelligence) are assumed to be positive predictors of the learners' self-efficacy. In 2012, Negahi, Ghashghaeizadeh, and Hoshmandja studied the relationship between learning styles and thinking styles with academic self-efficacy of English lesson. The method of collecting data included Kolb learning style questionnaire, Sternberg thinking styles questionnaire, and researcher-made questionnaire of English lesson academic self-efficacy of students. The analysis of data yielded that there was an important and positive correlation between the judgmental thinking style and legislative thinking style and academic English lesson self-efficacy of students. However, negative relation was found between the executive thinking

Ghorbandordinejad & Afshar

style and the academic self-efficacy of students. And also, there existed a significantly positive relationship between all of leaning styles elements with academic English lesson self-efficacy. The result showed that academic self-efficacy differed from students of humanities and engineering students. In a recent study (2016), Genç, Kuluşaklı, and Aydın recommend that teachers have the greatest role in helping their students to become aware of and evaluate their foreign language self-efficacy.

1.3 Perfectionism

Perfectionism has been associated with a huge number of unfavorable psychosocial outcomes. Anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, depression, and eating disorders are some of these unfavorable outcomes. The issue that concerns researchers mostly is that different researchers apply different operational definitions for defining perfectionism. Currently, researchers have not come to a unique definition of perfectionism (Flett & Hewitt, 2002). This applies that there are varying definitions in the literature on perfectionism. Accordingly, researchers must be of this feature and limit to draw reasonable conclusions out of their study. Generally, perfectionism is a sort of attitude for setting high and even unattainable goals (Flett, Hewitt, Blankstein, & Koledin, 1992). Since the mid-nineteenth century, perfectionism has received great attention (e.g. Horney, 1950; Adler, 1956; Hewitt & Flett, 1991). According to Adler (1956, as cited in Mills & Blankstein, 2000), those having innate motivation like to seek perfection. Traditional views believed that perfectionists are at the risk of shame and never feel pride. This is contrary to what Hamachek (1978) suggested. Hamchek (1978) points that this is true just about neurotic perfectionists; whereas, healthy perfectionists are satisfied with

On the Relationship between …

themselves, not only experience shame, but also feel pride. The most striking feature of perfectionists is that they struggle for flawlessness and set high standards of performance (Flett & Hewitt, 2002; Frost, Marten, Lahart, & Rosenblate, 1990). Moreover, perfectionists value their worth by achieving unreachable goals of achievement (Horney, 1950).

The different aspects of perfectionism represent different aspects of adaptive or maladaptive outcomes. Hewitt and Flett standpoint argues that socially prescribed perfectionism is more particularly connected with maladjustment/ negative side; while, self-oriented perfectionism has lesser maladjustment degree (Hewitt, Flett, & Turnbull-Donovan, 1992). The reason for this is that socially prescribed perfectionists have little freedom in choosing the task whereas self-oriented perfectionists select the tasks that seem more easily to achieve (Tangney, 2002). The dimension, which seems least associated with maladjustment, is other-oriented perfectionism. From the perspective of the Frost and colleague, concern over mistakes is the most likely maladjustment causing among other dimensions (Flett & Hewitt, 2002; Frost et al. 1990). In contrast, the doubts about actions dimension (Soenens, Vansteenkiste, Luyten, Duriez, & Goossens, 2005), the parental expectations, and the parental criticisms dimensions (Stober, 1998) have also been related to maladjustment to a lesser extent.

Hewitt and Flett (1991) proposed another classification. They divided perfectionism in three groups: self-oriented perfectionism (MPS-Self), other-oriented perfectionism (MPS-Other), and socially prescribed perfectionism (MPS-social). People with self-oriented perfectionism tend to set unrealistically high standards for themselves. They impose difficulty on themselves. They try not to make the faintest mistakes. However, other-oriented perfectionism does not like to assign jobs to

others due to fears that others might disappoint them with imperfect results. The last group, socially prescribed perfectionism is in need of admiration of others.

1.4 Perfectionism in EFL Context

The relationships between perfectionism and academic achievement has been investigated, although it is clear that maladaptive/unhealthy perfectionism is in contrast with academic achievement. Arthur and Hayward (1997) found that socially-prescribed perfectionism in first year tertiary students was associated with lower academic achievement.

A study was conducted by Ghafarsamar and Shirazizadeh (2010) examined the relationship between perfectionism, anxiety, and reading achievement among EFL learners. The participants of this study responded to perfectionism and reading anxiety scales. The result of their analysis showed that among three dimensions of perfectionism, only socially-prescribed perfectionism is the significant determinant for reading anxiety and reading skills.

In addition, Akhondpoor and Pishghadam (2011) did a study. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the role of learner perfectionism in foreign language learning success, academic achievement, and learner anxiety. 300 junior and senior students of English in Mashhad universities participated in this study, and answered Ahwaz Perfectionism Scale (2000 as cited in Akhondpoor & Pishghadam, 2011) and Speilberger's State/Trait Anxiety Inventory (1983 as cited in Akhondpoor & Pishghadam, 2011). The results of the correlational analysis showed that negative significant relationship between skills of reading, speaking, listening, GPA, and perfectionism and also a positive significant relationship between learner perfectionism and learner anxiety. The researchers' hypothesis with regard to the

On the Relationship between …

relationships between age, gender, and learner perfectionism was rejected. The overall findings can be summarized that how perfectionistic tendencies in language learners are associated with low academic achievement and poor performance in language skills.

Davari, Lavasani, and Ejei (2012) in a study evaluated the relationship between perfectionism facets and academic self-efficacy with regard to achievement performance. 302 third grade high school students (151 males and 151 females) participated in this research. The participants were asked to answer the Elliot and McGregor Achievement Goal Questionnaire, Try-Short, Owens, Slade, and Dewey Perfectionism Scale (1995) and McIllroy and Bunting Academic Self-efficacy Questionnaire (2001). The analysis of the result of this study showed that positive aspect of perfectionism had positive association with mastery-approach and performance-approach, but negative perfectionism was related to performance-avoidance and performance-avoidance. With respect to academic self-efficacy, the results implied that academic self-efficacy had positive relationship with mastery-approach and negative relationship with performance-avoidance.

In another study, Ghorbandordinejad and FarjadNasab (2013) discussed how anxiety can mediate between perfectionism and English achievement. The major goal of the study was to examine the relationship between perfectionism and English language achievement among high school third graders in Chenaran, a city in northeast of Iran, mediated by foreign language classroom anxiety. In this study participants answered to two sets of scales: using the Almost Perfect Scale-Revised and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale. What can be inferred from the results are that there is no strong correlations between perfectionism and English achievement ($F = .515$, $p > .05$) and

also classroom anxiety had a negative impact on English achievement ($r = -.357$, $p < .01$). however, the analysis of data showed that perfectionism and foreign language anxiety are negatively correlated; in this case maladaptive perfectionists were found to be more anxious than adaptive and non-perfectionists.

1.5 Self-efficacy and Perfectionism

In an article in 1980, Burns explained that unreasonable and self-defeating cognitive patterns of perfectionists are the determinant undermining self-efficacy. Perfectionists consider themselves incapable and incompetent, as they truly believe that efficient people reach their set goals without serious errors as such they regard themselves inferior. Accordingly, lack of confidence and sense of belief in their ability appears to be in accordance with Bandura's conceptualization of low self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1986).

The literature done on this issue proves that those enjoying higher scores on adaptive components of perfectionism show greater levels of self-efficacy. The relationship between scores on the Burns Perfectionism Scale (BPS; Burns, 1980) and the Hewitt and Flett Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (HMPS; Hewitt & Flett, 1991) with scores of general self-efficacy was examined by Hart, Gilner, Handal, and Gfeller (1998). The result showed that total perfectionism scores on the HMPS and BPS were not in significant link with self-efficacy. Although there was not a significant correlation between HMPS total score and self-efficacy, further studies yielded positive and significant correlations between the three subscales of the MPS and self-efficacy. Scores of Self- Oriented Perfectionism and Other-Oriented Perfectionism were negatively correlated with self-efficacy. In contrast, Socially Prescribed Perfectionism was positively correlated with self-

efficacy. They divided the participants into high and low perfectionism groups according to their scores. The conclusion of this study was that self-efficacy scores of higher perfectionist were not significantly different from those lower in perfectionism. Hart et al., 1998 found that each individual component of the HMPS distinguished for the self-efficacy variable. For the Self-Oriented and Other-Oriented Perfectionism subscales, those participants enjoying high score in these dimensions of perfectionism, their self-efficacy scores were significantly below those individuals with low scores in these dimensions.

2. Method
2.1 Participants
The participants of the present study were female third-grade high school students (N = 400) studying at six high schools in Northern Tehran. Among all the 800 participants investigated, 400 students who provided complete responses to the questionnaires were selected randomly. Regarding the academic majors of the participants, 20% studied humanities while 54.25% studied science, and 25.75% studied mathematics.

2.2 Instruments
2.2.1 Foreign Language Learning Self-efficacy scale for Iranian Students (SEQ)
The Foreign Language self-efficacy scale is a self-report instrument, which assesses the levels of participants' English self-efficacy beliefs. The original developer of this instrument was Sadighi, Alavi, and Samani (2004). They designed the questionnaire primarily based on Bachman (1990, as cited in Sadighi et al. 2004). It comprises 40 items and includes two components: grammatical competence (22 items) and Textual competence (18 items). The unequal number of items was

Ghorbandordinejad & Afshar

merely due to unequal underlying components of each, and greater attention was paid to grammatical aspects in language classes. Participants respond to the 40 items to rate their English self-efficacy beliefs using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4). Total scores for the entire instrument range from 40 to 160, for the subscales range from 22 to 88 for grammatical competence and 18 to 72 for textual competence. Higher scores on the subscales indicate higher levels of English self-efficacy. Coefficient alphas for the two subscales of foreign language learners' self-efficacy (i.e., Grammatical competence and Textual competence) were reported as .83, and .84, respectively. In addition, the reliability of the total scale was computed as .90.

As regards to the purpose and context of this study, Self-efficacy scale was translated from English into Persian in a three-step process (Hambleton, 1994) with the permission of Sadighi et al. (2004), the original developers of the foreign language learners' self-efficacy for Iranian students. The reliability of the translated and tested questionnaire was .85, which indicates the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The original developers of the questionnaire, Sadighi et al. (2004), reported the reliability of .97 of the scale.

2.2.2 The almost perfect scale-revised (APS-R)

The Almost Perfect Scale-Revised (APS-R; Slaney et al., 2001) was used to assess levels and dimensions of perfectionism. In this research the Persian version of the questionnaire, which was translated by Farjad Nasab, 2012, was used. The revised version of the Almost Perfect Scale consists of 23 items designed to assess both adaptive and maladaptive components of perfectionism.). The APS-R contains three subscales for High Standards (7 items), Order (4 items), and Discrepancy (12 items).

On the Relationship between …

The high standards and order subscales are associated with the aspects of positive perfectionism and the discrepancy subscale is associated with the aspects of negative perfectionism. Coefficient alphas for the High Standards, Order, and Discrepancy subscales were reported as .67, .71, and .82, respectively. The reliability of the complete APS-R scale was estimated as .85, which shows that this questionnaire has functioned well in terms of consistency.

2.2.3 English language achievement test

The third-grade English language final exam was prepared by *Iran Ministry of Education* (Assessment and Evaluation Center) and was held throughout the country on academic year 2013. The test is developed based on contents being taught through the third year of high school, and designed to measure students' overall achievement in English, more particularly this test shows students' achievement in mastering the content of *English Book 3*.

2.3 Procedure

In this section, the procedures for administering are addressed in detail. The first step was to translate the questionnaires from English to Persian since no Persian version of EFL learner self-efficacy was available. After asking for permission from Sadighi et al. (2004), the researcher performed a three-step process of translation, back-translation, and review. The process is described fully in the above. Finally, the data were collected at six high schools in Northern Tehran in academic year of 2013. Before the administration of questionnaires, the students were given a brief oral overview of the research project, the purpose of the study and a brief explanation or definition of the two variables (self-efficacy and perfectionism) by the researcher herself. The participants were requested to answer the questionnaires by selecting a choice.

Ghorbandordinejad & Afshar

3. Results

In order to explore the relationship between self-efficacy and English achievement, it is utilized Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients to determine significant relationship existed between learner EFL learner self-efficacy and English achievement. The total SEQ scores had a significantly positive correlation (r = .303, n = 400, p < .01) with the total English scores. It meant that the respondents with higher foreign language self-efficacy were likely to have higher English scores. In addition, significantly positive relationship was also found among the total English score and the two-subscale SEQ scores. Among them, the correlation coefficients of the English score had much higher correlations with the subscale of grammatical competence (r = .328, p < .01) than with the subscale of textual competence (r = .237, p < .01). It suggested that students with higher English scores tended to have higher self-efficacy concerning grammatical competence than textual competence.

Table 1
Correlation between Self-efficacy and English Achievement (N = 400)

	English Score	Self-efficacy	Grammatical Competence	Textual Competence
English Score	1			
Self-efficacy	.303 **	1		
Grammatical Competence	.328 **	.940 **	1	
Textual Competence	.237 **	.933 **	.754 **	1

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

The second research question to be answered was whether there is a relationship between perfectionism and English achievement. As the first step, the participants' levels of perfectionism were determined. In order

On the Relationship between …

to explore the relationship between perfectionism and English achievement, it is utilized Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients to determine significant relationship existed between perfectionism and English achievement. The results from Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients between SEQ scores and English scores are illustrated in Table 2. The total perfectionism scores had a significantly negative correlation (r = -.064, n = 400, *p* < .01) with the total English scores. It meant that the respondents with higher perfectionism were likely to have lower English scores. In addition, significantly negative relationships were also found among the two-subscale of perfectionism scores and one of the subscales showed positive correlation with the total English scores. Among them, the correlation coefficients of the English score had much higher correlations with the subscale of discrepancy (r = -.120, *p* < .01) than with the subscale of order (r = -.018, *p* < .01). On the other hand, the only subscale which lead to a positive correlation with English achievement was high standards (r= .071, *p* < .01). It is suggested that students with higher English scores tended to have higher perfectionism concerning high standards. As it was mentioned in section 3.3.2 that high standard component has to do with positive aspect of perfectionism.

Table 2

Correlation between Perfectionism and English Achievement (N = 400)

	English score	Perfectionism	Discrepancy	High standards	Order
English score	1				
Perfectionism	-.064	1			
Discrepancy	-.120*	.830**	1		
High standards	.071	.678**	.204**	1	
Order	-.018	.586**	.145**	.602**	1

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

Ghorbandordinejad & Afshar

The third research question aimed at investigating the mediation effect of perfectionism on the relationship between language learner self-efficacy and their English achievement. The most common method to test mediation effects in social science research is based on a four step multiple regression procedure that uses three regression equations to establish a mediation relationship between a predictor variable, in this study the predictor variable is EFL learner self-efficacy, and an outcome variable is English achievement score. Hierarchical multiple regression was used to assess the ability of control measure (Perfectionism) to predict English achievement after controlling for the self-efficacy. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicolllinearity, and homoscedasticity. Self-efficacy was entered at Step 1, explaining 9.2 % of the variance in achievement. After entry of the perfectionism at Step 2 the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 9.4%, F (2, 395) =20.47, $p < .001$.

Table 3
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. f Change
1	.303 a	.092		3.33806	.092	40.089	1	396	.000
2	.306 b	.094	.090	3.33866	.002	.858	1	395	.355
			.089						

Self-efficacy explained an additional 02% of the variance in achievement, after controlling for perfectionism responding, R squared change = .002, F change (1, 395) = .858, $p < .001$.

Table 4
Coefficients (after mediation of perfectionism)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model	B	Std. Error		T	Sig.
1 (Constant)	9.523	1.543	Beta	9.134	.008
Self-efficacy	.063	.010	.303	6.332	.000
2 (Constant)	10.522	1.501		7.012	.000
Self-efficacy	.062	.010	.300	6.240	.000
perfectionism	-.008	.009	-.045	-.926	.355

In the final model, only perfectionism was statistically significant, that self-efficacy with a higher beta value (*beta* = 300, *p* < .001) than the perfectionism (*beta* = –.045, *p* < .001).

4. Discussion

The primary goal of the study was to examine the relationship between self-efficacy, perfectionism, and English language achievement. Furthermore, this study was intended to investigate the mediating role of the perfectionism may play in the relationship of self-efficacy and English language achievement.

Regarding the relationship between self-efficacy and English achievement, findings revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between total self-efficacy and subscales of grammatical competence and textual competence with English achievement. Self-efficacy beliefs turned out to be so significant in the present study. Reviewing the literature proved that the findings in the study were consistent with the previous studies. Bandura (1986) pointed out that compliments are the best determinant for boosting self-efficacy. According to Krashen (1994), learners can succeed in EFL learning if they are equipped with greater self-efficacy. Moreover, some of the studies (Chen, 2007; Duman, 2007) displayed that students who have high self-efficacy are more successful in English.

Ghorbandordinejad & Afshar

Second, the study also revealed a significant negative relationship between perfectionism and English achievement. In other words, students with high level of perfectionism did not perform well on the English achievement. These results were generally in accordance with the second hypothesis.

Third, the results did not support the hypothesis about perfectionism as a mediator of the relationship between self-efficacy and English achievement. Further research is needed to explore possible links between these variable.

The lack of direct evidence in the literature regarding the mediation effect of perfectionism on the relationship between EFL learners' self-efficacy and achievement made it difficult to interpret the result of the present study. Although in one study, Davari et al. (2012) evaluated the relationship between perfectionism facets and academic self-efficacy with regard to achievement performance. The analysis of the result of this study showed that positive aspect of perfectionism had positive association with mastery-approach and performance-approach, but negative perfectionism was related to performance-avoidance and performance-avoidance. With respect to academic self-efficacy, the results implied that academic self-efficacy had positive relationship with mastery-approach and negative relationship with performance-avoidance. In 2002, LoCicero and Ashby also investigated the association between perfectionism and general self-efficacy. The researchers used the Almost Perfect Scale- Revised (APS-R; Slaney et al., 2001) and its components in order to differentiate between adaptive and maladaptive and nonperfectionists. They reported that adaptive perfectionists scored higher on the Self-Efficacy Scale (Sherer et al.,

1982) compared to nonperfectionists; self-efficacy scores of maladaptive perfectionists and nonperfectionists did not have that much difference.

5. Conclusion

This study provides several pedagogical implications. Being the first, self-efficacy beliefs could improve students' academic accomplishment. One of the most useful and important implications in L2 learning is that teachers should give positive feedback by verbal messages and social persuasions to help students to exert extra efforts required to gain success. Also, as setting perfectionist high standards would create a kind of stressful and disappointing environment, students are supposed to replace unachievable standards with logical aims in L2 learning (Dashtizadeh & Farvardin, 2016).

This study like any other is not devoid of limitations which future research can deal with. First, the data of the study was collected from 400 female students in Tehran. To have more accurate results, the data can be collected from larger number of male and female participants. Second, mainly third grade high school students, aged 18, answered the questionnaires, as age is an important factor in L2 learning, duplicating the same study with different age groups might lead to different results.

The findings of the study confirmed the positive role of self-efficacy in L2 learning. Also, students with high level of perfectionism turned out to perform negatively in English. Consistent with Locke and Latham (2006), setting challenging and attainable goal is one of the important criteria of personal development and properly set objectives help students to sustain motivation and commitment to their success. Furthermore, it was revealed that perfectionism did not mediate the relationship between self-efficacy and English achievement.

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