

**A CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF SELF-EFFICACY AND
PERCEIVED PARENTAL ENCOURAGEMENT FOR LEARNING
ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE WITH ENGLISH
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF BATCH 5 AND BATCH 6
STUDENTS AT LEVEL UP ACADEMY, LOIKAW TOWNSHIP,
KAYAH STATE, MYANMAR**

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Abstract: The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate if there was a significant relationship of self-efficacy and perceived parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language with English academic achievement of Batch 5 and Batch 6 students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar. A population sample of 71 students from Batch 5 (34 students) and Batch 6 (37 students), enrolled during the academic year 2017-2018, was chosen for this study. A 32-item questionnaire was used to measure the levels of self-efficacy for learning EFL, including its four subscales (listening efficacy, speaking efficacy, reading efficacy and writing efficacy); an 8-item questionnaire was used to measure perceived parental encouragement for learning EFL; and the levels of English academic achievement were determined using the English subject's final test. After data collection was done, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and a statistical hypothesis testing (correlational analysis using Pearson's product moment correlation and multiple correlation coefficient) were carried out to address the research objectives and hypotheses of this study. The research findings indicated that the levels of self-efficacy for learning EFL of both Batch 5 and Batch 6 students were slightly high. It was also found that the level of perceived parental encouragement of Batch 5 students was slightly high, while that of Batch 6 students was moderately high. The English subject's final test revealed that Batch 5 and Batch 6 students had good English academic achievement. Correlational analysis using Pearson's product moment correlation suggested that there was a strong, significant and positive relationship of self-efficacy for learning EFL with English academic achievement of Batch 5 and Batch 6 students. However, there was not significant relationship of perceived parental encouragement for learning EFL with English academic achievement of Batch 5 and Batch 6 students. The four

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subscales of self-efficacy for learning EFL (listening, speaking, reading and writing efficacy) were also strongly, positively and significantly correlated with English academic achievement of Batch 5 and Batch 6 student Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar.

Keywords: Self-Efficacy, Perceived Parental Encouragement, English as a Foreign Language, English Academic Achievement, Listening Efficacy, Speaking Efficacy, Reading Efficacy, Writing Efficacy.

Introduction

English is considered as a universal language nowadays, and hence mastering this language seems to be crucial (Bohdanska, 2012). Referring to English as an international language, Bohdanska (2012) stated that the majority of world's major events and almost all major conferences and summits of international organizations mainly use English language to engage in communication. In Asia, English language plays an important role as an official or semiofficial communication tool, as a core subject to be taught at schools, as instructional language in academic institutions, and as *lingua franca* (Cheng, 2012). As a matter of fact, English has become increasingly important among member countries of the Association of South East Asia Nations (Kirkpatrick, 2012).

Over the past seven years in Myanmar, government has put a lot of effort to reform education systems, due to which it is currently apparent that educational reform in Myanmar is experiencing a fast and broad change (Ireland & Benthuisen, 2014). As Myanmar builds its connections to the global network and builds up its economy, the pace and number of these progressions will likewise expand (Ireland & Benthuisen, 2014). The necessity of English language aptitude will be more essential than before in various scenarios in Myanmar's daily life. Although it is obvious that English language has become more common in different sectors in Myanmar, students still find it challenging to communicate in English (Phyu, 2017).

There are many factors, both internal (e.g., personal factors) and external (e.g., environmental factors), which may influence students in learning English as a foreign language (Bandura, 1997). According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is one of the most important factors which students have it in their beliefs for doing or accomplishing anything. The greater degree of self-efficacy for learning the students have, the more successfully they will acquire the desired knowledge. According to Gardner's (2010) socio-educational model, parental encouragement is also a significant external factor for successful learning, related to the idea that parents support their children to improve in academic

performance, which is somehow obvious, since most parents are engaged to participate, supervise, guide and support their students' education since early school years.

Although reform in Education took place recently in Myanmar, it will take time, a lot of commitment and dedication from all stakeholders to witness its success. To the knowledge of the researchers, students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar, seem to have little support from their parents in terms of motivation or encouragement for learning EFL. The researchers believe that students at Level Up Academy feel shy to apply English language in real world. The researchers also believe that students' self-efficacy for learning English as a foreign language (EFL) might also be one of the reasons for this behavior. It is also reported that there is no previous research conducted on this topic at the target school. From all this, the researchers decided to design a quantitative study to examine the relationship of Batch 5 and Batch 6 students' self-efficacy for learning EFL, perceived parental encouragement for learning EFL and their English academic achievement at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar.

Research Objectives

The following were the research objectives guiding this study.

1. To identify the levels of self-efficacy for learning EFL of Batch 5 and Batch 6 students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar.
 - 1.1 To identify the levels of listening efficacy of Batch 5 and Batch 6 students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar.
 - 1.2 To identify the levels of speaking efficacy of Batch 5 and Batch 6 students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar.
 - 1.3 To identify the levels of reading efficacy of Batch 5 and Batch 6 students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar.
 - 1.4 To identify the levels of writing efficacy of Batch 5 and Batch 6 students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar.
2. To identify the levels of perceived parental encouragement for learning EFL of Batch 5 and Batch 6 students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar.

3. To identify the levels of English academic achievement of Batch 5 and Batch 6 students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar.
4. To identify if there is a significant relationship of self-efficacy for learning EFL and perceived parental encouragement for learning EFL with English academic achievement of Batch 5 students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar.
5. To identify if there is a significant relationship of self-efficacy for learning EFL and perceived parental encouragement for learning EFL with English academic achievement of Batch 6 students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar.
6. To identify if there is a significant relationship of listening efficacy, speaking efficacy, reading efficacy and writing efficacy with English academic achievement of Batch 5 students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar.
7. To identify if there is a significant relationship of listening efficacy, speaking efficacy, reading efficacy and writing efficacy with English academic achievement of Batch 6 students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar.

Theoretical Framework

This study was conducted based on the following supporting theories: social cognitive theory and socio-educational model of second language acquisition.

Social cognitive theory

Social cognitive theory is a learning theory based on the idea that people learn and develop new skills by observing others through interactive relationship of personal, cognitive and environmental factors (Bandura, 1997). How people react and respond to particular behavior is mainly influenced by those three factors. Bandura calls this model the “triadic reciprocal determinism”.

Self-efficacy is one of the major theoretical components of Bandura’s social cognitive theory. According to Bandura, self-efficacy is “the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Students who have a high degree of self-efficacy usually believe in themselves that they are able to overcome particular challenging tasks or problems. On the other hand, students with low degree of self-efficacy tend to be less confident in themselves, and do not believe that they can overcome those particular challenges. According to Bandura (1997), a person’s self-efficacy is affected by the four main factors: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and

physiological factors. These main factors are fundamental sources to develop people's belief about their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994).

Mastery experiences

The first, foremost way and most effective way to create strong self-efficacy is through mastery experiences (Bandura, 1994). The initial steps to successes begin from intrinsic confidence in one's personal efficacy. Earlier experiences in overcoming difficulties reinforce sense of efficacy and it makes people feel self-confident when facing similar situation again. Conversely, experience of failures weakens our self-efficacy belief, particularly if failures happen before a sense of efficacy is strongly rooted. The effective way to develop mastery experience is to work with persistence and great effort (Bandura, 1997).

Vicarious experience

The second effective way to create and strengthen self-efficacy is through the vicarious experiences. People can obtain much information about their abilities and skills through observing how others perform (Bandura, 1997). Being similar to other people gives a cue of judging our own self-efficacy (Schunk, 1995). In other word, observing similar people who succeed in particular tasks can develop one's self-efficacy, and it can stimulate observers to try the tasks because this vicarious experience tells that they also can accomplish.

Social persuasion

The third way to improve self-efficacy is through social persuasion acquired from others. Self-efficacy belief can be created and developed as a result of social persuasions they obtain from others (Bandura, 1997). In this case, a persuader or a mentor is a vital part to develop, inspire and improve an individual's self-efficacy. Whilst positive persuasions might be effective to inspire and empower, negative persuasions are also powerful that they can result low self-efficacy and motivation (Bandura, 1997).

Physiological factors

The fourth way to develop self-efficacy is through physiological factors. People can obtain their self-efficacy information from emotional states such as nervousness, concern and anxiety (Bandura, 1997). People count moderately on physiological factors in scaling their level of capabilities (Bandura, 1994). People can measure their self-efficacy level by the emotional state and physical state, emotions and physical response. When they encounter negative feeling and worries about their abilities (e.g., undergoing nervousness and fears to speak in front of the public), those reactions can impact self-efficacy and they cause further reluctance and distress.

Socio-educational model of second language acquisition

This model, developed by Gardner (1985), explains the way in which variables such as integrativeness, attitude toward learning situation, motivation, language anxiety and others, affect language learning in second or foreign language learners. These variables integrate each other for successful mastery of second languages. In this study, only parental encouragement, which is one of significant constructs of Gardner's socio-educational model, was used as a research variable, in order to fill a gap in Myanmar educational research. Parental encouragement is one of the external factors which influence students to successfully learn a second language, because parents play an important role in their children's learning process. According to Gardner (2010), it is hypothesized that the encouragement, support and assistance from parents play important role for children to learn a second or foreign language. Parental encouragement was one of the major factors in the development of children's language learning skill in the class and parent's positive perception profoundly influences their children's perception of learning a second language (Gardner, 2006). This study measured to what extent students perceived their parents support in learning English as a foreign language using the parental encouragement subscale of Gardner's (2004) Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is shown below.

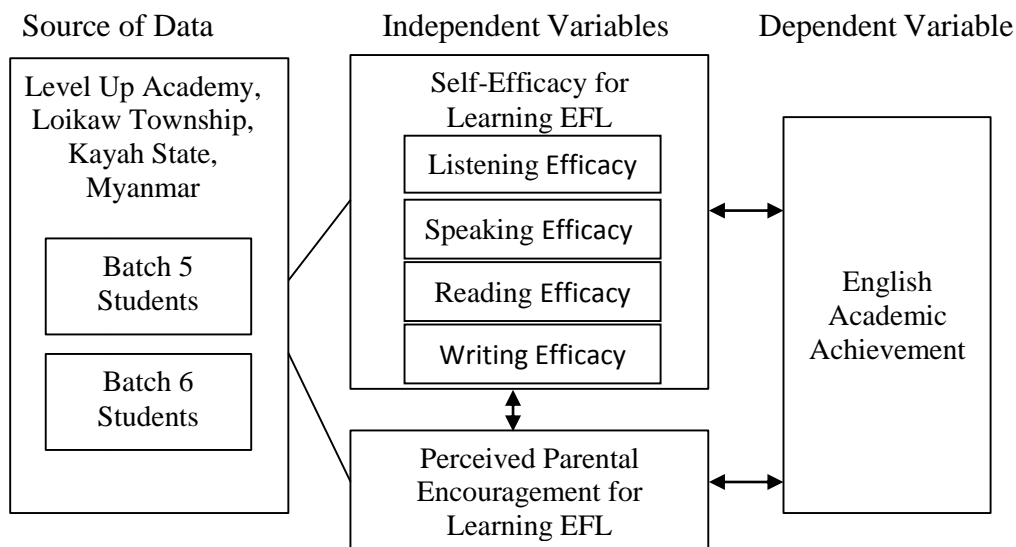


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Literature Review

A study conducted by Kitikanan (2017) investigated the relationship between English self-efficacy and English learning achievement of L2 Thai learners from Naresuan University, Thailand. The research findings suggested that English self-efficacy had a significant positive correlation to the English learning achievement. Each of the subscales of English self-efficacy (i.e., listening efficacy, speaking efficacy, reading efficacy and writing efficacy) were found significantly correlated to students' English learning achievement.

Hou and Lynch (2016) conducted a research to examine the relationship between motivation and perceived parental encouragement for learning Chinese with Chinese academic achievement. About 113 students of Grade 4, Grade 5 and Grade 6 from an international school in Thailand participated in this research study. The results indicated that there was a significantly positive relationship among students' motivation for learning Chinese, perceived parental encouragement and academic achievement.

Marina (2018) conducted a quantitative study to examine the correlation of Grades 6-8 students' motivation, parental encouragement, and achievement in learning English at St. John's Private School, Myanmar. The findings suggested that there was a significantly positive relationship between motivation for learning English and students' achievement for learning English. However, there was no significant relationship between parental encouragement and students' achievement for learning English.

Method/Procedure

Population and sample. The target population of this study were all the 71 students of Batch 5 and Batch 6 enrolled in the academic year 2017-2018 at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar. A population sample was chosen for this study.

This study was conducted based on the administration of the following research instruments: (a) Questionnaires for English Self-Efficacy (QESF, Wang et al., 2013), (b) parental encouragement subscale of the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (international version) (AMTB, Gardner, 2004), and (c) the English subject's final test.

Questionnaires for English Self-Efficacy. As the first instrument, the researchers used the Questionnaire for English Self-Efficacy (QESE), developed by Wang, Kim, Bong, and Ahn (2013), to measure the level of self-efficacy for learning EFL. The QESE is comprised of 32 items in which students were asked to rate their capacity level on a 7-point Likert-type scale

(1 = *I am totally unable to do this*, 2 = *I am unable to do this*, 3 = *I am possibly unable to do this*, 4 = *I am possibly able to do this*, 5 = *I am basically and in principle able to do this*, 6 = *I am able to do this*, 7 = *I am able to do this well*). The table below shows the value of the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for self-efficacy for learning EFL. Cronbach's alphas from previous studies have ranged from .94 to .96 for the QESE (Acikel, 2011; Wang et al., 2013), while the Cronbach's alpha for this study sample was .95.

Parental encouragement subscale of Attitude/Motivation Test Battery.

Researchers used the parental encouragement subscale of the international version of AMTB (Gardner, 2004). There were eight items in the questionnaire to measure the level of perceived parental encouragement for learning EFL, using 6-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *moderately disagree*, 3 = *slightly disagree*, 5 = *slightly agree*, 6 = *moderately agree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Cronbach's alphas from previous studies have ranged from .81 to .89 for this instrument (refer to Croatia and Spain studies in Gardner, 2006), while the Cronbach's alpha for this study sample was .91.

English Subject's Final Test. The English subject's test score was used to measure English academic achievement of Batch 5 and Batch 6 students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar. The test assessed students' proficiency in English reading, speaking, listening, writing, grammar and vocabulary.

Findings

The research findings are presented by objectives as follows.

Research Objective 1. Regarding to this research objective, it was found that the levels of self-efficacy for learning EFL of Batch 5 and Batch 6 students of Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar was slightly high.

Research Objective 1.1. Regarding to this research objective, it was found that the levels of listening efficacy of Batch 5 and 6 students from Level Up Academy were slightly high.

Research Objective 1.2. Regarding to this research objective, it was found that the levels of speaking efficacy of Batch 5 and 6 students from Level Up Academy were moderately high.

Research Objective 1.3. Regarding to this research objective, it was found that the levels of reading efficacy of Batch 5 and 6 students from Level Up Academy were slightly high.

Research Objective 1.4. Regarding to this research objective, it was found that the level of writing efficacy of Batch 5 students from Level Up Academy was moderately high, while writing efficacy of Batch 6 students was slightly high.

Research Objective 2. Regarding to this research objective, it was found that the level of perceived parental encouragement for learning EFL of Batch 5 students from Level Up Academy was slightly high. On the other hand, the level of perceived parental encouragement for learning EFL of Batch 6 students from Level Up Academy was moderately high.

Research Objective 3. Regarding to this research objective, it was found that the levels of English academic achievement of Batch 5 and Batch 6 students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar, were good.

Research Objective 4. It was found that there was a strong, positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy for learning EFL and English academic achievement of Batch 5 students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar ($r = .70, p < .001$). However, there was no significant relationship between perceived parental encouragement for learning EFL and English academic achievement of Batch 5 students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar ($r = -.15, p = .41$).

Research Objective 5. It was discovered that there was a strong, significant and positive relationship of self-efficacy for learning EFL and English academic achievement of Batch 6 students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar ($r = .84, p < .001$). However, there is no significant relationship between perceived parental encouragement for learning EFL with English academic achievement of Batch 6 students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar ($r = -.29, p = .09$).

Research Objective 6. Regarding to this research objective, it was discovered that there was a strong, significant and positive relationship of listening efficacy, speaking efficacy, reading efficacy and writing efficacy with English academic achievement of Batch 5 students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar ($R = .78, F(4, 29) = 11.13, p < .001$).

Research Objective 7. It was discovered that there was a strong, significant and positive relationship of listening efficacy, speaking efficacy, reading

efficacy and writing efficacy with English academic achievement of Batch 6 students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Kayah State, Myanmar ($R = .86$, $F(4, 32) = 21.78$, $p < .001$).

Discussion

Self-efficacy for learning EFL. The findings from this study show that Batch 5 and 6 students of Level Up Academy had slightly high self-efficacy in learning EFL. They also indicated that speaking efficacy was moderately high and it was the strongest efficacy among other sub-scales of English self-efficacy. The researchers observed that English teachers from Level Up Academy tried to apply different authentic resources and teaching methods to boost the development learning English. For those reasons, the overall self-efficacy for learning EFL might have been found slightly high among students. As part of English class activities, students had to serve as local guides to foreign visitors. That could be one of the reasons why students' speaking efficacy was found moderately high.

Listening efficacy. Results in this study show that the level of Batch 5 and 6 students' listening efficacy was slightly high. It was also found that their listening efficacy varied depending on contexts. According to the data, the majority of students were basically able to understand the topics related to their everyday school matters, as well as short stories in English. Research findings also indicated that listening comprehension was the most difficult tasks among the sub-scales of self-efficacy for EFL, and this result is consistent with previous studies (Kitikanan, 2017; Wang et al., 2013).

Speaking efficacy. The results showed that the levels of Batch 5 and Batch 6 students' speaking efficacy was moderately high. They also revealed that students were able to speak and communicate in English very well. Students' final scores in their English classes also indicated that they had good knowledge about grammar and vocabulary. In addition, speaking efficacy was the highest among other sub-scale efficacies for EFL. This finding is consistent with a previous study conducted in Thailand (Kitikanan, 2017), as it reported that Thai L2 students also had relatively high speaking efficacy.

Reading efficacy. This study showed that the levels of Batch 5 and 6 students' reading efficacy was slightly high. It means that most of the students of Level Up Academy were basically able to read and understand English texts, such as articles on Myanmar culture, English-language newspapers and short English narratives. This result agrees with the finding of Kitikanan (2017), who also reported that Thai L2 students, fourth-year English major students of a university in Thailand, had slightly high efficacy for English reading task.

Writing efficacy. Analyzing the levels of writing efficacy, this study shows that Batch 5 students had a moderately high writing efficacy, while Batch 6 students had slightly high writing efficacy. It means that most of the students were able to compose messages in English, write essays and form new sentences without much concern. This result aligns with the finding obtained by Kitikanan (2017), who suggested that Thai L2 students, fourth-year English major students of a university in Thailand, had relatively high writing efficacy.

Parental encouragement for learning EFL. In this study, the findings showed that the perceived support and encouragement from parents of Batch 5 at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Myanmar, was slightly high. On the other hand, the perceived parental encouragement of Batch 6 of Level Up Academy was moderately high. Looking at the socioeconomics of most of the parents in Kayah State, the researchers observed that they are struggling for their survival by working at their agriculture farms. Most of them have underwent the oppression of military government and received poor quality education from the government. However, the average level of parental encouragement shows that parents of Batch 5 and 6 still support and assist their children's education, especially learning EFL. It was found that the gap of the support and encouragement among parents of Batch 5 and 6 were large. It means that some parents strongly support their children's learning EFL, while other parents show very little support on this regard.

Relationship of self-efficacy for learning EFL with English academic achievement. The findings of this study suggested that the relationship self-efficacy for EFL and English academic achievement of Batch 5 and 6 students of Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Myanmar, was significantly and positively correlated. There were a number of researchers who studied the relationship of self-efficacy and academic achievement in their different disciplines and they were aligned with this current study. For example, Zhang and colleagues (2010) discovered that there was a significant positive relationship between self-efficacy for nursing and academic achievement of Chinese nursing students. Chen's (2017) findings were consistent with this study as it also indicated that students' self-efficacy for English listening skills had a positive relationship with listening performance.

Relationship of parental encouragement for learning EFL with English academic achievement. The findings of this current study reported that there was no significant relationship between parental encouragement for learning EFL and English academic achievement of Batch 5 and 6 students of Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Myanmar. A study conducted Marina (2018) also reported that parental encouragement of Grades 6 to 8 students at St.

John's Private School in Myanmar was not significantly related to their English achievement. This previous study and current study were consistent on that finding, and it revealed that the level of parental encouragement from both studies was high, but it has no significant relationship with students' English achievement. Contrary to this result, there were several research studies which had found that parental encouragement and academic achievement were related (Lawrence & Barathi, 2016; Zhang & Lynch 2016). For example, Lawrence and Barathi (2016) studied 350 higher secondary school students in India and it was discovered that there was a strong connection between parental encouragement and actual academic achievement of those students. The result of this study contradicted to Zhang and Lynch's (2016) findings, who reported that there was a critical connection between parental encouragement and Mandarin academic achievement of primary 5 and 6 students at a school in Bangkok, Thailand.

Relationship of listening efficacy, speaking efficacy, reading efficacy and writing efficacy with English academic achievement. The findings of this study indicated that there was a significantly positive relationship of listening efficacy, speaking efficacy, reading efficacy and writing efficacy with academic achievement of Batch 5 and 6 students at Level Up Academy, Loikaw Township, Myanmar. This result is consistent with outcomes of a study conducted by Kitikanan (2017) on Thai L2 learners, particularly fourth-year English major students from a university in Thailand. Kitikanan (2017) reported that Thai L2 learners' four efficacies for learning EFL, such as listening efficacy, speaking efficacy, reading efficacy and writing efficacy, were significantly correlated with their English academic achievement.

Recommendations

For students. This research study revealed that Batch 5 and Batch 6 students of Level Up Academy had slightly high self-efficacy for learning EFL. Speaking efficacy was moderately high while the listening efficacy, reading efficacy and writing efficacy were slightly high. The data also indicated that listening efficacy was the lowest among the subscales of self-efficacy for learning EFL. In order to improve listening efficacy, students should listen to native speaker's audio files, for example, in which they can prepare themselves to be familiar with different accents. They should find the authentic resources on internet and make use of those lessons to order to increase their listening efficacy.

For EFL teachers. The data indicated that the students' speaking efficacy were moderately high while the other efficacies were slightly high. Most of the students said that they were not familiar with some contexts such as

listening to English radio programs, reading English newspaper, understanding English movies and producing English sentences by using idiomatic phrases. Teachers should design their lesson plans which will bring familiarity to those tasks. Teachers also should encourage some parents to show interest on their children's academy journey and to involve in school related activities.

For parents. All the parents of Batch 5 and Batch 6 students should understand that the role of parents has impact on their children's' education. This study revealed that some parents provided very little support for their children's learning pathway while some parents were very active to assist any means for their children. As parents, they should be interested in what their children are learning and should participate in school's activities, to show their support or interest.

For principal and administrator. The result of this study revealed that students were not confident in their listening tasks as they were struggling in listening to English radio and watching English movies. The school principal and administrator should provide a learning environment which students can obtain authentic resources for learning English as a foreign language, such as providing free internet, audio books and reading books. The school authorities can also initiate the interactive channel between school and parents, so that some parents will have more interest in the education of their children and provide any means to boost their children's potentials.

For future researchers. This study indicated that the perceived parental encouragement for learning EFL had no relationship with English academic achievement of Batch 5 and Batch 6 students at Level Up Academy. Students might get motivation from other sources for learning English. Therefore, future researchers can consider more variables, such as motivation, attitudes toward English language and learning styles, in order to understand more about the development of learning English as a foreign language.

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