Effects of Task Feedback on EFL Students' Reading Self-efficacy

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Abstract
Many countries, including Malaysia, China, South Korea, Italy, and others, have their own guidelines for teaching English. These guidelines emphasize the critical nature of language teaching and acquisition, which cannot be separated from the following four basic components: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Blake, 2016). Reading is an indispensable language skill for English learners. Improving reading fluency and comprehension is an important task for EFL students (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). However, there are obvious challenges and obstacles to the teaching and acquisition of reading. An important problem is that EFL students have low levels of self-efficacy and a marked lack of confidence in their ability to pass a reading assessment and achieve excellence (Habibian & Roslan, 2014). This phenomenon can be attributed to the fact that learners develop the habit of receiving English knowledge directly from teachers while using traditional teaching methods (Kaymakamoglu, 2018). The extensive application of TBLT in America and Europe makes it an ideal teaching method for language learners. However, this teaching method has not reached its maximum potential in China, especially task-based teaching, which relies on more specific teaching techniques such as task feedback. Therefore, based on the paradigm shift in traditional teaching methods, this study takes task-based teaching and reading feedback as examples to illustrate how to improve English learners' self-efficacy. It is expected to be a resource for English reading teaching in senior high schools, promoting students' growth and helping students develop their basic English language skills. The research question is the effect of task feedback on English learners' reading self-efficacy. This study involves an experimental group and a control group through the participants of the experiment before and after the results of the questionnaire to reach the conclusion of research questions.

Introduction
Many nations, including Malaysia, China, South Korea, Italy, and others, have established their own English language teaching guidelines. These guidelines all underscore the critical nature of language instruction and acquisition, which cannot be divorced from the following four essential components: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Blake, 2016). One such method by which individuals obtain practical knowledge and information is through the study of English (Amin & Wahyudin, 2022). Additionally, reading is an essential language skill for

English learners. Word selection, information matching, paragraph filling, passage filling, and extended reading are all components of reading comprehension. Improving reading fluency and comprehension is a critical undertaking for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016).

Moreover, English reading proficiency is an integral component of the English-learning process across all age groups and grade levels (Chall, 2014). There is a positive correlation between the literacy level of the learner and their performance on the English test (Thompson, 2017). As a result, English literacy has emerged as a critical component in the educational journey of EFL learners. Nonetheless, evident challenges and obstacles plague the instruction and acquisition of reading. An important issue is that EFL students have a low level of self-efficacy and a marked lack of confidence in their ability to pass reading assessments and produce excellent results (Habibian & Roslan, 2014). This phenomenon could be attributed to the fact that learners develop the habit of receiving English knowledge imparted directly by instructors while utilizing traditional teaching methods. Traditional English instruction places the entire classroom under the control of the teacher. Its tenet is that all classroom knowledge should be imparted to students, who document it through note-taking or review at home in order to retain the newly acquired English skills (Kaymakamoglu, 2018). Some English learners' motivation to learn wanes after an extended period of studying in this manner; their accomplishments are mediocre, and they progressively lose faith in their ability to complete English assignments; this culminates in an evident lack of self-efficacy and poor academic performance.

Enhancing the enthusiasm of EFL students for reading is a significant concern when it comes to pedagogical approaches. The widespread use of task-based language teaching (TBLT) in the United States and Europe makes it an ideal method for language learners. This method of instruction, however, has not yet reached its maximum potential in China, particularly task-based instruction that relies on more specific teaching techniques, such as task feedback. Several significant elements stress the necessity of task feedback in English reading. First, feedback helps students identify their reading skills and shortcomings, allowing them to focus on specific areas where they need to improve. By obtaining immediate and critical feedback, English learners can better comprehend their mistakes and misunderstandings, making the learning process more targeted and efficient.Second, task feedback is important for motivating and engaging participants. Specific, unambiguous, and constructive feedback can boost learners' self-esteem and instill a good attitude toward reading. When students see that their efforts are being recognized and that they are making progress, their intrinsic motivation to participate in reading assignments may grow, resulting in sustained effort and better outcomes. In addition, task feedback helps to promote self-regulated learning skills. Learners can become more autonomous and effective in their learning by learning how to use feedback to set objectives, track progress, and alter techniques. This autonomy not only improves their reading abilities, but also provides students with lifelong learning tools that may be applied outside of the classroom.

As a result, this research is based on a paradigm shift in conventional pedagogical approaches; it employs task-based instruction and feedback on reading performance as an illustration of how to enhance the self-efficacy of EFL students. It is anticipated to serve as a resource for senior high school English reading instruction, foster student growth, and assist in the development of students' English language essential competencies.

The research question is what are the effects of task feedback on EFL students' reading self-efficacy.

Literature Review
Task Feedback
As an instructional approach, task feedback serves to enhance and optimize the learning process by furnishing students with feedback regarding the progress of their assignments. Prior research has established a correlation between positive task feedback and enhanced learning performance among students. Hattie and Timperley (2007), for instance, discovered through a meta-analysis that positive feedback can increase the motivation and self-esteem of students while also enhancing their academic performance. Additionally, research by Cameron and Pierce (2002) indicates that positive task feedback can promote learning outcomes and increase students' engagement and motivation in learning tasks. While negative task feedback is frequently regarded as a means to present learners with opportunities for growth, it can occasionally result in feelings of frustration. Nevertheless, positive outcomes can result from negative feedback under specific circumstances, according to a number of studies. As an illustration, Kluger and Denisi (1996) discovered that the integration of specific recommendations for enhancement alongside negative feedback can foster self-adjustment and development, ultimately leading to enhanced learning outcomes.

Task feedback has garnered significant attention in both pedagogical practice and research due to its critical role in the process of language acquisition. The objective of task feedback, which comprises assessment and comments on the assignments that learners complete during the course of instruction, is to encourage the growth of learners' language proficiency and motivation (Ellis, 2008). Task feedback is based primarily on feedback theory, cognitive theory, and sociocultural theory. Cognitive theory places emphasis on the cognitive process that occurs within learners when they are provided with task feedback. It highlights the significant impact that feedback has on the cognitive adjustment and knowledge construction of learners (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). The significance of feedback in social interaction and cooperation is underscored by sociocultural theory, which posits that task feedback emerges from the interplay among educators, students, and fellow students (Lantolf, 2000). By incorporating student-centered and peer-to-peer feedback into task feedback, this study attempts to enhance the learning effect. Learners' minds engage in a variety of cognitive activities during the assessment process, including critical thinking, planning, monitoring, and reflection. These are the exact thinking qualities that contemporary students must cultivate. These cognitive exercises have the potential to assist learners in developing a more precise self-evaluation.

As a result of receiving feedback, pupils assume the role of "teacher" and evaluate. Students will assume their own "responsibility" and identify their English learning assets and weaknesses through the process of evaluating one another's work, thereby laying the groundwork for future development (Yu & Hu, 2017). Students' self-assurance can be enhanced through peer feedback activities (Tsui & NG, 2000). Baleghizadeh and Mortazavi (2014) suggest that students' confidence in their capacity to fulfill course obligations might be bolstered through participation in feedback activities. When students discover that their feedback has been positively received by others or has significantly contributed to the learning of others during the assessment process, it elicits a sense of satisfaction in the heart.

This sentiment serves as an indication of the students' personal worth and encourages greater participation in the feedback process. From the perspectives of information processing and psychology, feedback theory elucidates the mechanism by which feedback influences the behavior and motivation of learners. It emphasizes the use of positive and constructive feedback to enhance the learning motivation and performance of learners (Kluger & Denisi, 1996).

Task feedback significantly influences the motivation, learning strategies, and learning outcomes of the students. Effective task feedback has the potential to engage and motivate learners, enhance their academic performance, and optimize their learning efficacy (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Furthermore, learners' capacity for self-adjustment and self-learning can be enhanced through the use of effective task feedback (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

Self-efficacy
"Self-efficacy" has undergone several definitional shifts since its inception by renowned American psychologist Bandura in 1977 as the foundational theory of social learning theory. Its initial definition was, "an individual's self-expectation regarding their capability to execute specific action processes in order to attain desired outcomes" (1977). Subsequently, it was redefined as "a person's evaluation of their own ability to plan and execute action processes to attain a particular type of performance" (1986). Self-efficacy, according to Bandura (1994), dictates how individuals perceive, think, are motivated, and act. Gist (1987), in line with Bandura, arrived at the conclusion, following years of research, that self-efficacy pertains to an individual's confidence in their ability to execute a specific task with success while in a composed state; furthermore, it is subject to modification in light of fresh information and experience, reflecting the dynamic nature of change (Gist and Mitchell, 1993). Self-efficacy, as defined by Gibison and Dembo (1984), pertains to the way in which learners perceive and evaluate their own capability to successfully accomplish academic obligations, attain commendable grades, and circumvent failures in both academia and the workplace. Mark (2004) proposed the notion of "reading circles" in relation to the instruction of group reading, drawing inspiration from literary circles. According to this notion, a reading circle comprises four to six students. After completing the role reading tasks via "self-directed learning," students should engage in "cooperative learning" to discuss, evaluate, and share the enjoyable reading experience that multidimensional interpretation of texts provided. Shelton (2012) asserts that several Asian studies have demonstrated the efficacy of this approach in igniting students' enthusiasm for university foreign language instruction and yielding exceptional teaching outcomes.

Li et. al (2017) implemented a one-semester reading circle self-learning activity in college English extensive reading courses. They noted that establishing self-learning activities in reading classes through reading circles fosters the development of students' autonomy and independent thought, as well as their ability to implement knowledge and collaborate with others. According to Mu (2017), reading circles integrate solitary reading with group discussion and return the initiative to the students, allowing them to regain a holistic understanding of the material and enhance their reading skills. Liu (2010) investigated the self-efficacy and English learning strategies of first-year students who did not concentrate in English. A positive correlation was found between self-efficacy and the implementation of learning strategies; furthermore, self-efficacy is a highly reliable predictor of learning

motivation. According to a study by Sun (2016), engineering and science students who possessed high levels of self-efficacy were more likely to employ metacognitive strategies to monitor and assess their writing processes and outcomes. Conversely, students with low levels of self-efficacy were unable to effectively utilize metacognitive strategies due to the impact of anxiety. According to a study conducted by Gu and Li (2018), the self-efficacy of junior high school pupils was categorized as moderate.

Methodology
Two classes were selected using purposive sampling from a senior high school located in northeast China for the purposes of this study. In addition, the number of pupils in each class and the outcomes of the most recent simulated English test are essentially identical. A control group of 45 pupils and an experimental group of 43 students made up the two classes. As an assessment instrument, the English learning self-efficacy scale developed by Zhang (2006) was utilized in this study. The scale comprises fifteen inquiries. The mean score of 4.5-5 signifies exceptionally high self-efficacy in the context of English learning; 3.5-4.4 represents strong self-efficacy; 2.5-3.4 signifies average self-efficacy; 1.5-2.4 signifies a feeble sense of self-efficacy; and 1.0-1.4 signifies extremely low English learning self-efficacy. The coefficient of overall reliability for the self-efficacy questionnaire was 0.902, a value exceeding 0.7. With respective reliability values of 0.863, the validity and reliability of the scale is substantial.

The investigations conducted in this research comprised a questionnaire pre-test and post-test. Students in both the experimental and control groups completed a self-efficacy questionnaire prior to the experiment. Following data collection, the duration of the investigation was three weeks, with each class lasting forty minutes. The experimental group implemented learning strategies of task feedback in English reading class; the class sessions are detailed in Table 3.1. Throughout the experiment, the control group continued to learn English as usual without incorporating any learning strategies of task feedback.

Table 3.1
Activity of Experiment Group

Activity	Results	Measures
Introduction	Explanations	
Pre-activity(10 minutes) - Brainstorming		
Activity(20 minutes) Task Feedback		
Teacher carried out same reading material to every group and designated eight students as "experts" from each group. The "expert" leaded the members read together. Afterwards, the students reorganized the new "puzzle" group. Each puzzle team guaranteed one "expert". In the second puzzle group, each "expert" divided the		

reading material into segments based on the group size and distributed them randomly to group members. Each member read and learn their segment independently. Then, each member sequentially retold their segment and connected them to summarize the entire material. After discussing and retelling with other group members, they collectively solved reading problems. Finally, group representatives, guided by the teacher, presented their material and worked on exercises together.	Reading Comprehension Answers	Transcription of Reading Comprehension

Post-activity(10 minutes)
-Group Presentations

The researcher administered a posttest self-efficacy questionnaire to both the experimental and control groups at the conclusion of the three-week study. Following data collection, the researcher analyzed the information and drew conclusions using SPSS.

Research Findings
The grouping of the experimental class and control class is shown in table 4.1. A total of 88 students were involved in the study, with 43 in the experimental group and 45 in the control group.

Table 4.1
Groups of Participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Experimental group	43	48.9	48.9	48.9
	Control group	45	51.1	51.1	100.0
	Total	88	100.0	100.0	

Before the experiment, the self-efficacy of the experimental group was compared with that of the control group. The results of the self-efficacy pre-test are depicted in Figures 4.2 and 4.3.

Table 4.2
Results of Pretest of Self-efficacy of Two Groups

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest of self-efficacy	Experimental group	43	3.1194	.83299	.12703
	Control group	45	3.1393	.87095	.12983

Table 4.3
Results of Independent Samples Test of Pretest of Self-efficacy

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Pretest of self-efficacy	Equal variances assumed	.922	.340	-.109	86	.913	-.01988	.18183	-.38134	.34158
	Equal variances not assumed			-.109	86.000	.913	-.01988	.18164	-.38097	.34121

The results of the independent sample t-test indicated that the t value of the test was -0.109, and the corresponding sig value was 0.913, which exceeded the threshold of 0.05. Consequently, the test did not achieve statistical significance. Therefore, there was no notable disparity in the self-efficacy scores between the experimental class and the control class prior to the experiment.

The researcher administered a posttest to all participants in the experimental class, and the control class following a three-week experiment. A comparison was made between the outcomes of the post-test and those of the control group, the experimental group, and the experimental group prior to the analysis of the post-test results.

Table 4.4
Results of Comparative Test of Self-efficacy before and after Test in the Control Group

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Post-test of self-efficacy	3.2089	45	.96375	.14367
	Pretest of self-efficacy	3.1393	45	.87095	.12983

Table 4.5
Results of Paired Samples Test of Control Group

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Post-test of self-efficacy - Pretest of self-efficacy	.06963	1.37046	.20430	-.34210	.48136	.341	44	.735

The paired t-test findings indicated that the t value was 0.341, and the associated sig value was 0.735, which exceeded the significance limit of 0.05, indicating that the results were not statistically significant. Hence, there is no substantial disparity observed in the self-efficacy scores between the pre-test and post-test assessments in the control group.

Table 4.6
Results of Pre-test and Post-test Self-efficacy Test of Experimental Group

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Post-test of self-efficacy	3.6434	43	.71948	.10972
	Pretest of self-efficacy	3.1194	43	.83299	.12703

Table 4.7
Results of Paired Samples Test of Experimental Group

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Post-test of self-efficacy - Pretest of self-efficacy	.52403	.94847	.14464	.23214	.81593	3.623	42	.001

The paired t-test yielded a t value of 3.623, with a corresponding sig value of 0.001, which is below the significance level of 0.05. Hence, there exists a substantial disparity in the self-efficacy scores between the pre-test and post-test assessments in the experimental class. The findings indicated that the mean self-efficacy score of the post-experiment group was 3.64, which was considerably greater than the pre-experiment score of 3.12.

Table 4.8

Comparative Test of Self-efficacy in the Experimental Group and Control Group after the Experiment

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-test of self-efficacy	Experimental Group	43	3.6434	.71948	.10972
	Control Group	45	3.2089	.96375	.14367

Table 4.9

Independent Samples Test of Self-efficacy in the Experimental Group and Control Group after the Experiment

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Post-test of self-efficacy	Equal variances assumed	11.320	.001	2.388	86	.019	.43452	.18196	.07280	.79624
	Equal variances not assumed			2.404	81.315	.019	.43452	.18077	.07486	.79418

The post-experiment analysis revealed that the t value obtained from the independent sample t-test was 2.404, with a corresponding sig value of 0.019. This SIG value, being smaller than the significance level of 0.05, indicates statistical significance. Hence, there exists a substantial disparity in the self-efficacy scores between the experimental group and the control group following the completion of the experiment. The findings indicated that the mean self-efficacy score for the experimental group was 3.64, which was substantially greater than the control group's score of 3.21.

Conclusion

The objective of this study is to investigate the impact of task feedback on the reading self-efficacy of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. According to the findings of the current study, providing feedback on tasks can enhance the reading self-efficacy of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners when compared to standard teaching techniques. The self-efficacy scores of the experimental group showed a significant increase from 3.12 to 3.64 between the pre-test and post-test. In contrast, the control group did not experience any significant change in their self-efficacy scores. After the post-test, the self-efficacy scores of the experimental group were significantly higher than those of the control group. This

suggests that providing feedback on tasks can enhance the reading self-confidence of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. This study offers insights into the effects of task feedback on reading self-efficacy among EFL learners in China and could contribute to the body of research on the area. Additionally, it can inspire novel ideas and insights for other researchers in the same domain.

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