

# Self-efficacy and Prediction of Note-taking Inclination among Undergraduate Translation Students

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**Abstract**—Self-efficacy is the self-perceived ability of an individual in performing the tasks assigned to him/her. Self-efficacy and its implications have been widely studied in the field of language teaching and learning. Yet, few studies have explored the relationship between self-efficacy and various aspects of interpreting ability. This article aims at investigating the role of self-efficacy in predicting the note-taking inclination of undergraduate translation students. In this regard, a total number of 53 junior and senior undergraduate translation students at the University of Zabol completed the Schwarzer's General Self-efficacy Questionnaire, and took the note-taking ability test in which test-takers were supposed to listen to VOA Special News tracks (five 30-45 second audio tracks at lower-intermediate level of difficulty) and take notes. Prior to administration, test takers received a brief instruction of seven main note-taking skills, based on the guidelines proposed by Mazzei (noting the idea, abbreviation, links, negation, emphasis, verticality, and shift). Finally, the students' notes were scored by two raters at a 0-35 point basis, according to the Mazzei's note-taking skills; and a high inter-rater reliability was achieved. The obtained Pearson results revealed a significant positive relationship between the self-efficacy of the test-takers and their note-taking inclination. Our findings imply that learners' self-efficacy should be more considered in interpreter training programs at B.A. level.

**Index Terms**—self-efficacy, note-taking inclination, interpreting, translation students

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. *The Notion of Self-efficacy*

Self-efficacy is “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura, 1986: p. 391). In this regard, self-efficacy is the answer to the question; can I fulfill this task in this condition? This definition is near to individuals’ perceptions of their ability and self-image (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996).

Self-efficacy attitudes are more explicit and context-based perceptions of abilities: a self-efficacy perception in an advanced reading course can be uttered as “I am confident”. Self-efficacy relates to basically cognitive perceptions of one’s own abilities on the basis of one’s mastery of the subject, whereas self-image appears as a more complicated variable using both cognitive and affective reactions toward oneself. Academic self-perception and self-efficacy are first contrasted from the following three mental viewpoints: variable composition, essence of comparison, and generality and structure (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996).

Self-efficacy theory persists on the fact that general competence or self-image attitudes should be distinguished from specific perceptions. A second specific characteristic (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003) is that it is applied in relation to some type of purpose, which can be realized by the individual, task context, or situation. In an academic situation, a student’s self-efficacy for learning and performing vocabulary tasks in a reading class might be lower than ordinary level because the teacher applies a grading curve and the student supposes the others are more successful in reading. Self-efficacy is thought to be concerned with student engagement and learning.

According to Linnenbrink & Pintrich (2003), the role of self-efficacy in commitment and behavior is that learners who do not have self-confidence in themselves are less tenable to make effort, and are more inclined to giving up quickly. If students receive exercise and tips in how to do tasks better, their capability can be enhanced. There is another variable “learned helplessness” - which refers to students’ ideas that they cannot master their own actions and there is no relationship between a behavior and its result.

### B. *Self-efficacy in Translation*

Self-efficacy is a quite new topic in translation research, and is primarily focused on instruction and aptitude. There also seems to be a connection between self-efficacy and subjective task complexity which mainly refers to “the perceived difficulty of source texts, post-editing and mental load in translation” (Schwieter & Ferreira, 2014: p. 36).

Bolanos Medina (2014) introduced the notion of self-efficacy from a sociological and mental viewpoint, and explored its possible implications for translatology. He conducted an exploratory correlational study, based on self-report measures on the subject. The results of this pioneer research revealed that self-efficacy is an important variable for translation process-oriented studies, advanced source language reading comprehension, ambiguity tolerance, and documentation capability.

Besides its novelty in the field of translation and interpreting, self-efficacy has never been investigated regarding its implications for note-taking ability of consecutive interpreters. In order to make the act of consecutive interpreting easier, professional interpreters usually apply a special system of note-taking. In the methods proposed on the basis of professional interpreting experience, notes are often considered as a note-taking technique, and in relevant academic literature they are mostly regarded as a language-independent tool (Kuhn & Albl-Mikasa: p. 257).

Based on Gile’s Effort Model (1995), note-taking is considered as a mediating step filling the distance between information encoding and decoding in the act of consecutive interpreting. Unsuitable notes, however, may distract the interpreter’s concentration and mostly lead to interpretation errors. Without the development of a simple and easy mode of note-taking system, note-taking in consecutive interpreting can lead to cognitive load, and is likely to overload the interpreter’s cognitive ability. The appropriate training of note-taking is widely regarded as a basic challenge-coping tactic in the interpreting action.

Siantova (2015) believes that in the act of instructing consecutive interpretation and developing note-taking, it is crucial to acquaint the learners – future interpreters- with some common notions. Although it is not feasible to urge them use these concepts in practice as each student corresponds his or her note-taking manner to individual needs and situational contexts which depends on the text or his or her own knowledge, environmental factors, background knowledge, the ability to distinguish obligatory or optional data, and etc. furthermore, the choice of language in which note-taking takes place is very idiosyncratic (see also Chuang, 2011; Sakamoto, 2011).

### C. Aims of the Present Study

The notion of self-efficacy has been widely studied in the field of language teaching/learning. Yet, few studies have explored implications of self-efficacy for translator/interpreter-training programs. More specifically, the role of self-efficacy in forming note-taking ability of consecutive interpreters has not been seriously studied. That is while there might be a relationship between the two mentioned constructs.

This article aims at investigating the role of self-efficacy in predicting the note-taking ability of consecutive interpreters. Based on the main elements and requirements of note-taking skill, which will be elaborated on in “Methodology” section; a main question might be brought forward as follows:

- Q: is the any relationship between the self-efficacy of interpreting trainees and their ability in performing systematic note-taking skills?

To answer the above question, authors propose the following hypothesis:

- H1: there is a significant positive relationship between the self-efficacy of interpreting trainees and their ability in performing systematic note-taking skills.

Furthermore, authors seek to investigate the following subsidiary hypothesis:

- H2: the variable of “Gender” has no mediating effect on the relationship between the self-efficacy of interpreting trainees and their ability in performing systematic note-taking skills.

## II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Self-efficacy is a widely studied psychological concept. Most of the studies are mainly based on the pioneer works of Bandura (e.g. Bandura 1982, 1994). In this regard, numerous researchers have applied this concept in language teaching/learning context. Cubukcu (2008) investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and foreign language anxiety. His study investigated whether the anxiety level of foreign language learners is related to their self-efficacy or not. To this end, 100 test-takers participated in the study and two different scales- “Foreign language Learning Anxiety Scale” and “The Self Efficacy Scale”- were applied. The obtained results of his study revealed that both aspects are unrelated and gender has no significant role regarding the anxiety level and self-perception scores of the junior students.

Coronado-Aliegro (2008) investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and self-assessment in foreign language education through a pilot study. This study explored the correlation of students’ self-efficacy beliefs about learning a foreign language with self-assessment scores concerning cognition of study habits and the significance of classroom subjects. His findings revealed a significant positive relationship between students’ self-assessment scores and their global self-efficacy attitudes about future foreign language achievement.

Nasrollahi & Barjasteh (2013) investigated the relationship between Iranian students’ language achievements and their self-efficacy. It also studied the levels of Iranian students’ self-efficacy and their majors. This study also explored the differences between students’ majors and their language achievements. They found that students’ major affects both language proficiency and self-efficacy (see also Joo, Bong & Choi, 2000; Pajares, 2003; Jungert & Rosander, 2010).

Chan & Lam (2010) explored the effects of different evaluative feedback on students' self-efficacy in learning. Their findings showed that self-referenced feedback was more helpful to students' self-efficacy than norm-referenced feedback. The effects of teachers' assessment and feedback on students' self-efficacy were also studied in their study. The results revealed that students who received summative feedback experienced a larger decrease in their self-efficacy than those who received formative feedback (see also Chyung, Moll & Berg, 2010; Denoyelles & Hornik, & Johnson, 2014; Shakarami, Khajehei, & Hajhashemi, 2013).

On the other hand, self-efficacy has been widely studied in the Iranian TEFL context. Rahimi and Abedini (2009) explored the connection between EFL learners' self-efficacy concerning listening comprehension and listening proficiency. The findings of their statistical analyses showed that listening comprehension self-efficacy was significantly correlated with listening proficiency.

Hamedani (2013) investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and self-regulation in vocabulary acquisition of Iranian EFL learners. In her study; first, the VLT was administered to a group of 132 intermediate university students to homogenize them in term of their vocabulary knowledge. Then the Self-efficacy and SRCvoc surveys were administered to determine self-efficacy belief and self-regulation in their vocabulary acquisition. Her findings showed that there is a significant relationship between self-efficacy and self-regulation in terms of vocabulary acquisition.

### III. METHODOLOGY

As mentioned earlier, this article aims at investigating the role of self-efficacy in predicting interpreting learners' inclination to apply systematic note-taking skills. In this regard, a self-efficacy scale was completed and a note-taking test was administered.

A total number of 53 junior and senior undergraduate translation students (38 females and 15 males) at the University of Zabol completed the General Self-efficacy Scale, already developed and validated by Schwarzer & Jerusalem (1995)(see appendix). This scale consisted of ten items measured on four-point Lickert scale, and was scored at a 10-40 point range). This scale measured the general self-perceived self-efficacy scale of individuals. It is worth mentioning that there exist learners' self-efficacy scales, but as the main focus of this study was on interpreters, authors preferred to apply a general scale.

Besides the self-efficacy scale, the same participants took the note-taking ability test specifically intended for this study. Test-takers were supposed to listen to VOA Special News tracks (five 30-45 second audio tracks at lower-intermediate level of difficulty) and take notes. Prior to administration, test takers received a brief instruction of seven main note-taking skills, based on the guidelines proposed by Mazzei (2009) (noting the idea, abbreviation, links, negation, emphasis, verticality, and shift).

Based on Mazzei's guidelines, students were recommended to grab the main idea of each chunk (meaning unit) rather than attempting to transcribe the whole track. Students were instructed to use abbreviations for noting down the ideas and refrain from writing down words longer than three letters. Students were supposed to clearly depict the semantic connection among various chunks, demonstrate the notion of "negation", and put emphasis on important parts of track. Finally, students were recommended to write down their notes in vertical or diagonal manner so that they can use the whole space of the paper, and to clearly demonstrate the change of subject on their note papers.

Finally, the students' notes were scored by two raters at a 0-35 point basis, according to the Mazzei's note-taking skills; and the inter-rater reliability of the two sets of scores was calculated. On the other hand, to investigate the research hypothesis, Pearson Correlation Coefficient was applied to determine the relationship between the two sets of interval data (self-efficacy and note-taking). The obtained data were analyzed by the newest version of SPSS, and results were discussed.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned earlier, participants of the present study completed the General Self-efficacy Scale and took the note-taking ability test. The descriptive statistics for the two tests are demonstrated in Tables (1) and (2), respectively. Furthermore, the overall descriptive results for the two genders are shown in Table (3).

TABLE 1  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR GENERAL SELF-EFFICACY SCALE TEST

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
Student Efficacy	53	1	53	27.00	2.121	15.443	238.500
Valid N (Listwise)	53	9	40	26.25	1.201	8.742	76.419

TABLE 2  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR NOTE-TAKING ABILITY

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Student	53	1	53	27.00	2.121	15.443
Note	53	11	32	21.45	.884	6.435
Valid N (listwise)	53					238.500 41.406

TABLE 3  
OVERALL DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS BASED ON GENDER

	Gender	Statistic	Std. Error
Efficacy	Female	Mean	25.84
		Variance	76.028
		Std. Deviation	8.719
		Minimum	10
		Maximum	40
	Male	Mean	27.27
		Variance	78.547
		Std. Deviation	8.863
		Minimum	9
		Maximum	40
Note	Female	Mean	21.11
		Variance	39.070
		Std. Deviation	6.251
		Minimum	11
		Maximum	31
	Male	Mean	22.33
		Variance	47.678
		Std. Deviation	6.905
		Minimum	13
		Maximum	32

As it can be seen in Table 1, the self-efficacy scores ranged from 9 to 40, with an average of 26.25. Further, a standard deviation of 8.74 was reported. On the other hand, Table 2 shows that Note-taking scores ranged from 1 to 32, with an average of 21.45. Furthermore, a standard deviation of 6.43 was reported.

As Table 3 clearly indicates, male and female participants expressed almost the same minimum and maximum amounts of self-efficacy, however, the average self-efficacy score for males (27.27) was a bit higher than that of females (25.84). On the other hand, the average note-taking ability score for males (22.33) was a bit higher than that of females (21.11).

As mentioned earlier, two raters scored test-takers' notes so that we could determine inter-rater reliability of the two sets of scores. The obtained correlation results are demonstrated in Table 4.

TABLE 4  
INTER-RATER RELIABILITY RESULTS FOR THE TWO SETS OF NOTE-TAKING SCORES

		Rater1	Rater2
Rater1	Pearson Correlation	1	.945**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	68	68
Rater2	Pearson Correlation	.945**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	68	68

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

As observed in Table 4, a high correlation (0.945) was found between the two raters' dedicated scores, revealing the inter-rater reliability of the scores. Validity of the note-taking test might be assumed as participants' notes were based on an explicit set of sub-skills, as mentioned in "Methodology". The average of two scores was considered as the final note-taking score for each participant.

Regarding the main research question, we investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and note-taking scores of the participants. The obtained Pearson results are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5  
THE OBTAINED PEARSON RESULTS FOR SELF-EFFICACY AND NOTE-TAKING TESTS

		Efficacy	Note
Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.838**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	68	68
Note	Pearson Correlation	.838**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	68	68

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

As seen in Table 5, a highly significant Pearson Correlation (0.838) exists between self-efficacy of participants and their inclination to apply note-taking techniques in their consecutive interpreting exercises. These results prove the first research question at a high level of significance (0.01). In other words, our findings prove the highly significant role of self-efficacy in predicting the note-taking inclination of undergraduate translation students. Our findings clearly confirm the qualitative contemplation of several translation and interpreting scholars (Angelelli, 2004; Pochhacker, 2004; Corsellis, 2008); who had already predicted the role of self-efficacy in predicting interpreting ability of students which consists of note-taking ability as one of its components.

Concerning the second research question, a Two Independent-Samples T-Test was run to investigate the difference between the note-taking abilities of male and female test-takers. The obtained statistical results are demonstrated in Table 6.

TABLE 6  
TWO INDEPENDENT-SAMPLES T-TEST RESULTS FOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MALES AND FEMALES

		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
EFFICA	Equal variances assumed	1.905	.172	-.768	66	.445	-1.228	1.599	-4.420	1.964
	Equal variances not assumed			-.759	59.230	.451	-1.228	1.618	-4.465	2.009

As Table 6 indicates, the null hypothesis is confirmed, and it might be claimed that no significance difference is observed between males and females in terms of applying note-taking skills in their tests. To put it more simply, males and females have revealed almost similar inclination toward using note-taking skills. These findings are in line with qualitative contemplations of many translation and interpreting experts who had denied the existence of any significance difference between genders in terms of interpreting sub-skills (Chernov, 2004; Salama-Carr, 2007; Angelelli & Jacobson, 2009; Monacelli, 2009).

## V. CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

In this study, the role of self-efficacy in predicting the note-taking inclination of undergraduate translation students was investigated. Further, the mediating role of gender was explored, as the second hypothesis of the study. Our findings revealed the significant role of self-efficacy in predicting the note-taking inclination of undergraduate translation students at the University of Zabol, but found no significant difference between the two sexes regarding their note-taking inclinations.

Based on the findings of the present study, it might be concluded that interpreting learners' self-efficacy can help them overcome their doubts when they want to choose appropriate note-taking guidelines. As was seen in this study, although all of the participants were given preliminary instructions about the appropriate method of note-taking, those with higher self-efficacy were more willing to apply these skills in their actual note-taking exercises. So, enhancing interpreting learners' level of self-efficacy can improve their courage to use appropriate note-taking skills, and as a result, can improve their note-taking ability.

Like any other research, this study was limited in some aspects. This present study was mainly focused on one aspect of consecutive interpreting ability. Future studies can investigate the relationship between self-efficacy and the other sub-skills of translation or interpreting. On the other hand, future studies can explore the roles of some other related psychological variables, such as self-confidence or self-esteem, in enhancing interpreters' professional ability and success.

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