An Analysis of the Correlation Between Self-Confidence and Students' TOEFL Grammar Test Ability

Irene Riskiana, Vionauli Sinaga, Iis Sujarwati

riskianaviona22@gmail.com
University of Bengkulu, Bengkulu, Indonesia

iissujarwati@unib.ac.id
University of Bengkulu, Bengkulu, Indonesia

wismayunita@unib.ac.id
University of Bengkulu, Bengkulu, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Grammar is an important aspect of the TOEFL Test. In general, self-confidence influences a person's psychological aspects of getting things done. The objective of this study is to examine the correlation between students' abilities on the TOEFL grammar test and their level of self-confidence. Using a purposive sampling technique, the research sample consisted of students enrolled in University of Bengkulu at seventh semester of the English Language Education study program. This research used a quantitative approach using SPSS software to analyze data. The study's conclusions demonstrated that while students tended to be more confident in their grasp of grammar, this did not imply that confidence affected students' performance on the TOEFL grammar test. Then, it could be seen from the existence of 9 question items from the TOEFL grammar test that were invalid. This affected the simple linear regression test which proved that the sig value is $0.53 > 0.05$. In other words, variable x, namely self-confidence, had no influence on the TOEFL grammar test. Therefore, the results of this research had implications for students of the English language education study program at University of Bengkulu that self-confidence and the TOEFL grammar test did not influence each other.

Keywords: TOEFL; self-confidence; English language

INTRODUCTION

Language has an important role in developing the intellectual, social, and emotional aspects of students. Communication is language's primary purpose. Eysenck and Keane (2020) claimed that language is a system of rules and symbols that allows individuals to communicate. In communicating, every speaker certainly tries to convey the message that is in his/her mind properly and clearly. Regarding the function of language in communication, this is seen from two things, namely communicating verbally and also in writing. People will develop a system that links the language they hear with its meaning in order to be able to express and interpret language. This is known as language grammar in the past (Clark and Muthen, 2009). The grammar of this language is more commonly known as English grammar. Furthermore, both the regulations and word choice must be carefully studied. The meaning system and linguistic structure are referred to as grammar (Betoni & Ulfaika, 2020). Thus, linguistic elements are an important aspect to convey a language.

In the term of education, students are required to be able to speak language, both spoken and written. They are encouraged to be able to master grammar, related to educational requirements such as

English proficiency tests. Grammar knowledge is evaluated through English language proficiency tests. English language competence has become a need for many stakeholders since it relates to an individual's capacity to communicate effectively in English (Renandya et al., 2018). There is a number of language competency tests available, including Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), International English Language Testing System (IELTS), and Pearson Test of English (PTE). One of the most common types of tests is TOEFL, an assessment tool that gauges a person's competency in the language without having any direct bearing on the process of teaching and learning (Kusuma, 2020, p. 329). The tests present grammar questions in various ways (Mabaroh, Suryatiningsih 2019). Based on ETS's TOEFL score performance descriptors (Educational Testing Service, 2021), scores between 337 and 459 are still deemed to be at the level of basic users of English, or A1 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Then, the score range between 460-542 is the threshold level for independent English users or B1 in the CEFR. Then, university graduates should ideally be at the B2 level or independent users of English (vantage) with scores between 543 and 626 to be considered proficient at the international level (Pratiwi & Waluyo, 2022).

The TOEFL test is very important, especially as a requirement for college graduation. The academic English language competency required for success in higher education is measured by the TOEFL (ETS, 2019b). Almost all universities throughout the world apply TOEFL score requirements for prospective master's and doctoral students with a minimum average score of 500 or 600 depending on the major the student is interested in and university policy (Herwkitar et al., 2012). However, sometimes students confidently take the TOEFL test without paying careful attention to grammar elements. In actuality, grammar is present in every section of the TOEFL exam, including the reading, listening, and writing sections. Some scholars contend that grammar instruction should take precedence over other academic subjects because it is necessary for EFL learners to speak English correctly, while others contend that a re-evaluation of grammar instruction is necessary in the context of EFL (Jean & Simard, 2011; Liamkina & Ryshina-Pankova, 2012; Loewen et al., 2009; Robinson, 2010; Shintani et al., 2013; Simard & Jean et al., 2011; Tolentino & Tokowicz 2014).

A student's success in obtaining a standard English language proficiency score can be influenced by many factors. In addition to academic factors, psychological factors are also important to consider, one of which is self-confidence. Self-confidence is an important factor in a person's psychology and is a benchmark in achieving success. As stated by Weinberg & Gould (2015), self-confidence emerges with the expectation of high success, helps in stirring positive emotions, facilitating concentration, setting goals, and increasing efforts. Then, in learning success, students must first believe in themselves that learning process will take place. The aspects of self-confidence, self-efficacy skills, and know how to access information will be successful in finding, monitoring, and evaluating information in a planned and controlled manner in the cognitive process (Cera et al., 2013; Ridlo &

Lutfiyah, 2017). Then, these aspects are expected to have positive implications for students' academic performance. Therefore, a person's confidence is a standard for assessing how confident students believe in their ability to solve various problems, especially in academic problems.

Students' confidence in taking the TOEFL test is seen from the indicator of their desire to graduate from higher education, so that they prepare themselves for the test as well as possible. According to Coppersmith (1967), cited in Yagci (2023), self-confidence is the culmination of an individual's evaluations of themselves, their convictions about their worth, significance, ability, and success, and their attitudes toward their acceptance of who they are. By having high self-confidence, a person will feel more capable of doing something well and thus have the ambition to be successful. A high feeling of self-confidence is necessary to have good experiences, develop oneself according to one's skills, and support one's strengths in order to become a successful individual (Ekinci et al., 2014). Nadiah and Arina (2019) claimed that self-confidence suggests that an individual is accountable for their job and is very beneficial in all circumstances. Success starts with a feeling of self-confidence. According to Gol and Aaleabbas (2016), self-confidence then relates to a person's cognitive perspective about their skills and capacities. Students feel ready or not ready, they will face the TOEFL test so they must prepare themselves well, one of which is knowledge and grammar skills in written language. However, in fact, students still experience difficulties in answering TOEFL grammar test questions and this has an impact on the final test score which is still below the minimum standard.

Several studies have been conducted related to self-confidence and grammar, namely the first a study conducted by Saengboon, Panyaatisin, Toomaneejinda (2022) entitled "The Roles of Grammar in English Language Teaching: Local Viewpoint". The results demonstrated that the participants' opinions of grammar teaching were favorable. The participants found grammar useful if it was taught with specific goals in mind, such as understanding academic English literature or preparing for the TOEFL exam. Next, a study conducted by Hidayati, Kusmanto, and Kiswantoro (2023) entitled "Development and Construct Validation of Indonesian Students Self-Confidence Scale Using Pearson Product Moment". The results showed that 45 of the self-confidence scale's statement items were deemed valid and reliable, whereas 11 of the items were deemed invalid. It is possible to measure students' levels of confidence by using the credible and valid assertions.

Based on the results of previous research and the background of the problem, there are still problems related to student self-confidence which have an impact on student grammar test results. Therefore, this research will focus on investigating the influence of the relationship between self-confidence and students' TOEFL Grammar test abilities. The research questions in this study are: (1) What is the influence of self-confidence on students' abilities in the TOEFL grammar test? (2) To what extent does self-confidence influence students' abilities in the TOEFL grammar test?

METHOD

This study employed quantitative research design. The gathering, analyzing, and interpreting of data in numerical form are the main goals of quantitative research design (Creswell, 2012, 2013; John W. Creswell, 2016) in Costigliola (2019). The independent variable and dependent variable are measured quantitatively using data that has undergone statistical processing. This research will focus on finding out how the independent variable, namely self-confidence, influences the dependent variable, namely the TOEFL grammar test.

The population is the target coverage in research. In this study, the population were the students majoring in English Education at University of Bengkulu, while the participants were taken as research samples were 7th semester students who had taken grammar tests with the total sample of 30 people taken from 3 classes.

In this study, the sampling technique used was the purposive method. Purposive sampling is a sampling approach that chooses how many samples to examine by taking specific factors into account in line with the intended criteria (Sugiyono, 2019). In this study, the sample criteria selected were that they were students in the 7th semester of the English education study program, had taken the TOEFL test, and were willing to volunteer to participate in the research.

In this study, research instrument theory was based on the Routledge Handbooks of Second Language Acquisition and Language Testing (2021). The instruments of this study were test and questionnaires. The TOEFL grammar instrument will be adopted from printed material sources from certain universities agencies in multiple choice form. This is because the close technique, either true close (where every word is eliminated) or rational close (where the item writer selects which words to delete), can be coupled with multiple choice questions. Then, the questionnaires of Self-Confidence employed likert scale. Likert scale is used to represent responses to the stimuli items (Winke and Halim, 2014). The Self-Assessment of English Writing Grammar, Punctuation, and Mechanics Skills and Use of Writing and Editing Strategies from the ESLP 182 Questionnaires (Marquette University) was the questionnaire instrument utilized in this study. It was modified from other research evaluations.

To analyze data in quantitative research regarding the influence of self-confidence on the TOEFL grammar test abilities of students in the 7th semester of the English language education study program, this research used the SPSS application. Validity and reliability tests, precondition tests utilizing linearity and normality tests, and hypothesis tests, namely basic linear regression tests, are the testing procedures in this study. Validity test with a level of rcount > rtable using statistical computations in SPSS. Cronbach Alpha reliability is then used in the reliability test. One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test employing an Anova test for linearity.

RESULT

The research results were analyzed using SPSS by testing the research instruments, namely the self-confidence and TOEFL grammar test. The objective is to determine the degree to which students'

self-confidence and their performance on the TOEFL grammar exam are related. So, to see this relationship, the research data was analyzed through the results of validity, reliability, normality and linear regression tests.

1. Validity Test

The validity test is conducted using the measuring instrument employed in the research, a questionnaire, to determine whether the data acquired is valid or not. It is based on Sugiyono's statement (2017: 125). This validity test was carried out using the SPSS program with Bivariate Pearson correlation. An item indicator is said to be valid if r count > r table (sig. 0.05).

The self-confidence questionnaire items are all deemed valid and can be used as a benchmark in this study, according to the results of the validity test for the variable x, which indicate that the r table is 0.361 and that all 20 items state the calculated r value > r table. Then for the results of the validity of the variable y, with an r table of 0.361, the result was that only 16 questions were indicated as valid, while there were 9 questions, namely questions number 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 16, 18, and 21 which were invalid because the calculated r value < r table so it is concluded that not all TOEFL grammar test question items are declared valid. Thus, it was determined that 20 questionnaire statements for variable x were valid based on the results of the validity test for both variables x and y in this study, however only 16 of the 25 TOEFL grammar test questions for variable y were deemed valid.

Table 1. Validity Test Result Variable Y

No Item	r_{hitung}	r_{tabel}	Note
1	0,233	0,361	**Invalid**
2	0,226	0,361	**Invalid**
5	0,085	0,361	**Invalid**
6	0,166	0,361	**Invalid**
8	0,355	0,361	**Invalid**
9	0,176	0,361	**Invalid**
16	0,094	0,361	**Invalid**
18	0,339	0,361	**Invalid**
21	0,296	0,361	**Invalid**

2. Reliability Test

Then, determining how well measurement results using the same object will give consistent data is the goal of the dependability test (Sugiyono, 2017). This research uses the Cronbach's alpha test which is between 0.50-0.60. Data is reliable if the Cronbach's alpha value a > 0.60. (Ghozali, 2018).

Based on the reliability results of variable x, it is known that the Cronbach's alpha value is 0.981, so it is declared reliable because 0.981 > 0.6. Then, for the reliability test results for variable y, it is known that the Cronbach's alpha value is 0.805, so it is declared reliable because 0.805 > 0.6. Therefore, it is determined that both variables, x and y, are reliable with a Cronbach's alpha value > 0.6.

3. Normality Test

Then, as a prerequisite for analysis, a normality test was carried out. Finding out if the residual or confounding variables in the regression model have a normal distribution is the goal of the normality test (Siregar and Syofian, 2014). The normality test was carried out using graphic analysis through regression calculations using the Kolmogorov Smirnov test processed with SPSS software. The significance value > 0.05 serves as the foundation for decision-making, indicating that the data is regularly distributed. Based on the results of the normality tests for the variables x and y, the values of the Asymp. Sig (2-tailed) for the variable x were 0.200 > 0.05 and 0.053 > 0.05, respectively. Thus, it can be inferred that variables x and y have normal distributions.

4. Linearity Test

Finding out if there is a significant linear relationship between two or more of the variables under investigation is the goal of the linearity test. According to the linearity test results, a significant deviation of 0.517 > 0.05 was found. Thus, it can be inferred that there is a linear relationship between variables x and y.

5. Simple Linear Regression Test

To determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, a straightforward linear regression test is run after passing the required exams. The computed f count = 4.068 with a significance level of 0.053 > 0.05, as shown in the table below, indicates that there is no relationship between the variable self-confidence (x) and the TOEFL grammar test (y).

Table 2. Simple Linear Regression Test Result

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1481.585	1	1481.585	4.068	.053^b
	Residual	10198.415	28	364.229		
	Total	11680.000	29			

a. Dependent Variable: Grammar

b. Predictors: (Constant), Kepercayaan Diri

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the data analysis, the findings showed that English language education study program students have a positive tendency towards self-confidence in the TOEFL grammar test. The results indicated that students were confident in their ability in grammar, punctuation, and mechanics skills. This finding is similar to the research of Hidayati, Kusmanto, and Kiswantoro (2023) which reveal that the self-confidence instrument can be used as a measuring tool to measure the extent of students' self-confidence in the learning process at the High School level. Then, the study of Bozgun and Kosterelioglu (2022) showed that self-confidence highly correlated with the metacognitive awareness. Therefore, self-confidence has a positive effect on the achievement of students' academic success. This can be influenced by several factors, as conveyed by Selmi et.al (2018), students who possess self-confidence undoubtedly possess attributes like (1) being aware of their strengths and limitations and then maximizing their potential (Ramdani and Zulmi, 2018); (2) establishing criteria for the accomplishment of one's life goals, rewarding success, and resuming work in the event of failure; (4) able to cope with feelings of depression, disappointment, and feelings of inadequacy that overwhelm them; (5) calm in running and dealing with everything (Oney and Oksuzoglu-Guven, 2015); (7) positive thinking (Kumalasari, 2017).

Then, for the TOEFL grammar test, the results revealed that several test questions were indicated to be invalid related to modal verbs pronouns, part of speech, tenses, and conjunctions. Related to this, there are several factors that can cause the question items to be invalid. As stated by Marthasari and Hayatin (2017), invalid questions can be caused by respondents not understanding the questions, giving rise to different perceptions. Therefore, the findings indicated that the TOEFL test instrument did not show a positive influence. This is not in accordance with the previous research conducted by

Saengboon, Panyaatisin, and Toomaneejinda (2022) which stated that students considered grammar to be very useful, especially in preparation for the TOEFL test. Thus, self-confidence does not have a positive implication on the ability of the TOEFL grammar test in students at the university level.

Furthermore, looking at the results of the normality test for the two variables, it is stated that variable x and variable y are normally distributed. However, when testing a simple linear regression, it turns out that the results obtained have a sig value which is more than standardized score, so it is negative, that is, there is no influence between the two variables. In this regard, although there is a positive trend in self-confidence regarding grammar issues, this does not mean that self-confidence has an effect on the TOEFL grammar test. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no influence between self-confidence and TOEFL grammar test experienced by students of the English language education study program at University of Bengkulu.

CONCLUSION

Success in completing or doing something is generally influenced by several factors. In education, the TOEFL test, especially the grammar session in written expression, is one of the things that every academic, such as students, needs to prepare for and pay attention to. Generally, self-confidence is one of the psychological aspects that contributes to a person's success. Nonetheless, the research's findings indicate that there is no meaningful correlation between students enrolled in Bengkulu University's English Language Education study program's self-confidence and their performance on the TOEFL grammar exam. The findings of a straightforward linear regression analysis, which show that there is no significant association between variable x, self-confidence and variable y, the TOEFL grammar test are indicative of this. The significance coefficient value of the regression is $0.53 > 0.05$. However, due to the limited scope of research and also the suitability of research instrument items, further research can expand the scope of research and be more careful in selecting and distributing question items and questionnaires and adapting them to students' level of understanding and research needs.

References

Betoni, T., & Ulfaika, R. (2020). The correlation between students' grammatical mastery and students' writing achievement at XI grade students of SMAN 1 Tarakan academic year 2019/2020. *Borneo Journal of English Language Education,* 2(1). https://doi.org/10.35334/BJELE.V2I1.1615

Cera, R., Mancini, M., & Antonietti, A. (2013). Relationships between metacognition, self-efficacy and self-regulation in learning. *Journal of Educational, Cultural and Psychological Studies,* 4(7), 115-141.

Clark, S. L., & Muthén, B. (2009). Relating latent class analysis results to variables not included in the analysis. http://www.statmodel .com/download/relatinglca.pdf

Coopersmith, S. (1967). The antecedent of self-esteem. San Francisco, CA: W. H. Freeman & Co.

Costigliola, F. C. (2019). Library of congress cataloging in publication data. *Awkward Dominion*, 381–382. https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501721144-016

Eysenck, M.W., & Keane, M.T. (2020). *Cognitive psychology: A student's handbook* (8th ed.). Psychology Press. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351058513

ETS. (2019b). *GRE guidelines for the use of scores*. https://www.ets.org/gre/institutions/admissions/using_scores/guidelines?WT.ac=40361_owt19_180820

Ekinci, N. E., Özdilek, Ç., Deryahanoğlu, G., and Üstün, Ü. D. (2014). Spor yapan lise öğrencilerinin özgüven düzeylerinin incelenmesi. Sportif Bakış Spor ve Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi, 1(1): 36-42.

Ghozali Imam. (2018). *Aplikasi analisis multivariate dengan program IBM SPSS 25 (Sembilan).* In Semarang, Universitas Diponegoro (p. 490).

G. I. Marthasari and N. Hayatin. (2017). Analisis usability terhadap sistem lective gegulang berbasis USE Questionnaire," *in Prosiding SENTRA (Seminar Teknologi dan Rekayasa),* no. 3.

Gol, A. K., & Aaleabbas, F. (2016). An Iranian case study on the relationship between EFL teachers' self-confidence level and learners' speaking development. *Linguistics and Literature Studies*, 4(2), 129–133. https://doi.org/10.13189/lls.2016.040205

Herwkitar, R., Safryono, D. A., & Haryono, P. Y. (2012). *Evaluasi program matrikulasi "TOEFL" mahasiswa universitas Al Azhar Indonesia 2010/2011. Jurnal Al-Azhar Indonesia Seri Humaniora,* 1(3), 179. https://doi.org/10.36722/sh.v1i3.67

Jean, G., & Simard, D. (2011). Grammar teaching and learning in L2: Necessary, but boring? *Foreign Language Annals,* 44(3), 467–494.

Kumalasari, D. (2017). *Konsep behavioral therapy dalam meningkatkan rasa percaya diri pada siswa terisolir. Hisbah*: *Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Dan Dakwah Islam*, 14(1), 15–24. https://doi.org/10.14421/hisbah.2017.141-02

Kusuma, A. (2020). *Practice Test TOEFL & TOEIC*. Genta Smart Publisher

Liamkina, O., & Ryshina-Pankova, M. (2012). Grammar dilemma: Teaching grammar as a resource for making meaning. *The Modern Language Journal,* 96(2), 270–289.

Loewen, S., Li, S., Fei, F., Thompson, A., Nakatsukasa, K., Ahn, S., & Chen, X. (2009). Second language learners' beliefs about grammar instruction and error correction. *The Modern Language Journal,* 93(1), 91–104.

Mabaroh, B., Suryatiningsih, N., & Pgri, S. (2019). *Kritis terhadap soal toefl di aplikasi Nst Toefl. Prosiding Seminar Nasional Teknologi Dan Sains*, September, 397–408.

Nadiah, & Arina, I. (2019). The students' self-confidence in public speaking. *ELITE Journal*, 1(1), 1–11. https://www.elitejournal. org/index.php/ELITE

Net, W. W. W. P., Hidayati, R., Kusmanto, A. S., & Kiswantoro, A. (2023). Development and construct validation of Indonesian students self-confidance scale using pearson product moment. *Pegem Journal of Education and Instruction,* 13(3), 94–103. https://doi.org/10.47750/pegegog.13.03.11

Oney, E., & Oksuzoglu-Guven, G. (2015). Confidence: a critical review of the literature and an alternative perspective for general and specific self-confidence. *Psychological Reports*, 116(1), 149-163. https://doi.org/10.2466/07.PR0.116k14w0

Pratiwi, D. I., & Waluyo, B. (2022). Integrating task and game-based learning into an online TOEFL preparatory course during the covid-19 outbreak at two Indonesian higher education institutions. *Malaysian Journal of Learning & Instruction*, 19(2), 37-67. https://doi.org/10.32890/mjli2022.19.2.2

Ramdani, Zulmi. (2018). Construction of academic integrity scale. *International Journal of Research Studies in Psychology*, 7(1), 87–97. doi.org/10.5861/ijrsp.2018.3003

Renandya, W. A., Hamied, F. A., & Nurkamto, J. (2018). English language proficiency in Indonesia: Issues and prospects. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 15(3), 618–629. http://dx.doi. org/10.18823/asiatefl.2018.15.3.4.618

Ridlo, S., & Lutfiya, F. (2017). The correlation between metacognition level with selfefficacy of biology education college students. In *Journal of Physics: Conference Series* (Vol. 824, No. 1, p. 012067). IOP Publishing

Robinson, P. (2010). Implicit artificial grammar and incidental natural second language learning: How comparable are they? *Language Learning*, 60, 245–263

Saengboon, S., Panyaatisin, K., & Toomaneejinda, A. (2022). The roles of grammar in english language teaching: *Local Viewpoints.* Pasaa, 63(June), 179–204.

Selmi, W., Rebai, H., Chtara, M., Naceur, A., & Sahli, S. (2018). Self-confidence and affect responses to short-term sprint interval training. *Physiology and Behavior,* 188(August 2017), 42–47. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.physbeh.2018.01.016

Shintani, N., Li, S., & Ellis, R. (2013). Comprehension-based versus production-based grammar instruction: A meta-analysis of comparative studies. *Language Learning*, 63(2), 296–329

Simard, D., & Jean, G. (2011). An exploration of L2 teachers' use of pedagogical interventions devised to draw L2 learners' attention to form. *Language Learning*, 61(3), 759–785.

Siregar, Syofian. (2014). *Statistik parametrik untuk penelitian kuantitatif: dilengkapi dengan perhitungan manual dan aplikasi SPSS Versi 17*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara

Sugiyono. 2017. *Quantitative, qualitative, and R&D*. Alfabeta Research Methods: Bandung

Sugiyono. (2019). *Metode penelitian kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan R&D (*Sutopo, Ed.; 2nd Ed.). Alfabeta

Tolentino, L. C., & Tokowicz, N. (2014). Cross-language similarity modulates effectiveness of second language grammar instruction. *Language Learning,* 64(2), 279–309.

Yağci, İ. (2023). The effect of self-confidence levels of the students of the faculty of sports sciences and faculty of education on their decision-making skills. *African Educational Research Journal*, 11(1), 74–80. https://doi.org/10.30918/aerj.111.22.077

Winke P., Lim H. (2014). The effects of testwiseness and test-taking anxiety on L2 listening test performance: A visual (eye-tracking) and attentional investigation. *IELTS Research Reports Online Series*, 3, 1–30. https://www.ielts.org/-/media/research-reports/ielts_online_rr_2014-3.ashx

Weinberg, R. S., & Gould, D. (2015) Spor ve egzersiz psikolojisinin temelleri. Ed. Mustafa Şahin & Ziya Koruç. (Eds). (pp. 323-347). Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık.