

## Investigating the Relationship between Self-Efficacy in Pronunciation and Emotional Engagement in EFL Classroom Conversations

Mohamad Yahya Abdullah

Department of English, College of Arts, University of Anbar, Ramadi, Iraq

[mohd.alrawi@uoanbar.edu.iq](mailto:mohd.alrawi@uoanbar.edu.iq)

**KEYWORDS:** Self-Efficacy, Emotional Engagement, Pronunciation, English Language Conversations.



<https://doi.org/10.51345/v37i1.1310.g641>

### ABSTRACT:

There is ample consensus among many English scholars that pronunciation is a fundamental component of communicative competence. This research sought to investigate the relationship between EFL students' self-efficacy in pronunciation and their emotional engagement in classroom conversations, and to measure their levels of self-efficacy and emotional engagement. A mixed-method cross-sectional design was employed to accomplish the aims of the current study, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative research instruments, particularly a survey complemented by focus-group interviews. Using a purposive sampling technique, 86 Iraqi university EFL students were involved in this research. Quantitatively, the findings showed that the participants (n = 86) reported a score in the upper-middle range, moderately high levels, self-efficacy in pronunciation was (mean = 28.755; SD = 4.437), and emotional engagement in conversation was (mean = 29.034; SD = 4.134). Besides, the quantitative results reported a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy in pronunciation and emotional engagement in class conversations,  $r(84) = .705, p < .001$ , suggesting that boosting EFL students' confidence in pronunciation may foster their positive emotions and willingness to participate in classroom conversations and discussions. Qualitatively, findings uncovered that increased confidence among participants correlates with a heightened interest in engaging in conversations with enjoyment, disregarding the potential negative emotions associated with making pronunciation errors. The findings of this study implied that increasing students' level of self-efficacy will positively impact their emotional engagement during conversations, suggesting that improving EFL students' confidence in pronunciation may boost their positive emotions and willingness to engage in classroom conversations and discussions.

### REFERENCES:

- Abdullah, M. Y. (2011). An investigation on the effects of C.M.C applications on ESL/EFL writing anxiety among postgraduate students at UKM. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.
- Abu-Bader, S. H. (2021). Using statistical methods in social science research: With a complete SPSS guide (Third edition). Oxford University Press.
- Adnan, M., & Nadeem, M. U. (2023). Impact of positive emotions on the willingness to communicate in second language. *Linguistics and Literature Review*, 9(1), 1-22.
- Alberth, A. (2022). Predicting Sense of Classroom Community from Foreign Language Enjoyment and Anxiety in an English as a Foreign Language Classroom. *International Journal of Emotional Education*, 14(1), 38–52. <https://doi.org/10.56300/AGIZ1797>
- Ali, P., & Younas, A. (2021). Understanding and interpreting regression analysis. *Evidence Based Nursing*, 24(4), 116–118. <https://doi.org/10.1136/ebnurs-2021-103425>
- Al-Rubaat, A. M., & Ali Alshammari, H. (2019). Analysis of Phonetic and Phonological Constraints of Saudi EFL Learners. *English Language Teaching*, 13(1), 63. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v13n1p63>
- Al-Saidat, E., Buragohain, D., & Amer, F. (2023). Role of Anxiety in Willingness to Communicate in the Jordanian EFL Context. 3L The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies, 29(2), 133–145. <https://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2023-2902-10>

- Badawy, R. R. A. H. (2022). Academic self-efficacy as a mediating variable between mental mindfulness and psychological and cognitive engagement of university students. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences*, 17(11), 4318–4331. <https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v17i11.8218>
- Bakar, Z. A., & Abdullah, M. R. T. L. (2015). Importance of Correct Pronunciation in Spoken English: Dimension of Second Language Learners' Perspective. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 23(8), 143–158.
- Bashori, M., Van Hout, R., Strik, H., & Cucchiarini, C. (2024). 'Look, I can speak correctly': Learning vocabulary and pronunciation through websites equipped with automatic speech recognition technology. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 37(5–6), 1335–1363. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2022.2080230>
- Bensalem, E. (2018). Foreign Language Anxiety of EFL Students: Examining the Effect of Self-Efficacy, Self-Perceived Proficiency and Sociobiographical Variables. *Arab World English Journal*, 9(2), 38–55. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol9no2.3>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Çakır, İ., & Baytar, B. (2014). Foreign language learners' views on the importance of learning the target language pronunciation. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 10(1), 99–110.
- Çalık, D. E. Ö. (2023). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.), Creswell, J. W. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, (2014). 650 pp. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods*. [https://www.academia.edu/94106174/Research\\_Design\\_Qualitative\\_Quantitative\\_and\\_Mixed\\_Methods\\_Approaches\\_4th\\_ed\\_Creswell\\_J\\_W\\_Thousand\\_Oaks\\_CA\\_Sage\\_2014\\_650\\_pp](https://www.academia.edu/94106174/Research_Design_Qualitative_Quantitative_and_Mixed_Methods_Approaches_4th_ed_Creswell_J_W_Thousand_Oaks_CA_Sage_2014_650_pp)
- Derwing, T. M., & Rossiter, M. J. (2002). ESL learners' perceptions of their pronunciation needs and strategies. *System*, 30(2), 155–166. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0346-251X\(02\)00012-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0346-251X(02)00012-X)
- Eldow, A., Shakir, M., Yahya Abdu, M., Iqbal, S., & Muttar, A. K. (2018). Exploring the extent of ICT role as a teaching tool in the public universities of Khartoum State. *J. Eng. Appl. Sci*, 13, 15.
- Farhat Jahara, S., & Hussein Abdelrazy, A. (2021). Pronunciation Problems Encountered by EFL Learners: An Empirical Study. *Arab World English Journal*, 12(4), 194–212. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no4.14>
- Fernández-García, A., & Fonseca-Mora, M. C. (2022). EFL learners' speaking proficiency and its connection to emotional understanding, willingness to communicate and musical experience. *Language Teaching Research*, 26(1), 124–140. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168819891868>
- Gilakjani, A. P., & Sabouri, N. B. (2016). Why Is English Pronunciation Ignored by EFL Teachers in Their Classes? *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 6(6), 195. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v6n6p195>
- Jin, F., Gu, C., & Li, Y. (2024). Trait emotional intelligence and foreign language performance: Associations with academic self-efficacy and foreign language anxiety. *Frontiers in Education*, 9, 1419328. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1419328>
- John W. Creswell. (2015). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. University of Nebraska.
- Kang, O. (2009). ESL Learners' Attitudes toward Pronunciation Instruction and Varieties of English. *The 1st Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference*, 105–118.
- Khajavy, G. H., MacIntyre, P. D., & Barabadi, E. (2018). Role of the Emotions and Classroom Environment in Willingness to Communicate: Applying Doubly Latent Multilevel Analysis in Second Language Acquisition Research. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 40(3), 605–624. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263117000304>
- Levis, J. M. (2022). Teaching pronunciation: Truths and lies. In C. Bardel, C. Hedman, K. Rejman, & E. Zetterholm (Eds.), *Exploring Language Education: Global and Local Perspectives* (pp. 39–72). Stockholm University Press. <https://doi.org/10.16993/bbz.c>
- Liu, H., Chen, B., Li, X., & Zhou, X. (2024). Exploring the Predictive Role of Self-Efficacy in Engagement Among EFL Teachers in Online Teaching: The Mediation of Buoyancy. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 33(4), 879–888. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-024-00820-x>
- Murphy, J. M., & Baker, A. A. (2015). History of ESL Pronunciation Teaching. In M. Reed & J. M. Levis (Eds.), *The Handbook of English Pronunciation* (1st ed., pp. 36–65). Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118346952.ch3>
- Naser, I. M., & Hamzah, M. H. (2022). Pronunciation Difficulties and Challenges in the Field of Research in Jordan. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 6(14), 140–157. <https://doi.org/10.26389/AJSRP.E090622>
- Nguyen, L. T., Hung, B. P., Duong, U. T. T., & Le, T. T. (2021). Teachers' and Learners' Beliefs About Pronunciation Instruction in Tertiary English as a Foreign Language Education. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 739842. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.739842>
- Prashant, P. D. (2018). Importance of Pronunciation in English Language Communication. *Pronunciation and Communication*, 7(2), 15–20.
- Sardegna, V. G., Lee, J., & Kusey, C. (2018). Self-Efficacy, Attitudes, and Choice of Strategies for English Pronunciation Learning. *Language Learning*, 68(1), 83–114. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12263>

- Shak, P., Siew Lee, C., & Stephen, J. (2016). Pronunciation Problems: A Case Study on English Pronunciation Errors of Low Proficient Students. *International Journal of Language Education and Applied Linguistics*. <https://doi.org/10.15282/ijleal.v4.483>
- Shakki, F. (2023). Investigating the relationship between EFL learners' engagement and their achievement emotions. *Porta Linguarum Revista Interuniversitaria de Didáctica de Las Lenguas Extranjeras*, 40, 275–294. <https://doi.org/10.30827/portalin.vi40.27338>
- Shehzad, M. W., Alghorbany, A., Lashari, S. A., Lashari, T. A., & Razzaq, S. (2019). The interplay between pronunciation self-efficacy sources and self-efficacy beliefs: A structural equation modeling approach. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v9i1.15933>
- Shehzad, M. W., Hasan, Md. K., Ahmed, R., Razzaq, S., & Ahmed, S. (2022). The nexus between grit and pronunciation performance among EFL learners: The mediating role of pronunciation self-efficacy beliefs. *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives*, 18(1), 32–48. <https://doi.org/10.1108/LTHE-03-2021-0026>
- So, S. C. Y., Li, W. H. C., & Ho, K. Y. (2019). The impact of congenital heart disease on the psychological well-being and quality of life of Hong Kong Chinese adolescents: A cross-sectional study. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 28(17–18), 3158–3167. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.14864>
- Srakaew, P. N. (2021). The Importance of Pronunciation in English Communication. *Journal of Asian Language Teaching and Learning (Online)*, 2(2), 11–18. <https://so10.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/jote/article/view/491>
- Yang, X. (2017). Sources of Chinese Learners' Self-efficacy in Learning English Pronunciation. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 7(6), 449. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0706.06>
- Yang, Y. (2023). Measurement and Exploration of English Pronunciation Self-Efficacy in M-Learning Context [Doctoral Dissertation]. University of Macau.
- Zheng, M. (2015). Conceptualization of Cross-Sectional Mixed Methods Studies in Health Science: A methodological review. *International Journal of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods*, 3(2), 66–87.

## Introduction:

As English has become the dominant language in different aspects of life and is now spoken all around the world, the phenomenon of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has become vital and fundamental to meeting the globalized world's demands. Millions of individuals have recognized the need to acquire a high level of English proficiency, mainly in speaking. Therefore, learning English has become a must across many countries, as well as a necessity to develop English proficiency in general and master pronunciation skills in particular. It is unanimous among many English scholars that pronunciation is a central component of communicative competence (Çakır & Baytar, 2014; Farhat Jahara & Hussein Abdelrady, 2021; Srakaew, 2021). In the context of English as a foreign language (EFL), a number of previous studies highlighted that several EFL students were found to be hesitant and reluctant to participate in classroom conversations because they experience difficulties in pronouncing English words correctly (Al-Rubaat & Ali Alshammari, 2019). Levis (2022, p. 44) argued that pronouncing words incorrectly is a main source to students' embarrassment and frustration, confirming the central role of pronunciation "speaking another language is power, and pronunciation is the face of that power." This phenomenon of pronouncing English words incorrectly can be attributed to instructional, psychological, social, and personal factors.

Firstly, pronunciation instruction hasn't been given sufficient attention like other language skills (Murphy & Baker, 2015). Additionally, many EFL students believe that language aspects, such as vocabulary and grammar are more vital than pronunciation, underestimating the importance of mastering pronunciation skills (Srakaew, 2021). Secondly, the repetition of pronunciation words incorrectly negatively impacts EFL students' self-confidence, making them feel embarrassed and hesitant when they are asked to be involved in classroom discussions (Shak et al., 2016). Thirdly, EFL students lack sufficient opportunities to practice pronunciation both inside and outside the classroom due to the limited time and number of classes, the scarcity of interactions with native speakers, and the absence of authentic materials and tasks that promote the engagement of classroom conversations (Naser

& Hamzah, 2022). Fourthly, the development of pronunciation skills is also hindered due to some socio-psycho variables, such as attitudes, emotions, culture, personal traits, motivation, and overall well-being (Abdullah, 2011; Bashori et al., 2024; Derwing & Rossiter, 2002; Kang, 2009; Nguyen et al., 2021). Although several previous studies investigated various factors that contribute to establishing the phenomenon of the effects of making frequent errors in pronunciation on EFL students' willingness to participate in classroom conversations, it is noted that further investigation is necessary to cover other factors so that a deeper understanding of the phenomenon can be obtained. Accordingly, this study aims to investigate the relationship between EFL students' self-efficacy in pronunciation and their emotional engagement in classroom conversations.

### **Study Rationale:**

In the EFL context, there is an ample consensus about the significance of developing students' pronunciation skills. In line with consensus, the researcher who has a long experience of teaching the courses of pronunciation and communication believes that EFL students' attitudes and emotions about their pronunciation abilities may affect their behaviors, mainly their tendency to participate in classroom conversations and discussions. Likewise, Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) postulated that students' pronunciation competency has a remarkable impact on their level of self-confidence while they are engaged in classroom discussions or conversations. In this respect, Gilakjani and Sabouri confirmed the necessity of increasing students' awareness towards the crucial role of English pronunciation proficiency, claiming that students' pronunciation competency has a direct influence on the overall sense of their language proficiency level. This is also consistent with a finding highlighted by past studies indicating that accurate pronunciation of English words enables students to mitigate their anxiety and boost their confidence level. Its positive impact on students' attitudes and emotions has constructive subsequences on their communication performance (Bakar & Abdullah, 2015; Prashant, 2018). Recently, Adnan and Nadeem (2023) revealed that positive emotions tend to influence willingness to communicate, expressing express themselves spontaneously, engaging enthusiastically in conversations and discussions, and fostering a safe, encouraging, comfortable and supportive learning environment. Therefore, fostering EFL students' beliefs in their abilities, self-efficacy, can contribute significantly to improve their pronunciation competency. A key aspect of a solid sense of self-efficacy is to encourage students to take risks and engage effectively in any opportunity to practice and improve their English communication competency.

Psychologically speaking, self-efficacy and emotional are related bidirectionally as students who convey positive emotion during interactions may view themselves as highly confident and capable of being competent speakers. To this end, it is necessary to gain an inclusive and deep understanding of this relationship to foster these psychological variables, which are vital to improve students' competency in both pronunciation and communication.

Despite a considerable amount of literature highlighting various pronunciation issues, no previous study has examined how the relationship between certain psychological factors in pronunciation and EFL students' engagement in classroom conversations. Additionally, based on the researcher's long experience of teaching different English language courses, including pronunciation and communication courses, it is believed that EFL learners' perceptions, attitudes, and emotions and regarding their pronunciation may affect their willingness to participate in classroom conversations. Therefore, the main aim for undertaking this study is

to investigate the relationship between EFL students' self-efficacy in pronunciation and their emotional engagement in classroom conversations. In order to achieve this purpose, this study addressed the following questions:

1. What are the self-efficacy levels of EFL students in pronunciation and their emotional engagement levels in classroom conversations?
2. How is EFL students' self-efficacy in pronunciation related to their emotional engagement in classroom conversations?

### **Literature Review:**

In EFL classrooms, a numerous scholarly previous investigations have demonstrated that students' inclination to participate in conversations and discussions is influenced by several linguistic and psychological factors, including their English language proficiency levels, emotional states, self-efficacy, motivation, learning environment, and others (Alberth, 2022; Al-Saidat et al., 2023; Eldow, et al., 2018; Jin et al., 2024). Nevertheless, it is noted that no previous study has examined how the relationship between certain psychological factors, such as self-efficacy in pronunciation and EFL students' engagement in classroom conversations. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the relationship between two factors to a deeper understanding of how EFL students' emotional states and personal traits can impact their willingness to be engaged in classroom conversations and discussions.

#### *Self-efficacy*

In the language learning domain, self-efficacy refers to learners' fundamental beliefs in their abilities to accomplish certain language tasks and actions, significantly affecting their perceptions, attitudes, behaviours, motivation, and performance outputs (Badawy, 2022; Jin et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2024). In their quantitative correlational research, Shehzad et al. (2022) employed self-efficacy in pronunciation as a mediating variable to examine the correlation between Saudi EFL learners' grit dimensions (perseverance of effort and consistency of interest) and their pronunciation performance. The findings revealed that both grit dimensions demonstrated significant and positive correlation with Saudi EFL students' self-efficacy in pronunciation performance, associating between grit dimensions and overall pronunciation performance. In a study which sought to find out factors influencing the English pronunciation self-efficacy of Chinese EFL students while adopting mobile learning instructional approach. Yang (2023) recognized that personal, behavioral, and environmental factors had directly impacted learners' pronunciation self-efficacy. Yang also contended that implementing mobile teaching approach could improve their pronunciation self-efficacy levels. In earlier previous studies, self-efficacy had been also proved as a significant predictor of overall language proficiency, particularly pronunciation performance (Sardegna et al., 2018; Shehzad et al., 2019; Yang, 2017).

#### *Emotional engagement*

EFL students' emotional states play a crucial role in their overall language learning process, and speaking performance in particular. Fernández-García and Fonseca-Mora (2022) attributed the development in EFL students' oral production is significantly correlated with their states of emotions, empathy, motivation, self-esteem, and overall attitudes. They also highlighted the vital role of students' personal and contextual influences on their classroom

engagement and willingness to communication. In the domain of classroom engagement, Khajavy et al. (2018) observed that a positive classroom environment and by the mediating role of students' emotions, has been associated with students' tendency to participate effectively in classroom discussions and conversations using the English language. In the same sense, Shakki (2023) traced the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' emotions and engagement. Shakki, in her major study, pointed out that EFL learners' emotions of achievement could significantly predict their engagement in the EFL classroom setting.

## Research Methods:



### *Research Design*

In this research, a mixed method cross-sectional design was employed to answer the two research questions developed from the primary aim of the study. This research design encompasses collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, particularly survey complemented by focus-group interviews, from a group of EFL students at a certain point in time to gain a deep understanding of the experiences of the population as a whole (So et al., 2019; Zheng, 2015). According to Creswell (2015), this design is advantageous to investigate current attitudes, behaviors, opinions, beliefs, or practices of individuals in a short amount of time, obtaining comprehensive insights and generalizable findings.

### *Participants*

Based on the primary aim of the study, a purposeful sampling technique was adopted to select the participants who could provide proper data for the current research (Çalık, 2023). Accordingly, the sampling of this study exclusively encompassed the EFL students who had completed courses of pronunciation and communication skills at the English Department, College of Arts, University of Anbar. As shown in Table 1, the participants for the present study were 86 Iraqi EFL students of which 54 female students (62.8%) and 32 male students (37.2%), 42 students (48.8%) were within the age range 19-21, 31 students (36.0%) were within the age range 22-24, and 13 students (15.1%) were within the age range 25 years old - above. In addition, 25 students enrolled in the second stage (29.1%), 19 students enrolled in third stage (22.1%), and 42 students enrolled in fourth stage (48.8%).

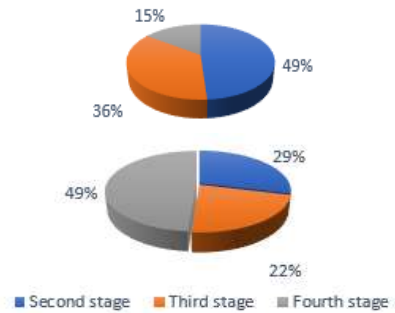
Table 1 Frequencies and percentages of participants' information

| Group           | Frequency | Percentage | Pie Chart  |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|--|
| <b>Gender</b>   |           |            |  |
| Male            | 32        | 37.2%      |  |
| Female          | 54        | 62.8%      |   |
| <b>Age</b>      |           |            |  |
| 19-21 years old | 42        | 48.8%      |  |
| 22-24 years old | 31        | 36.0%      |  |

|                     |    |       |
|---------------------|----|-------|
| 25 years old -above | 13 | 15.1% |
|---------------------|----|-------|

### Stage of the study

|              |    |       |
|--------------|----|-------|
| Second stage | 25 | 29.1% |
| Third stage  | 19 | 22.1% |
| Fourth stage | 42 | 48.8% |



### Data Collection Procedures

In this research, a mixed method cross-sectional design was employed to answer the two research questions developed from the primary aim of the study. This research design encompasses collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, particularly a questionnaire complemented by focus-group interviews, from a group of EFL students at a certain point in time to gain a deep understanding of the experiences of the population as a whole (So et al., 2019; Zheng, 2015; Abdullah, 2011). According to Creswell (2015), this design is advantageous to investigate current attitudes, behaviors, opinions, beliefs, or practices of individuals in a short amount of time, obtaining comprehensive insights and generalizable findings.

The designed questionnaire consisted of three parts, including demographic information, eight closed-ended questions evaluating self-efficacy in pronunciation, and eight closed-ended questions measuring emotional engagement in classroom conversations. The part of demographic information comprised questions regarding gender, age, stage of the study, and the English proficiency level. The other two parts encompassed closed-ended questions rated by Likert scale measurement: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree. Moreover, the interview questions were developed to probe participants' beliefs and experiences towards the problem under investigation.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research instruments used in this study, the researcher has performed the necessary methodological procedures. First, the researcher invited two experts who have long experience in teaching various linguistic courses at the English department to evaluate the designed questionnaire and interview questions. They were also requested to determine the effectiveness of the two research instruments, and detect any irrelevant questions, redundancy, and grammatical errors. In response to their feedback, few necessary amendments were made. Second, the researcher conducted a pilot study on 20 nonparticipants questionnaires to ensure the validity and reliability of the gathered data. The reliability analysis recorded a high level of Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha = 0.85$ ).

In an essential procedure to assure the ethics and integrity of the current study, the researcher obtained formal consents from the institutions and the participants associated with the study. Thereafter, the researcher started executing the collection of data using the two research instruments. In this regard, the questionnaire was transformed into Google Forms to allow participants to fill them out online easily and conveniently, and also facilitate the process of data collection and analysis. Afterwards, three groups of participants volunteered to attend

the focus-group interviews. Each group involved 4 students according to their study stage: Group (1) 4 second stage students, Group (2) 4 third stage students, and Group (3) 4 fourth stage students. The three focus group interviews took place in a private discussion room in the main library at College of Arts, University of Anbar. All interviews were audio-recorded. It worth noting that the researcher informed the participants that they are free to answer the questions in English or Arabic. Therefore, the obtained data from the three groups were translated from Arabic to English.

Finally, the quantitative and qualitative data collected from the questionnaires and focus-group interviews were prepared and organized to be ready for the data analysis procedures.

### *Data Analysis Procedures*

To address the research questions of this study, the quantitative data collected from the questionnaires ( $n = 86$ ) were analyzed using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 27). The descriptive statistics, including means, percentages, and frequencies, were used to answer the first question, while the test of Pearson correlation was run to answer the second research question.

On the other hand, the overall data gathered from the focus-group interviews were analyzed thematically following the qualitative analysis framework suggested Braun and Clarke (2006). Accordingly, the data is processed through six steps, including familiarization, coding, generating initial themes, reviewing the themes, defining and naming the themes, and finally, producing the reports.

### **Findings and Discussion:**

The current study sought to investigate the relationship between EFL students' self-efficacy in pronunciation and their emotional engagement during classroom conversations, while also evaluating their levels of self-efficacy and emotional engagement. To achieve these purposes, this study addressed the following questions:

1. What are the self-efficacy levels of EFL students in pronunciation and their emotional engagement levels in classroom conversations?
2. How is EFL students' self-efficacy in pronunciation related to their emotional engagement in the classroom conversations?

It worth mention that quantitative and qualitative data were collected through a questionnaire as the primary research instrument and focus group interviews as the secondary instrument to answer these two research questions.

#### **Research question 1**

To answer the first research question, the data gathered from the distributed questionnaire were analyzed statistically performing descriptive analysis, as shown in Table 2. The results revealed that on average, the total mean of EFL students' level of self- efficacy (**SE**) in pronunciation was (mean = 28.755; SD = 4.437), and the total mean of their level of emotional engagement (**EE**) was (mean = 29.034; SD = 4.134). The results demonstrated that the participants of this study ( $n=86$ ) reported a score in the upper-middle range, moderately high

levels, indicating positive or strong emotions and attitudes of both self-efficacy in pronunciation and emotional engagement in classroom conversations. Interestingly, this significant result uncovers that practical teaching practices in English pronunciation instruction are required to increase EFL student's self-efficacy in their pronunciation levels and create a positive learning environment to maintain their emotional engagement.

Table 2 Descriptive results of participants' self-efficacy and emotional engagement levels

| <b>Gender</b>             |                | <b>Self-efficacy</b> | <b>Emotional Engagement</b> |
|---------------------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| male                      | Mean           | 30.5625              | 30.4688                     |
|                           | N              | 32                   | 32                          |
|                           | Std. Deviation | 5.12387              | 4.43581                     |
| female                    | Mean           | 27.6852              | 28.1852                     |
|                           | N              | 54                   | 54                          |
|                           | Std. Deviation | 3.61769              | 3.73193                     |
| <b>Age</b>                |                | <b>Self-efficacy</b> | <b>Emotional Engagement</b> |
| 19-21 years old           | Mean           | 28.9524              | 29.5476                     |
|                           | N              | 42                   | 42                          |
|                           | Std. Deviation | 4.26530              | 3.97678                     |
| 22-24 years old           | Mean           | 28.8710              | 28.9032                     |
|                           | N              | 31                   | 31                          |
|                           | Std. Deviation | 4.58070              | 4.31551                     |
| 25 years old - above      | Mean           | 27.8462              | 27.6923                     |
|                           | N              | 13                   | 13                          |
|                           | Std. Deviation | 4.87931              | 4.19095                     |
| <b>Stage of the Study</b> |                | <b>Self-efficacy</b> | <b>Emotional Engagement</b> |
| Second stage              | Mean           | 28.2000              | 28.9600                     |
|                           | N              | 25                   | 25                          |
|                           | Std. Deviation | 3.22749              | 2.89367                     |
| Third stage               | Mean           | 31.2105              | 30.1105                     |
|                           | N              | 19                   | 19                          |
|                           | Std. Deviation | 4.30218              | 4.87145                     |
| Fourth stage              | Mean           | 27.9762              | 28.0952                     |
|                           | N              | 42                   | 42                          |
|                           | Std. Deviation | 4.79577              | 4.12494                     |
| Total                     | Mean           | 28.7558              | 29.0349                     |
|                           | N              | 86                   | 86                          |
|                           | Std. Deviation | 4.43764              | 4.13435                     |

Furthermore, the descriptive analysis presented in Table 2 provided detailed results about participants' levels of **SE** and **EE** in accordance with their gender, age, and stage of the study, in which an inclusive comprehension of the phenomenon under investigation could be drawn. In terms of gender, it is apparent from this table that male students ( $n= 32$ ) recorded higher mean scores in **SE** (mean = 30.562; SD = 5.123) and **EE** (mean = 30.468; SD = 4.435) compared with the female students ( $n= 54$ ) who reported a mean score (mean = 27.685; SD = 3.617) in **SE**, and (mean = 28.185; SD = 3.731) in **EE**. This significant result suggests that male students are more confident to participate in classroom conversation regardless their actual levels of pronunciation. This finding differs from the results indicated by Bensalem (2018) who contended that female students were significantly higher than male students.

In terms of students' age, the age range 19-21 years old ( $n= 42$ ) showed the higher levels in **SE** with a mean score (mean = 28.952; SD = 4.265), and in **EE** (mean = 29.547; SD = 3.976), then the age range 22-24 years old ( $n= 31$ ) reported the mean scores (mean = 28.871; SD = 4.580) and (mean = 28.903; SD = 4.315) in **SE** and **EE** respectively. Besides, the students whose age range is 25 years old – above ( $n= 13$ ) showed the lowest levels in **SE** (mean = 27.846; SD = 4.879) and **EE** (mean = 27.692; SD = 4.190).

Concerning the stage of the study, the results illustrated in Table 2 showed that the students of the third stage ( $n=19$ ) scored higher mean values in both **SE** (mean = 31.210; SD = 4.302) and **EE** (mean = 30.110; SD = 4.871) compared to the other students of the second and fourth stages. Despite the fourth stage students had longer experience of learning English language, they approximately scored the lowest levels of **SE** and **EE** compared to the students of third stage and second stage. Despite the fourth stage students having longer experience of learning the English language, they approximately scored the lowest levels of **SE** and **EE** compared to the students of the third stage and the second stage. It is difficult to explain this result, but it might be attributed to the language learning experiences and the actual levels of the sampling who responded to the questionnaire regardless their stage of the study.

## Research question 2

To answer the second research question, the researcher analyzed the quantitative and qualitative data gathered from the questionnaires and focus-group interviews using statistical and thematical techniques.

Quantitatively, Pearson correlation (two-tailed test) was run to measure the strength and direction of a linear relationship between students' mean scores on self-efficacy in pronunciation and emotional engagement in class conversations. The result is a value ranges from -1 to +1, indicating strong positive linear relationship when its value is near, and a strong negative linear relationship when its value is near -1 (Abu-Bader, 2021). The results of the correlation analysis, as shown in Table 3, indicate a significant positive correlation between the two measured variables,  $r(84)= .705, p < .001$ . This result implies that when students' level of self-efficacy rises, so does their emotional engagement during conversations, suggesting that improving EFL students' confidence in pronunciation may boost their positive emotions and willingness to engage in classroom conversations and discussions.

Table 3 Pearson Correlation Analysis

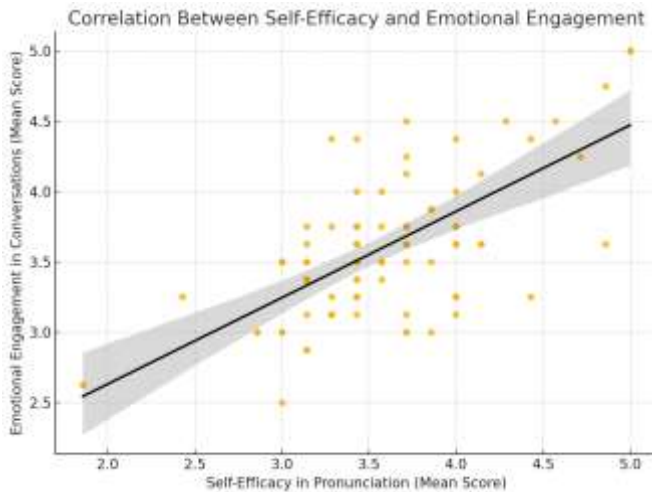
### Correlations

|                      |                     | Self-efficacy | Emotional Engagement |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Self-efficacy        | Pearson Correlation | 1             | .705**               |
|                      | Sig. (2-tailed)     |               | .003                 |
|                      | N                   | 86            | 86                   |
| Emotional Engagement | Pearson Correlation | 0.705**       | 1                    |
|                      | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000          |                      |
|                      | N                   | 86            | 86                   |

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

To picturize the connection occurred between the self-efficacy in pronunciation and emotional engagement in class conversations, a scatterplot with a regression line was performed (Ali & Younas, 2021). Figure 1 shows the positive slope of the regression line that points out the positive correlation between the two psychological assessed factors. This visualization significantly supports the above-mentioned results of Pearson correlation,  $r(84) = .705$ ,  $p < .001$ , and illustrates the reliable and meaningful relationship between these factors among EFL students.

Figure 1 Scatterplot with Regression Line: Self-Efficacy vs. Emotional Engagement



Qualitatively, the thematic analysis of the data obtained from the three focus-group interviews revealed that qualitative results remarkably and substantially reinforced the quantitative ones. In response to the question “*How do you rate your pronunciation proficiency level, and how do you think it influences your willingness to take part in classroom conversations?*”, a number of interviewed students (FG3S1, FG3S2, FG2S4, and FG1S4) viewed pronunciation as one of the most challenging aspects of the English language. They mentioned that despite studying the English language for more than ten years through the primary and secondary schools, in addition to the years of majoring in English at the university level, they still lack the confidence to participate in classroom conversations and discussions, as they fear making mistakes in pronouncing some English words incorrectly. The extracts below are taken from students’ responses to the question above.

**FG3S1:** *My pronunciation level is so and so. I still face many difficulties to pronounce many English words in correct way, that is why I avoid talking in English in front of my classmates. (Translated)*

**FG2S4:** *My pronunciation level is still not good. I tried a lot since I was in school to be like natives in pronunciations but unfortunately, I still face problems when I talk in English. (Translated)*

On the other hand, the majority of respondents rated their pronunciation proficiency at the satisfactory level, and they feel confident to be involved in any classroom conversations, considering it a great opportunity to develop their language proficiency. The analyzed data uncovered that increased confidence among participants correlates with a heightened interest in engaging in conversations with enjoyment, disregarding the potential negative emotions associated with making pronunciation errors. For example, FG3S4 mentioned *"I don't care to making pronunciation mistakes while I am speaking English because I am not a native speaker and I am still English learner."* Similarly, FG1S2 commented *"I know I have many pronunciation mistakes, but still feel highly confident in my pronunciation because anyone in the classroom also has mistakes. For me, participation in any conversation is very important opportunity and I must not ignore."* These responses and others given by different participants demonstrated the positive relationship between students' self-efficacy and emotional engagement in classroom conversations.

Furthermore, the qualitative findings highlighted the key role of the positive classroom environment in enhancing participants' levels of self-confidence and promoting them to participate actively conversations and discussions via the implementation of various supportive actions, such as frequent attempts until the moment of success. These attempts should be built on the concept of providing positive and constructive feedback to students given by the teacher and skilled peers, fostering students' positive beliefs in their own abilities to develop their English pronunciation proficiency, and subsequently making them feel more interested and confident about their pronunciation abilities.

In this regard, FG3S4 explicitly mentioned *"I think my teacher's immediate constructive feedback to correct my pronunciation errors during conversations and giving me frequent attempts helped me to develop my pronunciation and made me feel confident to continue speaking"* (Translated). Similarly, FG1S3 commented *"I think the overall positive environment in the class was really encouraging to participate in conversations even if I make mistakes in pronunciation"* (Translated).

It is apparent from both quantitative and qualitative results that EFL students' level of self-efficacy in pronunciation has significant effect on their emotional engagement in classroom conversations. This result is consistent with previous studies conducted by Sardegna et al. (2018), Shehzad et al. (2019), and Yang (2017) that proved self-efficacy as a significant predictor of overall language proficiency, particularly pronunciation performance. This result also partially agrees with a previous study conducted by Shehzad et al. (2022) in which the researchers found that Saudi EFL students' self-efficacy in pronunciation as a mediating variable is significantly correlated to students' grit dimensions and their pronunciation performance. Moreover, the results also indicated that creating safe, encouraging, positive classroom environment affected positively on their beliefs about their language abilities which in turn positively impacted their emotions. These results support the findings of the previous

researches performed by Khajavy et al. (2018) and Shakki (2023). Khajavy et al. (2018) suggested that a positive classroom environment and by the mediating role of students' emotions, is associated with students' tendency to participate effectively in classroom discussions and conversations using the English language. Likewise, Shakki (2023) pointed out that EFL learners' emotions of achievement could significantly predict their engagement in the EFL classroom setting.

### **Conclusion:**

No doubt, psychological factors play vital role in EFL students learning process. This study aimed at to investigate the relationship between EFL students' self-efficacy in pronunciation and their emotional engagement during classroom conversations, while also evaluating their levels of self-efficacy and emotional engagement. The results of this study indicated that the participants ( $n = 86$ ) reported a score in the upper-middle range, moderately high levels, SE in pronunciation was (mean = 28.755; SD = 4.437) and EE in conversation was (mean = 29.034; SD = 4.134). These results demonstrated positive or strong emotions and attitudes of both self-efficacy in pronunciation and emotional engagement in classroom conversations. Besides, the quantitative results reported a significant correlation between self-efficacy in pronunciation and emotional engagement in class conversations,  $r(84) = .705$ ,  $p < .001$ , suggesting that boosting EFL students' confidence in pronunciation may foster their positive emotions and willingness to participate in classroom conversations and discussions. Likewise, the qualitative findings revealed that increased confidence among participants correlates with a heightened interest in engaging in conversations with enjoyment, disregarding the potential negative emotions associated with making pronunciation errors.

The major limitation of this study is the sample size, which was merely made up of EFL students in the English Department, College of Arts, University of Anbar. Future studies maybe associated with a large population to include EFL students from different universities. This would make it possible to generalize the results.

### **Acknowledgment:**

The author acknowledges the valued cooperation and kind support from the academic staff of English department and all students who participated in this study.

## التحقيق في العلاقة بين الكفاءة الذاتية في التللفظ والمشاركة العاطفية في محادثات فصل اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية

محمد يحيى عبدالله

قسم اللغة الإنكليزية، كلية الآداب، جامعة الانبار، الرمادي، العراق.

[mohd.alrawi@uoanbar.edu.iq](mailto:mohd.alrawi@uoanbar.edu.iq)

الكلمات المفتاحية | الكفاءة الذاتية، المشاركة العاطفية، التللفظ، المحادثات باللغة الإنكليزية.



<https://doi.org/10.51345/v37i1.1310.g641>

### المستخلص:

هناك إجماع كبير بين العديد من علماء اللغة الإنكليزية على أن التللفظ هو عنصر أساسي في الكفاءة التواصلية. سعت هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في العلاقة بين الكفاءة الذاتية لطلاب اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية في التللفظ ومشاركتهم العاطفية في المحادثات الصفية، وقياس مستويات الكفاءة الذاتية والمشاركة العاطفية. تم استخدام تصميم مقطعي مختلط الأسلوب لتحقيق أهداف الدراسة الحالية، بما في ذلك أدوات البحث الكمية والنوعية، بالتحديد دراسة استقصائية تكملها مقابلات لمجموعات مركزة. باستخدام تقنية أخذ العينات المهادفة، شارك في هذه الدراسة 86 طالبا جامعا يدرسون اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية. من الناحية الكمية، أشارت النتائج إلى أن المشاركين (ن = 86) سجلوا مستويات عالية إلى حد ما، وكانت الكفاءة الذاتية في التللفظ (mean = 28.755; SD = 4.437)، والمشاركة العاطفية في المحادثة كانت (mean = 29.034; SD = 4.134). إلى جانب ذلك، ذكرت النتائج الكمية وجود علاقة كبيرة بين الكفاءة الذاتية في التللفظ والمشاركة العاطفية في المحادثات الصفية،  $r(84) = .705, p < .001$ ، مما يشير إلى أن تعزيز ثقة طلاب اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية في التللفظ قد يعزز مشاعرهم الإيجابية واستعدادهم للمشاركة في المحادثات والمناقشات الصفية. من الناحية النوعية، وكشفت النتائج أن زيادة الثقة بين المشاركين ترتبط باهتمام متزايد بالمشاركة في المحادثات مع الاستمتاع، وتجاهل المشاعر السلبية المحتملة المرتبطة بارتكاب أخطاء التللفظ. كما أشارت نتائج الدراسة الحالية إلى أن زيادة مستوى الكفاءة الذاتية للطلاب سيؤثر بشكل إيجابي على مشاركتهم العاطفية أثناء المحادثات، مما يشير إلى أن تحسين ثقة طلاب اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية في التللفظ قد يعزز مشاعرهم الإيجابية واستعدادهم للمشاركة في المحادثات والمناقشات الصفية.