Examining the Relationship between: English as a Second Language on Self-esteem; Self-efficacy, Confidence, Stress and Anxiety.

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“It’s all about coming from wherever you come from and take it wherever you want to go to, and the minute you do that, that’s when you can consider yourself a mastermind.”

- Rick Ross
**ABSTRACT:** The study conducted is to show the relationship of language speaking and its effects on self-esteem, self-efficacy, anxiety, confidence and stress within secondary language speakers. The achievement of the study was done through the use and fulfilment of numerous questionnaires on a total of 130 participants. Participants ranged from beginners in the use of the English language to intermediate and advanced English level users, with a control group of 34 native English speakers. The findings show that there are significant differences on the outcomes between groups and their use of the English language where beginners show the least self-esteem, confidence, and self-efficacy and more anxiety while the advanced users show the most self-esteem, confidence and self-efficacy and least anxiety with their use and abilities in comprehending and speaking the English language, but there was no difference in stress levels between groups. This study shows that there is a direct correlation between the abilities of a language and its social implications on its use as a secondary language.

**Key Words:** English, second language, self-esteem, self-efficacy, anxiety, confidence, stress.
Introduction

In the pursuit of a better life, many people have chosen to relocate themselves in the
seeking of a better profession or education in countries better established than their
previous/country of origin in the quest to maintain and preserve a better lifestyle for
themselves and their family.

According to the European Commission, they estimate that in 2011 roughly 1.7
million people immigrated into a European Union state country from outside the EU, and
additionally 1.3 million people residing in an EU state migrated to another member state.
Also, The Irish 2012 census has reported that there has been a 143% increase in foreign
nationals in the last 9 years, with more than 500,000 of the 4.5 million people living in
Ireland being non-Irish nationals.

In their new environment, people must adapt to the countries culture, this includes
adjusting to the native language or dialect. Language not only influences but determines what
we are capable of thinking and expressing (Benjamin Lee Whorf, 1956). When new to a
language, or using a language we have not had regular practice in speaking, it is common to
have doubts in one’s ability and develop self-conscious feelings about using it with people
fluent to this language. Dealing with a new language affects us in many ways; it can create
feelings of unease and affect our self-esteem. Language learning is an anxiety provoking
experience (Muchnicle & Wolfe, 1982; Horwitz et al, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991;
Rubio, 2004). English is a difficult language. It does not sound the way it looks. Learners are
often frustrated trying to understand what others are saying and too self-conscious about their
accents to speak (Judy M. Thompson).

Language is a necessary part of human life. When used as a general concept,
“language” refers to the cognitive faculty that enables humans to learn and use systems of
complex communications. We use language to communicate with one another, we speak what we think or feel and the connection between our experiences are instantaneous. It is believed that language is thought to have originated when early hominids first started cooperating, adapting early systems of communication based on expressive signs to include a theory of other minds and shared intentionality. Freud (1940) says “… the function of speech brings material in the ego into a firm connection with the mnemonic residues of visual, but more practically of auditory perceptions” (p.35), in other words, the mind is able to assimilate perceptual information through language, we are able to make sense of our perceptions by thinking about them in the form of words.

Self-esteem plays an important role in language learning. Self-esteem refers to the evaluation that the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself; it expresses and attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which an individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful and worthy (Coopersmith, 1981; Brown, 2001). In studies of self-esteem and language, Brodkey & Shore, 1976 and Gardner & Lambert, 1972, concluded that self-esteem proves to be an important variable in second language acquisition.

When self-esteem is low, the psychological homeostasis is unbalanced, creating insecurity, fear, social distance and other negative situations. With this we develop feelings of anxiety and stress. Anxiety is a feeling of worry or nervousness about something with an uncertain outcome. Anxiety is a common feeling, shared by all people; any task that involves a certain degree of challenge can expose feelings of anxiety.

We often take our knowledge of language for granted, and for those who have learned, even somewhat of a second language, we often forget how difficult language learning is. English itself is not an easy language, it does not sound how it looks and English
language learners often find themselves frustrated by the language in terms of how the word is spelled compared to how the word is pronounced, e.g. in the case of English phonetics – “ph” is read and spoken as “f” and also silent letters such as the “k” in the word “knife” etc. Many languages around the world do not use such constructs, and we, as English speakers, often overlook that and pay no mind to English learners and their difficulties understanding these rules. English is also a stress-based language; English language learners are often misinformed or find a hard time understanding how and where to emphasize sounds in particular words when speaking.

In an article by Judy M. Thompson of The Thompson Language Centre (n.d), Judy writes about an experience that one of her ESL (English as a Second Language) students had while at a restaurant, a woman, Maria, from El Salvador who was now learning English for the first time, had gone to a restaurant with her children and wanted to order coffee and a pecan danish, Maria was unaware of how to emphasize the stress on the English words for “pecan danish” so had pronounced as “pekundaneesh”, their server did not understand what Maria wanted so she had turned around and muttered a negative comment. Maria was devastated and had become disappointed with herself and her ability with the English language and had told herself that she will never go to a restaurant again because of the event that had happened. This is a prime example of the impact that speaking a new language can have on a person, when stressful situations arise, the conflict creates anxieties leaving them doubting their potential and abilities and impacting their confidence and self-esteem for future social interactions using a secondary language. “So, please don’t take for granted that a non-native speaker has to be good in English, even though said person may be living in an English-speaking country” (Hangukdrama, 2012).

Dr. Eleni Pappamihiel of The Florida State University conducted an experiment, in 2001, looking at anxiety in students using English as a second language, and found that;
when students are in a mainstream class, (classes that sue the English language), their overall level of anxiety towards the English language increases, when asked about their anxiety, the students responses clarified that the anxiety was associated with social and interpersonal interactions. When the researcher had asked them which they prefer, being in a regular (mainstream) class or their ESL (English as a Second Language) class, participant’s preferred ESL classes and in their answers a high number of participants explained that this was due to uncomfort caused by being exposed to English speaking students in their mainstream classes, an example response being: “I feel like when I say something the other students are going to laugh at me”.

The responses emitted by participants also indicate low self-efficacy towards their capabilities in the English language when in a social environment. Self-efficacy is the belief in one’s own ability to complete tasks and reach goals. As Dr. Pappamihiel’s research helped show that anxiety increases our belief in our capabilities of language decreases. Bandura’s (1991) theory of self-efficacy points that when a situation is perceived as threatening, the resultant anxiety is dependent on individuals perception of his/her ability to deal positively with that threat.

Nicole Mills, 2009, conducted an experiment measuring self-efficacy of French learning students; she found that the French students’ self-efficacy developed over the course of the semester in which students had learned French through Problem Based Learning (PBL). The PBL course curriculum provided students with ongoing feedback from both their instructor and peers about their performance. Bandura stated that self-esteem can act as a mitigating factor in anxiety producing circumstances. Through feedback from both instructors and peers, student will feel more inclined to do better, to achieve and hone their language skills as not to “embarrass” themselves in front of their peers. The PBL course used
anxiety as a positive outcome in the teaching and learning of the French language to boost student’s confidence throughout the semester, bringing out higher self-efficacy.

Atsushi Mizumoto of Kansai University (Japan) also conducted a study in 2012 to explore the effects of self-efficacy on vocabulary learning. He used 281 English language learners from two universities to participate in the study where they completed a Vocabulary Size Test (Nation & Beglar, 2007), questionnaires on self-efficacy, and an open-ended question about their use of VLSs (Vocabulary Learning Systems). The learners were divided into three groups based on their responses to the self-efficacy questionnaire. The effect of self-efficacy was then examined by utilizing text mining. He had found that participants with high self-efficacy were active users of VLSs, and that they employed deep strategies, and were meta-cognitively superior to participants with medium and low efficiency. Those with medium self-efficacy were also active users of VLSs, but they used shallow strategies compared with the high self-efficiency group. Those with low self-efficacy tended to be passive users of VLSs. This study is a demonstration of how one’s self-belief can prohibit people from utilizing their full potential in vocabulary learning. Many languages involve the extensive learning of vocabulary to build linguistic acquisition and also show how vocabulary building is dependent on a person’s confidence of their abilities in the language which is a self-motivating force in language acquisition.

In 2012, Ibrahim Khodadady and Gholam Hassan Khajavy of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad (Iran) explored the role of anxiety and motivation in foreign language achievement. They used 264 participants, all ranging between lower-intermediate to intermediate in the English language. They used two questionnaires in their study, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale and the Language Learning Orientation Scale to measure the role of anxiety and motivation in the learning of English as a foreign language. Their results found that students who lacked motivation to learn English, all had English communication fear,
fear of negative evaluation, negative attitude toward English class, and were not comfortable in their classes. Students who learnt English to gain some benefits or to avoid punishment all had English communication fear, fear of negative evaluation, and negative attitude toward English class and students who learn English for personally relevant reasons to achieve a valued goal feel less anxiety comparing with those who learn English for some type of internal or external pressure. The results correlate with past research in that greater anxiety in the English class was associated with amotivation, and lower levels of identified regulation and intrinsic motivation (e.g., Noels, Clément & Pelletier, 1999; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). Language learners who have no motivation to study English and those who study English for external reasons (except identified regulation) feel more anxious than those students who learn English for intrinsic reasons.

When faced with a tasks in roles such as academia and learning, those who are motivated to learn and achieve for their own reasons will more likely deal with criticism, judgement and evaluation better than those pushed into learning or learning for reasons that they don’t want, possibly due to better focus of their goals or a greater capacity to use criticism to reconstruct and revaluate their achievements, goals and learning. But for most people learning a new language is not undertaken for personal reasons but more external requirements, e.g. they must learn a new language because they have relocated to a new country or because it is part of their educational requirements (having to take up a new language in school), with this, foreign Language students are faced with uncomfortable situations in the classroom or learning environment where they must deal with stressful situations that take a toll on their self-esteem and confidence, subsequently shown through Ibrahim Khodadady and Gholam Hassan Khajavy’s findings.

Confidence is a socially defined construct; “What people think, believe and feel effects how they behave” (Bandura, 1986). Learners with greater confidence in their ability
will be more likely to develop the language further than those with less confidence. Self-efficacy, influenced by enactive mastery experience, verbal persuasion, vicarious experiences and physiological states, (Bandura, 1997), influences academic motivation, learning and achievement (Pajares, 1996; Schunk, 1995).

The role of stress in language learning has never been easy to distinguish from social and environmental stressors. In 1989, Rafael Javier and Luis Marcos conducted a linguistic conditioning experiment between Spanish/English speaking bilinguals using intensities of buzzer sounds (stressful conditions) and two lists of words. One word for each list functioned as the conditioned stimulus. Generalization to semantically, phonemically, and unrelated words occurred in both languages and buzzer conditions. Findings show a differential impact of the buzzer on the functional separation of the languages, although not in the direction predicted and the study concluded that stress produced code-switching, and hence, a primitivization of the subject's cognitive and linguistic functioning is assumed to have occurred. The study conducted by Javier and Marcos could prove as an insight into the implications of stress on language learning as, for learners, heightened attention and cognitive functioning is important for the processes of language learning, where concentration for the translation and identification of words and sentences is needed. Pilcher, McClelland, Ihlenfeldt, Maxfield and McCubbin, 2005, reported that stress can also be used to benefit language learning in terms of interpretation performance where participants reported progressively greater efforts and results when required to maintain their performance level.

In this study we will look at how people with different abilities of the English language judge their capabilities of performance with English in hopes that this study will advance understanding of desirability for people to have high self-efficacy beliefs in their foreign language concepts. Though participants will have comprehension of the English language, we must look at how confident and comfortable they are using it in an English
speaking environment as this impacts how and if a person will use their ability to the highest potential. With the concept of confidence in the area of second language speaking, it is said: “many learners experience anxiety when they feel that they are unable to be themselves when speaking a new language, and more advanced learners may actually be more sensitive between their true identity and the version of themselves they can communicate in the new language” (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986).

By observing the successes of comparable peers, an individual can learn that a task is manageable and foster the belief that he or she might also possess similar capabilities. This experience then may heighten one’s own perception of competence (Bandura, 1997).

The aim of the research is to look at if our language capabilities impact our confidence, self-esteem, self-efficacy, anxiety and stress when we are exposed to a language that is not of our mother tongue.

When having to deal with a language foreign to us, do our confidence and self-esteem levels drop as a result of our ability with the language? Do our anxiety and stress levels rise? Also, does this impact our self-efficacy when dealing with the language?
Methodology

The purpose of this study was therefore to evaluate the relationship of confidence, self-esteem, anxiety, self-efficacy and stress impacted by English as a second language.

Participants and Setting

The participant pool consisted of 130 candidates consisting of two different classes in English language speaking, Primary English language speakers (this was used as a control group), which was used as a control group, and Secondary English language speakers, with the latter having 3 sub-categories being the level in which they perceive their English language abilities, that being; Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Characteristics of Study Participants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English Language Use</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Level of Secondary English</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Beginner</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
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<td>Advanced</td>
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<td>(N = 130)</td>
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</table>

The participant pool consisted of approximately 26% primary English language speakers and 74% secondary language English speakers, with the subcategories consisting of roughly 34.5% Beginners, 31% Intermediate and 34.5% Advanced English as a second language speakers.

The questionnaires used where put online using Google Drive and made public, then they were spread through the internet to immediate participants being final year psychology students of Dublin Business School and close family and friends being asked to participate in the study through social media resources which was then spread and shared onwards, using the snowball effect.
**Instrumentation**

Prior to the surveys two questions were asked to determine which categories participants fall under; “Do you speak English as your primary or secondary language?” where participants chose between the two answers and for those that chose “Secondary” the participants then had to choose “What level of English language abilities do you perceive yourself to be capable of?”, participants were able to select either: Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced as a choice.

Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Scale (see Appendix A) was used to assess self-esteem as it is a widely known and reliable survey to measure self-esteem. To use in relation with the English language an insurrectionary phrase was added prior to the questionnaire, that being “Please chose your answer in terms of how you find using the English language”. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale consists of 10 items, half of the items being worded negatively and the other half positively, that ask participants to evaluate their current feelings and all questions provided are based on self-esteem. Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Scale is a 10 item Lykert-type scale with the items answers being on a four point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Item’s worded negatively are reverse scored and all items are then added together where the higher the score the greater the overall self-esteem from that person.

To test self-efficacy in relation to the English language, an adapted version of Nicole Mills Self Belief Instrument was used (See Appendix B). Originally a 40 question self-efficacy survey, it was shortened down to a 5 question self-efficacy survey based on the first 35 questions of the original due to the repetition and similarity of questions, the judgement of this was made by the author and thesis supervisor, and where the question asked about the feelings of students towards the French language (as it was originally a questionnaire used for
students of French schools), it was adapted and replaced to ask the questions in relation to the English language. The questions of the Self-Belief Instrument range in answers on a scale of 0 -7, 0 being “no chance” in completion of what the question asks and 7 being “completely certain”. When the scores are added, the results will show: The higher the total the greater the self-belief of the person to perform tasks using the English language (minimum figure = 0, maximum figure = 35). Running a Cronbach’s Alpha on this scale shows that there is a Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient of .883 which indicates a high level of internal consistency for our scale within our sample population (88% reliability).

To measure confidence in relation to English, an adapted version of the final five questions of Nicole Mills Self Belief Instrument were used (see Appendix C) as it measured confidence to pass English classes over five various grades, originally the grades in the questions involved the use of letter grading (e.g. “How confident are you that you will get a grade better than a B?”), this was changed to a percentage grade (e.g. “How confident are you that you will get a grade better than a 70%?”) as to not cause confusion in what the aim of the grade was for participants, the judgement of this was made by the author and thesis supervisor. As the self-efficacy scale used, it also measured answers on a scale of 0 -7, 0 being “no chance” in completion of what the question asks and 7 being “completely certain”. When the scores are added, the results will show: The higher the score the greater the confidence of the person in their English language use (minimum figure = 0, maximum figure = 35). Running a Cronbach’s Alpha on this scale shows that there is a Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient of .942 which indicates a high level of internal consistency for our scale within our sample population (94% reliability).

To measure second-language performance anxiety, a second language acquisition survey was used, provided by linguist Mark Davies of Brigham Young University (see
Appendix D). The survey was adapted to suit the study, cutting out a secondary part that involves matching puzzle pieces (through pictures) and four questions that did not suit the purpose of the current study were also removed. Initially a survey with answers on a scale of 1-5, the scoring had to be remade for the study due to Mr Davies loss of the original scoring sheet, so scoring was made, like Nicole Mills Self Belief Instrument, on a scale ranging from 0-7 to be later evaluated by adding all the scores together and the higher the score, the less perceived anxiety from the person (minimum figure = 0, maximum figure = 70), the judgement of this was made by the author and thesis supervisor. One item of the questionnaire (question 2) is phrased negatively while the rest are positive, this question is the only one reverse scored in the questionnaire. Running a Cronbach’s Alpha on this scale shows that there is a Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient of .704 which indicates a high level of internal consistency for our scale within our sample population (70% reliability).

Sheldon Cohen’s Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (1988) was used (see Appendix E), as it is the most widely used and reliable measure of the perception of stress faced by a person. The PSS is a 10 item questionnaire that is designed to tap how unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded respondents find their lives to be. Six of the items are worded negatively and the remaining four are phrased positively, scoring for the four positive questions is reversed and all scored are added together the higher the score the greater the perceived stress is to be.

Procedure

The complete survey was put online, hosted through Google Drive, with a cover letter explaining the study and purpose of the survey. It was noted that all participants had a choice to participate and submit their individual questionnaires and that they must be older than the age of 18 to participate in the study. Participants then went on to complete the survey after the cover letter.
Results

Data Analysis

The data was entered into statistics analysis software and an Independent-Samples T-Test was run to test for the significance of the difference between the means of two independent samples, in this case being: Primary and Secondary language use in all of the outcome measures. A One Way ANOVA was also run using the data to compare all groups (Primary, Secondary: beginner, intermediate and advanced) in the study on all of the outcome variables, measuring the means in each group and their significant differences between the groups.

Independent-Samples T-Test

Independent-samples t-tests where run for all variables (Primary English and Secondary English groups) on all outcome measures (self-esteem, self-efficacy, confidence, anxiety and stress).

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the self-esteem scores for primary English-language users and secondary English-language users. There was no significant difference in scores for primary (M = 24.24, SD = 4.82) and secondary, M = 22.64, SD = 4.78; t (128) = 1.67, p = .1 (two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = 1.6, 95% CI: -.29 to 3.49) was small (eta squared = .02).

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare self-efficacy scores for primary English-language users and secondary English-language users. There was a significant difference in scores for primary (M = 31.88, SD = 4.1) and secondary, M = 27.05, SD = 7.11; t (128) = 3.74, p = .000 (two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = 4.83, 95% CI: 2.28 to 7.38) was large (eta squared = .1).
An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare confidence scores for primary English-language users and secondary English-language users. There was a significant difference in scores for primary (M = 29.74, SD = 5.9) and secondary, M = 21.82, SD = 9.28; t (128) = 4.64, p = .000 (two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = 7.91, 95% CI: 4.54 to 11.28) was large (eta squared = .14).

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare anxiety scores for primary English-language users and secondary English-language users. There was a significant difference in scores for primary (M = 48.06, SD = 9.96) and secondary, M = 42.64, SD = 9.95; t (128) = 2.73, p = .007 (two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = 5.42, 95% CI: 1.49 to 9.35) was moderate (eta squared = .06).

A second independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the perceived stress scores for primary English-language users and secondary English-language users. There was no significant difference in scores for primary (M = 21.15, SD = 8.42) and secondary, M = 21.58, SD = 6.25; t (128) = -.32, p = .75 (two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -.44, 95% CI: -3.15 to 2.28) was small (eta squared = .01).

### Independent-Samples T-Test of Primary and Secondary English-Language Use Group Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Use</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-esteem</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>24.2353</td>
<td>4.81827</td>
<td>.82633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>22.6354</td>
<td>4.77740</td>
<td>.48759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-efficacy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31.8824</td>
<td>4.08816</td>
<td>.70111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>27.0521</td>
<td>7.11170</td>
<td>.72583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Confidence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29.7353</td>
<td>5.90485</td>
<td>1.01267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>21.8229</td>
<td>9.28042</td>
<td>.94718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anxiety</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>48.0588</td>
<td>9.96339</td>
<td>1.70871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>42.6354</td>
<td>9.95370</td>
<td>1.01590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stress</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21.1471</td>
<td>8.42123</td>
<td>1.44423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>21.5833</td>
<td>6.25033</td>
<td>.63792</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One-Way Between-Groups ANOVA

One-Way Between-Group ANOVOA was conducted to analyse the variance of the variables on all outcome measures. Subjects were divided into four groups according to their English language ability (Group 0: Primary English-language users [advanced level by default]; and the remaining groups comprised of those who used English as a second language; Group 1: Beginner level English users; Group 2: Intermediate level English users and Group 3: Advanced level English users).

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of the perceived level of English language on levels of self-esteem. There was a statistically significant difference at the p < .05 level in self-esteem scores across the four groups F (3, 126 = 11.81, p = .000. Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons of the four groups indicate that the primary English-language (PEL) use group (M = 24.24, 95% CI [22.55, 25.92]) gave significantly higher self-esteem ratings than the beginner English group (M = 19.97, 95% CI [18.41, 21.53]), p = .001, and comparisons between the beginner group also gave significantly lower self-esteem ratings than the advanced (ESL) group (M = 25.88, 95% CI [24.35, 27.41]), p = .000 and the advanced (ESL) group (M = 26.68, 95% CI [20.68, 23.32]) gave significantly lower self-esteem ratings than the advanced (ESL) group (M = 26.68, 95% CI [20.68, 23.32]), p = .003.

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of the perceived level of English language on levels of self-efficacy. There was a statistically significant difference at the p < .05 level in self-efficacy scores across the four groups F (3, 126 = 65.4, p = .000. Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons of the four groups indicate that the PEL use group (M = 31.88, 95% CI [30.46, 33.31]) gave significantly higher self-efficacy ratings than the beginner English group (M = 19.58, 95% CI [17.51, 21.64]), p = .000, and comparisons between the PEL group (M = 31.88, 95% CI [30.46, 33.31]) also gave
significantly higher scores than the intermediate ESL group (M = 29, 95% CI [27.57, 30.43]), p = .05.

The beginner ESL group (M = 19.58, 95% CI [17.51, 21.64]) gave significantly lower self-efficacy ratings than the intermediate (ESL) group (M = 29, 95% CI [27.57, 30.43]), p = .000, and also the beginner ESL groups results were significantly lower than that of the Advanced ESL group (M = 32.76, 95% CI [31.74, 33.77]), p = .000.

The intermediate (ESL) group (M = 29, 95% CI [27.57, 30.43]) gave significantly lower self-esteem ratings than the advanced (ESL) group (M = 32.76, 95% CI [31.74, 33.77]), p = .004.

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of the perceived level of English language on levels of confidence. There was a statistically significant difference at the p < .05 level in self-efficacy scores across the four groups F (3, 126 = 49.67, p = .000. Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons of the four groups indicate that the PEL use group (M = 29.74, 95% CI [27.68, 31.8]) gave significantly higher confidence ratings than the beginner English group (M = 13.73, 95% CI [11.5, 16]), p = .000, and comparisons between the PEL group also gave significantly higher scores than the intermediate ESL group (M = 21.8, 95% CI [19.15, 24.45]), p = .000.

The beginner English group (M = 13.73, 95% CI [11.5, 16]) gave significantly lower results than the intermediate ESL group (M = 21.8, 95% CI [19.15, 24.45]), p = .000, and also gave significantly lower results than the advanced ESL group (M = 29.94, 95% CI [27.85, 32]), p = .000.

The intermediate ESL group (M = 21.8, 95% CI [19.15, 24.45]), gave significantly lower results than the advanced ESL group (M = 29.94, 95% CI [27.85, 32]), p = .000.

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of the perceived level of English language on levels of anxiety. There was a statistically significant difference at the p < .05 level in self-efficacy scores across the four groups F (3,
126 = 12.77, p = .000. Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons of the four groups indicate that the PEL use group (M = 48.06, 95% CI [44.58, 51.54]) gave significantly lower anxiety ratings than the beginner English group (M = 36.48, 95% CI [32.88, 40.09]), p = .000.

Comparisons between the beginner ESL group (M = 36.48, 95% CI [32.88, 40.09]) also gave significantly higher anxiety scores than the intermediate ESL group (M = 42.93, 95% CI [40.3, 45.57]), p = .033, and the beginner ESL group also reported significantly higher anxiety results than the advanced ESL group (M = 48.52, 95% CI [45.53, 51.5]), p = .000.

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of the perceived level of English language on levels of stress. There was a statistically significant difference at the p < .05 level in self-efficacy scores across the four groups F (3, 126 = 4.65, p = .004. Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons of the four groups indicate that the advanced ESL use group (M = 18.15, 95% CI [15.77, 20.54]) gave significantly lower stress ratings than the beginner English group (M = 23.06, 95% CI [21.32, 24.8]), p = .018, and also the advanced ESL group gave significantly lower stress ratings than the intermediate English group (M = 23.73, 95% CI [21.66, 25.81]), p = .006.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Self-esteem</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>658.021</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>219.340</td>
<td>11.808</td>
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<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>2340.602</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>18.576</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Self-efficacy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3618.419</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1206.140</td>
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<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Confidence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>5908.650</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1969.550</td>
<td>49.674</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>4995.842</td>
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<td>39.650</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td><strong>Anxiety</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3130.389</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1043.463</td>
<td>12.769</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>10296.234</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>81.716</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13426.623</td>
<td>129</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stress</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
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<td>201.375</td>
<td>4.654</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>5452.253</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>43.272</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6056.377</td>
<td>129</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between English as a second language and the effects it has on a person’s self-esteem, self-efficacy, confidence, anxiety and stress. Results show the expected significance between all outcome measures on the different language abilities. Between the English as a second language groups (beginner, intermediate and advanced), it was found that all variables have shown a vast difference in all of the outcome measures. The beginner ESL group have shown a vast difference in self-esteem when compared to those of a higher ability in the English language (intermediate and advanced and primary English-language users), where their self-esteem was much lower than the higher level groups, and as expected each level of English language ability has shown a difference where self-esteem was lower than that of the group higher than them in the English language (e.g. intermediate vs advanced). Advanced ESL groups did not show a significant difference when compared with the primary English-language users; this was expected as both groups should have (roughly) the same ability in English language comprehension and executive functioning.

Findings show the same pattern followed through across all outcome measures; however, this is not the case for stress. The significant difference in stress throughout the groups has shown that the advanced ESL group had a lower amount of stress than the rest of the variables, but there was no other difference when comparing beginner, intermediate and primary English-language users.

The findings of the study correlate with the hypotheses challenging the study; when dealing with a new language, a number of psychosocial factors are affected by the challenging stimulus. As results show; the less we know, or the less ability we have in a new language, in this case English, the greater impact it has on us. Self-esteem and confidence
levels greatly plummet throughout learners where the lower ability there is in the language, the lower our self-esteem and confidence drop when having to deal with it too.

Our self-belief also takes a toll due to our language ability, findings suggest that the lower a person’s ability in the English, the lower their self-belief in carrying out tasks using that language is, such as reading a book or newspaper or comprehending and joining in on a conversation spoken in the new language, this could be a factor dependant on one’s self-confidence and self-esteem bringing down their self-belief as we have seen that levels for all of them become lower across the ability of the ESL groups.

Anxiety is a factor dependant on social constructs (e.g. confidence), the anxiety felt by participants may be more associated with worry aspects of anxiety, Bandura stated that self-esteem can act as a mitigating force, it is not surprising to see that anxiety is higher in the roles of beginners compared to the advanced ability ESL group, as we’ve seen with confidence and self-esteem lowering though the lower English language ability groups in regard to the English language, anxiety is raised within these groups. The less confident we are with the ability of the second language we must speak/use the less comfortable we become dealing with it and communicating through it which raises our anxiousness as a result.

Our results for participants perceived stress however has found that there was no difference within the groups, though advanced ESL learners have shown a lower amount of stress than all other groups. This was an expectant result as it has been hypothesised that stress levels are likely to increase in groups of a lower ability in the English language, although this is not completely unforeseen as the questions of the perceived stress scale (Appendix E) do not deal with stress in relation to the English language yet perceived stress of events that have transpired for the subject within the last month.
The implications of the study correlated directly to other research found in this field. Language learning anxiety has been investigated by researchers over the past thirty years and has been recognised and identified as being, and having, a negative impact upon second and foreign language learning (Aida, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). From the current study we can see specifically some aspects of what language learning anxiety is impacting, and hope that we can find from it, a better understanding of its effects and causes.

The findings of Ibrahim Khodadady and Gholam Hassan Khajavy’s 2012 study of anxiety and motivation in foreign language achievement where a great result of anxiety in foreign language learners was found due to fear of negative evaluation, the findings of the current study show that people with lower confidence of a language become anxious presumably due to the negative connotation of failure or drawing attention to themselves due to the lack of knowledge they have in this specific field/subject.

Eleni Pappamihiel’s study of anxiety in ESL students found that when students are exposed to native English speakers their anxiety increases due to having to deal with the English language, which is foreign to them, around others who are fluent; this rise in anxiety is due to their low self-efficacy when using the English language. As we have found in the current study, self-belief is at a low when confidence in our abilities of the language is low; this creates a downswing of self-confidence and prohibits the rise of confidence in terms of second language acquisition, and as in previous research this draws back to the avoidance or unpleasantry of drawing attention from others when feeling self-conscious about the aspect of speaking a language foreign to oneself.
Brodkey & Shore, 1976 and Gardner & Lambert, 1972’s studies of self-esteem and language concluded that self-esteem proves to be an important variable in second language acquisition. It is known that self-esteem and confidence are tied together, meaning; when we feel confident our self-esteem also rises and vice versa, this is a direct representation of our current results, as confidence and self-esteem are low so is self-efficacy, and like Ibrahim Khodadady and Gholam Hassan Khajavy (2012), the anxiety raised due to the lack of confidence in having to process and utilise a language we are not too successful in creates the disillusionment that lower’s one’s self-belief. The lack of safeguard and being outside of our comfort zone prohibits us from great success and advancement in potential of a language as we want to try remaining to “play it safe”, looking only to succeed in the tasks given at hand rather than succeed within our inner goals and future prospects. Bandura’s research also implicates that learners with more confidence will be more likely to develop their language further.

Nicole Mills, 2009, study of self-efficacy in French language learners show’s that self-belief in language abilities is increased over time which, in the latter, creates higher confidence and self-esteem levels and lower anxiety. This can be seen in the current study through the groups of English-language abilities, i.e. beginners have the lowest level of self-esteem and confidence and highest in anxiety but the intermediate level ESL group shows higher levels of self-esteem and confidence and lower levels of anxiety, so logically after beginner level broadens their knowledge and capabilities in language acquisition they will further and advance into a higher language ability group (intermediate level). As the self-esteem increases over time language learning becomes faster as understandings and rules of the language become better known and easily implicated in the latter. As Slater, Becket and Aufderhaar, 2006, have asserted; foreign language learning, content and skills develop
simultaneously while participating and practicing. Atsushi Mizumoto, 2012, found that ESL participants learning and utilizing vocabulary that had higher self-efficacy employed deeper strategies and were meta-cognitively superior to participants with lower self-efficacy.

Though there was no difference of stress between groups, past research has shown that there is limited knowledge distinguishing what the stressors for language learning specifically are. Though it is known first hand that language learning is a stressful feat to master, it is hard to pinpoint specifically what factors apply as stressors when learning a new language, whether its social factors or academic factors. Research by Khodadady and Gholam Hassan Khajavy (2012), has already shown us that people learning a language for their own reasons and desires show lower anxiety, this may also be the case on stress when dealing with language acquisition. Rafael Javier and Luis Marcos (1989) have shown that stress between noises and separation of languages in bilingual speakers, so it’s know that executive functioning in the distinguishing of languages and distractions or interruptions prolongs bilinguals cognitive functioning and fulfilment when dealing with the translation into the second language.

Findings in this study imply a deeper relationship among anxiety, self-esteem, self-efficacy and confidence in second language use and interactions and that second language use and learning have vast social implications. Future studies should focus on the interface among these factors and as the migration of people moving around the globe continues, different social aspects of the integration of migrants should be looked at, such as; the knowledge and acquisition of other secondary languages, different age groups and their comparisons of psychosocial construct affectedness, and cultural factors at play.
Further advancement should be made in the comparison of different language abilities; the current study did not have direct interactions between the language groups, or any participants, as questionnaires where spread online and the survey asked for the self-perception of one’s language abilities. This could have been avoided and advancement in further and more accurate results could have been found by looking at English language learners through English as a second language learning classes.

The implication of the unexpected stress findings are a reflection of a participant’s perceived stress in daily events over the last month as no questionnaire could be found to suit the study in terms of stress associated with language. Results in this study regarding stress are not a reflection of stress and second-language use and should not be regarded as results of stress when dealing with a second language. The findings of the advanced ESL group having lower stress levels is in no way a representation that advanced level ESL participants have lower stress due to advancement of the English language.

In conclusion, the achievement of the study has found that the lower the ability in English of a secondary English-language user, the lower that person’s self-esteem, confidence and self-belief is likely to be when dealing with English, or a secondary language, and in correlation to that, anxiety levels will be higher in regard to the English/secondary language and as the language ability becomes; self-esteem and confidence rise, self-efficacy is raised along with that and the language users anxiety in regards to the second language drops. Advanced secondary English-language users perceive identical results as a native English-language user in terms of self-esteem, self-efficacy, anxiety and confidence. No correlation to stress within English language ability has been found.
References


Ruby Pi-Ju Yang, Kimberly A. Noels, Kristie D. Saumure, Department of Psychology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, Canada T6G 2E9 (2005, August 8). Multiple routes to


Appendices

Appendix A

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. In terms of how you find using the English language, please circle:

- If you *strongly agree* with the statement circle **SA**.
- If you *agree* with the statement circle **A**.
- If you *disagree* with the statement circle **D**.
- If you *strongly disagree* with the statement circle **SD**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>At times, I think I am no good at all.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I feel that I have a number of good qualities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I am able to do things as well as most other people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I feel I do not have much to be proud of.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I certainly feel useless at times.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I feel that I’m a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I wish I could have more respect for myself.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I take a positive attitude toward myself.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Directions: Please use the following scale to answer the following statements. Circle the number that best describes **how sure you are that you can** perform each of the English skills below.

```
0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
No Chance                      Completely Certain
```

01 Read and understand the main ideas of what is written in the English language (e.g. in magazines, newspapers, letters, books etc.)
02 Listen to and understand the main ideas of a conversation spoken in the English language.
03 Join in and interact in a conversation using the English language.
04 Communicate your ideas in the English language in written form (e.g. through letters / notes etc.)
05 Comprehend what is spoken in conversation in the English language between two English speaking natives.

Appendix C

Imagine you are an attendant of a school / English-class and answer the questions accordingly.

```
0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7
No Chance                      Completely Certain
```

1 How confident are you that you would pass an English class?
2 How confident are you that you would pass English at the end of the semester with a grade better than 50%?
3 How confident are you that you would get a grade better than 60%?
4 How confident are you that you would get a grade better than 70%?
5 How confident are you that you would get a grade better than 85%?
Appendix D

Circle the number that best describes **how you feel** towards performance with a second/new language.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>I don’t worry about making mistakes in the English language.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>It frightens me when I don’t understand what somebody is saying in the English language.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>I feel at ease in a crowd</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>I rapidly get involved in social life at a new workplace or environment.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>I spend my leisure time actively socializing with a group of people, attending parties, etc.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>Learning second language is basically learning a lot of new vocabulary.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>I like to take risks.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>When learning a second language, I connect the sound of a new language word with an image or picture.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>When learning a new language, I start conversations in that language when possible.</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix E

**Instructions**

The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month.

In each case, you will be asked to indicate how often you felt or thought a certain way.
For each question circle one of the following options:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and stressed?</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things you had to do?</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that happened that were outside of your control?</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

0 = never  
1 = almost never  
2 = sometimes  
3 = fairly often  
4 = very often