



Self –Concept and Length of Writing Case Study of Iranian Female Learners

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between self-concept and length of writing in English among EFL students. 43 first-year female students of Islamic Azad University, Arak Branch participated. The research instrument consisted of General proficiency test and academic self-concept (ASC) scale questionnaire. The subjects were involved in paragraph writing. Statistical results indicated that self-concept could be a significant predictor of length of writing.

KEY WORDS: self-concept; EFL; length; writing.

INTRODUCTION

The role of affective variables in second- or foreign- language learning has attracted much attention in individual difference research over the past few decades (Gardner & MacIntyre, [1]). These affective variables can refer to attributes that involve students' attitudes and motivation, language anxiety, learning styles, and perceptions of academic self.

Redd, Brooks, & McGarvey [2] defined academic self-concept as "an individual's perception of his or her level of competence or ability within the academic realm." Similarly, Trautwein, Lüdtke, Marsh, Köller, and Baumert [3] defined academic self-concept as "a person's self-evaluation regarding a specific academic domain or ability." According to the self-concept model posited by Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton [5], the construct was hierarchical and multifaceted in nature such that self-concepts in specific domains such as English, math, history, and science are the subcomponents of one general academic self-concept. Considerable studies have been conducted to test and support the multidimensionality of the construct (Lau, Yeung, & Jin[6]; Marsh[9]; Marsh, Byrne, & Shavelson[8]; Marsh & O'Neill[9]; Marsh, Relich, & Smith[10]; Marsh & Shavelson[11]).

Although the terms self-concept and self-esteem are often used interchangeably, they represent different but related constructs. Self-concept refers to a student's perceptions of competence or adequacy in academic and nonacademic (e.g., social, behavioral, and athletic) domains and is best represented by a profile of self-perceptions across domains. Self-esteem is a student's overall evaluation of him- or herself, including feelings of general happiness and satisfaction.

Our main interest in this paper is to explore the effect of self-concept on the length of students' writing.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Sixty-two female freshman students of English literature and Translation at Islamic Azad University, Arak Branch, were considered at the beginning of the study. Based on the results of a given general proficiency test, forty-three students remained to be homogeneous. Then, the questionnaire which was adapted from Liu, Wang and arkins's [3] was used to distinguish high self-concept students from low self-concept students. To ascertain the research question concerning the relationship between self-concept and their length of writing, they were asked to write a paragraph on a topic. Our definition of the length of the paragraph was based on the number of words in the paragraph. The criterion for lengthy paragraph was more than 150 words. Hence, the written paragraphs were divided into two groups of long (more than 150 words) and short (less than 150 words).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to examine whether there is significant correlation between students' self-concept and their writing performance with a special focus on length, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated.

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Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	10.722	.238	45.032	.000
		.594	.332	.289	1.786

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	9.091	.250	36.359	.000
		1.052	.358	.417	2.940

As demonstrated in tables 1 and 2 , since the Beta coefficient of low self-concept group (0.289) is less than that of the high self-concept group(0.417), it can be concluded that for students grouped into higher self-concept a stronger correlation with the shorter writing has been observed.

Conclusion

Here, we feel it is necessary to give adequate and sufficient attention to self-concept. This study was done with female students. It can be investigated by male students, also. Further recordings would include an examination of the relationship between self-concept and accuracy in writing as well as fluency in writing.

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