

## **Understanding Vietnamese College Students' Self-Efficacy Beliefs in Learning English as a Foreign Language**

### **Abstract**

This article reports on a quantitative study investigating Vietnamese college students' self-efficacy beliefs as related to their English language proficiency and prior learning experience. A sample of 767 Vietnamese first-year college students responded to the Questionnaire of Self-Efficacy Beliefs. Results of this study support Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory and previous research (e.g., Chen, 2007) in that mastery experience is a significant source of self-efficacy beliefs. Results also showed a positive relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and English language proficiency when student background information and their learning experience were controlled. Students from the south region reported higher levels of self-efficacy beliefs than their classmates from the north and central regions in Vietnam. However, no significant differences were found between male and female students. Implications of the findings to research and the instruction of English as a foreign language in the Vietnamese context were discussed.

**Keywords:** Vietnam; college students; self-efficacy; English language proficiency.

### **1. Introduction**

Dominated by foreigners for more than one thousand years, the Vietnamese have had a long history of studying foreign languages. In Vietnam, Russian and French used to be preferred when it came to choosing a foreign language to learn. However, since the economic reforms that took place in Vietnam in 1986, there has been an increasing demand for studying English for communicative, commercial, diplomatic, collaborative, and cooperative purposes. English is a mandatory course for all tertiary and higher educational systems. Vietnamese students learn