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### How Self-Efficacy Influences the Speaking Skill of English Department Learners

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**Abstract**— This study explores the relationship between self-efficacy and English-speaking skills among second-semester students of the English Education Department at a private university in Bojonegoro. Grounded in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, the research investigates how students' beliefs in their speaking abilities influence their actual performance. Employing a qualitative design, data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis, and analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model. The findings reveal that students with higher self-efficacy exhibit greater confidence, motivation, and active participation in speaking tasks, whereas those with lower self-efficacy often experience anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and limited verbal engagement. Contributing factors to students' self-efficacy include prior experiences, peer support, and a supportive classroom environment. The results also show that students with higher self-efficacy are more likely to persist in overcoming difficulties, which positively impacts their speaking development. The study concludes that self-efficacy plays a significant role in enhancing speaking performance and recommends that educators adopt strategies aimed at fostering students' confidence through meaningful, structured, and engaging learning experiences. These insights underscore the importance of psychological factors in second-language acquisition and provide practical implications for improving speaking instruction and classroom practices in EFL contexts.

**Keywords:** Self-efficacy, speaking skill, university student, English language education

**Abstrak**— Penelitian ini mengkaji hubungan antara efikasi diri dan keterampilan berbicara bahasa Inggris pada mahasiswa semester dua Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di salah satu perguruan tinggi swasta di Bojonegoro. Berdasarkan Teori Kognitif Sosial Bandura, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana keyakinan mahasiswa terhadap kemampuan berbicara mereka memengaruhi kinerja aktual dalam kegiatan berbicara. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui angket, wawancara, dan analisis dokumen, serta dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa dengan tingkat efikasi diri tinggi menunjukkan rasa percaya diri, motivasi, dan partisipasi aktif yang lebih besar dalam tugas berbicara. Sebaliknya, mahasiswa dengan efikasi diri rendah cenderung mengalami kecemasan, takut melakukan kesalahan, dan kurang terlibat secara verbal. Faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi efikasi diri meliputi pengalaman sebelumnya, dukungan teman sebaya, dan lingkungan kelas yang mendukung. Mahasiswa dengan efikasi diri tinggi juga lebih gigih dalam menghadapi kesulitan, yang berdampak positif terhadap perkembangan keterampilan berbicara mereka. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa efikasi diri berperan penting dalam meningkatkan performa berbicara dan merekomendasikan agar pendidik menerapkan strategi yang membangun kepercayaan

diri melalui pengalaman belajar yang bermakna, terstruktur, dan mendukung. Temuan ini memberikan implikasi praktis dalam pengembangan pengajaran berbicara di konteks pembelajaran bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing.

**Kata kunci** – Self-efficacy, keterampilan berbicara, mahasiswa, pendidikan bahasa Inggris

## INTRODUCTION

Self-efficacy is widely recognized as a central factor in educational success, particularly in the domain of language acquisition. It refers to a learner's belief in their capacity to accomplish particular tasks and achieve learning objectives, which can significantly shape academic outcomes (Frey & Vallade, 2018). Supporting this framework, Givency (2023) identified a modest positive correlation ( $r = 0.333$ ) between self-efficacy and students' speaking proficiency, implying that although the relationship is not strong, students with higher self-efficacy generally demonstrate better speaking performance. Similarly, research by Ibrohim, Tirtanawati, and Prastiwi (2023) highlighted that extroversion is positively related to speaking skill, indicating that psychological dimensions – such as self-efficacy are vital in influencing English learners' speaking abilities.

Effective communication, a core component of speaking competence, is also significantly shaped by personal traits. Ilmiah, Rohmah, and Fitriainingsih (2024) found notable gender-based differences in communication styles, attributing such disparities to confidence and self-efficacy levels. These observations are consistent with previous studies that associate self-efficacy with enhanced verbal expression and increased comfort in language use. Reinforcing this, Agustin, Rohmah, and Fitriainingsih (2024) emphasized that confidence and self-belief are integral to students' communicative performance.

However, one notable shortcoming in current literature is the limited focus on the broader contextual factors that influence learners' self-efficacy during speaking engagements. While many studies highlight correlations between self-efficacy and speaking skill, they often fail to address the mechanisms through which increased self-efficacy leads to better performance. The role of feedback in cultivating students' confidence also remains underexplored. Özdemir and Karafil (2023) argue that individuals with higher self-efficacy are less likely to experience anxiety and more likely to approach challenging tasks with motivation and determination, thereby enhancing their engagement in learning. In this regard, Fitriainingsih (2017) pointed out that teacher encouragement plays a pivotal role in fostering students' belief in their speaking competence.

In terms of pedagogy, communicative competence is vital for establishing meaningful interactions in language classrooms. Rohmah (2017) emphasized that strategic competence the ability to overcome communication breakdowns, relies on students' willingness to take risks, which is often bolstered by strong self-efficacy. Learners who possess a high level of self-belief are more likely to devise effective ways of expressing ideas clearly and confidently.

The current research is positioned to bridge existing gaps in the understanding of how self-efficacy affects speaking ability, particularly among second-semester students enrolled in English education programs. This stage is pivotal, as students begin transitioning from foundational to more advanced language skills. By exploring

this relationship, the study seeks to inform educators on how to better support learners' speaking development. As Sökmen (2021) highlights, self-efficacy enhances student participation and academic achievement, underscoring its importance in cultivating active, confident learners.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to expand existing knowledge on the role of self-efficacy in shaping English-speaking performance. By focusing on second-semester learners, the research seeks to uncover practical insights that can help educators design more supportive learning environments that promote student growth and effective communication.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research adopted a descriptive qualitative approach to investigate the relationship between students' self-efficacy and their English-speaking proficiency. Conducted at a private university in Bojonegoro, the study focused on second-semester students in the English Education Department during the 2024/2025 academic year. The qualitative method was selected to allow for a nuanced exploration of how students perceive their speaking abilities and how these perceptions influence their actual performance. This aligns with Miles and Huberman's (1994) emphasis on qualitative inquiry as a means to understand complex human behaviors and thought processes.

Data collection took place between March 3 and March 21, 2025, ensuring participants were actively engaged in language learning during the second semester. A total of 40 students, comprising 12 males and 28 females, were selected using purposive sampling, targeting individuals who were directly involved in speaking-focused coursework.

Three main data sources were utilized: questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The questionnaire included both open- and closed-ended items, enabling the collection of quantitative indicators and qualitative reflections on students' speaking confidence, preparation, and anxiety. Semi-structured interviews were then conducted to explore participants' responses in greater depth, offering richer insight into their experiences. Furthermore, syllabi, lesson plans, and assessment rubrics were examined to contextualize the institutional setting in which the students were learning.

Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman (1994) framework, which comprises data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Students' responses were systematically coded and grouped into categories that revealed key patterns and emerging themes. These themes were visually represented using charts and matrices, and then interpreted through narrative summaries. Each interpretation was validated against the raw data to ensure consistency and accuracy.

To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, multiple validation strategies were employed. These included method triangulation (comparing data from questionnaires, interviews, and documents), member checking (inviting participants to verify interpretations), peer debriefing (consulting with academic experts for feedback), and maintaining a detailed audit trail documenting research decisions and processes. These strategies ensured that the results genuinely

reflected students' experiences and the educational realities within the English-speaking classroom environment.

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore the self-efficacy levels of second-semester students in speaking English. Using a 25-item questionnaire and follow-up interviews, the research identified how students perceive their abilities to speak English fluently, confidently, and interactively. The questionnaire results, summarized in Figure 1, show that 67.57% of students exhibit a moderate level of self-efficacy, while 32.43% are in the low category. Notably, none of the students achieved high or very high levels of self-efficacy. This indicates that although students believe they can engage in speaking tasks, their self-confidence is not yet fully developed, particularly under pressure or in spontaneous speaking situations.

**Figure 1.** The Result of Self-efficacy



Based on the data presented in Figure 1, students classified in the moderate self-efficacy group generally exhibited confidence in structured speaking situations, such as planned presentations or rehearsed dialogues. However, they tended to face difficulties when speaking spontaneously. This observation is in line with Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, which explains that self-efficacy is influenced by four key factors: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological or emotional states.

Zimmerman (2000) emphasized that learners with stronger self-efficacy are more likely to engage in self-regulated learning and persist through speaking challenges. Supporting this, Graham (2006) found that students who believe in their speaking capabilities are more inclined to use effective strategies and manage anxiety in communicative tasks.

According to Pajares (2002), students' self-efficacy beliefs play a critical role in determining the level of effort they invest and their persistence when encountering obstacles—an especially crucial factor in second language acquisition. Similarly,

Usher and Pajares (2008) demonstrated that exposure to positive peer models and encouraging feedback significantly enhance learners' confidence in classroom environments.

Interview responses collected during this study reinforced the questionnaire results. Students with relatively higher self-efficacy reported that familiarity with the topic, ample preparation time, and a supportive environment were instrumental to their performance. These findings align with those of Mills, Pajares, and Herron (2007), who concluded that preparation and teacher support positively influence learners' oral proficiency and speaking confidence.

Conversely, students with lower self-efficacy often experienced intense anxiety and fear of negative judgment, which led to avoidance behaviors such as limiting participation or relying heavily on memorization. This observation reflects the findings of MacIntyre and Gardner (1991), who stated that language anxiety negatively impacts performance and reduces students' willingness to communicate.

In response to such challenges, Woodrow (2011) proposed that strategies like gradual exposure to speaking tasks and emotional regulation training are essential for enhancing speaking self-efficacy in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings. Similarly, Tuan (2012) stressed the value of constructive feedback and a psychologically safe classroom atmosphere in reducing anxiety and building confidence.

Overall, the trends shown in Figure 1 highlight the need for intentional pedagogical strategies. Although most students are not at the lowest level of self-efficacy, there is still substantial room for improvement. Educators should aim to create growth-oriented learning environments where errors are treated as part of the learning process. As Mercer (2011) suggests, integrating informal discussions, collaborative speaking tasks, and targeted feedback sessions can help students strengthen their belief in their speaking abilities.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study emphasize the importance of self-efficacy in improving speaking skills among second-semester students of the English Education Department at one of the private universities in Bojonegoro. The analysis of the questionnaire data revealed that students with higher levels of self-efficacy demonstrated greater confidence and motivation in engaging in speaking activities. These students were more likely to participate actively in speaking tasks and exhibited a positive attitude towards overcoming challenges in speaking English.

In line with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, the study found that students' belief in their speaking abilities significantly influenced their actual speaking performance. It also became evident that factors such as prior experiences, peer support, and the classroom environment played crucial roles in shaping students' self-efficacy beliefs.

Overall, this study underscores the critical role of fostering self-efficacy to enhance students' speaking skills. A positive self-efficacy belief not only boosts confidence but also motivates students to persist and improve in their language proficiency. Therefore, it is recommended that educators focus on strategies that cultivate self-efficacy through meaningful, supportive learning experiences.

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