



## Prosiding

Seminar Nasional Inovasi pendidikan dan Pembelajaran  
Fakultas Pendidikan Bahasa dan Seni  
IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro

Tema "Inovasi pendidikan dan Pembelajaran di era digital untuk Pengalaman Belajar  
Imersif"



### Investigating the Relationship Between Grammar Knowledge and Speaking Self-efficacy among University Students

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**abstrak**— Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi pengetahuan tata bahasa dan self-efficacy berbicara mahasiswa. Studi ini menerapkan metode kuantitatif dengan rancangan korelasional. Sebanyak 25 mahasiswa dipilih menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Data dalam penelitian ini diperoleh menggunakan tes pengetahuan tata bahasa dan kuesioner self-efficacy berbicara. Data dianalisis menggunakan korelasi pearson dengan menggunakan perangkat lunak SPSS. Hasil analisis menunjukkan nilai korelasi sebesar 0,885 dengan tingkat signifikansi 0,000. Temuan ini mengungkapkan adanya adanya korelasi yang sangat kuat serta signifikan secara statistik pada pengetahuan tata bahasa dan self-efficacy berbicara pada taraf signifikansi 0,05. Mahasiswa dengan pengetahuan tata bahasa yang lebih baik cenderung memiliki self-efficacy berbicara yang lebih tinggi. Hasil ini menunjukkan bahwa grammar knowledge dan speaking self-efficacy memiliki hubungan positif.

**Kata kunci** — Pengetahuan Tata Bahasa, Self-efficacy Berbicara, Studi Korelasi

**Abstract**— This study explores students' grammar knowledge and speaking self-efficacy. A quantitative method with a correlational design was used. 25 students were selected based on purposive sampling. Data was collected using a grammar knowledge test and a speaking self-efficacy questionnaire. Data was analyzed using Pearson correlation with the help of SPSS. The study results presented a correlation coefficient of 0.885 with a significance level of 0.000. This evidence shows a very strong statistically significant relationship of the grammar knowledge and speaking self-efficacy questionnaire results at the 0.05 level. Students with higher grammar knowledge were likely to have better-speaking self-efficacy. The finding shows that grammar knowledge and speaking self-efficacy have a positive relationship.

**Keywords** — Grammar Knowledge, Speaking Self-efficacy, Correlational Study

## INTRODUCTION

English is the global language that holds significant importance in international interaction. In this era of globalization, the capability to use English has become an essential skill that cannot be ignored, particularly in the fields of education, technology, and employment. English has been officially institutionalized as a foreign

language taught throughout all levels of education in Indonesia. Therefore, mastering English is considered an important competence for students.

In English language learning, speaking is considered one of the primary skills that students need to become proficient in. Speaking is considered an important skill because it serves as a primary means of communication (Tirtanawati, 2016). Speaking English can be defined as the capability to use English as a foreign language to convey information, participate in conversations, and describe or explain something (Puspitasari et al., 2022). Through oral production, individuals can convey information, concepts, and personal perspectives to their interlocutors. When these communicative goals are not achieved, students often face immense pressure to perform well in front of their peers, which can lead to a reluctant learning atmosphere. However, in practice, many learners of English as a foreign language still experience difficulties in developing their speaking ability, particularly in terms of grammar mastery and confidence (Paneerselvam & Mohamad, 2019).

One of the factors that influences students' speaking ability is grammar. Grammar serves as the foundation for forming correct and comprehensible sentences. Grammar is closely related to language since it is one of the basics in language studies. In addition to that, grammar functions as the framework that allows us to convey our thoughts (Ilam et al., 2022). According to Rahmawati & Tirtanawati (2024), grammar functions to connect various elements of language in order to create meaningful structures. Good grammatical mastery can positively affect students' ability to communicate. Students with strong grammar tend to find it easier to construct sentence when speaking. According to Amelia et al. (2019), good grammar mastery not only helps with sentence structure, but also increases students' confidence in expressing themselves.

In addition, psychological aspects such as self-efficacy also play a significant role in determining students' speaking proficiency. Self-efficacy denotes an individual's confidence in their capability to finish a particular assignment. According to Mentari (2021), self-efficacy is an individual's evaluation of their capacity to carry out the actions required to achieve success and specific goals. Students possessing strong self-efficacy generally tend to show persistence in overcoming difficulties, which in turn

contributes positively to the improvement of their speaking ability (Gunirum et al., 2025). People with strong self-efficacy generally exhibit greater confident, bold in taking action, and resilient, including in communication activities such as speaking (Bandura, 1997).

Based on these conceptual insights, it is evident that both linguistic competence and psychological factors are vital for successful oral communication. However, previous research has largely examined these variables in isolation. In investigating the relationship between grammar and oral performance, previous findings have shown significantly varying and contradictory results. Some researchers reported an exceptionally strong correlation, such as Shafira & Novitri (2025), who found a correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.957$ . Surprisingly, conflicting evidence also exists for instance, Susriani et al. (2022), revealed an insignificant and negative relationship with a value of  $r = -0.102$ . On the psychological side, other investigations have only focused on how self-efficacy links to written grammar test scores rather than active oral production (Kholili, 2020).

To address this empirical gap, the present research is designed to explore the connection between middle grammar knowledge and speaking self-efficacy, particularly among students in English education programs at IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro. This stage is considered important as students are expected to develop both their linguistic competence and psychological readiness in speaking. Thru the analysis of the interrelationships between these variables, this study seeks to offer greater insight into how grammar knowledge and self-efficacy simultaneously support students' speaking ability.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research design with a correlational approach was used in this study to identify a possible relationship between students' grammar knowledge and their speaking self-efficacy. Two variables were used in this study. Variable X was grammar knowledge, and Variable Y was speaking self-efficacy. The sample for this research consists of 25 students selected using purposive sampling techniques, with

the criteria being English major students, who have attended speaking and grammar classes, and students from IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro.

Grammar knowledge was measured using a 30-item multiple-choice test covering tenses, sentence structure, and parts of speech, which was developed based on the grammar framework proposed by Greenbaum & Nelson (2009). Every correct response received a score 1, while every wrong answer received a score of 0. Speaking self-efficacy was measured using a questionnaire consisting of 20 statements based on the self-efficacy concept by Bandura (1997). The questionnaire used a four-point Likert scale, varying from strongly disagree to strongly agree, with ratings ranging from 1 to 4. Higher scores indicated a higher level of self-efficacy.

Before data collection, the instruments were evaluated for validity utilizing Pearson Product-Moment correlation, and their reliability was ensured using KR-20 for the grammar test and Cronbach's Alpha for the questionnaire. After collecting the data from the participants, the data were analyzed using normality and linearity tests as the prerequisite tests, followed by Pearson Product-Moment correlation examination to identify the association between the variables.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Grammar knowledge of the participants was assessed using a 30 item multiple choice test, and the results showed varying scores among the respondents. The maximum score obtained was 96, while the minimum score was 40, with a mean score of 76.2. The grammar scores were categorized by determining high and low score levels. The classification was based on the mean score as the cut-off point. Scores higher than 76.2 were categorized as high, whereas scores equal to or lower than 76.2 were categorized as low.

**Table 1.** Distribution Of Students Grammar Test Score

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	11	44%
High	14	56%

Based on the established criteria, 11 students (44% of the total sample) obtained scores below 76.2, while 14 students (56%) achieved higher scores, specifically above 76.2. Meanwhile, speaking self-efficacy was measured using a questionnaire made up of 20 assertions. The findings indicated that the maximum score was 80 while the minimum score was 60, with a mean score of 62.84. The speaking self-efficacy scores were categorized into high and low levels. The classification was determined based on the mean score as the cut-off point. Scores higher than 62.84 were categorized as high, while scores equal to or lower than 62.84 were categorized as low.

**Table 2.** Speaking Self-efficacy Score Distribution

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	16	64%
High	9	36%
Total	25	100%

The table shows that most students fall into the low category, totaling 16 students or 64% of the sample. Meanwhile, 9 students 36% are categorized as having high speaking self-efficacy. This shows that most students' speaking self-efficacy is still relatively low. To determine the relationship between the two variables, the researcher calculated the correlation coefficient using the Pearson Product Moment formula through SPSS. The statistical output is displayed in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Pearson Correlation Analysis Result

	Correlation	X	Y
X	Pearson Correlation	1	.885*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	25	25
Y	Pearson Correlation	.885*	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N		25

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

The results showed that the significance value was 0.000. This indicates that the void the hypothesis was dismissed and the alternative hypothesis was embraced, as the significance value is less than 0.05. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient between grammar knowledge and speaking self-efficacy of students at IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro was 0.885. To interpret the strength of this correlation, the researcher referred to the correlation criteria proposed by Sugiyono (as cited in Hikmah & Saputra, 2023)

**Table 4.** Correlation Criteria

The Criteria	The Description
0.000 - 0.199	Very Low
0.200 - 0.399	Low
0.400 - 0.599	Moderate
0.600 - 0.799	Strong
0.800 - 1.000	Very High

Based on Table 3, the obtained correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) is 0.885. This value indicates a very strong correlation, as it falls within the range of 0.800 to 1.000 according to Sugiyono's criteria. This statistically proves that there is a significant relationship between students' grammar knowledge and their speaking self-efficacy, meaning that higher grammar mastery is closely associated with higher levels of speaking confidence. This finding aligns with the descriptive data showing that most students 56% possess a relatively high level of grammar knowledge, indicating a good understanding of English grammatical rules. As emphasized by Amelia et al (2019), grammar mastery is essential for speaking ability as it helps students construct accurate and comprehensible sentences, which naturally builds their linguistic foundations. Thus, it can be concluded that grammar knowledge and speaking self-efficacy are positively related and mutually support students' speaking ability. This finding is also consistent with Pratolo et al (2019), who stated that speaking ability is influenced by linguistic factors such as grammar as well as psychological factors such as self-confidence.

However, a closer look at the descriptive data reveals an interesting paradox: while 56% of the students possess high grammatical knowledge, 64% of them still report low speaking self-efficacy. This indicates that while students possess the structural and conceptual knowledge of the language, transforming this cognitive competence into psychological confidence during active oral production remains a critical challenge. In the context of English majors at IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro, this discrepancy may occur because high grammar test scores are often achieved through written, analytical assessments, which do not automatically translate into real-time communicative courage.

## CONCLUSION

This research shows a meaningful and positive relationship between grammar knowledge and speaking self-efficacy among students of the English Education Department at IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro, as evidenced by a very high correlation coefficient value of 0.885, that belongs to the strong category. In addition, the significant value of 0.000 shows that the relationship is statistically meaningful. Descriptive findings further reveal that while most student 56% possess a high level of grammar knowledge, their speaking self-efficacy remains relatively low 64%, indicating that strong structural understanding does not automatically translate into oral confidence. These interconnected factors show that grammar the necessary cognitive foundation, yet psychological assurance is equally crucial for actual oral production. Consequently, English language educators should balance their teaching paradigms by not only emphasizing cognitive aspect like grammatical rules but also actively integrating affective to enhance students self confidence, thereby optimizing their overall speaking performance.

Furthermore, this study implies that improving students' speaking self-efficacy requires not only strengthening their grammatical competence but also providing more opportunities for active speaking practice in meaningful contexts. Classroom activities that encourage interaction, such as discussions, presentations, and

collaborative tasks, may help bridge the gap between students' linguistic knowledge and their confidence in using English orally. Therefore, future research is recommended to explore instructional strategies that simultaneously develop both grammar mastery and speaking self-efficacy in order to achieve more effective language learning outcomes.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author wishes to acknowledge all those who contributed to the completion of this research. First, the author recognizes the invaluable assistance provided by the research supervisors Ms. Oktha Ika Rahmawati, M.Pd. and Ms. Ayu Fitrianiingsih, M.Pd. The author appreciates the submission of data by the research respondents in this study and the rest of the respondents. The author acknowledges the prayers and support of the family and friends of the author. The author appreciates the support and encouragement of family members and friends.

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