



## Investigating EFL Students' Speaking Skills Viewed from Self-Efficacy: Instructional Experiences Learned from Seniors High Schools

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### Abstract

This study investigated EFL students' speaking skills viewed from self-efficacy at seniors high schools. This to measure students' self-efficacy beliefs and assessments to evaluate their speaking performance to find factors influencing their speaking skills.. The findings of this study had the potential to provide valuable insights into the factors influencing students' speaking skills development and contribute to the enhancement of language learning and teaching practices, also to find whether there is a relationships between students' self-efficacy levels and their performance in speaking tasks. A quantitative approach was employed by using SPSS IBM 26 and qualitative approach was employed by using observation and questionnaires, utilizing surveys, to measure students' self-efficacy beliefs and assessments to evaluate their speaking performance. The research included 30 second-grade Social Studies students from SMAN 7 Mataram, selected through purposive sampling. A questionnaire with two types of items, totaling 10 questions, was employed as the research tool. The major factors influencing students' self efficacy at IPS class at SMAN 7 Mataram are social persuasion (50%) and Emotional & Physiological States (50%). The results indicated a strong relationships, with a Pearson correlation coefficient (R) of 0.895, which is considered very high, falling within the 0.80 to 1.000 range. The statistical analysis at a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  showed a p-value lower than 0.05 ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ). Thus, the alternative hypothesis (H1) was accepted, and the null hypothesis (H0) was rejected, confirming a significant correlation between students' self-efficacy and their speaking skills. It means that students need encouragement and support from parents, teachers, and their community to boost their self-efficacy to improve English speaking skills.

**Keywords:** Self-efficacy; Speaking skills; English teaching-learning; Cognitive skills

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## INTRODUCTION

Students of SMAN 7 Mataram have achieved numerous successes in non-academic areas, but there are very few accomplishments in academic subjects like English. Consequently, the researcher is interested in investigating the students' self-efficacy and their performance in English speaking class to identify the factors affecting their speaking skills. Nunan (2003) describes speaking as the process of producing structured verbal expressions to communicate meaning. He also differentiates speaking from writing, noting that spoken language must be heard by others because it is brief and received immediately. Additionally, speaking requires real-time feedback for direct communication. Similarly,

Brown (1994) asserts that speaking is a skill in the production of oral language. It goes beyond just uttering words; it serves as a means of communication. Speaking takes place when two or more people engage in interaction, often with the goal of maintaining social connections.

In the world of education, English is an important factor in global communication in which English is the most widely spoken second language in the world, making it a crucial tool for international communication. Proficiency in English allows students to interact and collaborate with peers, educators, and professionals globally (Crystal, 2003). As a vital global language in various social and professional environments, the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language are essential. To improve the quality of English education, ongoing research is carried out to determine the factors that influence student learning outcomes, with students' self-efficacy emerging as a key factor.

Self-efficacy refers to a person's belief in their capacity to accomplish tasks, representing a sense of self-confidence across different activities. For instance, when a student delivers a speech in front of the class, it demonstrates their self-efficacy. This confidence is vital in numerous situations, including English-speaking classrooms, where individuals aim for optimal results despite challenges. Due to the complexities often associated with speaking English, self-efficacy becomes especially important. The level of students' self-efficacy significantly impacts their speaking proficiency. Those with high self-efficacy display greater confidence in verbal communication, while those with low self-efficacy often face more difficulties and anxiety when speaking.

Hence, it follows logically that individuals with high self-efficacy, akin to high self-confidence, will dedicate substantial effort toward their goals, given the prior indication that self-efficacy affects the level of effort exerted. Students with elevated self-efficacy are inclined to exhibit greater motivation, take initiative, and possess confidence in overcoming challenges when learning foreign languages. Additionally, Bandura (1997) posits that self-efficacy can affect numerous areas, such as actions and choices, the amount of effort invested, persistence when encountering challenges, emotional states, and the degree of success attained. He emphasizes that self-efficacy beliefs are crucial in directing human behaviour, particularly in terms of self-regulation, actions, and interactions with the environment.

Therefore, self-efficacy could be a key factor in enhancing students' language proficiency. Researchers argue that teachers are essential in raising awareness about learning a foreign language, as they influence the learning environment and have an understanding of students' abilities. Based on the elaboration above, the problem that is going to be discussed in this research is that: What factors influence students' self-efficacy at senior high schools? Is there a relationship between students' self-efficacy and their speaking skills at senior high schools?

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This research adopted a mixed-method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods, to provide a comprehensive analysis of the phenomena under investigation. The quantitative approach focuses on objective analysis through statistical methods, while the qualitative approach aims to explore and interpret the behaviors and experiences of the research participants. This combination allows for a deeper understanding of the factors influencing students' self-efficacy and their speaking skills, and it aligns with Sukmadinata's (2013) perspective on using mixed-method research to gain a more holistic view of the research topic.

## **Research Participants**

The research was conducted at SMAN 7 Mataram, a high school in Mataram with a large student population. The target population for this study consisted of students from SMAN 7 Mataram, specifically focusing on the second-grade IPS class. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select a sample of 30 students from this class, chosen because they represent the research object and provide relevant insights into the research questions. Purposive sampling was deemed appropriate for this study as the researchers intended to focus on a specific group of students who could offer relevant information regarding their self-efficacy in speaking English as a foreign language.

## **Research Instruments and Data Collection Technique**

Several research instruments and data collection techniques were used in this study to gather comprehensive data on students' self-efficacy and speaking skills: Observation Sheet: The observation sheet was designed to capture students' behaviors, particularly regarding their self-efficacy in speaking English. The researcher observed the students during their speaking activities to identify behaviors that might indicate high or low self-efficacy. Self-Efficacy Questionnaire: The researchers utilized a self-efficacy questionnaire as one of the primary instruments for assessing students' self-efficacy in speaking English. The questionnaire included 10 items with a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree). The questions were designed to assess students' beliefs in their ability to perform speaking tasks and the factors influencing their self-efficacy. The questionnaire was translated into Indonesian to ensure students could easily understand and respond to the items. Oral Test: The oral test was used to assess students' speaking skills directly. This test was administered by the teacher in the classroom, and the researcher closely observed the students' performance during the test. The test focused on students' ability to speak English in a variety of contexts, and the researcher recorded observations related to how self-efficacy might influence their performance.

The data collection process involved several steps: the researcher first conducted a survey to explore students' self-efficacy patterns and their speaking skills. Following the survey, the self-efficacy questionnaires were distributed to students, and their oral test performances were observed by the researcher. The data from these instruments were then analyzed to explore the relationship between students' self-efficacy and their speaking abilities.

## **Data Analysis**

Data analysis in this study involved both qualitative and quantitative techniques. For the quantitative analysis, the data collected from the self-efficacy questionnaires and the oral tests were analyzed using statistical methods. The self-efficacy questionnaire data, which included factors influencing self-efficacy, were analyzed to classify students as having high or low self-efficacy. The oral test data were also assessed to evaluate students' speaking performance. To determine the relationship between self-efficacy and speaking skills, the researcher employed Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. This statistical technique was used to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables (self-efficacy and speaking skills). The analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 26 software, which allowed the researcher to calculate correlation coefficients and determine if a significant relationship existed.

Additionally, a t-test was applied to further analyze the data and compare the differences in speaking skills between students with high self-efficacy and those with low self-efficacy. This statistical test helped to assess whether the differences in speaking performance were statistically significant, providing a more rigorous analysis of the influence of self-efficacy on students' speaking abilities. In conclusion, the combination of

qualitative observations and quantitative analysis allowed for a thorough examination of the factors influencing students' self-efficacy and its impact on their speaking skills. The results from these analyses provided valuable insights into how self-efficacy contributes to language learning, particularly in the context of speaking skills in English.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Findings

The researchers, in findings, elaborated students' self-efficacy and what factors influenced it, result of students' speaking test, and its relationships and how this knowledge can be applied to improve educational outcomes. Based on the finding data, the student's self-efficacy score is determined. The average value of students' self-efficacy is presented in the following table:

Table 1. The Mean Score of Students' self-efficacy

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self-efficacy	30	40.00	50.00	45.4000	3.58733
Valid (listwise)	N 30				

The data in table 1 shows that the average self-efficacy score obtained by students was 45.4. This was classified as a high level category based on a score classification of 41-50. Meanwhile, the minimum score obtained by students was 40 and the maximum score was 50. This showed that the lowest score obtained by students is 40 and the maximum score is 50. Based on data, it can be seen that out of 30 students, there were no students (0%) who were classified as very low, low and medium levels because students had a very high level of self-efficacy. Meanwhile, there are 3 (10%) students who are classified as high level and 27 (90%) students who are classified as very high level.

### Factors Influencing Students' Self-efficacy

Based on the researchers' observation and the students' answer from the questionnaires, we found that:

Table 2. Factors Influencing Students' Self-efficacy

Factors	Descriptions	Examples	Amount of Students
Mastery Experiences	Successful completion of tasks or achieving goals increases confidence in one's abilities.	Completing assignments, achieving good grades, or overcoming academic challenges.	0
Vicarious Experiences	Observing peers or role models succeed can boost one's belief in their own ability to succeed.	Watching classmates perform well on a presentation or a teacher demonstrating problem-solving techniques.	0
Social Persuasion	Encouragement or feedback from teachers, peers, or parents can enhance self-belief.	Positive feedback from a teacher or supportive comments from peers during group activities.	15

Factors	Descriptions	Examples	Amount of Students
Emotional & Physiological States	Students' emotional states (e.g., anxiety, stress) can influence their perception of their abilities.	Experiencing calmness before an exam versus high anxiety impacting performance.	15
Goal Setting	Setting achievable and specific goals can help build a sense of capability and accomplishment.	Creating a study schedule or breaking down a complex project into manageable tasks.	0
Previous Academic Success	Positive past academic experiences reinforce the belief in future success.	Receiving good grades or successfully completing difficult assignments in the past.	0
Parental Influence	Supportive or critical parental attitudes toward education can impact students' confidence.	Parents offering help with homework or pushing high academic expectations.	0
Teacher Support	Teachers who create a positive, supportive, and challenging learning environment enhance students' efficacy.	Teachers who create a positive, supportive, and challenging learning environment enhance students' efficacy.	0
Peer Influence	Positive or negative peer interactions can shape students' beliefs in their own academic capabilities.	Working in collaborative groups or dealing with peer pressure in academic settings.	0
Learning Environment	An encouraging, well-structured, and resource-rich environment fosters higher self-efficacy.	Classrooms with adequate resources, well-designed curricula, and a positive atmosphere for learning.	0

Based on the data collected from oral test, the Students' Speaking Skills score is determined. The average score for Students' Speaking Skills was presented in the following table.

Table 3. The Mean Score of Students' Speaking Skills

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Speaking Skills	30	40.00	50.00	46.4000	4.29595
Valid (listwise)	N 30				

The data in table 3. shows that the average Students' speaking Skills score were obtained from the oral test is 46,4. This is classified as a very high level category based on a score classification of 41-50. Meanwhile, the minimum score obtained by the students was 40 and the maximum score was 50. This showed that the lowest score obtained by



Students was 40 and the maximum score was 50. Based on findings, the data are seen that out of 30 students, there were students (0%) who were classified as very low, low and medium levels because Students had a very high level of Speaking Performance. Meanwhile, there were 9 (30%) Students who were classified as high level and 21 (70%) students who were classified as very high level.

### The Relationships Between Students' self-efficacy and Speaking Skills

Based on the data from Students' self-efficacy and Speaking skills, the result was shown in the following table:

Table 4. The Correlation between Students' self-efficacy and Their Speaking Skills

Relationships/Correlations		Self-efficacy	Speaking Skills
Self-efficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.895**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	30	30
Speaking Skills	Pearson Correlation	.895**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	30	30

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The data in the table above showed that there was a correlation between students' self-efficacy and Their Speaking skills. This is indicated by  $R = 0.895$  which was classified as a very strong correlation with a standard correlation in the range of 0.80 – 1.000. Results of statistical analysis at the significance level or alpha level ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.05. Based on the table above, it shows that the significance level is lower than 0.05 or  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This means that there is a significant correlation between Students' Self-efficacy and Their Speaking skills. This showed that the alternative hypothesis (H1) was accepted and the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected. The researcher concluded that the students' self-efficacy aspect and their Speaking Skills had a correlation.

### Discussion

This section consisted of Students' self-efficacy and their Speaking Skills which were analysed from the results of the questionnaire and the correlation between students' self-efficacy and their Speaking Skills. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to execute the necessary actions to achieve a desired goal. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning (Begum & Hamzah, 2018; Cordeiro, Castro, & Limpo, 2018), particularly regarding speaking skills, self-efficacy plays a pivotal role in shaping students' motivation, performance, and overall language acquisition. For EFL students, speaking is often one of the most challenging skills to master due to various factors such as fear of making mistakes, lack of vocabulary, and anxiety about communication in an unfamiliar language. Thus, understanding and fostering self-efficacy can significantly enhance students' confidence, persistence, and ultimately their proficiency in speaking English.

For students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), speaking skills often pose a significant challenge due to various complexities associated with real-time communication (Dheressa, Olana, & Bekele, 2023; Govender & Govender, 2009). Unlike other language skills such as reading or writing, speaking requires not only the immediate

recall of vocabulary and grammatical structures but also the ability to manage non-linguistic factors like tone, body language, and listening (Haerazi & Irawan, 2020; Khosravi et al., 2023). Speaking tasks, therefore, test a student's ability to interact spontaneously, manage stress, and produce coherent speech while simultaneously processing both linguistic and non-linguistic elements of communication. Self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform a task successfully, plays a central role in addressing these challenges. The more confident students are in their abilities, the more likely they are to engage in speaking tasks, thus leading to greater practice, which ultimately improves their speaking skills and boosts their overall confidence in the language.

One of the core ways in which self-efficacy influences speaking skills is through motivation. Motivation is the internal drive that propels individuals to take action (Schipper et al., 2018), and for EFL learners, it significantly impacts how they approach speaking tasks. It is in line with Setyowati et al. (2024) who informed that students with high self-efficacy believe that they can improve their productive language abilities, which fuels their desire to engage in speaking activities. These students are more inclined to take risks, experiment with new vocabulary, and attempt more complex grammatical structures, trusting that their efforts will lead to improvement. In contrast, students who lack self-efficacy may hesitate to speak due to fear of making mistakes or feeling embarrassed, which hinders their progress (Hu & Choi, 2023; Khan et al., 2018). The intrinsic motivation of students with high self-efficacy drives them to practice speaking regularly, whether through classroom activities, informal conversations, or self-study. Regular practice is vital for language acquisition and fluency development, and students who are motivated to practice speaking will see improvements more quickly than those who avoid it.

Furthermore, self-efficacy also impacts the level of effort that students are willing to invest in speaking tasks (Khodabandeh, 2022; Kinasih & Olivia, 2022). A student who believes they can improve is more likely to dedicate time and energy to enhancing their speaking skills. They are less likely to become discouraged by initial failures or challenges, and more likely to persist through difficult tasks. On the other hand, students with low self-efficacy may avoid speaking tasks altogether or give up quickly if they encounter difficulties (Haerazi & Irawan, 2020; Khosravi et al., 2023). The continuous cycle of effort, practice, and improvement leads to increased competence, which further boosts self-efficacy, creating a positive feedback loop that reinforces their belief in their ability to speak English.

In addition to motivation and effort, emotional responses also play a significant role in the development of speaking skills. Many EFL learners experience anxiety when speaking in front of others, especially in formal settings such as classrooms or exams. This anxiety can be debilitating, causing students to become self-conscious, make mistakes, or even avoid speaking altogether (Haerazi & Irawan, 2020; Khosravi et al., 2023). However, students with high self-efficacy are better equipped to manage these emotions. They view speaking tasks as challenges to be overcome rather than threats to their self-worth (Maharani & Afifi, 2024; Okatpiani et al., 2024). As a result, they are more likely to approach speaking tasks with a positive attitude, even in stressful or high-pressure situations. High self-efficacy contributes to emotional resilience, which is vital in reducing the debilitating effects of anxiety and increasing participation in speaking activities.

Several factors contribute to the development and enhancement of self-efficacy in EFL students, each of which plays an important role in how students perceive their speaking abilities. Mastery experiences, or successful past performances, are perhaps the most powerful source of self-efficacy (Maharani & Afifi, 2024; Okatpiani et al., 2024).

When students complete a speaking task successfully, whether it's answering a question in class or delivering a presentation, they gain confidence in their abilities. These successful experiences build a sense of competence and strengthen the belief that they are capable of handling future speaking tasks. For instance, if a student successfully participates in a group discussion or delivers an effective presentation, they are likely to feel more capable and willing to take on similar tasks in the future. This sense of achievement becomes a key motivator for further practice and improvement.

Another important source of self-efficacy is vicarious experiences, which occur when students observe others' successes. In the context of language learning, students can benefit from watching their peers perform speaking tasks successfully. Observing a peer speak English fluently or overcome challenges can serve as a powerful motivator for students, as it provides a model they can emulate (Maharani & Afifi, 2024; Okatpiani et al., 2024). Seeing others succeed helps students to believe that they too can succeed, especially when they identify with the peer who is performing the task. For example, a student may feel encouraged to participate in a conversation if they observe a classmate who was once shy or hesitant speaking confidently in English.

Social persuasion is another crucial factor that influences self-efficacy. Positive reinforcement, encouragement, and constructive feedback from teachers, peers, or mentors can help students believe in their ability to perform speaking tasks successfully. When teachers offer praise for a student's effort or improvement, it reinforces the belief that their abilities can be developed through hard work and practice. Conversely, negative feedback or discouraging comments can undermine students' confidence and lower their self-efficacy (Syahbani & Apoko, 2023; Warni et al., 2024). Therefore, it is important for educators to provide positive, constructive feedback that highlights students' progress and potential.

Finally, physiological and emotional states also contribute to self-efficacy. A student's physical and emotional responses to speaking tasks can either enhance or hinder their belief in their abilities. Students who experience anxiety or nervousness before or during speaking tasks may be less likely to engage or may perform poorly due to the physiological symptoms of stress, such as a racing heart or shaking hands. On the other hand, students who feel relaxed, confident, and emotionally positive about their speaking abilities are more likely to perform well (Syahbani & Apoko, 2023; Warni et al., 2024). Creating a low-pressure classroom environment where students feel safe to take risks and make mistakes is essential for fostering positive emotional states that support high self-efficacy.

The significance of self-efficacy in speaking skills is further supported by research, which consistently demonstrates a strong correlation between self-efficacy and language performance. For example, a study conducted by the researchers using IBM SPSS V26 and the Pearson product-moment correlation formula found a significant relationship between students' self-efficacy and their speaking skills. The correlation coefficient ( $R = 0.895$ ) indicates a very strong relationship, suggesting that students with higher self-efficacy tend to perform better in speaking tasks. The statistical analysis revealed that the level of significance was lower than 0.05 ( $p = 0.000$ ), confirming that the correlation between self-efficacy and speaking skills is significant.

The findings highlight that self-efficacy is a critical determinant of students' speaking abilities. Students who believe they can succeed in speaking tasks tend to perform better, while those with low self-efficacy may avoid speaking tasks or perform poorly due to anxiety and lack of confidence. These results underscore the importance of fostering self-efficacy in EFL classrooms, as it can directly contribute to improved speaking skills. Teachers can play a crucial role in enhancing students' self-efficacy by creating an



environment where students feel supported, encouraged, and capable of succeeding. Additionally, by designing activities that allow students to experience mastery, providing positive feedback, and promoting collaboration among peers, educators can help build students' confidence in their speaking abilities.

Finally, the findings of the research have important implications for educational practice and policy. By integrating self-efficacy-enhancing strategies into teaching methods, schools and teachers can foster an environment that not only improves students' speaking skills but also boosts their overall motivation, engagement, and academic performance (Syahbani & Apoko, 2023; Warni et al., 2024). When students feel confident in their ability to communicate in English, they are more likely to take risks, participate in class discussions, and ultimately improve their proficiency in the language. This positive cycle of increased engagement and improvement reinforces their belief in their abilities, further boosting their self-efficacy and leading to even greater success in language learning. Therefore, self-efficacy is a crucial factor in developing speaking skills among EFL students. Through mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and emotional regulation, students' belief in their ability to succeed in speaking tasks is shaped and enhanced. Teachers and educational institutions can play a significant role in fostering self-efficacy by providing students with the tools, encouragement, and support they need to succeed. By cultivating an environment where students believe in their potential to succeed, educators can create a classroom atmosphere that enhances not only speaking skills but also overall language acquisition and academic achievement.

## CONCLUSION

Self-efficacy plays a fundamental role in the development of speaking skills among EFL students, particularly because of the unique challenges inherent in spoken communication. Unlike other language skills such as reading or writing, speaking requires real-time interaction, where students must recall vocabulary and apply grammatical structures while also managing non-verbal cues like tone, body language, and listening comprehension. These demands often lead to high levels of anxiety and self-doubt among students, which can hinder their ability to perform well in speaking tasks. Self-efficacy, defined as the belief in one's capacity to succeed in specific tasks, directly influences how students approach these challenges. Students with high self-efficacy are more likely to engage in speaking activities, take risks with new vocabulary and sentence structures, and persist in the face of difficulties. This proactive engagement and willingness to take risks are crucial for language development, as they foster greater practice and interaction, which in turn enhances fluency. Consequently, the link between self-efficacy and motivation becomes a positive cycle, where the belief in one's abilities leads to greater effort and, ultimately, improved performance in speaking tasks, further boosting self-efficacy.

In addition to motivation and effort, emotional resilience is another critical aspect where self-efficacy influences speaking skills. Many EFL learners experience anxiety, particularly when speaking in front of peers or teachers. This anxiety can manifest in physical symptoms like shaking, stammering, or a racing heartbeat, which can interfere with clear communication and hinder performance. However, students with high self-efficacy tend to view these situations as challenges rather than threats, enabling them to manage their emotions more effectively. They are less likely to experience debilitating anxiety and more likely to approach speaking tasks with a positive mindset. The ability to stay calm under pressure and view mistakes as learning opportunities rather than failures is an essential skill for any language learner. High self-efficacy fosters this emotional resilience by reinforcing the belief that mistakes are a natural part of the learning process, not a reflection of one's capabilities. Teachers can help nurture this emotional resilience

by creating a supportive and low-pressure classroom environment, where students are encouraged to take risks and make mistakes without fear of judgment.

## RECOMMENDATION

Building on the findings of this study, it is essential to consider further recommendations for incorporating self-efficacy into English language teaching. First, teachers should intentionally create opportunities for students to experience success in speaking tasks, starting with manageable activities and gradually increasing the difficulty level. Such an approach, where students can progressively build their confidence through achievable goals, is crucial in developing a sense of competence. For instance, teachers can begin with simple pair work or small group discussions where the pressure is minimal, and students can practice without fear of making mistakes in front of the entire class. As students gain confidence in these low-risk activities, they can be gradually exposed to more complex tasks, such as oral presentations or debates, which will challenge their abilities and further strengthen their belief in their speaking proficiency. This method of scaffolded practice is aligned with the principles of self-efficacy, as it reinforces the idea that improvement is achievable through consistent effort and practice.

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