



SOURCES OF SELF-EFFICACY INFLUENCING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS OF EFL LEARNERS

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abstract

Self-efficacy is a crucial factor in English language learning because it can support students' performance. This study aims to investigate the sources of self-efficacy influencing the speaking skills of EFL students. This research was carried out at a university in Aceh province, Indonesia. This study used a qualitative approach and involved four EFL teaching program students who completed a public speaking class as participants. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which were analyzed qualitatively through three concurrent flows of activity, including data condensation/reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Bandura's (1997) theory was used to categorize the sources of the students' self-efficacy. The results show that four sources of self-efficacy had a role in shaping the EFL students' performance in speaking, including their mastery experiences, such as working as reporters and presenting in front of their peers; their vicarious experiences from local and online contexts; their psychological states; and verbal persuasions that they got from parents, friends, and lecturers. These results contribute to better understandings of the EFL students' sources of self-efficacy with implications for how best to support EFL students to rouse their self-efficacy.

INTRODUCTION

Self-efficacy was conceptualized in Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory. According to this theory, persons are seen as active participants in their lives rather than passive observers of the circumstances that shaped them. They are not just experiencing the event; they are agents of it (Bandura, 1999, 2001; Lailiyah & Cahyono, 2017). The term "efficacy" describes how people see themselves and their ability to reach a certain level of performance (Bandura, 1977) and how they might respond to the obstacles and determine how to proceed (Bandura, 1997). Individuals' self-efficacy also governs how they control and manage their learning objectives and persevere through tasks to completion. Additionally, it assesses how resilient and nervous the learners are to deal with challenges (Bandura, 2011; Huang, 2022).

Based on the social cognitive theory, students develop their self-efficacy through four primary sources: enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal and social persuasions, and emotional and physiological states (Bandura, 1997). The most effective form of self-efficacy is usually active mastery experiences, which entail achieving objectives via direct action. These experiences are particularly effective when a person completes a task they consider to be difficult (Bandura, 1997; Gale et al., 2021). For example, students evaluate and interpret the information after finishing an academic task, and assessments of their level of

competency are created or adjusted in light of their results. They are more assured of their capacity to do related or comparable tasks when they believe that their efforts have been successful (Bandura, 1997; Usher & Pajares, 2008). The second way that people develop self-efficacy is through the observing experiences of social models, or what is known as vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1997). Students learn about their own abilities through observing others, particularly classmates who offer relevant comparisons (Van Dinther, Dochi, & Segers, 2011).

Verbal persuasions, or socially persuasive feedback, are the third source of self-efficacy. This type of feedback consists of comments made regarding one's performance by significant others (Bandura, 1997). Positive remarks that emphasize a person's skills or performance successes will boost their sense of self-efficacy, but negative remarks that highlight a person's performance flaws may cause them to lose confidence in themselves. Moreover, comments made by those who are perceived as having more authority in a certain field—like the course instructor—may be interpreted as coming from a more knowledgeable, experienced, or skilled source. This could therefore have a greater impact on people's perceptions of their own ability (Bandura, 1997; Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019). The last source of self-efficacy is how people perceive and understand their physiological and emotional states, such as fear, when engaging in activities. For example, if stress and worry are interpreted as indicators of incompetence, then self-efficacy is diminished (Bandura 1997; Peura et al., 2021).

Self-efficacy in the educational setting has a big impact on learning and academic success since it affects students' perseverance, diligence, and self-control, all of which contribute to better learning outcomes (Graham, 2022). In terms of students' learning, motivation, and accomplishments, self-efficacy is a predictor and mediator. The various factors of competence (such as skill, knowledge, aptitude, or prior accomplishments) and students' upcoming performances are mediated by their self-efficacy, which is a crucial component of human agency (Bandura, 2006; Van Dinther, Dochy, & Segers, 2011). The self-efficacy of students should merit greater attention in all areas of learning and development in order to improve student welfare and achievement levels (Waddington, 2023).

Research on the self-efficacy of EFL students has been examined in the Indonesian context on a few different subjects. The research investigated students' self-efficacy from elementary school to advanced degrees. Anam and Stracke (2019) examined how Indonesian EFL students' self-efficacy beliefs affected their ability to learn English at the primary school level. Research at the university level focuses on the relationships between instrumental motivation and self-efficacy in Indonesian L2 English learners (Sinaga & Subekti, 2024); the impact of lecturers' language style on students' academic self-efficacy (Gunawan et al., 2019); and the self-efficacy development of Indonesian ESP students in English presentation (Hartono et al., 2023).

At the secondary school level as well as at the university level, Indonesian researchers related students' self-efficacy studies to four English skills, namely listening, reading, writing, and speaking. In terms of listening skills, Umam et al. (2020) correlated secondary school students' self-efficacy to their listening comprehension achievement. Regarding reading skills, Tarigan et al. (2022) examined the effects of EFL students' self-efficacy on their reading comprehension. The research was also conducted concerning learners' self-efficacy and writing, such as the interplay between EFL postgraduate students' writing efficacy and research literacy and teachers' immediacy and clarity (Ardi et al., 2024); EFL teaching program's undergraduate students writing self-efficacy (Belladina, Purwanti & Eliwarti, 2024); the factors' influencing writing self-efficacy of doctoral students studying overseas

(Jonathans et al., 2024); the relationships between self-efficacy, metacognition, a growth mindset, and academic performance of undergraduate EFL education and literature program (Prihandoko et al., 2024); the relationship of students' self-efficacy beliefs, motivation, and the EFL English writing performance in higher education (Sahril & Weda, 2018); comparison between undergraduate and graduate students' perceived anxiety self-efficacy in critical writing (Wardani & Mbato, 2021); and the role of self-efficacy in secondary school students' recount texts (Yulianawati, 2019).

Meanwhile, various research has been conducted in relation to EFL students' self-efficacy and speaking skills in Indonesia. The studies include: self-efficacy of art and design students in speaking-based activities (Abduh et al., 2022); EFL pre-service teaching program students' speaking self-efficacy (Darmawan, Alam, & Nirma, 2021); the relationship between the student's self-efficacy and speaking skill at a lower level (Desmaliza & Septiani, 2022); a relationship between speaking performance, foreign language learning anxiety, and self-efficacy (Hermagustiana, Astuti, & Sucahyo, 2021); EFL students' opinions on their own speaking self-efficacy during the online learning process (Ningias & Indriani, 2021); the relationship among students' English-speaking proficiency, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence (Santoso, Affandi, Basthomi, 2024); perceptions of English-speaking proficiency among out-of-Java students (Wene & Vantaosen, 2023); English language education student perceptions of self-efficacy in public speaking courses (Wijaya & Mbato, 2020); views of English education master students regarding their own efficacy in EFL speaking learning environments (Wijaya, 2021); self-efficacy's effects on EFL learners' speaking ability (Wijaya, 2024).

None of the aforementioned studies have examined the sources of self-efficacy of EFL students, especially in Aceh province, Indonesia. To contribute fresh viewpoints to the body of knowledge on EFL students' self-efficacy in this particular context, it is imperative that this research be conducted in this understudied area. This study examines the relationship between the speaking skills and self-efficacy of EFL students. Ningias and Indriani (2021) and Alawiyah (2018) contend that self-efficacy is a crucial element in improving students' performance in language learning, particularly in speaking, where there is a correlation between speaking self-efficacy and performance. This study specifically attempts to investigate the self-efficacy sources of EFL students' speaking proficiency. Thus, this investigation is guided by the following research question: Which sources of self-efficacy influence the speaking skills of EFL students?

METHOD

This study, grounded in Bandura's (1977) theory, employed a qualitative approach to identify the sources of students' self-efficacy in speaking skills within an EFL teaching program. The research was conducted at a university in Aceh, Indonesia. The participants were four students at an EFL teaching program. The selection of participants was based on two criteria: first, they had completed a public speaking class. This criterion was considered fairly relevant to examine students' speaking performance because, in this class, students were more active and focused in practicing and developing English speaking skills. Second, the participants received an A or had scores higher than 90 in the public speaking class. High-self-efficacy individuals think they can succeed at particular tasks (Moorhead & Griffins, 2013). Therefore, the researchers assumed that selecting high-achieving students could enrich the study's data since they might have a high level of self-efficacy from many sources.

The researchers used interviews in collecting data. Interviews are conducted to obtain specific and in-depth information about participants' thoughts, knowledge, opinions, beliefs, and feelings about the upcoming topic; answers are written down and recorded (Creswell, 2012). In this research, semi-structured interviews were the appropriate way to collect the data. A semi-structured interview is a type of interview in which the questions have been outlined. However, impromptu questions can be added between interviews to get more detailed answers from participants (Stuckey, 2013). The participants in this study underwent private face-to-face interviews in their preferred locations using the developed interview guidelines. Follow-up questions were posed as necessary during the interviews to elicit further detail and clarify answers. In order to extract participants' detailed perspectives, the researcher let the discussion flow more naturally and interactively. One month was allotted for data collection, which culminated in data saturation.

The data collected from the interview was analyzed qualitatively by using three concurrent flows of activity based on Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's (2014) model. This kind of model is divided into three stages. The first one is data condensation/ reduction. The researchers selected the data that has been collected from the interview transcripts, namely by sharpening, sorting, focusing, discarding, and organizing data. This condensation aimed to select important things from the data and eliminate unimportant things that were not relevant to the research theme. By classifying the data, it could be presented more straightforwardly and clearly. The second one is displaying data. This step displays the organized data or information that was carried out during the qualitative research process. In this study, the data from interviews was presented in narrative form, so it was easier to understand. The last step of data analysis is to conclude all existing in this study. In this section, the researchers concluded the data by answering the research questions and verifying the data to get a valid conclusion from the research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on Bandura's (1997) theory, this study characterized four sources of self-efficacy in students' speaking abilities as mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and psychological conditions.

Mastery Experience

Mastery experience is defined as a student's perception of their capacity to complete a task successfully based on previous accomplishments (Zheng & Ardasheva, 2019). The participants, AM, DS, and CR, believed that their prior experiences were the sources of their self-efficacy in speaking English. AM claimed that she was sufficiently efficacious due to her prior expertise as a reporter.

The most vivid memory I have is of my first experience as a reporter, which was a new stage for me, requiring me to consider gestures, tasks, the material, and myself. Well, it was a fresh stage for me to improve myself at that time. This experience had a positive influence on my English-speaking performance as well. I feel more confident when I speak (AM).

As Abun et al. (2021) argue, work experience duration has an impact on self-efficacy. Experience in the workplace, especially mastery job experience, increases self-confidence to accomplish objectives. The more practice individuals had, the higher their self-efficacy. While AM attributed her sense of self-efficacy to her work experiences, CR, another research participant, claimed that her experience speaking and practicing full English in the classroom was the source of her sense of self-efficacy.

The most memorable experience was speaking and practicing full English, and I felt that my speaking also improved because I had to practice in every class (CR). Mohammed's (2021) study also showed that students' self-efficacy was impacted by their English speaking in and out of class, which supported the student's claim that speaking practice improved her self-efficacy.

Specifically, DS contended that the moment she gave the presentations to her classmates in the classroom was her source of self-efficacy influencing her speaking.

My memorable experience was when I presented the material in front of my classmates, which I had prepared carefully and had memorized beforehand. I think I performed well enough, and I never forgot it because I got good feedback from the lecturer and my friends, and this increased my motivation to continue to do my best to speak English in front of the class (DS).

According to the students' statements, mastering experiences influenced their self-efficacy in their ability to communicate in English in front of the class. This finding is supported by Aliyu, Korau, and Basiru's (2019) study, which indicated that oral presentations could support EFL learners since they could reduce students' speaking anxiety.

Vicarious Experience

Through vicarious experiences, self-efficacy was also derived. It describes how someone evaluates their own skills in comparison to how well others perform; it is the experience of witnessing peers complete a task well that motivates those individuals to be able to complete a similar task (Krismiyanti, 2021). In this study, the researchers wanted to know if the participants had role models who inspired them to improve their speaking English and how they motivated them. According to RP, her role models influenced her self-efficacy in enhancing her speaking abilities.

I was motivated to maintain improving my English by my role models. I was encouraged and occasionally intrigued by how they practiced to become fluent speakers, which further stoked my desire to learn English (RP).

Based on the interview above, the student emphasized that self-efficacy arose when she saw people who were used as role models, that motivated her to continue learning to improve her English-speaking skills. This is in line with the response given by CR, who said:

Seeing my lecturers as role models motivated me to speak English fluently like them. I also aspired to be as fluent in English as the several Indonesian artists or influencers I recognized on social media. One of them was also my sister, who works as an English teacher and speaks the language fluently. They were the ones who motivated me to continue honing my English (CR).

CR specified that in her daily life, she was inspired to keep learning English by her lecturers, Indonesian artists or influencers they saw on social media, and her sister. She claimed that these individuals greatly influenced her decision to keep learning the language.

These findings revealed that the students' immediate environment and virtual world could serve as a source of vicarious experience, which in turn contributes to their self-efficacy in speaking English. Regarding the participant's immediate surroundings, her siblings and lecturers served as role models and impacted her self-efficacy in improving her speaking skills. Additionally, the participant's speaking self-efficacy was impacted by the artists and influencers they saw in the virtual world. These findings are consistent with Kang's (2021) study, which highlights that an individual's self-efficacy was impacted by both virtual and direct experiences; similar to real-life vicarious experiences, virtual experiences are more likely to have an impact when the observers find the virtual model more meaningful.

Verbal Persuasion

Verbal persuasion is the next source of the students' self-efficacy. According to Lianto (2019), if there are prominent people who think that students can accomplish their obligations or fulfill their performance, particularly in class, then students' self-efficacy can also grow. Students' self-efficacy might rise when a teacher, friend, or even a parent persuades them that they are capable. According to the interview data, parents, friends, relatives, and teachers verbally persuaded the study participants. According to AM, verbal persuasion gained from home and school played a significant role in supporting her self-efficacy:

Lecturers frequently provided positive feedback, followed by my English teacher and my mother, who always encouraged me to keep going because if I do my best, I can become fluent in English and master it as I desire. She also advised me to limit my daily activities, even if they are only simple tasks, but one day I will become great (AM).

Additionally, AM stated that without encouraging influence from her environment, she would not be able to increase her self-efficacy in speaking English, as she clarified below:

I'm the type of person who, when one of my goals is not accomplished, instantly loses interest in the endeavor. Thus, in my opinion, verbal persuasiveness that is constructive is crucial (AM).

Particularly, RP, another participant, stated that the primary verbal persuasion impacting her self-efficacy in speaking English was praise. She received a lot of praise when she spoke in English. Her pronunciation of words was one of the things that people frequently praised her. RP stated:

When I utilize English, I frequently receive compliments, especially when I pronounce words correctly. Without the help of others around me, I wasn't sure I could get better at English since I thought that when I speak the language, there must be friends or others who support me in being a more capable speaker (RP).

Different from RP, DS admitted that she did not often get compliments on her English-speaking skill, but there were several occasions when she got compliments from her friends.

I wouldn't say frequently, but on a few occasions—most notably when I gave a presentation in front of the class—my friends complimented me on how well I spoke English (DS).

DS also explained that the compliments that she seldom gained from her lecturers and friends could become the source of her self-efficacy in speaking English:

I was inspired to continue improving my speaking skills by my lectures. I was delighted to receive a positive comment from them, particularly from my favorite university lecturer. It also makes me happy when my friends say I speak English well. I would be happier, though, if my lecturers gave me more praise than my friends (DS).

DS revealed that she could not improve her speaking skill without the support of the people around her, as she mentioned below.

I need support from those around me to stay motivated because words of encouragement, motivation, and praise can unintentionally boost my confidence for the future, especially if the support comes from people who could have had a big impact on my life (DS).

It could be concluded that verbal persuasion seemed to significantly impact the students' self-efficacy. The students admitted that they often received praise and constructive compliments from people around them, namely parents, friends, and lecturers. Support from those people helped them stay motivated to achieve their desired goals. These results are supported by other findings based on two previous studies. Lam and Cham's (2016) study

suggests that parents and teachers' persuasions could increase students' self-efficacy. Won et al. (2017) found that academic self-efficacy among students might be predicted solely by the persuasiveness of teachers. Higher levels of self-efficacy were more frequently reported by students who said they received more positive and encouraging feedback from their teachers. They highlight that students' parents and peers are important social figures. Along with social persuasions from teachers, some students may also face a considerable degree of social persuasions from peers and parents.

Psychological State

The students who participated in this study experienced various emotions related to their self-efficacy in speaking class. The following extracts describe the participants' emotions when presenting organized public speaking in front of peers using English. DS experienced emotional reaction, that was nervous, when speaking English due to doubting her own English proficiency.

The factors that made me nervous when speaking English in front of others were that I lacked confidence and I doubted my own abilities (DS).

Similar to DS, RP Also felt nervous when she started speaking English, worrying whether her classmates would be excited on her speaking. However, this negative emotion disappeared after she continued her presentation.

I was initially nervous for a number of reasons [when I presented in English]. Firstly, I was concerned about how well I understood the content, and occasionally I considered how I might effectively manage the class to do so and compel the audience to pay attention to what was being delivered. Then, if I am feeling agitated, it is because I began to feel calm and at ease during the presentation. This can have an impact on how I communicate concepts or opinions in front of a large group of people (RP).

In contrast, AM did not experience any negative emotional reaction during her English presentation. She was confident enough with her English presentation.

I was excited [to present in English] because I wanted to impress a large number of people and obtain a good score. Also, I wanted to impress myself and be satisfied with my English speaking and presentation (AM).

Similar to AM, CR was also confident during her presentation. She was influenced by positive reactions of her classmates and lecturers.

My lecturers and friends were really encouraging at that time. No one was saying, "Ew, what is this?" or displaying any negative facial expressions. As a result, my confidence increased during my English presentation (CR).

The above extracts suggest that the students could feel nervous when speaking English in front of others due to a lack of confidence in their own performances and speaking skills. However, they could feel excited because they were motivated to impress themselves and others, and they got positive responses from lecturers and classmates.

Furthermore, the following results demonstrate how the participants perceived their emotional regulation and whether or not this regulation influenced their self-efficacy. According to RP, positive thinking became her source efficacy to support her speaking performance:

Because I had practiced so much, I typically persuaded myself that I could perform or give the best performance. In order to control my emotions, I would say affirmations that reminded me of the pleasant things I would experience. For what reason? Positive thoughts will inevitably lead to positive outcomes. However, if I have negative opinions of myself and the audience, they would influence me negatively. Therefore, I tried to

control my emotions and subsequently made an effort to remain composed so that my buddies in speaking class could understand what I was saying (RP).

In CR's opinion, focusing on goal was a good source of self-efficacy to speak English since it could overcome negative feeling when speaking:

To keep my emotions under control, I had to concentrate on my objective. I needed to focus on my goals of achieving good grades and giving a strong presentation, not on my nervousness. I shouldn't worry since it could make me feel even more terrified (CR).

AM also argued that focus was an important part of regulating emotion, influencing her speaking skills. However, her focus depended a lot on her audience's non-verbal clues:

When speaking, I had to concentrate and then look into other people's eyes, whether it was the lecturer's or my friends'. If I looked at someone and they didn't look back, or even if just one person didn't look at me, I would be blank. I therefore observed the classroom environment, my classmates' faces, and their eyes in order to control and enhance my emotions and communicate effectively (AM).

Meanwhile, another participant, DS, did not rely on other people's reaction when speaking English, her focus was on herself by being optimistic about her own ability:

By maintaining an optimistic outlook, feeling that my performance was adequate, and persuading myself that I was prepared and ready, I was able to control my emotions and do my best. I believe that my ability to control my emotions helped me maintain my confidence (DS).

The above findings suggested that emotional reaction became the students source of self-efficacy to speak English well. They regulated their emotions to concentrate and think positively during their speaking performances. These findings agree with Usán Supervia and Quilez Robres's (2021) study, which highlights that emotional regulations and academic performance are positively connected with self-efficacy. Since anxiety, tension, and worry do not always have a negative impact on performance and are not always detrimental to self-efficacy (Singh & Rajalingam, 2012), it would be beneficial to teach students how to perceive negative emotions as beneficial to their personal and professional development (Setyaningsih et al., 2022).

The results of this study give some implications to the field of EFL teaching and learning. It is noteworthy that students' self-efficacy plays a significant role in their ability to successfully acquire English speaking abilities. In order to improve their speaking abilities, educational institutions should help EFL students develop their efficacy. For instance, during the teaching and learning process, teachers should verbally persuade students and offer them positive feedback to elicit good emotional reactions in order to increase students' efficacy. Teachers should also reassure students that it is acceptable to make mistakes when speaking English because it is a foreign language. This is essential to help them manage their emotions if they are still having issues speaking. To boost student efficacy through mastery experiences, a teacher could also offer students to select speaking assignments that range in difficulty from easy to challenging. If students choose resources that are appropriate for their level of knowledge, they will feel more comfortable when they speak since they think they can easily master particular topics.

CONCLUSION

Self-efficacy is an influential factor that determines the success of EFL students' speaking performance. This study aims to explore the sources of self-efficacy influencing the speaking

skills of EFL students. The study's findings indicate four sources of self-efficacy play an essential role in shaping students' performance in speaking. First, their sense of self-efficacy benefited from their mastery experiences of working as reporters, presenting in front of their peers, and regularly practicing speaking English in class. Second, the students' local surroundings and online environment may provide them with vicarious experience, which would boost their self-efficacy in their ability to communicate in English. Third, the students' self-efficacy was also derived from verbal persuasions from their parents, friends, and lecturers in English. Fourth, the students' psychological states became their source of self-efficacy to speak English well. They managed their emotions to concentrate and think clearly during their speaking engagements. This study has some implications for policymakers, EFL teachers, and future researchers. Educational policymakers should include the issue of improving EFL students' self-efficacy as one of the school curriculum's goals and give understanding to EFL teachers through workshops concerning the importance of students' self-efficacy in learning a foreign language. EFL teachers should provide teaching strategies and feedback that can rouse students' self-efficacy in EFL learning. For future researchers, this study only concentrated on the sources of students' speaking efficacy and was conducted in an Aceh-specific context. Future studies may investigate the self-efficacy of EFL students and teachers in relation to other focuses such as motivation, identity, and agency in a variety of contexts.

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