

FROM SELF-EFFICACY TO SPEAKING PROFICIENCY: INVESTIGATING THE CORRELATION BETWEEN SELF- EFFICACY AND SPEAKING SKILL

Ni Luh Putu Ita Gayatri¹, I Gusti Ngurah Agung Wijaya Mahardika²,
Iida Bagus Gde Phalaguna³

1,2,3 Universitas Hindu Negeri I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa Denpasar
putuita840@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Speaking proficiency is a crucial component of English language learning, particularly for students preparing to become future English teachers. However, many learners face challenges in developing oral competence due to low confidence and limited self-efficacy. This study investigates the correlation between speaking self-efficacy and speaking skill among fourth-semester undergraduate students of the English Language Education Department (ELED) at I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa State Hindu University Denpasar. A total of 65 students participated as respondents. The research employed a quantitative correlational design, using a self-efficacy questionnaire to measure students' beliefs about their speaking abilities and a speaking test to assess their oral performance. Data were analyzed using Pearson's product-moment correlation. The findings revealed a statistically significant but low positive correlation ($r = .302$, $p = .015$) between speaking self-efficacy and speaking skill. This suggests that while self-efficacy contributes to speaking performance, it is not the only factor influencing students' oral competence. Other variables such as motivation, anxiety, and exposure to authentic communication may also play an important role. The study concludes that fostering students' speaking self-efficacy through supportive learning environments and communicative activities can enhance their speaking skills and better prepare them for their future roles as English teachers.

Keywords: speaking self-efficacy, speaking skill, English Language Education, correlation, language learning

INTRODUCTION

English language learning is increasingly vital in Indonesia, as it facilitates access to global knowledge, enhances career opportunities, and supports international communication. Recent studies emphasize the necessity of English proficiency for academic success and participation in the global economy (Supriadiputra, 2021). Many Indonesians study English, the current international lingua franca, to keep up with global developments in education, science, and technology (Dana & Aminatun, 2022). Thus, English mastery is important not only for students of the English Language Education Department (ELED) but also for all Indonesian learners, as it serves as a primary medium for global communication. In Indonesia, English is the most frequently taught foreign language in schools, requiring students to acquire proficiency in the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these, speaking is considered the most challenging yet crucial skill to master.

Speaking is a key component of language competence, essential for both academic success and effective communication in diverse contexts (Yu et al., 2020). As a productive skill, speaking involves complex aspects such as comprehension, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and fluency (Dana & Aminatun, 2022). It is regarded as the most crucial of the four language skills for learning a foreign or second language (Rao, 2019), as it engages both the brain and the vocal tract to produce language, thereby functioning as the primary medium of communication. Amiruddin et al. (2020) highlight that speaking not only serves as a foundation for communication but also facilitates intercultural interaction, cross-cultural understanding, and professional advancement.

For ELED students, speaking proficiency is particularly important, as it equips them to deliver classroom presentations, participate in academic organizations, and, most importantly, prepare for their future roles as English teachers. At I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa State Hindu

University, ELED students are required to complete three levels of speaking courses—elementary, intermediate, and advanced. Ideally, after completing these courses, students are expected to achieve a competent level of speaking proficiency. However, studies indicate that many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners still achieve low scores in speaking and struggle with oral communication despite years of study (Chin et al., 2024). Low confidence has been identified as a major factor contributing to these challenges (Hidayat & Devi, 2024).

One of the psychological constructs most strongly associated with speaking ability is self-efficacy. Defined as an individual's belief in their capacity to accomplish specific tasks, self-efficacy influences motivation, persistence, and performance (Aulia et al., 2023). In the context of language learning, speaking self-efficacy refers to learners' confidence in their ability to communicate effectively in English. Research has shown that students with higher levels of speaking self-efficacy are more motivated to practice regularly and seek opportunities to engage in oral communication (Zulkarnain & Widiati, 2023). This confidence enables them to perform better in demanding situations such as public speaking or interactions with native speakers (Aurelia & Putri, 2024). While related to self-confidence, self-efficacy is distinct: it concerns belief in one's ability to achieve specific tasks, whereas self-confidence is a broader sense of self-worth.

Previous studies have highlighted the relationship between self-efficacy and speaking performance. Devi et al. (2021) found a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.565$) between self-efficacy and speaking skills among tenth-grade students, indicating that higher self-efficacy contributes to better speaking outcomes. Similarly, Hermagustiana et al. (2021) reported a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.605$) between self-efficacy and speaking performance, while also noting a negative correlation between self-efficacy and learning anxiety ($r = -0.518$). In contrast, Au and Bardakçı (2020) found no significant relationship between speaking self-efficacy and oral performance, suggesting that factors such as sample size and learning context may influence outcomes. Additional studies (Chen, 2020; Sudirman et al., 2020) further confirm that while self-efficacy often enhances English performance, its strength of influence may vary.

Most of these studies, however, have focused on secondary school contexts, leaving limited research on university students, particularly those preparing to become English teachers. To address this gap, the present study investigates the correlation between speaking self-efficacy and speaking skill among fourth-semester ELED students at I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa State Hindu University in the academic year 2024/2025. By focusing on this specific population, the study provides insights into how self-efficacy influences speaking competence in future English teachers, offering implications for both teacher education and English language pedagogy in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative correlational design to investigate the relationship between students' speaking self-efficacy and speaking skill. Speaking self-efficacy was measured using a Likert-scale questionnaire adapted from relevant theories, while speaking skill was assessed through a speaking test evaluated with a standardized rubric.

The population consisted of 65 fourth-semester students of the English Language Education Department (ELED) at I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa State Hindu University Denpasar in the academic year 2024/2025. These students had completed three levels of speaking courses. Since the population size exceeded the minimum requirement of 30 participants for quantitative research (Gall et al., 2003), the entire population was taken as the sample.

Data collection was conducted offline in classrooms. Each session lasted 100 minutes, beginning with the questionnaire (5–10 minutes), followed by the speaking test, where each student was allocated up to 5 minutes. Data were collected class by class until all students

participated. To ensure research ethics, participants were informed about the purpose, procedures, and their rights before giving written consent. Personal information was anonymized using alphanumeric codes (e.g., A001, B001). All data were securely stored and used only for research purposes.

The data were analyzed using Pearson's product-moment correlation to test the hypothesis. If assumptions of normality were not met, Spearman's rank correlation was employed. The strength of correlation was interpreted using Springer's (2009) guidelines, ranging from negligible (0 to 0.19), weak (0.20 to 0.39), moderate (0.40 to 0.59), strong (0.60 to 0.79), to very strong (0.80 to 1).

FINDINGS

Data were collected from 65 fourth-semester English Language Education Department (ELED) students at I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa State Hindu University across five classes: A (Bangli), A1 (Denpasar), A2 (Denpasar), B1 (Denpasar), and B2 (Denpasar). Speaking self-efficacy was measured using a 28-item questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale ("strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"), while speaking performance was assessed through a speaking test evaluated with a rubric covering fluency, comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Bandura, 1989).

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test showed that self-efficacy scores were normally distributed ($p = 0.200 > 0.05$). This finding confirmed the assumption of normality, validating the use of parametric tests such as Pearson's correlation. A linearity test further confirmed that the relationship between speaking self-efficacy and speaking performance followed a straight-line pattern, meeting another key requirement for Pearson's correlation (Pramerta, 2021).

Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a coefficient of $r = 0.302$ with a significance value of $p = 0.015$. Since $p < 0.05$, the correlation was statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. These results indicate a positive and significant relationship between students' speaking self-efficacy and their speaking performance: students with higher self-efficacy tended to perform better in speaking tasks. According to Springer (2009), a correlation of 0.302 falls within the "weak" range, meaning that while the relationship is statistically significant, its strength is modest.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study revealed a low but significant positive correlation between speaking self-efficacy and speaking performance. This indicates that while self-efficacy contributes to students' speaking ability, its influence is relatively modest. Speaking performance is likely shaped by various other factors, including prior speaking experience, learning strategies, and psychological variables such as anxiety and motivation (Dörnyei, 2005; Bandura, 1997). Thus, enhancing self-efficacy alone may not guarantee substantial improvement in speaking skills.

The statistical analysis confirmed rejection of the null hypothesis, showing that self-efficacy and speaking performance are significantly related among fourth-semester ELED students at I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa Denpasar State Hindu University. Pearson's correlation coefficient ($r = .305$, $p = .015$) reflects a low-to-moderate positive relationship (Field, 2013; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This aligns with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986), which suggests that learners with higher self-efficacy are more likely to engage confidently, persist through difficulties, and manage anxiety, all of which can enhance performance.

These findings are consistent with Asakereh and Dehghannezhad (2015), who also identified a positive relationship between EFL learners' self-efficacy and speaking proficiency. Similarly, Luoma (2004) emphasized that psychological readiness, particularly confidence and self-belief, plays a key role in effective speaking performance. Nonetheless, the relatively

modest correlation observed in this study suggests that self-efficacy is only one of several determinants of speaking ability. Other influential factors may include instructional quality, opportunities for oral practice, individual learner differences (e.g., motivation, personality, cognitive ability), and socio-cultural influences (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

In the Indonesian EFL context, additional challenges may further moderate this relationship. Limited opportunities for authentic speaking practice, classroom anxiety, and a curriculum that emphasizes written or test-based assessments can reduce the extent to which self-efficacy translates into measurable speaking performance. Despite this, the observed correlation underscores the pedagogical importance of fostering students' self-efficacy. Strategies such as creating supportive classroom environments, setting achievable speaking goals, and providing constructive feedback may enhance learners' belief in their abilities, indirectly supporting performance outcomes.

The findings also resonate with Sudirman et al. (2020), who examined the link between self-confidence and speaking performance among senior high school students. Although their results ($r = .288$, $p = .088$) revealed only a low correlation and failed to reach statistical significance, both studies highlight the complex and context-dependent relationship between self-efficacy-related constructs and speaking performance. Together, these findings suggest that while self-efficacy is positively related to speaking ability, the relationship is nuanced and mediated by other factors.

One explanation lies in the multifaceted nature of speaking skills. As Luoma (2004) argued, successful speaking involves not only linguistic proficiency but also interaction management, clarity of message delivery, and effective communication strategies. Thus, even learners with high self-efficacy may face challenges if they struggle in these specific areas. Moreover, as Bandura (1997) noted, self-efficacy is a domain-specific construct, meaning that students may feel confident in general academic abilities without necessarily possessing high self-efficacy in speaking.

Overall, this study, alongside Sudirman et al. (2020), contributes to the broader discourse on the role of self-efficacy in language learning. Both studies highlight the importance of recognizing the complex interplay between self-efficacy and other cognitive, psychological, and contextual variables. Future research could employ longitudinal or experimental designs to explore causal relationships, or use qualitative approaches such as interviews and focus groups to gain deeper insights into learners' experiences.

In summary, while self-efficacy is an important predictor of academic success, its role in speaking performance is neither direct nor exclusive. Effective pedagogical practices should therefore take a holistic approach, addressing not only learners' confidence but also the multiple linguistic, psychological, and contextual factors that shape speaking performance in EFL contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the correlation between speaking self-efficacy and speaking performance among fourth-semester English Language Education Department (ELED) students at I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa State Hindu University. The findings revealed a statistically significant but weak positive correlation ($r = .305$, $p = .015$), indicating that while students with higher self-efficacy tend to achieve better speaking performance, the influence of self-efficacy alone remains limited.

These results support Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that self-efficacy fosters confidence, persistence, and resilience in learning tasks. They are also consistent with prior studies, emphasizing the role of psychological readiness in language learning. However, the relatively modest strength of the correlation suggests that speaking

ability is shaped by multiple factors beyond self-efficacy, such as prior speaking experience, learning strategies, motivation, anxiety, instructional quality, and socio-cultural influences.

Pedagogically, the findings highlight the importance of fostering students' self-efficacy while also adopting a holistic approach to speaking instruction. Encouraging supportive classroom environments, providing constructive feedback, and creating authentic speaking opportunities may strengthen learners' confidence and performance simultaneously.

Future research should consider longitudinal or experimental designs, as well as qualitative methods, to further explore the dynamic relationship between self-efficacy and speaking skills. Such studies may offer deeper insights into the complex interplay of psychological, linguistic, and contextual factors that shape learners' oral proficiency. In conclusion, while self-efficacy is an important predictor of speaking success, it should be viewed as one component within a broader constellation of factors influencing language learning outcomes.

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