

# EFL Learners' Perceptions towards their Self-Efficacy in Learning Public Speaking

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## Abstract

This article reports on EFL learners' perception towards their self-efficacy in public speaking course. Self-efficacy has been defined as a person's perceptions of his or her capabilities to complete a specific task with the skills that s/he possesses (Bandura, 1997). Thus, It is important for students to measure their skill in order to improve achievement in public speaking course. This research employed a survey study by means of two data collection techniques; questionnaire and interview. The sample of this research was 60 third year students of English department Galuh University. The research result showed that students' self-efficacy improved after learning public speaking course and the students felt confident using English in front of people. Furthermore, self-efficacy affected not only in public speaking course but also in the other courses. Meanwhile, the high and low self-efficacy might be affected students' achievements, however, they had similar purpose in public speaking courses, which they wanted to speak formally without feeling nervous. They had various efforts and strategies to achieve success in this course. This research concludes that self-efficacy in public speaking learning process to third year students of English department Galuh University was important to improve their achievement in speaking skill and improve their confident.

Keywords: perception; public speaking; self-efficacy; speaking skill; survey study.

#### Introduction

Learning is a process of change in human personality, and these changes are shown in the form of increasing quality and quantity of behavior such as increasing skills, knowledge, attitudes, habits, understanding, skills, thinking power, and other abilities. That statement has a relationship with the social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory proposes that individuals do not simply respond to environmental influences, but rather they actively seek and interpret information (Nevid, 2009). Social cognitive covers many topics, self-efficacy is one of the topic which reveal in social cognitive theory. The authors focus on self-efficacy to examine EFL learners' perceptions and effect in learning public speaking course. Self-efficacy refers to the ability which is accompanied by belief to do something to achieve certain goals (Raoofi, Tan, and Chen, 2012). Furthermore, according to Bandura (1997) as cited in Sargedna, Lee and Kusey (2017: 3), self-efficacy beliefs are believed to mediate personal agency by influencing individuals' choices, efforts, anxieties, and the perseverance with which they face challenges and new tasks. Thus, if someone feels challenged in doing a task and believe can reach the goals, it means someone has a high self-efficacy. Moreover, in public speaking course, he or she automatically can pass it smoothly. Sometimes, someone has anxiety in public speaking, but the handling of the anxiety is different between one person to the others depends on their self-efficacy.

Several previous studies about anxiety such as, pribyl et all (2001) and Tsiplakides, I., and Keramida, A. (2009), Khan, Z., A & Zafar, S. (2010). Those researchers figured out about how to overcome the anxiety in public speaking. Besides, syafryadin (2017) also talked about anxiety in public speaking. Based on the explanation stated previously, the present research was conducted to find out the EFL learners perception about their self-efficacy in public speaking course and to investigate the effect of high and low self-efficacy towards learning public speaking course. Two research questions are formulated as follow:

1. What are the perceptions of the EFL learners towards their self-efficacy in learning public speaking course?

2. What is the effect of high and low self-efficacy towards learning public speaking course?

#### **Theoretical Framework**

#### Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy has been defined as a person's perceptions of his/her capabilities to complete a specific task with the skills that he or she possesses (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy is defined as the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations (Bandura, 1995: 2). In simpler terms, self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to be successful in a particular situation. Bandura refers to confidence as the strength of belief but believes that confidence does not specify what the belief is about.

There are four major sources affecting one's development of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997): mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological states. Mastery experience refers to the gained experience from performing tasks. Vicarious experience is formed from the observation of others, such as friends, classmates or other peers. Social persuasion which means encouragement, praise and other positive comments or feedback that function as a facilitator to enhance one's self-efficacy.

## Self-efficacy in public speaking course

According to (Buchanan, 2016) there are four ways to improve self-efficacy such as mastery experiences, social modeling, social persuasion and physiology. Besides, self-efficacy has benefit not only used in speaking skill, but also in the other skills such as listening, reading and writing. The authors relate self-efficacy in this research with public speaking course which public speaking is an ability to speak up in front of people with the formal style of discussion. According to Dewi (2013: 1), public speaking in a brief definition is how to speak in public which demand the fluency of speaking, emotional control, diction, and tone of speaking. However, everyone has different self-efficacy – high, middle or even low. Certainly, public

speaking is unordinary style of speaking skill, it needs training to bring the good result. The use of formal language, the purposeful content of speaking and the gesture are considered in public speaking. In conclusion that the higher self-efficacy the better public speaking ability.

As for the composition of material from public speaking course which conducted in English Education Program Galuh University. There are sixteen sessions in one semester. The topics are as follow : Introduction to Public Speaking syllabus, Informative Speech (Outstanding Figure), Informative Speech (Favourite Places), Entertaining speech (Award/congratulatory Speech), Entertaining speech (Birthday and wedding Speech), Persuasive Speech (Promoting something), Argumentative Speech, Seminar Presentation (1), Seminar Presentation (2), Handling Question (1), Handling Question (2), Debate, Debate (2), Panel Discussion, and two session filled by mid-term test and final examination.

## **Research Methodology**

The research design used was survey study. Survey are widely used for collecting data in most areas of social inquiry, from politics to sociology, from education to linguistics (Nunan, 1992: 140). This research was a small-scale study. As stated by Nunan (1992: 142) that small-scale studies may decide to use nonprobability samples because they are easier to establish and, in consequence, cheaper. Ary, Jacob and Sorensen (2010: 374), says there are four survey categories, if approved based on their scope and focus, they are: (1) a census of tangibles, (2) a census of intangibles, (3) a sample survey of tangibles, and (4) a sample survey of intangibles. The characteristic of this research tends to a cencus of intangibles, because this census deals with construct that are not directly observable but must be inferred from indirect measures. Furthermore, census of intangibles gives the information about achievements, aspirations, attitudes or even perceptions. This research was conducted at Galuh University. The population of this research was the third year students of English department Galuh University. The technique sampling of this study was total population sampling. The total number of sample were 69 people. They were divided into six classes, class A, B, C, D, E and F.

The data of this research was obtained from close-ended questionnaire, openended questionnaire and interview. The data from close-ended questionnaire analyzed by using close items on the questionnaire and the percentage computation. The authors used Likert Scale to measure the data from the closeended questions. Meanwhile, transcribing and interpretating were the selected technique to analyze the data from the open-ended questionnaire. To analyze the data from interview, the authors transcribed the data and interpreted the transcribing data. According to Brown (2001: 215), transcribing means making a copy, arrangement, or record of the data with the purpose of reducing the data to a form that can easily be stored, accessed, sorted, and analyzed. Sthe interviews were in Indonesian, the extracts to be presented translated into English and crosschecked by the authors.

#### Findings and discussions

From the close-ended questionnaire, there were 60 of 69 respondents who filled the close-ended questionnaire, it consisted of fifteen statements. Meanwhile, there was open-ended questionnaire, it consisted of four questions and consisted of three categories: 1) students' perception, 2) students' feeling, and 3) students' motivation.

Based on the result of the data analysis from each close-ended questionnaires responses, to answer the first research question. The authors found that the students' perceptions towards public speaking course as follows. From the first statement, it showed that most of students (62%) N=37 answered agree, it can be said that self-efficacy was important in public speaking course. The second statement showed that almost half of students (48%) N=29 answered uncertain, it can be said that they still did not do a good performance yet in public speaking course. The third statement showed almost half of students (48.9%) N=29 answered agree, it can be said that they still that they have good confidence when they talked to people in English. The fourth statement showed that most of students (55%) N=33 answered agree, it can be said that they felt confident speech in front of the class using English. The fifth statement showed that almost half of students (45%) N=27 answered agree, it can be

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said that they able to kept their speech in English when they were disturbed by their friends in the class. The sixth statement showed that most of students (57%) N=34 answered uncertain, it can be said that they supposed that public speaking was enjoy and sometimes challenging. The seventh statement showed that most of students (52%) N=31 answered agree, it can be said that speech in the classroom was enjoyed. The eighth statement showed that most of the students (52%) N=31 answered strongly agree, it can be said that they wanted to have good ability in speaking, especially when they spoke in front of people. The ninth statement showed that most of the students (57%) N=34 answered strongly agree, it can be said that students' goals in public speaking was fluent when they delivered speech in front of people. The tenth statement showed that most of the students (60%) N=36 answered agree, it can be said that public speaking was enjoyed. The eleventh statement showed that almost half of students (48.3%) N=29 answered uncertain, it can be said that they sometimes did mistakes when deliver speech in public speaking course. The twelfth statement showed that almost of the students (62%) N=37 answered uncertain, it can be said that they sometimes obtained difficulties to focus while they were speech in front of people in public speaking course. The thirteenth statement showed that most of students (57%) N=34 answered agree, it can be said that they have intrinsic motivation, they could built up motivation by themselves. The fourteenth statement showed that most of students (62%) N=37 answered uncertain, it can be said that they sometimes active or not in question and answer session in public speaking course. The fifteenth statement showed that most of students (53%) N=32 answered uncertain, it can be said that they sometimes could communicated fluently with their friends in public speaking course.

Meanwhile, there was the data analysis from open-ended questionnaire. The authors found that the students' perceptions towards public speaking course as follows. From the first question, the students answered totally agree that self-efficacy was very important in public speaking course, because they thought that without self-efficacy public speaking course would not run smoothly. They showed that selfefficacy could improve self-confidence, motivation to learn, and speaking ability in formal style. Also, self-efficacy could reduce nervousness. Moreover, self-efficacy

greatly affect how people feel, think and behave. It could assist the students to aware about their fluency when speaking, pronouncing and selecting the vocabulary. However, a student stated that self-efficacy needs to be performed, because it would measure whether high or not the self-efficacy when they performed in front of people.

From the second questions, the students answered that they felt proud, grateful, happy and brave, when their skills in public speaking course affect the other courses. They assumed that self-efficacy was not only needed in public speaking course but also in the other courses and they felt more confident. They believe that self-efficacy was something must be owned by everyone, it means that self-efficacy had a big role for the other courses to improve their speaking skill. They thought if the achievement in the other course are good, it means that their self-efficacy will improve. For instance, in each course they have done presentation and some activities which need self-efficacy, thus, by self-efficacy they were ready to do assignments and dare to be a good speaker. They believe if someone is good at public speaking and has a good self-confidence, they will have good achievement in the other courses. However, there were three students who felt no differences when learning public speaking and there was no improvement on their self-efficacy. Besides, there were no differences revealed to the other courses affected by selfefficacy. There were five students who did not answer the question. Nevertheless, there were two students who were confused with self-efficacy and they assumed that self-efficacy was a method for teaching learning.

Furthermore, the third question, the students answered that most of their selfefficacy increased while or after conducted public speaking course. Self-efficacy assisted the students to gather and to build self-confidence. Their self-efficacy increased because they were pleased to speak in front of people. Meanwhile, practicing a lot was the students' effort to increase self-efficacy. Moreover, they could control themselves to speak in front of people and could get their own satisfaction when they have a good result for their self-efficacy. However, a small number of them did not find the differences, or even they experienced to get decrease self-efficacy, because of some factors such as nervousness and did not

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have enough confidence. Moreover, they got anxious and finally got scared of what they would like to say, they afraid of getting inappropriate grammar or sometimes they felt their self-efficacy increasing or decreasing, because they have different speaking skill. Sometimes they experienced getting increased or decreased selfefficacy, it depended on their mood.

Moreover, from the fourth question, it showed that various ways of students to find their sources of self-efficacy. Firstly, the students found their self-efficacy when they spoke in front of people to present their assignment, especially in public speaking course and did activities such as speech, discussion or presentation. Thus, the effects were more confident and less nervous to speak in front of people. Secondly, they found their self-efficacy from support of their friends and families. Thirdly, they found the source when they conducted the examination and presented a performance. Fourthly, they found source of self-efficacy through vicarious experiences. Furthermore, they also found source of self-efficacy by watching a TED talks which means a video created from a presentation at the main TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design), watching many idol videos in abroad, reading books, reading essays, and reading articles. There was a student stated that self-efficacy would not find without any encouragement. However, there were four students who did not know exactly about their sources of self-efficacy.

The result of interview was aimed to know the differences between students' high self-efficacy and students' low self-efficacy. The differences of self-efficacy were looked from their achievement, effort, strategy, interest and so on in public speaking course. Even though sometimes some people assumed that students with high self-efficacy would be better in their achievement and strategy in face the task, and the students with low self-efficacy would not. From the result above, the authors found not only good side from students with high self-efficacy, but also sometimes they did something that students with low self-efficacy did. As well as students with low self-efficacy, they were stereotyped by something negative, but they also sometimes did what students with high self-efficacy did. The difference is how high and low their self-

efficacy and what effects they made in public speaking course, one of the effect can be achievement.

Self-efficacy has an important role for students, because it describes individuals' beliefs in their capabilities (Alawiyah, 2018). As well as the students statement that self-efficacy was important to learn in public speaking. It means they need self-efficacy in learning public speaking course in order to improve their self-confident even reduced the anxiety. Self-efficacy concerns with someone's perception about capability to create his or her own achievement (Bandura, 1997). The students also create their achievement in public speaking course, as their self-efficacy was affected to the others courses so it was increase. Besides, self-efficacy also may influence performing the task (Sundari & Dasmo, 2014, p. 206). The result of the task will be based on the students' self-efficacy. Thus, self-efficacy is important for gaining achievement in every course. In speaking, sometimes EFL learners do not feel confident with their performance which ends up poorly (Alawiyah, 2018). However, after learning public speaking course, their confidence to perform in front of the class was improved, because they trained in every meeting of public speaking course.

Based on the result of the research, at least half of students could communicate with the other in public speaking course after learning public speaking course. Public speaking helped the students to improved self-efficacy. The same as stated by Wang et al. (2018: 234) self-efficacy as an individual's belief or confidence in his or her ability to use the English language to communicate with others, understand English conversations, read materials, and write in English. Furthermore, speaking in front of peers provokes anxiety in foreign language learners as they are afraid of making mistakes and being laughed at (Mede & Karaırmak, 2017). However, the result of this research revealed that mostly the students be able to kept their communication in front of the class such as discussion, speech and so on, even though there was disturbance from their peers or the other disturbance that could break the focus.

The result of the successful of public speaking course helped by self-efficacy, they gained their own satisfaction when they have a good result for their selfefficacy. Besides, the sources of self-efficacy varies, through mastery experiences,

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vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and positive emotional states, the four major sources of self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1995: 71-72). It was the same with the students when they speak in front of people to present their assignment, especially in public speaking course and did activities such as speech, discussion or presentation, they gained vicarious experiences.

Secondly, the authors discussed the result of the research based on the data from interview. The authors have interviewing and gained the data from the semistructured interview to know students' effect of self-efficacy in public speaking course. In this section, there were two categories of student, they were five students with high self-efficacy and five students with low self-efficacy. A student with a higher level of self-efficacy achieved better scores than learners with lower levels of self-efficacy regardless of their real ability (Lent et al, 1984). Nevertheless, that statement was slightly irrelevant if compared with the effort that students did, sometimes the students with low self-efficacy did what students high self-efficacy on the second or foreign language learning in general and the effect on specific skills, such as writing, reading and listening as well as strategy use in particular (Liu, 2013: 28). As well as in speaking skill especially in public speaking course, the effect of self-efficacy also revealed such as more confident, less nervous, dare to speak using English and so on.

The data of the interview revealed that all of the students have positive goal in public speaking course such as fluent in speaking English, improve self-confident, reduce anxiety and so on. Furthermore, as stated by Paltridge and Starfield (2013) as cited in Zhang and Ardasheva (2018) the fundamental goal of English Public Speaking teaching is to help learners acquire and use English to achieve academic, professional, or occupation goals. Both students with high self-efficacy and low selfefficacy has problem in public speaking course. Most of students with high selfefficacy stated that their biggest problems were nervous. Furthermore, most of students with low self-efficacy stated that their biggest problem were less preparation, it caused they did not have enough motivation. As stated by Alawiyah (2018), other reason is that student lack of motivation to practice the language in

daily conversation that they are too shy in conversation. Because practice is one of preparation in public speaking course.

In addition all of the students have problem in learning public speaking course. Half of the students felt enjoyed, uncertain, even never interested in public speaking course. It means they sometimes enjoy or not. It caused the situation in the class or from the psychology. All of the students also have strategies in public speaking course and most of them have the same strategies such as preparation of the material and practicing. As defined by Magogwe and Oliver (2007), self-efficacy has also been found related with learners' strategy use in foreign language learning. In public speaking course there will be found self-efficacy as one of student strategy. However, there was a student who has not any strategy in public speaking course.

Besides, there were students' opinion about a good speaker in public speaking course. The focus is typically on initiating public speaking skills such as body language, eye contact, vocal variety, conversational style, clear articulation, idea development, organization, confidence, interaction with audience, and meeting allotted time (Mortaji, 2018: 82). However, half number of students showed that the good speaker mush have good appearance to make interested the audience. The other opinions such as delivered the message well, interact with the audience, has a systematic talks arrangement and do not be too stiff. The students also have certain way or key to gain success in public speaking course. Half number of students stated how to gain success was practice. However, the other students stated that the key were confidents and have preparation.

Furthermore, the use of aids or note in public speaking is beneficial. However, they used it for different usage. Most of students using note to write the main point of talks in order to avoided the mistakes when have forgot. It was external fear which is deal largely with relating to the audience during the speech. For example, a speaker's anxiety related to forgetting information and freezing up during the speech represents an internal fear (LeFebvre, LeFebvre & Allen, 2018). Thus, most of the students used note to avoid forgetting information. Besides, there was a student who used note when he or she was in deadline in order could see it totally when perform in public speaking course. Besides the use of note, there was also student effort

during in public speaking course that they have done. Most of students effort was a lot of preparation such as practice and prepare the material and the other students faced public speaking enjoy or even they did not prepare a lot or have minimum preparation. Furthermore, students who ultimately spent more time in delivery and practice earned higher speech grades (Mazer & Titsworth, 2012: 239). Therefore, the students with more practice would gain better score and improvement skill.

In this research, the authors also asked the students about which topic they want to bring when they have an opportunity to share. It aimed to know how high their enthusiastic in public speaking course. As stated by Mazer & Titsworthif (2012: 238) a student has vested interest in a certain topic, he or she might spend additional time preparing for the speech through research, outlining, and practice activities that might ultimately affect speech grades. As well as in this research, the students asked by the authors about if they were have an opportunity to deliver speech or other activities in public speaking course. They would made well preparation because they chose the topic based on their interest. There were varies answers from the students and they seemed interested when they asked about it. Also, they took the topic with the benefit. Furthermore, the students did evaluation on their progress in public speaking course. Certainly, their progress was improved in public speaking course.

Summing up, based on the questionnaire and interview, self-efficacy is very important for achievement, especially in public speaking course as language learning. Every human has self-efficacy, however, the levels are different, there are high, medium or even low. Self-efficacy can be trained to be high, by some effort that can improve it. Also, self-efficacy has great effect to the students' achievement in learning public speaking and even the other courses.

## Conclusions and suggestions

Referring to the research questions of the present study, it concludes that selfefficacy is important in language learning, especially in public speaking course. It can make students' achievement increase and reduce the anxiety. Thus, they obtain

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the results based on the measurement of their self-efficacy, even though the expectation of them are similar which they want to obtain the good results in public speaking course, nevertheless the efforts are different.

Besides, there are high and low categories of self-efficacy, although they have different ways to do the efforts in public speaking course, sometimes they have similar problem to deal with, such as nerve, less preparation in courses and so on. Moreover, the sources of self-efficacy which the students obtain are different, such as experiences, support from friends and family. However a small number of the students did not find their source of self-efficacy. Furthermore, self-efficacy not only has benefit in language learning or public speaking course, but also in the other course in academic field. The advantages of self-efficacy could affect the students, such as being more confident, less anxiety, have good result in courses and so on. Besides, the weakness of self-efficacy is when the students have low self-efficacy, their willingness to do the task would not high as the students who have be high as the students who have high self-efficacy. Thus, it might influence students' achievement.

Referring the conclusion stated previously, the authors give some suggestions for EFL learners and further researchers who will be carrying out the research in the similar field. For the EFL learners, they must be aware to the existence of self-efficacy, so that self-efficacy can be determined and measured. The students will more confident and gain the source of self—efficacy so that the students could improve and justify something wrong in themselves. Besides, improving self-efficacy could make the great achievement, not only in public speaking course, but also in other courses. For the other researchers, it is suggested to conduct the research concerning the implementation of self-efficacy in listening skill, reading skill and writing skill. In addition, it is recommended that further research concern the accurate measurement of self-efficacy from different aspects. Thus the result will be more detail.

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