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The Correlation between Self-Efficacy and Speaking Ability among Junior High School Students

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A B S T R A C T

This research purpose to examine the correlation between students' self-efficacy and their speaking ability among Junior High School. Speaking is an essential skill in learning English; however, many students still face difficulties, which may be influenced by psychological factors such as self-efficacy. This study was conducted using a quantitative methodology with a correlational design. The participants were 20 seventh-undergraduate students. Data were composed with a self-efficacy using Children's Self-Efficacy in Learning English Questionnaire (C-SELEQ) and a speaking test using Public Speaking Test Rubric (PSCR) assessing fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. The data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment correlation after the normality assumption was fulfilled. The results showed that the correlation coefficient was r = -0.363 with a significance value of p = 0.115. This indicates a negative correlation between the two variables, which is not statistically significant. Therefore, the conclusions refer that, within this sample, self-efficacy does not a sufficiently valid determinant of students' speaking ability. The outcome of this research indicate that self-efficacy is not the primary factor influencing speaking ability. There are many other factors, such as the Dunning-Kruger effect, which could be one of the reasons the data is not statistically significant.

Keywords: *Self-Efficacy, Speaking Ability, Correlational Design*

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INTRODUCTION

English is considered a crucial requirement to attain social, educational and financial progress around the world (Fandiño et al., 2019). Speaking is one of the four primary language skills essential for communication when language learners use a language different from their native tongue. Speaking ability can be measured by how well someone is able to speak in everyday situations. (Namaziandost et al., 2019). Speaking skills are obligatory for any student nowadays, as this ability guarantees the quality of the student's linguistic capabilities.

Speaking is one of the English language skills that greatly supports the teaching and learning process, helping students become more active both in and out of school (Wang et al., 2024). Still, speaking difficulties such as confidence, vocabulary limit, pronunciation, and nerves before expressing ideas sometimes bother students. Of all the potential factors contributing to students' lack of speaking skills, the researcher is particularly interested in the students' psychological factors, specifically their self-efficacy.

Speaking is indeed an important influence when students decide to study English. Speaking is the process of transforming meaning (ideas or concepts in the mind) into articulatory movements (involving the mouth, tongue, and lips) to produce spoken language (Roelofs, 2023). Good speaking skills can support in many fields (Li et al., 2025). This is because English is used as an international language, so its role is not only for social but also for various other fields that require good speaking skills so that there are no mistakes in communication. Building confidence when speaking English is important. Real-time conversation is one of the best ways to practice. There is no substitute for it because it allows you to be more effective and have more fun with the language.

Self-efficacy is particular psychological factors well known can influence speaking ability (Leeming, 2017). Self-efficacy could be defined as the belief one has about their ability to plan and complete actions (Waddington, 2023). Researchers believe that people with high self-efficacy also have strong speaking skills. They will have more motivation and speak more often. Self-efficacy refers to perceived abilities to learn or perform actions at exact degrees. Theory and studies guide the concept that self-efficacy is a critical motivational construct which can have an effect on alternatives, attempt, staying power, and fulfilment. Self-efficacy is a private assemble that effects and is prompted by behaviours and social environmental variables. Scientific research of self-efficacy started in clinical studies but because has accelerated into numerous fields. In schooling, a critical studies extension turned into to contexts regarding getting to know. The formation of self-efficacy can be caused by social environmental factors, so that the influence of other people on a person's confidence.

Efficacy ideals, which talk to beliefs approximately one's very own abilities to execute sure movements or responsibilities, have been determined to be considerable predictors of attempt. Predictor means students can estimate what efforts can be made to achieve goals. When learning speaking skills, students are expected to be able to identify daily activities or other efforts that can help improve their speaking skills. According to Pablo (2025), Students are exposed during school years to different contextual and academic situations involving adversity and requiring the use of coping skills in order to overcome or solve these negative experiences without serious emotional consequences. During their teenage years, they are expected to learn from their experiences to support their academic development, personal growth, and transition from adolescence to adulthood (Supervía et al., 2025). Maria (2023) findings in the Italian educational system, students are required to make significant decisions about their future at a relatively young age (around 13–14 years old), such as selecting the type of high school they wish to attend. This study examines the correlation between how Italian secondary school students take responsibility for their decisions, their self-efficacy, and their sense of gratitude for their lives. It also considers other factors such as age, gender, attendance, and further education after graduation (Pedditzi et al., 2023).

All of the previous studies mentioned above have shown a positive correlation between self-efficacy and speaking ability. This means that students who are confident in their abilities tend to perform better in speaking. At MTs Islamiyah Palangka Raya, the results may differ, given that many factors—such as classroom dynamics, teaching approaches, and environmental influences can affect the correlation between self-efficacy and speaking ability. Therefore, study is needed to determine whether the correlation between self-efficacy and speaking ability also holds true consider specific context. This research purpose to examine the correlation between self-efficacy and speaking ability among seventh-undergraduate students at MTs Islamiyah Palangka Raya, in order to provide empirical evidence and a deeper understanding of this correlation within the context of local education.

METHOD

This research uses quantitative with a correlational design. Correlation is a method used by researchers to identify correlation between two or more variables (Sorensen, 2010). The researcher decided to use this design because this study aims to examine the correlation between self-efficacy and speaking ability. To measure and describe the correlation between these variables, statistical analysis is required. The researcher used JASP as the tool for data analysis.

Respondents

The respondents in this research are seventh-undergraduate students of MTs Islamiyah Palangka Raya. There are 20 students. The researcher became interested by selecting the seventh-undergraduate students due to the fact the researcher become curious approximately their self-efficacy after during this time of studying English.

Instruments

The Children's Self-Efficacy in Learning English Questionnaire (C-SELEQ) by Zhendong Gan served as inspiration for researching students' self-efficacy. Additionally, the Public Speaking Test Rubric (PSCR) is well-suited for assessing speaking ability. Ary (2010) argues that measurement tools in research, such as tests and questionnaires, constitute what is meant by "instruments." An instrument is a tool, whereas instrumentation refers to the entire process of using that instrument.

Procedures

The research procedure carried out in several stages. First, the researcher administer a questionnaire to all students of class VII to measure their level of self-efficacy (Gan, 2022). The questionnaire was distributed in class, and the students were given a clear, detailed, and straightforward explanation of how to complete. The students given sufficient time to complete the questionnaire honestly and independently.

After collecting the questionnaire data, The speaking test was assisted in the style of an interview, where each student was asked to respond to several questions for about 2–3 minutes (Blevins et al., 2025). This test began with the students introducing themselves. They were asked to state at least their name, age, and hobbies. The researcher also encouraged the students to share other details about themselves. As a result, some students also mentioned their favorite foods and drinks, their aspirations, and other topics. The assessment covered fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.. The raters consisted of the researcher and a fellow university student from the same study program, namely English Education. To ensure the reliability of the scores, inter-rater reliability was applied by comparing the scores given by both raters.

To ascertain the correlation between students' self-efficacy and their speaking abilities, the information gathered from the speaking test and the questionnaire processed for additional analysis.

Data analysis

There multiple phases to the data analysis. First, score the students' self-efficacy questionnaire by calculating the total score of each student based on the Likert scale. The results represent the level of students' self-efficacy. All aspects of the assessment align with Maria Blevins' Public Speaking Test Rubric (PSCR), adapted for middle school students. The scores from each aspect combined to obtain the overall speaking score. To ascertain whether the data are normally distributed, the researcher then do a normality test. Whether the data is normal or not has a significant impact on the validity of the subsequent data analysis. Finally, the researchers conducted a correlation analysis to examine the correlation between students' self-efficacy and their speaking ability. The data are normally distributed, the Pearson Product Moment correlation applied. In order through ascertain the extent and importance of the association between the two variables, the researcher lastly interpret the correlation analysis results. The level of significance used in this study is 0.05.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study involved 20 students as participants. The sample was selected from seventh-undergraduate students. In this research, the participants were given two tools to measure their self-efficacy (variable X) and speaking ability (variable Y). The tools were administered to the respondents in their classroom.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistic Students' Responses

Descriptive Statistics

	Self-efficacy	Speaking
Valid	20	20
Missing	0	0
Mode	50.22	31.78
Median	49.00	29.50
Mean (arithmetic)	47.60	29.00
Std. Deviation	8.828	6.333
Range	39.00	22.00
Minimum	27.00	18.00
Maximum	66.00	40.00

Based on the descriptive statistics above, the figure of participants in this research was 20 students with no missing data. The mean score of self-efficacy was 47.60 with a standard deviation of 8.828, while the mean score of speaking ability was 29.00 with a standard deviation of 6.333. The minimum and maximum scores of self-efficacy were 27 and 66, whereas the speaking scores ranged from 18 to 40.

Normality Test of the data

Self Efficacy

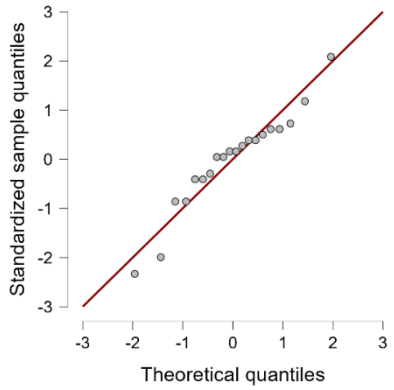

Figure 1. scatter plot of self-efficacy

Speaking

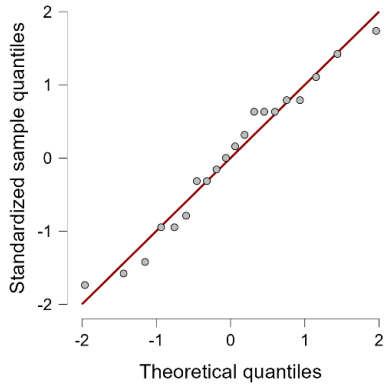

Figure 2. scatter plot of speaking

Based on the QQ plot, the data points of self-efficacy and speaking ability are distributed around the diagonal line. This indicates that both variables are approximately normally distributed. Therefore, the assumption of normality is fulfilled, and Pearson correlation analysis can be applied.

Correlation between self-efficacy and speaking ability

Table 2. Correlation between self-efficacy and speaking ability

Pearson's Correlations

			Pearson's r	p
Self-Efficacy	-	Speaking	-0.363	.115

Self-Efficacy VS Speaking

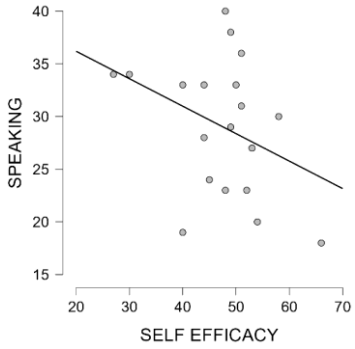

Figure 3. scatter plot of self-efficacy vs speaking ability

The result of Pearson correlation analysis showed that the correlation coefficient between self-efficacy and speaking ability was r = -0.363 with a significance value of p = 0.115. This indicates that the two variables have a negative correlation. However, the p-value is greater than 0.05, which means that the correlation is not statistically significant. Therefore, it perhaps concluded that there is no indicative correlation between students' self-efficacy and their speaking ability.

The scatter plot also shows a correlation between self-efficacy and speaking ability. The regression line on scatter plot slopes downward, indicating a negative correlation between the two variables. This suggests that speaking ability scores tend to decrease as self-efficacy increases. Furthermore, points that show data are broadly scattered over the regression line, remarking unsteady and inconsistent correlation between the two variables. This visual pattern supports the Pearson correlation result that the correlation between self-efficacy and speaking ability is unsteady and not statistically indicative.

There may be other factors that influence speaking ability besides psychological factors such as self-efficacy. However, this study is not without its own limitations, namely the small or limited sample size, that may be the principal cause of its failure.

Dunning-Kruger effect may also explain the negative correlation observed in this study. Students with low speaking ability may be unaware of their limitations yet possess high self-efficacy, whereas students with strong speaking ability tend to be more self-critical, resulting in lower self-efficacy. Furthermore, since the significance value (p = 0.115) is higher than 0.05, the result is not statistically indicative, referring that the null hypothesis cannot be declined. Therefore, negative correlation may have occurred by chance or due to the small sample size.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that there is no statistically significant correlation between students' self-efficacy and their speaking ability (r = -0.363, p = 0.115). This result appears to contrast with the theory of self-efficacy proposed by Albert Bandura, which posits that individuals' beliefs in their capabilities influence their performance outcomes. In the context of language learning, self-efficacy is often associated with increased willingness to communicate, persistence in practice, and reduced anxiety during speaking tasks. However, the absence of a significant relationship in this study suggests that self-efficacy alone may not be a strong predictor of speaking ability, particularly when learners' linguistic competence—such as vocabulary mastery, grammatical accuracy, and pronunciation—is not sufficiently developed. This implies that performance in speaking is a multifaceted construct influenced by both psychological and linguistic factors.

Furthermore, the negative direction of the correlation can be interpreted through the lens of the Dunning-Kruger effect, which describes a cognitive bias in which individuals with lower ability tend to overestimate their competence, while those with higher ability may underestimate their performance. In the present study, students with limited speaking proficiency may have reported relatively high self-efficacy due to a lack of metacognitive

awareness, whereas more proficient students might have evaluated themselves more critically, resulting in lower self-efficacy scores. This phenomenon may explain the inverse relationship observed between the two variables, despite theoretical expectations of a positive correlation. Such findings highlight the importance of considering learners' self-assessment accuracy when examining the role of self-efficacy in language performance.

Additionally, the non-significant correlation may be influenced by other variables not examined in this study, such as learning environment, instructional strategies, frequency of speaking practice, and affective factors like language anxiety. According to Stephen Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, emotional variables can act as a barrier to language acquisition and performance, even when learners possess adequate confidence or competence. Moreover, the relatively small sample size (n = 20) may have limited the statistical power of the analysis, increasing the likelihood of Type II error. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve a larger sample size and incorporate additional variables to better capture the complex interplay between psychological and linguistic factors influencing speaking ability.

CONCLUSIONS

the relationship between students' self-efficacy and their speaking ability and found that there was no statistically significant correlation between the two variables ($r = -0.363$, $p = 0.115$). Although self-efficacy is theoretically considered an important factor influencing academic performance, the findings suggest that it may not directly determine students' speaking ability in this context. The negative direction of the correlation, although not significant, indicates a tendency for higher self-efficacy to be associated with lower speaking performance, which may be explained by differences in students' self-perception and evaluative awareness. These results imply that speaking ability is influenced by multiple factors beyond psychological constructs such as self-efficacy, including linguistic competence, learning experiences, and affective variables like anxiety. The findings also highlight the possibility that some students may inaccurately assess their own abilities, which can affect the relationship between perceived and actual performance. Furthermore, the limited sample size of this study may have reduced the statistical power to detect a meaningful relationship.

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