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Speaking Success in EFL Classrooms: How Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulated Learning Shape Learners' Oral Performance

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Abstract: Speaking proficiency is a fundamental component of communicative competence in EFL contexts, yet many Indonesian students continue to experience difficulties in oral performance. This study investigated the contribution of self-efficacy and self-regulated learning to the speaking performance of eleventh-grade students at four Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) schools in Pekanbaru. Using a correlational quantitative design, data were collected from 106 students selected via cluster random sampling. The instruments consisted of two adapted questionnaires measuring self-efficacy and self-regulated learning, and a rubric-based speaking test assessing vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, grammar, and accent. The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression after meeting the required assumptions of normality, linearity, and multicollinearity. The results showed that both self-efficacy and self-regulated learning made significant positive contributions to speaking performance, with self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.444$, $t = 5.895$, $p < 0.001$) and self-regulated learning ($\beta = 0.534$, $t = 7.102$, $p < 0.001$) emerging as significant predictors. The model produced an R value of 0.792 and an R^2 value of 0.627, indicating that the two predictors explained 62.7% of the variance in students' speaking scores. These findings suggest that students with greater confidence in their speaking ability and a stronger capacity to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning tend to demonstrate higher speaking performance. The study suggests that pedagogical practices that promote learners' confidence and self-regulated learning may support the development of speaking proficiency in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: Self-efficacy, Self-regulated Learning, Speaking Performance, EFL Students.

1. Introduction

Speaking is widely regarded as one of the most important skills in English language learning because it reflects learners' ability to use language meaningfully in academic and real-life contexts. As a central component of communicative competence, speaking enables students to express ideas, negotiate meaning, respond spontaneously, and participate actively in interaction (Pakula, 2019; Galaczi, 2013; Littlewood, 2014). Yet, despite years of formal English instruction, many Indonesian EFL students still hesitate to speak, produce brief, fragmented utterances, avoid volunteering, or remain silent for fear of making mistakes and being judged negatively. Anandari (2015) explains that speaking anxiety can strongly inhibit oral participation, while Zafarina (2022) notes that classroom silence is often linked to psychological pressure and fear of evaluation. This suggests that speaking problems in the Indonesian EFL context are shaped not

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only by limited language ability but also by anxiety, fear of negative judgment, and low confidence (Fauzi & Asi, 2023; Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2020). In addition, speaking is inherently demanding because it requires learners to coordinate vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and discourse organization in real time under pressure (de Jong et al., 2013; Skehan, 2024; Tavakoli et al., 2020). These conditions indicate that students' speaking performance is influenced by both linguistic demands and internal learner-related factors, making psychological variables especially important to examine.

Among these internal factors, self-efficacy stands out as particularly relevant because it shapes how learners assess their ability to perform speaking tasks successfully. In EFL speaking, self-efficacy refers to learners' task-specific beliefs about whether they can perform oral communication effectively, and recent research shows that this belief is meaningfully associated with language proficiency and spoken performance rather than being merely a general sense of confidence (Graham, 2022; Wang & Sun, 2020; Zhang & Ardasheva, 2018; Zhang et al., 2020). Its role becomes especially significant in speaking because oral communication typically requires learners to respond immediately, perform in front of others, and cope with evaluative pressure (Bárkányi, 2021; Derakhshan & Fathi, 2024; Leeming et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2020). Students with stronger speaking self-efficacy are generally more willing to initiate speaking, contribute to discussions, persist when encountering linguistic difficulties, and demonstrate better performance on spoken tasks or greater readiness to communicate (Chang et al., 2024; Leeming et al., 2024; Zhang, 2024). They are also more likely to interpret speaking challenges as manageable and to sustain effort when difficulties arise, whereas lower self-efficacy is consistently associated with higher anxiety and weaker communicative engagement (Arani, 2025; Zhou et al., 2023). Thus, self-efficacy helps explain why some learners participate more actively and perform more effectively in speaking tasks than others.

Closely related to self-efficacy is self-regulated learning, which refers to learners' ability to actively manage their own learning through planning, monitoring, and evaluation. In EFL speaking, this capacity is particularly important because oral proficiency develops not only through classroom instruction, but also through continuous practice, self-awareness, and deliberate effort beyond teacher-directed activities (Butler, 2024; de Vrind et al., 2024; Qiu et al., 2024). Learners with stronger self-regulation tend to set clear speaking goals, prepare vocabulary before performing, monitor their pronunciation and fluency during practice, and reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of their oral production afterward. Alotumi (2021) emphasizes that improvement in speaking depends greatly on learners' ability to regulate their own motivation and effort, while Uztosun (2021) argues that self-regulated motivation for speaking plays a meaningful role in the development of speaking competence. As a result, such learners are more likely to engage in independent practice, such as rehearsing presentations, recording their voices, and using feedback to improve future performance. Through these strategic and reflective behaviors, self-regulated learners gradually develop greater control over their speaking, which can support better fluency, accuracy, and confidence. By contrast, learners with weaker self-regulation may depend too heavily on classroom input, practice less independently, and struggle to identify or address their own difficulties. For this reason, self-regulated learning is highly relevant to speaking performance because it supports the sustained practice, strategic effort, and reflective habits needed for successful oral communication in English (Chen, 2022; Derakhshan & Fathi, 2024; Jara & Gutema, 2025).

Previous studies have consistently shown that both self-efficacy and self-regulated learning are important factors in students' speaking performance. In the Indonesian EFL context, Hermagustiana et al. (2021) found that self-efficacy was positively correlated with speaking performance, while foreign language learning anxiety was negatively associated with both speaking performance and self-efficacy, suggesting that students who believe in their speaking ability tend to perform better and experience less anxiety. Similarly, Santoso et al. (2024) reported that self-efficacy significantly contributed to Indonesian EFL learners' speaking achievement. In contrast, emotional intelligence did not show a significant relationship, indicating that self-efficacy may be a more direct predictor of speaking success. On the other hand, research on self-regulated learning also highlights its important role in the development of speaking. Ni'mah et al. (2025) found a positive correlation between students' self-regulated learning strategies and speaking skills, showing that

learners improved their speaking through the phases of forethought, performance control, and self-reflection. Likewise, Uztosun (2021) reported that self-regulated speaking motivation significantly predicted foreign-language speaking competence, with affect regulation making a unique contribution, thereby emphasizing the importance of managing motivation and emotion in oral performance. Further support comes from Leeming et al. (2024), who found that speaking self-efficacy influenced spoken task production indirectly through willingness to communicate, suggesting that learners' belief in their speaking ability can shape their readiness to engage in communication and, consequently, their actual performance.

In light of the important roles of psychological and self-regulatory factors in the development of speaking, a more comprehensive investigation of students' speaking performance is needed. Although self-efficacy and self-regulated learning have both been recognized as influential variables, their combined contribution to speaking performance has not been sufficiently examined. The present study, therefore, offers a novel approach by integrating these two internal learner variables within a single framework to explain students' speaking performance more comprehensively. Accordingly, this study aims to determine the extent to which self-efficacy and self-regulated learning contribute to students' speaking performance. It is expected that the findings will provide deeper insight into the psychological and self-regulatory dimensions of speaking ability and offer practical implications for improving speaking instruction in EFL classrooms.

Existing studies have demonstrated the pedagogical potential of digital storytelling for enhancing language skills and learner engagement in EFL classrooms, particularly through its multimodal affordances and narrative structure. However, much of the current literature has tended to foreground learning outcomes or learners' affective responses, often treating engagement as a general or unidimensional construct. As a result, less attention has been given to how students experience digital storytelling across multiple dimensions of engagement, including cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects, especially within elementary and secondary EFL contexts in Indonesia. In addition, while digital storytelling has been widely promoted as an innovative instructional strategy, empirical insights into teachers' lived experiences in implementing this approach remain comparatively limited. The complexities teachers face in aligning digital storytelling with curricular goals, managing classroom dynamics, accommodating learner diversity, and navigating technological constraints are often acknowledged but not systematically examined. In educational contexts where English functions as a foreign language and digital literacy integration is still developing, understanding both learners' multidimensional engagement and teachers' pedagogical challenges is essential to inform sustainable instructional practice.

2. Method

This study employed a quantitative correlational design to investigate the relationships among self-efficacy, self-regulated learning, and speaking performance. This design was considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to examine naturally occurring relationships among variables without manipulating them (Creswell, 2012; Cohen et al., 2018). The study involved two independent variables, self-efficacy and self-regulated learning, and one dependent variable, speaking performance. The population consisted of 890 eleventh-grade students enrolled in four State Islamic Senior High Schools in Pekanbaru, namely MAN 1, MAN 2, MAN 3, and MAN 4. From this population, 106 students aged 16 to 18 years were selected through cluster random sampling, in which intact classes were treated as clusters. This technique was appropriate because the students were already organized into naturally existing class groups, making it efficient and practical for a large school population (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Of the 106 participants, 42 were male (39.6%), and 64 were female (60.4%), all of whom were in Grade XI. Data were collected through questionnaires and a speaking performance test, and were analyzed using multiple linear regression to determine the individual and simultaneous contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable (Field, 2018; Hair et al., 2019)

Data were collected using two instruments: a questionnaire and an oral speaking test. The questionnaire was designed to measure students' self-efficacy and self-regulated learning. The self-efficacy section was adapted from Bandura's (1998) self-efficacy scale, while the self-regulated learning section was adapted from the

Online Self-Regulated Learning Questionnaire (OSLQ) developed by Barnard et al. (2009). Several items were adapted to the Indonesian EFL context, and the questionnaire was administered electronically via Google Forms to facilitate distribution and data collection. It employed a five-point Likert scale and included both positively and negatively worded items to reduce response bias and improve the accuracy of students' self-reports (DeVellis, 2017). Positive items were scored as follows: Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly Disagree = 1, whereas negative items were scored in reverse. For interpretation, mean scores were classified into five levels: 4.21–5.00 = Very High, 3.41–4.20 = High, 2.61–3.40 = Moderate, 1.81–2.60 = Low, and 1.00–1.80 = Very Low.

Students' speaking performance was measured through an oral speaking test scored using Hughes' (2003) rubric, which assesses five components: vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, grammar, and accent. In the test, each student was required to produce a short monologue in a controlled classroom setting and was given approximately five to seven minutes to complete the task. The final speaking scores were then grouped into five categories for interpretation: 80–100 = Very Good, 66–79 = Good, 56–65 = Sufficient, 40–55 = Less, and 30–39 = Fail. Together, these procedures enabled both the questionnaire data and speaking performance data to be assessed systematically and consistently across participants.

The study was conducted over a period of two months and carried out in three main stages. The first stage involved adapting the research instruments, obtaining expert validation, and conducting a pilot test to examine their validity and reliability. The second stage focused on the main data collection through the administration of the online questionnaire and the speaking tests at each school. The final stage involved scoring the speaking performances, coding the questionnaire responses, testing the assumptions for regression analysis, and conducting the inferential statistical procedures. Throughout the process, the study followed ethical research procedures by obtaining permission from the participating schools and securing informed consent from the students. Instrument reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with the self-efficacy scale obtaining a coefficient of 0.984 and the self-regulated learning scale 0.991, both of which indicate excellent internal consistency according to George and Mallery (2019). Construct validity was examined using corrected item–total correlation, and all items exceeded the minimum criterion of 0.30 suggested by Azwar (2012), indicating that each item adequately represented the construct it was intended to measure. Based on these results, both instruments were considered appropriate for use in the main study.

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 26 using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics summarized students' questionnaire responses and speaking scores, while multiple linear regression examined the individual and combined contributions of self-efficacy and self-regulated learning to speaking performance. Before regression, assumption tests for normality, linearity, and multicollinearity were conducted. All analyses were performed at a significance level of 0.05 (Pallant, 2020; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). As a correlational study, this research could identify relationships among variables but could not establish causality (McMillan, 2022; Privitera, 2022). In addition, because the study was limited to schools in Pekanbaru and measured speaking performance only once, the findings may have limited generalizability. They may not fully capture changes in students' oral ability over time.

3. Findings

The present study examined the extent to which students' self-efficacy and self-regulated learning contributed to their speaking performance. Before conducting the multiple regression analysis, a series of classical assumption tests was performed to ensure the model's suitability. The normality test indicated that the standardized residuals were approximately normally distributed. This was supported by the histogram, which showed a roughly bell-shaped distribution, and by the Normal P–P Plot, in which the points closely followed the diagonal reference line. These results suggest that the normality assumption was met. The linearity test further showed that both self-efficacy and self-regulated learning had linear relationships with speaking performance, as indicated by non-significant deviation-from-linearity values. In addition, the

multicollinearity test showed acceptable results, with tolerance values above 0.90 and VIF values below 10, indicating that the two independent variables did not exhibit problematic intercorrelation.

The results of the multiple regression analysis are presented in Table 1. Both self-efficacy and self-regulated learning were found to contribute significantly to students' speaking performance. Self-efficacy obtained a standardized beta coefficient of 0.444, $t = 5.895$, $p < 0.001$, while self-regulated learning obtained a standardized beta coefficient of 0.534, $t = 7.102$, $p < 0.001$. These findings indicate that both variables significantly predicted speaking performance. Among the two predictors, self-regulated learning showed the stronger contribution, as reflected in its higher standardized beta coefficient and t-value. This suggests that students who are more able to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning tend to demonstrate better speaking performance. At the same time, self-efficacy also made a substantial contribution, indicating that students' confidence in their ability to speak English is positively associated with their speaking achievement.

Table 1. Summary of Regression Results

Variable	**β (Standardized)**	**t**	**Sig.**
Self-Efficacy (X_1)	0.444	5.895	0.000
Self-Regulated Learning (X_2)	0.534	7.102	0.000

The overall regression model is summarized in Table 2. The multiple correlation coefficient was $R = 0.792$, indicating a strong relationship between the predictor variables and speaking performance. The coefficient of determination was $R^2 = 0.627$, indicating that 62.7% of the variance in students' speaking performance was explained jointly by self-efficacy and self-regulated learning. The adjusted R^2 of 0.619 indicates that the model remained stable after adjustment for sample size and the number of predictors. This result indicates that the model had substantial explanatory power, while the remaining 37.3% of the variance may be attributed to other factors not included in the study.

Table 2. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square (R^2)	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error
1	0.792	0.627	0.619	7.093

The regression analysis yielded the equation $Y = 7.497 + 0.426X_1 + 0.314X_2$, indicating that both self-efficacy and self-regulated learning contributed positively to speaking performance. This means that, holding the other variable constant, each one-point increase in self-efficacy was associated with a 0.426-point increase in speaking performance. In contrast, each one-point increase in self-regulated learning was associated with a 0.314-point increase. However, the relative strength of the predictors is more appropriately interpreted using standardized beta coefficients rather than unstandardized regression coefficients. Based on the standardized beta values, self-regulated learning contributed more to speaking performance than self-efficacy. These results indicate that both variables significantly predicted students' speaking performance, with self-regulated learning emerging as the more dominant predictor in the model.

4. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that self-efficacy and self-regulated learning significantly contributed to students' speaking performance in this Indonesian EFL context. The regression model showed a strong relationship between the two predictors and speaking performance, with R = 0.792, R^2 = 0.627, and Adjusted R^2 = 0.619. These results indicate that 62.7% of the variance in students' speaking performance was explained jointly by self-efficacy and self-regulated learning. In relation to the aim of the study, this confirms that speaking performance is closely associated with both learners' belief in their speaking ability and their capacity to regulate learning strategically. Derakhshan and Fathi (2024) similarly emphasize that speaking success is closely linked to the interaction between self-belief and self-regulatory processes, while Ma (2022) also highlights the important role of learner-related factors in shaping oral performance. This result further suggests that speaking performance in this context is shaped not only by language knowledge, but also by how confidently and systematically students approach speaking tasks. Students who believe in their ability to speak are more likely to engage positively in speaking activities. In contrast, students who regulate their learning effectively are better able to prepare, monitor, and improve their performance over time. In this sense, oral achievement reflects the interaction between psychological belief and strategic learning behavior rather than linguistic competence alone (Wael et al., 2018; Gani et al., 2015; El-Sakka, 2016).

The contribution of self-efficacy was statistically significant, with β = 0.444, t = 5.895, and p = 0.000. This shows that students with stronger confidence in their ability to speak English achieved better speaking performance. In this context, where students often experience hesitation, fear of making errors, and evaluative pressure during oral tasks, self-efficacy serves as an important psychological factor that supports participation and persistence. The regression equation also showed a positive unstandardized coefficient for self-efficacy (B = 0.426), indicating that each 1-unit increase in self-efficacy was associated with a 0.426-point increase in speaking performance, holding the other variable constant. Santoso et al. (2024) similarly found that self-efficacy significantly contributed to Indonesian EFL learners' speaking achievement. Jara and Gutema (2025) reported that students with stronger speaking self-efficacy tended to achieve better speaking performance. This result indicates that confidence in speaking ability is directly linked to stronger oral performance. Students who believe in their ability to speak English are more likely to engage in speaking tasks with greater readiness, sustain effort when encountering difficulty, and perform more effectively under classroom pressure. In this sense, self-efficacy operates not only as a psychological condition but also as a meaningful factor shaping students' actual speaking achievement (Alawiyah, 2018; Pramerta, 2023; Afifah et al., 2024; Sundari & Dasmo, 2014).

Self-regulated learning also contributed significantly and emerged as the stronger predictor in the model. It obtained β = 0.534, t = 7.102, and p = 0.000, which were higher than the corresponding values for self-efficacy. The unstandardized coefficient was also positive (B = 0.314), indicating that each one-unit increase in self-regulated learning was associated with a 0.314-point increase in speaking performance, holding the other variable constant. Although the raw coefficient for self-efficacy was numerically larger, the standardized beta values show that self-regulated learning made the stronger relative contribution. This finding suggests that students' ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning exerts a stronger influence on speaking performance than confidence by itself, as self-regulated learning in EFL has been consistently conceptualized as a strategic process involving goal setting, self-monitoring, and reflective self-evaluation that directly shapes language-task performance (Zhang & Zhang, 2019; Habók & Magyar, 2018; Teng & Zhang, 2019; Benraghda et al., 2022). While self-efficacy has been widely recognized as a meaningful predictor of speaking achievement, research also indicates that confidence becomes more productive when accompanied by active self-regulatory behavior and strategy use (Asakereh & Dehghannezhad, 2015; Kim et al., 2015; Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019; Pramerta, 2021). In EFL speaking contexts, where improvement depends on sustained practice, management of learning conditions, and ongoing adjustment of strategies,

self-regulated learning provides a more immediate strategic basis for stronger performance (Alotumi, 2021; Uztosun, 2021; Sun, 2022).

The findings show that self-efficacy and self-regulated learning serve distinct yet interconnected functions in shaping speaking performance. Self-efficacy explains students' readiness to engage in speaking tasks and to sustain effort under pressure, while self-regulated learning explains how students manage the learning process to improve. The fact that both variables were significant, along with the model's substantial explanatory power, indicates that speaking performance is closely linked to both psychological beliefs and strategic learning behavior. At the same time, the remaining 37.3% of unexplained variance indicates that other factors outside this model also influenced speaking performance. Furthermore, the findings clearly address the study's aim: both self-efficacy and self-regulated learning contributed significantly to students' speaking performance, with self-regulated learning being the more dominant predictor. This result establishes that improving speaking performance in this context requires attention not only to language practice, but also to students' confidence and their ability to regulate learning effectively.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study show that self-efficacy and self-regulated learning are important contributors to students' speaking performance in the Indonesian EFL context. Both variables were found to significantly relate to oral performance, with self-regulated learning emerging as the stronger predictor. These results indicate that speaking performance is shaped not only by learners' confidence in their ability to speak English but also by their capacity to manage learning strategically through planning, monitoring, and evaluation. The study therefore supports a more integrated understanding of speaking performance in which psychological belief and self-regulatory behavior function as central explanatory factors rather than peripheral influences. In pedagogical terms, the findings highlight the importance of designing speaking instruction that builds students' confidence and fosters strategic, independent learning habits.

However, several limitations need to be acknowledged. First, because the study employed a correlational design, the findings cannot be interpreted as evidence of causal relationships. Second, the study was limited to a specific school context, which restricts the broader transferability of the findings to other learner populations and educational settings. Third, speaking performance was assessed only once, so the study does not capture how students' oral ability may develop or fluctuate over time. Finally, although the model explained a substantial portion of the variance in speaking performance, other relevant variables, such as anxiety, motivation, linguistic competence, classroom interaction, and instructional quality, were not included in the analysis. Future research should investigate these variables across more diverse educational contexts to examine whether similar patterns emerge among different groups of EFL learners. Longitudinal designs would be especially valuable for tracing how self-efficacy, self-regulated learning, and speaking performance develop over time. Further studies should also incorporate additional predictors to build a more comprehensive model of speaking performance. In addition, intervention-based research is needed to examine how classroom practices that strengthen students' confidence and self-regulatory skills influence speaking development in measurable ways.

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