

## **English Language Education Students' Perceptions of Self-Efficacy in Public Speaking Class**

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### **Abstract**

*Self-efficacy is one of the most pivotal springboards determining EFL learners' success in acquiring the target language in the communicative classroom contexts. Therefore, well-planned learning strategies and enjoyable learning environments should be provided continuously in order to breed proficient communicators in the target language. To do so, English language teachers need to shift their roles from instructors as facilitators to nurture EFL learners' self-efficacy development continuously. This study aimed to investigate the students' perceived self-efficacy in public speaking class. One research problem was proposed in this study namely, what are the significant factors that can heighten learners' self-efficacy in public speaking class? This study employed a qualitative method utilizing three research instruments i.e., classroom survey, students' speaking learning reflections, and interview to collect data from public speaking class of the English Education Study Program, Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta. Qualitative content analysis was employed to draw meanings out of the data gathered. Findings from this study revealed that EFL learners will be able to be proficient target language communicators when they believe in their speaking competencies and obtain meaningful feedback from the teachers.*

**Keywords:** *self-efficacy, communicative classroom contexts, public speaking class, meaningful feedback, qualitative content analysis*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Learning a foreign language, particularly in Asia learning contexts, is quite challenging since the learners are required to master the cultural values of the target language to obtain satisfying language academic achievement. (Gill, Kelley, Williams, & Martin, 1994) state EFL learners have to be able to incorporate certain cultural praxis of the target language to attain more fruitful language competencies. Major (2005) believes that cultural mediation will help non-native EFL speakers to adapt more easily to the target language culture. Sahin (2005) argues that EFL teachers play a pivotal role in bridging the cultural boundaries among their learners who are non-native speakers. Hattani (2019) argues that language teachers should accommodate all of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills into their English for specific purposes program with the purpose of preparing EFL learners to master the target language competencies corresponding to their future working fields. (Sari & Margana, 2019) state that qualified English learning program, particularly speaking, will run better if language teachers are willing to integrate one of the prominent digital media in this globe namely YouTube since EFL learners will be able to improve their higher-order thinking skills and confidence while delivering their ideas in front of other people. As relevant representatives of all of these aforementioned 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills, the public speaking class is enacted to provide EFL learners wider opportunities to develop their communicative competencies and self-efficacy into more advanced levels. Therefore, EFL learners are required to possess a greater mastery of speaking skills in order to foster their self-confidence and self-efficacy while delivering their speech in front of the public. Communicative competencies cannot be dissected from self-efficacy for the learners will exhibit better speaking performances if they believe in their abilities. (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996) argue self-efficacy is a term that is related to the learners' beliefs whether they can accomplish certain learning tasks or not. Moreover, to make use of the arts of speaking come to the natural existence of meaningful communication in public speaking class, the learners are required to be more confident while delivering their messages to the audience and convey every single piece of their talks clearly to convince the interlocutors.

Following this aforementioned theory, self-efficacy is extremely important to be grown and nourished in each classroom individuals since it will lead them to mold such a strong belief that they can carry out some particular learning tasks successfully. Bandura (1986) states self-efficacy enables the learners to strongly believe that they are capable of doing certain tasks to obtain the intended purposes in their learning. In line with this theory, language teachers should not tell their learners whether they are good or not good at something. Otherwise, they need to change learners' perceptions by motivating them that they have capabilities to accomplish their tasks to nurture their positive self-conception. This kind of understanding is closely related to the learners' perseverance to attain their goals in their learning since they have already possessed strong reinforcement that they can resolve various obstacles during the learning processes. (Hsieh & Schallert, 2008) believe the learners who perceive their learning failure as a lack of effort will exert more control over their learning since they will be more persevere and brave to endure their learning processes. However, the learners who assume the learning failure as having no abilities tend

to give up easily in their learning for they believe that effortful learning attempts will not lead them to success. In conformance with this common educational issue, Aliyu (2017) believes that language teachers should involve all learners to share their ideas more actively in collaborative learning groups, monitor current learning progress, and provide more constructive feedback for them. All of these three teaching-learning dynamics will not only increase the learners' likelihood of success in achieving their target language learning objectives but also make enactive mastery experiences emerge more vividly since they have ingrained strong beliefs that they have qualified competencies to be succeeded. Palmer (2006) argues that enactive mastery experiences will allow the learners to possess such a strong belief that they have adequate capabilities to accomplish challenging learning tasks. Strong-minded learners can only be born if language teachers are aware of two kinds of impacts affecting their whole characters as the learner namely internal and external influences. Internal influence depends on the learners' motivation, interest, and creativity allowing them to achieve the learning outcomes. While external influence depends on the appraisals and rewards addressed to the learners. (Wang, Shannon, & Ross, 2013) discovered that vicarious learning experiences are powerful learning weapons if they are combined with the specific learning goals set by the learners. This matter can be done if the teachers ask their learners to observe their peers' successful learning performances. After that, the learners need to imitate their learning peers' success. It can be their strategies, confidence, persistence, and motivation. Once the learners are able to accomplish all of these matters, their likelihood of success in learning will be increased dramatically for they have formed such a strong belief that similar learning achievements are possible to be obtained as long as they maintain their higher degree of learning volitions continuously.

For the tangible evidence, some recent studies are investigating on self-efficacy in global, Asian, and Indonesian contexts. In global contexts, Frenzel et al. (2016) conducted their study on the importance of teachers' self-efficacy in conducting continuous teaching practices by possessing a higher degree of motivation. Further, Chang et al. (2014) delved more profoundly on the improvement of self-efficacy experienced by college students when engaging in digital learning practices. In Asian contexts, two recent studies on collective self-efficacy among Asian American college students have been conducted by (Klassen & Chiu, 2010) together with (Kim & Omizo, 2005). Ultimately, (Suprpto, Chang, & Ku, 2017) and (Utami, 2017) conducted self-efficacy studies focusing on Physics learning processes and Entrepreneurial education. Furthermore, (Lomi & Mbato, 2019) mentioned that EFL learners urgently require continuous moral supports from their teachers to increase their volition and motivation in public speaking class. Mbato (2020) also reported that multiple learning strategies implemented in public speaking class do not only enable EFL learners to be proficient L2 speakers but also confident and qualified public speakers. The previous researchers agreed that the teachers should provide meaningful supports for EFL learners when they perform their speeches in speaking learning activities. So far none of the studies reviewed above has investigated factors impacting students' self-efficacy in public speaking. To fill in the gap, this study was undertaken particularly aiming to investigate factors that influence English Language Education Students' self-efficacy in public speaking class. One research problem was proposed in this study namely: What are the significant factors that can heighten the learners' self-efficacy in public speaking class?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

As was mentioned previously, self-efficacy can be interpreted as people's confidence to carry out particular tasks which give impacts to their continuous lives. (Bandura & Zimmerman, 1994) state when people construct self-efficacy wholly, they will be able to shape their feelings, thinking, motivation, and behavior in such good condition. This positive attitude will also provoke cognitive, motivational, and selection processes. As a result, the learners who can maintain their self-efficacy will have a strong willingness to accomplish challenging tasks since they believe that it will improve their learning proficiency. In addition, self-efficacious learners always set goals, participate actively in learning processes, and maintain their commitment for they are eager to take risks despite the existing presence of failure. On the other hand, learners who possess lower self-efficacy tend to avoid doing more challenging tasks since they have already established a fixed mindset in their perception. These learners believe that they will not be able to master particular abilities to finish their tasks no matter how hard they attempt, they believe that failure is an inseparable companion in their learning.

In concert with all of these aforementioned conceptions of self-efficacy, EFL learners who are engaging in Public Speaking class frequently undergo communication apprehension when delivering their speech in the presence of other learning companions. This common issue is influenced by their lower levels of self-efficacy affecting their self-beliefs that they will not be able to exhibit satisfying speaking performances. Further, (Khoshsima & Shokri, 2017) discovered that language teachers need to integrate supportive speaking learning environments in the presence of EFL learners in order to help them actualize their communicative skills in real-life situations. Nurhayati (2016) suggested language teachers integrating classroom drama in which the learners can freely express their ideas in the forms of creative language usage. (Aliyu, Korau, & Basiru, 2019) state another useful way to reduce EFL learners' speaking anxiety is language teachers need to utilize oral presentations and classroom interactions since they will feel more confident and comfortable while speaking out all their ideas frequently to other classmates. However, Bandura (1997) states that there are four sources of self-efficacy beneficial for fostering EFL learners' self-efficacy in public speaking class namely mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and psychological states. In mastery experience, the learners will be able to continue their learning success since they have experienced it in the past. In vicarious experience, the learners are able to increase their self-efficacy dramatically since they imitate their learning peers' success. Through verbal persuasion, the learners will perform well in designated learning tasks since they have been convinced that they have abilities to do so. In the last cycle, the learners need to experience a higher degree of enjoyment in the learning processes to allow them to be more proactive and cooperative participants in the classroom.

## **3. RESEARCH METHOD**

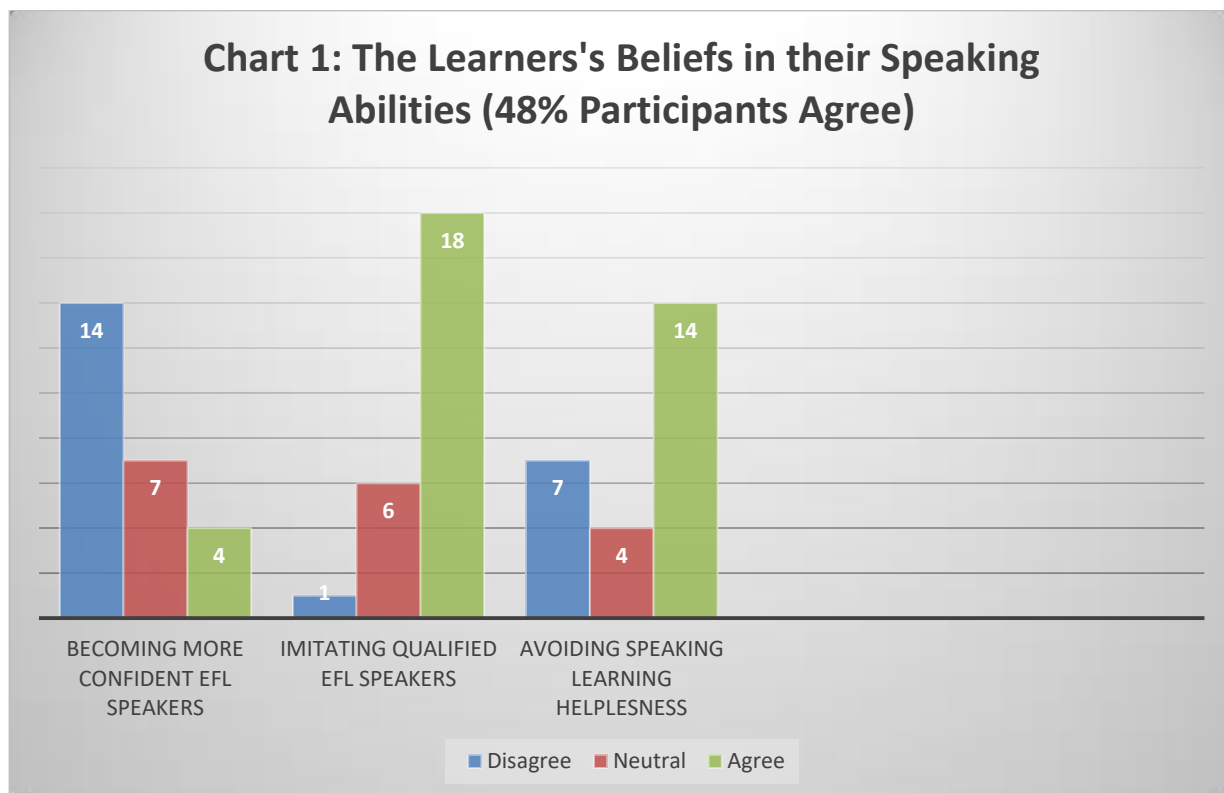
This is a qualitative study in which the researchers attempt to create trustworthiness after gathering the obtained data. Therefore, the researchers aim to understand particular phenomena occurring in specific fields with the purpose of avoiding unintended bias on the

data. Taken as a whole, purposive sampling was applied to collect more relevant data in this study. Further, purposive sampling will enable the researchers to attain a profound understanding regarding the learning experiences undergone by the learners. (Devers & Frankel, 2000) reason stronger arguments out of the data gathered should be delineated successfully while implementing purposive sampling in the qualitative study unless the research will be handicapped as poor results. In addition, qualitative content analysis was also utilized in this study with the purpose of generating some renewable findings out of the data gathered. Krippendorff (1980) argues content analysis can yield proper and reliable inferences from the data, which have been analyzed to give knowledge, some new perspectives, appropriate representatives of the facts, and simple guidance relevant to the real actions. The research participants participating in this study were English Language Education Students participating in Public Speaking Class. During the data gathering processes, the researcher made use of 15 questionnaire statements in the form of Likert-scale and students' reflections regarding their self-efficacy in Public Speaking Class. The reflections consist of 5 reflective questions asking about factors influencing their self-efficacy development in Public Speaking Class.

#### **4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

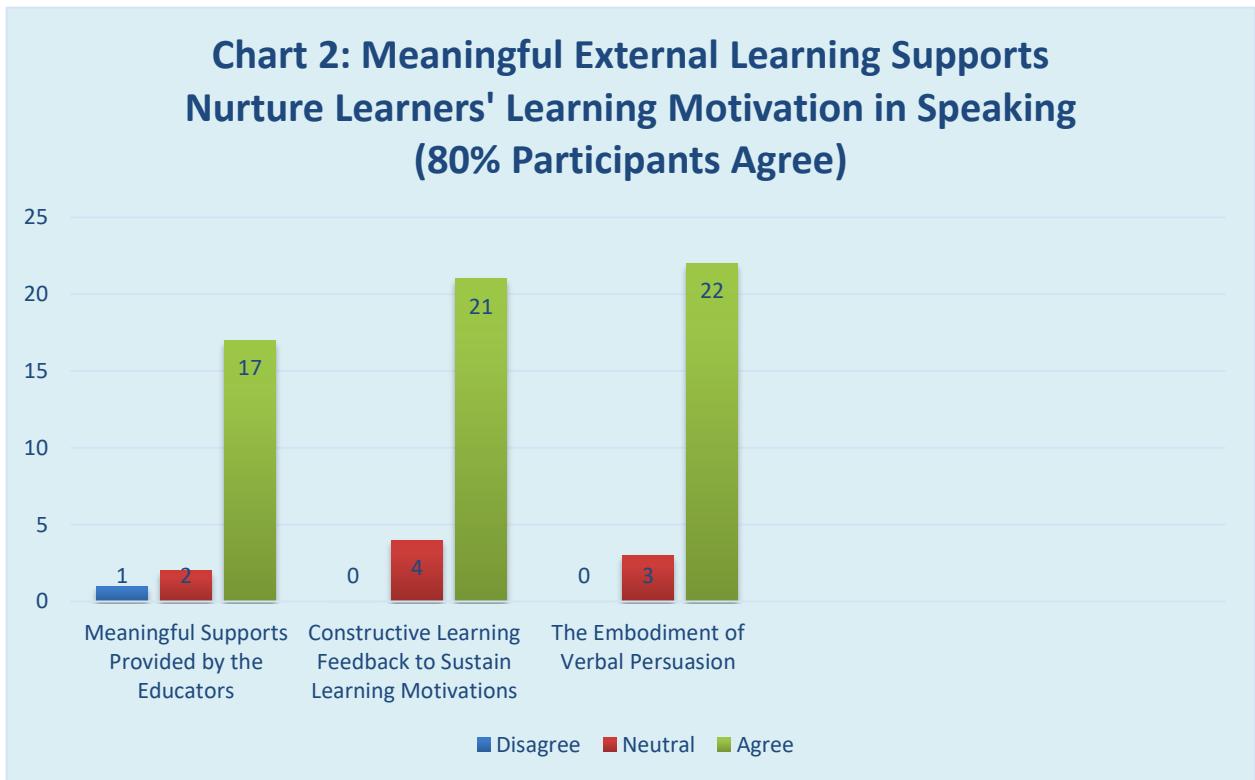
##### **4.1 The Significant Factors that can heighten the learners' self-efficacy in public speaking class**

The following discussion attempts to answer the research problem proposed in this study, namely: What are the significant factors that can heighten the learners' self-efficacy in public speaking class? The data were in the form of the classroom survey. All of these following major findings summarize some important statements formed in a Likert-scale questionnaire with regard to some relevant factors influencing EFL learners' self-efficacy growth while delivering their talks in Public Speaking Class. There were three major findings drawn from this study namely: (a) Self-efficacy increased the learners' beliefs on their speaking abilities, (b) Self-efficacy maintained their speaking learning motivation through supportive learning environment (c) Self-efficacy is fostered successfully in public speaking class. Each theme of this major finding will be coupled with profound arguments and relevant theories along with prior researches' findings in line with the theme of this study. Further research results together with in-depth explanations can be seen as follows.



The first chart revealed about high students' agreements regarding their beliefs in their speaking abilities. The highest agreement was discovered in the second category in which the learners are agree to imitate more qualified EFL speakers in public speaking class. The second highest agreement was found in the third category where the learners have actively become helpers-seekers in public speaking class. While the lowest agreement deals the first category in which EFL learners lack of self-confidence when performing their speeches in public. This lowest finding is not surprising at all since most of English Language Education Students still possess a higher degree of speaking anxiety when performing their talks in public speaking class. Particularly, this finding shows that EFL learners are afraid of being judged, criticized, and assessed by their lecturer or learning peers. This common issue is corresponding with (Harris, Kemmerling, & North, 2002). They discovered that speaking anxiety will impede the learners to speak more confidently in the class since they have endured a higher degree of stress before commencing their speaking activities. Another similar finding discovered by (Pertaub, Slater & Barker, 2002). They also found that that the learners are afraid of being judged and humiliated by their teachers and peers which prevent them from exhibiting satisfying speaking performances. Although the learners are lacked of confidence in their public speaking class, there is still a light for them to develop their self-efficacy and public speaking skills into its utmost since the results indicate that most of them are willing to imitate others' qualified public speaking performances. This conception is in line with the highest and second highest category in this section which reveals that the

learners are still striving harder to exhibit better public speaking performances in the presence of learning impediments as long as they imitate qualified speaking learning models and actively seek for assistance from their lecturer and learning peers. These two remaining findings are aligned with the findings discovered by (Askew & Field, 2007). They found that speaking anxiety can be reduced excessively if the learners are willing to imitate other peers' learning success. (Turner, Chandler, & Heffer, 2009) discovered that the learners' engagement and self-efficacy in second language learning have been increased more dramatically when the teachers are able to implement more meaning-making discussions for learners. (Wise & Trunnell, 2001) discovered that the learners who show their persistence in learning activities are those who are motivated continuously by their teachers. Arslan (2013) also revealed that positive psychological states toward their current learning circumstances will influence primary school students' development of self-efficacy and learning engagement. Regarding 3 findings mentioned above, it can be argued that English Language Education Students still lack of confidence while speaking in public. However, long-lasting learning volitions together with consistent supports given by the teachers will enable them not only to survive in challenging learning situations but also become more competent EFL communicators in the future.

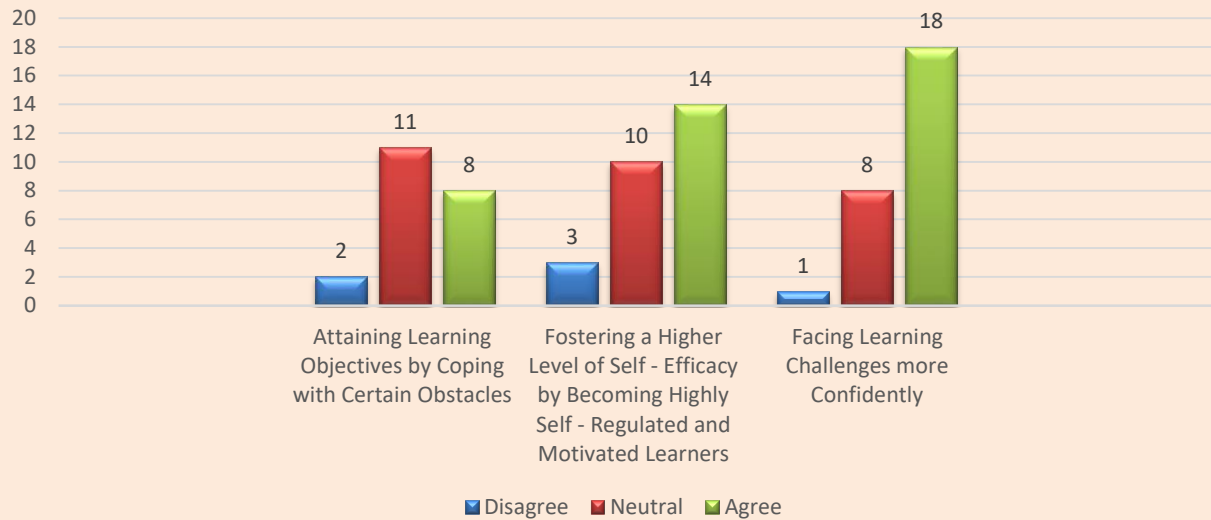


The second chart deals mostly with meaningful external learning supports which can nurture EFL learners' motivation in public speaking class. The highest agreement can be discovered in the

third category where EFL learners acknowledge that positive verbal persuasion given by their lecturer and learning peers will nurture their motivation to be more excellent public speakers in public speaking class. The second highest agreement goes to the second category where EFL learners acknowledge that meaningful and constructive feedback maintain their motivation in public speaking class since they are able to identify all of their particular strengths and weaknesses useful to navigate them to be more qualified public speakers in the upcoming learning activities. While the third highest agreement addressed to the first category in which EFL learners completely value the presence of more meaning-making supports given by their lecturer. This last category is crucial for further development of EFL learners' self-efficacy and public communicative competencies since supportive learning environments will engage all of the learners to hone their public speaking competencies more intensely through meaningful guidance provided by their lecturer. This third finding is closely interlinked with two previous findings generated by (Harmer, 2008; Leu, 2005). They discovered that EFL learners will obtain more fruitful target language learning outcomes when teachers guide their learning processes more passionately and compassionately. In line with this first finding, the second category is also interesting to be noted briefly here since EFL learners will gain more controls over their public speaking learning activities. This positive learning outcomes will be generated since the lecturer provides meaningful feedback, where the learners are appraised regarding particular learning achievements they have achieved, and most importantly, constructive feedback in which learners are able to utilize all of their strengths and weaknesses to navigate their learning pathways in such a better purpose in the future. This finding has shared similar characteristics a prior study conducted by (Bourhis & Allen, 1998). They discovered that constructive and meaningful feedback through videotape have successfully improved EFL learners' public speaking competencies, attitude, and performances more significantly. (Smith & King, 2004) also found that the clearness of the speaking learning feedback needs to be delivered more clearly and accurately for the learners to foster their future public speaking performances. Since the previous finding formed in previous theme has stated about the importance of nurturing EFL learners' self-efficacy in public speaking through verbal persuasion. The last category also revealed that EFL learners extremely appreciate significant others' supports and encouragement since they will be tougher and more confident while encountering many kinds of challenges in their public speaking learning activities. This last finding in this section is supported by other findings discovered in 2 previous studies. The first study done by (Mohamadi, Asadzadeh, Ahadi, & Jomehri, 2011) found that a higher degree of teachers' self-efficacy will promote greater impacts on learners' self-efficacy when they are convinced to accomplish many kinds of challenging learning tasks since their words and actions will show tangible reflections on how they put robust trust in their learners. In addition, (Melor, Barclay, Bulger, and Kath, 2006) discovered stronger solidarity established within the learners having similar genders will give more powerful impacts when they motivate one another since they have experienced similar learning events and feelings in their learning communities. To summarize, supportive and positive learning atmosphere need to be inculcated in public speaking classroom environments since the learners will not only able to hone their public communication competencies but also infuse their robust speaking learning motivation continuously.



**Chart 3: The Learners are able to Maximize Their Self - Efficacy Levels in Public Speaking Class (53% Participants Agree)**



The last chart showed that EFL learners are able to maximize their self-efficacy levels in public speaking class. The highest agreement can be found in the third category where EFL learners are willing to encounter many kinds of obstructions during engaging in public speaking class. The second highest agreement can be discovered in the second category in which EFL learners have been able to be more self-regulated and motivated while participating in public speaking learning dynamics. The lowest agreement talks more about the reluctance of EFL learners to attain their specific public speaking learning objectives by coping with various learning obstacles. By looking at the findings above, it is worth restating here that a fully establishment and empowerment of self-efficacy will bring the learners to a higher level of future learning activities since they are willing to cope with many kinds of learning impediments in learning and become more self-regulated learners. This kind of conception goes the same way as the first, second, and third categories exhibit previously in this section. When the learners are willing to confront with various learning challenges since they have known the best learning strategies, preferences, styles, and environments which work best for them, they will be able to overcome many kinds of learning strategies coming to their public speaking learning journeys for they have been able to apply many kinds of learning strategies applicable for resolving particular learning problems. This first finding has a tight-knit relationship with two theories of self-regulated learners proposed by two prominent experts. First, Zimmerman (2000) argues self-regulated learners will be able to generate their proactive thoughts, feelings, and actions in the search of the learning goals. By the same token, Mbato (2013) also mentions self-regulated learners will actively plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning progress based on the success and failure accompanying their learning journeys. The second finding showed that some EFL

learners have gained more powerful controls over their learning since they have been more self-regulated and motivated while practicing their public speaking skills in their daily basis. This positive learning attitude towards public speaking class will not only promote meaningful impacts for their future learning activities but also future careers when they have become graduate students or professional workers in their fields. Since these two vocations require them to be long-lasting and independent academician in their professional fields, it is pivotal for the learners to preserve their learning volitions continuously not only in public speaking class but also in tangible future life events. This second finding has been corroborated by two theories of self-regulated learners. In the first theory, (Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2002) state that self-regulation does not only lead people to be more expertise in their fields but also continuous learners. Further, Boekaerts and Niemivirta (2000) believe that the learners will be more self-regulated and autonomous in their learning if they have been given wider opportunities to hone their skills outside of the classroom learning environments. The last finding of this section showed that most of the learners in public speaking class are confident to face many kinds of challenges waiting for them. Again, this result is influenced by the teachers' capabilities to create more intimate relationships with their learners, promote positive learning atmosphere, and provide a great number of supports for the learners. This finding is corresponding with the result of current research conducted by Zuffiano et al. (2013). They discovered that the teachers' abilities to reduce the excessive stress levels of their learners in second language classrooms depend mostly on how they cast their profound intimacy, caring, and encouragement for learners.

#### **4.2 Other Important Findings Discovered in This Study**

These two essential findings are discovered through interview activities conducted with three interviewees. Further, three interviewees witnessed they have applied two resources of self-efficacy while delivering their speeches in front of the public namely: (1) Mastery experience and (2) Vicarious learning experience. Each important finding will be accompanied by relevant theories and exhaustive arguments to shed a new enlightenment in this study. Further discussions can be discerned as follows.

As mentioned earlier in the previous chapters of this study, the learners will be able to nurture their excellent learning performances if they have already experienced success in their previous learning experiences. On the contrary, the learners will feel doubtful with themselves if they frequently suffer from a great number of failures in their prior learning experiences. (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002) argue that mastery experience plays a pivotal role in fostering or debilitating the learners' self-efficacy levels since their prior success and failure will mold certain beliefs within them whether they are able to execute some present learning tasks successfully or not. In relation to this essential source of self-efficacy, the three interviewees also confessed that mastery experience had promoted some positive and negative impacts in their public speaking practices. Two interviewees were able to continue their likelihood of success in their public speaking tests since they had received satisfying scores and constructive feedback from their lecturer and classmates. However, one interviewee acknowledged that his learning spirit in public speaking class had waned significantly for he did not obtain good scores in his previous public speaking tests.

Eventually, this last interviewee put more robust learning commitment that he will be able to perform better in the succeeding public speaking tests since he wanted to achieve a similar success like his learning partners. This stronger learning commitment showed that this learner had already established some optimism after receiving unsatisfying scores in his prior Public Speaking tests since he is still willing to imitate other good learning models in order to obtain fruitful learning outcomes as they did before. To corroborate all of these theories and arguments, here are some excerpts of students' learning reflections written by the three interviewees:

*[After I join Public Speaking Class, I can improve my confidence when I speak in front of the people. I can still learn how to control my emotions when I do a speech, but it is still difficult for me to control myself. I still cannot control my nervous]* (An interview was conducted with the first interviewee).

*One thing that I have done to improve my self-efficacy is tried to exercise myself to improve my speaking skill]* (An interview was conducted with the second interviewee).

Interviewee 3:

*[The preparation of the speech may affect my self-efficacy. If I prepared well, I can be more confident and know what I will talk about]* (An interview was conducted with the third interviewee).

In conformance with mastery learning experience mentioned before, proficient public speakers cannot be bred in an isolated way, yet they are empowered by other qualified learning models. In short, when the learners have more desire to imitate other good learning models in their learning circumstances, they will be able to attain their learning objectives successfully in spite of various difficulties obstructing their learning processes. It can also be stated that the learners' self-efficacy levels will be ingrained more fully within themselves for they always strive harder to reach similar learning levels as their peers, which in turn, enabling them to possess stronger self-beliefs that their learning competencies are not static, but evolve continuously. Bandura (1977) argues that by modeling other qualified learning models, the learners will avoid doing the similar mistakes done by their learning peers, even perform greater academic performances in future learning events. Taken as a whole, the three interviewees also acknowledged that before delivering their speech in front of the public, they have already observed some proficient learning peers who have performed well with the purpose of enabling them to do the similar thing while delivering their talks without creating unnecessary errors in their speech such as grammatical mistakes, mispronunciation, and inappropriate dictions. Given this complex picture, all of these arguments and theory had been reinforced by the excerpt given by three interviewees as follows:

*[Yes, the lecturers can give me an example and I will learn from my lecturer to improve my self-efficacy in communicative skills]* (An interview was conducted with the first interviewee).

[I can try to practice and improve my self-efficacy by myself, I will do it and then, practice it with my friends] (An interview was conducted with the second interviewee).

[I will prepare my speech as much as possible. I also look for other public speakers to learn from them] (An interview was conducted with the third interviewee).

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

On the whole, there were three major conclusions drawn from this study namely precise implementations in exercising self-efficacy through communication praxis, continuous utilization of internal and external factors, and urgent requirements to promote collaborative learning. First, the learners are required to pick up their exact learning strategies more critically before going deeper to practice their communicative competencies for they will possess stronger intentions to attain their learning objectives in the face of difficulties. Until this major point is reached, the learners should also be guided to further learning exposures through the use of internal and external factors. Both of these factors have tight-knit relationships with each other since the learners will be more autonomous, mature, and proficient target language communicators only if the lecturers together with learning counterparts have successfully generated more meaning-making feedback and powerful motivation influencing the further navigation of their learning dynamics. To be truly successful while running all of these fruitful educational strategies, the lecturers need to be able to promote a positive learning atmosphere through cooperative learning communities in communication language learning circumstances with a purpose establishing, nourishing, and fostering learners' self-efficacy levels along with communication proficiency to their utmost. Ultimately, there are two suggestions for future researchers aiming to conduct similar theme regarding this present study namely the future researchers should conduct a correlational study about the importance of self-regulation and self-efficacy in improving EFL learners' communicative competencies in speaking classes and they have to be able to discover some specific variables related to the EFL learners' self-efficacy development in order to provide broader access for language educators to apply a wide variety of communicative language teaching approaches in their majority of classroom settings.

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