Out-of-Java Students' Perceptions of Self-Efficacy in English-Speaking Skills

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Abstract

This study investigates out-of-Java students' perceptions of their self-efficacy in English-speaking skills. To figure out their perceptions, the researchers formulated two research questions: (1) To what extent do out-of-Java students' educational backgrounds impact their perceptions of self-efficacy in English speaking skills? (2) How do students cope with the challenges of speaking English? Participants in this study were the third-semester students from English Language Education Study Program. Written reflections and semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary data collection methods. In analyzing the data, Thematic Analysis was employed in this study. The researchers described the participants' self-reflections and transcribed their interviews. This study revealed two important results. First, there was an influence of participants' educational backgrounds on their perception of self-efficacy in English-speaking skills. Second, the participants had their strategies in overcoming the difficulties that they experienced in speaking. The results of the study showed that out-of-Java students have high self-efficacy beliefs which increase with their time at university and can improve their English-speaking skills by applying some learning strategies.

Keywords: English-speaking skills; Out-of-Java students; Perception; Self-efficacy

1. Introduction

It is generally known that speaking is the biggest difficulty experienced by Indonesian students in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Speaking English causes the students to experience anxiety. Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA) is multifaceted psychological phenomenon that many learners experience when learning a Foreign Language (Bashori et al., 2022). Moreover, the students tend to be afraid to speak because of a lack of knowledge of English in terms of grammar and vocabulary.

Out-of-Java students often experience obstacle in speaking because of their lack of English skills. This situation happens due to the lack of learning in terms of English-speaking skills in their previous studies. Out-of-Java students are not accustomed to speaking English since the process of learning in the classroom tends to use Bahasa Indonesia, students' first language; hence this condition results in their low speaking proficiency and anxiety to speak in English. This is in line with Farhani et al. (2020) stated that many students still cannot speak English and feel anxiety when speaking English though they have been studying English for many years. The use of Bahasa Indonesia by English teachers is very common in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms and is seen as a positive method of teaching English by students and teachers (Hasrina et al., 2018; Nursanti, 2016; Pardede, 2018; Sibarani, 2019). However, this method affects students' English skills (Sibarani, 2019) and causes them anxiety to show their English skills (Farhani et al., 2020).

Inequality of education also contributes to the problem in speaking English. Inequality must be measured not only by the educational level people achieve but also by the educational quality students receive and, fundamentally, by what students learn and how they implement that knowledge in real-life contexts (OECD,2018). In Indonesia, inequality in education still exists. Indonesia is divided into three parts: west, middle and east. Java island, which is located in the western part of Indonesia, is more advanced in all aspects compared to the other islands. It has become the center of Indonesia. In contrast, the other islands, such as Kalimantan, Sulawesi, NTT, Maluku and Papua, still face many obstacles in their growth, including in the education sector. These statements align with Wirandana & Khoirunurrofik (2022), stating that Java Island's educational facilities and infrastructures are still more numerous than those in the rest of the country, particularly in Eastern Indonesia. It is also in line with Inadequate education has caused problems, such as the low quality of education and scarce human resources. The problems encourage many students from outside Java island to study in Java since it offers a good quality of education.

Further, negative perceptions of students' self-efficacy become the factor that prevents them from speaking English. Self-efficacy theory was popularized by Bandura in 1977, in which he defined self-efficacy as how individuals perceive their abilities to perform a specific task. He further explained that one's belief in their ability to organize and carry out actions is needed to produce a particular achievement. Self-efficacy is about self-belief. Thus, from

Bandura's statement, it can be concluded that a strong belief in one's abilities shows that the person has high self-efficacy, and it has an impact on academic success. While low belief in one's abilities indicates low self-efficacy, which results in academic failure. These statements are supported by Tus (2020) who argued that the more a person believes in himself, the easier it is for him to achieve his goals, while someone who has a low self-efficacy focuses on the negative side and is more likely to experience difficulties and failures in achieving his goals. It is in line with Torres & Alieto (2019) that "people who judge themselves as incapable will lower their efforts or give up quickly when facing difficulties and failures, whereas those who have deep confidence in their abilities invest more effort when they fail to overcome challenges". Regarding language learning, self-efficacy belief also contributes to the level of success of students' academic performances (Chao et al., 2019; Chen, 2020; Kosimov, 2021; Passiatore et al., 2019; Sabti et al., 2019; Torres & Alieto, 2019; Turner et al., 2021).

Perception, which defines as one's view of something that comes from the environment where the individual is (George Jennifer & Jones, 2012; Prameshella, 2018), has a significant role in behavior. It influences the dynamics of students' self-adjustment in learning (Prameshella, 2018). The perception of self-efficacy acts as a cognitive mechanism that allows individuals to control reactions to stress (Bandura in Hergenhahn & Olson, 2008). Students who are confident to face the pressure would not feel anxious and restless when completing assignments (Torres & Alieto, 2019). On the contrary, those who do not feel confident to control the pressure that arises when working on their assignments tend to always think of their disabilities and stress when remembering their assignments. Thus, it is crucial for the students to have positive self-efficacy perceptions. Realizing and understanding the significance of possessing a positive perception of self-efficacy, it is important to research students, especially out-of-Java students, to figure out their perceptions of self-efficacy since they have high expectations to obtain quality education which triggers them to leave their hometown to continue their university education in Java Island. It is meaningful to see how their perceptions affect their ways of thinking, ways of behaving, and especially their academic performances.

Research on EFL students' self-efficacy in speaking has been accomplished by some researchers (Hermagustiana et al., 2021; Ningias & Indriani, 2021; Yilmaz et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). Nevertheless, no research focusing on EFL students' perception of self-efficacy in speaking has been conducted. Therefore, the researchers are interested in researching EFL students' perception of self-efficacy in speaking, focusing on out-of-Java students as participants. The researchers formulate two research questions in this study: (1) To what extent do out-of-Java students' educational backgrounds impact their perceptions of self-efficacy in English speaking skills? (2) How do students cope with the challenges of speaking English? This study is beneficial for the students since they can learn how to

overcome the obstacles, they encounter in their learning process. It is also helpful for the lectures to understand the out-of-Java students' feelings toward English speaking skills.

2. Method

The researchers collected the data in a private university in Yogyakarta. The researchers applied purpose sampling in determining the participants. Eight students in the third semester of the English Language Education Study Program were the participants of this study. All the participants are from outside Java Island, namely, West Kalimantan, East Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Papua.

Written reflections and semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary data collection methods. The researchers asked the participants to write reflections on their learning experiences, strategies and difficulties while conducting studies in English Language Education Study Program. They wrote the reflection based on the five questions that the researchers provided. Moreover, to get the in-depth information, the researchers used face-to-face interviews as the source of data collection. The semi-structured interview protocol from Smith (2015) was applied in this research. The researchers interviewed the participants regarding their educational backgrounds, their perceptions of self-efficacy in performing English and the strategies they used to overcome the challenges they faced while conducting their studies in their study program. The researchers provided five questions for the interviews. The questions were adapted from Lisa Williams' study in 2017.

Thematic Analysis from Yin (2003) was employed in analyzing the data in this study. The researchers studied the participants' self-reflections and transcribed their interviews. The data were divided into meaningful analytical units. The units were then coded through category names. After the coding process, the data were then assigned to the themes.

3. Finding

3.1 To what extent do out-of-Java students' educational backgrounds impact their perception of self-efficacy in English speaking skills?

Students' educational backgrounds have big influences on their self-development, namely developments in terms of perception, self-confidence, academics, and socialization. Students from outside of Java island with different educational backgrounds adapt to the new learning culture in Java. As students from outside of Java, they experienced challenges while studying in English Language Education Study in this private university. The most difficult thing for them was speaking English. They had experienced this problem when they were in the first semester. In this study, the researchers sought to find out if there was an impact of their educational backgrounds on their perceptions of self-efficacy in their English-speaking skills while attending lectures in this university. There were two important things found by researchers after conducting and analyzing the data.

3.1.1 Feeling embarrassed

Someone's assessment of his/her ability in a particular academic domain is called as perceived self-efficacy. This is very strong in the sense that people tend to be involved in activities that they feel capable of. The beliefs in their own abilities become the strong points when they want to pursue their goals. Of the 8 participants in this study, 5 wrote in their reflections that their educational backgrounds influenced their perceptions of self-efficacy in English speaking skills. For instance, two students wrote:

> *I encountered the difficulty in speaking English because of my educational background. I am from Papua and I am very embarrassed to speak in front of the class. In my previous study, during English lesson, we were rarely speaking in English. (Susan)*

> *I had difficulty in speaking English. However, my friends who are from Java were very good in speaking English. In my opinion, this was due to the difference of our backgrounds. (Susan)*

> *When I first spoke English in front of the class, I felt insecure because I came from a rural area in Kalimantan. When I was in senior high school, I rarely spoke in English during the English lesson. I was not used to speak English. (Ana)*

The statement above proved that educational backgrounds greatly influenced the students in English speaking skills. In addition, Susan also stressed that her background made her felt ashamed to speak English.

3.1.2 Being passive

As we know, it is difficult for out-of-Java students to adapt to new learning cultures. These students adjust to this culture for two or even three semesters. Coming from outside Java not only made the participants not confident in speaking English but also made them inactive in the learning process. Lani and John, for examples, revealed:

> *I didn't talk much when attending the lectures since I come from outside Java. I didn't know Javanese culture. I remained silent during the lecture process because I couldn't speak English fluently. (Lani)*

> *I remained silent during the lecture process. I felt insecure because I come from outside Java. (John)*

Those statements showed that the students felt inferior because of their backgrounds. They were afraid to speak and did not dare to express their opinions in the class. The inability to adapt to the new culture can lead the bad influences on students. They can feel stressed, lose motivation in learning and eventually choose to drop out.

3.2 How do students cope with the challenges of speaking English?

In the learning process, there are many things that students must consider in order to engage in the activities. Speaking which is one of the important skills in English language learning must be mastered by the students. However, it is not easy to improve speaking skill because several elements must be mastered first such as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. Many students experience the difficulties in speaking English due to these elements. More than that, the negative perceptions of their self-efficacy become the factor that prevents them from speaking English. Knowing that there are many challenges and problems experienced by students in speaking, it is very important for them to have learning strategies in order to overcome the problems and also improve their speaking skills. There were four themes that the researchers got related to the students' strategies in dealing with problems in speaking. These four themes had answered the second research question.

3.2.1 Practice makes perfect

Speaking is indeed a difficult ability to master, but if we look at it from a habit factor, it turns out that there are many people who can or are fluent in English because they often speak in English. This shows that speaking English continuously can improve one's speaking skill. All of the participants described in their reflection that they applied several strategies to cope with the challenges in speaking English. For example, one student stated:

> *I practice my English in daily life because I believe that practice makes perfect. Moreover, I also improve my pronunciation by speaking more in English. (Maya)*

Maya wrote that she spoke English in her daily life because she believed that with practice, she could improve her speaking skill. In addition, she also paid attention to another factor when practicing her speaking which was pronunciation. Speaking English in everyday life with fellow students brings a good influence on them. Therefore, speaking English with friends is highly recommended for students of English Language Education Study Program. Nina had carried out this suggestion, she wrote:

> *In order to improve my speaking, I speak English with my friends. Besides, I like to read and rewrite what I have learned. I immediately do the assignment given by the lecturers.*

The participant showed perseverance in learning English. She spoke English with her friends and always prioritized the tasks given by the lecturer. From the interviews data, the participants said that they often practiced their speaking by speaking English with friends who are from abroad. Ana and John, for example, stated:

> *Aside from practicing speaking English with Indonesian friends I also speak English with friends who are from abroad. (Ana)*

> *In improving my speaking skill, I speak English with friend who is from abroad. If I make a mistake in grammar or pronunciation, he always corrects it and teaches me the correct grammar and pronunciation. (John)*

Speaking English is not only done when dealing with others but also with ourselves. Practicing speaking in front of a mirror is something that students often do to improve their abilities. However, besides being able to improve speaking skills, speaking in front of a mirror also increases student's confidence. The students are able to assess their speaking performance. Ana, for example, mentioned in her reflection:

> *To improve my speaking skills, I often practice speaking in front of a mirror. By doing this I can assess my performance when speaking. I also pay attention to my body language when speaking.*

Practicing speaking in front of a mirror does make us able to assess our strengths and weaknesses. Other strategies such as making videos and recording our performances when speaking English are known as good methods for improving speaking skills. John in his reflection described:

> *I always speak English with my friends. In the dorm, I speak English with friends who are not from English department. I want us to learn together to improve our English skills because English is very important. Besides that, I often practice public speaking in my room. I specify a topic and then talk about the topic. I recorded this activity then I assessed whether I had spoken well or not, whether my grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation were correct or not.*

The strategy carried out by John is a good strategy for improving speaking skill. Besides practicing English speaking, he also practiced his public speaking skill. It is true that recording our performance can help us know what errors we are making. Besides, we can also know the extent to which our speaking abilities are increasing.

3.2.2 Films and Songs

There are many things that can be done to learn English, no need to rely on conventional methods such as textbooks and school-based English language lessons, but learn English through media such as films and songs are proven to be effective for many students. Dialogue in films and lyrics in songs can help us remember words better, add new vocabularies and practice grammar and pronunciation. Another advantage of learning speaking through films and songs is honing our accents to resemble to the accent of a native speaker. In addition, we can get to know the various modern English terms and expressions used today, as well as general proverbs. In this way, learning English becomes more fun for us. In this study, 6 participants stated that they used films and songs as English learning media. For example, Ana mentioned:

Aside from speaking English with my friends, I also listen to English songs in order to improve my language skill.

From the statement above, it can be said that the participant got benefits from listening English songs. Regarding to speaking, if one has many vocabularies and has mastered in grammar, his/her speaking skill will increase. This has been proven by Santi, which she described in her reflection:

I learn English through games and movies. I watch western series and movies with English subtitles. This makes me understand English better. For example, by watching cartoons from Disney channel every day, I get a new vocabulary. I also know more about grammar because I'm used to hearing it from movies.

Watching movies is a fast-enough way to learn English. Besides being fast, improving speaking skills through film is also fun, therefore many people rely on film as a way to learn English. Using films as the media to improve speaking will make the students be more interested. In addition, they will be encouraged to practice speaking regularly. Moreover, listening to songs is also one of the effective methods to learn English. Grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation will be easier to understand.

Table 1. Students' methods to improve English-speaking skills

No.	Participants	Strategies
1	Tina	Speaking English with friends and listening to English songs.
2	Lani	Listening to English songs.
3	John	Speaking with friends, practicing in front of mirror and recording speaking performance.
4	Nina	Speaking English with friends and reading books.
5	Maya	Speaking English with friends.
6	Santi	Watching western series and movies and playing games.
7	Ana	Practicing speaking in front of a mirror and speaking English with friends, and using body language.
8	Susan	Speaking English with friends and listening to English songs.

The table above showed the methods used by the participants to improve their English-speaking skills. There were some of them who used the same methods and there were some of them who had different learning methods. Learning methods are individual. It means that the effective learning methods for a student are not necessarily effective for other students. To obtain an effective learning method, students need to know a series of concepts that will bring them to find the most effective learning methods for themselves.

3.2.3 Believing in your ability

Some people assume that speaking in front of people requires a lot of mentalities because speaking in front of a crowd is something that is difficult for someone to do. One's ability to speak in public develops with constant practice. Indonesian people consider that speaking in front of a lot of people is a difficult thing to do. The causes are none other than feeling shame, insecurity, lack of confidence, and fear. This problem can be overcome if the person often practices speaking in front of the crowd. For students, speaking in front of classmates can increase their confidence and speaking skills.

All participants made comments that they were more confident in speaking English in the third semester. They have gained their confidence to speak English from day to day. The participants also showed that their self-confidence encouraged them to demonstrate English in front of the class. For instance, Susan said:

> *My confidence is increasing from day to day. I feel more confident when I speak English in front of the class.*

Similarly, another participant said:

> *Comparing to the first semester, now my speaking has improved, and likewise my self-confidence. I am not afraid to speak English in front of the class anymore. (Lani)*

The statements above showed that the participants' English-speaking skills were increasingly over time. Interaction in English with classmates and lecturers did increase their confidence. Now, they believed in their own abilities. They also felt motivated when they saw their friends who have good speaking skills performance in front of the class. Nina acknowledged this, she said:

> *I feel motivated when I see a friend who is good in speaking.*

Furthermore, Tina added:

> *I feel motivated when I see friends who speak better than me. I want to speak English as well as them.*

These participants acknowledged that seeing their classmates who have good speaking skills did not make them feel inferior. They were even motivated to improve their speaking skills.

3.2.4 Learning from mistakes

In demonstrating their English-speaking skills, the participants still made errors in terms of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. Lani, for example, said:

> *Now my confidence and speaking skills have improved. However, sometimes I still make mistakes in grammar and vocabulary. I think making a mistake is a natural thing. The important thing is that we must learn from those mistakes in order to improve our abilities.*

Lani said that she still had difficulties in grammar and vocabulary. However, these factors did not make her felt afraid to speak in front of the class. This also happened to Ana, who said:

> *Even though I still made many mistakes in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, I did not feel embarrassed and afraid to speak in front of the class. In my opinion, by making mistakes we can learn from these mistakes and in the end, we can improve our speaking skills.*

Besides giving a challenge and an unpleasant feeling, making mistakes can also provide an opportunity for ourselves to grow and develop as long as we can process it. Mistakes will strengthen our character and improve our abilities if we want to learn and look at it with a mindset for learning. Moreover, a fatal mistake can be a key to success in the future. In speaking context, if we see our mistakes in a positive way and make these mistakes as a learning process, our abilities will increase.

4. Discussion

The first significant result showed that participants' educational backgrounds influence their self-efficacy in English-speaking skills. Out-of-Java students thought that their educational backgrounds became an obstacle for them in the learning process. They felt embarrassed to speak English because they were not used to it, so they became passive in class. This condition happened when they were in the first semester. This problem resulted from the lack of good education in their previous studies. This first result confirmed Wirandana & Khoirunurrofik (2022) study that easy access to high-quality education can improve human resources in the future. Thus, the education system should provide the necessary facilities and resources to support both schools (to fulfil their responsibilities) and students (to learn what is needed) without disparity among regions (Wirandana & Khoirunurrofik, 2022). It is also crucial for the government to take concrete actions by building facilities and increasing teachers' teaching abilities by holding educational seminars. The good education and educators will balance the learning process of the students. By getting a good education, student can compete with others who are from the big cities. They will not feel afraid and insecure because of their backgrounds.

The second significant result of this study was the learning strategies applied by the participants to overcome the difficulties in speaking English. Language learning strategies help students to succeed in learning and develop their communicative competencies. This result supported Amir's (2018) study that by using the Language Learning Strategy, English language students can master the material independently, either individually or with other people. The result showed that the participants had implemented what Goh (2017) stated in her study: to communicate well verbally, students need systematic guidance and support to plan language use, improve vocabulary, and develop relevant speaking skills.

In this study, some participants applied communication activities as a strategy to improve their speaking skills. They communicated with their friends using English. This result revealed that the participants used a communicative strategy to improve their abilities. Some previous researches showed that communicative strategies have a good impact on students. These studies found that communicative strategies help promote communicative competence to students (Al-Qahtani & Al-Hebaishi, 2010; Nakatani, 2006). The other strategy applied by the participants was watching western movies and listening to English songs. This strategy is known as good strategies in improving speaking skills. Boonkit (2010) investigated the factors that improved the speaking ability of Thai university students and found that frequent exposure to English material through listening and watching activities increased participants' speaking abilities. Knowing that there are many benefits obtained from learning strategies, students must have plans for learning English inside and outside the classroom (Amir, 2018).

In addition, the participants also applied the other impactful strategy, which was believing in their abilities. This method led them to success in demonstrating their speaking English in the lecture process. The results showed that in the third semester the participants had no difficulties in terms of confidence anymore. They had overcome this obstacle because they realized that self-belief was important if they wanted to be successful students. They emphasized that from day to day their confidence and English language skills were increasing. They were active in the lecture process. Wong (2005) states that a big problem among ESL students is the low level of self-efficacy. Therefore, it is crucial to increase students' self-efficacy beliefs in speaking foreign languages. Furthermore, the participants also revealed that they learned from their mistakes to overcome their difficulty in speaking English. They still made mistakes in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. However, their self-efficacy in speaking English was not diminishing. They were more eager to speak. This result was in contrast to that conducted by Al Nakhalah (2016) in which the participants of his study were worried about making mistakes when speaking English. Thus, it could be concluded that out-of-Java students were willing to study to improve their speaking English skills and had high self-efficacy.

5. Conclusion

This study revealed two important results. First, there was an influence of the participants' educational backgrounds on their perceptions of self-efficacy in English-speaking skills. In the first semester, the participants were not active in the lecture process. However, this condition only happened when they were in the first semester. In the third semester, they stated that their English-speaking skills were increasing. They were active and brave when speaking in front of the class. Second, the participants had their own strategies in overcoming the difficulties that they experienced in speaking. The result showed that the participants used four main strategies; speaking English with friends, watching western movies and listening to English songs, believing in their abilities, and learning from mistakes.

The results of the study indicated that these out-of-Java students have high self-efficacy beliefs which increase with their time at university and can improve their English-speaking skills by applying some learning strategies. This study would be helpful for all students outside Java island who desire to study in Java. They may use this research as one of the learning media for them to solve the obstacles that happened during their studies. This research is also helpful for lecturers and students from Java island to understand the pathways of students from outside Java island and how they overcome all the difficulties while studying. In addition, the researchers suggest that future studies must be carried out because of the limited number of studies in this field. Future research can be improved by involving larger sample groups.

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