

APPROACHES TO SELF-EFFICACY IN SECOND LANGUAGE SPEAKING: THE STATE OF THE ART

Arsi Zahiri^{1*}, Resdilla Pratiwi^{2**}

^{1,2}English Applied Linguistics Study Program, State University of Medan, Medan, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: arsyza@gmail.com; **E-mail: Resdillapратиwi@gmail.com

Abstract-This paper aims to paint a picture of approaches to self-efficacy in second language (L2) speaking. More specifically, it posits assessable self-efficacy dimensions in L2 speaking as instruments for assessing such particular domain are scanty. Dimensions of the self-efficacy hinge on the four sources of self-efficacy namely mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and psychological and affective states, whereas the dimensions of L2 speaking employ Goh's (2007) model for speaking skill for effective communication, namely phonological skills, speech function skills, interaction management skills, and extended discourse organization skills. In conclusion, all the dimensions of self-efficacy are juxtaposed with Goh's (2007) model for speaking skill for effective communication thereby constructing assessable instrument for assessing students' speaking self-efficacy.

Keywords: self-efficacy, L2 speaking, EFL learners

1. INTRODUCTION

Since its launch in 1945 as one of a foreign languages taught to students in Indonesia, English becomes compulsory subject either in primary or secondary education. At the beginning of its launch, the purpose of learning a foreign language (i.e. English) is to read literature, thus mimicry and memorization become the hallmarks of teaching activities in the class. As such is due to the approach that was popular in that day namely Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Direct Method (DM), and Audio Lingual Method (ALM) [1].

Nowadays, along with the purpose of communicative competence in learning English as a foreign language, teaching students how to speak becomes important. It is important in the sense that students would face challenges in this globalised era. The globalised era demands not only the ability to read and write, but also to speak fluently. To be considered fluent in speaking English, one must have four competences, namely grammatical competence, strategic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and discourse competence [2]. These four competences in turn affect students' fluency in speaking.

However, not only do the four competences affect one's skill in speaking, but also there is another factor that may be considered important in determining their success, that is self-efficacy. This paper aims to paint a portrait of the nature of self-efficacy and its relation to the English speaking as one of determinant in one's success. In addition to this, it pursues dimensions of self-efficacy and L2 speaking to arrive at an instrument for assessing self-efficacy in speaking.

2. DISCUSSION

As stated earlier that there are four competences affecting one's ability in speaking, this paper aims to moot another variable, particularly psychological, that may affect one's ability in speaking, that is, self-efficacy. Before dwelling on self-efficacy and its dimension, let us review the four competences needed by students in speaking English as the explanation as to why it is important.

Grammatical competence. As the name indicates, it refers to the ability to master linguistic codes, and the ability to recognize morphological and phonological features of a language [2]. Understanding the rules of a language seems to be the most crucial thing to follow since we cannot speak fluently unless we follow the rule of a language. Sociolinguistic competence serves as the second determinant of success in L2 speaking. It simply refers to the ability to understand the sociological aspects like appropriate words. By having this competence, one would know when s/he employ a word to the people they speak. The third competence is in terms of discourse. Discourse competence concerns with the connection of a series of sentences or inter-sentential relationships to form a meaningful whole [2]. The fourth competence is in terms of strategy, or strategic competence. It defines as the ability to employ strategies to compensate for imperfect knowledge of rules [2]. This

kind of competence is highly needed so that the speakers know the strategy for employing appropriate words.

Although experts in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) and/or applied linguistics have studied the four competences, there is another determinant of success in speaking. The four competences would not be effective unless the speaker is high efficacious. One may have a good grammar but if they are low efficacious, they might not be able to express the ideas in their mind. Similarly, the other three competences resemble similarity in the result of expressing ideas. The four competences are also employed in all types of speaking.

1. Speaking Skills

Brown [3] states that there are five basic types of speaking, and each of which has different characteristics one another. Details of the five basic types of speaking are set in Table 1.

Table 1. Basic Types of Speaking

| Types of speaking | Characteristics |
|--------------------------|---|
| Imitative | This kind of speaking performance only aims to imitate or mimic a word, phrase or possibly a sentence. |
| Intensive | It is the production of short stretches of oral language designed to demonstrate competence in a narrow band of grammatical, phrasal, lexical, or phonological relationships (i.e. intonation, stress, rhythm, and juncture). |
| Responsive | Responsive assessment tasks include interaction and test comprehension but at the somewhat limited level of very short conversations, standard greetings and small talk, simple requests and comments, and the like. |
| Interactive | The difference between responsive and interactive speaking is in the length and complexity of the interaction, which sometimes includes multiple exchanges and/or multiple participants. |
| Extensive | Extensive oral production tasks include speeches, oral presentations, and storytelling, during which the opportunity for oral interaction from listeners is either highly limited. |

(Source: Adapted from Brown, 2004:141-142)

Of the five basic types of speaking, three of them are employed in the L2 speaking classroom such as intensive speaking, responsive speaking, and interactive speaking. All of the three types above have dimensions to assess so that our students' achievement in speaking will be attained. For this reason, Goh[4] postulates four key areas of speaking competence. Similar to Brown [3], these four key areas indicate some similarities to the five basic types of speaking namely imitative, intensive, responsive, interactive, and extensive.

Both Brown [3] and Goh[4] posit similarities in their notion of speaking skills that can be seen from its characteristics. Imitative speaking may also refer to the phonological skills since it assess the clarity of a word, phrase or sentence sounds. Responsive speaking may also be juxtaposed with speech function since it aims to perform communicative performance (i.e. standard greetings, demands, agreement). Furthermore, intensive and interactive speaking types may refer to interaction management skills. As such is due to its characteristics that aim to demonstrate competence in the interaction skills (i.e. negotiation, closing conversation). Finally, extensive speaking is juxtaposed with extended discourse organization skills since it intends to pursue cohesion and coherence in public speaking (i.e. speeches, oral presentations).

Table 2. Speaking Skill for Effective Communication

| Dimension | Characteristics |
|---------------------|---|
| Phonological Skills | Produce accurate sounds of the target language at the phonemic (vowels and consonants) and prosodic (stress and intonation levels). |

| Dimension | Characteristics |
|--|---|
| Speech Function Skills | Use spoken words to perform communicative functions, such as request, demand, decline, explain, complain, encourage, beg, direct, warn, and agree. |
| Interaction Management Skills | Manage face-to-face interactions by initiating, maintaining, and closing conversations, regulating turn-taking, changing topics and negotiating meaning. |
| Extended Discourse Organization Skills | Establish coherence and cohesion in extended discourse by using established conventions to structure different types of spoken text (e.g. narrative, procedural). |

(Source: Adopted from Goh, 2007:5)

2. Self-Efficacy Theory

Before discussing self-efficacy, it is necessary to deal with its theory. The notion of self-efficacy is firstly introduced in 1977 by a psychologist Albert Bandura in his working paper titled “Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change”. Such a theory is driven from the Social Cognitive Theory in which people are self-organizing and make causal contributions to their own psychological functioning through mechanism of personal agency (Bandura, 1997:2). In the hub of Social Cognitive Theory, human thought and action are viewed as the product of personal, behavioral, and environmental influences (Pajares, 2005:340). These three factors are determinant factors in affecting one’s success in doing something, and are illustrated in Figure 1.

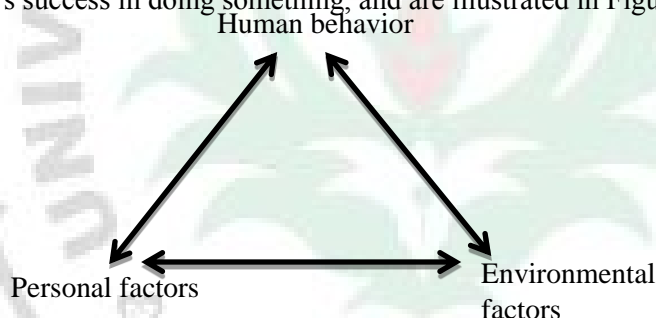


Figure 1. Model illustrating relations between determinants in triadic reciprocal causation

(Source: Adopted from Pajares, 2005:341)

To put it simply, a student believes that s/he has a low competence in speaking since her/his last English scores were low. This self-belief will affect her/his behavior towards speaking like reluctance to do English tasks. Such behavior is logical since it acts as a way of resistance in the student’s behavior. Furthermore, milieu around him/her (i.e. competitive classroom, lack of teacher’s attention, lack of role model in English) may deteriorate his/her behavior towards English in particular speaking.

3. Four Sources of Self-Efficacy

As self-efficacy refers to beliefs’ in one’s capabilities to organize and execute course of action required to produce given attainments (Bandura, 1997:3), he further postulates that there are four sources of self-efficacy. These four sources, according to Bandura (1997), act as the determiner of success in attaining goals. The four sources of self-efficacy are mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and psychological and affective states (Bandura, 1997:79). It is important to bear in mind that since its release in 1977, the notion of self-efficacy has been a source of inspiration in researching human’s behavior in many contexts such as in social sciences, engineering, mathematics, and reading, but little attention is paid to the second language (henceforth L2) speaking. Much of L2 speaking research centers on other psychological variables such as motivation, anxiety, and perception (i.e. Pino, 2009; Nazara, 2011; Ozturk and Gurbuz, 2014) and proficiency variable (i.e. Mistar and Umamah, 2014).

Mastery experience acts as the first source of self-efficacy. As the name indicates, it acts as the most influential source of self-efficacy because it provides the most authentic evidence whether one can take whatever it takes to succeed (Bandura, 1997:80). It is common that in the pursuit of success, we need to have great effort and mastery of something we are concerned about. Thus, having a great amount of mastery experience in L2 speaking will lead us to the belief that we can speak English well.

Vicarious experience serves as the second source of self-efficacy. As the name demonstrates, it refers to the transmission of competencies and comparison with the attainments of others (Bandura, 1997:79). Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that our efficacy may be altered by our colleagues' experiences in the past. If they failed in doing something in the past and told such a story to us, our self-efficacy may also be diminished. As a result, we would not be brave enough to pursue our goals.

The third source of self-efficacy is verbal persuasion. As the previous two sources, this source may also alter our self-efficacy through others' beliefs. It is common in daily life that people ask their mates' opinions regarding the thing they want to do. Moreover, Bandura (1997:101) posits that it is easier to sustain a sense of efficacy, especially when struggling with difficulties, if significant others express faith in one's capabilities than if they communicate doubts.

The last source is psychological and affective states. Unlike verbal persuasion that may alter one's self-efficacy in doing something, psychological indicators of efficacy play an important role in health functioning and activities requiring physical strength and stamina (Bandura, 1997:106).

4. Assessing Self-Efficacy in Speaking

With reference to the four sources of self-efficacy and speaking skills for effective communication, an instrument for assessing self-efficacy in speaking can be drawn. The instrument for assessing self-efficacy in speaking can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3.Blueprint for Assessing Self-Efficacy in Speaking

| Characteristics of Self-Efficacy in Speaking | Characteristics of Speaking Skills for Effective Communication: Students are able to speak in terms of | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---------|------------------------|---------|-------------------------------|---------|--|---------|
| | Phonological Skills | | Speech Function Skills | | Interaction Management Skills | | Extended Discourse Organization Skills | |
| | Number of Item | Item No | Number of Item | Item No | Number of Item | Item No | Number of Item | Item No |
| The beliefs students have about their ability to produce accurate sounds of the target language. | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| The beliefs students have about their ability to deal with challenging speaking tasks | 1 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 8 |
| The beliefs students have about their ability to achieve better academic skills in speaking. | 1 | 9 | 1 | 10 | 1 | 11 | 1 | 12 |
| TOTAL | 3 | | 3 | | 3 | | 3 | |

(Source: Adapted and Synthesized from Bandura (1997) and Goh (2014).)

Table 3 describes the characteristics of self-efficacy and speaking skills for effective communication. It is derived from the theory of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) and Goh's (2014) model. In addition to assessing self-efficacy in speaking, a questionnaire consisting of 12 questions can be developed on the basis of the above blueprint. The developed blueprint is available on Appendix 1.

3. CONCLUSION

With reference to the above discussion, some conclusions are drawn. First, students' skills in L2 speaking is not merely affected by the four competences (i.e. grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence), but it also is affected by psychological aspect such as self-efficacy. This kind of variable, in turn, has been studied in many majors such as mathematics, reading, writing, and listening, but little attention is paid to the L2 speaking.

Second, in the field of L2 speaking, it is indeed important to consider students' self-efficacy in speaking. The way the students produce words and sentences should be paid attention painstakingly

during the teaching and learning activities in the class. For this reason, the teacher needs to be not too formal to their students in the class so that their speaking goes flawlessly.

Third, since there is little attention is paid to the assessment practices of self-efficacy in speaking, it is therefore imperative to construct an instrument. Hence, this paper bridges the English teachers who intend to evaluate their students' speaking self-efficacy in the classroom.

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