

Schools' Strategies in Enhancing Students' Self-Efficacy Related to English Language Skills

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates school strategies in enhancing students' self-efficacy related to English language skills at SMP Negeri 2 Palangka Raya. The research problem arises from the observation that many junior high school students experience low self-efficacy and hesitation when learning English, which affects their participation and language performance. Therefore, this study aims to examine how school programs are implemented to enhance students' self-efficacy, how these programs are carried out in the classroom, and what obstacles the school encounters in improving students' self-efficacy. This research employed a qualitative approach using a case study method. Data were collected through interviews with the school principal, English teachers, and students, as well as through observation and documentation. The findings reveal that the school implements several strategic programs to enhance students' self-efficacy, including the "Student Talent Showcase" program, which provides opportunities for public speaking and English storytelling, teacher participation in professional development forums, and specialized mentoring for English competitions. At the classroom level, teachers apply role-play activities, peer modeling, culturally responsive teaching, and supportive feedback to build students' confidence in using English. However, several obstacles remain, particularly internal psychological barriers such as fear of making mistakes, lack of intrinsic motivation, and self-doubt among students with low self-efficacy. External factors, such as differences in learning support outside school, also influence students' self-efficacy. The findings contribute to understanding how institutional programs and classroom strategies can support the development of students' self-efficacy in English language learning.

Keywords: Self-Efficacy; English Language Learning; School Strategies; EFL Students; Classroom Pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

Education plays an essential role in developing students' abilities, character, and potential in order to prepare them to face global challenges. According to the National Education Law of Indonesia, education aims to develop students' potential so that they become knowledgeable, creative, independent, and responsible citizens. One important competence that students need to develop is the ability to communicate in English, as English has become an international language widely used in education, technology, and global communication (Nuraeni et al., 2017). Therefore, mastering English language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing is considered an important goal in modern education. The acquisition of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is fundamentally influenced by psychological constructs, among which self-efficacy stands as a primary determinant. Self-efficacy is the conviction that one can successfully carry out specific tasks (Bandura, 1978). In the context of Indonesian secondary education, high self-efficacy is essential for overcoming language anxiety and fostering active communication.

Prior research has demonstrated a strong correlation between students' academic success and self-efficacy. Stronger self-efficacy beliefs are associated with increased learning motivation and better academic achievement, according to Doménech-Betoret et al. (2017). In a similar vein, Chang and Tsai (2022) discovered that students' self-efficacy has a major impact on their engagement and success in learning English. Additionally, Astuti (2022) found that students' self-efficacy has a favorable impact on their ability to speak English. According to these results, students who have confidence in their skills are more likely to engage fully in language learning activities and attain superior learning outcomes. While extensive literature has explored self-efficacy as an individual psychological trait, there is a critical need to investigate it through the lens of a case study, focusing on how specific institutional ecosystems and structured school programs systematically cultivate these beliefs within a particular social context.

Further observations were conducted in several junior high schools in Palangka Raya to compare students' achievements in English competitions. The results showed that SMP Negeri 2 Palangka Raya achieved higher performance in English competitions compared to other schools. This condition suggests that the school may implement certain strategies that help students develop stronger self-efficacy in learning English. Schools play an important role in creating supportive learning environments that encourage students to build confidence and actively participate in language learning activities. SMP Negeri 2 Palangka Raya represents a unique and significant case for this investigation due to its status as a high-achieving institution. Despite the common challenges faced by public schools in Indonesia regarding English proficiency, SMP Negeri 2 Palangka Raya has consistently maintained a reputation for excellence in English-related achievements and regional competitions.

Theoretically, such institutional success should reflect a high level of collective self-efficacy among its students. However, preliminary observations within the classroom revealed a compelling paradox: active engagement and high confidence are concentrated within a specific segment of the students. Approximately 10 out of 32 individuals demonstrate this level of participation and confidence. This internal discrepancy suggests that the school's strategies may function effectively for some but encounter systemic barriers for others, making SMP Negeri 2 Palangka Raya a "rich site" for an in-depth case analysis.

This research focuses on the organizational and pedagogical strategies implemented by SMPN 2 to bridge the gap between institutional goals and student confidence. Rather than merely describing the lived experiences of individual students (phenomenology), this study analyzes the "bounded system" of the school's programs, their practical implementation in the classroom, and the institutional challenges that arise during the process. By dissecting the strategic efforts of a high-performing school, this study aims to provide a granular understanding of how self-efficacy is managed at an institutional level. The findings are expected to offer practical insights and a strategic blueprint for other educational institutions seeking to foster a more inclusive and robust environment for English language self-efficacy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous Related Studies

Several studies have examined the role of self-efficacy in English language learning and its influence on students' academic performance. Gurium (2025) conducted a qualitative study investigating how self-efficacy influences the speaking skills of English education students. The findings showed that students with high self-efficacy demonstrate stronger motivation, greater persistence, and higher confidence in speaking activities. In addition, supportive learning environments were found to play a significant role in strengthening students' belief in their language abilities.

Similarly, Istikharoh and Utami (2024) explored students' self-efficacy in technology-assisted language learning using a mixed-method approach. The study found that students who actively engage with digital learning tools tend to develop higher levels of self-efficacy. Approximately 76.6% of students reported a high level of confidence when using digital platforms. This suggests that both technological integration and supportive environments contribute positively to students' motivation and self-efficacy in English learning.

In contrast, Fadillah and Wulandari (2025) examined the relationship between students' self-efficacy in essay writing and their writing performance. The results revealed a weak and statistically insignificant correlation between the two variables.

This indicates that high self-efficacy alone does not automatically lead to better academic performance and must be supported by effective instructional strategies. A related study by Givency (2023) also reported a weak positive correlation between self-efficacy and speaking performance among senior high school students. The findings suggest that, although self-efficacy contributes to students' confidence, other factors such as teaching methods, learning environments, and motivation also play important roles.

Overall, these studies confirm that self-efficacy is an important factor in language learning. However, most previous research focuses on self-efficacy as an individual psychological variable rather than examining how schools systematically develop it through institutional and classroom strategies. Therefore, this study aims to explore how school programs and teaching practices contribute to strengthening students' self-efficacy in English language learning.

Theoretical Framework of Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is widely recognized as one of the most important psychological factors influencing students' learning processes and academic success. According to Bandura (1978), self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to plan and carry out actions required to achieve specific goals. In educational contexts, self-efficacy affects how students think, feel, and behave during the learning process. Students with high self-efficacy tend to show greater effort, persistence, and resilience when facing academic challenges, while also demonstrating stronger motivation to engage in learning activities (Schunk, 1991; Maddux, 2016).

Bandura's social cognitive theory explains that self-efficacy develops through four main sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological or emotional states. Mastery experiences refer to students' past successes in completing tasks, while vicarious experiences occur when students observe others successfully performing similar tasks. Verbal persuasion involves encouragement and feedback from teachers and peers, and physiological states relate to how students interpret their emotional responses during learning (Bandura, 1978). These sources collectively shape students' confidence in their abilities. In the context of English language learning, self-efficacy plays a crucial role because language acquisition requires continuous practice, interaction, and active participation. Students with high self-efficacy are more willing to engage in speaking activities, attempt challenging tasks, and persist despite difficulties. In contrast, students with low self-efficacy often experience anxiety, avoid participation, and doubt their ability to use the language effectively (Suryani et al., 2020).

This is closely related to the development of the four macro-skills in English: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening and reading are categorized as receptive skills, while speaking and writing are productive skills (Galang, 2020).

Mastery of these skills requires not only linguistic competence but also confidence and willingness to actively use the language. In this sense, self-efficacy becomes a key supporting factor in successful language learning. Furthermore, the role of schools and teachers is essential in fostering students' self-efficacy. Educational institutions can implement strategies such as cooperative learning, supportive feedback, and student-centered approaches to create a positive learning environment. According to Chang and Tsai (2022), supportive classroom environments and constructive teacher feedback significantly enhance students' motivation and self-efficacy. Therefore, effective school programs and teaching practices are crucial in helping students develop strong self-efficacy, which ultimately supports their success in mastering English language skills.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a case study design. This design was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of a specific phenomenon within its real-life context, particularly suitable for examining how school strategies are implemented to enhance students' self-efficacy. The focus of this study was on the institutional and classroom strategies used to support students' confidence in English language learning. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Palangka Raya, which was selected based on preliminary observations indicating its relatively strong achievements in English competitions compared to other junior high schools in the same region.

The participants consisted of one school principal, two English teachers, and six students representing different levels of self-efficacy in English learning. The principal was involved to provide information regarding institutional programs and policies. English teachers were selected due to their direct role in implementing instructional strategies that influence students' confidence and classroom participation. The students were included to capture their experiences, perceptions, and challenges in learning English. All participants were selected purposively based on their relevance to the research objectives.

Instruments and Procedures

Data were collected using interviews, observations, and documentation. The researcher acted as the primary instrument, responsible for collecting and interpreting the data. In-depth interviews were conducted to gain detailed insights into school strategies, teaching practices, and students' learning experiences. Semi-structured interview questions were used to explore the implementation of school programs, classroom teaching strategies, and challenges in enhancing students' self-efficacy. Interviews with the school principal focused on institutional policies and programs, while interviews with English teachers explored classroom practices and strategies used to build students' confidence. Interviews with students aimed to

understand their perceptions, experiences, and feelings toward learning English. Classroom observations were carried out to examine how teaching strategies were implemented in practice, including student participation, teacher–student interaction, and the overall learning atmosphere. Documentation was also used to support the data, including school program records, competition achievements, and other relevant materials. The use of multiple data sources allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using an interactive qualitative data analysis model consisting of three main steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Rijali, 2019). Data reduction involved selecting, organizing, and focusing relevant information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. The data were then categorized into themes aligned with the research objectives, such as school strategies, classroom practices, and challenges in enhancing students' self-efficacy. Data display was conducted by presenting the findings in a structured and descriptive form, supported by excerpts from interviews and observations. This process helped identify patterns, similarities, and differences across participants' responses. The final step, conclusion drawing, involved interpreting the data to generate meaningful insights into how school programs and teaching strategies contribute to students' self-efficacy in English learning (Ummah, 2019). To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, triangulation was applied by comparing data from multiple sources, including interviews, observations, and documentation. This approach helped ensure that the findings accurately reflect the actual conditions in the field (Moleong, 2018).

RESULT AND DISUSSION

Institutional Strategies in Enhancing Students' Self-Efficacy

The findings show that SMP Negeri 2 Palangka Raya implements several institutional strategies to enhance students' self-efficacy in English language learning. One of the main programs is the Student Talent Showcase (Ajang Bakat Siswa), which is conducted every Wednesday. This program provides students with opportunities to demonstrate their abilities, including English storytelling and public speaking. This activity represents a form of social persuasion carried out by the school, where students are encouraged to perform in front of an audience. Through this experience, students gradually build confidence and reduce their fear of making mistakes. In addition, the school supports teachers' professional development through participation in the Subject Teachers' Consultative Forum (MGMP). This forum enables teachers to exchange teaching strategies, improve pedagogical competence, and stay updated with effective instructional practices.

The school also provides special mentoring programs for students participating in English competitions. English teachers are assigned as mentors to guide students

during preparation. These institutional strategies create structured opportunities for students to practice and demonstrate their abilities, which contributes to the development of their self-efficacy.

Classroom Pedagogical Strategies

At the classroom level, teachers apply various strategies to build students' confidence in learning English. One commonly used approach is role-play and interactive learning activities. These activities encourage students to practice speaking and expressing ideas in a supportive environment. Teachers also implement peer modeling by encouraging high-achieving students to serve as role models for their classmates. This allows students with lower confidence to observe and learn from peers who successfully perform language tasks.

In addition, teachers apply culturally responsive teaching by integrating local cultural elements, such as regional stories and familiar contexts, into English learning materials. This approach helps students relate learning content to their daily lives, making English more meaningful and accessible. Another important finding is the use of supportive feedback. Teachers do not immediately criticize students' grammatical or pronunciation errors. Instead, they guide students to reflect on their responses and discover the correct forms. This creates a safe and supportive classroom environment that encourages participation and reduces anxiety.

Challenges in Developing Students' Self-Efficacy

Despite the implementation of various strategies, several challenges were identified. The most prominent obstacles are internal psychological factors, including fear of making mistakes, low motivation, and lack of confidence. These factors often result in passive classroom behavior and reluctance to participate in English activities. In addition, the findings show that the effectiveness of teaching strategies is not evenly distributed among students. While active students benefit significantly from these strategies, others with lower confidence remain less engaged. This indicates that differences in students' initial self-efficacy levels influence how they respond to classroom practices. External factors also contribute to this issue. Differences in learning support at home and access to additional tutoring create unequal learning opportunities. Some students receive extra academic support outside school, while others rely solely on classroom instruction. These disparities affect students' confidence and readiness in learning English.

The findings of this study highlight that both institutional and classroom strategies play a significant role in enhancing students' self-efficacy. The Student Talent Showcase program reflects Bandura's concept of social persuasion, where encouragement and opportunities to perform help strengthen students' confidence. Similarly, mentoring programs and teacher professional development contribute to creating a supportive institutional environment that fosters self-efficacy.

At the classroom level, strategies such as role-play and peer modeling align with the concept of mastery and vicarious experiences in Bandura's theory. Students gain confidence through direct practice and by observing their peers' success. These findings are consistent with previous studies (e.g., Chang & Tsai, 2022), which emphasize the importance of supportive learning environments in improving students' engagement and self-efficacy.

The use of culturally responsive teaching further strengthens this process by making learning more relevant to students' lives. When students can connect learning materials with their own experiences, their motivation and confidence tend to increase. In addition, supportive feedback from teachers plays a crucial role in reducing anxiety and encouraging active participation, which supports the findings of Doménech-Betoret et al. (2017). However, the findings also reveal that improving self-efficacy is not solely dependent on instructional strategies. Internal psychological barriers, such as fear and low motivation, continue to hinder some students' participation. This supports previous research (Suryani et al., 2020), which shows that low self-efficacy negatively affects students' engagement in learning activities.

Furthermore, the unequal impact of teaching strategies suggests that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be sufficient. Students with different levels of initial confidence require more differentiated support. External factors, such as family support and access to additional learning resources, also influence students' self-efficacy. The study indicates that while school programs and teaching strategies are effective in enhancing students' self-efficacy, additional efforts are needed to address both internal and external barriers. A more inclusive and differentiated approach may help ensure that all students benefit equally from these strategies.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the strategies implemented by SMP Negeri 2 Palangka Raya to enhance students' self-efficacy in English language learning. The findings indicate that the school applies a combination of institutional programs and classroom teaching strategies to support the development of students' self-efficacy. One of the key institutional initiatives is the Student Talent Showcase program, which provides students with opportunities to practice public speaking and demonstrate their abilities in English as a form of social persuasion. In addition, the school supports teachers' professional development through participation in the Subject Teachers' Consultative Forum (MGMP) and provides mentoring programs for students involved in English competitions. These efforts contribute to creating a supportive environment that encourages students to practice English and build confidence.

At the classroom level, teachers implement various pedagogical strategies, including role-play activities, peer modeling, and culturally responsive teaching. These approaches promote interactive and meaningful learning experiences that

help students develop confidence in using English. Supportive feedback from teachers also plays an important role in reducing students' anxiety and encouraging them to view mistakes as part of the learning process.

However, the study also identified several challenges that influence the development of students' self-efficacy. Internal psychological factors, such as fear of making mistakes, low motivation, and lack of confidence, remain significant barriers for some students. External factors, including differences in learning support outside school, further contribute to unequal learning experiences among students. While the strategies implemented by the school have positively contributed to enhancing students' self-efficacy, additional efforts are needed to address both psychological and environmental barriers. Providing more inclusive and targeted support may help ensure that all students can develop confidence and actively participate in English language learning.

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