

RESEARCH ARTICLE**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN EFL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE SPEAKING ANXIETY**

Nasim Danesh Tahsildar^{a,}, Adela Kabir^b*

ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating the relationship between EFL students' academic self-efficacy beliefs and their English language speaking anxiety at a public university in Afghanistan. A number of 202 students from two different English Language and Literature Departments participated in this study. Two sets of questionnaires were used to collect data in this study. The obtained results revealed that the participants' both levels of self-efficacy beliefs and their speaking anxiety were rather high. A significant positive correlation was also found between the participants' self-efficacy beliefs and their English language speaking anxiety. In addition, the two Departments' students were compared in terms of self-efficacy beliefs and speaking anxiety. The study is concluded with two recommendations for future research and English language teachers to focus more on English language speaking anxiety and be more empathic to students while teaching English language speaking skill.

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Keywords: Self-Efficacy Beliefs, Speaking Anxiety, English Department, English as a Foreign Language

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ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

AFGANİSTANDA YABANCI DİL OLARAK İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRENEEN ÖĞRENCİLERİN AKADEMİK ÖZ YETERLİKLERİ VE İNGİLİZCE KONUŞMA KAYGILARI ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİNİN İNCELENMESİ

Nasim Danesh Tahsildar^{a,}, Adela Kabir^b*

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Afganistan'daki bir devlet üniversitesinde yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen öğrencilerin akademik öz yeterlik inançları ile İngilizce konuşma kaygıları arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Çalışmaya iki farklı İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümünden 202 öğrenci katılmıştır. Çalışmada veri toplamak için iki grup anket kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen sonuçlar, katılımcıların hem öz yeterlik inanç düzeylerinin hem de konuşma kaygısının oldukça yüksek olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Katılımcıların öz yeterlik inancı ile İngilizce konuşma kaygısı arasında da anlamlı ve pozitif ilişki bulunmuştur. Ayrıca, iki bölümün öğrencileri öz yeterlik inancı ve konuşma kaygısı açısından karşılaştırılmıştır. Çalışma gelecekteki araştırmalar ve İngilizce öğretmenleri için İngilizce konuşma becerisini öğretirken konuşma kaygısına daha fazla odaklanma ve bu süreçte öğrencilere daha empatik davranma önerileriyle sonuçlandırılmıştır.

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Öz Yeterlik İnançları, Konuşma Kaygısı, İngilizce Bölümü, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce

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Introduction

As an EFL teacher at a university in Afghanistan for more than 10 years, I have had and witnessed many students at different levels with high grammatical, lexical and phonological competence; however, I have found the same students with low speaking abilities. Many other EFL colleagues of mine also share the same experiences sometimes. EFL teachers are usually proud of their students' lexical and grammatical competence; conversely, when it comes to speaking, they are concerned about their students' confidence and abilities to speak. The lower level of the scores of speaking subjects among other subjects at English Departments is another evidence of this claim.

Research on relationship between learning foreign language skills and certain personality qualities have also focused on variables such as efficacy, anxiety, motivation, confidence, extroversion and risk taking (Bandura, 1977; Ozturk & Gurbuz, 2012) and the relationships between different aspects of EFL skills and personal qualities have been recently explored by different studies such as (Cubukcu, 2008; Anyadubalu, 2010; Tsai, 2013; Marashi, 2015; Tuncer, 2015; Mede & Karimak, 2017). As mentioned earlier, EFL students in Afghanistan seem to be weaker at their speaking skills compared to other language skills like vocabulary and grammar. So, as one of the very early studies in this area in Afghanistan, this study investigated the relationship between EFL students' academic levels of self-efficacy and their speaking anxiety.

The framework of the study relates to Bandura's (1986) claim that self-efficacy beliefs have an efficient role in regulating anxiety stimulation and anxiety also functions as a main source of self-efficacy beliefs. Bandura also adds that self-efficacy regulates the way individuals feel, think, motivate themselves and act accordingly. Self-efficacy is defined as an individual's belief in his/her own capacity in doing a specific task (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1997). Usher and Pajares (2008) assert that self-efficacy can significantly predict academic success and has a positive function in controlling and regulating of anxiety in learning context (Bandura, 1994). Moreover, Ahmed (2011) asserts that low level of self-efficacy can cause higher level of learning anxiety. On the other hand, research also shows that students' positive feelings and experiences increase their self-efficacy (Csizer & Piniel, 2013) and as a type of emotional feeling, anxiety is a dynamic part of affective domain (Gardner, 1993), which is correlated with learners' self-efficacy (Csizer & Piniel, 2013). Recently, several empirical studies (e.g. Cubukcu, 2008; Anyadubalu, 2010; Tsai, 2013; Marashi, 2015; Tuncer, 2015; Mede & Karimak, 2017) have also been conducted to explore the relationship between EFL/ESL students' efficacy and their language learning anxiety. However, findings of these studies are somehow contradictory, which will be discussed in the following sections.

Scovel (1987) defines anxiety as an emotional state of apprehension which is indirectly related with something. Foreign language anxiety is a specific type of anxiety which mainly happens in foreign language classes (Horwitz & Cope, 1991). According to Horwitz (2001), one-third of second language learners experience at least a moderate level of foreign language anxiety, which mainly affects the language learning process negatively (Luo, 2013). Studies show that facilitating foreign language anxiety can be seen as an occasion to intensify the learners' performance in different aspects of learning a foreign language while debilitating anxiety deteriorates the process of learning. Horwitz, et. Al (1986) and MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) identify three types of anxiety as researchable issues: communication anxiety, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety.

As a part of communication anxiety (Horwitz, 1986), speaking, among the four main language skills is considered to be the most anxiety producing skill (Luo, 2015). Horwitz (1986, p. 128) defines speaking anxiety as "a type of shyness or fear of communicating with people." On the other hand, students in foreign language classes usually consider speaking in foreign language as the most anxiety provoking experience in the classes (Mede & Karairmak, 2017).

A number of research has been conducted on the possible impacts of foreign language speaking anxiety on foreign language performance. For instance, Huang (2004) investigates speaking anxiety among university English language learners in Taiwan. She finds that learners with higher level of speaking anxiety make less continuous speech in English with longer pauses while speaking compared to learners with lower level of speaking anxiety. In another study, Liu and Jakcson (2008) in their investigation on 547 Chinese EFL learners explore that foreign language learners' speaking anxiety toughly avoid learners to communicate in foreign language classrooms. In addition, Tsiplakides



and Keramida (2009) in their qualitative study find that school students mainly experience speaking anxiety due to fear of negative perception and evaluation of their classmates. Furthermore, Balemir (2009) in his study on the relationship between proficiency level and degree of foreign language speaking anxiety in Turkey reveals that EFL university students in Turkey experience a medium level of anxiety while speaking English as a foreign language. On the other hand, Luo (2015) examines Chinese language speaking anxiety among students who learn Chinese as a foreign language in the United States. The result demonstrates that the students experience a high level of anxiety while speaking Chinese. Thus, research evidence on foreign language speaking anxiety demonstrates that students of different levels experience anxiety at medium or high level while speaking a foreign language. In addition, research also indicates that the anxiety that the students experience while speaking a foreign language affects their communication performance negatively.

Studies also show that foreign language anxiety is correlated with certain significant factors that predict foreign language learning performance. These factors are such as learners' self-efficacy (Mede, 2017), self-esteem and locus of control (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008). Among these factors, self-efficacy beliefs are also efficient factors in contributing to the lessening of language anxiety (Fard, 2013; Tsai, 2013; Christopher, 2015; Merc, 2015; Marashi, 2015; Tuncer, 2016).

A number of empirical studies have investigated the correlation between foreign language learners' anxiety and self-efficacy. However, recent empirical evidence that supports the relationship between self-efficacy and language learning anxiety is not consistent. In a study on self-efficacy, anxiety and performance in English language, Anyadubalu (2010) discovers a significant moderate negative correlation between self-efficacy and English language anxiety. The findings show that students with higher level of self-efficacy experience lower level of foreign language anxiety. However, no significant relationship between confounding variables (teaching styles, time exposed in language learning out of the class and students' learning experience) and language performance is found. In a similar study on the impact of foreign language anxiety and self-efficacy among high school students in Taiwan, Tsai (2013) also investigates the relationship between self-efficacy and foreign language anxiety with regard to various genders and language proficiency levels. The result of this study also shows a negative correlation between the learners' level of self-efficacy and foreign language learning anxiety. In addition, Marashi (2015) assesses the relationship between self-efficacy and anxiety among foreign language learners. Marashi's findings indicate that there is a significant negative relationship between foreign language learning anxiety and self-efficacy. Further, Mede and Karimak (2017) conduct a research to investigate the predictor roles of speaking anxiety and English self-efficacy on foreign language speaking anxiety. The result of their study demonstrates a negative correlation between English speaking self-efficacy and speaking anxiety. Thus, results of these studies seem to support the hypothesis that as anxiety increases, self-efficacy level decreases. However, opposite to the negative correlations between EFL students' level of self-efficacy and foreign language learning anxiety, there have been certain recent studies showing positive or no correlations between the two variables. For example, Tuncer (2016) examines the relationship between foreign language anxiety and self-efficacy beliefs of foreign language learners. According to the results, self-efficacy affects the foreign language learning in a positive way. In addition, Tuncer mentions that his findings are compatible with Cekirdik's (2014) and Dogan and Tuncer's (2015) findings on the correlation between foreign language anxiety and self-efficacy. On the other hand, Cubukcu (2008) and Güngör and Yaylı (2012) in their studies on the correlation between self-efficacy and foreign language learning anxiety find no correlation between the two variables. Cubukcu also adds that whether EFL students have higher or lower level of self-efficacy, their anxiety level does not change. Neither can Cubukcu find a significant difference between girls' and boys' level of anxiety and self-efficacy. Moreover, in another investigation into the relationship between self-efficacy and test anxiety of EFL learners, Fard (2013) also finds no significant correlation between EFL students' self-efficacy beliefs and their EFL performance and no relationship in terms of gender.

Thus, from the literature it can be inferred that there are correlations between EFL students' level of self-efficacy and their language learning anxiety. However, findings on these correlations are not consistent. Certain studies (Pajares & Herron, 2006; Anyadubalu, 2010; Erkan & Saban, 2011; Tsai, 2013; Marashi, 2015; Mede & Karimak, 2017) demonstrate negative correlations between the two variables as hypothesized, while studies like (Dogan, 2016; Cekirdik's, 2014; Dogan and Tuncer, 2015) show positive correlation between the variables. On the other hand, few other studies (Cubukcu, 2008; Fard, 2013) found no correlation between foreign language learning self-efficacy beliefs and foreign language learning anxiety. In spite of all these studies with scarce findings, when it comes to the correlation between leaning English as a foreign language self-efficacy beliefs and English language speaking anxiety, no study has been conducted to investigate the issue in general

and in university context among English Language and Literature Departments in Afghanistan in particular. Therefore, the current study seeks to investigate the relationship between EFL students' level of self-efficacy and their English language speaking anxiety at two different English Language and Literature Departments in a university in Afghanistan.

For the purpose of this investigation, the following questions are addressed in the current study:
 Research questions:

1. What is the general level of perceived academic self-efficacy beliefs among English Departments' students at Herat University?
2. What is the general level of English language speaking anxiety among English Departments' students at Herat University?
3. Is there any relationship between the students' perceived academic self-efficacy beliefs and English language speaking anxiety?
4. Do perceived academic self-efficacy beliefs and English language speaking anxiety of the students at EDEC and EDLC differ significantly?
5. Are there significant differences between the students' perceived academic self-efficacy beliefs and English language speaking anxiety in terms of level and gender?

Method

This study is a quantitative study which yields data by examining a possible correlation between the perceived academic self-efficacy beliefs and English language speaking anxiety among EFL students at a public university in Afghanistan.

Participants of the study

The participants of this study were 202 bachelor students enrolled in two different English Language Departments, the English Department at College of Education (EDEC) and English Department at College of Literature (EDLC) in Herat University. The participants' age ranged between 18-30. The participants were enrolled as freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors, whose level were calculated as basic, intermediate and advanced. The following table shows a more detailed demography of the participants of the study.

Table 1. *The Participants' Demographic Data*

Ager	Gender		College		Level of English		
	Male	Female	EDEC	EDLC	Basic	Mid	Adv
18-30	85	117	112	90	38	110	54

Measures

The instruments used to collect data in this study were two survey questionnaires. The first questionnaire is the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire developed by Graumer Erickson (2016). It consists of 13 items testing the foreign language students' academic self-efficacy beliefs. This scale ranges from 1 (Not very like me) to 5 (Very like me). The self-efficacy questionnaire was found to be reliable (13 items; $\alpha = .83$).

The second questionnaire which is on Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS), was adopted from Horowitz's (1986), the developer of the scale. It is the most widely used instrument currently available for measuring Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (Csizer & Piniel, 2013). It consists of 33 statements, each to be rated by the respondent on a 1 (no anxiety) to 5 (high anxiety) Likert scale. Out of 33 items, 20 items which are directly related to English language speaking anxiety were used in this study. Levels of English Language Speaking Anxiety in this scale are divided into two levels as high and low. The high level of anxiety is determined from the mean value between 3.01 to 5.00, while the low level is taken from the range of 1.00 to 3.00. Items 15, 23, 25,

27 and 32 are reversely scored in this scale. Moreover, Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale was found to be highly reliable (20 items; $\alpha = .87$).

Both questionnaires were merged into one, including a demographic information part. The demographic information part of the questionnaire asked about the participants' sex, age, class, level of English, the frequency of communication with friends in English during a week and college. Finally, the questionnaire was randomly distributed to 217 EFL students and after cleaning the data, 202 questionnaires were found to be returned and fully completed.

Data Analysis

After all the data was collected, checked and coded, the data of 15 participants was excluded from the analysis due to certain misses. First, based on the research questions, the level of the students' self-efficacy was calculated in two different levels: the low level and the high level. The low level was determined by the mean value between (1.00 to 3.00) and high while the high level of efficacy among the students was determined from the range of (3.01 to 5). The same procedure was calculated with English Language Speaking Anxiety as was done by (Horowitz, 1986). The following tables show the participants' levels of self-efficacy and speaking anxiety.

Table 2. *The Participants' Level of Self-Efficacy*

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Efficacy	202	2.17	5.00	3.98	.57

As shown in table 2, the mean value of the participants' level of self-efficacy is above 3.00. It is 3.98, which shows the participants of this study experienced almost a higher level of academic self-efficacy. Table 3 demonstrates the mean and standard deviation of the participants' level of self-efficacy by item.

Table 3. *The Mean and Standard Deviation of the Participants' Level of Self-Efficacy by Item*

N	The Students' Self-Efficacy Items	Mean	SD
1	I can learn what is being taught in class this year.	4.28	.95
2	I can figure out anything if I try hard enough.	3.97	.96
3	If I practiced every day, I could develop just about any skill.	3.88	1.14
4	Once I have decided to accomplish something that is important to me, I keep trying to accomplish it, even if it is harder than I thought.	4.15	.88
5	I am confident that I will achieve the goals that I set for myself.	3.70	1.00
6	When I'm struggling to accomplish something difficult, I focus on my progress instead of feeling discouraged.	3.73	1.11
7	I will succeed in whatever career path I choose.	3.96	.97
8	I will succeed in whatever college major I choose.	3.98	.91
9	I believe hard work pays off.	3.74	1.03
10	My ability grows with effort.	4.00	1.00
11	I believe that the brain can be developed like a muscle.	4.03	1.10
12	I think no matter who you are, you can significantly change your talent.	4.36	.83
13	I can change my basic level of ability considerably.	4.02	.86

As shown in Table 3, among the 13 items regarding the students' level of efficacy, the students tend to feel the highest efficacy in item number 12 (4.36) about the change in their talents, while in terms of achieving their goals they feel lower at (3.70) as shown by item number 5. Table 4 shows the mean and standard deviation of the participants' levels of speaking anxiety.

Table 4. *The Participants' Level of Speaking Anxiety*

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Anxiety	202	1.00	5.00	3.74	1.11

As shown in table 4, the mean value of English language speaking anxiety is above 3.00. It is 3.74, which shows the participants of this study experienced also an almost higher level of English language speaking anxiety. Table 5 demonstrates the mean and standard deviation of the participants' level of English language speaking anxiety by item.

Table 5. *The Mean And Standard Deviation of the Participants' Level of English Language Speaking Anxiety by Item*

N	English Speaking Anxiety Items	Mean	SD
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English.	3.57	1.18
2	I don't worry about making mistakes in speaking English language.	2.13	1.11
3	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English	3.52	1.22
4	I always think other students are better at speaking English language than me.	3.15	1.30
5	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.	3.45	1.12
6	I worry about the consequences of failing my oral English.	3.52	1.05
7	I don't understand why some students get upset over English speaking.	3.78	1.15
8	In speaking English, I get so nervous when I forget things I knew.	3.50	1.38
9	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English-speaking class.	3.44	1.11
10	I would not be nervous speaking in English language with native speakers.	2.38	1.09
11	Even if I am well prepared for speaking English, I feel anxious about it.	3.73	1.21
12	I feel confident when I speak in English language class.	2.28	1.14
13	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm supposed to speak English in the class.	3.51	1.24
14	I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	2.21	1.05
15	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	3.48	1.25
16	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	3.19	1.38
17	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	3.50	1.26
18	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	3.53	1.07
19	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English language.	2.26	1.11
20	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions I haven't prepared	3.74	1.11

As shown in Table 5, among the 20 items (items 14 to 33) regarding the students' level of speaking anxiety, the students tend to feel the most anxious in item number 20 (3.78) about the fact that they don't understand why they get upset while speaking English. Items 15, 23, 25, 27 and 32 in this questionnaire are reversely scored.

To answer the third question and to see if there is any correlation between the students' level of self-efficacy and their speaking anxiety, a Pearson correlation calculation was done. The Pearson's r data showed an approximately positive correlation, $r = 0.507$ among the two variables. In other word, a significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and English language speaking anxiety was found at $r(202) = 0.507$, $p = .000$. Table 6, demonstrates the correlation between the participants' self-efficacy beliefs and their English language speaking anxiety.

Table 6. *Correlation Between Efficacy and Anxiety*

		Efficacy	Anxiety
Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.507**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	202	202
Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	.507**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	202	202

To answer the fourth question, and to see if there is any significant difference between the levels of efficacy and anxiety of the participants who came from two different English Departments (EDEC and EDLC), an ANOVA test was conducted and findings are as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Efficacy and Anxiety Mean Difference Between EDEC & EDLC

College		Anxiety	Efficacy
EDEC	Mean	2.39	1.89
	N	112	112
	Std. Deviation	.60	.55
EDLC	Mean	2.50	2.16
	N	90	90
	Std. Deviation	.64	.56
Total	Mean	2.44	2.01
	N	202	202
	Std. Deviation	.62	.57

As shown in Table 7, the mean score of EDEC participants in Anxiety is 2.39 while the mean score of EDLC in the same variable is 2.50. In addition, the mean of Efficacy of EDEC participants is 1.89 while the same variable Mean with EDLC participants is 2.16. Thus, it can be concluded that EDLC participants' both Anxiety and Efficacy are higher than their counterparts at EDEC.

In order to determine whether this difference between the mean scores of the two Departments' students (EDEC and EDLC) is significant, an Independent Sample T-test was applied and the result is shown in Table 8 below.

Table 8. Independent Samples Test

	Equal variances	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of dif	
									Lower	Upper
Anxiety	Assumed	1.3	.249	-1.21	200	.226	-.107	.088	-.281	.066
	Not assumed			-1.20	184.98	.230	-.107	.088	-.282	.068
Efficacy	Assumed	.76	.382	-3.41	200	.001	-.270	.079	-.426	-.114
	Not assumed			-3.41	189.9	.001	-.270	.079	-.426	-.114

As demonstrated in Table 8, there seems to be a significant difference only in the mean of Efficacy between the participants of the two Departments. EDEC students are found at (M=1.89, SD=.55) while EDLC students are found at (M=2.16, SD=.56 conditions; t (200) =-3.41, p < 0.001. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between self-efficacy mean scores of EDEC and EDLC students. The EDLC students revealed to have a significant higher level of self-efficacy in their field of study.

To answer the last question and to find the difference between the students' perceived academic self-efficacy beliefs and English language speaking anxiety in terms of level, the mean analyses show that students at basic level tend to have the highest efficacy at (2.23), while this score for students at intermediate level is lower at (1.96) and for advanced level it is the lowest among the three levels at (1.95). On the other hand, students of different levels scored in the same order in terms of anxiety. Basic students' mean score in Anxiety is (2.53), intermediate students at this variable score (2.46) and advanced students is again with the lowest mean at (2.34). Table 9 shows the differences between the means, numbers and standard deviations of efficacy and anxiety among students of different levels.

A post-hoc test was also conducted to see if the differences between the three groups (Basic, Intermediate, Advanced) were significant. The results demonstrated that the differences related to only Efficacy were significant among two groups of Basic and Intermediate. The Basic group differed significantly from Intermediate group at p < .05., (0.42). Conversely, the differences related to Anxiety were not found to be significant.

Table 9. *Efficacy and Anxiety Difference Based on Different Levels*

Levels		Efficacy	Anxiety
Basic	Mean	2.23	2.53
	N	38	38
	Std. Deviation	.487	.487
Intermediate	Mean	1.96	2.46
	N	110	110
	Std. Deviation	.590	.600
Advanced	Mean	1.95	2.34
	N	54	54
	Std. Deviation	.567	.743
Total	Mean	2.01	2.44
	N	202	202
	Std. Deviation	.573	.624

However, conducting at T-test, this study found no statistically difference between male and female students in displaying Self-efficacy and English language speaking anxiety. Table 10 shows the difference between male and female students' self-efficacy and speaking anxiety.

Table 10. *Self-Efficacy and Speaking Anxiety Mean, SD and Results of t-Test According to Gender*

	Gender	Mean	SD	F	Significance
Efficacy	Male	2.04	.61	1.36	.245
	Female	1.98	.54	1.36	Not significant
Anxiety	Male	2.51	.62	.374	.541
	Female	2.39	.62	.374	Not significant

Table 10 demonstrates that there is no significant different between male and female students' self-efficacy and English language speaking anxiety.

Discussion

In this part, the results will be discussed based on the research questions, respectively. The analyses on the level of the participants' self-efficacy was calculated based on two different levels: the low level and the high level. The low level was determined by the mean value between 1.00 to 3.00 and high while the high level of efficacy among the students was determined from the range of 3.01 to 5. The results showed that the participants' level of self-efficacy is above 3.00. It was 3.98, which shows almost a higher level of self-efficacy among the participants. As for the analysis on the level of the participants' anxiety, the students' anxiety was divided into low and high levels. The low level of students' speaking anxiety was determined by the mean value between 1.00 to 3.00 while the high level was determined from the range of 3.01 to 5 Horowitz's (1986). The result showed that the mean value of English language speaking anxiety was 3.74, which denotes almost a higher level of English language speaking anxiety. Thus, both the levels of self-efficacy and speaking anxiety of the EFL students in this study were found to be rather high. The results are similar to the conclusions by Horwitz (2001), Le (2004), Tahsildar (2014) and Cagatay (2015), who reported higher levels of foreign language efficacy and anxiety among EFL learners in different countries.

In addition, the analyses on the correlation between the participants' level of self-efficacy and their speaking anxiety demonstrate an almost significant positive association ($r = 0.507$). This implies that the more efficacious EFL students in this study tended to feel more anxious. This finding seems to be at odds with the ideas assert that self-efficacy has a positive function in controlling and regulating of anxiety in learning context (Bandura, 1994; Usher & Pajares, 2008). In addition, the finding contradicts many empirical studies (e.g. Cheng, 2001; Liu, 2006; Mills et al., 2006; Anaydubalu, 2010; Ghonsooly & Elahi, 2010; Erkan & Saban, 2011; Tsai, 2013), who found a negative relationship between self-efficacy and anxiety in the context of language learning. However, it is in line with Çekirdek (2014), Tuncer and Dogan (2015) and Tuncer's (2016) findings exploring positive correlations between self-efficacy beliefs and foreign language learning anxiety.



On the other hand, this study also compared the mean scores of the two different English Departments' students in terms of self-efficacy and speaking anxiety in order to see the differences between these two psychological constructs within two different Departments' students. The mean score of Efficacy of EDEC students was 1.89 while the same variable Mean with EDLC students was found 2.16. In addition, the mean score of EDEC participants in Anxiety was 2.39 while the mean score of EDLC in the same variable was found 2.50. Thus, it can be implied that EDLC students' both Anxiety and Efficacy are higher than their counterparts at EDEC. In a study on the same Departments was done by Tahsildar (2019) in order to explore the level of teaching efficacy among the graduates of the two Departments as EFL teachers at public schools. However, when compared, findings of the study showed that graduates of EDEC as EFL teachers showed to have a significantly higher self-efficacy than their counterparts at EDLC as EFL teachers. Thus, it implies that EDEC, which educate teachers offers students with higher teaching efficacy. Conversely, EDLC, which emphasizes more on English literature, offers students with higher general academic efficacy to the society.

The next finding of this study is on the difference between the students' perceived academic self-efficacy beliefs and English language speaking anxiety in terms of level. Findings in this regard showed that students at basic level tended to have the highest level of efficacy at (2.23), while this score for students at intermediate level was lower at (1.96). Advanced level students scored the lowest among the three levels at (1.95). On the other hand, students of different levels scored in the same order in terms of anxiety. Basic students' mean score in Anxiety was (2.53); intermediate students at this variable scored (2.46) and advanced students was again with the lowest mean at (2.34). In terms of anxiety, these findings are aligned with Zhao and Whitchurch's (2011) study which explored that basic learners tend to feel more anxious than higher level learners.

However, this study found no statistically difference between male and female students in displaying self-efficacy and English language speaking anxiety. This result is in line with Cubukcu's (2008) study which yielded no significant difference between girls and boys in terms of anxiety level but contrasts with Bozavli and Gülmez (2012), Park and French (2013) and Luo's (2014) conclusions that females experience more anxiety in terms of speaking a foreign language.

Conclusion

This study was an effort to investigate the relationship between EFL students' level of self-efficacy beliefs and their English language speaking anxiety at a university in Afghanistan. First, the levels of the participants' self-efficacy as well as English language speaking anxiety were assessed and it was found that the participants experienced a higher level of both self-efficacy and speaking anxiety. Then, a correlational analysis was conducted and showed a significant positive relationship between the participants' levels of self-efficacy and their speaking anxiety. In addition, the mean differences between the two Departments students' levels of self-efficacy as well as English language speaking anxiety was also calculated. Findings showed that that EDLC students' both Anxiety and Efficacy were higher than their counterparts at EDEC. Further, the difference between male and female level of anxiety was calculated but no difference was found in terms of gender. Finally, findings on the participants' level showed that students at basic level tended to have the highest level of efficacy while this score for students at intermediate level was lower. Advanced level students scored the lowest among the three levels in terms of self-efficacy beliefs. As for the level of anxiety, the participants scored in the same order as their level of efficacy.

Thus, findings of this study in terms of both self-efficacy beliefs, speaking anxiety and their association were different from the findings of the most recent related literature. The reason of the higher level of speaking anxiety among EFL students might be due lack of enough attention on Speaking skill and much emphasis on other skills like Grammar, Vocabulary, Phonetics etc. On the other hand, studies on language anxiety is still very rare specifically in terms of speaking (Luo, 2015). So, more attention in this regard is recommended for the future research. Further, English language teachers should also be aware of the existence of English language speaking anxiety in their classrooms and show more empathy to their students in speaking sessions.

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