

ONLINE SPEAKING TEST APPLICATION: IS IT EFFECTIVE IN ELEVATING STUDENTS' ENGLISH SELF-EFFICACY, ANXIETY AND MOTIVATION?

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Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the impact and efficacy of the Online Speaking Test (OST) application on students' motivation and self-efficacy to optimize English learning and produce students with greater English language proficiency. Using a variety of techniques, such as pre-test, observation, interviews, treatment in using the OST, and post-tests to see whether changes had occurred before and after the treatment, 102 university students from various faculties in Bali's university participated in this study. Employing the OST, the research revealed variations between the factors of rising and decreasing student motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence following treatment and post-treatment. Nevertheless, there was a very small variation in the proportion of students whose self-confidence improved following therapy, which was brought on by variations in the students' English proficiency levels. The students with excellent proficiency in both comprehending and using English did not encounter major challenges when using the online speaking test. Students who feel less confident, on the other hand, have a different experience. Due to differences in prior learning experience, learner characteristics, teaching and learning methods, learners' motivations and the urgency of language acquisition, an OST may result differently according several factors affecting the learners intrinsically and extrinsically.

Keywords: Online Speaking Test; Motivation; Self-Efficacy; Proficiency

INTRODUCTION

The global pandemic forced people to switch from traditional classroom settings to online learning environments. Teachers need to use a range of strategies and adapt to different assessment techniques in order to assess students' performance in these domains in an effective manner (Benítez-Correa et.al, 2024; Widiastuti, 2021). The achievement of foreign language learners is shaped by a range of factors, particularly learners' attitudes and academic motivation, which have been shown to exert a significant influence on learning outcomes (Azar & Tanggaraju, 2020; Deepa, 2020; Pham, 2021). Researches mentioned that one way to determine how well students are performing is for teachers to use technology to assist them in learning, especially assessing speaking skills. Online media is still helpful in teaching and learning situations even after the pandemic. Online methodology improves students' performance—as long as they are engaged, get timely feedback, and interact with the tutor, classmates, and real resources (Fandiño et.al, 2019; Juniardi et.al, 2020).

Thus far, a plethora of prior research has documented a robust correlation between a learner's self-efficacy and their academic performance; recent studies continue to support this association, with longitudinal and meta-analytic evidence demonstrating that higher academic self-efficacy is significantly linked to higher academic achievement (Honicke et al., 2023; Luo et al., 2023; Meng et al., 2023; Xing Da, 2024). Self-efficacy may affect our behaviours, thoughts and emotions. The students with strong self-efficiency tend to have good autonomous learning ability (Chen, 2020).

Online learning is self-directed, researchers have suggested that self-efficacy can play a significant role in academic success in distance learning and it is essential to comprehend self-efficacy in online learning in order to enhance online education (Demei, et.al., 2013).

Online learning self-efficacy is considered a major contributor to academic success (Ahmadipour, 2022). Demei et.al (2013) stated that technology, learning, and social interaction are the three main areas that need to be taken into account when analysing online self-efficacy. In addition to technical problems (Monteiro & Morrison, 2014) and self-efficacy (Panadero et al., 2017), research in digital learning environments has identified a number of barriers for learners, including motivation and anxiety (Armellini et al., 2021). These barriers may limit the opportunities of digital learning environments for supporting learning (Hodges et al., 2020). Anxiety, a psychosocial barrier for students, is likely to restrict interactions with peers and tutors, which could obstruct success in higher education (Brook & Willoughby, 2015). The claim that anxiety influences learning in both in-person and virtual learning environments is supported by additional research studies (Grieve et al., 2017).

To understand the complex patterns observed in self-efficacy, motivation, and anxiety in this study, it is important to situate them within an integrated theoretical framework. Bandura's social-cognitive theory posits that self-efficacy beliefs—individuals' judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute actions required to produce given attainments—play a central role in how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave, including in academic settings. Higher self-efficacy has been shown empirically to predict greater motivation and lower anxiety because students with strong efficacy beliefs are more confident in their skills and better able to cope with challenges (Artino, 2012).

According to Dörnyei's (2014) view, motivation is not fixed but dynamically interacts with cognitive and affective constructs such as self-efficacy and anxiety. Recent research in online English learning further supports this integrated perspective: self-efficacy beliefs can mediate the relationship between motivation and anxiety, and anxiety itself can mediate the relationship between self-efficacy and motivation. In other words, students with lower self-efficacy may experience higher anxiety, which in turn undermines their motivation.

Despite various research mentioning the students' improvement and its relation especially with students' self-efficacy, anxiety and motivation with the use of online learning, the findings of existing research give us little information about what lies beneath the correlation. Additionally, previous research is not enough to clarify whether the improvement comes from the use of the online learning or due to the students' ability. To address this, a case study was conducted on Balinese EFL learners, who appear to hold distinctive perspectives on their self-efficacy compared to other EFL populations. Unlike many Asian EFL learners who tend to be hesitant and reluctant to speak English, Balinese learners often demonstrate stronger self-efficacy in productive language skills, particularly in speaking as well as writing (Pratiwi, 2020). This study argues that the relationship between online speaking test application, self-efficacy, anxiety, and motivation is not universally consistent and that the way these constructs interact may vary depending on learners' foundational language skills and learning contexts. Accordingly, this study seeks to answer whether and to what extent the use of online speaking test application is effective to Balinese EFL learners' self-efficacy, anxiety, and motivation, and whether meaningful correlations exist among these psychological variables within an online learning environment.

METHOD

Respondents

This study obtained the approval to conduct this empirical research from the Social Science and Natural Science Faculties at A university in Bali (pseudonym). In total there were 102 university students in the 19 – 23 years old age-group voluntarily participated in this mix-method research. Among them there were 23% male and 77% female students. The

participants were randomly selected from third to fifth-semester students. According to the initial data form the participants revealed that since primary school they had studied English for around 10–12 years.

Prior to do the research, the students were explained that their participation in the study was completely voluntary and it has no consequences or risk to their grade in their course. The students who were willing to participate signed the voluntary consent form while some other withdraw their participation in the research. No material reward offered as an incentive to the students and they voluntarily participated in this study for the shake of obtaining knowledge and experience.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study included an in-depth interview, questionnaire of self-efficacy, anxiety and motivation. A pre-test questionnaire was administered to assess the students' self-efficacy, anxiety and motivation. Treatment was given to the students using the Online Speaking Test (OST) – an online learning tool that was downloaded at Playstore and Appstore - for two months followed by post-test in order to validate whether there is improvement toward the students' self-efficacy, anxiety and motivation. An in-depth interview was conducted to validate the questionnaire result. The questionnaires were quantitatively analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), version 26, while the qualitative analysis focused on data obtained from in-depth interviews addressing students' self-efficacy, motivation, and learning-related anxiety.

Procedures

Prior to conducting a thorough analysis of the questionnaire about the impact of the OST application on the motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence of Balinese students, a number of preliminary measures were implemented to assess the questionnaire's validity, reliability, and normality statistically then the in-depth interview on self-efficacy, motivation, and anxiety in learning was conducted.

The interview involves a set of open-ended questions that can acquire in-depth information and allow a spontaneous response from the participants. The interviews were conducted primarily in Indonesian to help the participants feel more at ease and be able to answer all of the questions, to avoid misunderstanding and the interviewee can be better to express themselves in using their mother tongue. The interview sessions lasted around 30 – 40 minutes for each participant. Fifteen out of the 102 students were randomly selected to be interviewed. The semi-structured interview lasted approximately 20–25 minutes. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses were performed on the data in order to address research question.

Data analysis

In order to analyse the pre-test and post-test data involves the following steps: (1) Using scale or ratio data; (2) Using a normality test to see the normally distributed data. This will determine which test method to use. The paired sample test is used for the normally distributed data is normally distributed; the two related sample test is used for the data that is not normally distributed; (3) 3. Interpreting result.

To evaluate the validity of the questionnaire, the validity tests were performed. The significance of the correlation can be used to compute the p-value for the validity test. If the p-value is less than 0.05, the research data or questionnaire is considered valid; if not, the opposite can be true. Apart from validity testing, reliability testing was also carried out. The reliability test is used to determine whether a questionnaire has consistency if measurements

are carried out with the questionnaire repeatedly. When the reliability test resulted in the Cronbach Alpha value which greater than 0.6 then the questionnaire is considered reliable.

The Normality Test is used to determine whether the research data is normally distributed, where the normality test for this study was carried out using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test shows that the significance value for Class 1 data or pretest data is $0.193 > 0.05$ so it can be concluded that the pretest data is normally distributed.

The qualitative data, collected through in-depth interviews, were intentionally more focused and were used to provide contextual insights into students' motivational backgrounds and self-efficacy beliefs. The results of the interviews were transcribed, translated from Indonesian into English, and then analysed. The interviews were recorded using two different types of audio-recording equipment, and they were backed up on a laptop to prevent data loss. Note taking was also conducted to write the essential points to help create the follow – up questions for the participants to enrich the data. The qualitative component aimed to explain and enrich the interpretation of the quantitative findings by capturing learners' perspectives and experiences that could not be fully represented through numerical data alone.

FINDINGS

Psychological and Future Characteristic of the Learners

According to the results of the interviews, the largest proportion of participants said that they chose to study English because they understood how important it was to have an international language in order to advance their careers and expand their opportunities.

R.5 = “Being born and raised in Bali made me realize that being able to speak English makes it easier for me to see job opportunities. Coincidentally, I used to be a vocational school student majoring in hotel accommodation, where at school my studies focused on foreign languages and the basics of tourism. At that time, I realized that by understanding English, it can bring good output in terms of work. Because my dream is to be involved in the world of tourism, I need to be able to speak English to communicate with native speakers. It is also not uncommon that nowadays we see many jobs that have qualifications that require you to be able to speak English.”

R.12 = “Because I intend to work in the world of tourism and of course that requires good English skills”

R.7 = “I want to be able to speak English with good and correct pronunciation. In an increasingly developing world, everyone is required to be able to at least speak English, so I want to improve my ability to speak English. This will make it easier to find a job after graduating or if I want to get a scholarship to continue my studies abroad.”

R.1 = “I learn English because I have the dream of going to work in England. This happened after I read and studied world history books. As I read, England was the most influential country at that time, so that English is an international language to this day. I love the seasons, clothes, food and architecture of England. I also follow the update news in their royal issues. My dream cities are the city of Oxford, Glasgow, and the old city of York. These three areas have a warm atmosphere and are full of buildings whose architecture has a historical vibe. To achieve this dream, of course I have to learn English.”

R.9 = “I like learning about things related to language. During school I felt that compared to exact science lessons, I tended to enjoy learning languages more and my performance

in terms of grades was also greater in language lessons. I feel that language is a fun thing to learn and delve deeper into.”

R.3 = “I practice the foreign language skills since I was in elementary school. Since I was little, I realized I had an interest in foreign languages, especially English. Therefore, I want to train and develop the skills that I currently have by studying in English Literature. I also studied another language, namely Japanese. Maybe I'm a typical language learner.”

This study indicates that learners’ motivation to learn English is multidimensional, driven by instrumental, integrative, and intrinsic factors. English is perceived not only as an academic subject but also as a key resource for career advancement, global communication, and personal fulfilment, particularly in the tourism sector. Influenced by their context in Bali and vocational tourism-related programs, learners envision themselves as competent English users in professional settings, which motivates sustained learning effort. Interview findings also reveal strong intrinsic motivation, reflected in enjoyment of language learning, interest in English-speaking cultures, and a language-oriented self-identity. While instrumental motivation related to employment is the most dominant factor, integrative and intrinsic motivations are essential in sustaining engagement and long-term commitment, supporting the view that motivation is dynamic and closely linked to learners’ self-concept.

Correlations among Self-Efficacy, Anxiety and Motivation and the Use of OST

While the qualitative interview data contributed to the explanation of background of the learners by exposing underlying psychological background of learning, motivation and learners’ future prospects, the quantitative data revealed statistical trends and relationships, such as academic performance, self-efficacy, motivation and anxiety levels. The results of the questionnaire validity tests indicate that all correlation coefficients among the self-efficacy, anxiety, and motivation items yielded p-values below 0.05, demonstrating statistically significant item correlations. This finding confirms that all questionnaire items are valid and appropriately measure their respective constructs. Therefore, the instruments used in this study are considered suitable for further statistical analysis.

Based on the self-efficacy reliability test, the self-confidence questionnaire's Cronbach Alpha is $0.636 > 0.6$, indicating its reliability. The results of the reliability test indicate that the anxiety questionnaire is reliable due to the Cronbach Alpha value is $0.888 > 0.6$. In addition, the motivation questionnaire has a Cronbach Alpha value of $0.943 > 0.6$, indicating its reliability. Collectively, these results confirm that all three instruments consistently measure the intended psychological constructs.

Table 1. The Self-Confidence Variable Pre-Test and Post-Test Results

Test Statistics ^a	
	Self-Efficacy Post- test - Self-Efficacy Pre-test
Z	-2.111 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.035

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on positive ranks.

The self-confidence variable pre-test post-test results are displayed in the table above. The two related sample tests produced a significance value of $0.035 < 0.05$, indicating a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test data on the self-confidence variable. The anxiety variable in the paired sample test from the pre-test and post-test data, yielding a

significance value of $0.017 < 0.05$, indicating a significant difference in the anxiety variable between the pre-test and post-test data (Table at the attachment).

Table 2. The pre-test and post-test data on the motivation variable
Paired Sample T Test dan 2 related sample tests.

Table 2. Test Statisticsa	
	Motivation Post-test - Motivation Pre-test
Z	-2.038 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.042
a. Signed Ranks Test	
b. Based on positive ranks.	

There is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test data on the motivation variable, as indicated by the significance value of $0.042 < 0.05$ obtained from the two related sample tests from the pre-test and post-test data on the motivation variable, which is displayed in the above table.

Table 3. Post Test Result After Treatment

Variable	Increase	Decrease
Motivation	40	62
Anxiety	60	42
Self-Efficacy	46	56

Table 3 shows that following the intervention, most students experienced decreased motivation and self-efficacy, while anxiety generally increased. This pattern suggests that the intervention had a negative affective impact, intensifying tension and reducing students' confidence and willingness to engage. The OST appears to have functioned as a stress-inducing assessment, particularly for learners with limited speaking confidence or high language anxiety. Although the instruments were valid and reliable, the online speaking test did not enhance students' psychological readiness; instead, it heightened anxiety and diminished motivation and self-efficacy.

DISCUSSION

The pre-test questionnaire results indicate that more than half of the respondents demonstrated high levels of motivation and self-efficacy. Students generally perceived themselves as competent and confident in their English skills. This finding is consistent with Pratiwi (2021), whose interview-based study of Balinese EFL learners revealed a high degree of self-efficacy and the students are all motivated. According to that study, learners' strong self-efficacious beliefs and students' motivation were shaped by positive thoughts and emotions associated with their language abilities. Frequent exposure to foreign tourists in Bali, as a major tourism destination, contributed to learners' enjoyment, comfort, confidence, and enthusiasm in using English. Moreover, Pratiwi (2021) identified multiple factors influencing self-efficacy, including personality, prior education, learning experiences, and school environment.

However, despite their initially high motivation and self-efficacy, students expressed concern about the treatment and the post-treatment test. The administration of the online speaking test (OST) appeared to trigger insecurity, particularly regarding their performance and self-presentation. This suggests that while learners held positive beliefs about their abilities, evaluative contexts—especially technology-mediated ones—may undermine their confidence and emotional readiness.

There are many different motivations for learning a foreign language. A person can acquire a foreign language because he is interested in it; for example, he must be able to communicate in the language if he wishes to work in a nation where it is spoken. In addition, a person may learn a foreign language in order to comprehend the culture of another nation. Another popular incentive is the desire to become fluent in a foreign language, especially an international language like English, French, Mandarin, and so on, in order to facilitate work chances.

Interview data further revealed that students' motivation to learn English was largely instrumental. The majority of respondents emphasized the importance of English for improving their competencies and supporting future careers. This finding aligns with Santoso (2017), who reported that students' primary motivation for learning English was employment-related, given its status as a global language. In the Balinese context, English proficiency is closely associated with career advancement and economic opportunity, particularly in tourism-related industries. As English-speaking human resources are increasingly demanded in the workplace, students perceive English proficiency as a form of added value that enhances employability.

Unquestionably, having a strong command of the English language can help with the recruiting process, lead to new opportunities, and boost one's career. This is due to the growing demand in the workplace for human resources who speak English. Our "selling value" at work will definitely rise when we can speak a foreign language fluently, especially English. The interviews' findings demonstrate the students' internal and external motivation to study English. Intrinsically because they find it enjoyable and because it will enable them to get better jobs later on. On the other hand, English speakers can anticipate better lives and professions because it is the most popular foreign language on the tourist island of Bali.

The interviews also indicated that students were motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically. Intrinsically, they enjoyed learning English and recognized its personal benefits; extrinsically, they were driven by the sociocultural and economic environment of Bali, where English is widely used to communicate with tourists. Bali's role as a major contributor to Indonesia's foreign exchange earnings (Antara & Sumarniasih, 2017) reinforces public awareness of the importance of English, which in turn shapes students' motivation to develop language proficiency.

Contrary to these positive perceptions, the post-test results revealed a decline in students' motivation, self-efficacy, and confidence after the implementation of the OST application. More than half of the participants reported increased anxiety, decreased motivation, and reduced self-confidence. The findings align with interview responses indicating that students experienced discouragement and reduced enthusiasm after completing the online speaking test (OST). Many participants reported increased awareness of their linguistic limitations, which diminished their willingness to engage in further speaking activities. Technological issues, time pressure, and the lack of immediate feedback were also identified as key factors that heightened anxiety, challenging the assumption that online testing environments are inherently less stressful. Interview data further revealed feelings of self-doubt and decreased confidence in English-speaking ability, particularly when students struggled to express ideas fluently. Consistent with self-efficacy theory, these negative performance experiences undermined learners' confidence and motivation. Overall, the integration of quantitative and qualitative data suggests a reciprocal relationship among anxiety, self-efficacy, and motivation: increased anxiety was associated with reduced self-efficacy, which subsequently led to lower motivation.

The divergence between the quantitative post-test results and the qualitative interview findings highlights an important issue. While interviews allowed students to articulate their

long-term motivations and positive beliefs about learning English, the immediate experience of taking an online speaking test generated anxiety and unexpected emotional responses. This discrepancy suggests that students' general motivation and self-efficacy do not necessarily translate into positive affective responses during assessment, particularly when the assessment format is unfamiliar or perceived as threatening.

One possible explanation lies in the suitability of the OST itself. As a general application, the OST may not adequately account for differences in students' English proficiency levels. Without clear categorization of learners' abilities, test tasks may be perceived as too difficult for lower-proficiency students or insufficiently challenging for higher-proficiency students. Additionally, the online testing context requires students to rely heavily on their own abilities, with limited support from teachers or peers, which may exacerbate anxiety.

From a test validity perspective, the OST appears to fall short of established test development and validation frameworks. First, test-taker characteristics—such as prior knowledge, learning experience, and individual differences—were not sufficiently considered. As Pratiwi (2020) notes, Balinese EFL learners' motivation and self-efficacy are shaped by past learning experiences, family support, educational context, and exposure to English, all of which can influence test performance.

Second, the cognitive validity of the OST is questionable. According to Weir et al (2013), speaking tests should activate cognitive processes similar to those used in real-life communication. However, the tasks in the OST did not fully reflect authentic speaking situations, potentially limiting students' ability to demonstrate their true speaking competence. Performance conditions should approximate real-world language use as closely as possible, within practical constraints.

Finally, the criterion-related validity of the OST is also limited. Because the test did not clearly distinguish between different proficiency levels, it failed to provide an accurate external criterion of students' speaking ability (O'Sullivan & Weir, 2011). Using the same test for students with varying levels of proficiency may obscure genuine performance differences. High-achieving and low-achieving students require differentiated assessment to ensure objective and meaningful results.

In conclusion, both data sources indicate that the OST contributed to heightened anxiety and decreased motivation and self-efficacy. These findings highlight the importance of designing online speaking assessments that minimize anxiety and support learners' confidence, as perceived competence plays a critical role in sustaining engagement and motivation in online English learning contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between online learning and Balinese EFL learners' self-efficacy, anxiety, and motivation. The findings indicate that although students initially demonstrated high levels of motivation and self-efficacy—supported by positive learning experiences and strong instrumental goals—these psychological attributes were not consistently sustained following the implementation of an online speaking assessment. Instead, the post-test results revealed increased anxiety alongside decreased motivation and self-efficacy, suggesting that the impact of online learning and assessment is highly context-dependent. The results confirm that motivation, self-efficacy, and anxiety are dynamically interconnected rather than independent constructs. While Balinese EFL learners generally exhibit strong confidence in productive language skills, particularly speaking, this confidence can be disrupted when assessment conditions impose rigid time constraints or fail to align with learners' proficiency levels.

These findings contribute theoretically by demonstrating that the commonly assumed positive relationship between online learning, motivation, and self-efficacy does not always hold, it is context-dependent rather than universal. Although online learning environments are often assumed to promote autonomy and engagement, the findings suggest that poorly aligned assessment design—especially rigid time constraints and lack of proficiency differentiation—can disrupt learners perceived competence and emotional regulation.

Practically, the results underscore the need for more flexible and learner-centered online speaking assessments. From an assessment design perspective, differentiating tasks by proficiency level, reducing strict time limits, and providing adequate support may help lower anxiety, sustain motivation, and more accurately reflect learners' speaking abilities. Aligning online assessment design with motivational theory and learner-centered principles is essential to ensure that technological tools support, rather than hinder, effective language learning.

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