

## **Student satisfaction with EFL speaking classes: Relating speaking self-efficacy and skills achievement**

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This study investigated the relationship between student satisfaction with speaking classes, speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs, and speaking skills achievement. To this end, one hundred Iranian EFL undergraduate students filled out two questionnaires; a research-made and pilot-tested questionnaire for student satisfaction with speaking classes, and a questionnaire for speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs, adapted from Rahimi and Abedini (2009), Gahungu (2007), Wang et al. (2013), and Saeidi and Ebrahimi Farshchi (2012). Participants' final scores in speaking skills were collected from their instructors and regarded as a measure of their speaking skills achievement. The results of Pearson correlation analyses showed that both student satisfaction with speaking classes and speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs had significant positive correlations with speaking skills achievement, with the latter being stronger. Moreover, the results of Pearson correlation analyses also indicated the existence of a significant positive correlation between student satisfaction with speaking classes and speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs. Multiple regression analyses showed that between the independent variables of the study, speaking self-efficacy beliefs was a significantly stronger predictor of Iranian EFL students' speaking skills achievement.

### **Introduction**

In English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts such as Iran, where EFL students have limited access to real and authentic contexts, speaking classes play a significant role in the development of the EFL students' speaking skills. Therefore, EFL students' satisfaction with such classes can be of paramount importance. Moreover, a multitude of research has reported the importance of improving the self-efficacy beliefs of students, which results in a positive influence on their achievement (Doordinejad & Afshar, 2014; Rahemi, 2007).

Available literature indicates a correlation of speaking skills with a number of factors for which comprehensive investigation can provide a better picture of this language skill and may make a significant contribution to teaching and learning in this complex area. However, the literature on the relationship between affective variables and speaking skills reveals the scarcity of research on the correlation between speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs, student satisfaction with English speaking classes, and speaking skills achievement. Therefore, this study seeks to bring these affective variables together, and determine the extent to which such variables contribute to EFL students' speaking skills achievement.

### **Speaking skills**

English speaking skills, as an international means of communication, are necessary for effective interactions amongst people across the world. These are highly demanding, complicated and multi-faceted skills, as one cannot communicate effectively unless he/she is equipped with sufficient knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, culture, genre, speech acts,

register, discourse, and phonology (Scrivener, 2005). Bygate (1987) also believed that speaking skills are complicated, as in speaking, the presence of an interlocutor necessitates the presence of two conditions: 1) reciprocity condition; and 2) time pressure condition. The reciprocity condition refers to the idea that in speaking, more than one participant is required. This means the speaker should adjust vocabulary, structure, style, etc., to suit the listener, and allow the listener to participate actively by asking questions, and reacting to the questions. Time pressure refers to the lack of preparation and planning in spontaneous speech. Moreover, Fraser (2002, 2007) and Kolb and Kolb (2005) stated that challenging, stimulating, and supportive environments can impact language learning in general, and speaking skills learning in particular. Thus, providing a supportive and satisfactory environment in the classroom is very important, in that it can contribute to the process of language learning. Therefore, language instructors should consider students' linguistic and pragmatic competence, and also need to take their psychological needs into account, and attempt to meet such psychological needs, identifying and countering affective factors that can impact upon students' learning (Mak, 2011).

### **Self-efficacy**

During the 1960s and early 1970s, experts in the field began to direct an increasing focus upon affective factors in EFL contexts. One affective factor is known as *self-efficacy*, which refers to "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura, 1986, p. 391).

Self-efficacy was derived from Bandura's *social-cognitive theory* and suggests that individuals' beliefs about their abilities significantly influence their subsequent achievement. It has been examined in various disciplines and settings and has received support from a growing body of findings in various fields. In past decades, self-efficacy has been studied extensively in educational research, primarily in the area of academic performance, motivation, and self-regulation (Bandura, 1986; Graham & Weiner, 1996; Lent et al., 1987; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002; Mills, 2004; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996; Schunk, 1991). In EFL contexts, self-efficacy studies pivot around a number of variables, namely language learning strategies, language anxiety, motivation, and language achievement.

Numerous studies have shown that high levels of self-efficacy are associated with good performance in language learning tasks in different language domains (Rahimi & Abedini, 2009; Farjami & Amerian, 2013; Ghonsooly & Elahi, 2010; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008; Liu, 2013; Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2006, 2007; Wang, Kim, Bong & Ahan, 2009). Considering the issue that students with higher degrees of self-efficacy exert greater effort in order to perform the required tasks (Pajares, 2000), many researchers have conducted studies in EFL contexts to determine its possible correlation with students' learning achievement. Ghonsooly, Elahi and Golparvar (2012), for instance, examined the relationship between university students' self-efficacy and their achievement in general English. The results showed a significant positive relationship between university students' self-efficacy and their achievement in general English. Similar results were also reported in other studies, which emphasised self-efficacy as a strong predictor of academic achievement

(Doordinejad & Afshar, 2014; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008; Rahemi, 2007; Rahimpour & Nariman-Jahan, 2010; Wigfield, 1994; Zimmerman, Bandura & Martinez-Pon, 1992).

A number of other studies also investigated relationships between EFL learners' self-efficacy and their language skills achievement. Some studies (Kargar & Zamanian, 2014; Naseri & Zaferanieh, 2012; Shang, 2011) revealed a positive relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and reading comprehension skills achievement. However, unlike the previous studies, Asadi Piran (2014) examined the relationships between self-efficacy, self-esteem, self-concept and reading comprehension achievement of 92 EFL learners and found no significant relationship between self-efficacy and reading comprehension score.

The relationship between self-efficacy and EFL listening achievement was investigated by Chen (2007). The results indicated a significant positive relationship between EFL learners' self-efficacy beliefs and their listening achievement. In line with the results obtained by Chen (2007), Rahimi and Abedini's (2009) findings revealed that listening comprehension self-efficacy was significantly correlated with listening proficiency. Several researchers in the field have also taken writing self-efficacy into consideration. Hosseini Fatemi and Vahidnia (2013), for example, found a significant relationship between learners' writing performance and their English self-efficacy beliefs.

However, it seems little research has been conducted on the relationship between speaking skills achievement and speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs. One of the few studies conducted on speaking self-efficacy is a recent study by Liu (2013), who investigated the effects of a campus "English Bar" on college students' speaking self-efficacy. Using a questionnaire and in-depth interviews, it was revealed that students who often speak English at the "Bar", showed a considerably higher level of self-efficacy compared to their peers who seldom or never visited the "Bar". The positive effects of frequenting the "Bar" were described by Liu as follows: first, students were free to choose the partners as well as the topics to reduce their anxiety. Second, students with poor speaking skills were encouraged by the foreign teachers and their partners. Third, students' self-confidence and self-efficacy was increased as they observed "similar others" who were fluent English speakers. Finally, students were motivated and worked harder as they realised that they were making progress in their use of English for self expression.

### **Satisfaction with classroom environment**

Another important factor which influences EFL students' performance is their satisfaction with the classroom environment. By definition, satisfaction is "the extent to which a students' perceived educational experience meets or exceeds his/her expectations" (Juillerat, 1995, as cited in Demaris & Kritsonis, 2008, p. 5). This definition suggests that satisfaction is a subjective perception, on the students' part, of how they feel about the learning experience and how their needs are met in the classroom. Satisfaction is also defined as the willingness to continue the learning process because the expectations and personal needs are met in the classroom environment (Rashidi & Moghadam, 2014). In EFL contexts, satisfaction is concerned with EFL learners' conceptions of the actual learning environments. Both individual and environmental characteristics (i.e. teaching

and learning styles and classroom environment, etc.) can influence learners' satisfaction. Students' satisfaction with the classroom environment can suggest that appropriate teaching methods and efficient facilities are employed. Students may be discouraged and marginalised in an unsupportive environment. As Gao (2010) put it:

Those who are satisfied with their language learning progress are likely to be those who are able to successfully create and maintain a supportive social learning space for their language learning efforts. (p. 150).

Jannati and Marzban (2015) conducted a study to investigate EFL learners' perception of learning environment and its possible relationship with their language achievement. A total of 100 intermediate EFL learners participated in the study using the "What is happening in this class" (WIHIC) questionnaire (Fraser, 1998) and a shortened version of a paper-based TOEFL was used to measure the participants' English proficiency level. The results indicated a large difference between the learners' actual learning environment and the environment in which they were willing to learn the language. According to the researchers, the reason for the students' dissatisfaction was the classroom environment not being personalised or/and conceptualised for both EFL teachers and students in the educational context of Iran.

Moreover, the results of the study revealed that there was a significant relationship between their satisfaction with the classroom environment and their language achievement. Similar results have been reported by other researchers (Efe, 2009; Fraser, 1994; Heikkilä & Lonka, 2006; Schaal, 2010; Waldrip & Fisher, 2003), who found that student performances were significantly affected by their satisfaction.

In summary, the literature indicates students' satisfaction with classroom environment and their self-efficacy are significantly related to their academic performance. However, the relationship between the above-mentioned variables and speaking skills achievement has remained unclear and requires further research.

### **Statement of the problem and research questions**

As already stated, in spite of the fact that many studies have been conducted to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and foreign language learning in general and reading, listening, and writing skills in particular, studies on the relationship between self-efficacy and speaking skills achievement appear to be scarce. Furthermore, few studies have investigated students' satisfaction with speaking classes and its possible relationship with speaking skills achievement. Therefore, it is potentially worth shedding light on the relationship between speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs and satisfaction with speaking classes. To this end, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Is there a significant relationship between Iranian EFL students' satisfaction with speaking classes and their speaking skills achievement?
2. Is there a significant relationship between Iranian EFL students' speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs and their speaking skills achievement?

3. Is there a significant relationship between Iranian EFL students' satisfaction with speaking classes and their speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs?
4. Concerning satisfaction with speaking classes and speaking self-efficacy, which is a stronger predictor of Iranian EFL students' speaking skills achievement?

## Method

### Participants

One hundred Iranian EFL first year undergraduate students majoring in English language participated in the study. The participants were selected on a convenience sampling basis from several universities in Iran, during the 2014/2015 academic year. Their language proficiency level was at an intermediate level, according to the *Oxford Proficiency Test*. Ages ranged from 18 to 35 years (mean=20.4), and 57 of the participants were female and 43 were male.

### Instruments

Two questionnaires in the English language were used for data collection. The pilot-tested and validated *satisfaction with speaking classes* questionnaire developed for this study comprised 38 items, based on a Likert scale ranging from one (very unsatisfactory) to five (very satisfactory). The *speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs* questionnaire was adapted from Rahimi and Abedini (2009), Gahungu (2007), Wang et al. (2013), and Saeidi and Ebrahimi Farshchi (2012). It comprised 28 items, based on a Likert scale ranging from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree).

To develop the satisfaction with speaking classes questionnaire the following steps were taken:

1. Before the study commenced, 20 EFL students from the same broad population as the participants were engaged in semi-structured interviews, with questions which had been reviewed by two experts in the field. The rationale behind the interviews was to "draw up an item pool" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 112). A forty-six item questionnaire was developed.
2. The questionnaire was first judged by two experts in the field and then an initial pilot study was conducted with 15 EFL students from the same broad population as the participants in order to ensure its comprehensibility and clarity. Some inappropriate items were omitted, and poorly understood items were modified. Ultimately, the number of items in the questionnaire was reduced to 38.
3. The 38-item questionnaire (Appendix A) was administered to 100 EFL students, none of whom had participated in the pilots. The data were subjected to exploratory factor analysis, and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were calculated. Results are summarised in Table 1. As can

be seen from Table 1, the results indicate an acceptable KMO index (0.74). A principal component factor analysis was also conducted.

Table 1: Results from KMO and Bartlett's Test for satisfaction with speaking classes questionnaire (N=100)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin	Measure of sampling adequacy	0.74
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. chi-square	1.87
	df	780
	Significance	.000

4. The reliability of the questionnaire (Appendix A) was calculated using Cronbach's alpha consistency, which reveals the questionnaire enjoyed an acceptable internal consistency ( $r = 0.97$ ).

In order to design the speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs questionnaire (Appendix B), items were adapted from questionnaires by Rahimi and Abedini (2009), Gahungu (2007), Wang et al. (2013), and Saeidi and Ebrahimi Farshchi (2012). The questionnaire was piloted with 100 EFL students from the same broad population as the participants. The results of the pilot study indicated that the questionnaire enjoyed acceptable validity, with Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy being 0.71. Using Cronbach's alpha, the internal consistency was found to be 0.84.

A proficiency test (*Oxford Proficiency Test*) was also employed to determine the participants' language proficiency level.

## Procedure

First, the *Oxford Proficiency Test* was administered to the participants in order to ascertain they are homogeneous. Before distributing the questionnaires to the participants, they were informed that their personal information would remain strictly confidential and would be used only for research purposes. Then, the questionnaires were distributed among the participants and they were asked to write their required personal information on the front page of the questionnaires. Names of participants were sought in order to match with their final scores in speaking skills that were obtained later. To safeguard this information, it was not disclosed to their instructors or anyone else, it was kept protected from unauthorised access, and was not retained longer than required for processing.

Although the instructions were clearly stated in each questionnaire, questions related to the items of the questionnaires were answered and information on how to complete the questionnaires was further explained to the participants. No time limit was specified, though most respondents required about 20 minutes. After receiving each participant's consent, their final scores in speaking skills were requested and collected from their instructors. These scores provided the measure of their speaking skills achievement.

## Data analysis

Data were analysed using *SPSS* software version 16. A bivariate (Pearson product-moment) correlation coefficient was run to investigate the relationship between satisfaction with speaking classes, speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs, and speaking skills achievement (i.e. to answer the first three research questions respectively). Then, a multiple regression analysis was run in order to examine which one of satisfaction with speaking classes, and speaking skills self-efficacy was the stronger predictor of Iranian EFL students' speaking skills achievement (i.e. to answer research question 4).

## Results

To answer the first research question, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was run; the results are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Pearson product-moment correlation investigating the relationship between satisfaction with speaking classes and speaking skills achievement

		Satisfaction with speaking skills	Speaking skills achievement
Satisfaction with speaking skills	Pearson correlation	1	.459**
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Speaking skills achievement	Pearson correlation	.459**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

Table 2 indicates that there was a positive correlation between participants' satisfaction with speaking classes and their speaking skills achievement,  $r = .459$ ,  $N = 100$ ,  $p < .05$ .

To answer the second research question, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was run, with results summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Pearson product-moment correlation investigating the relationship between speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs and speaking skills achievement

		Speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs	Speaking skills achievement
Speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs	Pearson correlation	1	.560**
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Speaking skills achievement	Pearson correlation	.560**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

Table 3 shows that there was a positive correlation between participants' speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs and their speaking skills achievement,  $r = .560$ ,  $N = 100$ ,  $p < .05$ .

The third research question set out to investigate the probable relationship between Iranian EFL students' satisfaction with speaking classes and speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs. To answer the third research question, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was run, with results summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Pearson product-moment correlation investigating the relationship between satisfaction with speaking classes and speaking skills self-efficacy

		Satisfaction with speaking skills	Speaking skills self-efficacy
Satisfaction with speaking skills	Pearson correlation	1	.625**
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Speaking skills self-efficacy	Pearson correlation	.625**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

Table 4 demonstrates that there was a positive significant correlation between participants' satisfaction with speaking classes and their speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs,  $r = .625$ ,  $N = 100$ ,  $p < .05$ .

The fourth research question sought to investigate satisfaction with speaking classes and speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs, which one is a significantly stronger predictor of Iranian EFL students' speaking skills achievement. To this end, a multiple-regression analysis was run, the results of which are presented in Tables 5, 6 and 7.

Table 5 shows multiple correlation coefficients as well as the adjusted and unadjusted correlation of satisfaction with speaking classes and speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs, with speaking skills achievement.

Table 5: Model summary indicating the multiple correlation coefficients, the adjusted and unadjusted R of satisfaction with speaking classes and self-efficacy beliefs in speaking skills, with speaking skills achievement

Model	R	R squared	Adjusted R squared	Std. error of the estimate
1	.577	.333	.317	.1402

Given Table 5, the multiple correlation coefficient (R), using the two predictors (i.e. satisfaction with speaking classes and speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs) simultaneously, is 0.58 ( $R^2 = 0.33$ ) and the adjusted  $R^2$  is 0.31. It indicates that 31% of the variance in learners' speaking skills achievement can be predicted from the combination of the above-mentioned predictors.

ANOVA was run to see whether the combination of the predictors (i.e. satisfaction with speaking classes and speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs) significantly predicted Iranian EFL learners' speaking skills achievement (Table 6).



Table 6: ANOVA for the prediction of the speaking skills achievement of the participants by the combination of satisfaction with speaking classes and speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Regression	81.596	2	40.798	20.747	.000
Residual	163.215	97	1.966		
Total	244.811	99			

Regarding Table 6, the combination of satisfaction with speaking classes and speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs predicted speaking skills achievement of the participants,  $F(2, 96) = 20.74, p = .000 < .05$ .

The amount of the contribution of each of the two independent variables (satisfaction with speaking classes and speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs) to the dependent one (speaking skills achievement) is summarised in Table 7.

Table 7: Multiple regressions for the predictive power of speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs and satisfaction with speaking classes

	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. error	beta		
(Constant)	9.979	1.225		8.145	.000
Satisfaction with speaking classes	.577	.373	.178	1.546	.126
Speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs	1.531	.391	.449	3.913	.000

Concerning Table 7, satisfaction with speaking classes and speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs, the latter was a stronger predictor of speaking skills achievement of the participants, ( $\beta = .44, t = 3.9, p = .000 < .05$ ).

## Discussion

The present study investigated the relationships between student satisfaction with speaking classes, speaking skills self-efficacy, and speaking skills achievement. The findings show positive relationships between the dependent variable (speaking skills achievement) and the independent variables (satisfaction with speaking classes and speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs). The results also indicate a significant relationship between the independent variables, and that speaking skills self-efficacy belief is a stronger predictor of Iranian EFL students' speaking skills achievement.

As the results have shown, students expressing high satisfaction with speaking classes received high scores in speaking skills, and those expressing low satisfaction received low scores. Although little research has been conducted to investigate the relationship between EFL students' satisfaction with speaking classes and their speaking skills achievement, a

number of studies (e.g. Efe, 2009; Fraser, 1994; Heikkilä & Lonka, 2006; Schaal, 2010; Waldrip & Fisher, 2003) investigated the relationship between student satisfaction and their academic performance, with results in accord with the findings of the present study. As stated by Rashidi & Moghadam (2014), student satisfaction with their learning environment can contribute to their willingness to continue their learning process; in that students feel their expectations are met. On the other hand, when students find the learning environment unsatisfactory, they may be discouraged and lose their motivation to continue learning. Thus a satisfactory classroom environment can encourage students to develop a good command of speaking skills.

A number of factors can affect students' satisfaction with their speaking classes, including educational system and facility-related, instructor-related, socially-related, psychologically-related, and linguistically-related factors. Therefore, speaking instructors and administrators should take these factors into account and attempt to meet students' needs in order to create a satisfactory speaking classroom for EFL students. However, it is not an easy task for EFL instructors and administrators to consider every factor which can affect EFL student satisfaction. Training competent speaking teachers who can create a satisfactory speaking classroom environment may be part of the solution. Administrators and education policy-makers need to exert more emphasis on student satisfaction with facilities and education system, by investigating and addressing EFL students' needs.

Results of this study show that students with higher speaking skills self-efficacy are more likely to receive higher scores in speaking skills. Bandura (1986) stated that it can be due to the fact that self-belief in general can help students to participate in tasks, and students with high self-efficacy set higher goals and engage themselves in tasks which require considerable effort, persistence, and interest (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003; Pajares, 1996, 2003). Moreover, self-efficacy beliefs determine the amount of effort, perseverance and resilience individuals spend on an activity, and self efficacy-beliefs can affect an individual's thought patterns and emotional reactions. With the aforementioned facilitative effects of self-efficacy beliefs in mind, high speaking self-efficacy beliefs can contribute to students' speaking skills achievement as those with high self-efficacy enjoy high self-confidence and are encouraged to carry out speaking tasks with different difficulty levels. Students with a high sense of self-efficacy have confidence to approach difficult tasks, while those with low self-efficacy might think things are tougher than they really are, which can lead to a sense of stress and depression (Pajares, 1996).

Bandura (1997) proposed four sources from which self-efficacy beliefs are developed: mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and psychological states. The first source, mastery experience, suggests that past experiences play a significant role in developing self-efficacy beliefs. People who have accomplished a task successfully tend to have higher sense of self-efficacy. Thus, in order to improve students' speaking skills self efficacy beliefs, in the beginning, speaking instructors need to provide students with speaking tasks which are not arduous and do not require considerable effort, thereby increasing the likelihood of their success in performing the task. This can have a facilitative effect, improving their speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs.

Secondly, vicarious experience is received when learners observe the performances of their peers and friends. This enables them to appraise their own capabilities in relation to the attainments of others. Observing friends and peers performing a task successfully can develop positive feelings about their own capabilities, which in turn results in a higher sense of self-efficacy. Therefore, helping students to be attentive in speaking classes and encouraging them to monitor the speaking tasks performed by their classmates can boost their speaking skills self-efficacy.

Social persuasion, received from others, is the third source of influence, which pivots around initiating a task, trying hard to succeed, and employing new strategies (Pajares, 2002). Positive persuasion suggests that success is achievable, while negative persuasion impinges upon self-beliefs (Vaezi & Fallah, 2011). In EFL language classrooms, the teacher's feedback and evaluation can take the form of either positive or negative persuasion. Thus, speaking instructors should attempt to persuade students by providing them with facilitative feedback which results in the improvement of their speaking skills self-efficacy.

Lastly, psychological and affective states, namely stress, fear reactions, anxiety, fatigue and excitement can affect self-efficacy. For instance, learners with low levels of stress and anxiety tend to perform task more successfully. Therefore, transforming debilitating states to facilitative states is one of the key factors in improving perceived self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). As students in speaking classes may encounter many negative affective factors such as stress, anxiety, shyness and so on, speaking instructors should create a congenial atmosphere for students; so that students can boost their self-efficacy beliefs.

The present study is also an examination of the relationship between Iranian EFL students' satisfaction with speaking classes and speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs. The results reveal a significant positive relationship between the above-mentioned variables. Apparently, no study in the field has examined the relationship between these variables; therefore, further research is required to shed light on the relationship between these two variables.

The fourth research question sought to investigate satisfaction with speaking classes and speaking skills self efficacy, which one is a stronger predictor of Iranian EFL students' speaking skills achievement. The results demonstrate that Iranian EFL students' speaking skills self-efficacy is a stronger predictor of their speaking skills achievement. The findings emphasised the significance of students' beliefs in their ability in general, and in their speaking skills in particular.

## **Conclusion and implications of the study**

This study set out to examine the relationship between Iranian EFL students' satisfaction with speaking classes, speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs and speaking skills achievement. The results demonstrated a significant positive relationship between the variables. That is, a positive relationship between the independent variables (satisfaction with speaking classes, speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs) and dependent variable (speaking skills

achievement) was found. The findings also revealed a positive relationship between satisfaction with speaking classes and speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs. The results also indicated that speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs was a significantly stronger predictor of Iranian EFL students' speaking skills achievement than satisfaction with speaking classes.

The findings of the present study suggest that EFL instructors and administrators need to provide students with satisfactory learning environments in order to better contribute to students' speaking skills achievement. EFL instructors also need to assist students to nurture their speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs, in order to help them deal with exacting speaking tasks in both real life and classroom contexts. Furthermore, the findings can also raise EFL language learners' awareness of the importance of speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs, and encourage them to seek opportunities to improve their self-efficacy beliefs.

### Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

Although the study shed light on an area in which little research has been conducted, it has limitations which further research can illuminate. In this study, factors which lead to student dissatisfaction and to negative speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs were not investigated. Therefore, the following suggestions are proposed for further research:

1. Investigation of the factors that contribute to EFL students' dissatisfaction with their speaking classes.
2. Inquiry into factors contributing to negative speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs.

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## Appendix A: Student satisfaction with speaking classes questionnaire

Name: ..... Gender: ..... Age: .....

VU = very unsatisfactory; U = unsatisfactory; N = neutral; S = satisfactory; VS = very satisfactory

		How satisfactory do you find:	VU	U	N	S	VS
Linguistic related items	1	The spoken vocabulary you learn in your speaking class					
	2	The effect of your speaking class on the improvement of your pronunciation					
	3	The effect of your speaking class on your accuracy in speaking					
	4	The effect of your speaking class on the improvement of your fluency in speaking					
	5	The impact of your speaking class on your ability to exchange ideas in English					
	6	The contribution of your speaking class to your knowledge of idiomatic expressions, collocations, and proverbs					
	7	The effect of the atmosphere of your speaking class on you					
Psychological related items	8	The level of your self-confidence to speak English in the classroom					
	9	Your ability to make use of the stuff you have learnt in the classroom for real life communication					
Social related items	10	The cooperation between you and your classmates					
	11	Your classmates' reactions to your mistakes					
	12	Your speaking class in providing the opportunity for you to speak in English with your classmates and instructors					
	13	The effect of your speaking class on your ability to communicate with native speakers					



	14	The proficiency level of your classmates					
Course book related items	15	The level of the course book introduced to you					
	16	The sufficiency and efficiency of speaking exercises in the course book					
Instructor related items	17	Your instructor's motivation for teaching					
	18	The help of your instructor when you face speaking skills problems in the classroom					
	19	The way your instructor evaluates your speaking skills					
	20	Your access to your instructor after class time					
	21	The speaking activities you are asked to do by your instructor in the classroom					
	22	The way your instructor makes use of audio-visual facilities in the classroom					
	23	Your instructor's explanation and clarification of the target culture					
	24	The balance your instructor considers in using English and Persian					
	25	Your instructor's feedback on your mistakes					
	26	The speaking homework your instructor asks you to do at home					
	27	Supplementary materials such as story books, language CDs, introduced to you by your instructor					
	28	The amount of time your instructor allocates to speaking skills activities during a session					
	29	Your speaking instructor's methods of teaching					
	30	Your speaking instructor's relationship with you					
	31	Your speaking instructor's accent					
32	The encouragement you get from your instructor to speak						
33	The topic your instructor presents in the classroom for discussion						
Educational system and facility related items	34	The contribution of your speaking class to the improvement of your weaknesses in speaking skills					
	35	The efficiency and sufficiency of the audio-visual facilities used in your speaking class					
	36	The number of students in your classroom					

	37	The time when your speaking classes are held					
	38	The physical appearance of your speaking classroom.					

## Appendix B: speaking skills self-efficacy beliefs

Name: ..... Gender: ..... Age: .....

SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; N = neutral; A = agree; SA = strongly agree

	Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	I have enough ability to improve my speaking skills.					
2	I am sure that if I practice speaking more, I will get better grades in the course.					
3	I can speak better than my classmates.					
4	Even if the speaking task is difficult and I don't have the required vocabulary, I can find the strategy to get the message across.					
5	I am not stressed out when speaking English in the classroom.					
6	I enjoy speaking with a proficient partner.					
7	I am one of the best students in speaking courses.					
8	I enjoy meeting tourists because I can speak with them well.					
9	The more difficult the speaking practice is, the more enjoyable it is.					
10	When the instructor asks a question, I raise my hand to answer it even if I'm not sure about it.					
11	I'm confident about my ability to interact with other English speakers.					
12	While speaking, I can deal efficiently with unexpected situations.					
13	While speaking, I can remain calm when facing difficulties.					
14	When I'm talking with fluent speakers, I let them know if I need help.					
15	I'm confident I can communicate what I mean easily.					
16	I feel confident that I can achieve a native-like accuracy in speaking.					
17	I'm able to actively participate in my speaking classes.					
18	I'm sure I can use English outside the classroom.					
19	I believe I am a good English speaker.					
20	I strongly believe that I can achieve native-like fluency in English.					
21	I can describe my university to others in English.					
22	I can tell a story in English.					

23	I can ask my teachers questions in English.					
24	I can produce sentence with idiomatic expressions.					
25	I can introduce my teacher to someone else in English.					
26	I can discuss subjects of my interest with my classmates					
27	I can introduce myself in English.					
28	I can answer my teachers' questions in English					

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