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Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching
2013, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 96–109

Enhancing Self-Regulated Learning in Teaching Spoken Communication: Does It Affect Speaking Efficacy and Performance?

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Abstract

The study examines the effects of enhancing self-regulated learning in the teaching of spoken communication on speaking efficacy and performances among second year students attending spoken and written communication lessons in the College of Business and Economics of Bahir Dar University. In this study, two sections consisting of 91 participants were included. To gather data, scales, tests, and diaries were used. Descriptive statistics, paired t-test, independent samples t-test, and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) were applied to analyze the quantitative data. On the other hand, the qualitative data were analysed using such steps as looking for themes and coding, categorizing codes of similar content, and writing summary and interpretation. The outputs of the ANCOVA show that 56% of the variance in speaking performance and 39% of the variance in speaking efficacy are accounted for by the self-regulated learning intervention controlling for initial differences. The qualitative analysis also indicated that the experimental group improved its speaking efficacy and performances. Overall, the results reveal that the experimental group surpasses the control group in both speaking efficacy and performances. The results imply that attention needs to be paid to the enhancement of self-regulated learning in the process of teaching spoken communication.

1 Introduction

After the downfall of the military government, the transitional government of Ethiopia started to reform the then education system, which had various drawbacks (Tefrera, 1996), and as a result, the New Education and Training Policy was designed and introduced in 1994. The policy document proposes reforms in the school curriculum, language of instruction, teacher education programs and examinations systems. Such reforms were designed to make the new education and training policy responsive to the needs of students and that of the society at large. Accordingly, changes have been made. A case in point is the use of regional languages as a medium of instruction in primary schools, the use of English as a medium of instruction starting from Grade Nine, and the teaching of English as a subject starting from Grade One.

Having a close look at the teaching learning process, researchers (e.g. Desta, 2004) state that traditional teaching methods are still persistently in use at all levels and in the teaching of all subjects in Ethiopia. In the same vein, Mekonnen and Endawke (2008) noted that even though teachers are expected to use practical and problem-solving teaching methods, as stated in the new education and training policy, it seems that there is very little or no practical change in the teaching of any course, including English language skills.

In the western context, a few studies on self-regulated learning (e.g. Corno & Mandinach, 1983; Corno & Rohrkemper, 1985; Manning, 1988; Novak & Gowin, 1984; Palincsar & Brown, 1984; the preceding all cited in Manning & Payne, 1996) maintain that training in self-regulated learning is possible, and could result in "success experiences in schools that, in turn, relate to positive feelings about oneself as a learner and a competent person" (Corno, 1987, p. 252, cited in Manning & Payne, 1996, p. 17). This obviously makes clear that self-regulated learning could contribute a lot to the improvement of not only achievements, but also self-beliefs and related variables, as the more internalized and integrated the regulation of behavior, the more the student will develop confidence and other affects (Boggiano & Pitman, 1992). In a similar vein, scholars (e.g. Zimmerman, 1994) argue that self-regulated learning helps learners develop not only their cognitive capacity but also their affects, if it is properly enhanced in schools. There are also pieces of evidence that seem to prove that learners' psychological adjustment and effective learning could be easily enhanced when students are allowed and helped to regulate their activities, behavior and other affective factors (e.g. self-esteem), which are associated directly or indirectly with their learning. Here, the key question may be how self-regulated learning could be promoted. According to Ormrood (2006) and Atkinson and colleagues (1996), self-regulated learning can be promoted by teaching students the strategies for self-regulated learning.

However, most of the classroom teaching/learning processes, as noted by Borich (2004), still depend on activities by which students acquire facts, rules, and sometimes action procedures, and the majority of tasks require outputs at lower levels of cognition: knowledge, comprehension, and sometimes application. In relation to this, national studies of the state of education in US found that many students were unable to think independently of the teacher or to think critically, to be self-motivated, and to derive their own patterns of thoughts and meanings of a given content due to the traditional instructional techniques and related factors (Beyer, 1992; Hester, 1994, all cited in Borich, 2004). In the Ethiopian context, the problem seems more serious, as Desta (2004) writes, "As teachers usually focus on giving lectures, students depend primarily on lecture; independent learning is not encouraged." (p. 72) This seems to signify clearly the need for promoting self-regulated learning that is likely to make learners master a given course and become capable learners who can independently accomplish any manageable task. This is because it is believed that if learners use self-regulated learning strategies, they design more relevant academic objectives for themselves, learn in an effective way, and become highly successful in any academic setting (Butter & Winne, 1995; Zimmerman & Risenberg, 1997, cited in Ormrood, 2006). Moreover, a great deal of adolescent and adult learning activities, such as doing homework, reading, and writing essays take place in isolation from others, and so require significant self-regulation (Winne, 1995). Unfortunately, however, only a few students have developed a high level of self-regulation of learning due to the fact that traditional teaching practices have been doing little to promote self-regulated learning (Zimmerman & Risenberg, 1997, cited in Ormrood, 2006).

Given that self-regulation of learning, as Zimmerman (1994) asserts, makes students metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participants and doers in the teaching/learning process, one could argue that it should be enhanced, as an alternative approach to the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language, which is difficult to manage. But it seems to have been a missing facet of approaches to English language education.

It is also argued that language learning is not merely a matter of having a high level of intelligence, but what appears to be more important is the learners' use of strategies and their capability to react to a particular learning context to manage their learning and to overcome any challenges as effectively as possible (Williams & Burden, 1997). In relation to this, Pajares and Schunk (2002) argue, "many students have difficulty in school not because they are incapable of performing successfully but because they have learned to see themselves as incapable of handling academic work." (p. 17) For this reason, Cole and Chan (1994) suggest that students should be taught self-regulated learning strategies that enable them to take active control of their own learning processes, such as the setting of goals, developing skills and affects, monitoring progress, evaluation of performance, and so forth.

Pajares (1996) remarks that studies which focus on school experiences that influence performances and self-efficacy beliefs in the process of accomplishing tasks have very rarely been conducted. Besides, most researchers seem to have paid attention to the effects of a given intervention or method on performance alone. Consequently, the effects of innovations (e.g. methods, and strategies) on learner affects (e.g. self-efficacy), as far as this writer knows, are aspects missing from most of the experimental or case studies conducted in the field of teaching English s a foreign language, but it could be contended that such studies should have examined the effects of a given approach on not only performances but also self- beliefs. The reason is that checking the effects of a given intervention on both performances and related affects as well (depending on the focus of a given study) could make the findings more comprehensive and informative.

Above all, even though equipping students with self-regulated learning strategies, as Pintrich and De-Groot (1990) state, is the long lasting goal of education, there is no evidence, as far as this writer knows, of any attempt to promote self-regulated learning in English language classes, in general, and in speaking classes, in particular. In other words, self-regulated learning is still (considered) a new approach in helping students improve their performances and self-beliefs in the academic world. This study is, therefore, devoted to investigating the effect of enhancing self-regulated learning in spoken communication classes on speaking efficacy and performances. In line with this, an attempt is made to address the following research questions:

- Does self-regulated learning (in spoken communication classes) affect speaking performance?
- Does self-regulated learning affect speaking self-efficacy?

2 Literature review

2.1 Defining self–regulated learning

The term self-regulated learning is defined in different ways by different scholars. But most of them seem to define it similarly, or with very little differences. Good and Brophy (1995) defined self-regulated learning as a process of active learning in which students take responsibility for encouraging themselves to understand materials they deal with, to accomplish tasks, to monitor what they do, to assess their strengths and weaknesses, and to take corrective actions based on self-evaluation reports. In a similar fashion, but with slight differences, Pintrich (2000) explains self-regulated learning as "an active and constructive process whereby students set goals for their learning, and then try to monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation, and behavior guided and constrained by their goals, and the contextual features in the environment" (p. 453). This definition interestingly parallels Zimmerman's (2000) definition of self-regulated learning that puts emphasis on the interaction of three major elements: (a) personal regulation, which refers to the adjustment of cognitive and affective factors; (b) behavioral self-regulation that mainly takes into account the process of observing oneself and modifying performance; and (c) environmental self-regulation that involves analyzing learning context, and making adaptations in a way that optimizes performance. The interactions of these components, according to Zimmerman (2000), occur in the forethought of task, performance, and self-reflection (stages of self- regulation).

By and large, self-regulated learning could be defined as an active learning process through different strategies that help students try their level best to maximize their cognition and performance, and to manage their behavior, affects and other external factors, which could influence their learning. One thing that needs to be clear, at this point, is that self-regulated learning is neither a measure of intelligence nor a personality trait that results from nature (early in life). It could be of course considered as a construct that could be learned and developed through experience and self-reflection (Pinrich, 1995). Teachers can, therefore, adjust their teaching styles in ways that help students become self-regulated learners (Coppola, 1995; McCombs, 1989). On the other hand, students, on their part, need to control or monitor their behavior, affect and the environment to improve their performance. In addition, students should be aware of their personal weaknesses so

that they can make up for those limitations. In this regard, it is remarked that good self-regulated learners try to understand the task requirements and the classroom ground rules, and then try to adjust their learning accordingly (Ormrood, 2006).

2.2 What is self-efficacy?

Self-efficacy has become the most important construct worth studying in psychology since the time when Albert Bandura, who initially specialized as a behaviorist, became dissatisfied with the nature of behaviorism for the reason that a key component was missing from this widely known and accepted learning theory of that time. In 1977, with the publication of "Self-efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change," he identified an important aspect of that missing element, which suggests that people can develop self-perceptions of ability to accomplish a given task (Pajares & Schunk, 2002).

Self-efficacy is defined in a number of ways by different scholars, but almost all seem to refer to the same notion. To illustrate, self-efficacy is defined as a judgment that a person makes about his/her competence to be good at a specific task (Borich & Tombari, 1995; Dembo, 1994). Bernhardt (1997) also defines it as learners' beliefs about their abilities to accomplish a given task. And according to Pajares (2000), it is the students' evaluation of their academic competence in a specific domain. Self-efficacy is also explained as the degree to which a student thinks that s/he has the capacity to cope with any challenge in the process of learning (Pajares & Schunk, 2002). Similarly, Arnold and Brown (1999) tried to define it as students' perception about their ability to perform a task at hand. Now, it seems more desirable to see the definition and related notions by Bandura (1977), who is the prominent figure in this area. He states that self-efficacy is one's judgments of his/her capability to accomplish a given task. In the light of this, speaking efficacy is defined as one's feelings of capability to accomplish a given speaking task.

Self-efficacy is widely assumed to develop as a function of one or more such factors as mastery experiences, emotional and physiological arousal, vicarious experience and verbal persuasion (Bandura, 1986). Among these factors, mastery experience, which refers to one's direct experiences of a given task, is believed to contribute a lot to the development of task specific self-efficacy (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Thus, it can be inferred that successful direct experience or practice is likely to enhance task specific self-efficacy; on the contrary, failure experiences are likely to lower self-efficacy. This, in turn, could imply that self-efficacy is likely to be influenced by self-regulated learning, which refers to one's direct learning experiences.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research design

This study is mainly an embedded quasi-experimental research that is quantitative but supplemented with qualitative data gathered using diary. In the words of Creswell and Plano Clark (2007):

> An embedded experimental research design is usually defined by having qualitative data embedded within an experimental design. And hence, the priority of this model is established by the quantitative, experimental methodology, and the qualitative data set is the subservient within that methodology. (p. 69)

This design is preferred, because an embedded experimental research design enables a researcher to thoroughly examine a given problem, for instance, the cause-effect relationship between variables, based on both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

It is widely recognized that it is difficult to design 'true' experiments with random assignments in educational contexts for various reasons, and hence, the most common method applied effec-

tively is the use of intact class groups or quasi-experimental design (Dörnyei, 2007). In the light of this, two class groups are included in this study.

3.2. Participants, sampling, and treatment: An overview

The study involved randomly selected experimental and control intact groups. These two sections consisted of 97 students attending the course "Spoken and Written Communication" in the College of Business and Economics of Bahir Dar University. All of the students were in the age range of 18–20 except for two advanced standing students aged 28 and 30 (among the experimental group students). Data from these exceptional students were excluded from the study in the process of excluding exceptional cases that could jeopardize the validity and reliability of the data. Data from 4 students with incomplete information were also excluded. Therefore, the study depended on 91 students consisting of 45 experimental group students (39 males and 6 females), and 46 control group students (37 males and 9 females).

A total of 10 students consisting of 6 students each from the experimental group (3 males and 2 females) and the control group (4 males and 1 female) were randomly selected using a lottery method. Then they were convinced and oriented to keep a diary. Diary data were collected from these students.

Students in the experimental group were subject to the self-regulated learning intervention. So these students were helped and encouraged to get to know and use self-regulated learning (strategies), such as personal self-regulated learning strategies (e.g. goal-setting, planning, keeping records of errors etc.), behavioral self-regulated learning strategies (e.g. task analysis, self-evaluation, self-talk, checking quality and progress etc.), and environmental self-regulated learning strategies (e.g. seeking help from others, arranging a place for study, isolating oneself on purpose etc.) in spoken communication classes; on the other hand, the control group students were taught the course using traditional approaches to spoken communication, which do not provide students with the opportunity to meaningfully and responsibly plan, perform or practice, and evaluate their learning, and which do not consider students' affects. One thing worth noting is that the contents taught to the control and experimental groups were the same. Another point worth mentioning is that the two groups were taught by the same teacher so as to control the teacher variable. Above all, it should be noted that the intervention was conducted for three hours per week for 14 consecutive weeks.

3.3 Instruments

The instruments used for the main study, as discussed above, are both quantitative and qualitative measures. The instruments (questionnaire, tests and diary) were then tried out during the pilot study. As a result of the pilot study, some problems were identified and resolved. Finally, the refined instruments were employed to gather data for the main study.

3.3.1 Speaking efficacy scale

For the measurement of students' speaking efficacy, 12 items were prepared. Among these, the first 4 items were adapted from writing self-efficacy scale (Pajares, Miller & Johnson, 1999). The rest were prepared by this researcher on the basis of various literature on the nature of speaking and oral interaction (e.g. Nunan, 2004), and then the items were presented to three instructors, who have been teaching Spoken English for a long period of time, for evaluation. After the items had been evaluated, they were revised based on the comments received (from the aforementioned instructors). Finally, they were pilot tested.

This scale measures students' speaking efficacy, and includes 12 items such as "I can correctly pronounce all words in my speech that lasts 5-10 minutes," "I can express ideas with good grammar," "I can correctly use parts of speech such as nouns, verbs, etc. when I speak" (see Appendix 1). Each of the items requires a response on a scale from 0 (no chance) to 10 (completely certain).

A high score thus obviously indicates a high level of speaking efficacy. The reliability of this scale was found to be 0.88.

3.3.2 Speaking tests

Common sense and experience tell us that tests are very useful instruments to evaluate individuals' knowledge and skills. However, one thing that should be noted is that if tests are to serve the intended purpose, they should not be ill-prepared.

In order to measure students' speaking performance, some oral questions that focus on students' biography, hobbies and the like, about which they can easily generate enough information when they speak were prepared, as the oral interview is one of the most common ways of testing speaking skills (Heaton, 1990). Then, students were asked to sit for oral exams. To reduce subjectivity in marking, two instructors who are experienced in teaching speaking marked the speaking tests or oral responses. The markers were, of course, oriented in advance to help them effectively apply the analytic marking technique with some marking criteria, such as accuracy, fluency, relevance of ideas, and the like. Each criterion is assessed on a 4-point scale (3, 2, 1, and 0 with appropriate descriptions). There would be, as a result, a maximum score of 15 and a minimum of 0 for each test. In line with this, the total score of the two tests for each student was taken as a measure of speaking performance. Finally, every participant's total score was changed into a percentage. The consistency between the two markers was found to be .85 and .81 for the two tests, respectively.

3.3.3 Diary

A diary is one of the most important ways of understanding the feelings, thoughts, and daily experiences of research participants. Supporting this, Dörneyi (2007) states:

> Diary studies are appropriate for looking at temporal variation in dynamic processes, investigating for example, how people change or respond to certain stimuli. Diary studies are more sensitive to such questions than many other longitudinal designs, because they typically involve more frequent data recording that can capture changes with increased fidelity. … Diary studies can provide background information that can resolve ambiguity regarding causal direction between variables. (p. 143)

It is also noted that diary analysis provides researchers with respondents' immediate self-reports, which can minimize problems in retrieving relevant information due to forgetfulness, as the participants keep more recent information than distant experiences (Van Eerde et al., 2005, cited in Dörneyi, 2007).

Therefore, the diary method was employed to collect additional qualitative data regarding students' feelings, thoughts, experiences and the like in spoken communication classes for the main study.

Students in both control and experimental groups were given appropriate orientation and diary notebooks with a cover letter that makes clear that students should keep records of some specific points immediately after each of the spoken communication classes. The points are:

- Students' ways of learning or developing their speaking skills.
- Students' feelings about their spoken communication
- Students' feelings about their teacher's ways of teaching spoken communication.
- The level of their feelings of capability to accomplish a given speaking task.
- Activities, techniques and/or strategies that contributed to the improvement of students' speaking efficacy and performance.

The rationale for making both groups keep diaries is that the data from both groups could more easily show the differences and/or similarities in change of feelings, thoughts, performance and/or experiences between the two groups.

However, diary as a means of data collection is not free from limitations. For example, it is generally very demanding on the the participant and/or the informant needs to be, as Dörneyi (2007) notes, interested in keeping diary for valid and reliable data collection. For this reason, it was decided to limit the number of students who keep diaries and convince the participants convinced using different strategies and motivational factors, such as:

- Providing students with oral praise and encouragement on the basis of continuous follow up and diary assessment conducted every two weeks.
- Valuing their effort invested in keeping diaries
- Making students value the relevance of keeping diaries
- Helping students develop a positive attitude towards keeping diaries.

These strategies and related activities were found to be effective in helping students maintain their motivation, effort, and perseverance to keep diaries. Hence, adequate data were collected (for the main study).

3.4 Methods of data analysis

Mixed methods, as scholars (e.g. Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Trochim, 2003) argue, are effective ways to exhaustively address a research problem. Employing both quantitative and qualitative methods is advisable to critically explore a given research problem.

The quantitative data were analyzed using parametric tests, such as descriptive statistics, paired t-test, independent samples t-test, and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA).

On the other hand, the data collected using diaries were analyzed qualitatively using such steps as looking for themes and coding, categorizing themes of similar content, and making summaries and interpretations.

4 Results

4.1 Analysis of pre-intervention quantitative data

As shown in Table 1, the pre-intervention mean of each of the measures of the variables treated was found to be below the expected mean (in both the experimental and control groups). From this, it could be concluded that the students did not develop the skills of self-regulation, self-efficacy and speaking skills to the degree expected. This seems to imply that students need to be provided with some sort of training to improve their scores for all of the variables treated.

Most importantly, the pre-intervention mean of each of the variables in both the control and experimental groups appeared to be similar, although this needs to be checked by further analysis. The t-test is therefore devoted to this.

The *t*-tests shown in Table 1 reveal that there are no significant differences between the pre-intervention measures of the control and experimental groups.

Table 1. Pre-intervention mean differences between the experimental and control groups (for all of the variables treated)

Variables	*Expected Mean*	*Control group (n=46)*		*Experimental group (n=45)*		*t*	*Sig.*
		M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**		
SEF	60	38.27	5.15	39.80	6.28	-1.27	.20
SPER	50	44.65	11.55	44.43	10.49	.09	.92

*p<.05

Note: SEF=speaking efficacy; SPER=speaking

The paired samples *t*-test displayed in Table 2 show that there are significant differences between the pre-intervention and post-intervention measures of the variables treated among the ex-

perimental group students. In other words, the experimental group students' post-intervention scores are higher than their pre-intervention scores for all of the variables treated. The differences seem to have resulted from the intervention conducted to promote self-regulated learning in teaching spoken communication.

Table 2. Summary of paired *t*-tests for the experimental group

Variables (in pair)	*Paired Differences*		*t*	*Sig (2-tailed)*
	M	**SD**		
SEF1-SEF2	-11.20	5.81	-9.94***	.00
SPER1-SPER2	-14.43	6.37	-11.25***	.00

N=45; *df* =44
*p<.05, ***p<.00
Note: SEF1=pre-intervention speaking efficacy; SEF2=post-intervention speaking efficacy; SPER2=pre-intervention speaking performance; SPER2=post-intervention speaking performance

The paired t-tests for the control group displayed in Table 3 show that there are no significant differences observed between the pre- and post-intervention measures of the variables. The results could imply that the traditional teaching and learning methods of spoken communication do not lead to differences in students' speaking efficacy and performances. However, there seems to be some changes in speaking performance, which seem to have resulted from the lessons. From this, one can see that the traditional methods have with a positive effect on speaking skills development, even though they do not have considerable influence on students' speaking efficacy.

Table 3. Summary of paired *t*-tests for the control group

Variables(in pair)	*Paired Differences*		*t*	*Sig (2-tailed)*
	M	**SD**		
SEF1-SEF2	-1.63	6.95	-1.60	.13
SPER1-SPER2	-4.30	5.31	-5.43***	.00

N=46; *df* =45
*** p<.00

4.2 Analysis of post-intervention mean differences between the experimental and control groups (for the variables treated)

Table 4 depicts that during the post-intervention period, the experimental group students scored higher than the expected mean of the measure of each variable, while the control group students still scored below the expected mean of the measure of each of the variables treated. Therefore, such differences between the two groups could be logically attributed to the self-regulated learning intervention in the experimental group, but it needs to be checked for significance. Thus, the t-test is applied to see if such differences are significant.

Table 4. Post-intervention mean differences between the experimental and control groups (in the variables in focus)

Variables	*Expected Mean*	*Control group (n=46)*		*Experimental group (n=45)*		*t*	*Sig.*
		M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**		
SEF	60	39.81	7.08	51.01	7.23	-7.45	.00
SPER	50	48.95	10.27	61.86	9.43	-6.24	.00

* p>.05
Note: SEF=speaking efficacy; SPER= speaking performance

The outputs of the independent samples t-test shown in Table 4 reveal that students in the experimental group surpassed the control group students in all of the variables. From the results, one can understand that the self-regulated learning intervention has a significant effect on students' skills of self-regulation that in turn enhances the development of speaking efficacy and performances.

It is conceivable from Table 5 that the experimental group students outshined the control group students in speaking efficacy. One can also clearly see that 39% of the variance in speaking efficacy is accounted for by the self-regulated learning intervention excluding the effect of initial differences in speaking efficacy ($F_{(1, 89)}$=57.75, p<.05, partial η2=.39). This result supports the outputs of the independent samples t-test that shows significant differences between the two groups in speaking efficacy.

Table 5. Summary ANCOVA on the differences in SEF2 (controlling for SEF1)

Source	Df	MS	F	Sig.	Partial η2
SEF1	1	932.92	22.33	.00	.22
Group	1	2412.83	57.75*	.00	.39
Error	88	41.77			
R^2=50 (Adjusted R^2 =49), Dependent variable=SEF2 *p<.00 Note: SEF1=pre-intervention measure of speaking self-efficacy; SEF2=post- intervention measure of speaking self-efficacy.					

The results presented in Table 6 reveal that the experimental group students outperformed the control group students in speaking tests. The results also indicate that 56% of the variance in students' speaking performance is attributed to the self-regulated learning intervention partialling out the effects of initial differences in spoken communication ($F_{(1, 89)}$=119.32, p<.00, partial η2=.56). Most importantly, such results imply that the self-regulated learning intervention conducted in the experimental group significantly contributed to the development of students' speaking skills.

Table 6. Summary ANCOVA on the differences in SPER2 (partitioning out SPER1)

Source	Df	MS	F	Sig.	Partial η2
SPER1	1	5859.89	178.11	.00	.65
Group	1	3925.63	119.32***	.00	.56
Error	88				
R^2=.75 (Adjusted R^2 =.75), Dependent variable=SPER2 *** p<.00 Note: SPER1=pre-intervention measure of speaking performance; SPER2=post-intervention measure of speaking performance					

4.3 Students' reflections on their speaking efficacy

Data from the diary of students in the experimental group show that they were getting better and better in self-efficacy (feelings of capability or confidence) in spoken communication due to the help, guidance and encouragement received to exercise self-regulated learning in speaking classes.

The experimental group students' diaries, as already stated, pointed out positive changes in their speaking efficacy, and hence they became comfortable with speaking tasks. In other words, the diaries show that students' in this group kept on developing their speaking efficacy. The following statements extracted from students' diaries seem to make this point clear:

My confidence increases everyday …

> I can speak about anything …
>
> My feeling about my speaking skills is somewhat good …, and I [feel] happy when I speak.

On the contrary, students in the control group reflected that they have a low level of self-efficacy in spoken communication. The following expressions extracted from these students seem to support this.

> … I am not comfortable with speaking activities, and my attention is mostly out of the class.
>
> … I have no confidence to accomplish speaking tasks.
>
> … I do not know how I could speak correctly and fluently.

In sum, the evidence mentioned implies that the intervention helped students in the experimental group positively change their speaking efficacy, which could have contributed a lot to their speaking skills development. Thus, one could also argue that self-regulated learning should be given due attention during spoken communication instruction.

4.4 Students' reflections on their speaking performance

The analysis of the experimental group students' diaries uncover that these students benefited a lot from the intervention. One of the most important benefits that students gained from the intervention is that they had improved their speaking skills. In this regard, almost all of the experimental group diarists mentioned points that seem to show their improvements in spoken communication. For instance, the following statements from the students' diaries show that they had improved their speaking efficacy and performances.

> My speaking skill is good … Speaking is manageable if you use various strategies and if you do practice, …
>
> In my spoken communication, I produce reasonably acceptable speech.
>
> I came to a conclusion that I could improve my spoken communication using the self regulated learning strategies.

Students also believed that they would demonstrate more speaking improvements in the future. For example, one student says, "my speaking performance is not bad, but in the near future I will perform better in speaking." Another student notes, "I believe that I can speak very well." From these reflections, one could sense that learners were able to develop positive attitudes and speaking efficacy that seem to have helped them develop persistence and self- determination for learning how to speak so as to make further improvements.

However, students in the control group did not report considerable changes in speaking performance except for one student who seemed to claim changes in speaking as a result of the spoken communication course. He says, "I think the speech I produce now is somewhat better than what I did before attending the spoken course."

Overall, there is evidence to say that self-regulated learning is advantageous in comparison with the traditional approach, which was applied in teaching the control group. This is because, while the control group diarists reported almost no significant improvements in speaking efficacy and performances, the experimental group diarists reported significant changes in both speaking-efficacy and performances.

5 Discussion

5.1 The effects of self-regulated learning on speaking efficacy

Both the quantitative and qualitative data analyses show that self-regulated learning has had a significant effect on students' speaking efficacy and performances.

The findings show that students in the experimental group made significant changes in both self-regulated learning and speaking efficacy. And such changes seem to have resulted from the self-regulated learning intervention.

A few studies demonstrated that instruction with the help of self-regulated learning strategies enhances the development of self-efficacy and performance (Pajares, 2003). The influence of this kind of instruction on learners' speaking efficacy could be ascribed to the fact that the self-regulated learning intervention has key features which are similar to the major sources of self-efficacy. Thus, it seems that the knowledge and use of self-regulated learning strategies helped the experimental group students succeed in spoken communication and develop their speaking efficacy. In this respect, it is evident that the feedback and persuasion that students received from the teacher, peers, and even from themselves seem to have contributed to the development of their speaking efficacy. On the contrary, students in the control group made no significant change in speaking efficacy.

The qualitative data analysis also shows that while those students who were involved in the experimental group expressed that they enjoyed and benefited a lot from self-regulated learning strategies and thus improved speaking efficacy, the control group students asserted that they have no idea of self-regulated learning and its strategies, and expressed that they suffer from difficulties in speaking, which seems to be an indicator of their low level of speaking efficacy.

The aforementioned results seem to support the view that self-regulated learning contributes a lot to the development of students' affects. Because self-regulated learning involves various strategies that learners use in order to manage their tasks, emotions and the like, it contributes directly or indirectly to the enhancement of their self-beliefs. For example, positive self-talk, managing stressors, making meaning and joy out of the task itself, controlling negative emotions and so forth are viewed as very important elements of self-regulated learning that facilitate the development of learners' self-efficacy (Pintrich, 1995). Since self-regulated learners can adjust their effort and strategies to the task and to their goals, they know when to persist, when to ask for help, where and how to perform tasks successfully. This, in turn, seems to have contributed to the observed positive change in students' self-efficacy. This could also be supported by previous studies that indicated that learners in autonomy-supportive classes experience not only greater perceived autonomy but also more functioning in terms of their engagement, creativity, intrinsic motivation, academic performance, persistence in school, and so forth (Black & Deci, 2000; Boggiano et al., 1993; Vallerand, et al., 1997, all cited in Reeve and Jang, 2006).

5.2 The effect of (enhancing) self-regulated learning on speaking performance

It is worthwhile to note that the data analyses, as already pointed out, show that promoting self-regulated learning in teaching spoken communication enhances students' speaking performances. Specifically, the quantitative data analysis show that enhancing self-regulated learning in teaching spoken communication helped the experimental group students outperform their counterparts in speaking tests.

Similarly, the qualitative data analysei reveals that students in the experimental group improved their speaking skills or performances as a function of the self-regulated learning intervention in their spoken communication class. In other words, the self-regulated learning strategies that students acquired and used in the process of learning spoken communication played a great role in improving their speaking performances.

One thing that needs to be made clear, however, is that students in the control group had also made some improvements as a result of the speaking lessons, but such improvements do not seem

significant, while the improvements in the experimental group are highly significant. This is to say that whereas self-regulated learning helps students improve their speaking performances to a great extent, the traditional approach to teaching spoken communication contributes to the enhancement of performances in spoken communication to a lesser extent. From this, one could argue that the current crisis of spoken communication can be resolved to a significant extent, if self-regulated learning is effectively applied in the teaching of spoken communication, especially at the tertiary level.

One of the possible explanations for the observed results is that students in the experimental group have acquired and used self-regulated learning strategies that enhance one's performance. As stated by different scholars (e.g. Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 2004), self-regulated learning strategies play a great role in improving one's performance.

6 Conclusions and implications

It is evident that enhancing self-regulated learning in spoken communication class facilitates the development of students' speaking performances. In the same vein, self-regulated learning intervention in spoken communication class helps students develop their speaking efficacy.

Students with adequate knowledge and use of self-regulated learning strategies (as a result of the intervention) seem to apply self-regulated learning to enhance their learning of spoken communication, as the strategies help them manage their speaking activities. They even tend to transfer strategies to the learning of other language skills too. It seems, therefore, easier for learners who have acquired self-regulated learning strategies to manage their spoken communication. In contrast, students who lack self-regulated learning skills are more likely to suffer from speaking deficiency and a lower level of speaking efficacy.

It should be noted that the use of self-reported scales, the smallness of the sample size, the use of intact class groups, and the possible diffusion of the intervention might have affected, at least in part, the results.

However, the results seem to validate the hypothesis that enhancing self-regulated learning in spoken communication classes would improve students' speaking performances and self-efficacy. Thus, it would be fair to conclude that students get motivated and persistently take responsibility for their learning, and eventually show improvements in performances and efficacy beliefs, if they are not only equipped with strategies of self-regulated learning, but also receive support in exercising self-regulated learning in spoken communication class.

It seems very important for teachers to value the knowledge, skills, and affects that students have and to show concern for the development of such skills and beliefs. Teachers also need to appreciate students' effort and activities, because it is when teachers are practically considerate and appreciative that students try their best to make a difference in both their speaking skills as well as their speaking efficacy beliefs. In short, teachers should try their best to assist students to overcome problems that lead to poor speaking performance and a low level of speaking efficacy. Hence, teachers should liberate themselves from the traditional ways of teaching and effectively apply the self- regulated learning approach.

If the current spoken communication problem is to be resolved, at least to a considerable extent, self-regulated learning should be effectively applied as an approach to the teaching of spoken communication, especially at tertiary level where students could take control over and responsibility for their learning. But certain arrangements need to be made in advance; for instance, teachers should be trained in how to enhance self-regulated learning, and teaching materials should also be redesigned in a way that enables students to develop their speaking skills and speaking efficacy by employing self-regulated learning (strategies).

Teachers should also be well aware of the powerful role of self-regulated learning and try their best to help students get to know and use the principles and strategies of self-regulated learning. This is because if students are to be effective in their learning in general and speaking in particular, it is worthwhile for them to be familiar with the how of setting goals and standards, planning activities, organizing information, managing time, rehearsing information that need to be remembered,

getting feedback, asking for help, recording errors not to repeat them in the future, evaluating weaknesses and strengths and taking corrective actions, and generally acting in line with the principles and phases of self-regulated learning.

It seems worth doing further studies on the effects of self-regulated learning intervention on students' performances, attributions, apprehension, and the like in wider contexts. Students' application of self-regulated learning in the process of learning other courses and its effects should also be investigated.

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Appendix 1: Speaking Efficacy Scale

Directions: On the scale from 0 (Definitely cannot do it) to 10 (Definitely can do it), how sure are you that you can perform each of the following speaking skills below? Remember that you may use any number between 0 and 10. Write your answers on the spaces provided.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Definitely cannot do it		**Probably cannot do it**			**Maybe**		**Probably can do it**			**Definitely can do it**

1. Correctly pronounce all words in my speech that lasts 5-10 minutes.
2. Correctly use parts of speech such as nouns, verbs, adjectives or adverbs.
3. Correctly use, singulars and plurals, regular and irregular verbs, verb tenses, articles, prepositions, prefixes and suffixes when I speak.
4. Express ideas (using different types of sentences, such as simple, compound and complex sentences) with good grammar as situations demand.
5. Express my idea with adequate and relevant supporting details in speaking.
6. Speak fluently about a given issue using effective words or appropriate diction.
7. Organize words into sentences that clearly express an idea in my speech.
8. Produce a well-organized and well- sequenced or coherent speech whenever I am asked.
9. Correctly express my ideas in speaking even in stressful situations, and within a limited time.
10. Find a way to motivate myself to finish when I am tired but have not finished my speech
11. Refocus attention sufficiently to produce an effective speech on time when my concentration wanders while speaking.
12. Restate my speech when I find it wordy, ungrammatical or confusing so that it is clear and grammatically correct.