



EXPLORING THE LEVEL OF SELF-CONFIDENCE AMONG STUDENTS WITH DIFFERENT SPEAKING PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the variation of students' self-confidence level in their speaking performance in English. Using a qualitative approach, live experiences, and influencing factors related to self-confidence in speaking English were explored. Data were collected through classroom observations, reflective journals, and interviews to get a deep understanding of participants' perspectives and behavior. This research was conducted at an English course located in Kaliwates, Jember. The sample consists of two male students and two female students, all at the same CEFR level (A2 Elementary), but with varying levels of self-confidence and speaking performance. The results showed that students with low self-confidence can achieve high scores in speaking performance, while students with high self-confidence do not necessarily achieve high scores. They may still receive a low score in speaking performance, even if they have a high level of self-confidence.

Keywords: *self-confidence; speaking performance*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki variasi tingkat kepercayaan diri siswa dalam performa berbicara dalam bahasa Inggris. Pendekatan kualitatif digunakan untuk mengeksplorasi persepsi siswa, pengalaman hidup, dan faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi yang terkait dengan kepercayaan diri dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, jurnal reflektif, dan wawancara untuk mendapatkan pemahaman yang mendalam tentang perspektif dan perilaku peserta. Penelitian ini dilakukan di lembaga pendidikan Bahasa Inggris yang berlokasi di Kaliwates, Jember dengan dua siswa laki-laki dan dua siswa perempuan sebagai sampel. Semua sampel berada di tingkat CEFR yang sama yaitu A2 Dasar tetapi dengan tingkat kepercayaan diri dan tingkat performa berbicara yang berbeda. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa dengan kepercayaan diri rendah bisa mendapatkan nilai tinggi dalam performa berbicara. Sementara siswa dengan kepercayaan diri tinggi tidak menentukan bahwa mereka akan mendapatkan nilai tinggi dalam performa berbicara. Mereka mungkin bisa mendapatkan skor rendah dalam performa berbicara meskipun memiliki tingkat kepercayaan diri yang tinggi.

Kata Kunci: *kepercayaan diri; performa berbicara*

INTRODUCTION

In learning English as a foreign language, students are required to master four language skills, which are the basis of language. Among the four language skills, speaking is one of the most important skills, yet challenging. Based on a real-life situation, most of the students in Indonesia have problems with speaking English.

Several studies found that the problems encountered by the students while speaking English caused by two factors, namely linguistic factors and nonlinguistic or psychological factors. For linguistic factors, the major problem encountered by the students was limited vocabulary, lack of pronunciation, and struggle with grammar and fluency (Ihsan & Wahidah, 2019; Maji et al., 2022). The second factor, the psychological factor, the problem faced by the students was caused by a lack of self-confidence, fear of making mistake, anxiety, and low bravery when speaking English (Fitriani et al., 2015; Inayah & Lisdawati, 2017; Murti & Jabu, 2022).

Budayanti et al. (2023) stated that students felt worried their friends would laugh at them when speaking English. They lack the confidence to speak English and feel inferior because other students have better speaking skills. In addition, Farhani et al. (2020), mentioned in his research that students would be teased and mocked by their friends if they make a mistake when speaking English in public. So that the students afraid to speaking English. Another study proved that it is difficult for students to produce good speaking skills even if they have learned to speak English in a specific class at university, since English is not their first language (Audina et al., 2016). In fact, Aulia and Apoko (2022) found that students are in the red zone as they are currently dealing with problems in speaking and are confused about giving ideas in English. They felt afraid to make some mistakes in speaking English because they did not have sufficient vocabulary. Sometimes the students had prepared words in their minds, but they still found it difficult to express their ideas. Other studies also found that some students had an interest in English mainly in speaking, but still felt nervous, shy, and afraid when speaking English. Several also felt less confident in their abilities in speaking (Komang et al., 2022).

The preliminary study found that most of the students looked too shy to speak in front of people. Even though they already knew each other in the class, they found it difficult to talk about themselves in English in front of the class. The researcher conducted an observation to one of the classes when students were doing speaking practice. The teacher asked the students to make a paragraph that tells about themselves and then they presented it in front of the class. During the speaking performance, most of them focused solely on the notes they had written on paper. Additionally, several students appeared unwilling to participate in oral activities in class. This makes the message or idea that they want to convey cannot be conveyed properly. Besides, speaking is a process of achieving goals and transferring messages, where the speaker not only expresses their ideas in his mind but also expresses their necessity (Audina et al., 2016). In the process of learning English, it is very important for students to master speaking so that they can communicate their ideas properly (Budayanti et al., 2023).

According to Kutub (2019), speaking is a challenging skill in learning English. In speaking English, the students require to knowing grammar more and also the use of English in real context. Moreover, a rich vocabulary to enhance speaking skills is also needed. If students have a broader vocabulary, they will demonstrate greater fluency and accuracy in their speaking performance (Kutub, 2019). Additionally, in order to master speaking, students need to have high self-confidence. Furthermore, Hasan et al. (2020) stated that speaking does not only involve knowledge but also a psychological aspect, in this case, self-confidence which is the key aspect to success in speaking performance. Besides, self-confidence is a feeling

that can make students brave and always want to try something interesting. It is also an aspect that can raise people to have a strong desire to achieve something. Self-confidence is a personal factor that supports the achievement of students in learning English as a foreign language (Lar & Maulina, 2021). This is consistent with Nadiyah et al. (2019) who stated that self-confidence is a positive attitude owned by people to be able to achieve their goals. Therefore, with self-confidence, the students will be able to convey their message and create good communication.

Self-confidence, although not directly correlated with other language aspects, plays a crucial role in speaking performance. Several factors affect speaking skills including linguistic factors and non-linguistic factors. In this case, one of the non-linguistic factors affecting speaking is self-confidence, which does not correlate with any other language aspects, but from personal factors (Kutub, 2019). Without self-confidence, students will not have the bravery to speak to others and a low desire to accomplish something (Hasan et al., 2020).

Additionally, self-confidence can inspire enthusiasm, courage, and motivation, helping students achieve better speaking outcomes (Lar & Maulina, 2021). Moreover, self-confidence is essential for the success of the learning process as a whole (Christie, 2018, p. 143). As Kanza (2016) stated, "Generally, self-confidence is someone's feeling of trusting and believing in his/her abilities to do things in a successful way" (p. 24). Students with high self-confidence will be brave to recognize their abilities. If they can control their confidence, they will be able to do many things, especially in speaking English (Komang et al., 2022). Akbari and Sahibzada (2020) affirmed that students with high self-confidence achieved higher success and performed better in speaking English. In learning English, self-confidence is essential, as it helps students avoid many challenges; it is the key to success in speaking (Hasan et al., 2020). Conversely, students with low self-confidence often struggle to express their ideas, even when they know and have prepared the necessary vocabulary (Bahtiar et al., 2020). They fear making mistakes, particularly in grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary use (Aulia & Apoko, 2022). Therefore, this research aimed to investigate the variation in students' self-confidence levels and how it influences their speaking performance in English. The study was conducted with students in an informal education class in Jember, who, despite being from different grades, are at the same level of proficiency in English.

There have been several studies that examined students' self-confidence and speaking performance at several levels of education. The first study was carried out by Kutub, (2019), who found that self-confidence has a low significant correlation with speaking performance. The study revealed that fourth-semester students at a university in Malang who have high self-confidence do not affect their speaking performance. Having high self-confidence does not determine that their speaking performance is good. This research aligns with Audina et al. (2016), who found that students who have high self-confidence do not determine they will also achieve high scores in speaking performance. The same case with the students who have medium self-confidence levels does not determine whether they will get average or low scores in speaking achievement.

On the other hand, Komang et al. (2022) investigated 40 students in a the junior high school of Mengwi and found that without self-confidence, the students will always feel afraid and embarrassed to speak English. They need more support

and motivation from their teacher to feel more comfortable and confident in conveying oral expressions. Another study by Aulia and Apoko (2022) inferred that there was a positive relationship between the students' self-confidence and speaking skills at the SMPIT Al Muchtar. The study found out that the students would communicate well if they have high self-confidence. Another study by Novia et al. (2023) indicated that most of the tenth graders at a senior high school in Ogan Ilir had high self-confidence and possibly have higher spoken presentation scores. It showed that their speaking achievement was primarily influenced by their high self-confidence.

Most of the previous studies mentioned above focused on students in formal education settings, such as junior high schools, senior high schools, and universities. However, none of these studies investigated students in informal education institutions. This study addresses that gap, as it examines students in an English course, where learners are placed with others at the same proficiency level. This reduces the potential influence of varying English levels on speaking performance, unlike in formal education settings, where students in the same class often have different levels of English proficiency.

In conclusion, the researchers aim to examine the variation in self-confidence levels among students with differing speaking performance in English. Another reason for investigating this topic is the lack of studies focusing on students in informal education settings, such as English courses. The researcher aimed to explore how students' self-confidence levels influence their speaking performance in front of peers from different age groups and grades across various schools. Specifically, this research seeks to answer the question: How does self-confidence vary among students with different levels of speaking performance in English?

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative research approach with a phenomenological design to explore how self-confidence varies among students with different levels of speaking performance in English. This approach was chosen to explore the student's perceptions, live experiences, and influencing factors related to self-confidence in speaking English. Data were collected through classroom observations, reflective journals, and interviews to get a deep understanding of participants' perspectives and behavior.

Participants

This research was conducted at an English course located in Kaliwates, Jember. The participants in this research were four students in the same class, which consisted of two male and two female students. All the samples are in the same class and the same level of English based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), which is A2 Elementary. However, all the participants are from different education backgrounds and different level of speaking performance. The characteristics of the participants of this research explained as follow.

Table 1. Characteristics of participants

Participants	Gender	Education Background	Level CEFR	Level of Speaking Performance
Student A	Male	Junior high school	A2	High
Student B	Male	Junior high school	A2	Medium
Student C	Female	Senior high school	A2	Low
Student D	Female	Senior high school	A2	High

Instruments

The researcher collected the data through classroom observation and semi-instructed interviews to explore the students' self-confidence in speaking English. First, the researcher conducted a classroom observation to analyze how the class atmosphere when the students conducted the speaking practice. The classroom observation in this research was carried out twice in a month while joining an internship in an English course. Then, a semi-instructed interview with four students were administered. Several questions were asked related to the student's self-confidence in speaking English. The researcher adopted questions from a study conducted by Urrutia and Vega (2010), who conducted a questionnaire to diagnose students' attitudes and impressions about speaking. Additionally, the data through teacher's journals on students' activities in class and the students' performance were also collected. Students' daily speaking scores and speaking exam scores were collected and analyzed to assess their performance in speaking English.

FINDINGS

The Results of the Observation

An observation was carried out to know the situation of the students in the class. The observation was carried out when the students did the speaking practice in the class. It was found that most of the students in the class felt too shy to speak English in front of their classmates. This condition led to developing some questions about students' self-confidence in speaking English. The following were the topics of questions employed in the interview: 1) Level of self-confidence. 2) Feelings experienced during the speaking test. 3) Skills that were difficult and easy to practice. 4) Factors that made speaking English difficult.

The Results of the Interviews

Following the observation, the interviews were administered. Based on the interview results, the researcher found that students showed different levels of self-confidence when speaking English, and these differences were influenced by several factors.

Related to Point 1 of the interview, which focused on the level of self-confidence, Student A reported that she had low self-confidence. This was mainly due to feeling nervous when speaking in front of others and being unclear about the topic being discussed. Student A admitted that she struggled with performance anxiety, especially in group settings, which further lowered their self-confidence in speaking.

Conversely, Student C had moderate self-confidence, but this was hindered by limited vocabulary. She said that when she had the intention to speak, her ability

was constrained because she felt uncertain about using the correct words. This vocabulary gap created moments of hesitation, making it difficult for her to express her ideas in English. This ultimately affected her overall confidence in speaking.

On the other hand, both Student B and Student D showed high self-confidence in speaking English with different reasons. Student B said that she felt more confident when referring to a text or notes during speaking activities. This external support made her feel more secure, as it provided her with a reference point for her speech. Meanwhile, Student D attributed her strong self-confidence to her regular practice

Regarding Point 2 of the interview, which explored students' feelings when speaking English, most students reported feeling confident in their speaking abilities due to regular practice. The teacher frequently encourages them to practice speaking in class, emphasizing the importance of repetition and real-time feedback to build confidence for the speaking test. One student shared that, despite feeling anxious about her score, she remained confident in her ability to perform well, attributing this assurance to her high self-confidence. This confidence, she explained, stemmed from consistent classroom practices and her belief in her capacity to overcome challenges. Additionally, several students noted that their growing comfort with speaking English in front of others further contributed to their positive feelings during the speaking test, even when faced with uncertainty about the specific content.

Furthermore, the students' perspectives on which skills they considered difficult or easy to practice were explored (Point 3). In this regard, Student A found speaking to be difficult because he often felt nervous when speaking English in front of others, while he considered writing to be easy due to his greater confidence in that area. Student A expressed that his nervousness during speaking situations often made it harder for him to concentrate on expressing his ideas clearly. In contrast, Student C regarded speaking as an easy skill because she enjoyed communicating with others. She mentioned that her natural inclination to engage in conversations made speaking feel more like an enjoyable activity than a challenge.

For the last point of the interview, the researcher explored what are the factors that make the students difficult to speak English. Regarding this topic, the researcher found several factors that affect students' speaking performance. They faced many difficulties expressing their ideas which made it difficult to speak. From the table above, the researcher concluded several factors that make it difficult for students to speak, such as nervousness, lack of vocabulary, and the audience around them. However, one interesting thing that the researcher found was that grammar was not an inhibiting factor for them to speak English. They didn't worry about grammatical errors, as long as their interlocutor could understand them.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this research show that speaking still becomes challenging for students. In a study, Aulia and Apoko (2022) found that students in Indonesia who learn English as a foreign language are faced with problems in speaking English, especially in conveying their ideas in English. In addition, speaking is one of the challenging skills in language learning (Fitriani et al., 2015; Kutub, 2019). This is because speaking is a key component of communicative competence and is

frequently used in daily activities. As part of spoken performance, speaking requires students to demonstrate their ability to communicate, making it a challenging aspect of language learning, particularly in English.

Based on the result, a student thought that speaking was a difficult skill to practice. It was because he felt nervous to speak in front of people, which indicated that he has low self-confidence. Christie (2018) supports this idea, stating that most of people believe that speaking skills are harder than others due to a lack of self-confidence to deliver sentences in English. The researchers also found that the most common problems faced by students are nervousness or low self-confidence and lack of vocabulary. The students' lack of self-confidence and lack of vocabulary make the students think that speaking is a difficult skill (Fatmawati et al., 2020). Furthermore, Kutub (2019) stated that having a rich vocabulary can enhance their speaking skill and support their fluency and accuracy so that they have better speaking performance. Lack of self-confidence and lack of vocabulary are the common problems faced by students in speaking English in that class. Several studies also mention that the major problems faced by the students in speaking were a lack of vocabulary, poor pronunciation, struggle with grammar (Bahtiar et al., 2020; Farhani et al., 2020; Ihsan & Wahidah, 2019; Maji et al., 2022; Novia et al., 2023).

Additionally, a student said that the audience was a factor that made it difficult to speak English. In this case, Kansil et al., 2022, p. 15 supports this challenge:

"When a person has to speak in front of many people and he is afraid of criticism from the audience or feels embarrassed when speaking in front of many people, his confidence level will affect his speaking ability". It means that, if the students are afraid of the audience it will affect their level of self-confidence and affect their speaking ability. A study by Yumniamatillah (2016) found that the presence of an audience is a significant factor affecting students' self-confidence in speaking, highlighting its influential role. Similarly, Siagian and Pinem (2020) discovered that many students felt intimidated by their listeners, which made them nervous about speaking English. They felt embarrassed and afraid they will not understand their speech. Most of students in Indonesia felt nervous, anxious, and shy when they speak English (Fahira, 2022). Another study carried out by Jaya et al. (2022) also found that some students face difficulties to speaking English in class, especially because they fear of making a mistake. They thought that the teacher or even their friends would give bad comments and laugh at them if they made a mistake. In some cases, the students tried to avoid making eye contact with the audience. They think this way will help them to decrease the nervousness and give a better performance.

Besides, this study found that parents' support can affect students' self-confidence. As a result, the student with high self-confidence said that her parents supported her in practicing speaking English at home which helped her to gain self-confidence. This is in line with Sumanti and Muljani (2021) who stated that parents' involvement will guide the students into a positive attitude towards language which help them to have better performance. Their guidance at home would encourage them to learn English and help them to use the language more effectively. In contrast, unsupportive environments will cause laziness and unmotivated in students (Murti & Jabu, 2022). Regarding the learning of English as a foreign language in Indonesia, parents' participation is an effective way to help their

children learn well (Rintaningrum et al., 2022). It can be assumed that the environment can become a factor that influences the students' self-confidence in speaking. This is also included in the psychological problems.

On the other hand, this study also showed that most of the students in that English Course are highly self-confident in speaking performance while a little student has low self-confidence. They felt confident in speaking English and believe that they can pass the speaking test. It is proven that with high self-confidence people can believe themselves to do many things and achieve something. It is supported by Komang et al. (2022) who stated that students with high self-confidence will not be afraid to examine their abilities and will be able to do many things, especially in speaking English. In addition, Novia et al. (2023) stated that students with high self-confidence will feel enjoyable, motivated, unashamed, and believe in their abilities. Based on the results, it was found that all the students believed in their abilities and were not nervous about speaking English. Their regular practice of speaking English in class helped boost their self-confidence, and they believed they would be able to pass the speaking test.

Finally, the aim of this research was to investigate the variation in self-confidence levels among students with different levels of speaking performance in English. Based on the results, Student A had the lowest self-confidence but achieved a high score in speaking performance, while Student B, who had high self-confidence, received a medium score. These findings led to the conclusion that while students with high self-confidence may demonstrate belief in their abilities and speak English well, this does not guarantee a high score in speaking performance. Conversely, students with low self-confidence do not necessarily perform poorly. In fact, students with low self-confidence may surpass those with high self-confidence and could even achieve the highest speaking scores.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that high self-confidence does not consistently lead to better speaking performance. Similarly, students with low self-confidence do not always perform poorly; in fact, in some instances, they can deliver strong speaking performances. In conclusion, students with low self-confidence can achieve high scores in speaking performance, while high self-confidence does not guarantee a high score. Students with high self-confidence may still receive a low score, despite their strong belief in their abilities.

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