

The Influence of Self-Confidence on Students' Speaking Ability: A Correlational Study at MA Nurul Muttahidah Pinotu

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A B S T R A C T

Self-confidence plays a crucial role in second language learning, particularly in enhancing speaking ability. In many senior high schools in Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL), and students often struggle with speaking due to low self-confidence. This study investigates the correlation between self-confidence and speaking ability among eleventh grade students at MA Nurul Muttahidah Pinotu. Employing a quantitative research approach with a correlational design, the study involved 25 students as the total sample. The instruments used were a self-confidence questionnaire consisting of 20 items based on a Likert scale and a speaking test assessing five aspects: pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and comprehension. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 24, including normality and linearity tests, followed by Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis. The results revealed a statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.505$, $p = 0.010$) between students' self-confidence and their speaking ability. This finding suggests that the more confident students are, the better their speaking performance. However, the small sample size is a limitation of this study, and further research with larger samples is recommended. These results highlight the importance of fostering students' self-confidence to improve speaking skills in EFL contexts, especially in underrepresented educational settings such as senior high schools.

Keywords: *Self-Confidence, Speaking Ability, Correlation.*

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking Ability is crucial for students as it serves as a fundamental tool for effective communication, which is required in both academic and social settings. Speaking ability is an important facility that helps students to communicate their ideas, thoughts and opinions correctly and confidently (Harmer, 2007). Speaking is an interactive skill as well; it means being able to interact and responding relevantly according to the situation (Brown, 2001). Students, in particular, benefit from this skill as it helps them contribute to classroom discussions, with better help relationships amongst their peers and prepare them for future professional environments that require strong oral communication skills.

Several factors can influence students speaking ability, and these include psychological, linguistic, and environmental aspects. In his book *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*, Brown (2007) discusses these three categories of factors that influence language learning, especially speaking ability. Firstly, psychological factors such as self-confidence and anxiety levels play a significant role in determining how effectively students can express themselves orally. Secondly, linguistic factors, involve the students' vocabulary range, grammatical knowledge, and pronunciation skills, which are essential for clear communication. Thirdly, environmental aspect. Applying a language environment system is the right method to achieve mastery of a language being studied as a communication tool

There are three things that can influence the performance of students from their ability in speaking as explained by previous paragraph. The first is the psychological aspect, and self-confidence is one of part of this aspect. Self-confidence is a psychological concept that reflects an individual's judgments of their own adequacy and answers to questions such as: What if I fail my thesis defense? It is the way of interpreting our capacity, security when dealing with situations. Self-confidence can affect behavior, motivation and emotional responses that empower individuals to face challenges head on with optimism and resilience. Self-confidence is not just about having certain skills, but also about believing in one's capacity to apply those skills effectively in various contexts. Self-confidence plays an important role in learning and performance, as it encourages individuals to persevere and overcome obstacles (Schunk, D. H., & Pajares, 2005). Self-confidence is a dynamic attribute that can be developed and strengthened through experience, positive reinforcement, and self-reflection.

This is because the first principles that have a vast effect on students speak English great or not is self-confidence, which determines whether they are active in dialogue and can express themselves well. People with self-confidence tend to perform tasks more successfully (Albert, 1997). In an educational environment, students who are more confident speak up or question the teacher, take risks to participate, and gel with other peers. This is needed for learning a language, as it gives students a chance to polish and practice the speaking routine. Besides, Self-confidence is negatively correlated with language anxiety; students who are more self-confident tend to exhibit less anxiety and perform better on the exercise of speaking tasks (Woodrow, 2006). Initially, mitigating anxiety permits learners to prioritize substance over fright of faults, enabling more articulate speeches. Self-confidence impacts not only performance but motivation to evolve and participate in difficult discussions, progressively bettering fluency. As confidence increases, challenging involvement drives development. This reduction in worry unlocks focus on substance instead of mistake dread, facilitating fluent, coherent speeches. Further, self-confidence affects not only presentation but eagerness to study and hone speaking through time, resulting from engaging troublesome activities which cultivates skills.

One of the biggest struggles most students faced in schools is developing self-confidence and an ability to practice speaking English. Many students have anxiety and worry to make errors when speaking English directly hurting their motivation: share the idea of for practice (Liu, M., & Jackson, 2008). This anxiety typically stems from a lack of self-esteem that makes the students question whether they can even talk correctly or well enough. For example, students with lower levels of self-confidence are less tolerant taking risks in other languages learning process, as for example participating to conversations or speaking at the moment (Dornyei, 2005). When students are unable to keep practicing, the cycle continues and speaking abilities continue to deteriorate.

The observations that the author has made on eleventh grade students at Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Muttahidah Pinotu, it shows a clear difference in students' speaking skills. Some students are very confident and speak well, while others seem hesitant and have difficulty speaking. This suggests that high self-confidence may be positively correlated with oral performance. Students who are more confident than others are better communicators. This situation raises an important question: Is there a significant correlation between students' self-confidence and students' speaking ability in eleventh grade students of Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Muttahidah Pinotu?

Based on the theory and results of observations that the author has made, the author is interested in knowing whether there is a significant relationship between self-confidence and students' speaking ability, especially in eleventh grade students of Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Muttahidah Pinotu.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative research method with a correlational design. The purpose of this design was to determine the relationship between students' self-confidence and their

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 speaking ability without manipulating any variables (Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, 2012). Data were collected through questionnaires and speaking tests and analyzed statistically to examine the correlation between the two variables.

Variables of The Study

There were two different variables in this study: the independent and the dependent variable. According to Sugiyono (2012), independent variables are variables that influence or cause changes in dependent variables or bound variables. In this study, the independent variable (X variable) was self-confidence, while the dependent variable (Y variable) was students speaking ability. In other words, self-confidence affects students speaking ability

Population and Samples

The population and samples for this study were all eleventh grade students at MA Nurul Muttahidah Pinotu, consisting of 25 students. The total sampling technique was used, because the population size was relatively small and easy to manage. This approach allowed the researcher to collect comprehensive data from each member of the population without bias.

Instruments

Two instruments were used to collect data. The first was a self-confidence questionnaire adapted from Mustafa (2015), which included 20 items using a 5-point Likert scale. This questionnaire was also used by Novia et al. (2023) in their study entitled The Correlation between Students' Self-Confidence and Speaking Achievement. The second instrument was a speaking test in which students were asked to tell about the most memorable experience in their lives. Speaking ability was assessed using five criteria: pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and comprehension, based on a rubric adapted from Brown (2004).

Procedures

Data collection was conducted in two stages. First, a self-confidence questionnaire was distributed to students. The researcher explained the instructions and ensured that participants completed them independently and honestly. After that, a speaking test was given individually. Each student was given preparation time and then asked to take the speaking test. Their performance was observed and assessed by the researcher based on a predetermined rubric.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 24. Before conducting the correlation test, data normality was tested using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and data linearity was tested using the ANOVA table. After ensuring that the data were normal and linear, the Pearson Product Moment correlation formula was applied to determine the strength and significance of the relationship between self-confidence and speaking ability. The results were interpreted based on the correlation criteria to draw conclusions about the research hypothesis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a significant relationship between 2 variables, Self-Confidence (Independent variable) and speaking ability (dependent variable) in eleventh grade students at Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Muttahidah Pinotu. Based on the results of data analysis that has been done by the author, the author found that there is a significant relationship between the 2 variables.

The Results of the Questionnaire

Self-confidence data collection was conducted through a questionnaire containing 20 statements with a Likert Scale of 1-5. The questionnaire was adapted from a validated instrument by Mustafa (2015). Each student completed the questionnaire individually in a classroom setting under the researcher's supervision to reduce potential bias or influence. This questionnaire was given to 25 students to measure their level of confidence in speaking English. After the students answered, the score was calculated by adding up all the answers,

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so that a total score of minimum 20 and maximum 100 was obtained. The results of the questionnaire can be seen in the table below:

Table 1. The Score of Self-Confidence Questionnaire

No.	Research Subject	Score
1	RS1	66
2	RS2	65
3	RS3	65
4	RS4	64
5	RS5	74
6	RS6	66
7	RS7	68
8	RS8	67
9	RS9	67
10	RS10	74
11	RS11	78
12	RS12	65
13	RS13	71
14	RS14	80
15	RS15	70
16	RS16	65
17	RS17	68
18	RS18	73
19	RS19	74
20	RS20	72
21	RS21	66
22	RS22	72
23	RS23	73
24	RS24	71
25	RS25	76
Total Score		1750
Mean Score		70
Maximum Score		80
Minimum Score		64

The results of the questionnaire filled out by 25 students, found that the highest score obtained by students was 80, the lowest score was 64, and the average score was 70. Based on these results, the researcher found that in general, students have a high level of self-confidence.

The Results of the Speaking Test

The data was collected by using test which gives to students to find out the students' speaking ability. The test is the students had to describe based on the given topic. The students were asked to tell about the best experience in their life. Each performance was scored using a rubric adapted from Brown (2004), which evaluated five aspects: pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and comprehension. Each criterion was rated from 1 to 5, and the combined score was scaled into a final mark out of 100. The students were able to answer the test even if several students get troubled to speak whether in aspect of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency or comprehensibility. The score of speaking test can be seen in the table below:

Table 2. The Score of Speaking Test

Research Subject	Criteria Of Scoring Speaking Test					Total	Final Score
	Pronunciation	Vocabulary	Grammar	Fluency	Comprehension		
RS1	2	3	3	3	2	14	56
RS2	3	3	3	2	4	14	56
RS3	2	2	3	2	3	12	56
RS4	2	3	2	4	3	15	48
RS5	3	2	4	3	2	15	60
RS6	4	4	4	3	3	17	60
RS7	3	3	3	4	2	16	68
RS8	4	2	2	3	3	13	64
RS9	3	3	2	4	3	15	52
RS10	3	4	4	3	3	19	60
RS11	5	2	4	3	4	15	76



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RS12	2	4	3	3	4	18	60
RS13	4	4	4	4	4	19	72
RS14	3	4	3	2	4	16	76
RS15	3	4	3	3	4	16	64
RS16	2	4	4	4	2	17	64
RS17	3	3	2	4	3	14	68
RS18	2	2	3	3	3	14	56
RS19	3	3	3	3	4	15	56
RS20	2	4	3	4	3	17	60
RS21	3	4	3	3	2	15	68
RS22	3	3	4	3	3	16	60
RS23	3	3	2	3	3	14	64
RS24	3	3	4	3	3	17	56
RS25	4	3	3	3	2	14	68
Total Score							1548
Mean Score							61,92
Maximum Score							76
Minimum Score							48

Based on the table 2, it can be seen that the score variation is quite diverse. The highest score obtained by students is 76, the lowest score is 48, and the average score is 61.92. Which shows that in general the students' speaking ability is in the sufficient category.

After the author has finished collecting the data, the author then carries out several tests: normality test, linearity test, then correlation test.

Normality Test

Normality tests complement the graphical assessment of normality (Ghasemi, A. & Razali, 2012). The normality test is used to find out whether the data obtained were normal distribution or not. In this research, the researcher used Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to find out the normality of the data by using SPSS version 24. In this case, if the result of normality test was higher than significant level ($\alpha = 0.05$), it means that the data were normal distribution. The result of normality test can be seen in the table below:

Table 3. Normality Test

	Statistic	df	Sig.
Self-Confidence	,152	25	,141
Speaking Ability	,168	25	,068

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on table 3, it can be seen that the result of normality test Asymp. Sig values for both variables are greater than 0.05. The self-confidence shows a Sig value 0.141, and the speaking ability shows a Sig value 0.068. In conclusion, the researcher concluded that the data obtained were normal distribution.

Linearity Test

After the data is confirmed to be normally distributed, the author then conducts a linearity test to determine whether the data is linear or not. The results of the linearity test are as follows:

Table 4. Linearity Test

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
Speaking Ability *	Between Groups	(Combined)	12	4,305	2,287	,083
		Linearity	1	18,963	10,076	,008
		Deviation from Linearity	11	2,972	1,579	,222
	Within Groups	22,583	12	1,882		
	Total	74,240	24			

Based on table 4, it can be seen that the result of linearity test Deviation from Linearity was 0.222. It means that the result of the data for linearity test of grammar mastery and speaking accuracy test were linear, because $0.222 > 0.05$. Finally, the author concluded that the data obtained were linear.



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Correlation Test

After conducting normality and linearity tests, the author then conducted a Pearson Product Moment correlation test using SPSS version 24 to determine whether there was a significant relationship between Self-Confidence and Speaking Ability.

Table 5. Correlation Test

		Correlations	
		Self-Confidence	Speaking Ability
Self-Confidence	Pearson Correlation	1	,505**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,010
	N	25	25
Speaking Ability	Pearson Correlation	,505**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,010	
	N	25	25

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the table 5, the correlation coefficient (r) between self-confidence and speaking ability is 0.505, with a significance value of 0.010. Since the significance value is less than 0.05, this indicates that the correlation is statistically significant. The value of $r = 0.505$ indicates a moderate positive correlation between the two variables. This means that students who have higher levels of self-confidence tend to have better speaking skills. In other words, as students' self-confidence increases, so does their performance in speaking English.

The findings suggest practical implications for classroom practice. Teachers should prioritize creating supportive and low-anxiety environments to boost student confidence. Simple strategies, such as positive feedback, role-play exercises, and group discussions, can enhance learners' willingness to speak. As confidence improves, students are more likely to engage actively in class and develop their oral communication skills further.

Interpretation and Implication

This finding supports Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, which posits that individuals who believe in their capabilities are more likely to perform successfully. The result is also consistent with previous research by Novia et al. (2023) and Sandiarsa & Suhaili (2021), which found similar positive correlations. In practice, this suggests that self-confidence is not just a background factor but a significant contributor to speaking proficiency. Therefore, EFL teachers should consider incorporating confidence-building activities into their teaching methods, such as low-pressure speaking tasks, peer support systems, and positive reinforcement.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the study conducted by the author, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between self-confidence (independent variable) and speaking ability (dependent variable) of eleventh grade students of Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Muttahidah Pinotu. This can be seen from the results of the Pearson correlation test conducted by the researcher, the researcher found a correlation coefficient value (r) between self-confidence and speaking ability of 0.505, with a sig value (Sig. 2 tailed) of 0.010. Therefore, the sig value <0.05 , it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the two variables and is included in the moderate correlation category. This means that the higher the student's self-confidence, the better their speaking ability. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between self-confidence and speaking ability of class eleventh students of Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Muttahidah Pinotu. Teachers should foster a supportive classroom environment that reduces fear and encourages speaking. Activities like group discussions, role-playing, and peer feedback can boost confidence. Students are encouraged to practice speaking regularly and embrace mistakes as learning opportunities. Future researchers may expand this study by adding other affective variables and using larger samples.

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