

Assessing Self-Confidence Levels in EFL Students' Speaking Performance

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Abstract

This study aims to assess the self-confidence levels of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in terms of their speaking performance. This study uses a quantitative approach with a quantitative descriptive method. The sample of the study consists of twenty-eight EFL students from the English Language Education study program, at Universitas Negeri Makassar using cluster random sampling. The data collection technique used a questionnaire as an instrument. The data were analyzed using SPSS 25 to find out the frequency and percentage distributions and to identify common patterns in self-confidence levels. Additionally, the mean score is calculated to provide a quantitative measure of the overall self-confidence among the respondents. The findings of the data analysis revealed that the level of EFL students' self-confidence in speaking performance is at a high enough level with a score of 76.51. As a result, this study highlights the importance of self-confidence issues in EFL teaching practices and suggests that fostering a supportive learning environment could enhance students' speaking performance and overall language proficiency.

Keywords: Assess, Self-Confidence, Speaking Performance.

INTRODUCTION

Self-confidence is a crucial psychological factor in language acquisition, especially in the context of speaking performance among students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Speaking is often regarded as one of the most challenging skills to master in language learning,

as it requires the ability to produce coherent speech in real-time, interact fluently, and respond accurately. For EFL students, developing confidence in speaking English is not only about mastering linguistic elements but also about building the belief in one's ability to use the language effectively. Lack of self-confidence can lead to anxiety, reluctance, and overall poorer performance, ultimately affecting students' language learning progress (Brown, 2007). This aspect of confidence, therefore, becomes an essential area of study to understand its impact on speaking proficiency and ways to enhance it within the EFL context.

The relationship between self-confidence and language performance has been extensively explored within educational psychology and language acquisition. Numerous studies suggest that a high level of self-confidence is often associated with improved speaking skills, as confident students are more likely to participate actively and take risks in speaking tasks (Dörnyei, 2005). For instance, studies by Tsou (2005) and Liu & Jackson (2008) demonstrated that EFL learners with higher self-confidence exhibited better fluency and accuracy in speaking tasks, indicating a direct correlation between confidence levels and speaking success. Moreover, these studies emphasize that confidence-building strategies in EFL instruction can contribute to students' willingness to communicate, which is critical in overcoming the inhibitions associated with foreign language learning. These findings underline the importance of self-confidence as a determinant in successful language use, motivating further exploration into how it influences EFL learners' speaking proficiency.

In Indonesian higher education, where English is taught as a foreign language, many students encounter significant challenges in developing speaking confidence due to limited exposure and practice opportunities outside the classroom (Lauder, 2008). English, being predominantly used in academic settings, may intensify the pressure to perform well, leading to self-doubt and communication apprehension. This context adds another layer of complexity, as students must navigate both linguistic and psychological barriers. Thus, understanding the self-confidence levels of Indonesian EFL students, particularly those in higher education, provides valuable insight into the specific challenges they face and helps in tailoring educational strategies to address these barriers.

Several studies focusing on EFL students' confidence levels in Indonesia have shown that fostering a supportive classroom environment significantly impacts their speaking confidence. For example, a study by Wahyuni (2017) found that a collaborative learning approach helped EFL students improve their confidence and speaking abilities, indicating that classroom dynamics and teaching methods play a critical role in shaping self-confidence.

Similarly, research by Riyanto (2019) highlights that EFL learners often feel more confident when they receive positive reinforcement and constructive feedback from their instructors, further stressing the importance of teacher support in building students' confidence. These studies suggest that EFL students' self-confidence is highly influenced by both internal factors, such as personal belief and linguistic competence, and external factors, such as teaching methods and peer interactions.

Given the complex interplay of these factors, this study seeks to assess the current self-confidence levels of EFL students in speaking performance at Universitas Negeri Makassar.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Self-Confidence

- a. Sudirman et al. (2020) define self-confidence as a person's understanding of their own abilities, love, and awareness of their own feelings.
- b. Vriska (2022) stated that something that is quite crucial in influencing speaking performance is self-confidence because self-confidence can provide enthusiasm, a sense of courage, and stimulation to learners.

Characteristics of Self-Confidence

Burton & Platt (2006) list ten fundamental signs of confidence that one should consider. When individual exhibit confidence, they are likely to possess a number of those ten characteristics.

- a. Direction and values, refer to the goals or objective that a person wants to achieve.
- b. Motivation, this context is a state where someone enjoys doing something without any external pressure.
- c. Emotional stability, indicates a condition where a person is calm and focused on how to overcome existing challenges.
- d. A positive mind-set, interpreted as someone having the ability to remain optimistic and look on the bright side even when someone's face turns back.
- e. Self-awareness, indicates as a condition where someone knows and aware of the abilities they have in a certain field, how much capacity they have, and how someone looks and speaks to someone.
- f. Flexibility in behavior, indicates as a condition where an individual can adapt according to the circumstances.
- g. Eagerness to develop, interpreted as an indicator that someone enjoys getting learning experience.
- h. Health and energy, mean that a person is connected to their body, respects it, and feels that their energy flows freely.
- i. A willingness to take risks, indicates as an ability to act in the face of danger and put oneself at danger even when others lack the knowledge or expertise to handle the problem is known as willingness to accept risks.
- j. A sense of purpose, interpreted as someone increasingly feeling the coherence of the various parts of your life.

METHOD

This research employed a quantitative approach using descriptive quantitative design in which the researcher describes EFL students' level of self-confidence. The research was conducted on July 2024. This research was conducted online via Google Meet. The research population consisted of English Language Education students from Universitas Negeri Makassar, batch 2022. Cluster random sampling was used to select twenty-eight respondents. The instruments that the researcher used to obtain data for this research are self-confidence questionnaire.

The researcher conducted data collection. The researcher gathered EFL students in a google meeting room, then briefly explained about self-confidence which can affect speaking performance. After that, EFL students were given a questionnaire about self-confidence via a google form link. Then, EFL students were given several topics related to educational issues and they made presentations as an instrument to measure their speaking performance used speaking performance assessment rubric.

The data analysis technique in this research was using SPSS Version 25 descriptive statistical analysis software: frequency, percentage, and mean score.

Table 1. The Rating Score of Self-Confidence Questionnaire

No.	Category	Level
1	91 – 100	Very High
2	78 – 90	High
3	65 – 77	High Enough
4	52 – 64	Middle
5	39 – 51	Low Enough
6	26 – 38	Low
7	14 – 25	Very Low

(Sirchi, 2021)

FINDINGS

The Level of EFL Students' Self-Confidence on Speaking Performance

a. The Frequency and Percentage of the EFL Students Level of Self-Confidence

This part deal with the EFL students' self-confidence on speaking performance at Faculty of Languages and Literature, Universitas Negeri Makassar.

Table 2. The Frequency and Percentage of the EFL Students Level of Self-Confidence

Level	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Very High	91-100	1	4%
High	78-90	13	46%
High Enough	65-77	12	43%
Middle	52-64	2	7%
Low Enough	39-51	0	0
Low	26-38	0	0
Very Low	14-25	0	0
Total		28	100%

Based on the table 2, it can be seen that there are 28 EFL students, there are a student (4%) gain very high self-confidence on speaking performance, there are 13 students (46%) who achieve high self-confidence on speaking performance, there are 12 students (43%) who get high

enough self-confidence on speaking performance, there are 2 students (7%) who occupy the middle level self-confidence on speaking performance, and there are no students who get low enough, low, and very low level of self-confidence on speaking performance.

b. Mean Score of Students' Self-Confidence

Table 3. Mean Score of Students' Self-Confidence

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Min	Max	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self-Confidence	28	58.75	93.75	2142.50	76.5179	8.96468
Valid N (listwise)	28					

Table 3 above shows the mean score of EFL students' self-confidence is 76.51, the researcher interpreted by the mean score that the most EFL students Universitas Negeri Makassar have high enough level of self-confidence. The EFL students' mean is 76.51 and range 65-77 or it means that it is in a high enough level of self-confidence. The table also shows that the minimum score of EFL students' self-confidence is 58.75, and the maximum score is 93.75.

DISCUSSIONS

To acquire information in accordance with the research questions, there researcher provides a self-confidence questionnaire on speaking performance and analyzes the results using descriptive statistical analysis. Based on the findings of the research, the mean score of EFL student's self-confidence at Universitas Negeri Makassar is 76.51 which represent high enough level (65-77). Self-confidence is one of the affective factors of speaking performance. Sudirman et al., (2020) define self-confidence as individual recognition of someone's own capabilities, loving and being aware of his own emotions. This indicates that if someone, especially an EFL student, has strong self-confidence, it will enable them to overcome any problems that they fear will arise when speaking. It is supported by a statement from Vriska (2022) that something that is quite crucial in influencing kicking skills is self-confidence because self-confidence can provide enthusiasm, a sense of courage and stimulation to learners. A person's self-confidence can be measured through several indicators.

Burton & Platt (2006) stated that there are ten indicators of self-confidence that a person must have. These indicators are direction and values, motivation, emotional stability, a positive mind-set, self-awareness, flexibility in behavior, eagerness to develop, health and energy, a willingness to take risks, and a sense of purpose. The researcher presented a questionnaire representing each of the self-confidence indicators above to measure the level of self-confidence of EFL students. Based on the results of a questionnaire conducted by researcher, the following are five indicators that a person has when they act confidence.

a. Direction and values

Direction and values refer to the goals or objectives that a person wants to achieve. As well as the principles and beliefs that form the basis of a person's behavior and their interactions with other people. Direction can also be interpreted as an individual's ability to set clear, specific, and measurable goals. They have a vision that is accompanied by a way to achieve their goals. While values are in the form of beliefs and commitments to personal values and believe that they are worthy of the goals set. EFL students with a frequency of 22 students agree and 6 students strongly agree that speaking performance activities are very enjoyable. This shows that they have positive self-esteem so that they are worthy and able to speak English and make speaking activities something enjoyable. The majority of EFL students with a frequency of 22 students strongly agree and 6 students agree that they are aware of the importance of having the ability to speak in public. Regarding this statement, we can conclude that on average EFL students have been able to set specific and measurable goals.

b. A positive mind-set

A positive mindset can be interpreted as someone having the ability to remain optimistic and look on the bright side even when someone's face turns back. Someone with a positive mindset also does not give up easily when facing difficulties and will continue to find ways to overcome obstacles. EFL students with a frequency of 2 Strongly agree, 14 agree, 11 disagree, 1 strongly disagree. It can be seen that some of them are optimistic about the results of their speaking performance assessment. Almost all EFL students think that they will continue to study hard if the results or grades they get are not satisfactory. From these results, the researcher points out that seeing a positive mindset as a deep belief in one's own abilities and an optimistic view of the situation faced even though the results obtained are not in accordance with expectations.

c. Self-awareness

Self-awareness is a condition where someone knows and is aware of the abilities they have in a certain field, how much capacity they have, and how someone looks and speaks to someone. Someone with self-awareness also releases that there is no need to be perfect, because we are actually human. EFL students with a composition of 16 students strongly agree, 12 students agree that they accept input from others to make them better. Furthermore, 24 students agree that they know the abilities they have. Therefore, the researcher points out that EFL students can recognize, understand, manage their own feelings and behaviors. They understand their strengths and weaknesses and are open to suggestions from others as self-reflection to be better in the future.

d. Flexibility in behavior

Flexibility in behavior is a condition where an individual can adapt according to the circumstances. A person can see the big picture and pay attention to details. Someone with this indicator considers other people's views in making decisions. Majority of EFL students with frequency 17 agree, 9 strongly agree with the statement they enjoy trying new things. 18 EFL students agree, 5 students agree that they can adapt to new environments easily. Based on this frequency, the researcher points out that EFL students have the ability to adapt to various situations and are ready to face various new challenges that are in front of them.

e. Eagerness to develop

Eagerness to develop is an indicator that someone enjoys getting learning experience. Rather than acting as if someone has become an expert without knowing anything new, then individuals with this indicator prefer to discover new experiences. The majority of EFL students with a frequency of 19 students agree, 7 students strongly agree with the statement they enjoy practicing my speaking skills. All EFL students also feel that they want to get many opportunities for new experiences. From the results of the questionnaire, it can be concluded that almost all EFL students have the enthusiasm to develop, indicating the desire and motivation of individuals to continue learning to improve their speaking skills to achieve higher goals.

In conclusion, someone who is confident has specific and measurable goals and makes speaking performance enjoyable. Most of EFL students remained optimistic about their speaking performance and committed to continuous improvement even when results were not as expected. They also acknowledged their strengths and weaknesses and were open to feedback. Many EFL students enjoy trying new things and can easily adapt to new environments, indicating behavioral flexibility. Almost EFL students enjoy practicing their speaking skills and seeking new experiences, reflecting their eagerness to develop. These indicators collectively enhance their speaking performance.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the data analysis and the discussions, the researcher points out that the EFL students of Universitas Negeri Makassar have a high enough level category of self-confidence in speaking performance. It was proven by the mean score 76.51 in range score 65 – 77 which implied students' high enough level of self-confidence.

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