

# FACTORS AFFECTING EFL LEARNERS' CONFIDENCE IN SPEAKING ENGLISH AT THE MEC ENGLISH COURSE BANJARMASIN

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## ABSTRACT

This research was conducted to determine the factor of English language confidence among EFL students at an English course in Banjarmasin. In particular, it seeks to identify what factors can increase self-confidence in an English learning environment based on a student's perspective.

The method used in this research is a qualitative method with an interviewing study approach. Four students who were nervous were selected as participants. Data collection was carried out through structured interviews and classroom observations.

The results showed that speaking in front of the class, being laughed at by other people, incomprehensible input, students' beliefs about language learning, teacher personality, and lack of preparation were six factors that could affect students' confidence in learning English.

**Keywords:** Students' Confidence, English

## ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui faktor kepercayaan bahasa Inggris pada siswa EFL di tempat kursus bahasa Inggris di Banjarmasin. Secara khusus, ini berupaya untuk mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor apa yang dapat meningkatkan kepercayaan diri dalam lingkungan belajar bahasa Inggris berdasarkan perspektif siswa.*

*Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi wawancara. Empat siswa yang gugup dipilih sebagai peserta. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara terstruktur dan observasi kelas.*

*Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa berbicara di depan kelas, ditertawakan oleh orang lain, masukan yang tidak dapat dipahami, keyakinan siswa tentang pembelajaran bahasa, kepribadian guru, dan kurangnya persiapan merupakan enam faktor yang dapat mempengaruhi kepercayaan diri siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris.*

*Kata Kunci: Percaya Diri Siswa, Bahasa Inggris*

## INTRODUCTION

English is one of the languages that are used widely in the world. People use it to communicate with other people from many parts of the world. This language has become a compulsory subject from Junior High School to senior high school for many years. One of the objectives of this policy is enabling the students to access knowledge through English. Based on the content standard of teaching English which is issued by Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan (BSNP), English teaching in Indonesia is aimed to help the students to achieve communicative competence (BNSP, 2013). By having communicative competence, the Indonesian

students have to be able to communicate using English with other people.

The English teaching is intended to develop students' communicative competence which emphasizes listening, writing, reading, and speaking skills. Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information. The use of English for speaking is not a simple process at all because the speaker should also master several important elements, such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Brown (2011:270) states that there are some features that make speaking a difficult language skill. They cover clustering, redundancy, reduced forms,

performance variables, colloquial language, rate of delivery, stress, rhythm, intonation of English and interaction. Besides the students' lack of vocabulary, their less confidence to speak and judgment of English as a difficult subject make speaking as the difficult language skill.

Having good English proficiency is a skill that is needed in today's market. The ability to speak English provides many benefits to life in the present. The reason why English proficiency is needed in the current era is that learning English can make it easier to find work, make it easier to establish social interactions, improve careers, make it easier to seek knowledge or add reading material outside the national scope so that it opens up insights into science and technology, and there are many other benefits.

Speaking is an ability needed by every human being in the form of language to convey messages to people other. This is in line with the opinion of Tarigan (2008 : 152) that the goal communicative ability is "conveying messages to other people who socially acceptable. This goal can be achieved with practice develop communicative skills ". Many factors are involved affect students' communication skills, namely internal factors and external factors. Internal factors are related to encouragement in students such as motivation and self-confidence. External factors have to do with how students obtain language from teachers, parents or learning resources.

English for most Indonesians is the language foreign or can be said to be the second language of a child, so it is more interference easily occurs, because it often uses the structure of the first language in the second language (Mar'at 2009 : 235). Self-confidence is a thing the most important thing in speaking English. Many things are a background of self-doubt such as insecurity, worries of making mistakes and worries are difficult for the opponent to understand speaking. This statement is supported by the opinion of Mar'at (2009 : 95) that "feelings of

insecurity appear more often during learning second language, for fear of making mistakes. This feeling is not felt on when learning the first language ”

Lack of self-confidence in students is also an internal barrier second language learning. This is in line with the research that has been done by the English course institute Easy Speak Bandung in Fitria (2015: 3) reveals that "there are five main senses that become weaknesses and constraints in a relevant way often arise when dealing with English is laziness, shame, fear, feeling boredom and lack of confidence in students." There are several characteristics of someone who can be said to have trust self, as suggested by Lauster's theory (2003 in Wahyuni, 2014: 54), "the characteristics of a confident person, namely: a) Believe in ability own, b) Acting independently in making decisions, c) Having a sense positive about yourself, d) Dare to express opinions."

Based on the problem of self-confidence speaking English that has been done by the English course institute Easy Speak Bandung, the researchers tried conducted a study entitled "FACTORS AFFECTING EFL LEARNERS' CONFIDENCE IN SPEAKING ENGLISH AT THE MEC ENGLISH COURSE BANJARMASIN. " As it is known that the MEC English Course is an English language learning course institution which is of course different from the teaching that can be obtained in schools. at MEC English Course Banjarmasin, the number of students in one class is around ten to fifteen students. Besides that, the learning is very innovative which further emphasizes the students' ability to speak English.

## **METHODS OF RESEARCH**

The research design used in this research is interviewing study. This research uses one variable so the suitable approach is to use qualitative methods. An interview in

qualitative research is a conversation in which questions are asked to obtain information. An interviewer is usually a researcher who asks questions of the interviewee, in a series of usually short questions and answers. The process of data analysis fell into three major phases following the framework of qualitative analysis developed by Miles and Huberman: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **A. Findings**

#### **1. Factors Contribute Students' Confidence in Speaking English at MEC English Course Banjarmasin**

Based on the results of the interviews obtained, it shows that there are several factors that influence students' confidence in speaking English, including factors from the teacher: the teacher's personality, the teacher's way of speaking in front of the class, the explanation from the teacher that is difficult to understand. Student factors: being teased by their peers, unsure of their abilities, believing that English is difficult, and lack of preparation.

The first student said that: Unclear explanation, mocked by peers, limited vocabulary, less study, requested by test teacher without notification, force must be able.

The second student said that: The teacher's explanation is unclear, the teacher ignores it, lags behind the material, lacks learning, does not understand what the teacher says, the teacher mostly uses English, was mocked by peers, the way teachers act and behave.

The third student said that: English is difficult, don't understand what the teacher is saying, explain too fast.

And the last student said that: Suddenly asked by the teacher, unclear explanation, fear of being ridiculed by others, feeling other students are better, limited vocabulary, English so hard.

This shows that unclear explanations are the most disturbing aspects for students about understanding English. They are also afraid of making mistakes and being ridiculed by their peers. Furthermore, when asked why they felt so insecure, students answered that they felt anxious when they did not understand what the teacher was saying and were poorly prepared. Moreover, they feel anxious because they only have limited knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. They also feel that other students are better than them.

When asked how people react if they make mistakes, they all replied that their friends would laugh. Researchers also examined participants' beliefs about English. Most of the participants also admitted that English is difficult. They think they need to know every word to understand what is being said in English. Students also ask how the teacher influences their feelings. They replied that teachers can cause anxiety by the way they act and behave in a rude and coercive way to understand, speak too fast, and students want the teacher to teach slower and can be understood by using sufficient English. They also want their teacher to encourage them and not force them to quickly get it. In addition, they argue that group learning and games before learning are very helpful in absorbing lessons.

#### **2. The Way Students Overcome Their Self-Confidence When Speaking English at MEC English Course Banjarmasin**

The first way to develop self-confidence when speaking in English is to read a reading in English aloud. Because, this method can greatly help train students' English pronunciation. By reading aloud, students can correct wrong pronunciation right away. The more students practice pronunciation methods, the more accustomed to pronouncing English words. As a result, students will be more confident when speaking in English.

Insecurity when speaking English mainly arises from a fear of making mistakes. It is not a sin to make mistakes when speaking English. In fact, even native speakers often make mistakes when they speak, and they have no problem with that. Actually, making mistakes when speaking in English is not a big problem as long as the other person understands what is meant. Language is a tool for communication, so grammar or pronunciation errors are not things to think about as long as what you want to convey is well received by the interlocutor. So don't let the fear of being wrong stop students from speaking English. It's okay if it's wrong. Because of that mistake students can learn.

Next, students can make a list that contains the English skills that students have mastered to date. Even though it sounds small, this can make students believe in their own abilities. When students don't feel confident, students can look at the list. When they watched, the student's confidence would surely grow again.

Whether we realize it or not, nervousness and insecurity can be lost if you are calm and relaxed when speaking English. That is why students must remind themselves to stay calm when speaking in English. There are several ways you can do to keep

students calm in speaking English: Take a deep breath and then exhale slowly. This may sound trivial, but this method can increase oxygen levels in the blood, which can reduce nervousness and insecurity. Speak softly. Talking quietly can make students more relaxed. Various studies have shown that smiling can have a positive effect on mood. Smiling can also make the atmosphere happier and calmer. Therefore, students should not forget to smile when speaking English.

The next way that can be applied to help students build self-confidence is by imagining themselves speaking English fluently and clearly. In fact, this technique of imagining is commonly used by athletes before they compete. That's because imagining a positive outcome from a situation will let students know what students' goals are and they will be more confident and enthusiastic about achieving those goals.

Furthermore, this method can mainly be done when speaking in English in front of a crowd. For example, during a presentation or giving a speech. Practicing and preparing what to say can help students be more confident when they perform later. Always remember to never memorize the material word for word because students will easily forget. Instead, students must understand and memorize only the important points. One way to strengthen students is to rewrite the material to be used in their own words. Rewriting can also help memorize material. The more students master the material that will be conveyed when speaking in front of many people, the easier it is for students to foster self-confidence when performing later.

## **B. Discussion**

The findings suggest several factors that may contribute to students' confidence in the English course classroom. This also shows that these factors do not only come from teachers but also students. Based on these findings, the factors that contribute to student confidence can be classified as follows :

### **1. Factors Contribute to Confidence comes from Teacher**

#### **a. Speaking in Front of the Class**

Most of the students answered that they were very concerned about having to speak in front of the class. They replied that they started to worry when their teacher asked them to practice speaking in front of the class. Others said that they started to panic when it came to speaking English. Many also commented that they were scared when suddenly the teacher asked them. One student said that being summoned alone caused panic.

In fact, some students admitted to feeling restless because all students paid attention to them. They fear being judged negatively by teachers and peers who can reveal their shortcomings. In addition, they think it might happen because of the limited vocabulary and knowledge they have.

During the observation it was also found that students seemed anxious when speaking in front of other people with whom they were not very close. Some of them lowered their voices or spoke faster to avoid teacher correction. Others tend to avoid their teachers by pretending to be busy writing notes or reading books. Some

even resisted teacher instructions to practice their speaking skills in front of the class in an effort to avoid embarrassment of being called to speak.

A similar result was found by Lizuka (2010) that students experience self-doubt in several contexts. One of the contexts is speaking in front of the class. This finding is also in line with Koch and Terrel, as quoted in Oxford (1999) that oral presentation is the activity that generates the most distrust. He added that being called upon to respond verbally also produces anxiety. Horwitz (2006) also noted that students are very self-conscious about speaking a foreign language in front of other students, this feeling often creates fear or even panic. Moreover, according to them, difficulty speaking in pairs or groups or in public is a manifestation of communication fear.

#### **b. Incomprehensible Input**

According to students, unclear explanations can also increase their confusion in learning English. The interview shows that most participants feel very disturbed when they do not understand the lesson. They shared that they began to feel uncomfortable when they didn't understand what the teacher was saying. Some of them added that they were afraid they would not understand all the language input which only increased their chances of failure.

Many complain that the teacher speaks too fast and

speaks too much English. In addition, other students also feel that the English class moves so fast. Several other participants reported that they often felt intimidated when the teacher only used English when giving lessons. One person replied that he was very upset when he didn't understand the lesson. Another person also admits that the extra time will really help him digest the lesson.

In addition, the observation results showed that some students looked confused when the teacher gave lessons. Some even show carelessness by chatting with their friends next to them or drawing something possible to reduce their anxiety.

According to Horwitz et al. (2006) difficulty in listening to or studying spoken messages is a manifestation of communication fears. Worde (2003) also notes that ignorance triggers considerable anxiety. In addition, a similar result was found by Lizuka (2010) that difficulties in following teacher conversations also caused anxiety.

c. Teachers' Personality and Attitude

The two factors discussed earlier, speaking in front of the class and incomprehensible input, both suggest that teachers clearly play an important role in the amount of student anxiety and self-doubt. However, the other factors mentioned by the students seemed to have been generated by the teacher as well.

Some students reported that they became afraid when teachers overly criticized

students' mistakes. It made them feel very intimidated. They also mentioned that they started feeling uncomfortable or worried when suddenly the teacher gave them a quiz or test. Next, they suggested that teachers show empathy and encouragement to their students.

Several other students complained that the teacher sometimes showed apathy. Someone shared his experience that one day he asked about a subject at school that they did not understand with the intention of finding the answer in the course but the teacher ignored him. The teacher instructs him to ask his friend instead of answering the question. Others tell a similar story. The teacher did not want to repeat his explanation. He added that the teacher accused him of not hearing the explanation so the teacher refused to repeat it.

Price (2001) notes that some teachers have increased student anxiety. This finding is also consistent with Oxford (2009) who classified the most important teacher-student interactions associated with language anxiety into three problems such as harsh correction, taunts, and uncomfortable error handling in front of the class. Similar results were found by Worde (2003) that some pedagogical and instructional practices carried out by teachers can cause anxiety and insecurity.

**2. Factors Contribute to Confidence comes from Students**

a. Ridiculed by Peers

Another factor that played a big role in making participants feel insecure was unsupportive attitudes such as teasing from friends or teachers. They all thought that the people in their class would laugh at them if they made a mistake. In other words, they were all very worried about being laughed at by others or humiliating themselves in public.

Besides, some of them had painful memories of being teased by other students. They admit that they are often ridiculed or even shouted at by their peers if they do something wrong. It makes them lose focus and feel very embarrassed. This finding also shows that they become very nervous when it comes to speaking in front of the class.

In addition, this finding is supported by the observation that most students tend to laugh at their peers when they make mistakes. The worst thing is that students who make mistakes start to lose focus. Their minds went blank and fell silent for a moment. They fidget, stretch and stutter. They look so restless, worried and even sweaty. While some of them just smiled or laughed to cover up their anxiety.

A similar result was found by Price (2001) that the fear of being laughed at by others is one of the biggest sources of anxiety. In addition, this finding is also in line with Oxford (1999), he noted that ridicule is one of the most important issues related to language nervousness.

#### b. English is Difficult

Certain beliefs were also found to be a contributing factor to student nervousness. Interviews reveal that English has earned a reputation as a notorious subject. Many students feel English is a difficult subject. They often think that they cannot speak properly or understand a lesson. They also feel less competent than other students. They keep thinking that other students are much better than them. In other words they have low self-esteem.

Furthermore, some of them answered that they felt overwhelmed by the language rules. While some others claim to have problems with their vocabulary. They believe that to understand what is being said in English they have to understand every word.

In addition, the observation also revealed that students were too afraid to be active in class. Most of the students are passive. They prefer to wait for the teacher, just follow along, and do whatever the teacher tells them to.

This finding is consistent with Horwitz et al. (2006) that certain beliefs about language learning also contribute to student tension and frustration in the classroom. Additionally, Price (2001) found that students who were anxious believed that their language skills were weaker than other students. He adds that unsuccessful language learners often have lower self-esteem than successful language

learners. The same result was found by Marwan (2007) that lack of confidence is one of the main causes of student failure.

c. Lack of Preparation

The results showed that the lack of preparation was also a factor in students' self-distrust. Some admit that they usually become very anxious when they don't prepare enough for exams or speaking practice. A person blames himself for worrying too much because he learns less. A similar result was found by Marwan (2007) that lack of preparation was the main cause of student failure. In addition, Lizuka (2010) also found that attending classes without sufficient preparation often causes bad things.

## CLOSER

While other research on English self-esteem has focused on the college or junior high and high school level, this study focuses on courses that show clear and compelling evidence of the causes of student self-confidence in learning English. The source of these factors is not only from teachers but also from students. In addition, these factors are discussed in this study, which deepens our understanding of what makes a person less confident in speaking English.

Student experiences provide a lot of information about students' confidence in learning English. How can they be confident if there are still many factors that make them afraid, anxious, and anxious. They offer insight into what may be causing them to lack self-confidence and what teachers can do to reduce that mistrust. In other words, students can provide valuable information about building their confidence in learning English. Therefore, it is important to use their insights

to create a more relaxed environment in which they feel confident about what they are getting into.

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