

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LEARNERS' LACK OF SELF-CONFIDENCE IN SPEAKING ENGLISH

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Abstract: In English language learning, some learners face an issue promoting their speaking skills which is caused by the lack of self-confidence. As a response to this issue, this study is conducted to examine the factors contributing to learners' lack of self-confidence in speaking English. This study employed a descriptive quantitative design. The data were collected from 147 students of SMAN 2 Lumajang using a questionnaire adapted from CSEFL (Confidence in Speaking English as a Foreign Language). The data were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis. The findings showed that most of the learners possessed a moderate level of self-confidence, and ability was the most contributing factor to the lack of self-confidence for the majority of the learners. It was suggested that the teachers should create learning environments that promote learners' self-confidence, for instance, by giving motivation and equal chance to speak in front of the class.

Keywords: lack of self-confidence, speaking skill, CSEFL

INTRODUCTION

Speaking skill is considered as as one of the most important skills in oral communication by the majority of language learners. The reason is that speaking skill sometimes becomes the fundamental measurement to evaluate learners' success in learning a language (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). Moreover, since one of the main objectives of language teaching is to make the learners able to use the language in communication (Cook, 2008), speaking skill has a crucial role in achieving that objective. Therefore, promoting language

learners' speaking skill should be one of the main priorities in English language teaching, and thus allowing them to use English properly in oral communication.

However, apart from speaking skill being the most important, it is also the most difficult to learn (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). As a result, there are many language learners who struggle to acquire high speaking proficiency. Moreover, most of them are still unable to use English appropriately in communication even though they have spent many years learning English. For those reasons, many researchers have tried to investigate the contributing factors to this particular issue. Several studies suggested that psychological factors – such as anxiety, self-confidence, motivation, etc. – contribute to learners' low proficiency in speaking English. As one of the psychological factors, self-confidence has contributions to learners' speaking skill development.

The term 'self-confidence' itself has been used by many experts to define the attitude of trusting oneself. Pierce and Gardner (2004:594) defined self-confidence as a degree to which an individual believes him/herself to be capable, significant, and worthy. According to Shrauger and Schohn (1995:256) self-confidence is one's belief in his/her competence, skill, and perceived capability to deal effectively with various situations. Those definitions create an overview that self-confidence is generally a state of being confident in taking the course of actions that leads someone to achieve successful outcomes. Each individual has a different extent of self-confidence from one another and the accumulation of one's experiences with him/herself and the external world around him/her determines the extent of one's self-confidence (Harris, 2009).

Self-confidence plays a significant role in the way someone perceives what they are capable of performing. Having self-confidence allows someone to have positive attitudes and realistic perceptions towards him/herself, thus enabling him/her to do/achieve something successfully (Pratama, 2017). Therefore, a person with high self-confidence will more likely initiate actions to accomplish his/her goals and strive to achieve positive and successful outcomes.

In the aspect of learning, self-confidence is one of the most influential factors. According to Karimi and Saadatmand (2014), self-confidence allows learners to achieve better results. Thus, learners with high self-confidence are more likely to succeed in their learning because they believe in their abilities. In the English language teaching context, particularly in speaking instruction, self-confidence has a significant role in promoting

learners' speaking skill development. This is supported by Songsiri (2007) who stated that one of the significant factors to drive or to inspire learners to reach speaking proficiency is self-confidence. Thus, helping learners get their self-confidence will allow them to achieve high speaking proficiency. In many cases, though competent EFL learners likely have a good knowledge of the English language, they sometimes still have difficulties communicating fluently and accurately using English because of their lack of self-confidence. It was proved with a research conducted by Haidara (2016), which showed that despite the learners' high level in English vocabulary and grammar mastery, they tended to feel insecure when they spoke in English, in which one of the factors was their lack of self-confidence.

Some research findings suggested that self-confidence helped learners to achieve success in learning a language. Tridinanti (2018) found that self-confidence had a significant correlation with speaking achievement; that is, learners with high self-confidence had higher achievement than those with low self-confidence. Moreover, the fact showing that self-confidence affected learners' speaking performance was also proved by some researchers. Park and Lee (2005) examined the relationships between L2 learners' anxiety, self-confidence, and oral performance. They found that self-confidence affected L2 learners' oral performance significantly. Moreover, Al-Hebaish (2012) found that there was a significant correlation between self-confidence and speaking performance.

A pilot study conducted by Griffiee (1997) to construct a questionnaire to measure confidence in speaking English as a foreign language (CSEFL) found the key factors that contribute to learners' self-confidence in speaking English. Griffiee (1997) suggested that the key factors of self-confidence are ability and assurance. The concept of these factors is further explained by Macintyre et al. (1998): the factor of ability refers to learners' perceived competence at a particular moment and the judgment of language proficiency, and the factor of assurance refers to the temporary emotional reaction and pleasant experience in speaking English. Moreover, the recent research findings also showed that those factors are the keys that build self-confidence. Heriansyah (2012) investigated the cause of learners' difficulties in speaking English and found that learners' lack of language ability (lack of grammar knowledge and lack of vocabulary) caused learners not to be confident in speaking English. Moreover, Haidara (2016) found that the learners' lack of self-confidence was caused by the absence of learners' assurance such as nervousness, shyness, feeling of hesitation, and fear of making mistakes.

Based on the justification above, there is a need to take the issue regarding the learners' lack of self-confidence in speaking English into a study since it is related to learners' speaking skill development. However, though several studies had been conducted to explore learners' self-confidence in speaking English, only a few studies focused on exploring the factors of self-confidence in speaking English. Moreover, as far as what the researcher had explored, the researcher had not found a study addressing learners' lack of self-confidence in speaking English. Therefore, the current study examined the factors contributing to learners' lack of self-confidence in speaking English. Thus, the research questions were formulated as follows.

1. What is the level of the learners' self-confidence in speaking English?
2. What is the dominant factor that contributes to the learners' lack of confidence when speaking English?

METHOD

The present research employed descriptive quantitative design. According to Johnson and Christensen (2014), descriptive research is a research that aims at providing an accurate description or picture of the status or characteristics of a situation or phenomenon. Thus, its findings will provide insights into the current issue – the factors contributing to the learners' lack of self-confidence in speaking English – using the numerical data.

The population of this research was the whole 10th-grade students of SMAN 2 Lumajang in the academic year of 2020-2021. As many as 147 students were obtained as the samples. The researcher employed simple random sampling to determine the samples. This sampling method gives every element in the target population an equal chance to be selected as a sample (Dainel, 2012).

The researcher collected the research data using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from the CSEFL (Confidence in Speaking English as a Foreign Language) developed by Griffiee (1997). It had a function to measure the level of self-confidence in speaking English and had been used in some research which explore self-confidence in speaking English (e.g. Nasih et al., 2019; Doqarumi, 2014). This questionnaire used five-point Likert scale and consisted of 12 items in the form of statements. All items were in the form of positive statements, and thus the high scores indicated a high level of self-confidence, while the low scores meant the opposite.

In the present research, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this questionnaire was 0.937. It showed that the questionnaire had a very good consistency. Furthermore, the Pearson's correlation coefficient of each questionnaire's item was above 0.500. Thus, all items were valid, and there was no need to remove some items from the questionnaire.

The researcher employed descriptive statistics analysis as the data analysis method. It was employed to provide better understanding of the data obtained from the instrument. The researcher conducted the statistical calculation using SPSS (version 23) and Microsoft Excel 2016.

FINDINGS

First, the researcher measured the level of self-confidence using the total questionnaire scores of each student. The result showed that 33 students (22%) had low self-confidence, 80 students (55%) had moderate self-confidence, and 34 students (23%) had high self-confidence. The data showed that most of the students (over 50%) possessed moderate self-confidence, while the number of students with low self-confidence and students with high self-confidence were almost the same. Thus, it indicated that the overall level of students' self-confidence was moderate.

Second the researcher conducted an item analysis on each factor. The researcher analyzed which factor between ability and assurance contributed the most to the lack of self-confidence by using the mean value of the factors from each student. The result showed that ability is the most contributing factor for 128 students (87%), assurance is the most contributing factor for 14 students (10%), and both ability and assurance are the contributing factors (both factors have the same mean value) for 5 students (3%). These results showed that the ability had a more significant contribution to learners' lack of self-confidence rather than assurance.

Furthermore, the researcher conducted an item analysis by analyzing the mean value of each item to provide further explanations regarding which items might indicate the sources of learners' lack of self-confidence. The result of the item analysis showed that the items had low, moderate, and high indication levels, and none of the items had very low and very high indication levels.

For the items included in the factor of ability, such as item numbers 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 11, the results of item analysis showed that these items had high or moderate indication

levels. The results showed that item numbers 4, 7, 9, and 11 had high indication levels, while item numbers 1, 6, and 8 had moderate indication levels.

Item number 7 (**I can be a tour guide for foreigners and answer their questions in English**), with the mean value 2.4, was the most salient item among the other items. Item number 4 (**I can discuss in English with native speakers**), item number 9 (**I can give my opinion in English when talking to a native speaker**), item number 11 (**I can speak English in front of many people/audiences**) had the same mean value, which is 2.6. These items had a high indication level since their mean value was in the category of high indication level (1.9 - 2.6). It indicated that these high level items might be the major sources of lack of self-confidence for the students. It was supported by the questionnaire results which showed that these items had a larger number of students who did not feel confident with the situation explained in the statement.

As for the results of item numbers 1, 6 and 8 showed that these items had a moderate indication level with the mean value ranging from 2.7 to 3.4. Item number 8 (**I am used to speaking English with other people**) showed the mean value 2.7. The results of item number 1 (**I am capable of answering an interview in English**) showed that the mean value of this item was 2.9. For item number 6 (**I can speak English easily**), the mean value was 3.3. These items were moderately indicated as the source of the lack of self-confidence since the questionnaire results showed that these items had the equal number of students between those who were confident about the situation explained in the items and those who were not. However, the questionnaire results also showed that item number 8 tended to have a high indication level since it had a larger number of students who were not confident, while item number 6 tended to have a low indication level since it had a smaller number of students who were not confident.

For the items included in the factor of assurance, such as item numbers 2, 3, 5, 10, and 12, the results of item analysis showed that these items had low and moderate indication levels. The results showed that item numbers 3, 5, and 12 had a moderate indication level, while item numbers 2 and 10 had a low indication level.

The results of item numbers 1, 6 and 8 showed that these items had a moderate indication level with the mean value ranging from 2.7 to 3.4. The result of item number 12 (**I am relaxed when speaking English**) showed that the mean value of this item was 2.9. This item had no tendency since it had equal numbers of students who were confident and were

not confident. For item number 3 (**I like speaking English**), the mean value was 3.3. Item number 5 (**When I speak English, I feel cheerful**) had the mean value 3.4. These two items tended to have a low indication level because they had larger numbers of students who were confident than those who were not.

As for the item numbers 2 and 10, the results showed that these items had a low indication level with the mean value ranging from 3.5 to 4.2. Item number 2 (**I want to study in an English-speaking country**) showed the mean value 3.5. Item number 10 (**I look for chances to speak English**) had the mean value 3.8. The results of these low level items indicated that these items might not be the major sources of lack of self-confidence. It was supported by the questionnaire results which showed that these items had a smaller number of students who did not feel confident with the situation explained in the statement.

DISCUSSION

The first aim of this research was to describe the learners' level of self-confidence in speaking English. The results of the analysis showed that the majority of the learners (55%) had a moderate level of self-confidence, while the rest of them had a high level of self-confidence (23%) and a low level of self-confidence (22%). Thus, most of the learners only possessed moderate level of self-confidence. However, since there was no previous research that examine the level of self-confidence, this finding might provide a new insight that the majority of students who speak English as a foreign language had a moderate level of self-confidence.

The second aim of this research was to describe the factors that dominantly contributed to the learners' lack of self-confidence. The results of the factor analysis indicated that ability was the most contributing factor to the lack of self-confidence for the majority of the students (87%). This finding corresponds with Heriansyah's research (2012) which found that learners' lack of language ability caused learners not to be confident in speaking English.

The researcher then continued to explore the items that might indicate the source of learners' lack of self-confidence. The results of item analysis showed that item numbers 4, 7, 9, and 11, which were included in ability, were the only items which might indicate the sources of learners' lack of self-confidence since they had a high indication level. These four items may be able to provide more explanation regarding the sources of learners' lack of confidence. It can be elaborated by relating the statement of those items to the concept of

ability explained by Macintyre et al. (1998). According to Macintyre et al. (1998), there are two aspects having an influence on the factor of ability in self-confidence, they are situations (state self-confidence) and learners' judgements towards the foreign language (foreign language self-confidence).

Based on the concept of self-confidence by Macintyre et al. (1998), these four items can be categorized as the factor of ability in state self-confidence since those items explained the situations that require learners to speak English. Item number 7 (**I can be a tour guide for foreigners and answer their questions in English**) describes a situation of speaking English as a tour guide for foreigners. This situation might be an unfamiliar situation for most of the learners. Thus, it might be the reason why most of the learners did not feel confident to speak English in that situation. Item number 4 (**I can discuss in English with native speakers**) and item number 9 (**I can give my opinion in English when talking to a native speaker**) have the same situation, which is the situation of speaking in English with native speakers. The majority of the learners might not have a chance to speak with native speakers, and thus, this might be the reason these items also had a high indication level. Item number 11 (**I can speak English in front of many people/audiences**) describes the situation of speaking in English in front of many people. The majority of the learners might not be used to speaking English in front of many people. This might be why this item also had a high indication level, and as a result, most of them answered that they were not confident to speak English in that situation.

Compared to previous research, the current research is different in many ways. This research is different in terms of research design compared to the research conducted by Griffiee (1997). Griffiee (1997) conducted a pilot study to construct a self-confidence questionnaire and to find the key factor of self-confidence in speaking English. As a result, Griffiee created Confidence in Speaking English as a Foreign Language (CSEFL) that has a function to measure self-confidence in speaking English. On the other hand, the current research adopts CSEFL and self-confidence factors as foundations to conduct this research which aims to explore the factors contributing to learners' lack of self-confidence in speaking English. Moreover, the current research also has a different focus compared to the previous research exploring self-confidence in speaking English. Most of the previous research were conducted using correlational research, and thus, the findings only provided a significant correlation between speaking skills and self-confidence (Tridinanti, 2018; Park & Lee, 2005;

Al-Hebaish, 2012). On the other hand, the current research explored this issue from a different perspective, where it focused on exploring the factors contributing to learners' lack of self-confidence in speaking English. Thus, the findings of the current research will be able to provide more insights regarding the issue of learners' lack of self-confidence in speaking English.

This research still has some limitations. First, the results of the questionnaire might be inconsistent because it depends on the subject being analyzed, which sometimes can make up their mind while answering the questionnaire, and therefore, the result of the questionnaire might be biased. Second, the limitation of this study lies in the data collection that is only taken quantitatively. Thus, it is unable to validate the items indicated as the sources of the lack of self-confidence even though they are elaborated with the concept of self-confidence. Therefore, the future researchers are expected to implement qualitative data collection methods to serve as a support and provide a deeper analysis into the factors that contribute to learners' lack of self-confidence in speaking English.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, the researcher draws two conclusions. First, the majority of learners possess a moderate level of self-confidence. Second, between the factor of ability and assurance, the ability comes to be the most contributing factor for the majority of learners (87%). The further item analysis also reveals that the sources of their lack of self-confidence might come from some unfamiliar situations, such as becoming a tour guide for foreigners, having a talk or discussion with native speakers, and speaking in front of many people/audiences.

The first suggestion is addressed to the English teachers who faced the issue of learners' lack self-confidence in speaking English. The findings of the study showed that every learner did not possess the same level of self-confidence in speaking English. The teachers should be aware of it during the learning process. Thus, the teachers should create learning environments that promote learners' self-confidence, which can be done by giving more encouragement and motivation to learners and assuring them not to be afraid of making mistakes during learning. Moreover, the teachers should also give opportunities for learners to build their self-confidence in speaking English. Giving learners an equal opportunity to

speak English in front of the class, for instance, might allow them to promote their self-confidence and allow them to speak English better over time.

The second suggestion is addressed to future researchers who aimed to explore this issue. It is suggested that they should analyze the sources of learners' lack of self-confidence in speaking English. Furthermore, they can also investigate the effectiveness of particular learning strategies that might promote learners' self-confidence in speaking English and explore the self-confidence in different language skills such as listening, reading, and writing.

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