

An Analysis of Factors Affecting Speaking Confidence of Secondary School Students at UPT SMA Negeri 1 Sidrap

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify and analyze the factors influencing the speaking confidence of secondary school students at UPT SMA Negeri 1 Sidrap. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach focusing on students' experiences and perceptions in the process of learning English. The participants of the study were eleventh-grade students selected through purposive sampling. The data were collected through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and documentation to obtain comprehensive information regarding the factors affecting students' speaking confidence. The findings reveal that students' speaking confidence is influenced by two main categories of factors, namely internal factors and external factors. Internal factors include language proficiency, previous speaking experience, and psychological aspects such as self-confidence, anxiety, and personality. Meanwhile, external factors include the teacher's role, teaching methods, learning materials and media, peer support, and classroom atmosphere. The analysis demonstrates that students' speaking confidence is fundamentally influenced by the interplay of internal and external dimensions. Internally, the primary obstacles originate from linguistic deficiencies (specifically in vocabulary and grammar) alongside psychological barriers such as shyness and apprehension. Conversely, externally, the teacher's pedagogical approach and instructional methods emerge as the most impactful drivers. The integration of creative media and a supportive classroom climate significantly mitigate the fear of social judgment, thereby lowering students' internal anxiety. In conclusion, while internal readiness poses a challenge, a safe and encouraging external environment serves as the vital catalyst for improving students' confidence in oral English communication.

Keywords: Speaking Confidence; Internal Factors; External Factors, Speaking Ability; Secondary School Students

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, English has become an essential means of communication used across various fields such as education, business, technology, and international relations. As an international language, English enables individuals to connect and interact with people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language, which means that students learn it mainly in formal classroom settings rather than through daily communication. Despite its importance, many students still face difficulties in mastering English, particularly in speaking skills, which require active use of the language.

Speaking is considered one of the most important skills in learning English because it allows learners to express their ideas, thoughts, and feelings orally. It is an interactive process that involves not only producing language but also understanding and responding to others in real-time communication. Mastering speaking skills requires the integration of several components such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency. Therefore, students are expected not only to understand the language theoretically but also to be able to use it effectively in communication.

However, mastering speaking skills is not an easy task for many students. One of the major challenges faced by learners is the lack of confidence in speaking English. Speaking confidence plays a crucial role in determining whether students are willing to participate in speaking activities. Students who lack confidence tend to feel anxious, shy, and afraid of making mistakes, which prevents them from expressing their ideas clearly. As a result, even students who have sufficient knowledge of English may still struggle to communicate effectively due to low confidence.

Speaking confidence is closely related to psychological factors such as self-esteem, motivation, and anxiety. According to the concept of self-efficacy, individuals who believe in their abilities are more likely to perform tasks successfully. In the context of language learning, students with high confidence are more active and willing to take risks in speaking, while those with low confidence often avoid participation. Therefore, confidence is not only a supporting factor but also a key determinant of students' success in developing their speaking ability.

Previous studies have shown that speaking confidence significantly influences students' speaking performance. Research findings indicate that students with higher confidence levels tend to demonstrate better fluency, accuracy, and participation in speaking activities. On the other hand, students with low confidence are often hindered by fear of negative evaluation, anxiety, and lack of practice.

These studies highlight the importance of addressing both psychological and pedagogical aspects in improving students' speaking skills. In addition to psychological aspects, speaking confidence is also influenced by various internal and external factors. Internal factors include students' personality, language proficiency, past speaking experiences, and self-esteem. Meanwhile, external factors involve the role of teachers, teaching methods, learning materials, peer support, and classroom environment. These factors interact with one another and shape students' attitudes and behaviors toward speaking English.

Despite the growing attention to speaking confidence, many secondary school students still experience difficulties in developing confidence in speaking English. In the context of UPT SMA Negeri 1 Sidrap, students often hesitate to speak English in classroom activities due to fear of making mistakes and being judged by others. This condition indicates that there are underlying factors that need to be explored in order to understand the root causes of students' low speaking confidence. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the factors affecting the speaking confidence of secondary school students at UPT SMA Negeri 1 Sidrap. By identifying both internal and external factors, this research is expected to provide valuable insights for teachers, students, and future researchers in developing effective strategies to improve students' confidence and speaking ability in English learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking confidence has become an important issue in English language learning, particularly in improving students' speaking performance. Many researchers agree that confidence plays a crucial role in determining whether students are willing to speak or remain silent in the classroom (Bandura, 1997; Brown, 2001). Students who have high confidence tend to express their ideas more freely, while those with low confidence often feel anxious and hesitant to participate in speaking activities (Arifin, 2017). Several previous studies have shown a strong relationship between self-confidence and speaking ability. Research indicates that students with higher levels of confidence are more active in classroom interactions and demonstrate better speaking performance (Aulia & Apoko, 2022; Mega & Sugiarto, 2020). They are more willing to take risks, practice speaking, and communicate their ideas despite making mistakes. This suggests that confidence is not only a psychological factor but also a key component in developing speaking skills (Akbari & Sahibzada, 2020).

In addition, the learning environment significantly influences students' speaking confidence. A supportive classroom atmosphere, interactive teaching methods, and positive teacher feedback can encourage students to participate more actively in speaking activities (Richards, 2008; Doff, 1988). On the other hand, a rigid or unsupportive environment may increase students' anxiety and reduce their willingness to speak (Rochelle, 2011). Therefore, teachers play an essential role in creating a learning environment that fosters confidence. Students also face various

problems in speaking English, which can be categorized into linguistic and psychological factors. Linguistic problems include limited vocabulary, poor grammar, and difficulties in pronunciation, while psychological problems such as fear of making mistakes, shyness, anxiety, and low self-confidence often prevent students from speaking (Tuan & Mai, 2015; Qasemi, 2020). These challenges must be addressed in order to improve students' speaking performance.

Speaking confidence is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include personality, self-esteem, motivation, and language proficiency (Bandura, 1997; Getie, 2020). For example, students who have good language skills and high self-esteem are generally more confident in speaking. External factors, such as teacher support, peer interaction, teaching strategies, and classroom environment, also contribute significantly to building students' confidence (Supriyanto & Savitri, 2024). Furthermore, frequent practice and positive speaking experiences can help students develop their confidence over time. When students are given opportunities to speak in a supportive environment, they gradually become more comfortable and confident (Thornbury & Harmer, 2005). Based on the explanations above, it can be concluded that speaking confidence is a crucial factor in English language learning. It is influenced by various internal and external factors and plays a significant role in students' speaking performance. Therefore, this study aims to explore the factors affecting students' speaking confidence in a specific educational context to provide a deeper understanding of this issue.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the factors affecting students' speaking confidence in learning English. This approach was selected because it enables the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of students' experiences, perceptions, and feelings. The research was conducted at UPT SMA Negeri 1 Sidrap. The participants were eleventh-grade students who were selected through purposive sampling to represent different levels of speaking confidence.

Instruments and Procedures

The instruments used in this study were observation and semi-structured interviews. Observation was conducted to examine students' behavior, participation, and confidence during speaking activities in the classroom. Meanwhile, interviews were carried out to obtain deeper information about students' perspectives and the factors influencing their confidence. All interviews were recorded and transcribed to ensure accurate data collection. The data collection process involved several steps. First, the researcher conducted classroom observations to identify students' speaking behavior. Second, interviews were conducted with selected students to explore their experiences and challenges in speaking English. In addition, field notes were taken

during the observation process to support and enrich the data obtained from the interviews.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using qualitative analysis techniques, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The researcher categorized the data into themes such as internal and external factors affecting speaking confidence. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, triangulation was applied by comparing the results of observations and interviews. The findings were then presented descriptively to provide a clear understanding of the research problem.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that students' speaking confidence varied significantly among the participants. Some students showed high levels of confidence by actively participating in speaking activities, while others tended to remain silent and hesitant. This variation indicates that speaking confidence is not evenly distributed among students and is influenced by multiple factors. Based on classroom observations, students with higher confidence were more willing to express their ideas, answer questions, and engage in discussions. They appeared relaxed and less afraid of making mistakes. In contrast, students with lower confidence often avoided speaking, showed nervous behavior, and required encouragement from the teacher to participate.

The interview results showed that many students experienced anxiety when speaking English. They reported feeling afraid of making grammatical mistakes, mispronouncing words, and being laughed at by their peers. These feelings of fear and anxiety significantly affected their willingness to speak in the classroom. Another important finding was related to students' limited vocabulary and lack of grammar mastery. Many students stated that they found it difficult to construct sentences, which reduced their confidence in speaking. This linguistic limitation made them hesitant to express their ideas clearly.

The study also found that personality influenced speaking confidence. Students who were more extroverted tended to be more confident and active in speaking activities. Meanwhile, introverted students were more likely to feel shy and reluctant to speak, especially in front of the class. External factors also played a significant role in shaping students' speaking confidence. A supportive teacher, interactive teaching methods, and a positive classroom environment encouraged students to participate more actively. Students reported feeling more comfortable when the teacher created a relaxed and non-judgmental atmosphere.

Peer influence was another factor affecting students' confidence. Students felt more confident when they received support and encouragement from their classmates. However, negative reactions such as laughing or mocking could reduce their confidence and increase their anxiety. The findings indicate that students' speaking

confidence is influenced by a combination of internal factors (such as anxiety, personality, and language ability) and external factors (such as teacher support, peer interaction, and classroom environment). These factors interact with each other and determine students' willingness to speak.

The results of this study confirm that speaking confidence plays a crucial role in students' speaking performance. Students who demonstrated higher confidence were more active and willing to participate in speaking activities. This finding is consistent with previous studies which emphasize that confidence is a key factor in successful language learning (Bandura, 1997; Akbari & Sahibzada, 2020). Students with strong self-belief tend to engage more actively in communication and are more willing to take risks in using English during classroom interactions.

The finding that anxiety affects students' speaking confidence is also in line with earlier research on psychological barriers in language learning. Fear of making mistakes and being judged by others can significantly reduce students' willingness to speak (Arifin, 2017; Rochelle, 2011). In addition, linguistic factors such as limited vocabulary and poor grammar were found to influence students' confidence, supporting previous studies which indicate that language competence is closely related to speaking performance (Tuan & Mai, 2015; Qasemi, 2020). When students feel that they lack sufficient language resources, they tend to hesitate and avoid speaking, which ultimately affects their participation.

Furthermore, personality differences also play an important role in shaping speaking confidence. Students with extroverted personalities tend to be more confident and active, while introverted students often require more support to participate in speaking activities (Getie, 2020). This highlights the importance of considering individual differences in the classroom. Teachers need to design varied and inclusive teaching strategies that provide equal opportunities for all students to express their ideas.

The findings also reveal that external factors, particularly the role of teachers and peers, significantly influence students' speaking confidence. A supportive teacher who provides positive feedback and encouragement can create a safe and comfortable learning environment, reducing students' fear of making mistakes (Richards, 2008; Doff, 1988). Similarly, positive peer interaction can motivate students to participate more actively, while negative responses may decrease confidence and increase anxiety (Supriyanto & Savitri, 2024). These findings confirm that speaking confidence is shaped by the interaction of internal and external factors.

Based on these findings, this study offers important pedagogical implications. Teachers should not only focus on improving students' linguistic competence but also prioritize building a supportive classroom atmosphere that encourages active participation. The use of interactive and communicative activities, along with consistent positive feedback, can help students gradually develop their confidence.

In addition, promoting peer collaboration and recognizing individual differences are essential strategies to enhance students' speaking confidence.

However, this study has several limitations. It was conducted in a single school with a limited number of participants, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. The use of qualitative methods also means that the results are based on subjective perceptions. Moreover, this study focused only on students' perspectives without including teachers' viewpoints. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve a larger and more diverse sample, apply mixed-method approaches, and include both students' and teachers' perspectives to provide a more comprehensive understanding of factors affecting speaking confidence.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that students' speaking confidence plays a crucial role in their ability to communicate in English. Students with higher levels of confidence tend to participate more actively in speaking activities, express their ideas more clearly, and are less afraid of making mistakes. In contrast, students with low confidence often experience anxiety, hesitation, and reluctance to speak, which negatively affects their speaking performance. This study also found that students' speaking confidence is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include anxiety, personality, self-esteem, and language proficiency, while external factors involve teacher support, peer interaction, teaching methods, and classroom environment. These factors interact with each other and significantly shape students' willingness and ability to speak in English. Therefore, it is important for teachers to create a supportive and interactive learning environment that encourages students to speak without fear. Providing positive feedback, using engaging teaching strategies, and promoting peer support can help increase students' confidence. In addition, improving students' vocabulary and grammar mastery is also essential to enhance their speaking ability. By addressing both psychological and linguistic aspects, students can develop greater confidence and become more effective English speakers.

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