



Overcoming Confidence Problems in Speaking English for Social Communication

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Abstract

Individuals often lose confidence in learning and using English due to lack of support or even ridicule from the surrounding environment. In previous research, we found that quite a few people did not understand the importance of English in social life and were more focused on solving problems in the environment, not starting from facing these problems themselves. Through this case we want to change the way an individual think about being afraid of the things they face during the learning process, and we want to raise self-confidence in people out there who are learning English. The researcher used a qualitative method, using interviews involving 10th and 11th grade students at SMAN 1 Cileungsi (5 participants at each grade with a total of 10 participants). Based on the data analysis, it was found that many of the students who were studying English had problems with their self-confidence.

Keywords: *Confidence, English, Speaking*

Introduction

Self-confidence is a feeling of trust or confidence in one's abilities, a feeling of pride along with a sense of responsibility arises. This understanding arises due to positive descriptiveness. This means accepting yourself as you are (Brewer, Sampaio, & Barlow, 2005). Self-confidence covers many aspects of life, one of which is education. In studying, we need to have self-confidence to be able to absorb knowledge as effectively as possible. According to Lauster (1976), there are five aspects that can form self-confidence namely, optimism, objective, responsibility, confidence in one's abilities, and rational and realistic. These aspects of self-confidence are also related to each other. However, it is not uncommon for us to

encounter problems in forming self-confidence. One of them is environmental factors; the environment has quite an important role in forming an individual's character. The problem we discuss in this research is about how the environment can influence a person's sense of confidence in learning English, according to the title we chose, namely *Overcome the Problem of Lack Confidence When Speaking English in Social Life*.

Self-confidence and academic self-concept are crucial factors that significantly influence students' academic achievement and educational paths throughout their academic journey. According to a comprehensive study conducted by Wang et al. (2015), it has been found that students who have a strong belief in their academic abilities and perceive themselves as competent learners tend to outperform their peers who have lower confidence levels. This superior performance is evident across various academic measures such as grades, test scores, and the ability to persist in challenging fields of study. Students who are highly confident tend to adopt mastery-oriented approaches to academics. These approaches are based on a "growth mindset," which means that these students believe that their abilities can be developed and improved through effort. Active learning strategies, resilience in the face of obstacles, and ultimately greater success are all motivated by this. On the other hand, individuals who lack confidence tend to withdraw from difficult or challenging tasks in order to maintain their perception of competence. This behavior ultimately hinders their long-term achievement (Dweck & Leggett 1988).

Interventions aimed at enhancing students' self-belief in their abilities have been found to result in improvements in their actual competence. These interventions achieve this by enhancing motivation, engagement, effort, and the utilization of self-regulated learning strategies. Verbal persuasion techniques, such as when trusted mentors express belief in a student's abilities, have been proven to boost confidence in subjects like math and sciences. This increase in confidence has been observed to result in higher grades throughout college courses that span a semester. These techniques are particularly beneficial for underrepresented groups, such as women and minorities, who are more likely to experience confidence gaps. Walton & Cohen (2011). Incremental skill development approaches have the potential to create positive impacts by gradually building step-by-step mastery. Experiences of success accumulate over time, leading to an increase in one's perception of self-efficacy.

Extensive research has provided strong evidence that language proficiency

plays a significant role in the academic performance of English language learners (ELLs) who are studying in English-based educational settings. This includes their ability to understand and participate in instruction, as well as their performance on assessments. English Language Learners (ELLs) tend to achieve lower scores on standardized tests and receive lower grades compared to native English-speaking students. This is primarily because linguistic barriers make it difficult for ELLs to fully grasp the content, particularly in subjects that heavily rely on literacy skills such as language arts, social studies, and science. These subjects require a strong command of academic vocabulary and advanced reading comprehension skills (August et al., 2009). Extensive demographic variables have been taken into account, and it has been found that English proficiency level is the most significant factor in predicting the subject area test scores of English Language Learners (ELLs) in secondary school.

The development of academic English ability through language support programming has shown a clear and significant impact on academic achievement. According to a study conducted by Loeb et al. (2014), English Language Learners (ELLs) who were randomly assigned supplemental English lessons showed a significant improvement in their test scores and grades compared to the control groups. This improvement was observed over the course of a full academic year. According to a study conducted by García & Godina (2017), certain schools have successfully achieved up to four times the expected growth in reading skills for English Language Learners (ELLs) through the implementation of intensive language interventions. Research in higher education consistently emphasizes the importance of language fluency in ensuring the academic success of English Language Learners (ELLs) throughout their college years.

Social anxiety disorder is a condition that involves experiencing intense fear and avoiding social situations because of a fear of being judged or scrutinized. This disorder has been found to have a significant impact on a person's ability to succeed academically. According to research conducted by Van Ameringen et al. (2003), it has been found that adolescents who suffer from social anxiety disorder tend to experience various negative outcomes in their academic performance. These outcomes include receiving lower grades, performing worse on achievement tests such as high school exit exams, having a lower likelihood of attending college, and being more prone to dropping out of school. It is important to note that these findings hold true even when controlling for demographic factors such as socioeconomic status. School refusal and absenteeism, which are caused by anxiety related to school, contribute to the differences in academic achievement due to missed learning opportunities. However, even socially anxious students who attend school regularly still experience disparities in their actual performance and level of

engagement.

There are several ways in which social anxiety can contribute to underachievement. One of these is through the impact it has on a person's ability to concentrate and process information during lessons. Intrusive worries can make it difficult to stay focused, leading to diminished cognitive load. Additionally, social anxiety can manifest as test anxiety, making it harder for individuals to perform well on exams. Lastly, individuals with social anxiety may avoid participating in class or seeking help from others in order to avoid negative evaluations, which can further hinder their academic success (Brook & Willoughby, 2015). According to Bernstein et al. (2008), the use of cognitive behavioral therapy to treat anxiety has resulted in notable improvements in the academic performance and graduation rates of affected adolescents. In order to effectively reduce academic impairment among students with entrenched social anxiety, universities have developed scaffolded public speaking courses that incorporate exposure therapy (Oerbeck et al., 2021). These findings emphasize the importance of addressing social-emotional barriers in order to fully realize one's learning potential.

We often find cases where someone has a decrease in self-confidence when learning something because of a lack of support from the environment in which they learning. In this case we are talking about English as an object that is being studied. We find many cases where the victim has a feeling of lack of self-confidence due to environmental factors that do not support or even ridicule the victim while studying English. This makes the victims feel that they do not have the opportunity or capacity to learn English. Through this we can see how much potential is wasted from many people who lose their self-confidence. Of course, this is very unfortunate if it continues to happen. This is the reason that made us choose this title.

In previous research, we found that quite a few people did not understand the importance of English in social life and were more focused on solving problems in the environment, not starting from facing these problems themselves. Through this case we want to change the way an individual think about being afraid of the things they face during the learning process, and we want to raise self-confidence in people out there who are learning English. It is not uncommon for us to find that there are still many people who do not understand how important English is in social life. Because of this, we are interested in finding out more deeply and further about English in the eyes of many people in social life.

Method

The Design of the Research

The researchers in this study employ qualitative methods for data collection in the field. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research involves methods that are used to explore and gain an understanding of the meaning that individuals or groups of people assign to social or humanitarian problems. Using this method, researchers can collect data directly at the location where the incident occurred. This method benefits researchers by providing them with a clear understanding of the environment surrounding the sources that provide answers to their research inquiries.

Participant

The researchers conducted data collection at SMAN 1 Cileungsi. There is a total of 10 participants from SMAN 1 Cileungsi, with 5 students from the 10th grade and 5 students from the 11th grade. The researchers will immediately begin investigating why the environment plays such a crucial role in their ability to learn English as a foreign language.

Research Instrument

One-on-one interview in which the subject is addressed with general inquiries. The researchers collect data by utilizing interviews as a means of gathering information through a series of questions and answers. Data Collection through Interviews is a method of collecting data. According to Esterberg (2002), an interview is a meeting between two individuals where they exchange information and ideas through a series of questions and answers. The purpose of this exchange is to construct meaning and understanding on a specific topic. Using this instrument, researchers can directly observe and analyze the responses of individuals involved in the study. This allows them to gather more comprehensive and insightful information about the research they are conducting.

Technique of Data Collection

The process of data collection begins with conducting interviews. The results of these interviews are then combined and processed to generate more accurate data, ensuring optimal outcomes. Researchers can gather multiple responses from students when they inquire about the issues they are facing in their research. This technique is commonly referred to as the Data Collection Technique. It will provide the students with a total of seven questions. It will then gather the responses and summarize them as raw data. After that, the researchers will conduct a thorough review of the collected field data to ensure the researchers obtain the best possible

results.

Technique of Data Analysis

The first type of qualitative data analysis was proposed by Miles and Huberman., (2019), both of whom agreed that the stages for conducting qualitative data analysis are divided into three, namely: Reduction, at this stage the data will be simplified to suit your needs. The large amount of data will make it difficult for researchers to get information quickly. Data display, after eliminating irrelevant data, the next stage is to present the data in a neater and more systematic form, so that information will be easier to obtain. Conclusion drawing, This stage is the final stage, namely drawing conclusions based on data that has been arranged in a neater form.

Results

In the data the researchers have obtained and collected from the field. The researchers concluded that a significant number of English students experienced self-confidence issues. Eight out of ten students experience a lack of self-confidence due to their fear of how their environment will respond when they are learning English. They experience fear due to the possibility of receiving a negative response, leading to a decline in their self-confidence. Some individuals may experience trauma due to a lack of supportive environments, which can lead to a decrease in self-confidence and feelings of inadequacy when it comes to speaking English.

The researchers also found that some individuals opted to study English privately or independently due to their fear of others' reactions. Some individuals also opt to disregard the feedback from their surrounding environment. Using a self-defense mechanism, they can learn English with increased confidence. In addition, some individuals address their lack of self-confidence by seeking advice from trusted individuals or conducting research from reliable sources on the internet.

However, some individuals also express concerns about their learning environment, perceiving it as lacking support and being detrimental to their well-being. They say that "it's better for me to learn by myself than to ask and get ridiculed by my friends". Based on this, the researchers have concluded that the learning environment of students has a significant impact on both their self-confidence and the overall quality of their learning experience. Some individuals choose to isolate themselves and confront their fears by independently learning English. Certainly, this approach is detrimental and inefficient for certain students due to the significant influence of the learning environment on the process and quality of education.

Discussion

The study's findings strongly indicate that unsupportive environments significantly impede the development of self-confidence among students learning English. The discovery that 8 out of 10 students face confidence issues as a result of environmental factors is consistent with previous research that highlights the significant influence of environments on learning abilities (Brown, 1999). Anxiety stemming from the fear of negative reactions from others can lead to trauma and have a negative impact on both confidence and self-efficacy. This is supported by Bandura's (1998), social learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of self-efficacy in understanding human behavior. The students in this study utilized coping strategies that were similar to the ones identified in Tridinanti (2018) study. These strategies included privately learning to avoid judgment and disregarding feedback from others. However, isolating oneself hinders the advantages that collaborative learning provides, as highlighted by Dai & Sternberg, (2004) in their research on cooperative learning environments.

According to Mercer & Dörnyei (2020), research on motivation and global environments, avoidance is not a sustainable long-term solution as it allows the underlying environmental issues to persist. Addressing environments proactively through effective communication and education about the significance of English fluency can contribute to creating a supportive atmosphere that students are looking for. This was exemplified by Clément et al., (1994) in their influential research on language learning environments. The concerns expressed by participants about unsupportive environments are consistent with previous research on the subject (Awan, Azher, Anwar, & Naz, 2010). The study's depth of insight into students' thought processes and motivations makes a valuable contribution. The impact of environments on language learning motivation and engagement is significant, as highlighted by Dörnyei & Ushioda (2021) in their recent integration of motivational theory. Poor environmental conditions can greatly diminish motivation and engagement in language learning. However, conducting additional research on the specific communication and actions that contribute to creating a threatening or discouraging environment could offer practical guidance for making concrete improvements. This could serve as a basis for interventions aimed at actively fostering confidence among English learners.

The decision of certain students to learn independently in isolation to cope highlights the significant negative effects of unsupportive environments. According to Vygotsky (1980) social development theory, environments that are filled with ridicule do not serve as collaborative and constructive spaces for growth. Instead, they compel individuals to withdraw, which greatly hinders their potential for learning. The outcome is a less than ideal learning experience that contradicts the

interactive and communicative nature of acquiring a language. Nevertheless, the fact that certain students demonstrate the initiative to conduct research and educate themselves, even in less than ideal circumstances, indicates a deep-seated motivation and thirst for knowledge. This serves as a valuable foundation for their learning journey. By utilizing counseling and community-building initiatives, we can tap into the inherent motivation of individuals and facilitate their transition from isolation to becoming part of supportive groups. This transition is crucial for their collective growth and success, as highlighted by Dörnyei & Ushioda (2021) Second Language Motivational Self System theory.

In summary, it is evident that unsupportive environments significantly impede the development of confidence, which is crucial for the success of students learning English. While the coping strategies that students adopt are valuable, they cannot completely replace the need for healthy environments that support effective communication and collaborative language acquisition. Although more research is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of negative dynamics, current evidence suggests that actively promoting supportiveness through education and enhanced communication can potentially change environments from demotivating to motivating. The improved alignment between students and their environments has the potential to empower students to fully realize their learning potential. However, in order to make progress, it is necessary to recognize that environments are not just passive backgrounds. Instead, they are active forces that shape outcomes through complex social processes, as explained in influential frameworks for Second Language Acquisition (Giles & Byrne, 1982; Schumann, 1986). Environments play a crucial role in shaping behaviors, beliefs, and the range of possibilities available to individuals. If we want English learners to become increasingly fluent, it is crucial that we prioritize creating environments that empower them rather than hinder their progress.

Conclusion

This study presents compelling evidence that unsupportive social environments have a significant impact on the lack of self-confidence experienced by the interviewed students who were learning English. Most of the students who took part in the study expressed that their learning environment had a negative effect on their confidence in learning English. They specifically mentioned feeling afraid of being judged or made fun of by their peers. According to foundational motivational theory, environments that foster anxiety and discouragement can hinder the development of self-efficacy, which is believed to be crucial for success in language acquisition.

The use of avoidance or isolation as coping strategies by students further hinders the opportunity for meaningful collaborative learning experiences, which are known to maximize outcomes. Nevertheless, the display of motivation and persistence by certain students, even in the face of unsupportive conditions, suggests the possibility of significant growth in environments that are more nurturing.

Although the conclusions are based on a limited qualitative sample, the detailed insights uncover significant themes that deserve further investigation in terms of supporting the development of confidence. Every student should have access to learning environments that prioritize their safety and encourage them to ask questions. It is important to create an atmosphere where making mistakes is seen as a natural part of the learning process, and where support is given more importance than judgment. Although this study focused on a specific context, it provides valuable insights into the definition of healthy ecosystems for language learners, which can pave the way for further critical inquiry.

Suggestions

Promoting supportive communication, relationships, and community-building that focuses on valuing multilingualism has emerged as a promising approach to counteracting the negative effects that have been observed. By transforming environments that inhibit students, we can create environments that encourage them, leading to the blossoming of their motivation instead of its deterioration. There is a need for additional research on effective strategies to actively foster supportive social environments in order to promote engagement and facilitate progress.

Education programs that promote diversity and cultural exchange have the potential to be effective small-scale interventions that can contribute to improved inclusion and a sense of belonging. Creating an environment where students feel safe to ask questions without experiencing shame or embarrassment is crucial for fostering the collaborative participation that is essential for personal and academic growth. It is important to give focused attention to operationalizing improvements in the environment through peer involvement and assessing the outcomes associated with it.

Because language acquisition barriers go beyond just pedagogical factors, it is important to also consider a wider range of investigators. Focusing on building bridges of understanding between all students, regardless of their backgrounds, can create an environment where the benefits of a multilingual society can be collectively realized. Realizing the potential requires ongoing dedication to finding

constructive solutions that focus on building supportive communities. This way, progress can bring people together instead of isolating them.

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