



The Influence of Junior High School Students' Self-Confidence on Their Speaking Ability

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to find out the correlation between students' self-confidence and their speaking ability. This study was conducted at a senior high school at Aceh Barat Daya. The method is a correlation research method using Product Moment Correlation. The total number of research subjects is 54 students. The result of this study showed that there is a correlation between students' self-confidence and their speaking ability, as the significance value is 0.00 and lower than 0,05. The correlation is indicated as an extremely weak correlation because the value of R^2 is 0,106. It can be suggested that the students should improve their self-confidence and have good achievement in speaking.

Keywords: *Self-confidence, speaking, correlation*

Introduction

Speaking is an English skill besides listening, reading, and writing. It involves conveying thoughts, ideas, and information through verbal communication, requiring proper pronunciation, intonation, and clarity (Baker & Westrup, 2023). Good speaking skills is a crucial for students to develop effective and meaningful communication (Pye & Greenall, 2021), Additionally, speaking practice helps students to improve vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency, foster confidence, and overcome communication barriers (Fulcher et al., 2022)

In the Indonesian senior high school curriculum, speaking learning emphasizes developing students' ability to communicate in English through various activities and tasks aligned with national education standards (Hariri et al., 2024) The curriculum focuses on enhancing students' proficiency in expressing ideas, opinions, and information clearly and confidently in formal and informal communication.

The study is conducted at the junior high school level because this stage of education is critical for developing speaking skills. In junior high school, students transition from essential language acquisition to more advanced language use, which includes expressing complex ideas and engaging in meaningful conversations. At this level, the curriculum emphasizes oral communication recognizes the importance of speaking skills for academic success and social interactions. By targeting junior high school students, the study aims to maximize the impact of language instruction and provide students with the foundational skills they need to succeed in speaking.

In addition, self-confidence plays a pivotal role in speaking well (Kurniawati, 2013). When students believe in their ability to communicate effectively, they are more likely to engage actively in conversations and express their thoughts clearly. Self-confidence empowers students to overcome the fear of making mistakes and take risks using the language (Wahyuni, 2021.). Besides, self-confidence is a part of speaking English effectively. It enables students to navigate social and professional environments more effectively and is a crucial personal and academic growth skill.

Based on the study conducted by Nadila (2022), students learning a second language exhibited improved speaking proficiency when they reported higher levels of self-confidence, leading to increased engagement and better fluency over time. Similarly, Febriyani and Astuti (2020) highlighted that students with greater self-confidence in speaking English as a second language demonstrated superior oral communication skills driven by enhanced motivation and practice. Joni, Nitiarsih, and Andini (2017) extended this finding to adult learners in workplace settings, where higher self-confidence in speaking abilities correlated with active participation in professional discussions, ultimately contributing to improved language skills and career advancement opportunities.

This study aims to determine whether there is any significant correlation between students' self-confidence and speaking skills. Most previous studies have stated a correlation, and it is interesting to conduct further research on self-confidence and speaking skills among junior high school students in West Aceh Barat Daya. In this study, the researchers propose two research questions and one hypothesis. The research questions are: (1) How are students' self-confidence and speaking ability? Is there any correlation between students' self-confidence and speaking ability?

Method

This study is quantitative research with a correlation research design. It aims to know the relationship between two variables. The X variable is self-confidence, and the Y variable is speaking ability. The population of this research is the students of SMP Negeri 1 Susoh, consisting of five classes.

The subject selected by using random sampling technique was the students of class VIII.B as sample which consisted of 35 students. The data is collected by using two techniques: questionnaire and a test that conducted on October 2024. The questionnaire is to measure students' self-confidence. It is in the form of Likert Scale and developed with some indicators dealing with Self-confidence based on Lauster's theory. It contains six indicators of self-confidence they are in self-efficacy, optimization, objective, responsibility, rationality, and optimism

The test measures students' speaking ability. Students are required to explain their experience in two minutes. The speaking test refers to the rubric based on Brown and Harris criteria; it covers fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and comprehension. The data collected were analyzed to determine students' self-confidence and speaking ability of the eight grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Susoh. Pearson Product moment correlation was used to find the correlation between two variables.

Results

Based on the data collected, it can be figured out the students' self-confidence and their speaking ability. The result study was explained as follows:

Student's Self Confidence

Based on the results of filling out the questionnaire conducted to the students, the following will describe the description of the results of the questionnaire on the level of confidence as listed in Table 1.

Table 1. The Distribution of Students' Self-Confidence

Score Range	Classification	Frequencies	Percentage
96 - 100	Excellent	0	
86 - 95	Very Good	0	
76 - 85	Good	0	
66 - 75	Fairly Good	1	
56 - 65	Fair	16	29.63%
46 - 55	Poor	33	61.11%
Under 45	Very Poor	4	7.41%

Following the result questionnaire analysis as presented in Table 1, it can be seen that the majority of students fall into the "Poor" classification (61.11%), while a smaller percentage are classified as "Fair" (29.63%) and "Very Poor" (7.41%). Only one student is classified as "Fairly Good" with no students in the "Good," "Very Good," or "Excellent" categories. The provided data highlights significant areas for

improvement, with the majority of students scoring poorly. This can be connected to weaknesses in key self-confidence indicators like self-efficacy, optimism, and responsibility.

Students Speaking Ability

The result test indicated that most students have poor speaking ability. For detail as shown in the following table:

Table 2. The Distribution of Students' Speaking Ability

Score Range	Classification	Frequencies	Percentage
96 - 100	Excellent	0	
86 - 95	Very Good	0	
76 - 85	Good	0	
66 - 75	Fairly Good	0	
56 - 65	Fair	3	5.56%
46 - 55	Poor	34	62.96%
Under 45	Very Poor	17	31.48%

The data as shown in Table 2 indicated that a significant majority of students have low speaking abilities, as reflected by the high percentages in the "Poor" and "Very Poor" classifications. These issues are likely linked to key speaking indicators—fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and comprehension. To improve their speaking skills, targeted interventions in these areas should be considered, such as focused pronunciation practice, grammar exercises, and activities that enhance comprehension and conversational fluency.

The correlation between students' self-confidence and their speaking ability

To find out the correlation between students' self-confidence and their speaking ability, it is computed the correlation through Pearson Product Moment Correlation formula as revealed in the following table.

Table 3. The correlation of two variables

		Speaking Ability	Self Confidence
Speaking Ability	Pearson Correlation	1	.106
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	54	54
Self Confidence	Pearson Correlation	.106	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	54	54

The data presented involves the correlation between students' self-confidence and their speaking ability. The data analysis of correlation was obtained the value of the correlation between students' self-confidence and their speaking ability at SMP Negeri 1 Susoh was 0.106. Based on this result, it can be determined that the correlation was positive correlation

Coefficient Determination

The result shows Pearson correlation coefficients and significance levels. The Pearson correlation between **Speaking Ability** and **Self-Confidence** is **0.106**. A coefficient of 0.106 indicates a very weak positive correlation between the two variables.

Even though the correlation is statistically significant ($p = 0.000$), the coefficient determination correlation ($r = 0.106$) is extremely weak. This suggests that self-confidence has only a minimal effect on speaking ability among these students. It can be summarized that there is a positive correlation between students' self-confidence and their speaking ability. Since the correlation is positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), the hypothesis is **accepted**. However, the relationship is very weak, indicating that while self-confidence is a factor, it is not a strong predictor of speaking ability in this context.

Discussion

The result of this study showed that the relationship between students' self-confidence and their speaking ability for the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Susoh has a positive correlation but the correlation correlation was in weak correlation. This value indicates that self-confidence contributes minimally to speaking ability for students at SMP Negeri 1 Susoh. Self-confidence and speaking ability in students often show a weak correlation because self-confidence encompasses a broader range of personal attributes, such as resilience, motivation, and self-esteem, that do not solely depend on speaking skills.

A student exhibit strong self-confidence in other areas, like problem-solving or teamwork, even if their speaking ability is limited due to linguistic, social, or cognitive challenges. It is supported by Hidayati (2021) speaking ability involves not just confidence but a range of competencies, including linguistic knowledge, fluency, pronunciation, and sociolinguistic skills. Thus, while confidence plays a role, it is only one of many variables contributing to effective speaking.

The findings of this study with existing literature, which often highlights the role of self-confidence in language learning but cautions against overestimating its impact. For example, Normawati and Muna (2021) argue that while confident students are generally more willing to take risks in speaking and are less fearful of

making mistakes, the development of speaking skills also heavily depends on practice, feedback, and exposure to real-life communication situations. This nuanced understanding suggests that while confidence is necessary, it must be complemented by opportunities for authentic speaking practice and targeted pedagogical interventions.

Similarly, research by Deswarni (2002) found that There are likely other reasons why speaking ability is not strongly affected by self-confidence. For example, students feel anxious or nervous when speaking in front of others, which can lower their performance. Other factors, such as the amount of practice, understanding of the language, and support from teachers and classmates, also have a bigger impact on their speaking skills.

Conclusion

This study shows that self-confidence and speaking ability are connected, but the connection is weak. This means that being confident does not always mean a student will be good at speaking. Other factors, like feeling nervous or worried (anxiety), can affect a student's speaking ability even if they are confident in other areas. To help improve both confidence and speaking skills, teachers can create a friendly and supportive classroom where students feel safe to express themselves without fear of making mistakes. Encouraging practice through fun activities like role-playing or group discussions can also reduce anxiety and build confidence.

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