

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PERSONAL JUDGMENT AND STUDENTS' CONFIDENCE IN SPEAKING ENGLISH

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Abstract

Speaking is a crucial part of learning English, yet many students still struggle to talk effectively and eloquently. Prior research has examined psychological factors, such as self-confidence and self-esteem, that affect speaking performance. However, personal judgment, as a particular type of self-evaluation, has received little attention, especially in the Indonesian context. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between students' confidence in their ability to speak English and their personal judgment. Thirty-eight Grade students were randomly selected for this study, which used a quantitative correlational approach. A speaking confidence test and a personal judgment questionnaire were used to gather data. The validity and reliability of the instruments were examined. Spearman's rho was utilised for analysis since one variable was not normally distributed. The results revealed a strong and significant positive correlation ($r = 0.741$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that positive self-evaluation is associated with higher speaking confidence.

Keywords: personal judgment, self-confidence, speaking ability, English learning, students

INTRODUCTION

English is widely used in various fields, including politics, trade, health, and education. As an international language, English is spoken by many people around the world. Therefore, the ability to communicate in English is essential because it provides access to broader opportunities and enables individuals to connect globally. Among the four language skills, speaking is considered one of the most crucial skills in learning a foreign language. However, many students still experience difficulties in speaking English fluently and confidently. (Pratiwi Dyah, 2021) reported that students faced various obstacles in speaking during the Covid-19 pandemic, including linguistic difficulties and psychological barriers such as shyness and low confidence, which significantly affected their speaking performance.

One psychological factor that influences students' confidence in speaking is personal judgment. Personal judgment refers to an individual's assessment of their own abilities based on personal perceptions and experiences. According to (Santrock, 2010) Personal judgment is the process by which individuals evaluate their own capabilities and make decisions based on their understanding, experience, and perception of their abilities. In the context of English language learning, personal judgment plays a role in shaping students' confidence in their ability to speak and communicate using English.

Research conducted by Suja'i and friends (2023) shows that many students judge themselves negatively, such as feeling incapable, being afraid of making mistakes, and lacking confidence to speak in front of the class. This tendency toward negative self-

assessment directly affects students' self-confidence levels. Conversely, students who have a positive assessment of their abilities tend to demonstrate greater courage and confidence in speaking English. Similarly, Aprilianti et al. (2022) state that students who judge themselves negatively often feel less capable, even though they actually possess sufficient skills, whereas students with positive self-assessments are more confident in expressing their ideas in English.

Self-confidence plays a central role in speaking performance. According to (Gholam Hassan Khajavy, 2018) Self-confidence significantly influences students' willingness to communicate by reducing anxiety and improving speaking fluency. In addition, (Al-Wossabi, 2024) found that self-confidence is positively correlated with English speaking fluency. Additionally (Ilmi, 2024) found a strong relationship between students' confidence and speaking skills, suggesting that students with a higher sense of self-worth are more at ease voicing their thoughts, whereas those with a lower sense of self-worth frequently experience worry and fear. Additionally, (Pratiwi & Prihatini, 2023) discovered that introverted students struggle with psychological issues like shyness, a fear of making mistakes, and a lack of confidence, all of which have a big impact on how well they talk. These results demonstrate how closely speaking confidence and self-perception are related.

Self-efficacy theory also supports the connection between internal belief systems and linguistic performance. Academic self-efficacy is the conviction that one can organize and carry out the necessary actions to accomplish learning objectives (Hayat et al., 2020). Having a strong belief in one's abilities can boost confidence, drive, and perseverance when tackling academic challenges, such as learning a foreign language. In a similar vein, students who have a higher level of self-efficacy are more likely to speak up during speaking exercises, accept failure, and communicate clearly (Graham, 2022). Additionally, it was discovered by (Chen & Hsu, 2022) that self-efficacy-based interventions can improve students' self-esteem and willingness to communicate in English. Internal assessments and beliefs appear to have a major impact on speaking performance, according to this research.

Empirical studies also demonstrate the relationship between psychological factors and speaking ability. (Sumardi et al., n.d.) found that students with higher self-confidence tend to have better speaking skills. (Aprilianti et al., 2022) reported that students with high confidence are more willing to express their ideas in English. (Dewi & Pratami, 2024) revealed that self-esteem correlates positively with speaking ability. Additionally, (Kamilia et al., 2024) emphasized that self-confidence plays a crucial role in motivating students to actively use English in speaking activities. (Purwaningtyastuti et al., 2024) found that students' self-esteem was positively associated with their speaking performance, suggesting that internal self-evaluation contributes to oral communication success.

Several studies have demonstrated that self-perception is closely related to speaking ability. Students who evaluate themselves positively tend to be more confident

and willing to communicate. Conversely, negative self-assessment can lead to anxiety and reduced participation. In addition, self-efficacy theory suggests that individuals who believe in their abilities are more likely to engage actively and persist in learning tasks.

Although numerous studies have explored psychological factors such as self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, most of them focus on these constructs in a general sense. Personal judgment, as a more specific form of self-assessment, has not been widely examined, particularly in relation to speaking confidence. Furthermore, limited research has investigated this relationship in the context of Indonesian junior high school students. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by examining the correlation between personal judgment and students' confidence in speaking English.

METHODOLOGY

In order to investigate the connection between students' confidence in their ability to speak English and their own judgment, this study used a quantitative correlational research approach. Since the goal of the study was to ascertain the degree of relationship between two variables without changing them, a correlational design was chosen. Speaking confidence was considered to be the dependent variable (Y), and personal judgment was considered the independent variable (X).

The study's population consisted of 120 eighth-grade students. A sample of 30 students was selected using random sampling. 30 of the 120 eighth-graders in the population comprised the study's sample. For correlational research, especially in small-scale educational studies, this sample size is methodologically acceptable despite its small size. According to statistics, a minimum sample size of 30 is often considered adequate to approximate normality under the Central Limit Theorem, allowing for significant inferential analysis.

Furthermore, the main goal of this study is to investigate the direction and intensity of the association between speaking confidence and personal judgment rather than extrapolating results to a larger population. In this situation, population representativeness is not as important to correlation analysis as the stability of the correlation coefficient. To ensure that every person of the population had an equal chance of being chosen, this research used a straightforward random sampling procedure. To preserve methodological rigour, the process was applied methodically. First, the school administration provided the researcher with an official list of all 120 eighth-graders. Second, a unique identification number between 1 and 120 was given to every student. Third, a lottery-based randomisation method was used to choose 30 individuals by drawing numbers at random. The random selection approach was carried out without the researcher's interference in selecting particular individuals to ensure transparency and reduce selection bias. In terms of probability, this method ensures that the sample is representative of the entire population. Additionally, all students were taught by the same instructor, followed the same curriculum, and were exposed to comparable teaching techniques, making the population comparatively homogenous in

important aspects. This uniformity bolsters the study's internal validity and validates the use of random sampling.

A speaking exam and a questionnaire were the two tools employed to gather the data. The purpose of the personal judgment questionnaire was to gauge how well students thought they could speak. Eight statements made up the test, which was created using measures of self-perception, self-belief, and self-evaluation in English speaking. Students' opinions of their capacity to articulate thoughts, control speaking anxiety, and carry out oral assignments with assurance were represented in the items.

The personal judgment questionnaire was developed to measure students' self-evaluation of their speaking ability. The development of the instrument involved several steps. First, the researcher identified the theoretical indicators of personal judgment, including self-perception of competence, belief in speaking ability, and evaluation of speaking performance. Second, eight statements were constructed based on these indicators. Third, a four-point Likert scale was used to order the items, strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), agree (3), and strongly agree (4).

The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were assessed following the data collection from the research sample. In SPSS version 22, Pearson Product-Moment correlation was used to assess item validity. At the significance level of 0.05, the correlation coefficient for each item was compared to the critical r-table value. All eight of the items were kept for analysis since they satisfied the validity requirements. Cronbach's Alpha reliability testing produced a coefficient of 0.717, suggesting strong internal consistency. All item scores, which might range from 8 to 32, were added up to determine the overall personal judgment score. Higher scores were indicative of better subjective assessment.

The speaking confidence test was conducted in the form of an individual oral performance. Each student was assessed individually to ensure that the speaking performance reflected their personal level of confidence without peer influence. The procedure was carried out as follows. First, each student was called individually. Second, students were asked to introduce themselves in English. No specific time limit was imposed during the task in order to allow students to speak naturally according to their level of confidence. As a result, the duration of responses varied among students, with some students speaking for approximately two minutes or longer.

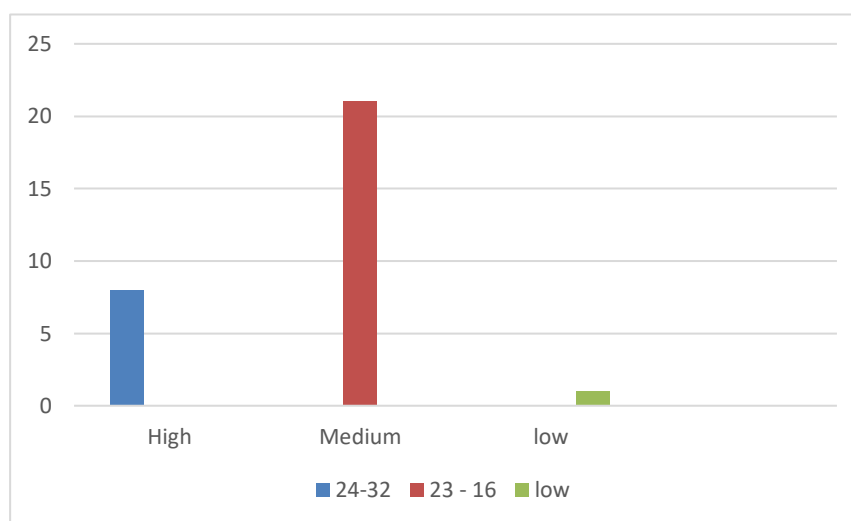
Students' performances were evaluated based on confidence-related indicators, including fluency, pronunciation clarity, voice projection, eye contact, and willingness to communicate. A scale from 1 to 5 was used to rate each indicator. The total speaking confidence score was calculated by summing all component scores, with higher scores indicating higher levels of speaking confidence. To ensure consistency in scoring, predetermined assessment criteria were applied during the evaluation process. The scores obtained from the speaking test were then tabulated and analyzed using SPSS version 22 for correlation analysis.

RESULT/FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to evaluate the data in order to ascertain the correlation between students' speaking confidence and their own judgment.

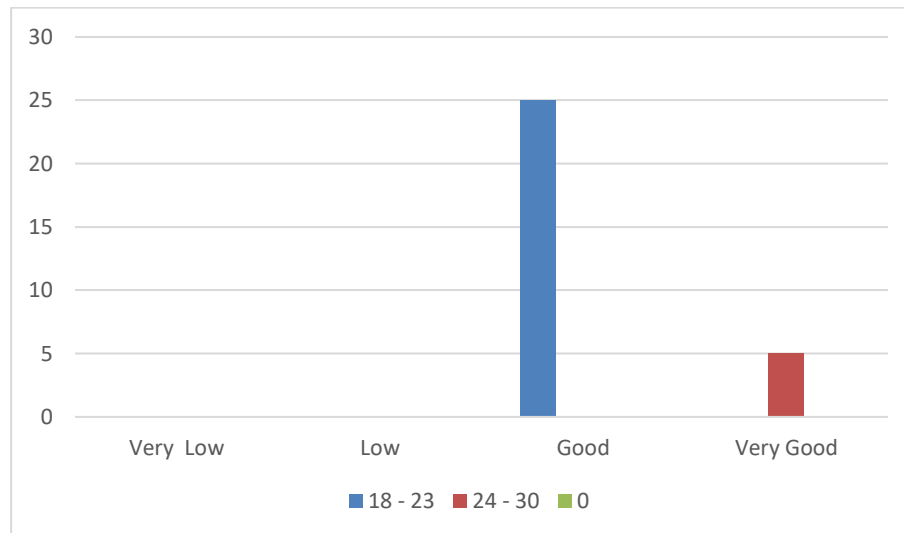
The descriptive statistics indicated that most students demonstrated a moderate level of personal judgment. Out of 30 students, 21 students (70%) were categorized in the medium level, 8 students (26.7%) in the high level, and 1 student (3.3%) in the low level. These findings suggest that the majority of students tend to evaluate their speaking ability at a moderate level.

Figure 1. illustrates the distribution of students' personal judgment levels.



Regarding speaking confidence, 25 students (83.3%) were categorized as having good confidence, while 5 students (16.7%) were classified as very good. No students were found in the low or very low categories. This indicates that students generally exhibited positive confidence in speaking English.

Figure 2. presents the distribution of speaking confidence levels.



Before evaluating the hypothesis, preparatory tests were carried out. Speaking confidence was not regularly distributed, according to the Shapiro-Wilk normality test (Sig. = 0.033 < 0.05), whereas personal judgment was (Sig. = 0.156 > 0.05). An study of Spearman's rho correlation was used because one variable did not satisfy the normalcy assumed.

Table 1. *The Result of Spearman's Rho Correlation Analysis*

Variabels	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Personal Judgment	0.741	0.0000	30
Speaking Confidence			

The study's findings show a substantial and statistically significant positive relationship between students' confidence in their ability to speak English and their personal judgment ($r = 0.741$, $p < 0.05$). This result suggests that personal judgment may serve as a fundamental psychological factor that influences students' communication conduct rather than only being linked to speaking confidence.

A connection of this size indicates that students' preparedness to participate in speaking activities is significantly influenced by their internal assessment of their skills. Positive self-evaluation increases the likelihood that students will show signs of confidence, such as keeping eye contact, speaking clearly, and showing a desire to engage. On the other hand, students who have a low opinion of themselves could shy away from speaking assignments, hesitate before speaking, and feel more nervous.

Therefore, in language performance, personal judgment serves as both a behavioral regulator and a cognitive assessment. These results provide significant support for the self-evaluation theory paradigm put forward by (Santrock, 2010) which highlights how people's opinions of their own talents directly affect their behavioral choices and performance outcomes. Students who thought they were capable were more likely to act confidently when speaking in front of an audience.

Additionally, the findings support the self-efficacy hypothesis, which holds that effort, perseverance, and resilience are determined by one's conviction in one's own abilities. In the context of speaking, personal judgment may serve as a domain-specific kind of self-efficacy, according to this study's high association.

By presenting personal judgment as a more direct and internalized evaluative process in contrast to more general categories like self-esteem, this study significantly advances current thinking. Personal judgment is more closely associated with performance in speaking activities because it concentrates on task-related self-evaluation, whereas self-esteem represents overall self-worth.

The results of this study are in line with earlier studies that emphasize the influence of psychological variables on speaking performance. For example, positive self-evaluation boosts students' confidence in presenting ideas, according to Aprilianti et al. (2022). In a similar vein, Dewi and Pratami (2024) discovered a favorable correlation between speaking skill and self-confidence.

However, by separating personal judgment as a separate component, this study provides a more nuanced contribution. This study highlights the process of internal appraisal that comes before confidence, in contrast to earlier research that focuses more generally on self-confidence or self-esteem.

Furthermore, the current study indicates that cognitive appraisal (personal judgment) may act as a prelude to emotional reactions like fear or confidence, whereas Khajavy (2018) highlighted the significance of emotions in desire to share. As a result, this study adds to the body of literature by bridging the gap between cognitive self-assessment and observed speaking behavior, especially in the understudied Indonesian EFL environment.

The study's conclusions have important ramifications for English language instruction. They contend that enhancing pupils' speaking skills requires addressing their internal psychological processes in addition to language education.

The following techniques can be used by educators to promote good personal judgment:

1. Positive, Organized Feedback
Instead of concentrating only on mistakes, teachers should provide students precise, helpful criticism that emphasizes their strengths. Students' self perception is reshaped as a result.
2. Assisted Self-Evaluation
Including reflective exercises, such self-evaluation checklists, helps students become conscious of their skills and evaluate their development objectively.
3. Speaking Exposure Gradually
To gradually boost confidence, teachers should provide speaking exercises that

move from low-risk to high-risk scenarios pair work, group discussion, individual presentation).

4. Error-Tolerant Learning Environment
Fear is lessened, and involvement is increased when a supportive environment is created where errors are accepted as a necessary part of learning.

5. Scaffolding and Modelling
Giving pupils organized direction and examples makes them feel more capable, which enhances their ability to make their own decisions.

By using these techniques, educators may influence students' internal belief systems and performance, resulting in greater, longer-lasting gains in speaking confidence.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between students' confidence in their ability to speak English and their own judgments. The results showed that the two variables had a high and statistically significant positive association ($r = 0.741$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that students who have more favourable opinions of their own speaking abilities also typically exhibit greater confidence when participating in speaking exercises. The findings demonstrate how crucial internal self-evaluation is to determining pupils' psychological preparedness to speak English. Although linguistic proficiency remains crucial, students' motivation to communicate and participate in speaking exercises is strongly influenced by their perceptions of their own skills. Personal judgment can therefore be seen as a psychological factor that affects learning English.

Pedagogically, the findings suggest that English teachers should focus on improving students' language skills while also fostering positive self-evaluation through supportive feedback and a low-anxiety classroom environment. Encouraging reflective practices and constructive reinforcement may help enhance students' speaking confidence. Overall, this study confirms that personal judgment is significantly associated with speaking confidence, and greater attention to students' psychological development may enhance speaking performance in EFL classrooms.

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