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## An Analysis of Senior High School Students Factors to Confidence in Speaking English

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### ABSTRACT

Despite years of English instruction, many Indonesian senior high school students remain hesitant to speak due to anxiety, fear of mistakes, and low self-efficacy. Speaking confidence is influenced by both internal factors, such as self-perception, motivation, and linguistic competence, and external factors, including teacher support, peer interaction, and classroom environment. This study aims to identify and analyze the internal and external determinants of students' confidence in speaking English. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through open-ended questionnaires distributed to 25 eleventh-grade students at MA Sirnamiskin Bandung. Responses were analyzed thematically to identify recurring themes. Findings reveal that psychological barriers—such as anxiety, low self-esteem, and fear of negative evaluation—significantly hinder students' confidence. External elements, including supportive teacher feedback, peer encouragement, and school programs like English Day, were found to enhance confidence. Consistent practice through media exposure and real-life interactions also contributed positively. The study concludes that improving speaking confidence requires a holistic approach that addresses emotional, social, and experiential aspects of learning. These results provide practical implications for teachers and school administrators to design supportive and engaging speaking activities that foster students' confidence in English communication.

## 1. Introduction

English is a global language that plays a crucial role in education, business, and international communication. In Indonesia, the 2013 Curriculum emphasizes communicative competence, particularly the ability to express ideas and opinions clearly in spoken English. Speaking confidently is not merely a linguistic skill but also an indicator of effective language acquisition, as it involves the production, reception, and delivery of information in an interactive process (Brown, 2007). However, developing speaking confidence remains a challenge for many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Research has shown that speaking skills are influenced by both linguistic factors—such as grammar, vocabulary, and

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pronunciation—and non-linguistic factors, including affective variables and pragmatic competence (Hinkel, 2006; Soodmand Afshar & Asakereh, 2016). Students require not only adequate language knowledge but also the ability to manage fluency, accuracy, and adaptability in various communication contexts.

Self-confidence is a fundamental component of human behavior and is essential for successful learning activities (Brown, 2001). In reality, many senior high school students in Indonesia still hesitate to speak English despite years of study. For example, Hamid and Rasyid (2018) found that only 37% of students felt confident speaking English in class, with fear of mistakes, limited vocabulary, and pronunciation difficulties as common obstacles. Other studies also indicate that factors such as shyness, negative evaluation, and lack of preparation contribute to low participation in speaking activities (Hamouda, 2012; Ur, 1996). Speaking is considered one of the most anxiety-inducing skills in language learning (Brown, 2007). Anxiety, self-perception, motivation, and the learning environment are among the factors that shape students' willingness to communicate (Safa, 2020). Psychological factors, including self-efficacy and intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, play a significant role in determining whether students engage in speaking activities (Bashosh et al., 2013; Leeming, 2017 in Dong, 2023). For instance, students with strong self-efficacy are more likely to persist despite challenges, while motivation can stem from personal enjoyment or external demands.

External factors are equally important. Teacher support, peer interaction, and classroom atmosphere can either enhance or hinder speaking confidence. Supportive teachers who provide constructive feedback without judgment, as well as positive peer relationships, can encourage students to take risks and participate actively. In contrast, competitive or unsupportive environments may increase anxiety and discourage communication. Despite the growing recognition of the importance of speaking confidence, research in the Indonesian senior high school context remains limited, particularly studies focusing on the interplay between internal and external factors. Previous studies have often examined general speaking skills or language proficiency without specifically addressing confidence as a distinct construct. This gap highlights the need for targeted investigations into the factors that influence students' self-confidence in speaking English, especially in environments where English is not used in daily communication.

This study addresses that gap by analyzing both internal and external factors affecting senior high school students' confidence in speaking English. Internal factors include self-efficacy, motivation, personality traits, and prior learning experiences, while external factors cover teacher support, peer influence, and the learning environment. Understanding these factors can inform educators and policymakers in designing strategies and activities that foster supportive, engaging, and low-anxiety environments, ultimately enhancing students' confidence in using English for communication. The objective of this research is to identify and analyze the internal and external determinants that shape senior high school students' speaking confidence, with the aim of providing practical recommendations for improving confidence in English communication.

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## **2. Methodology**

### ***Instrument***

The main instrument used in this study was an open-ended qualitative questionnaire designed to explore the internal and external factors influencing students' confidence in speaking English. The questionnaire consisted of approximately ten questions, focusing on self-perception, psychological barriers, environmental influences, practice habits, and suggestions for improvement. To ensure clarity, the questions were written in simple English and Bahasa Indonesia, enabling participants to respond comfortably and accurately. The instrument underwent content validation by two experts—one university lecturer in English Language Education and one English teacher from the target school—who confirmed its alignment with the research objectives. Face validity was tested through a pilot trial with 5–10 students to check clarity, readability, and relevance.

### ***Data Collection***

Data were collected from 25 Grade XI students at MA Sirnamiskin Bandung during the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure they had prior experience in English speaking activities, such as presentations, discussions, or oral assessments. The researcher obtained permission from the school and informed consent from participants before data collection. The questionnaire was distributed online via Google Forms, allowing students to respond individually in a comfortable and non-pressured environment. Responses were submitted anonymously to maintain confidentiality.

### ***Data Analysis***

The collected qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns. First, all responses were compiled into a single document, with each participant assigned a code (e.g., P1, P2) to ensure anonymity. The researcher familiarized themselves with the data by reading the responses repeatedly, then generated initial codes reflecting key ideas, such as “fear of making mistakes,” “teacher encouragement,” or “peer support.” Similar codes were grouped into broader categories, including self-perception, psychological factors, environmental influences, and practice/exposure. Themes were reviewed and refined to ensure accuracy and representativeness, with supporting quotes selected from participants' responses. Triangulation was conducted by comparing questionnaire results with contextual notes from the school environment and teacher input, enhancing the credibility of the findings.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

This study involved 25 eleventh-grade students from MA Sirnamiskin Bandung who completed an open-ended questionnaire designed to identify internal and external factors influencing their confidence in speaking English. The questionnaire

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consisted of five main components: Self-Perception of Speaking Confidence, Psychological Factors, Environmental Factors, Practice and Exposure, and Closing Reflections. The instrument was validated by experts and tested through a pilot study before distribution. The complete list of questions used in the questionnaire is presented in Tabel 1.

Tabel 1. Questionnaire Items

No	Component	Question Item
1.	Self-Perception of Speaking Confidence	How do you feel when you are asked to speak in English in class?
2.	Self-Perception of Speaking Confidence	In which situations do you feel most confident speaking English?
3.	Psychological Factors	What makes you nervous or afraid to speak English?
4.	Psychological Factors	How do you usually react when you make a mistake while speaking English?
5.	Environmental Factors	How do your teachers help you feel more confident in speaking English?
6.	Environmental Factors	How do your classmates influence your confidence in speaking English?
7.	Practice and Exposure	How often do you practice speaking English outside the classroom?
8.	Practice and Exposure	What activities help you improve your English-speaking confidence?
9.	Closing Reflections	Have you ever used English in real-life situations? Please explain.
10.	Closing Reflections	What suggestions do you have for improving students' confidence in speaking English?

The findings from the questionnaire reveal that students' confidence in speaking English is shaped by a combination of psychological, social, and practical factors. While many students struggle with anxiety, fear of mistakes, and lack of self-assurance, they also recognize the importance of support from teachers and peers, opportunities for practice, and a safe, engaging environment. Enhancing students' speaking confidence thus requires a holistic approach that addresses both emotional and linguistic dimensions of language learning. While some students demonstrate partial confidence during controlled or rehearsed activities (such as reading or singing in English), spontaneous speaking remains a source of discomfort. However, their confidence tends to improve when they are familiar with the topic or when they feel supported by their teachers and classmates.

Psychologically, many students struggle with feelings of inferiority when comparing themselves with classmates who are more fluent in English. Despite this, some students use such comparisons as motivation to improve their speaking ability. The school environment itself is considered fairly supportive. Activities such as English Day, speech competitions, and teacher encouragement contribute positively to students' motivation. Teachers who avoid judgmental attitudes and instead provide constructive feedback play a crucial role in fostering confidence.

However, the opportunities for informal English-speaking practice are still limited. Outside the classroom, the frequency of English use varies greatly among students.

Some actively engage with English through games, music, movies, or social media, while others rarely use English outside school. Nonetheless, students who have had real-life experience using English—such as talking with tourists.

Table 2. Summarizes the Responses

Component	Emerging Themes	Representative Responses
Self-Perception of Speaking Confidence	Nervousness, fear of mispronunciation, partial confidence in familiar contexts	"I feel nervous when asked to speak, but confident if I already understand the topic."
Psychological Factors	Fear of being laughed at, low self-esteem, social comparison, motivation through peer performance	"I feel shy when others speak fluently, but I try to learn from them."
Environmental Factors	Importance of teacher support, peer encouragement, role of school activities	"Supportive teachers help me feel brave to speak."
Practice and Exposure	Variation in practice frequency, influence of media exposure, importance of regular use	"I often practice by watching English videos or playing games."
Closing Question	Real-life experiences with English, suggestions for improvement	"I've used English with tourists. More speaking events would help me gain confidence."

The results were interpreted in line with the main research objectives.

Table 3. To Identify Internal (Psychological) Factors Affecting Students' English-Speaking Confidence

Internal Factors	Frequency Mentioned	Description
Anxiety and Nervousness	Frequently	Students fear being wrong and judged by peers or teachers.
Self-Efficacy	Occasionally	Students feel more confident when they know the topic.
Motivation	Frequently	Students are motivated by peers and personal goals (e.g., study abroad).

Table 4. To Analyze The Role Of External (Environmental) Factors In Shaping Confidence

External Factors	Frequency Mentioned	Description
Teacher Support	Frequently	Positive, non-judgmental encouragement from teachers boosts confidence.
Peer Encouragement	Moderately	Some students benefit from peer support, others feel pressured.
School Environment	Occasionally	English Day and competitions promote confidence in speaking.

Table 5. To Examine The Impact Of Practice And Exposure On Students' Speaking Confidence

Practical Elements	Frequency Mentioned	Description
Media Practice	Frequently	Students practice through social media, games, music, and movies.
Real-Life Experience	Occasionally	Speaking with tourists or during online games builds practical confidence
Frequency of Practice	Varies	Ranges from rare to daily practice, depending on personal initiative.

The results of this study demonstrate the complexity of high school students' self-confidence in their English speaking abilities. Several important elements, including psychological barriers, social environment, motivation, and the importance of practice, were found through the examination of students' responses. The following interpretation of these results takes into account the hypotheses and current research over the past five years. When speaking in English, some students reported feeling anxious, worried, and afraid of making mistakes. Their confidence in speaking was greatly hampered by these psychological barriers. Language anxiety remains one of the strongest predictors of speaking performance and self-confidence in EFL learners, according to Wang and Zhan (2021) in article (Siegel, n.d.). This is in line with students' anxiety about being criticized or ridiculed when they speak in front of their peers.

Furthermore, to create a psychologically safe learning environment, teachers must actively address emotional variables such as anxiety and shyness, according to research by (Khajavy et al., 2025). According to this study, peer comparison and classroom pressure caused anxiety in some children even when they reported helpful professors. Students who showed greater confidence when speaking generally indicated that they were more prepared or knowledgeable about the subject. This illustrates the idea of self-efficacy, which is important for speaking effectiveness. EFL students with stronger self-efficacy are more likely to take risks during speaking tasks and persist through communication difficulties, as noted by (Hermagustiana et al., 2021). Regarding motivation, the majority of students stated that they wanted to improve in English for practical reasons, such as studying. The majority of students stated that they were motivated to improve in English for practical reasons, such as studying abroad or communicating online. This is consistent with the findings of (Hermagustiana et al., 2021), who highlighted the importance of instrumental and integrative motivation in helping second language learners develop their confidence in speaking. It is clear that external influences such as peer encouragement and instructor assistance have an impact. While some students reported feeling pressured compared to their more fluent peers, others said that supportive teachers gave them more confidence.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study investigated the internal and external factors influencing senior high school students' confidence in speaking English. The findings reveal that

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psychological elements—such as anxiety, low self-esteem, and fear of negative evaluation—are the main internal barriers to speaking confidence. External factors, including teacher support, peer relationships, and a positive classroom atmosphere, also play a significant role in shaping students' willingness to communicate. Consistent exposure to English through media, school programs, and real-life interactions was found to enhance confidence over time. The research successfully addressed its main objective by identifying and analyzing how emotional, social, and experiential aspects interact to influence speaking confidence. The results confirm that fostering a supportive and engaging learning environment, combined with regular and meaningful speaking practice, is essential for building students' self-assurance in English communication.

However, the study has certain limitations, particularly its focus on a single school and the exclusive use of self-reported data, which may not capture the full complexity of students' confidence. Future research could expand to multiple schools and incorporate classroom observations or interviews for richer data. Despite these limitations, the study offers practical insights for teachers and school administrators in designing targeted strategies to promote speaking confidence in EFL contexts.

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