

English only please? Students' views of their self-confidence in spoken English in a Philippines state university

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Abstract - Speaking in front of a crowd necessitates a great deal of courage and confidence in order to adequately explain and communicate your message to the audience. In regards, the researchers utilized a qualitative research approach, specifically Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, in conducting this study. The study seeks to determine how students perceive their confidence in spoken English, as well as the precise tactics they use for confidence reinforcement. A total of 22 second year English major students, using semi-structured interview the current study investigates their perceptions and views about their self-confidence in terms of spoken English in a Philippine State University as well as what certain techniques and approaches do they employ for confidence reinforcement. The results showed that majority of them were viewing themselves as mediocre users of the said language and are still in the process of learning. They are still working with their fluency as well as expanding their vocabularies. The most dominant learning approach students employ is the traditional way which includes reading books, novels and other literary works. Future researchers may investigate the students' oral recitation approach preference and conventional learning mediums which were not included in the current study.

Keywords: self-confidence; spoken English; Philippine university; learning approaches; perception

I. INTRODUCTION

A language is a set of arbitrary vocal symbols that enables interaction and communication between members of a certain culture or between those who have learned that culture's system. However, in many classrooms, it is not encouraged, and speaking is not tested in learners' exams. Nonetheless, speaking is a skill that may be learned by listening to yourself talk and repeating it back to yourself. Along with using brief inquiries and conversations in the classroom, teachers can do drills on the fundamentals of language usage (Bashir et al, 2011).

Speaking in front of a lot of people takes a lot of courage and confidence to properly explain and deliver what you are really trying to emphasize to the audience. Inayah and Lisdawati (2021) highlighted that students who are having difficulties speaking in front of a lot of people are often lacking in self-confidence. As a result, it hinders their ability to express themselves convincingly in front of a crowd. On the other hand, students who have high self-confidence were able to emphasize and successfully convey what they were trying to say to their target audience (Fatmawati et al, 2020; Tridinanti, 2018; Gurler, 2015; Elsayed, 2022; Chand, 2021). These confident students have the capacity to emphasize important ideas and create a lasting impression on their intended audience. They are able to successfully manage the difficulties of public speaking because of their self-assured manner and confidence in their abilities, which leads to their ability to communicate clearly and effectively.

Additionally, studies have proven that self-confidence and English-speaking skills have a significant correlation (Gustaman, 2015). These findings indicate that a person's self-confidence has an impact on his or her proficiency in spoken English. For instance, confident students tend to be more vocal about their opinions, thus being found to be more active in speaking English. Their confidence empowers them to actively participate in class discussions and share their thoughts and ideas with ease. Also, they are more likely to have a positive mindset in their approach to language learning, allowing themselves more growth and improvement. Conversely, those who lack confidence are less likely to participate during class discussions, as they are usually held back by fear or anxiety, which inhibits their willingness to express themselves in English. This reluctance to participate can consequently impede their progress in learning the language and limit their opportunities for language practice and improvement.

The above-mentioned studies focus on the factors that affect the learners' confidence, or lack thereof, in their oral proficiency in speaking English as their second language, as well as strategies on how students can maintain or build confidence under those factors. However, understanding how the students view their confidence in their spoken English has been given little emphasis and thus needs to be explored, more specifically in a Philippine state university context. It is significant to study the students' perceptions, as it can help elicit meaningful insights concerning their confidence. Furthermore, it is equally important to explore the specific approaches employed by Filipino students to reinforce their confidence when it comes to speaking English. In relation to this, the researchers aim to answer the following research questions: (a) How do these students perceive their confidence in spoken English? (b) What specific approaches do they employ for confidence reinforcement?

1.1 Students' Self Confidence

Self-confidence is a critical aspect of effective spoken English, as it helps individuals to overcome fear and stuttering and deliver messages or information proficiently. In Salim's (2015; cf. Susanto et al, 2022) definition, self-confidence is an individual's general evaluation of themselves, which can be approved or disapproved, liked or disliked by the individual. Several studies have explored the importance of self-confidence in spoken English and its impact on learners' abilities.

In a literature review by Amhar and Maulina (2021; Nety, 2020; Moon & Lindblom, 1994; Hirschberg, 1970), the authors emphasized the significance of self-confidence in achieving one's goals in life. They also highlighted the Lauster theory, which explains that self-confidence is an

individual's belief in their ability, and actions taken are not too apprehensive but are practical and effective. The theory supports the importance of self-confidence in spoken English, as learners who possess self-confidence can speak without fear and deliver messages proficiently. In other words, self-confidence can be correlated to one's self-esteem which can be applied in actual scenarios. It can be noticed that having self-confidence, particularly while speaking verbally, is a prerequisite in most learning institutions or environments. This integrates learners' awareness of their overall potential, allowing them to see their strengths and shortcomings. According to their research, the more confident you are in your talents, the more likely you are to be practical.

Similarly, in Nadiyah et al (2019) study, the researchers investigated the correlation between self-confidence and speaking. They found that many learners struggle with speaking English due to a lack of self-confidence. Learners who lack self-confidence may experience anxiety and fear of making mistakes, which can hinder effective communication. Learners' speaking performance suffers as a result of self-criticism, doubts, and comparing oneself to others, resulting in difficulty expressing one's thoughts. Individuals who communicate with confidence, on the other hand, build strong communication and are more likely to attain their intended results. They have the ability to effectively affect the perceptions and attitudes of the audience, leaving them with a favourable impression of the speaker. This signifies the importance of self-confidence in speaking to avoid stuttering which may confuse audiences resulting to a much more effective communication since this would reflect how students carry themselves whenever they are presenting in an educational institution.

Self-confidence is a crucial aspect of effective spoken English, as it helps individuals overcome fear and stuttering, enabling them to communicate proficiently. Studies have highlighted the importance of self-confidence in achieving life goals and establishing good communication. The Lauster theory and other studies emphasize the significance of self-confidence in achieving one's goals and establishing good communication. Self-confidence is correlated to one's self-esteem, making it essential for learners to speak without fear and deliver messages proficiently. In learning institutions, self-confidence is a prerequisite for effective communication, as it helps learners recognize their strengths and shortcomings, and build strong communication skills. Educators should focus on building self-confidence in fearless speakers to enhance their speaking skills and overall success in life.

1.2 Learning Approaches for Confidence Reinforcement

English speakers who are confident tend to speak more, which means that they improve faster. As people become more confident in their abilities and acknowledge that their mistakes don't matter, speaking English becomes more fun, and people tend to do it more (Utari et al, 2022). As such, building confidence is crucial to students in state universities especially those whose major is English. There are abundant amount of various learning approaches that can be done for confidence reinforcement in speaking English. To further expound this analysis, below are some examples of confidence reinforcement in spoken English and its critical analysis.

A research published by Pale and Kamlasi (2021) entitled "Mirror Talking Strategy to Enhance Speaking Skill of English Department Students of Timor University" suggested that one of the learning approaches to reinforce confidence in spoken English is through mirror talking. It is an activity wherein the person stands in front of a mirror and says positive affirmations repeatedly. This has a proven positive psychological effect on yourselves as it was proven in their research when they compared the speech performances of those students who practiced mirror talking and those who did not. Furthermore, another variation of this method is the literal translation which is talking to the mirror itself. This works in a way as the person pretends that the mirror is people listening to that person. This reinforces confidence as it lets the speaker get used to the pressure of talking to a lot of people and lets the speaker have a look at themselves while they speak thus gradually building confidence.

Confident English speakers improve faster and speak more, making it more enjoyable. Building confidence is crucial for students in state universities, especially those majoring in English. Learning approaches like mirror talking and literal translation can help reinforce

confidence in spoken English. Mirror talking involves repeatedly saying positive affirmations in front of a mirror, which has a positive psychological effect on speech performance. The literal translation, where the speaker pretends to be listening to the mirror, gradually builds confidence by allowing the speaker to adjust to the pressure of speaking to a large audience.

II. METHOD

2.1 Qualitative Research Design and Approach

The study intends to determine the English students' view of their self-confidence in spoken English at a Philippine State University. The researchers used a qualitative type of research since this study can be answered by condensing the oral verbatim of the respondents. This paper used Phenomenology in conducting qualitative research. Phenomenology is the systematic inquiry of social phenomena occurring in natural settings. It refers to a study designed to understand participants' subjective, lived experiences and perspectives. Phenomenology is founded on the idea that a single experience can be interpreted in a variety of ways and that reality is made up of each participant's interpretation of that experience. The researchers will specifically use Interpretative phenomenological analysis. The researchers used this method to conduct a face-to-face or online interview to gather information about the individual perspectives of English students in their views of their self-confidence in spoken English and interpret the results thereof. The interviews were conducted to determine their perception of their confidence in speaking English, including the ways they assess their confidence, approaches to building confidence, and the effectiveness of these approaches. The results contributed to the understanding of the general experience of self-confidence in spoken English.

Participants

This study intends to investigate the viewpoint and insights of English major students on their self-confidence in terms of spoken English using a qualitative approach. Since the authors are themselves Eastern Visayas State University students, the choice of the research locale was solely based on accessibility and practicality. A total of twenty-two (22) students from Eastern Visayas State University, specifically second-year students pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in English Language, under the College of Arts and Sciences, took part in the study. Since only the English major students at EVSU were asked to participate, purposive-convenience sampling was utilized in assembling the participants. In addition, only those who were available at the time of the interview were given the opportunity to do so. The participants were chosen based on an inclusion and exclusion criteria. This includes that the participants need to be regular Bachelor of Arts in English Language students, meaning they couldn't be transferee or shiftee-students and must not have any issue with absenteeism.

Data Collection and Analysis

Prior to collecting data, an ethical agreement was reached between the researchers and the participants. The consent given to the interviewee, permission to record the interview using a mobile device, the participant's right to withdraw, and the use of aliases to anonymously identify participants in order to protect the secrecy of their identities, such as S1, S2, etc., are all covered by this. The researchers used a semi-structured interview to gather the data, asking two (2) questions on the first study question and another two (2) about the second. The interview was conducted in a face-to-face environment within the University. The researchers transcribed the recorded interview, which was then employed in the data analysis. Thematic analysis was used by the researchers during the data analysis process. It is a technique for finding patterns (themes) in data and then evaluating and reporting on them. It gives your data collection a basic organization and a detailed description (Boyatzis, 1988 as referenced in Braun & Clarke, 2012). The primary goal of this study is to ascertain how the English students at the Philippine State University perceive their level of self-confidence in spoken English. To do this, the researchers will group these factors into themes and describe each theme in turn in order to develop a general understanding of how each theme affects the students' confidence. A theme, which denotes a certain degree of structured response or meaning within the data set, captures a significant aspect of the data in respect to the study topic (Braun & Clarke (2012). Thematic analysis is the best

method for assisting researchers in classifying and organizing the common factors that influence confidence. The data have undergone through different cycle to come up with appropriate code for every significant statements. In Vivo, at the end was the coding process used by the researchers to come up with the best codes, categories and themes.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section discussed the findings from the interviews conducted as part of the current study, which aims to explore how students at a Philippine State University view their self-confidence in spoken English. It will be determined how these students perceive their confidence in spoken English as well as the specific strategies they use to build that confidence.

3.1 How do these students perceive their confidence in spoken English?

3.1.1 Can articulately communicate using English language.

The participants' perceptions of how confident they feel in their ability to speak English differ from one another, according to the data collected. The following accomplishments helped us assess whether a participant is an effective English speaker. (1) someone who has achieved goals and great experiences that helped shape him into the person he is today; (2) someone who is confident to talk about his efficiency in using/speaking the language.

"I perceive myself as someone who has achieved many, achieved many feats, I think, that made me into the person I am today." [SP22]

"I see myself as somewhat efficient when I speak English as it's, it's actually my second language." [SP17]

These two important statements imply that the participants are proficient in English and have the self-assurance necessary to speak in front of others. Filipino kids should be exposed to as much English as they can in English-speaking classes and other settings. The type of learning environment that will be created in the classroom should be decided by the teachers, since this will increase the students' belief in themselves (Maramag-Manalastas, 2018).

3.1.2 Average English language user in the process of development.

On the other hand, (1) student who is an average user of English language and (2) student who cannot speak straight English yet are feats mostly showed by the participants. This can be seen in the following data significant statements:

"I perceive myself in speaking using English language as an individual who is not really fluent in speaking English since I still have some problems with my grammar and the way I construct my sentences." [SP13]

"I am slightly confident since I've taken this course and since this is, we are required to speak in English in almost all of our subjects." [SP19]

"I perceive myself, in speaking or using English language, not totally good, but I can understand it" [SP2]

"I perceive myself as an average student because I am just a student who can speak basic English and I can't consider myself fluent yet because I don't have the confidence to speak English" [SP6]

"I perceive myself as a mediocre user of the language since English language is not our native language..." [SP3]

"I would definitely say I can speak okay using the English language but when whenever I speak like in front of the class for example, my anxiety gets the better of me and when it does I my mind goes blank, and I will not make it half across the point that I am trying to make" [SP5]

These statements demonstrate that students at a Philippine state university primarily use the medium-level English language. This implies that they are not 100% confident enough when they are speaking English. The findings are supported by study of (Rahayu & Osman, 2019; Susanto et al, 2022). This aspect has a significant impact on students' motivation levels and

frequency of English practice. These show that students still have many problems of speaking English. Therefore, the teacher could give the effective strategies to overcome students' problems.

3.1.3 Lacks confidence in speaking and still learning.

Apart from some students feeling confident and others feeling average, some of them perceive themselves as somewhat lacking in confidence because they are still discovering the language. One participant admitted that he or she is not quite so proficient in speaking the language as he or she is still learning the language [SP 18]. Similarly, SP4 mentioned that he or she is not particularly excellent but can, however, form simple sentences since he or she is still in the process of learning.

"I am not yet so proficient in it because I'm still learning to speak the language [SP18]."

"I'm not so good in English but I can able to make simple sentences and I'm aware that I'm not good in it and I'm still on the process of learning [SP4]."

Additionally, another student-participant expressed that he/she is "a student who naturally tries to improve herself while speaking English [SP7]."

These responses from participants reveal that many students at a Philippine state university still lack confidence in speaking English and are still trying to be proficient in the said language. This implies that students tend to feel less confident when they view their speaking skills as below average. The study of Inayah and Lisdawati (2021) backs up these findings. It has been found that students who have trouble speaking usually struggle with their motivation and self-confidence, making it harder for them to determine their actual abilities. Furthermore, various researches identified a link between confidence and speaking, one of which is the Nadiah et al (2019) study. According to them, the lack of confidence of the learners may lead to anxiety and fear of making mistakes, both of which can impede clear communication. Conversely, people who communicate with confidence create good communication and are more likely to get the results they want.

3.2 What specific approaches do they employ for confidence reinforcement?

3.2.1 Applying traditional way of learning in practical scenarios.

The participants' approaches include applying the traditional way of learning such as reading books and watching movies. They also apply the knowledge they acquired from those processes in real life interactions such as talking with peers.

"I would read a book, a mystery book or romance or manga, whatever, as a way to develop my knowledge in English. And I would converse using the English language with other people who are much older or younger, who is familiar with the language as well... These approaches have helped me in growing up and I also found my own strategy." [SP20]

"...and I try to read more because when I do, I learn a lot of words then I can use them whenever I speak." [SP05]

In these two significant statements, respondents stated that they read books and speak with others who speak English to improve their language skills. They have developed and discovered their plan with the use of these methods. Additionally, they highlighted how reading helps them pick up new vocabulary that they may use in their daily lives.

3.2.2 Using digital learning medium for confidence reinforcement.

The participants utilize the technology in this digital world to help them gain confidence. They look up for help in the internet and other social media platforms as a way to improve their confidence in speaking English.

"First is relying on social media platforms and then the next technique that I did to improve my self-confidence is I practiced speaking in front of the mirror. [SP01]

"I'm watching Tiktok like on how to boost your confidence or being a positive person even if your English is not good." [SP15]

These important statements showed how students rely on digital and technological help in order to boost their self-confidence. Through watching videos or scrolling on social media students learn new things which they can apply to themselves and use it as a technique. As technologies grow it is a given that it can be a medium for aid and support just like how it helps these students in gaining confidence in speaking English.

3.2.3 Usage of English language in a day-to-day basis

Some participants stated that the technique is using English language in a day-to-day basis like having conversations in English or in simple things like interacting with other people through the use of English language.

"...and then the next technique that I did to improve my self-confidence is I practiced speaking in front of the mirror." [SP1]

"Talking to someone, through that there is an interaction and also by that, you can gain knowledge from that person." [SP4]

In these two statements, the technique they used to increase their self-confidence showed that respondents frequently improved their public speaking abilities in front of a mirror. Also, when they communicate with someone, they have the chance to interact with that person and learn from them.

"I try to speak English in more settings even if it is not required. Even in daily conversations with my friends or even my family or even just anyone that I converse with. So, I try to speak more English." [SP19]

"I would read a book, a mystery book or romance or manga, whatever, as a way to develop my knowledge in English. And I would converse using the English language with other people who are much older or younger, who is familiar with the language as well... These approaches have helped me in growing up and I also found my own strategy." [SP20]

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3.2.4 Participating orally in class to boost confidence.

Another approach or technique used by students is through actively participating during class discussions which is also a great way to boost confidence because you can always practice in class your English grammar, pronunciation, intonations and etc.

"Another is really participating during class discussions...these techniques definitely helped me in molding myself as an English major student which I know that self-confidence"

The respondents stated that participating in class discussions had helped them grow into English majors who appreciated confidence. Respondents also mentioned that participating in class discussions is an effective way to increase their self-confidence. This is because they get to practice their English while learning from their lecturers in the classroom.

IV. CONCLUSION

The current study was carried out to investigate the perspectives of English major students at a Philippine state university on their spoken English skills as well as how they grow their confidence. The majority of the replies acquired during data collection revealed that learners have varying assessments of their self-confidence in terms of spoken English skills, but they were all committed to practicing and aiming for progress. Furthermore, data obtained demonstrated that, while the traditional strategy was the most commonly employed by these learners, students employ a variety of strategies to build their self-confidence that they believe are efficient and effective in their separate instances.

Furthermore, future studies may look at the elements that influence English major students' self-confidence, as well as how they manage and adapt. Further research into how digital media influences their self-esteem may also be considered. Such critical topics, such as their oral recitation technique preference and insights into conventional learning mediums, which were not addressed in the current study, may be addressed in future research.

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