



THE ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' SELF-CONFIDENCES IN PUBLIC SPEAKING AT POLITEKNIK TONGGAK EQUATOR

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ABSTRACT

Public speaking is a vital communication skill essential in personal, academic, and professional contexts. It enables individuals to convey ideas effectively, persuade audiences, and leave a lasting impression. One critical factor influencing success in Public Speaking is self-confidence, the belief in one's ability to perform well in making statements and doing presentation. However, the students struggle to build this self-confidence due to fear of judgment, limited experience, and lack of effective feedback as the challenges. The research method of this study is to acknowledge the common challenges about their self-confidence in Public Speaking. The participants of the research are the students from English Business Professional Communication which consists of 35 students. Our research is using observation sheet, the data collection was conducted using Google Form. In the data collection, the survey consisted of 12 structured questions designed to assess students' personal experiences, perceptions, and obstacles related to public speaking and self-confidence. The result of the survey shows that approximately 80% of the respondents agreed that they are facing challenges building self-confidence when speaking in Public Speaking. These results indicate a clear need for targeted strategies, such as practice opportunities and constructive feedback, to help students build confidence in their speaking abilities.

Keywords: Public Speaking, Students' self-confidence, communication, Politeknik Tonggak Equator

INTRODUCTION

Public speaking is a critical skill required for various aspects of personal, academic, and professional life. It involves delivering a speech or presentation to an audience in a structured and deliberate manner, often with the intent to inform, influence, or entertain (Ma'mun, 2018). According to Templeton and Fitzgerald, public speaking allows speakers to stand before an audience and communicate effectively, with the goal of persuading, informing, or entertaining listeners. Similarly, Yee, Jafre, and Abidin (2014) note that public speaking shares similarities with presentations typically used in academic or commercial settings. In essence, public speaking enables the speaker to convey valuable information, engage the audience, and deliver a message that leaves a lasting impression.

Self-confidence, defined as an individual's belief in their ability to succeed, plays a fundamental role in effective public speaking. Salim (2015) describes self-confidence as a personal evaluation that affects how people view their strengths, weaknesses, and overall worth. Lauster adds that self-confidence is shaped by life experiences and involves having a realistic belief in one's abilities, which influences how individuals face challenges and tasks

(Kamridah, 2016). In the context of public speaking, confidence allows speakers to articulate their thoughts clearly and overcome nervousness. This belief in one's ability to perform well is essential for managing the fear and anxiety that often accompany public speaking.

One of the key factors in building self-confidence in public speaking is consistent practice. As Carnegie and Esenwein (2007) explain, practice helps speakers refine their speech delivery, improving their vocal projection, body language, and overall presence on stage. Practicing in front of family members or close friends can help speakers gain confidence before addressing a larger audience. Furthermore, practice helps individuals become familiar with the content of their speeches, allowing them to convey their message with greater clarity and control. This repetitive engagement helps to reduce the fear of judgment and the pressure associated with speaking before an audience.

Another factor that influences self-confidence in public speaking is feedback. In classroom settings, feedback is primarily provided by lecturers, which, while valuable, is limited in scope. Peer feedback offers diverse perspectives and can be essential in helping students identify areas for improvement. However, students often lack the ability to provide meaningful critiques, or they may hesitate to offer constructive feedback, reducing the effectiveness of peer evaluations. Without sufficient practice and feedback, many students struggle to build the self-confidence necessary to perform well in public speaking.

In summary, public speaking and self-confidence are intricately linked. Public speaking requires not only fluency but also a strong sense of self-assurance. For students, the key to developing this confidence lies in practice, feedback, and overcoming personal challenges like fear and anxiety. Therefore, this research focused on the students' confidence level. This research explained the confidence level through public speaking at advanced speaking class. The students' confidence level in public speaking can be known through body language, vocal variety, facial expression, and eye contact. Understanding these elements will allow educators to better support students in overcoming the challenges of public speaking and enhancing their performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Definition of Public Speaking

One of the most basic skills in English is Public Speaking. According to Yee (2014, p.11), "Public speaking is the process of speech in which a speaker stands in front of audiences and delivers a speech in a structural manner to persuade, inform, or entertain them". It involves students' self-confidence to practice speaking through a public as an exercise for reducing their anxiety. In terms of communication, public speaking acts as an activity which adapts to changing situations and audiences by engaging listeners well.

Azadi (2015, p.88) states that "The most common way to convey the message to others is by speaking. It should be realized that the ability to communicate effectively is a must, which needs to be taken seriously in English education". In some conditions, Speaking is a productive skill that requires a lot of activities which needs a deep learning process in order to build learners' self-confidence.

The Elements in Public Speaking

According to Harmer (2001, p.13), in public speaking, there are two main elements these are:

- a. Language features and mental/social processing.
 1. Connected speech (Used by speakers and the also produce individual phonemes).

2. Expressive devices (Students can apply some supra-segmental features and tools to be an effective communicator).
 3. Lexis and grammar (The speaker can use a number of common lexical phrases in performance of certain language functions)
 4. Negotiation language (Negotiator the language in which people seek clarification and to show what structure people are saying).
- b. Mental and social processing.
1. Language Processing (The speaker's process the language in their mind and arranges it in a coherent order to come out in the desired shape).
 2. Interaction with others (The speaker has a lot of listening to, understand other people's feelings, and knowledge of how to make linguistics turn around or allow someone else to do it.
 3. Information processing (It is the ability to process and to respond to information provided or retrieved).

As mentioned above, effective public speaking requires not only linguistic accuracy but also mastery of expressive and suprasegmental features that enhance delivery including mental and social processing.

The Challenges in Public Speaking

According to Ur (2020, p.18), students face several issues in public speaking affecting their self-confidence:

- a. Inhibition: Fear of making mistakes and embarrassment when speaking English hinder practice.
- b. Nothing to say: Lack of motivation due to low confidence and limited vocabulary.
- c. Low participation: Limited speaking opportunities, exacerbated by some students dominating discussions in their local language.
- d. Lack of topics: No available topics for discussion.
- e. Mother tongue use: Over reliance on native language.

These problems highlight inhibition, lack of motivation, low participation, lack of discussion topics, and the tendency to revert to the mother tongue which counted as a challenge when speaking to a public.

The Definition of Self-Confidence

According to Nadiah (2018, p.227), "Self-confidence is a feeling of worth that someone feels for himself". Self-confidence is treated as an individual's self-assessment, impacting success or failure within their communication. It involves believing in one's abilities, acting without others' influence, and being optimistic and responsible. While everyone has limitations, self-confidence includes positive self-image, enjoying communication, and maintaining composure. Indicators are good body language, enjoying speaking, and accepting by understanding your weaknesses and strengths. Minghe (2013, p.59) said that "Some indicators of self-confidence are; communicating a positive image with a good body language, enjoying

speaking, having fun, not worrying too much about losing words and mistakes, maintaining composure, concentration and self-control”.

The Importance of Self-Confidence in Public Speaking

As one of the important things to master in Public Speaking, self-confidence plays a crucial role in the secret of successful life, which implies that it has a significant relationship in oral communication and academic achievement. Kakepoto (2012, p.16) said that “Self-confidence is a crucial aspect of a good performance”. It helps students effectively share and express their thoughts. Without it, even the most creative motivating ideas may not help students progress. Dornyei (2013, p.16) states that “You can use the most creative motivating ideas, but if the students still doubt themselves, they will not progress as students”. This reinforces the idea that self-doubt can hinder progress, regardless of the quality of instruction or motivational techniques used. This suggests that fostering self-belief in students is essential for long-term language learning success.

The Factors influencing Self-Confidence in Public Speaking

Shen (2019, p.17) states that “the factors that influence students’ self-confidence in public speaking consist of two factors; Psychological and Linguistics”. This study concentrated on the internal elements that influence students' self-confidence when practicing speaking English. Students' self-confidence in public speaking is influenced by internal and external factors. External factors are outside the students' control, like physiological and physical restrictions, as well as systemic impediments, while internal factors such as psychological hurdles and attitudes also play a role in affecting students' confidence in speaking a foreign language.

Addressing both sets of factors, especially fostering a positive psychological environment and supporting students in overcoming internal barriers is essential for improving students’ self-confidence and language learning success.

Psychological Factors

Psychology, the scientific study of behavior and mental processes, encompasses activities such as eating, talking, laughing, running, reading, and sleeping. It involves complex mental activities like considering and envisioning, which are not immediately observable. Juhana (2012, p.18) highlights that “Students' difficulties in practicing English are often influenced by interconnected psychological factors, including the fear of making mistakes, shyness, anxiety, and lack of motivation”.

1. Fear of Making Mistakes

A common issue for students in speaking countries is the fear of making mistakes. This fear stems from the concern of being ridiculed by others when mistakes are made.

2. Shyness

English students frequently experience shyness when asked to speak the language. Shyness is characterized by social withdrawal, active avoidance, and an uncomfortable self-focus during actual or imagined social interactions.

3. Anxiety

Anxiety in learning a second language includes feelings of pressure and apprehension, affecting speaking and listening abilities, such as worries about the abilities of peers and instructors.

4. Lack of Motivation

Motivation is the desire to learn a language, requiring effort to achieve goals. Unmotivated students are often silent and unresponsive in English conversations.

Linguistics Factors

Spolsky (2021, p.20) states that “Linguistics is the study of language, focusing on phonology, grammar, and semantics”. Grammar, a key aspect of English, illustrates sentence structure and word functions. Educational linguistics examines how linguistic proficiency, including grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency, influences students' self-confidence in speaking English. This study will explore the impact of these linguistic elements on students' speaking abilities.

1. Grammar

A conversation is more effective when proper grammar is used. Harmer (2001, p.21) pointed out that “Grammar of a language is the description of the way in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that language”. From the statement above, it can be summed up that by having good grammar, the speaker can convey/produce the words or share information correctly.

2. Pronunciation

Pronunciation acts as the way a language is spoken and how words are pronounced. Hornby (2010, p.21) said that “Pronunciation is the way in which a language is spoken, the way in which a word is pronounced or the way a person speaks the words of language”. This component determines sound patterns and how a word is spoken. It emphasizes that intelligibility should be the goal, with certain pronunciation features being more critical than others when it suggests some pronunciations are more important than others.

3. Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to words and sets of words with specific meanings. Without sufficient vocabulary, learners cannot effectively communicate or express ideas. It implies that language learners cannot inform or express their ideas either in spoken or written language. Thornbury (2011, p.22) stated that “Without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed”. One of the most important skills that every learner should master while speaking English is vocabulary mastery to fill out their formal statement. Ideas that are added in the arguments that are told by mouth cannot be improved without an adequate vocabulary.

4. Fluency

Fluency is the ability to speak smoothly, accurately, and at a natural speed, similar to a native speaker. It ensures the listener understands the speaker's ideas and messages effectively. Hornby (2010, p.22) defined “Fluency as the way of someone speaking with normal speed like the native speaker or the man because the one who owns the language can dispose the language well”. Based on the statement above, fluency refers to the ability of someone to speak a language at a normal speed, which leads to how a native speaker would. It implies that a fluent speaker can use the language naturally and effectively, conveying their thoughts smoothly and without hesitation.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This research design is the procedures and techniques for addressing a given problem conducting a systematic approach for the investigator to find out student's perceptions by assessing a subject qualifies as a research problem towards their self-confidence. Creswell (2012, p.25) states that "research design as a research plan and procedure, down to detailed methods of data collection and analysis."

Descriptive research used for methodology's population structures mentioning a sample size. Some methods were automatically taken using purposive sampling and techniques which has been gathered from people's opinions and perspective by sampling four lecturers in total and collecting the data using a survey including interviews and questionnaires incorporating self-completing methods, and open-ended questions in Public Speaking.

Time and Place of Research

In this research, the writer conducted the research in the Polytechnic of Tonggak Equator. This research will be done in December 2024 - January 2025.

Subject of Research

The writers chose The Lecturers of English for Business and Professional Communication and a few students as the subject of research because of the experience in related subjects. The subject of research consists of 4 lectures and 4 students for an interview. The writers chose the lectures and fellow students to answer an interview with the criteria of being subject of research of this research, have taught or experience with the related subject.

Technique and Instrument of Data Collecting

In this research, the writers used interviews from the subject of research as the instruments of data collection. According to Bolderston (2012, p.40) "interviews are used to obtain in-depth information about the participants' experiences by interpreting them. This interaction provides the opportunity of recording everything in their lives".

Technique of Data Analysis

According to Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 10), analysis involves three activities that happen simultaneously these three components are:

1. Data Reduction

Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions.

2. Data Collection

Process includes further episodes of data reduction occur (writing summaries, coding, teasing out themes, making cluster, making partitions, writing memos)

3. Data Display

A display is an organized, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In this research, the writer sent questionnaires to 35 student respondents via Google Form. All of the respondents are the third semester to eighth semester students of Polytechnic of Tonggak Equator. The finding of the questionnaires can be seen in the following questions.

Q1. Students are afraid of making mistakes in Public Speaking presentation or speech

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total Respondent
Students are afraid of making mistakes in Public Speaking presentation or speech	34.3%	62.9%	2.9%	0%	100%

Based on the question 1, it can be seen that 62.9% respondents agree that students are afraid of making mistakes in Public Speaking presentation or speech, 34.3% states strongly agree, 2.9% states disagree and 0% states strongly disagree.

Q2. Students are over reliance on their mother tongue in Public Speaking speech or presentation

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total Respondent
Students are over reliance on their mother tongue in Public Speaking speech or presentation	14.3%	68.6%	17.1%	0%	100%

Based on the question 2, it can be seen that 68.6% respondents agree that students are over reliance on their mother tongue in Public Speaking speech or presentation, 14.3% states strongly agree, 17.1% states disagree and 0% states strongly disagree.

Q3. Students feel shy when asked to speak English during Public Speaking speech or presentation

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total Respondent
Students feel shy when asked to speak English during Public Speaking speech or presentation	20%	65.7%	11.4%	2.9%	100%

Based on the question 3, it can be seen that 65.7% respondents agree that student feel shy when asked to speak English during Public Speaking speech or presentation, 20% states strongly agree, 11.4% states disagree and 2.9% states strongly disagree.

Q4. Students do not do eye contact properly when doing Public Speaking presentation or speech

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total Respondent
Students do not do eye contact properly when	22.9%	68.6%	8.6%	0%	100%

doing Public Speaking presentation or speech					
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Based on the question 4, it can be seen that 68.6% respondents agree that students do not do eye contact properly when doing Public Speaking presentation or speech, 22.9% states strongly agree, 8.6% states disagree and 0% states strongly disagree.

Q5. Students often rely on reading text on their phones when doing presentation or speech

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total Respondent
Students often rely on reading text on their phones when doing presentation or speech	37.1%	57.1%	5.7%	0%	100%

Based on the question 5, it can be seen that 57.1% respondents agree that students often rely on reading text on their phones when doing presentation or speech, 37.1% states strongly agree, 5.7% states disagree and 0% states strongly disagree.

Q6. Students feel pressured when doing Public Speaking speech or presentation

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total Respondent
Students feel pressured when doing Public Speaking speech or presentation	25.7%	62.9%	8.6%	2.9%	100%

Based on the question 6, it can be seen that 62.9% respondents agree that students feel pressured when doing Public Speaking speech or presentation, 25.7% states strongly agree, 8.6% states disagree and 2.9% states strongly disagree.

Q7. Students are often reluctant to participate (asking question/giving suggestion/saying disagreement) in Public Speaking speech or presentation

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total Respondent
Students are often reluctant to participate (asking question/giving suggestion/saying disagreement) in Public Speaking speech or presentation	29.4%	67.6%	2.9%	0%	100%

Based on the question 7, it can be seen that 67.6% respondents agree that students are often reluctant to participate (asking question/giving suggestion/saying disagreements) in Public Speaking speech or presentation, 29.4% states strongly agree, 2.9% states disagree and 0% states strongly disagree.

Q8. Students are not well prepared in Public Speaking presentation or speech

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total Respondent
Students are not well prepared in Public Speaking presentation or speech	2.9%	58.8%	35.3%	2.9%	100%

Based on the question 8, it can be seen that 58.8% respondents agree that students are not well prepared in Public Speaking presentation or speech, 2.9% states strongly agree, 35.3% states disagree and 2.9% states strongly disagree.

Q9. Students often speak with incorrect grammar in Public Speaking speech or presentation

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total Respondent
Students often speak with incorrect grammar in Public Speaking speech or presentation	14.3%	77.1%	8.6%	0%	100%

Based on the question 9, it can be seen that 77.1% respondents agree that students often speak with incorrect grammar in Public Speaking speech or presentation, 14.3% states strongly agree, 8.6% states disagree and 0% states strongly disagree.

Q10. Students often speak with incorrect pronunciation during Public Speaking speech or presentation

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total Respondent
Students often speak with incorrect pronunciation during Public Speaking speech or presentation	8.6%	80%	11.4%	0%	100%

Based on the question 10, it can be seen that 80% respondents agree that students often speak with incorrect pronunciation during Public Speaking speech or presentation, 8.6% states strongly agree, 11.4% states disagree and 0% states strongly disagree.

Q11. Students lack word choices during Public Speaking speech or presentation

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total Respondent
Students lack word choices during Public Speaking speech or presentation	17.1%	71.4%	11.4%	0%	100%

Based on the question 11, it can be seen that 71.4% respondents agree that students lack word choices during Public Speaking speech or presentation, 17.1% states strongly agree, 11.4% states disagree and 0% states strongly disagree.

Q12. Students speak brokenly when communicating in Public Speaking or presentation

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total Respondent
Students speak brokenly when communicating in Public Speaking or presentation	11.4%	65.7%	22.9%	0%	100%

Based on the question 12, it can be seen that 65.7% respondents agree that students speak brokenly when communicating in Public Speaking speech or presentation, 11.4% states strongly agree, 22.9% states disagree and 0% states strongly disagree.

CONCLUSION

In this part, the writers discussed the finding of the research that has been done based on the questionnaire. Based on the questionnaire, first is fear of making mistakes, with 62.9% of respondents agreeing and 34.3% strongly agreeing with this sentiment. This indicates that anxiety plays a critical role in students' reluctance to confidently participate in public speaking. Secondly, linguistic dependencies and limitations significantly affect students' performance. Next is over-reliance on mother tongue, with 68.6% of respondents agree, and 14.3% strongly agree, that there is an over-reliance on their mother tongue during speeches. Furthermore, 77.1% agree that students often use incorrect grammar, and 80% agree that pronunciation issues are general. It is in line with Hornby (2010, p.21), said that "Pronunciation is the way in which a language is spoken, the way in which a word is pronounced or the way a person speaks the words of language". Moreover, shyness and reluctance to participate also emerged as key concerns, with 65.7% agreeing and 20% strongly agreeing that students feel shy when speaking in English. Similarly, 67.6% agree that students often hesitate to engage in discussions or ask questions during presentations. This finding is in line with Juhana (2012, p.18) highlights that "Students' difficulties in practicing English are often influenced by interconnected psychological factors, including the fear of making mistakes, shyness, anxiety, and lack of motivation".

Spolsky (2021, p.20) states that "Linguistics is the study of language, focusing on phonology, grammar, and semantics". Those challenges happened in most non-verbal aspects of communication, such as eye contact, with 68.6% agreeing and 22.9% strongly agreeing that students fail to establish proper eye contact. Additionally, reliance on reading from their phones with 57.1% agree and 37.1% strongly agree underscores a lack of preparation and the need for improved practice in delivery and engagement techniques. Preparation and confidence levels are areas requiring attention, with 58.8% of respondents agree that students are not adequately prepared for their presentations, and 62.9% agree that they feel pressured during public speaking. Thus, this line is suitable with Hornby (2010, p.22) defined "Fluency as the way of someone speaking with normal speed like the native speaker or the man because the one who owns the language can dispose the language well". Other than that, a lack of lexical variety and fluency is evident, with 71.4% agreeing that students lack word choices and 65.7% indicating that their communication tends to be broken. Such limitations hinder effective articulation and may result in less impactful presentations.

Based on the questionnaire, these writers revealed that students face a range of obstacles, including fear, linguistic proficiency, non-verbal communication, preparation, and fluency in public speaking. Addressing these challenges will require a multifaceted approach that includes language skill development, confidence-building exercises, and training in both

verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication. By implementing such measures, students' abilities in public speaking can be enhanced confidently.

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