

Speaking Confidence Among Sasak-Speaking EFL Learners at Institut Elkatarie, Lombok Timur

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Abstract

This study examines the factors shaping speaking confidence among students of the English Language Education Study Program at Institut Elkatarie, East Lombok, most of whom speak Sasak as their first language, together with the experiences through which that confidence develops and the strategies learners employ to strengthen it. A qualitative case study design was adopted, treating the study program as a bounded system. Data were generated through in-depth interviews with 29 students and 4 speaking lecturers, non-participant observation of speaking classes, and analysis of the speaking syllabus and academic records, collected from February to May 2026. Analysis followed the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014), and credibility was established through source and technique triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, and an audit trail. The findings show that speaking confidence is shaped by the interaction of internal conditions, namely vocabulary and grammatical control, pronunciation, self-efficacy, motivation, prior speaking experience, and anxiety, with external conditions, namely lecturer feedback, peer response, the classroom climate, and opportunities for authentic use. Confidence developed gradually rather than abruptly, advancing through accumulated experiences of successful performance, and learners sustained it through independent rehearsal, vocabulary enrichment, habitual informal use, digital media engagement, and a reframing of error as part of learning. The study contributes a three-layer account of confidence formation in a trilingual rural setting.

Keywords: *Self-confident; Self-efficacy; Speaking anxiety; Speaking confidence; Trilingual context; EFL Learners.*

1. Introduction

Speaking is the language skill through which learners most visibly demonstrate communicative competence, and it is also the skill they most consistently avoid. The asymmetry is instructive: learners who perform adequately on written grammar tasks frequently fall silent when asked to speak, which indicates that oral performance is governed by conditions that lie outside linguistic knowledge itself. Richards (2022) argues that speaking instruction fails when it treats oral production as the automatic outcome of accumulated knowledge, since production additionally requires the willingness to be heard while still imperfect. That willingness is what the present study investigates under the term speaking confidence.

Self-confidence in language learning is not a general personality disposition but a domain-specific judgement about one capacity to act in a particular situation. Bandura (1997) locates such judgements in self-efficacy, the belief that one can execute a given task, and demonstrates that they govern effort, persistence, and the willingness to attempt difficult activity. Usher and Pajares (2022) refine the construct by specifying the sources from which academic self-efficacy is built, namely mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological state, and Schunk and DiBenedetto (2021) show that these sources operate cumulatively rather than independently. Applied to oral English, this framework predicts that confidence is neither innate nor conferred by instruction, but assembled from a learner history of performance and its social reception.

A parallel line of work approaches the same phenomenon from its negative pole. Horwitz et al. (1986) establish foreign language classroom anxiety as a construct distinct from general anxiety, comprising communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation, and Dewaele (2024) demonstrates that such anxiety interacts with enjoyment rather than simply suppressing performance. MacIntyre (2023) links these affective states to willingness to communicate, showing that the decision to speak is made situationally and can be predicted more accurately from perceived competence than from measured competence. Indonesian studies converge on the same pattern. Umisara et al. (2021) identify fear of negative evaluation as the dominant psychological source of speaking anxiety, Rindi (2024) links reduced anxiety to increased learning motivation, and Ningias and Indriani (2021) show that self-efficacy in speaking fluctuates with the mode of instruction.

Empirical work has also begun to specify the relationship in measurable terms. Phipps (2023) reports that speaking self-efficacy predicts oral performance more strongly than proficiency test scores among university EFL learners, and Li and Zhang (2023) show that accuracy and fluency develop in tandem with self-efficacy when scaffolding is provided.

Sinaga and Subekti (2025) find that Indonesian learners report their lowest self-efficacy in speaking among the four skills, while Nasution and Nissa (2024) and Dwiyanti et al. (2025) document the inverse association between self-efficacy and public speaking anxiety. Hadijah and McCauley (2026) model the sources of speaking self-efficacy among Indonesian learners and confirm that mastery experience contributes most, and Angamo et al. (2026) demonstrate that explicit strategy instruction raises self-efficacy, which implies that confidence is amenable to pedagogical intervention rather than fixed.

Two studies stand closest to the present one. Muqorrobin et al. (2022) find language ability to be the most dominant contributor to low speaking confidence, followed by fear of error and limited speaking experience, but their quantitative design on secondary school learners reports the relative weight of factors without recovering how learners themselves experience them. Sumanto and Saharani (2023) address that gap qualitatively and show that learners' perceptions of their speaking competence are tightly coupled to their confidence, yet their focus rests on perceived competence alone and does not extend to the environmental conditions that produce it. Read together, the two studies establish that language ability and self-perception matter, while leaving unexamined the process by which the two become linked over time.

Three gaps therefore remain. First, a conceptual gap: factors influencing speaking confidence are commonly reported as inventories, ranked by dominance, which cannot show how internal and external conditions interact to produce a given disposition in a given learner. Second, a processual gap: confidence is typically measured as a state at one point in time, so the trajectory through which it is acquired, and the specific experiences that mark its turning points, remain undocumented. Third, a contextual gap: Indonesian research on this topic has concentrated on urban and Javanese settings in which learners move from Indonesian to English, whereas learners whose first language is a regional language encounter English as a third language, with a correspondingly different profile of exposure and inhibition. Nation (2022) notes that vocabulary growth in a third language is constrained by the available input environment, and Krashen (1985) had already argued that comprehensible input governs acquisition, which suggests that rural learners with limited English exposure face a structurally different task from their urban counterparts.

This third gap defines the site of the present study. Students of the English Language Education Study Program at Institut Elkatarie, East Lombok, predominantly speak Sasak as their first language and Indonesian as their second, so English functions as a third language acquired almost entirely within formal instruction. Preliminary observation during speaking classes revealed a pattern consistent with this configuration: several students remained silent during discussions, avoided presentations, or produced only minimal responses despite demonstrating comprehension of the material. Their reticence therefore could not be attributed to comprehension failure, which made the affective and environmental conditions surrounding oral production the appropriate object of inquiry.

Based on the data, there was 99 % of English department students at Institut Elkatarie are used Sasak as mother language. They used Sasak as mean as communication in daily life. There are 45 students studying at English department. All of students active in following learning activities. Institut Elkatarie is one of private university in Lombok Timur. It has been established since 2020. It has 3 faculties which include of 7 majors such as Tadris Bahasa Inggris, Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Bimbingan Konseling Pendidikan Islam, Hukum Tata Negara, Hukum Pidana, Manajemen Keuangan and Akuntansi. Institut Elkatarie has a vision and mission to integrate local Sasak culture with Islamic religious values. It proves by some of subjects are concern with Sasak cultural as compulsory subjects such as Pendidikan Bahasa Sasak, Sejarah budaya Sasak, Etika budaya Sasak. Thus, most of students are from Lombok which dominated by Sasakness.

The study accordingly pursues three objectives: to identify the factors that shape students' confidence in speaking English, to describe the experiential trajectory through which that confidence is built, and to explain the strategies students employ to strengthen it. These objectives are addressed through three research questions. Which internal and external factors shape speaking confidence in this setting, and how do they interact? Through what sequence of experiences does confidence develop? Which strategies do students adopt, and on what reasoning do they select them? The contribution is twofold: empirically, the study documents confidence formation among trilingual learners in a rural secondary-city institution, a population largely absent from the literature; theoretically, it proposes a three-layer account in which linguistic resources, perceived competence, and social reception operate as successive conditions rather than as parallel factors.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Self-Confidence and Self-Efficacy in Language Learning

Self-confidence is understood here as a learner belief in their own capacity to act, which enables independent and responsible performance without undue dependence on the judgement of others (Lauster, 2019; Ghufuron & Risnawita, 2020). The construct becomes analytically usable when narrowed to the task-specific belief that Bandura (1997) terms self-efficacy, since a learner may hold high general self-esteem while judging themselves incapable of speaking English in front of peers. Usher and Pajares (2022) identify mastery experience as the strongest source of such belief, which yields a testable expectation for this study: students who have completed successful oral performances should report higher confidence than those who have not, independently of their measured proficiency. Schunk and DiBenedetto (2021) add that efficacy beliefs and performance form a reciprocal cycle, so that confidence is both outcome and cause of oral practice.

Speaking Competence and Its Components

Speaking is an interactive process involving the simultaneous production, reception, and processing of information (Brown, 2015), and it is realized as the oral use of language to interact and convey meaning (Nunan, 2015). Brown (2015) specifies five components of speaking performance, namely grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension, and Ilham et al. (2024) confirm that these components are unevenly developed among Indonesian EFL

learners, with fluency and pronunciation lagging behind grammatical knowledge. Hughes (2013) notes that assessment practice tends to privilege accuracy over intelligibility, which is pedagogically consequential because the communicative tradition of Larsen-Freeman (2023) and Richards (2022) holds that an accuracy oriented classroom raises the cost of error and therefore suppresses attempts at production.

Analytical Framework

Combining the two strands yields the framework used in the analysis. Speaking confidence is treated as the product of three successive layers rather than a list of coordinate factors. The first layer consists of linguistic resources, namely vocabulary, grammatical control, and pronunciation, which set the outer limit of what a learner can attempt. The second layer is perceived competence, the learner own judgement of those resources, which mediates between capacity and action and explains why proficient learners may still decline to speak (MacIntyre, 2023; Phipps, 2023). The third layer is social reception, comprising lecturer feedback, peer response, and classroom climate, which either confirms or contradicts the learner self-judgement and thereby regulates anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986; Dornyei, 2022). The framework predicts that intervention at the linguistic layer alone will not raise confidence if the receiving environment remains punitive, and this prediction is examined against the data.

2. Method

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. The approach was selected because the object of inquiry is the meaning learners attach to their own speaking experience, which requires interpretive rather than measurement procedures (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2023). Qualitative inquiry examines phenomena in their natural setting with the researcher as key instrument and proceeds inductively toward understanding (Sugiyono, 2023; Moleong, 2022; Fadli, 2021). The case study design was chosen because the phenomenon is contemporary, situated, and inseparable from its context (Yin, 2018), and because it permits in-depth exploration of a case bounded by time, place, and participant group (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Nurahma & Hendriani, 2021; Septiana et al., 2024). The English Language Education Study Program at Institut Elkatarie was treated as the bounded system, with the program as the unit of analysis and individual students and lecturers as units of observation.

Research Site and Period

The research was conducted at Institut Elkatarie, East Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, from February to May 2026, covering one full academic semester so that speaking performance could be observed across the progression of a course rather than at a single point. The site was selected purposively on three grounds. The study program prepares prospective English teachers, for whom oral competence is a professional requirement rather than an optional skill. Its students are predominantly Sasak speakers, which yields the trilingual configuration that the research questions address. Preliminary observation had already established marked variation in speaking confidence within the same cohort, providing the internal contrast necessary for analysis.

Participants

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, with maximum variation sought across year of study and observed level of classroom participation, so that both reticent and active students were represented. Speaking lecturers were included as supporting informants in order to permit triangulation of student accounts. Recruitment ceased when additional interviews no longer generated new categories. Identities were replaced by codes. The composition of participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Composition of Research Participants

Code	Category	Number	Year of Study	Information Sought
S-01 to S-23	Students, higher participation	23	3	Sources of confidence, turning-point experiences, strategies adopted
S-24 to S-30	Students, lower participation	6	2	Inhibiting conditions, reasons for reticence, perceived competence
L-01 to L-4	Speaking lecturers	4	6	Feedback practice, classroom climate, observed development of students
Total		33		

Source: The Primary Data of Interviewing.

Data Collection

Three techniques were combined. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted using a protocol organized around the three layers of the analytical framework, namely linguistic resources, perceived competence, and social reception, with probes designed to elicit specific past episodes rather than general opinion; interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim. Non-participant observation covered speaking classes, presentations, and group discussions, recorded in field notes documenting participation behaviour, hesitation phenomena, and lecturer responses to error. Documentation comprised the speaking course syllabus, lesson materials, and study program academic records, which allowed stated instructional intentions to be compared with observed classroom practice.

Interviewing had been conducted in three sections. At the first section followed by 10 students and 2 speaking lecturers, at the second sections followed by 10 students and 1 speaking lecturer and at the third sections followed by 9 students and 1 speaking lecturer. Time durations were taken 2 hours for each interviewing sections. Besides, observation had been conducted 10 times meeting. There were 33 documents had been analyzed as primer data.

Data Analysis

Analysis followed the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014), and proceeded concurrently with data collection rather than after its completion. Transcripts and field notes were first condensed through open coding, which generated codes such as stopping mid-sentence when a word is missing, rehearsing before class, fearing peer laughter, and receiving encouragement instead of correction. These codes were grouped into categories, for example lexical retrieval failure and non-punitive feedback, and the categories were then abstracted into themes corresponding to the three analytical layers. Coded segments were additionally tagged by temporal reference, distinguishing accounts of early study from accounts of the present, which made the developmental trajectory recoverable from cross-sectional interviews. Data display took the form of a matrix relating each factor to its supporting evidence, presented in the results.

Trustworthiness

Credibility was established through four procedures consistent with established criteria for qualitative rigour (Denzin & Lincoln, 2023). Source triangulation compared student accounts with lecturer accounts on the same issues, particularly claims about feedback practice and classroom climate, which cannot be verified from student report alone. Technique triangulation tested interview claims against observation and documents, so that a reported fear of correction was checked against observed lecturer responses to error. Member checking returned summaries of the findings to selected participants for confirmation. Peer debriefing with a colleague outside the study examined coding decisions and rival interpretations, including the possibility that observed differences between year groups reflected cohort composition rather than developmental change. An audit trail of recordings, transcripts, field notes, and coding sheets was maintained to support dependability, and transferability was addressed through thick description of the setting.

Research Ethics

Permission was obtained from the study program prior to fieldwork, and informed consent was secured from all participants, who were told the purpose of the research and their right to decline any question or withdraw at any stage without academic consequence. Because students were asked about difficulties and about lecturer conduct, participation was kept confidential from teaching staff, identities were replaced by codes, and statements concerning individual lecturers were reported only in aggregate form. This safeguard was necessary given the evaluative relationship between students and the lecturers who taught them.

Institut Elkatarie are open welcoming the researcher in conducting study among students. As fas as the purposes and the benefits are having implication to students.

3. Findings and Discussion

Findings

Linguistic Resources as the Outer Limit of Attempted Speech

The first analytical layer emerged from the data as a boundary condition rather than as a direct cause of confidence. Vocabulary was the resource participants named most frequently, and their accounts located its effect at a precise moment, namely the point of lexical retrieval failure during ongoing speech. Students with larger vocabularies described expressing ideas more fluently and worrying less about encountering difficulty, whereas those who judged their vocabulary limited described halting mid-conversation when a word could not be found. What made this consequential was not the gap itself but its visibility: the failure occurred in front of an audience.

"If I already know the vocabulary, I am more confident in speaking. But if there is a word I do not know, I immediately get nervous and sometimes choose to remain silent." (S-01, interview, 03 March 2026)

Grammatical control and pronunciation operated similarly but with a different affective signature. Many students reported fearing grammatical or pronunciation error in the presence of lecturers or classmates, and this fear resolved into a stable preference for listening over participating. Observation corroborated the reports: several students paused for extended periods before speaking and repeatedly restarted their sentences, behaviour consistent with the linguistic anxiety described by Horwitz et al. (1986) and with the component profile reported by Ilham et al. (2024), in which pronunciation and fluency lag behind grammatical knowledge. Notably, the anxiety attached to being heard making an error rather than to the error itself, since the same students made comparable errors in written work without distress.

Perceived Competence as the Mediating Layer

The second layer proved decisive. Students who had previously delivered presentations or sustained discussions in English reported markedly higher confidence than those without such experience, and the difference did not correspond neatly to differences in measured language ability. Some students whose academic English performance was strong nevertheless described hesitation when required to speak before the class, while others with more modest linguistic resources volunteered readily because earlier attempts had gone well. Self-judgement, in other words, tracked accumulated performance history more closely than it tracked competence, which is the pattern that mastery experience predicts as the primary source of efficacy belief (Bandura, 1997; Usher & Pajares, 2022; Hadijah & McCauley, 2026).

"If I already got presentation and discussion activities during learning in the classroom, my confident is getting higher than before we got presentation. If I do more task directly in classroom, it opens my anxiety to speak active and more fun." (S-02, interview, 05 March 2026)

Social Reception as the Regulating Layer

The third layer determined whether self-judgement was confirmed or revised. Lecturer conduct was the most frequently cited external condition, and students distinguished sharply between correction and condemnation. Feedback that acknowledged the attempt before addressing the error was described as enabling, whereas a classroom atmosphere experienced as excessively formal or assessment-oriented intensified the fear of error and reduced volunteering.

"If the lecturer encourages me and does not immediately blame me, I am more confident in trying to speak, even if it is not perfect." (S-03, interview, 06 March 2026)

Peer response operated on the same logic at closer range. Most students reported greater comfort speaking within a supportive group and specified the condition precisely: peers who responded positively and did not laugh at mistakes. The salience of laughter in these accounts indicates that the operative mechanism is fear of negative evaluation rather than communication apprehension in general, which is consistent with Umisara et al. (2021) and with the situational account of willingness to communicate advanced by MacIntyre (2023).

Opportunity for authentic use emerged as the external condition most specific to this setting. Students who used English outside class reported higher confidence than those who used it only during lectures, which is unremarkable in itself, but the constraint they described was structural rather than motivational: outside the campus, English has no communicative function in daily life in the surrounding community, so opportunities had to be manufactured deliberately among like-minded peers rather than encountered. This is the condition that distinguishes the present case from urban settings and it aligns with the input-dependence of third-language vocabulary growth noted by Nation (2022) and with Krashen (1985) on comprehensible input.

In other sides, there is no available any kinds of speaking club or English community for students in Institut Elkatarie. Those factors are affecting students has less change to practice their English. Students are always using Sasak as means of communication during activities in university. Using mother language still dominant among student communication.

Table 2. Matrix of Factors, Evidence, and Analytical Layer

Layer	Factor	Observed Manifestation	Evidence	Theoretical Anchor
Linguistic resources	Vocabulary mastery	Halting mid-utterance at retrieval failure	S-01; S-03; S-07 S-10; class observation	Nation (2022)
Linguistic resources	Grammar and pronunciation	Long pauses, self-restarts, preference for listening	Observation; S-02; S-012	Brown (2015); Ilham et al. (2024)
Perceived competence	Self-efficacy	Confidence tracks performance history rather than proficiency	S-04; S-13; L-05	Bandura (1997); Usher & Pajares (2022)
Perceived competence	Speaking anxiety	Distress attached to being heard erring, not to error itself	S-06; S-13; observation	Horwitz et al. (1986)
Perceived competence	Prior speaking experience	Senior students volunteer more than juniors	Observation; L-08	Hadijah & McCauley (2026)
Social reception	Lecturer feedback	Encouragement before correction enables attempts	S-01; L-04; syllabus	Dornyei (2022)
Social reception	Peer response	Absence of laughter is the stated precondition	S-09; S-14; S-15	Umisara et al. (2021); MacIntyre (2023)
Social reception	Opportunity for authentic use	English has no function outside campus; use must be manufactured	S-11; S-016; S-17; field notes	Krashen (1985); Nation (2022)

Source: Results of Interviewing and Observation.

The Developmental Trajectory of Confidence

The second research question concerned how confidence is built over time, and the accounts converged on a gradual rather than abrupt process. At the beginning of their studies most students described shyness, fear of being laughed at, and worry about error, reported most acutely in individual presentations and whole-class speaking. Physiological symptoms featured prominently in these retrospective accounts, which corresponds to the physiological state that Usher and Pajares (2022) identify as one source of efficacy judgement.

"I used to be very afraid of speaking English because I felt my abilities were lacking. I was often nervous and my hands would sweat during presentations." (S-04, interview, 07 March 2026)

The turning points participants identified were specific and consistent: a presentation that went better than expected, or a conversation sustained without breakdown. Following such episodes students reported a psychological boost sufficient to motivate continued use of English, and observation supported this account at the cohort level, since senior students were more active in discussion, more willing to ask and respond, and more ready to express opinions in English than juniors.

Repeated successful performance, rather than instruction about speaking, appears to be the mechanism of development, which is precisely the primacy of mastery experience that Bandura (1997) predicts.

Based on the data, students with high year level are showing the most active in communicating during classroom learning. They more often produce some questions to lecturer using English and giving their ideas over problems to persuade the solutions. Besides, students with low year level are showing a little performance in directing English in classroom.

Strategies Employed by Students

The third research question concerned strategies, and five recurred across the interviews. The first was independent rehearsal, in which students practised before a mirror, recorded their own voice, or simulated a presentation prior to performing in class. The reasoning behind this strategy is significant: rehearsal converts a public first attempt into a private one, thereby removing the audience from the moment of greatest risk.

"I usually practise alone in my room before giving a presentation, so I feel more confident speaking in front of the class." (S-06, interview, 09 March 2026)

The second strategy was vocabulary enrichment through reading articles, watching English-language videos, and using language-learning applications, which students linked directly to reduced fear of retrieval failure. The third was habitual informal use with friends of similar interest, and students who engaged in such practice reported faster development than those who used English only in class. The fourth was engagement with digital media, including video platforms, podcasts, and online learning applications, which students valued both for pronunciation models and for the absence of an evaluating audience, a combination that Angamo et al. (2026) associate with gains in speaking self-efficacy. The fifth was a reframing of error as part of learning, which students described as a deliberate change of mindset that made them willing to accept communicative risk.

Read against the framework, four of the five strategies address the second and third layers rather than the first. Rehearsal, informal practice, digital media use, and error reframing all work by lowering the cost of being heard, whereas only vocabulary enrichment addresses linguistic resources directly. Students, in other words, had independently identified social reception as the binding constraint, which is consistent with the finding that strategy instruction raises efficacy belief rather than proficiency alone (Angamo et al., 2026; Li & Zhang, 2023).

Discussion

Perceived Competence Outweighs Measured Competence

The central finding of this study is that self-perception of ability determines speaking confidence more strongly than ability itself. Students whose academic English was strong still hesitated before the class, while students with weaker resources volunteered when their performance history was favourable. This result confirms Bandura (1997) on the primacy of efficacy belief and corroborates Phipps (2023), who finds speaking self-efficacy to be a better predictor of oral performance than proficiency scores, as well as Sinaga and Subekti (2025), who report speaking as the skill in which Indonesian learners judge themselves least capable, and Oktavira and Santoso (2025), who find perceived public speaking performance to predict communication confidence. The present results also qualify Muqorrobin et al. (2022), whose quantitative ranking identified language ability as the dominant factor: the present data suggest that what operates is not ability but the learner estimate of it, a distinction that a factor-ranking design cannot detect. The practical implication diverges accordingly, since raising proficiency will not raise confidence unless the learner self-assessment is revised along with it.

Anxiety as an Evaluative Rather Than Linguistic Phenomenon

The second contribution concerns the location of anxiety. Participants attached distress not to error but to being observed committing it, a pattern evidenced by the fact that the same students tolerated comparable errors in written work without discomfort, and by the specificity with which they named peer laughter as the decisive condition. This locates the phenomenon within fear of negative evaluation, one of the three components Horwitz et al. (1986) identify, rather than within communication apprehension generally, and it extends Umisara et al. (2021) by specifying the evaluative audience rather than anxiety level as the operative variable. Dewaele (2024) argues that anxiety and enjoyment coexist rather than displacing one another, and the present data support that reading: students who described fear also described satisfaction after successful performance, which is why the trajectory advances rather than stalling.

The Trilingual Rural Setting as a Structural Condition

The third contribution is contextual and constitutes the principal departure from existing Indonesian research. Studies conducted in urban and Javanese settings describe learners who move from Indonesian to English within an environment where English carries at least occasional communicative value. For the participants of this study, English is a third language acquired after Sasak and Indonesian, and it has no function in daily life beyond the campus. The consequence is that opportunity for practice is not merely unequally distributed, as the literature commonly reports, but structurally absent, so that any use of English outside the classroom must be deliberately manufactured among peers who agree to sustain it. Nation (2022) and Krashen (1985) establish the dependence of acquisition on available input, and this setting represents a limiting case of that dependence. The implication is that interventions transferred from urban contexts, which assume incidental exposure, will underperform here unless exposure is institutionally created.

Three Layers Rather Than Two Lists

Taken together, the findings support the framework proposed at the outset and refine the conventional internal-external dichotomy. Reporting factors as two parallel inventories, as most prior studies do, obscures their ordering. The data indicate instead a sequence: linguistic resources set the outer limit of what can be attempted, perceived competence determines what is attempted within that limit, and social reception determines whether the attempt revises the self-judgement upward or downward. The layers are conditional rather than additive, which explains the otherwise puzzling observation that proficient students remain silent in punitive classrooms while less proficient students speak in supportive ones. The account is also disconfirmable: were confidence to rise following purely linguistic intervention in a classroom whose evaluative climate remained unchanged, the ordering proposed here would require revision.

Pedagogical Implications

Three implications follow for practice. Because the binding constraint lies in social reception rather than in linguistic resources, the first priority is a psychologically safe classroom in which error is treated as evidence of attempt; Dornyei (2022) provides concrete motivational procedures to this end, and the present data indicate that acknowledging the attempt before correcting it is the specific move students notice. Second, because mastery experience drives development, curricula should engineer early low-stakes successful performances rather than deferring oral assessment to high-stakes presentations; graduated speaking tasks and paired formats achieve this at low cost. Third, because exposure is structurally absent in this setting, the institution must create it deliberately through English day schemes, conversation clubs, or partnerships that supply interlocutors, since exhorting students to practise outside class presumes an environment that does not exist. Angamo et al. (2026) further indicate that explicit strategy instruction is an efficient lever, and the five strategies documented here can be taught rather than left to individual discovery.

Limitations

Four limitations qualify these claims. The study covers a single study program in one institution, so the findings are analytically rather than statistically generalizable. The developmental trajectory was reconstructed from cross-sectional interviews and cohort comparison rather than followed longitudinally, so cohort composition cannot be fully excluded as an alternative explanation, although peer debriefing specifically examined this possibility. The claim that perceived competence outweighs measured competence rests on documentary and observational indicators of proficiency rather than on a standardized test, which limits its precision. Finally, the trilingual configuration was treated as a contextual condition rather than measured, so the specific contribution of Sasak-Indonesian-English sequencing remains to be established. Subsequent research could follow a single cohort across several semesters, combine a self-efficacy instrument with standardized proficiency measures, or compare institutions differing in first-language profile and in the availability of English exposure.

4. Conclusion

This study examined the factors shaping speaking confidence among students of the English Language Education Study Program at Institut Elkatarie, East Lombok, the experiences through which that confidence develops, and the strategies students use to strengthen it. Confidence is shaped not by two parallel sets of factors but by three ordered layers. Linguistic resources, comprising vocabulary, grammatical control, and pronunciation, establish the outer limit of what a student can attempt. Perceived competence, comprising self-efficacy, motivation, prior speaking experience, and anxiety, determines what is actually attempted within that limit, and it proved the decisive layer, since students with strong measured ability still declined to speak while students with weaker resources volunteered when their performance history was favourable. Social reception, comprising lecturer feedback, peer response, classroom climate, and opportunity for authentic use, determines whether each attempt revises self-judgement upward or downward.

Confidence developed gradually rather than abruptly, and its turning points were specific episodes of successful performance rather than instruction about speaking, with senior students consistently more active in oral participation than juniors. Students sustained their development through five strategies, namely independent rehearsal, vocabulary enrichment, habitual informal use, engagement with digital media, and the reframing of error as part of learning; notably, four of the five operate by lowering the social cost of being heard rather than by building linguistic resources, which indicates that students had themselves identified evaluative reception as the binding constraint.

The study contributes a three-layer account of confidence formation and documents it in a setting largely absent from the literature, namely a rural secondary-city institution whose students encounter English as a third language after Sasak and Indonesian, and where English carries no communicative function beyond the campus. The practical consequence is that raising proficiency alone will not raise confidence: institutions must simultaneously secure a non-punitive evaluative climate, engineer early experiences of successful performance, and deliberately create the exposure that this environment does not supply. Given the single-site scope and the cross-sectional reconstruction of development, these conclusions are offered as analytically transferable propositions requiring testing in longitudinal and comparative designs.

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