THE EFFECT OF SELF-ESTEEM IN SPEAKING SKILLS AT PAPUA UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

English speaking skill is challenging for Indonesian students, it is necessary to identify factor such as self-esteem that contributes significantly to the improvement of this skill. This investigation was conducted on students who have taken speaking class at an English Education department in a University in West Papua. The methods used to collect the data were questionnaire and interview. The instrument for Self-esteem identification and classification adapted the Self Esteem Inventory (CSEI) developed by Ryden (1978). Fifty students (50) students voluntarily participated in this study. Based on the data obtained from the research instruments, it was confirmed that self-esteem played pivotal roles on students' speaking ability. Those with good and high levels of self-esteem perform better than the students with low self-esteem. Home environment, social interactions, supports, and appreciation were identified as determinant components for the students in this context to the level of their self-esteem in improving their English-speaking ability. Some suggestions and recommendations for future investigations are discussed.

Keywords: self-esteem; speaking ability

Abstrak

Keterampilan berbicara dalam bahasa Inggris merupakan tantangan bagi siswa Indonesia, maka penting untuk mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor seperti harga diri (self-esteem) yang berkontribusi secara signifikan terhadap peningkatan keterampilan ini. Penelitian ini dilakukan pada mahasiswa yang telah mengikuti mata kuliah berbicara di Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di salah satu universitas di Papua Barat. Metode yang digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data adalah kuesioner dan wawancara. Instrumen untuk mengidentifikasi dan mengklasifikasikan harga diri diadaptasi dari Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI) yang dikembangkan oleh Ryden (1978). Lima puluh (50) mahasiswa secara sukarela berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini. Berdasarkan data yang diperoleh dari instrumen penelitian, dikonfirmasi bahwa harga diri memainkan peran penting dalam kemampuan berbicara mahasiswa. Mahasiswa dengan tingkat harga diri yang baik dan tinggi menunjukkan performa yang lebih baik dibandingkan dengan mahasiswa yang memiliki harga diri rendah. Lingkungan rumah, interaksi sosial, dukungan, dan apresiasi diidentifikasi sebagai komponen penentu bagi mahasiswa dalam konteks ini terhadap tingkat harga diri mereka dalam meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara bahasa Inggris. Beberapa saran dan rekomendasi untuk penelitian selanjutnya juga dibahas.

Kata Kunci : *harga diri; kemampuan berbicara*

1. Introduction

Being able to speak English is one of the aims of learning the language but learning English for many years at schools in Indonesia does not guarantee that students are able to use the language for speaking classes. Normally, students who enrolled into English department can speak English fluently in speaking class but many times, some students speak hesitantly and have some pauses. Some students are also struggled to give response to some English-speaking questions even though they understand the questions. The possible explanations to these phenomena are the teaching instructions focusing on vocabulary and grammar (Bahrani, 2012), the context of textbooks used and the environment of the classroom (Tuyen, 2021)

In the broader sense, there are two factors that can influence English speaking: linguistic factors and psychological factors. In school, the focus of English language instructions is mainly on vocabulary and grammar development and neglects the needs for fluent speaking and in students' daily life, they barely find a chance to practice speaking for social interactions. Another factor that affects speaking performance is psychological factor. This affective component of learning can have impact on student's emotions. Haidara (2016) argued that human psychology can affect English language proficiency level. Furthermore, while speaking, students may experience nervousness, shyness, low self-esteem, and a lack of enthusiasm (Sari, 2022). Even if they think that they understand syntax and have sufficient vocabulary, they still have some issue with speaking.

Self-esteem is one of the important factors that can influence the fluency in speaking. The foundation of self-esteem is self-belief, which gives people the confidence to face challenging situations of life (Dewi, 2022). When someone has self-worth, they believe they can overcome challenging situations of life on their own. Hosogi et al. (2012) also stated the importance of self-esteem as a fundamental emotion for individuals to integrate into society and lead fulfilling lives.

Regarding to the roles of self-esteem in spoken language, this research is conducted to see some factors that might contribute to level of the self-esteem at English Education department at a University in Papua. As the purpose of the faculty where the students' study is that the students are prepared to be English teacher, they are expected to have a good fluency in English. Therefore, it is needed to ensure that they possess a high self-esteem. The students might have various levels of self-esteem that lead them to show the differences in their speaking ability.

2. Method

This research is applying Mix-method research**.** Mixed-method study provided a flexible framework for the combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Combining both methodologies allows for deeper insights into study phenomena that a single method may not fully capture (Dawadi, Shrestha, & Giri, 2021). For example, quantitative research methodology can assess the efficacy of a positive psychology-based intervention, but the methodology alone is unable to explain how diverse people feel the intervention process and outcomes (Clark, 2017). In that term, the researcher used quantitative methods, such as surveys, provide objective and measurable outcomes, whereas interviews as the example of qualitative approaches, which aid in the exploration and understanding of situations (Dawadi, Shrestha, & Giri, 2021). In addition, combining two methods could be better than employing a single method since it was likely to deliver deep understanding into the research phenomenon that were not possible to fully understand using only qualitative or quantitative methods.

2.1 The Population and Sample

The population of this research was 74 students from 2021-2024 academic years at English Education Department students in a University in West Papua. There were 14 students (2021 academic years), 12 students (2022 academic years), 22 students (2023 academic years), and 26 students (2024 academic years). From the sample, the researcher took 6 students for the interview sessions. The students were selected according to the highest and the lowest speaking score.

2.2 Technique of Data Collection and Analysis

The techniques of collecting data were questionnaire, speaking score and interview. In questionnaire, researcher adapted the Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory (CSEI) developed by Ryden (1978) to identify self-esteem and classify the students' level of self. From 58 statements, the researcher only used 20 statements that was related to speaking ability. regarding the student' speaking scores, the researcher asked for permission to obtain the data from the speaking lecturer who ever taught the students. These scores indicated the speaker's skill in delivering information and engaging in verbal interaction. For interview, the data obtained from the sessions was be used to collect the additional data from the observation checklist. Based on the form of the questions, the structured interview was used in this research.

The data statement in CSEI was using 4-linkert scale from not very likely to extremely likely. The results were analyzed by using WINSTEP 3.73 version and categorized into 5 levels of Self-esteem: very high (1.38 – 2.00), high (0.08 – 0.70), low (0.07 – (-0.74)) and very low (-0.73 – (-1.35)). The data from interview was analyzed by following the steps provided Miles and Huberman (1992): data Reduction, display, and conclusion

3. Results and Discussion

The term "level of self-esteem" describes how people generally, or typically, feel about them. One method of differentiating between secure and fragile forms of high self-esteem is self-esteem stability (Kernis, 2005). Over the period of a lifetime, self-esteem is largely constant, however it might change depending on external circumstances as there has been a growing emphasis on investigating the ways in which life experiences impact the growth of self-worth (Reitz, 2022). To classify the level of self-esteem, it could be seen on the measure score and the Standard Deviation. The Standard Deviation was 0.68 and the distance on the person map that display the level of self-esteem with the frequency and the percentage of the students in each level. The finding shows that from fifty students, only 3 (6%) students had very high level of self-esteem and 3 (6%) had high level of self-esteem. Some of them 21 (42%) students were in moderate level, some others 16 (32%) students were in low level, and the rest 7 (14%) students were in very low level of self-esteem.

The following narrative illustrates the relationship between students' levels of self-esteem and their speaking skills, as supported by the findings of Haidara (2016), Dewi (2022), and Satriani (2019). Among the three students with very high self-esteem, two received an A grade and one received a B in their speaking course. Meanwhile, of the three students classified as having high self-esteem, two received an A and one received a B-. In the moderate self-esteem category, which included 21 students, eleven received an A, one received a B+, four received a B, and the rest received a C. For the 16 students with low self-esteem, four earned an A, one received a B+, five received a B, one earned a B-, and five received a C. Lastly, in the very low self-esteem group of seven students, two received an A, while the remaining students scored lower, with four receiving either a B or B-, and one receiving a C. These findings suggest a tendency that students with higher self-esteem tend to perform better in speaking skills compared to those with lower self-esteem.

Self-esteem is the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself. It expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy (Coopersmith, 1967). Overall, the score of students on CSEI distributed across various self-esteem levels and English-speaking scores. In accordance with that, five of six students with high self-esteem levels (very high, and high) tended to achieve better English-speaking grade (A, and B+), and the one student with high self-esteem levels achieved B-. As for the twenty-one students with moderate self-esteem levels, they had varied grades, which were eleven students received an A grade, one student received a B+, four students received a B, and the rest received C grade. Meanwhile from twenty-three students with low self-esteem levels (low and very low), nine students achieved the lower ranges (B-, C+, and C). But surprisingly the other fourteen students achieved better English-speaking scores (A, B+, and B). An interesting case appeared in this research. There were thirty students with moderate and low self-esteem levels (low and very Low), could have A, B+, and B grade in speaking class.

The data from interview will be given more explanations about the unique context of self-esteem in this study. One of considerable aspects of self-esteem was students' perception about the classroom atmosphere. As mentioned by Sahid, Murianty and Manilet (2024), students also have many challenges in learning English, especially for speaking and grammar. Usually, learning English presents a number of difficulties for students, including a lack of motivation, struggles pronouncing words, embarrassed when speaking the language, fear of making mistakes, a lack of vocabulary, difficulty understanding the meaning of English conversations, and struggles putting words together to form sentences. The same cases occur in this study. The students (MT, NT, DP) stated that the classroom atmosphere was important to support their learning process, the good or normal atmosphere made them could learn well in class. Meanwhile, for the students (RT, AA, and BT) the classroom atmosphere depended on the situations they encountered. As for RT sometimes she struggled with English, felt less enthusiastic in class because she did not understand the material being taught; as for AA the atmosphere varies depended on the lecturer's energy and how they taught; and for BT, the atmosphere was good, but he felt nervous and lost when the lecturer asked questions. Situation in classroom is also important to support students' learning process, the good or normal atmosphere made them can learn well in class.

Extract 1.

> *I feel like the classroom atmosphere is normal, not very heavy* **(NT)**. *In my class… we can support each other during the learning activities and the atmosphere pretty great and boosting my self-confidence* **(MT)**. *The classroom's Atmosphere is very important for us, also makes us easily know how to speak in public.* **(DP)**. *For me, if the lecturer comes in and asks a question, I still get nervous* **(BT)**. *There is something I understand and something I don't understand. It makes me sometimes feel less enthusiastic* **(RT)**. *Each course has a different atmosphere, if the lecturer who teaches us is enjoy and not tense, we'll learn well, it will be fun* **(AA)**.

Students also had varied perceptions about using English to interact with each other. While one of them (MT) mostly felt confident to speak in English because she is often using the language and surrounded English speaker, the three students (NT, DP, BT) experienced both confidence and insecurity depending on the situation. But most of it related to the lack of confidence, afraid of making mistake, and worried about what people might think when they are speaking in English. They found more comfortable to speak with friends, while others struggle with fear of judgment (Sahid, Murianty, & Manilet ,2024).

Extract 2.
I feel confident to speaking English with people maybe because I watch too much everything in English and surrounding myself with people who can speak English **(MT)** *Sometimes I'm not confidence to interact with my friends or my close friends. Especially when I talk in English in front of them, maybe they will react like it's wrong* **(DP)**. *When I want to talk the confidence disappear* **(BT)**. *Because I'm scared that my grammar is not good and my pronunciation good enough But, sometimes I feel that I must talk to people in English then I must talk in English* **(NT)**.

The other important aspect is family's encouragement. How parental support significantly contributes to students' willingness to learn and engage with English (Tahang, Paparang, Yuliana, Irianti & Syahira, 2023). The students highlight the significant role of family support in motivating and encouraging them in English learning. It encouraged them to continue learning English and to improve further. From there the other two students explained how the support or encouragement impacted their selves (MT, NT, and DP) It boosted their confidence and motivated them so they could share their knowledge through teaching their sibling or be a teacher in the future. In contrast, there was one student (RT) that did not receive encouragement and motivation from her family. But in her learning process, she had inspiration from others, from Papuans that had a good English skill and could go on study aboard.

Extract 3.
I am the only one that take English education as my major, they really support me **(AA)**. *You have to do this or that for English*, *that kind of encouragement make me to continue learning English* **(BT)**. *Even sometimes they test me to say something in English that sometimes I don't know, but they tell me how to say it* **(DP)**. *They motivate me to do English stuff, and my parents want me to be a teacher* **(MT)**. *My family always encourage me to learn more in English. They said that, "if I learn more in English, so I can teach my sisters and also my brother, and also helping my father with his working"* **(NT)**.

Social interaction is viewed by students as one of crucial components for their self-esteem in speaking. Jadila, Widyaningrum and Hartati (2023) stated that by discussing with friends and in groups, it can increase students' courage and confidence, especially when speaking in English. The participants of this study experience a mix of positive and negative impacts in their English interactions, with self-esteem boosted by supportive environments but hindered by judgment or self-doubt. MT feels positively about English interactions, because it helps her to improve her skills due to the supportive environment. Meanwhile the other students felt different about social interactions. The students (RT and AA) believe interactions can be positive or negative depending on the person they meet. If they met supportive people then it can bring positive impact, but if the people are the judgement one, it will bring negative impact such as low self-esteem and causing insecurity. In line, students (NT, DP, BT) they also stated that interacting with others in English has positive impact such as a chance to share knowledge and feels supported by friends, but sometimes they still feel insecure and less confidents to speak in public because of the difficulties they have on grammar, pronunciation, or lack of knowledge.

Extract 4.
I feel like it's been in positive way. I've been surrounding myself with people who can speak with English to improve my English (MT). For the positive one, my friends and I would either like to talk face-to-face or in the group in English. If we are wrong, others will correct us, but doesn't offend us. But sometimes, some people may make it negative… they judge us, they will be roasting us. That makes us insecure (AA). …It will affect our self-esteem (RT). …We can share. But the negative impact is I'm a little bit scared that my speaking ability is not good. I feel that they don't understand what I'm saying (NT). …I can speak directly. But for the negative one, I don't know much about English, that's why it's difficult to get or learn new things (BT). I'm not confident when I speak in public because I feel I don't know to speak English. For me English is difficult (DP).

The support and encouragement from family, peers, teachers and others make them to continue learning English and to boost their confidence (Auttama, 2021). Students said that the recognition and praises from their lecturer or teacher to their English ability boosts their self-esteem, drive them to learn more.

Extract 5.

Student MT: *During the speaking or listening class with sir Suardi, and then there is one time he asked everyone about this thing and everyone was just silence… and he just speak to me and it can be boosted my confident.*

Student NT: *When I was in elementary school, there-there's my English teacher, …he wants us to uh read it aloud in the class. …Uh there's one of my friends; she got uh 67 eh 97 points. So, it made me feel like more anxiety? I just read it aloud and slowly. But and I don't expect that my teacher would give me uh a 100, 100. So, from that my interest to learning English be bigger than I was in… class.*

Student DP: *From high school, at that time uh I was given an assignment from the teacher, then come forward we were told to read uh a story, my teacher after I read uh the text uh, he said what uh I'm one, sa-I'm one of the few people there who uhm the way to read the text is the best. So, uh I think, I pu what ehh self-esteem there is also like, I can speak English, I can read English.*

Student AA: *I was once appointed to take part in a university-level English debate, and it was the first time and I didn't have any experience. Uh I was convinced by my friends and my lecturer so I also felt a little bit confident even though I wasn't too confident. Well, there I felt that for example my self-esteem was good.*

Student BT: *In family, we don't speak English as our daily, no. But for example, if I already speak one word and then meet other people and they say "wow you can speak English" I feel proud,*

4. Conclusion

Speaking English gives everyone access to a wide range of opportunities in fields like both education and job opportunities. However, speaking English can be challenging, specifically when it is referring to people's psychological conditions. The data identified there is an effect of self-esteem in students' English-speaking ability. The majority of students with good speaking skills had moderate to high levels of self-esteem, while some students with lower scores showed lower levels of self-esteem. This finding confirms that self-esteem plays an important role in improving students' English-speaking ability.

In addition, the factors that influence students' self-esteem also take a role in it. Just like family environment that provides strong support. It is positively influencing students' self-esteem and speaking ability to continue learning English, to improve further, and to boost their confidence; social interaction is also one of the factors that influence the advancement of self-esteem and speaking ability, especially when the students meet people who usually speak English and the positive people. The last thing is achievement. When students get awareness, appreciation, and support for their speaking ability from others, it makes them have the power to learn more and perform better.

This study was limited to English Education students at one university in Papua, which may not represent students from other regions or study programs. Additionally, the use of self-reported data such as questionnaires and interviews may affect the objectivity of the results due to potential bias in students' responses.

For the next researcher, this research can be expanded by collecting data from various universities in Papua to increase the validity and reliability of the research results or scaled down (for example with case study research) in order to get a more in-depth discussion of the results. The results of this study can be used as a reference for the development of learning programs that focus on improving self-esteem and English-speaking skills for university students.

Acknowledgments

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