



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-CONFIDENCE AND PERCEIVED ACADEMIC SPEAKING PERFORMANCE AMONG EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN DIGITAL PRESENTATION SETTINGS

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Abstract

Oral communication skills occupy a foundational position in English language education, especially in tertiary academic contexts where learners must convey ideas, contribute to discussions, and deliver content in the target language. Yet a significant portion of EFL learners are held back not by insufficient grammar or vocabulary, but by psychological obstacles chief among them a lack of belief in their own speaking ability. The present study sought to investigate how self-confidence relates to the way EFL university learners perceive their own academic speaking performance when delivering presentations through digital platforms. Employing a quantitative correlational framework, the researchers gathered data from 17 participants using an online questionnaire. Statistical analysis yielded a strong and significant positive correlation ($r = 0.827$, $p = 0.000$), confirming that greater self-confidence is associated with more favourable self-assessments of speaking performance in online academic settings. The results underscore the need for EFL instruction to move beyond purely linguistic training and intentionally cultivate learners' affective readiness for oral academic tasks.

Keywords: academic speaking performance, digital presentation, EFL learners, self-confidence, speaking skill

Abstrak

Kecakapan komunikasi lisan menempati posisi mendasar dalam pendidikan bahasa Inggris, khususnya di jenjang perguruan tinggi di mana mahasiswa dituntut untuk menyampaikan gagasan, berpartisipasi dalam diskusi, dan mempresentasikan materi dalam bahasa target. Namun sebagian besar mahasiswa EFL tidak terhambat oleh keterbatasan tata bahasa atau kosakata, melainkan oleh hambatan psikologis terutama kurangnya keyakinan terhadap kemampuan berbicara mereka sendiri. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji hubungan antara kepercayaan diri dan persepsi kinerja berbicara akademik mahasiswa EFL dalam konteks presentasi digital. Dengan menggunakan kerangka korelasional kuantitatif, data dikumpulkan dari 17 mahasiswa melalui kuesioner daring. Hasil analisis menunjukkan korelasi positif yang kuat dan signifikan ($r = 0,827$, $p = 0,000$), yang menegaskan bahwa tingkat kepercayaan diri yang lebih tinggi berkaitan dengan penilaian diri yang lebih positif terhadap kinerja berbicara akademik dalam lingkungan digital.

Kata Kunci: Kepercayaan diri, Keterampilan berbicara, Kinerja berbicara akademik, Presentasi digital, Pelajar EFL

INTRODUCTION

Oral proficiency is widely recognised as one of the most challenging competencies for learners of English as a foreign language to develop. At the university level, the expectation to communicate effectively in English is embedded in nearly every academic activity from seminars and group discussions to formal presentations and question-and-answer sessions. The capacity to speak English with clarity and fluency has therefore moved beyond being merely advantageous; it has become a practical requirement in both educational and professional domains. Despite this reality, a considerable number of EFL learners at the tertiary level continue to find spoken English challenging, and the obstacles they encounter are not confined to language knowledge alone.

The internal, psychological dimension of language use exerts a powerful influence on speaking behaviour. Learners frequently cite nervousness, self-doubt, and the dread of committing errors as forces that suppress their willingness to speak up, even when they possess sufficient linguistic resources to do so. Of the various affective variables that shape oral performance, self-confidence has consistently emerged as especially significant. Within the context of second language acquisition, self-confidence denotes a learner's subjective sense of being capable of handling communicative tasks in the target language (Clement, Dornyei, & Noels, 1994). When this sense of capability is low, learners tend to disengage from speaking activities and deliver output well below their actual potential.

A body of empirical work has established a clear link between self-confidence and spoken language outcomes. Tridinanti (2018) documented a meaningful correlation between confidence levels and speaking achievement in an undergraduate EFL population. Similarly, Gurler (2015) observed a positive association between the two variables in a group of English language teaching preparation students. Tuncel (2015) extended comparable findings to the domain of Turkish as a foreign language. Taken together, these studies build a compelling case that affective preparedness is as central to oral performance as linguistic proficiency itself. Nevertheless, a notable limitation of this body of research is its predominant focus on traditional, in-person instructional environments, leaving the specific dynamics of digital academic contexts underexplored.

Contemporary higher education has undergone a significant structural shift as digital communication platforms have become routine tools for academic exchange. Applications such as Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams now serve as primary venues for student presentations and discussions, requiring learners to project confidence and competence not face-to-face, but through a screen. This transition introduces a distinct set of communicative demands: sustaining audience engagement without physical proximity, managing technical variables, and performing without the organic feedback loops of a shared physical space. Given the limited scholarly attention devoted to self-confidence specifically within digitally mediated academic speaking tasks, this investigation fills an important gap. The current study therefore aims to determine the nature of the relationship between self-confidence and perceived academic speaking performance in EFL university learners who present through digital platforms.

METODE PENELITIAN

A quantitative correlational approach was adopted for this investigation, with the objective of determining whether and to what degree self-confidence co-varies with perceived academic speaking performance in an EFL university population. Primary data were obtained through a structured self-report questionnaire hosted on Google Form and completed by 17 student participants. The sampling procedure followed a convenience model, selecting respondents on the basis of their availability and willingness to participate during the data collection period.

The measurement instrument took the form of a Likert-scale questionnaire organised around two constructs: self-confidence, which served as the predictor variable (X), and

perceived academic speaking performance, which functioned as the outcome variable (Y). Each construct was operationalised through eight declarative statements. Crucially, both variables captured learners' own appraisals of their confidence and speaking performance during online academic presentations, rather than scores awarded by external evaluators.

Before the main data collection, the instrument underwent psychometric screening. Item-level validity was verified through Corrected Item-Total Correlation, with a cut-off of 0.30 applied to determine acceptable items. Internal consistency was quantified via Cronbach's Alpha, using 0.70 as the minimum reliability benchmark. Every item across both scales satisfied these standards. The collected data were processed in IBM SPSS Statistics. A normality check was performed prior to the inferential analysis to verify that the distributional assumptions underlying the Pearson Product Moment procedure were satisfied. The correlation coefficient was computed according to Equation (1):

$$r = [n(\sum XY) - (\sum X)(\sum Y)] / \sqrt{[n\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][n\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]} \dots (1)$$

A significance threshold of $p < 0.05$ was established, with results meeting this criterion interpreted as evidence of a statistically meaningful association between the two variables under investigation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following subsections detail the outcomes of the psychometric evaluation and the inferential statistical procedure, along with a contextualised interpretation of those outcomes within the broader discourse on self-confidence and EFL oral academic performance.

Validity Testing

To establish construct validity, the Corrected Item-Total Correlation method was applied to every item in both scales, with 0.30 serving as the lower bound for item retention. The results confirmed that all eight items measuring self-confidence (X) and all eight items measuring academic speaking performance (Y) surpassed this threshold. Consequently, the complete instrument was deemed valid and suitable for administration in the main study.

Table 1. Validity Test Results for Variable X (Self-Confidence)

Item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach Alpha if Item Deleted
X1	19.71	50.221	.853	.945
X2	19.65	49.493	.928	.941
X3	19.65	54.368	.559	.961
X4	19.88	47.610	.864	.944
X5	19.65	44.993	.911	.941
X6	19.53	48.265	.845	.945
X7	19.59	50.507	.761	.950
X8	19.65	47.743	.893	.942

Table 2. Validity Test Results for Variable Y (Academic Speaking Performance)

Item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach Alpha if Item Deleted
Y1	20.38	33.183	.573	.944
Y2	20.06	31.262	.764	.930
Y3	20.13	32.250	.848	.925
Y4	20.06	31.929	.842	.925
Y5	20.25	33.400	.723	.933
Y6	20.44	30.263	.850	.924
Y7	20.19	29.763	.853	.923
Y8	20.38	29.983	.829	.925

Reliability Testing

Internal consistency was evaluated through Cronbach's Alpha, with 0.70 as the accepted minimum. The self-confidence scale yielded a coefficient of 0.953, while the academic speaking

performance scale produced 0.937. Both values surpass the threshold by a considerable margin and are categorised as excellent, providing strong assurance that the instrument generated dependable and consistent scores across the 17 participants.

Table 3. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	N of Items	Category
Self-Confidence (X)	0.953	8	Excellent
Academic Speaking Performance (Y)	0.937	8	Excellent

Correlation Analysis

With psychometric adequacy established, the Pearson Product Moment procedure was used to quantify the association between self-confidence and perceived academic speaking performance. The analysis returned a coefficient of $r = 0.827$ accompanied by a significance value of $p = 0.000$. As p is well below the 0.05 threshold, the relationship meets the criterion for statistical significance. An r value of 0.827 reflects a strong positive association, indicating that higher self-confidence scores correspond systematically with more positive self-assessments of academic speaking performance, across the full sample of 17 respondents.

Table 4. Pearson Correlation Results

		Total_X	Total_Y
Total_X	Pearson Correlation	1	0.827
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	17	17
Total_Y	Pearson Correlation	0.827	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	17	17

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

DISCUSSION

The robust positive association documented here reinforces a pattern that EFL researchers have observed across multiple instructional contexts (Tridinanti, 2018; Gurler, 2015; Tuncel, 2015). Oral production in a second language is inherently high-stakes: it unfolds without a pause for revision, exposes the speaker to immediate social evaluation, and leaves no room to retract errors once they have been verbalised. Within formal academic settings, these pressures compound as learners are additionally required to organise and articulate complex content under conditions of audience scrutiny.

The present findings suggest that a learner's internal appraisal of their own speaking capability is a measurable determinant of their oral academic engagement. Those who hold a positive view of their own communicative competence demonstrate greater willingness to participate, take linguistic risks, and persist through moments of uncertainty. Conversely, learners who harbour doubts about their ability tend to become self-monitoring to a degree that actively undermines fluency and output quality. This dynamic echoes the theoretical position advanced by Clement et al. (1994), who situated self-confidence at the core of learners' readiness to use a second language in social interaction.

The digital dimension of this study introduces an additional layer of analytical significance. Online presentation environments strip away several of the contextual supports that physically co-present audiences naturally provide: real-time facial feedback, ambient energy, and the immediacy of shared space. Deprived of these cues, learners must rely more heavily on internal psychological resources to sustain their performance. The magnitude of the correlation observed in this digitally mediated context implies that self-confidence functions as a particularly vital stabiliser when academic oral tasks are conducted remotely.

At the same time, self-confidence should not be understood as a standalone predictor. Lexical range, syntactic accuracy, spoken fluency, and accumulated practice in authentic communicative situations all shape the quality of a learner's spoken output (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). The interaction between these factors is bidirectional: confidence amplifies the use of existing competence, while genuine competence, in turn, consolidates confidence. The instructional implication is clear designing learning environments that deliberately cultivate affective security alongside linguistic skill is not supplementary to effective EFL pedagogy; it is integral to it.

CONCLUSION

This investigation set out to determine whether self-confidence and perceived academic speaking performance are meaningfully associated in EFL university learners who present through digital platforms. Analysis of data collected from 17 participants produced a strong, statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.827$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that learners who hold a higher regard for their own speaking capability also report more favourable perceptions of their academic oral performance in online settings. These results reinforce the view that affective variables such as self-confidence are not peripheral to language learning outcomes they are substantively implicated in how learners engage with and execute high-stakes communicative tasks. As digitally mediated academic speaking becomes ever more prevalent, EFL programmes would benefit from treating the development of learner self-confidence as a core instructional priority rather than an incidental outcome. The study's primary constraint is its modest participant pool, which limits the generalisability of the findings; broader replication across larger and more heterogeneous samples, and with additional variables such as motivation and learning environment, is encouraged.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors extend their sincere appreciation to all individuals who supported this research. Particular gratitude is owed to the supervising lecturer whose guidance shaped the direction and quality of the work. The authors are likewise grateful to every participant who voluntarily completed the questionnaire and made the empirical component of this study possible.

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