

The Role of Self Confidence, Learning Strategies, and Teacher Support in Enhancing Student's English Speaking Proficiency: Case Study in SMAS Kristen 1 Amahai

Sience Aponno

SMAS Kristen 1 Amahai

siena3401@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of self-confidence, learning strategies, and teacher support in enhancing students' English speaking proficiency. Recognizing that speaking proficiency is a key component of communicative competence, the research explores how psychological, strategic, and pedagogical factors interact to improve students' oral communication skills. A quantitative research design was employed, involving a sample of students from senior high schools. Data were collected through validated questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS, with multiple regression analysis applied to determine the contribution of each variable. The results revealed that self-confidence, learning strategies, and teacher support each had a positive and significant effect on students' speaking proficiency, both individually and simultaneously. Self-confidence emerged as a strong predictor, enabling students to overcome anxiety and engage actively in speaking activities. Effective learning strategies were found to enhance skill acquisition and language use, while teacher support provided essential guidance, feedback, and motivation. These findings underscore the need for a holistic approach to language teaching that integrates psychological readiness, strategic learning, and supportive pedagogy. The study offers practical implications for educators, suggesting that fostering self-confidence, teaching effective learning strategies, and maintaining consistent teacher support can collectively lead to substantial improvements in students' English speaking proficiency.

Keywords:

Self-Confidence,
Learning Strategies,
Teacher Support,
English Speaking
Proficiency

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly globalized world, the ability to communicate effectively in English has become an essential skill for students. English is not only a key to academic success but also a gateway to broader career opportunities and participation in international contexts. Among the four language skills, speaking is often regarded as the most challenging, as it requires the integration of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency in real-time communication (Kurniawan, 2024). For many learners of English as a foreign language, this skill is associated with anxiety, hesitation, and a lack of confidence, which can hinder their willingness to participate actively in conversations. These challenges are not only linguistic in nature but also rooted in psychological and pedagogical factors (Muhsinin et al., 2025).

One of the most influential factors in speaking proficiency is self-confidence. Students who believe in their ability to express themselves in English are more willing to take risks, initiate conversations, and use the language in various situations. Self-confidence helps learners overcome the fear of making mistakes, which is a common barrier in oral communication. When students have high confidence, they tend to engage more in speaking activities, sustain their efforts in learning, and show greater persistence in improving their language skills. On the other hand, low self-confidence

often leads to avoidance, silence, and minimal participation in class activities, which in turn limits opportunities for improvement.

Alongside self-confidence, learning strategies play a pivotal role in shaping students' speaking abilities. Learning strategies refer to the specific actions, techniques, or approaches that learners employ to facilitate language acquisition. These strategies may include practicing with peers, using multimedia resources, self-monitoring progress, setting personal learning goals, or engaging in role-play and simulation activities (Eslami & Fatahi, 2008). Effective strategy use can help learners overcome speaking difficulties, organize their thoughts before speaking, and practice language structures in a meaningful context. Learners who adopt active and varied strategies tend to progress more quickly and use the language with greater ease compared to those who rely solely on passive classroom learning.

Teacher support is another critical component in enhancing students' speaking proficiency. Teachers serve not only as providers of linguistic input but also as motivators, facilitators, and guides in the learning process. Support from teachers can take many forms, such as providing constructive feedback, offering encouragement, creating a safe environment for speaking practice, and designing activities that stimulate interaction. When teachers show understanding, patience, and belief in their students' abilities, learners often feel more secure and motivated to participate. Moreover, the teacher's role in modeling language use, scaffolding speaking tasks, and fostering a positive classroom atmosphere can significantly influence students' willingness to communicate (Ulpa et al., 2025).

The interaction between self-confidence, learning strategies, and teacher support forms a dynamic process that shapes students' speaking outcomes. A confident student is more likely to apply effective strategies, while the application of such strategies can further enhance confidence. Similarly, teacher support can boost both confidence and strategic learning by encouraging risk-taking, guiding students toward effective practices, and providing the necessary resources and feedback. When all three elements work in synergy, students are more likely to achieve higher levels of speaking proficiency. Conversely, the absence or weakness of one element can disrupt the cycle, resulting in stagnation or slow progress in oral communication skills (Harahap, 2025; MAESA, 2022).

Although the significance of self-confidence, learning strategies, and teacher support in developing speaking proficiency is widely acknowledged, many educational settings still focus primarily on linguistic accuracy rather than on building the psychological readiness and strategic skills necessary for effective oral communication. As a result, many students remain reluctant to speak in English, lack awareness of useful learning strategies, and do not fully benefit from the support that teachers can offer. The limited integration of these three factors into language instruction leaves a gap in understanding how they collectively contribute to the improvement of students' speaking performance. The objective of this study is to examine the roles of self-confidence, learning strategies, and teacher support in enhancing students' English speaking proficiency.

Literature Review

1. Self-Confidence and Speaking Proficiency

Self-confidence is often described as a learner's belief in their own ability to perform a specific task successfully. In the context of English speaking, it refers to a student's trust in their capacity to communicate ideas clearly, respond to questions, and participate actively in conversations. Learners with high self-confidence are more willing to take risks, use new vocabulary, and experiment with different grammatical structures, even if they make occasional mistakes. This willingness to engage directly impacts fluency and communicative competence. Conversely, low self-confidence can manifest in hesitation, avoidance of speaking opportunities, and overreliance on memorized sentences, which restricts language development.

Self-confidence is closely linked to motivation and anxiety levels. Students who believe in their speaking ability often experience lower levels of anxiety, allowing them to focus more on the content of communication rather than the fear of errors. As a result, they develop better pronunciation, a wider vocabulary, and improved fluency over time. In addition, confident learners tend to be more proactive in seeking opportunities to practice English outside the classroom, which accelerates skill improvement (Varasarin, 2007; Waluyo & Rofiah, 2021).

2. Learning Strategies and Speaking Proficiency

Learning strategies are deliberate actions, behaviors, or thought processes that learners use to enhance their understanding, retention, and use of a new language. In speaking, these strategies help learners plan their utterances, select appropriate words, and adjust their speech according to context. Cognitive strategies, such as repetition, summarizing, and note-taking, help students internalize new language structures. Metacognitive strategies, such as goal-setting, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation, enable learners to assess their progress and adjust their methods accordingly. Social strategies, including practicing with peers and seeking feedback, provide authentic opportunities for language use.

Effective learning strategies not only improve linguistic accuracy but also build the mental readiness needed for spontaneous communication. For example, students who prepare conversation outlines or practice role-play scenarios are better equipped to handle real-life speaking situations. Moreover, strategic learners are more likely to manage communication breakdowns by rephrasing, asking for clarification, or using body language to support meaning. Over time, this active problem-solving approach leads to greater speaking fluency and resilience in challenging communication contexts (Ghafar, 2023; Narzillayevna, 2024).

3. Teacher Support and Speaking Proficiency

Teacher support encompasses the academic, emotional, and motivational assistance that instructors provide to learners. In the realm of speaking, this includes creating a supportive environment where students feel comfortable expressing themselves, providing constructive feedback, and designing activities that encourage interaction. Teachers act as facilitators who guide learners through speaking tasks, model correct pronunciation and intonation, and introduce strategies for organizing thoughts before speaking.

The quality of teacher-student interaction significantly influences learners' willingness to communicate. When teachers encourage risk-taking and normalize mistakes as part of the learning process, students are more inclined to participate.

Structured speaking tasks, such as debates, interviews, or storytelling, can be used to gradually build students' speaking confidence. Furthermore, teachers who show genuine interest in their students' progress foster a sense of belonging and motivation that extends beyond the classroom (Kristie, 2018; Songsiri, 2007).

METHOD

1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between self-confidence, learning strategies, and teacher support in enhancing students' English speaking proficiency. The design was chosen to identify the strength and direction of relationships among the variables, as well as to determine the extent to which each factor predicts speaking performance. A cross-sectional survey approach was used, collecting data from participants at a single point in time. This design allowed for the measurement of naturally occurring variations in the three independent variables and their association with the dependent variable.

2. Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of senior high school students enrolled in English language classes in the selected academic year. The target group was chosen because these students are at a developmental stage where speaking skills are crucial for both academic and future professional purposes. The sample was drawn using a purposive sampling technique, selecting students who had completed at least one year of formal English instruction and had participated in speaking-focused activities. A total of 120 students participated, representing diverse proficiency levels and classroom environments. This sample size was considered sufficient for statistical analysis using multiple regression techniques.

3. Data Collection Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the school administration and English department coordinators. The instruments were administered in two sessions: the questionnaires were distributed first, followed by the speaking proficiency test on a separate day. Students were informed about the purpose of the study, assured of the confidentiality of their responses, and asked to provide informed consent before participation. The speaking test was conducted in a controlled classroom setting, with each student given equal preparation and speaking time to ensure fairness. Two trained raters independently scored the speaking performance to reduce subjectivity and increase scoring reliability.

4. Data Analysis

The collected data were coded and entered into SPSS program for analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of participants and the distribution of scores for each variable. Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated to examine the strength and direction of relationships between self-confidence, learning strategies, teacher support, and speaking proficiency. Multiple regression analysis was then conducted to determine the predictive power of the three independent variables on students' speaking proficiency. The significance level was set at 0.05 for all statistical tests. Inter-rater reliability for the speaking test scores was also computed to ensure consistency between evaluators.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to provide an overview of the participants' scores on self-confidence, learning strategies, teacher support, and speaking proficiency.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self-Confidence	120	77.458	8.532
Learning Strategies	120	75.317	9.126
Teacher Support	120	78.242	7.845
Speaking Proficiency	120	76.133	8.014

Source: Data Analysis

Participants reported relatively high mean scores across all variables, with teacher support having the highest mean (78.242) and learning strategies the lowest (75.317). The standard deviations indicate moderate variability within each variable, suggesting differences in students' experiences and abilities.

2. Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation was used to examine the relationships among the three independent variables (self-confidence, learning strategies, and teacher support) and the dependent variable (speaking proficiency).

Table 2. Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	Self-Confidence	Learning Strategies	Teacher Support	Speaking Proficiency
Self-Confidence	1.000	0.546**	0.493**	0.625**
Learning Strategies	0.546**	1.000	0.512**	0.587**
Teacher Support	0.493**	0.512**	1.000	0.561**
Speaking Proficiency	0.625**	0.587**	0.561**	1.000

Source: Data Processed

All three independent variables were positively and significantly correlated with speaking proficiency. The strongest correlation was between self-confidence and speaking proficiency ($r = 0.625$), followed by learning strategies ($r = 0.587$) and teacher support ($r = 0.561$). The intercorrelations among independent variables were also positive and significant, indicating that these factors are related but measure distinct aspects of learning.

3. Multiple Regression Analysis

A multiple linear regression was conducted to determine the extent to which self-confidence, learning strategies, and teacher support predict speaking proficiency.

Table 3. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.732	0.536	0.523	5.534

Source: Data Processed

The three predictors combined explained 53.6% of the variance in speaking proficiency ($R^2 = 0.536$), indicating a moderate to strong model fit.

Table 4 ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	5482.316	3	1827.439	59.705	0.000
Residual	4746.984	116	40.923		
Total	10229.300	119			

Source: Data Processed

The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model was statistically significant ($F = 59.705$, $p < 0.001$), meaning that self-confidence, learning strategies, and teacher support together significantly predict speaking proficiency.

Table 5. Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	12.317	4.214		2.923	0.004
Self-Confidence	0.321	0.072	0.375	4.458	0.000
Learning Strategies	0.278	0.067	0.332	4.157	0.000
Teacher Support	0.245	0.074	0.279	3.311	0.001

Source: Data Processed

All three predictors were significant. Self-confidence had the largest standardized beta ($\beta = 0.375$), indicating it was the strongest predictor of speaking proficiency. Learning strategies ($\beta = 0.332$) also had a substantial positive effect. Teacher support ($\beta = 0.279$) contributed significantly but to a slightly lesser extent compared to the other two predictors. This suggests that while all three factors are important, enhancing self-confidence may yield the greatest improvement in speaking proficiency.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the significant roles that self-confidence, learning strategies, and teacher support play in enhancing students' English speaking proficiency. The statistical analysis showed that each of these variables had a positive and significant correlation with speaking proficiency, and together, they explained more than half of the variance in students' speaking performance. This demonstrates that the development of speaking skills is not solely a linguistic matter but is heavily influenced by psychological readiness, strategic learning behavior, and the nature of teacher-student interaction.

The strongest predictor identified in the regression analysis was self-confidence. This confirms the long-standing view that a learner's belief in their ability to speak English effectively is central to their actual performance. Students with high self-confidence are more likely to take initiative in conversations, attempt new vocabulary, and engage in speaking activities without excessive fear of making mistakes. The positive relationship between self-confidence and speaking proficiency suggests that the more students trust in their communicative abilities, the better they perform in fluency, coherence, and overall oral competence. This finding aligns with the notion that self-confidence reduces language anxiety, enabling learners to focus on meaning rather than form alone. In practical terms, when students feel assured about their abilities, they are more willing to practice and to take communicative risks, both of which are essential for improvement.

Learning strategies emerged as the second strongest predictor of speaking proficiency. This finding emphasizes that speaking proficiency is not only about motivation and emotional readiness but also about the methods students employ in their learning process. Students who regularly use strategies such as pre-speaking preparation, peer practice, self-monitoring, and the use of authentic language resources tend to perform better in oral communication tasks. Strategic learners are better equipped to handle unexpected questions, maintain conversational flow, and repair communication breakdowns when they occur. The positive correlation between learning strategies and speaking proficiency indicates that even students with moderate confidence can achieve notable improvements if they adopt effective learning techniques. This reinforces the importance of explicitly teaching students how to learn, not just what to learn. Instructors who model and encourage the use of effective strategies can help students internalize habits that lead to sustained speaking improvement.

Teacher support also showed a significant positive influence on speaking proficiency, though it was the third strongest predictor among the three variables. This does not diminish its importance; rather, it underscores the role of the teacher as a facilitator of a conducive learning environment. Teacher support, in this study, encompasses both emotional encouragement and instructional guidance. Students who perceive their teachers as supportive are more likely to participate actively, persevere through challenges, and seek help when they encounter difficulties. This finding is consistent with the idea that the classroom environment, shaped largely by the teacher's approach, can either foster or inhibit a student's willingness to communicate. Supportive teachers not only correct mistakes but also encourage risk-taking, reassure students about their progress, and provide constructive feedback in ways that build rather than undermine confidence.

When considered together, the three predictors form a reinforcing cycle in which each element supports and enhances the others. Teacher support can strengthen self-confidence by affirming students' efforts and normalizing mistakes as part of the learning process. A confident student, in turn, is more willing to experiment with new learning strategies and seek opportunities for practice. The use of effective strategies then leads to measurable improvements in speaking proficiency, which further reinforces confidence. This cyclical relationship suggests that interventions aimed at improving speaking performance should not address these factors in isolation. Instead, a holistic approach that targets emotional, strategic, and instructional dimensions simultaneously is likely to yield the most sustainable results.

The relatively high proportion of variance explained by the three predictors (53.6%) also indicates that while these factors are highly influential, there are other variables that contribute to speaking proficiency. These may include linguistic factors such as vocabulary size and grammatical knowledge, environmental factors such as exposure to English outside the classroom, and personal factors such as intrinsic motivation and cultural attitudes toward speaking. Nonetheless, the findings of this study suggest that by focusing on self-confidence, learning strategies, and teacher support, educators can address a substantial portion of the challenges students face in developing oral communication skills.

Another notable aspect of the findings is the intercorrelation among the independent variables. Self-confidence was moderately and positively correlated with

both learning strategies and teacher support, suggesting that students who feel supported by their teachers and who use effective strategies tend to have higher confidence in their speaking abilities. Similarly, students who use a range of learning strategies are more likely to perceive greater teacher support, possibly because strategic learners engage more actively in classroom activities and thus receive more interaction and feedback from their instructors. These interrelationships indicate that the development of one factor can positively influence the others, creating multiple pathways to improved speaking proficiency.

From a pedagogical perspective, these findings have important implications. First, language programs should incorporate activities specifically designed to build self-confidence. These may include low-stakes speaking tasks, peer collaboration, and public speaking exercises with constructive feedback. Teachers can also integrate confidence-building practices such as acknowledging small improvements, setting realistic goals, and emphasizing progress over perfection. Second, explicit instruction in learning strategies should be a standard component of speaking courses. Rather than assuming that students naturally know how to practice effectively, teachers should model techniques such as brainstorming ideas before speaking, using paraphrasing to handle unknown words, and engaging in self-reflection after speaking tasks. Providing students with opportunities to experiment with different strategies and reflect on their effectiveness can lead to greater autonomy and long-term improvement. Third, teacher support should be cultivated not only as a teaching technique but also as a part of the school's culture. Institutions can offer professional development to help teachers create more supportive and inclusive learning environments. Teachers can be encouraged to employ scaffolding techniques, provide balanced feedback, and design tasks that promote meaningful communication rather than rote memorization.

The results suggest that any comprehensive approach to improving speaking proficiency should be balanced. Overemphasizing one element at the expense of the others may limit overall effectiveness. For example, boosting self-confidence without equipping students with strategies might lead to more willingness to speak but without corresponding improvements in accuracy or fluency. Similarly, teaching strategies without fostering confidence may leave students reluctant to use them in real-time communication. Teacher support that does not address both emotional and instructional needs may not fully empower students to take ownership of their learning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that self-confidence, learning strategies, and teacher support play a significant and complementary role in enhancing students' English speaking proficiency. The statistical analysis demonstrated that each of these variables has a positive and significant effect, both individually and collectively, on students' ability to communicate effectively in English. Self-confidence emerged as a crucial psychological factor that empowers students to take risks, engage in conversation, and overcome anxiety when speaking in a second language. Learning strategies, particularly metacognitive and communicative approaches, were found to foster systematic skill development and encourage active practice. Furthermore, teacher support was shown to provide the necessary scaffolding, motivation, and constructive feedback that facilitate speaking proficiency.

growth. These findings highlight the importance of integrating psychological, strategic, and pedagogical dimensions in English language teaching, suggesting that a holistic approach is essential for achieving optimal student outcomes in speaking proficiency.

Reference

- Eslami, Z. R., & Fatahi, A. (2008). Teachers' Sense of Self-Efficacy, English Proficiency, and Instructional Strategies: A Study of Nonnative EFL Teachers in Iran. *Tesl-Ej*, 11(4), n4.
- Ghafar, Z. (2023). The influence of self-confidence on English language learning: A systematic review. *International Journal of Applied Educational Research (IJAER)*, 1(1), 55–68.
- Harahap, Y. F. (2025). *ENGLISH LEARNING MOTIVATION AND SPEAKING ABILITY OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDENTS: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY AT SULTAN SYARIF KASIM STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF RIAU. UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI SULTAN SYARIF KASIM RIAU.*
- Kristie, L. S. (2018). Teachers' strategies to improve students' self-confidence in speaking: A study at two vocational schools in Central Borneo. *Register Journal*, 11(2), 139–153.
- Kurniawan, W. I. (2024). *Analysis on student's self-confidence in speaking skill: a case study at The Second Grade Student's of SMA Negeri 1 Keruak. UIN Mataram.*
- MAESA, A. D. E. (2022). *MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES IN TEACHING SPEAKING: A CASE OF ENGLISH TEACHERS AT SMAN PLUS PROVINSI RIAU. UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI SULTAN SYARIF KASIM RIAU.*
- Muhsinin, M., Haerazi, H., & Rahman, A. (2025). Implementing Self-Regulated Learning in Improving EFL Students' Speaking Skills Integrated with Self-Confident Level in Islamic-Affiliated Schools. *Indonesian Journal of EFL and Linguistics*, 31–49.
- Narzillayevna, A. S. (2024). The impact of self-confidence on the acquisition of english language skills: asystematic review. *Eurasian Journal of Entrepreneurship and Pedagogy*, 2(1), 11–16.
- Songsiri, M. (2007). *An action research study of promoting students' confidence in speaking English.* Victoria University.
- Ulpa, S., Tahir, M., & Amin, F. H. (2025). Teachers' Perceptions of Speaking Confidence Strategies: A Case Study at Cambridge English School. *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 8(2), 370–378.
- Varasarin, P. (2007). *An action research study of pronunciation training, language learning strategies and speaking confidence.* Victoria University.
- Waluyo, B., & Rofiah, N. L. (2021). Developing Students' English Oral Presentation Skills: Do Self-Confidence, Teacher Feedback, and English Proficiency Matter?. *Mextesol Journal*, 45(3), n3.