

## Self-confidence in Language Classes

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**Abstract:** *Self-confidence is an important element in almost every step and aspect our lives, but people struggle to have it. Lack of self-confidence can seriously affect a person's life negatively and hinder a person from becoming successful. Self-confidence as important in other aspects of a human's life is also important in learning a language and is part of the curriculum in language teaching. This importance relies on two aspects. First, our personality and knowledge of the world, and our ability to reason and express our thoughts. Second, the impact of self-confidence on relation between students' class participation and their academic achievement is also undeniable. Looking at the importance of self-confidence, this paper discusses the reasons and causes that result students' self-confidence in language classes.*

**Key Words:** *self-confidence, self-esteem, speaking performance, motivation, anxiety.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

Self-confidence also called self-esteem means the belief and trust on our self, it means having the ability and courage to express our self and it means the ability to say what we have in your mind. Branden (1994) defined it as the disposition to experience oneself as being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and of being worthy of happiness. However, as self-esteem is a complex construct, a short definition cannot possibly explain the whole concept and the process. Self-esteem is a psychological and social phenomenon in which a person evaluates his or her competence according to some values, which may result in different emotional states. Self-confidence gives us a powerful means of expressing our self among people. It in fact makes us very powerful in any situation to share what we have in our mind. As Maslow and Rogers (1980) said that self-confidence refers to an individual's overall evaluation of someone's self-worth or self-image. In this research paper, I have tried to find out the reasons why most of the students do not have trust or belief on themselves and they are not taking part in class activities. In other words, I have tried to find the reasons that why students are in low self-confidence during class participations. As Myers (1981) made a fundamental discovery in teacher behavior on students' self-confidence. He stated on the slow or low performing students that teachers paid less attention, gave less time to answer questions, provided less follow-up questions and gave less feedback to low performing students. These are all what directly affect students' self-confidence. In my experience misbehaving of teachers brings the level of students' self-confidence down. This is why I conducted a research on self-confidence and the effect of teacher's behavior on students' self-confidence. As Rosenthal (2002) said that it is important to note that teacher's behavior is one of the key factors in increasing and decreasing students' self-confidence.

#### 1.1. Statement of the Problem:

I have taught different subjects at different levels at the English Department of Kabul Education University. A big problem in my classes was lack of student participation in class participation, especially in speaking classes. Years later, after some experience, I knew that the problem with low or lack of participation is not in the curriculum or textbooks, it relied in the society and the social behavior in the society. The purpose of this paper is to explain find the reasons and causes of low confidence and its effects on academic achievement of students.

### 2. METHOD OF RESEARCH:

This paper aims to find the reasons and causes of low and lack of confidence in language learning. The method used to write this paper is the library method. The data is collected from selective academic books, journals, and authentic articles. In addition to that, I have provided examples from my own professional experience and observations to further support the importance self-confidence in language learning classes.

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW:

In addition, Muchnick and Wolfe (1982) said that self-confidence refers to an individual's overall evaluation of someone's self-worth or self-image. Regarding the mentioned idea, Zimmerman (1997) expressed that self-confidence is one of the personality trait which is a composite of a person's thoughts and feelings, strivings and hopes, fears and fantasies, his view of what he is, what he has been, what he might become, and his attitudes pertaining to his worth. Self Confidence is a positive attitude of oneself towards one's self-concept. It is an attribute of perceived self. Self Confidence refers to a person's perceived ability to tackle situations successfully without leaning on others and to have

a positive self-evaluation. A self-confident person perceives himself to be socially competent, emotionally mature, intellectually adequate, successful, satisfied, decisive, optimistic, independent, self-reliant, self-assured, forward moving, fairly assertive and having leadership qualities. So the concept of Self Confidence enjoys important position in the theories of human behavior and personality and is regarded as a basic condition of human existence in modern day world by many thinkers.

Arnold (1999) and many other researchers refer to the importance of self-confidence in the language classroom. Language learning is an anxiety-provoking experience for many students (Muchnick and Wolfe 1982; Horwitz et al. 1986). As Horwitz et al (1991, 31) noted,

The importance of the disparity between the "true" self as known to the language learner and the more limited self as can be presented at any given moment in the foreign language would seem to distinguish foreign language anxiety from other academic anxieties such as those associated with mathematics or science. Probably no other field of study implicates self-concept and self-expression to the degree that language study does.

Generally speaking, self-esteem is one of the central drives in human beings. When the level of self-esteem is low, the psychological homeostasis is unbalanced, creating insecurity, fear, social distance and other negative situations. Self-esteem can exercise a determining influence on a person's life, for good or bad; when there is very low self-esteem, this may even bring about a need for clinical treatment. However, though in the context of language learning low self-esteem is a non-clinical phenomenon, it can have serious consequences. Students may avoid taking the necessary risks to acquire communicative competence in the target language; they may feel deeply insecure and even drop out of the class. Taking these effects into consideration, in the language classroom it is important to be concerned about learners' self-esteem. However, this implies more than doing occasional activities to make students reflect about their worthiness and competence. As a first step, teachers themselves need to be aware of their own self-esteem, to understand what self-esteem is, what are the sources and components, and how applications can be implemented in the language classroom. This implementation should be based on a valid framework. Speaking is one of the main purposes of language learning in that it is an ability to transfer some ideas to other people clearly and correctly. In other words, people can communicate their ideas well to other people (Argawati, 2014). According to Cora and Knight (Farabi et al, 2017), speaking is a crucial part of second language learning and teaching which involves producing, receiving and processing information. For majority of people, the ability of speaking a foreign language means knowing that language because speech is the main tool of human communication.

However, there are many things that can influence students' performance. In speaking activities, based on previous research, Sudirman found that several factors that influence students in speaking that were performance condition which includes standard of performance, planning, time pressure and the amount of support (Sudirman, 2019). The second factor was affective factor. In this case there were categorizes of affective factor that are motivation and anxiety. The next factor was listening ability. Students must understand what the others say to made them respond it therefore speaking was closely related to listening. topical knowledge was a factor that can affect students' speaking performance. Beside that he found there are some problem faced by students, one of them is the students still used their local accent include their pronunciation and the tone of the students' speaking are still too pitched like Indonesian accent in speaking for example they are shame and nothing to say. One valid reason that makes students shame is they never encouraged for participated in conversation or other actives involving social exchanges. Another reason might be that students allowed classroom to make them feel inferior (Normawati & Muna, 2015). In their major study, Tuan & Mai found that all the teachers agreed that their students spoke very little or not at all in speaking class. Students could not think of anything to say then students often used Vietnamese instead of English in English lessons (Tuan & Mai, 2015). Beside that the students have no motivation to express themselves in English, fearful of criticism or losing face, worried about making mistakes and shy. Tuan & Mai point out that in order to help students overcome problems in learning speaking, it is necessary for the teachers to figure out factors that affect their speaking performance (Tuan & Mai, 2015). The performance in speaking English is the capacity or the ability to do something by some action to talk or speak. Students' speaking performance can be affected by the factors those come from performance conditions (time pressure, planning, standard of performance and amount of support), affective factors (such as motivation, confidence and anxiety), listening ability and feedback during speaking activities.

In this case, researcher focuses to one of the factors that is, confidence. self-confidence is defined as individual recognition of one's own capabilities, loving and being aware of his own emotions, whereas (Marhaeni, Putra, & Jaya, 2013) argues that self-confidence is feeling confident in oneself that includes good or bad judgment and can act to interact in accordance what is expected by others so that the individual can be accepted by others and their environment. Self-confidence can be classified into two groups as inner confidence and outer confidence. The elements that form inner confidence are loving own self, self-knowledge, setting explicit goals, thinking positively. Inner confidence is the ideas and feelings of an individual that shows how much a person is pleased and at peace with himself. The factors that constitute outer confidence are communication and the capability of controlling feelings. Individuals who are highly

inner confident are pleased with themselves and have high self-esteem (Şar, Avcu, & Işıklar, 2010). Confidence can be one thing that can give satisfaction to our self, which means that those who have no confidence may not achieve their goals or even never try to get what they want because they lack of confidence. But for people who have achieved their goals, it is not because they have the ability but because they have confidence. It also found in students. There are some students who have high confidence because they think it can help to get something new or something that can give knowledge for them. For example, students feel confident when asking teachers about material that they have not understood without shame. Therefore, this self-confidence is important for all students in improving their speaking performance, especially when they appear to speak in front of the class.

Myers (1981) said that those students who are slow or low performers, the teachers pay less attention to them, give less time to answer questions and provide less follow-up questions for them. These are all what directly effect on students self-confidence. The reality is teachers should give more time, teachers should more involve in the lesson and teachers should pay more attention to those students who are low and slow performer. Because, teachers' job is not only to teach active students, teachers job is to teach the whole class.

#### 4. CONCLUSION:

This research discussed different aspects of self-confidence in language learning. That self-confidence gives students power of expressing their selves among people and make them very powerful in any situation either they are mixed in order to share what they have in their minds. In addition, the class environment is a powerful agency of nurturing students to have high self-esteem. The teachers, therefore, should engage the learners in activities to enhance their self-worth. Teachers should guide and counsel students constantly to avoid a state of despair. Furthermore, there are still some vague questions which might clearly effect on students' self-confidence. So, this research is not enough, in order to have enough that what are other key pints that cause students self-confidence down needs for further investigation. For example, the effects of age on students' self-esteem and academic performance at Kabul Education University, languages and literature faculty, English department.

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