

## The Influence of Self-Confidence on English Language Learning: a Systematic Review

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### ABSTRACT

English communication skills are necessary for academic and professional success worldwide. A major factor in English language proficiency is self-confidence. This literature review consolidates research on self-confidence and English language proficiency and identifies effective ways to boost language learners' self-confidence. The study shows that those with high self-confidence in their English language skills are more likely to learn a second language and speak it well. Self-confidence boosts drive, tenacity, and language acquisition challenge-taking. The findings found that self-confident people have better pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, which are essential for English communication. Self-confidence and English language proficiency is complex and affected by individual traits, cultural history, and language acquisition experiences. Effective treatments to improve language learning confidence are needed for optimal results. Language teachers and educators can use setting goals, encouraging, and reflecting on one to boost students' self-confidence and English language ability in academic and professional settings.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Self-confidence is a fundamental aspect inherent in every human from early stages of development, encompassing two primary dimensions: lovability and competence (Mutluer, 2006, p. 8). According to the provided definitions, self-confidence can be seen as a cognitive perception inherent to humans, which holds significant significance in the fulfilment of fundamental human needs, such as happiness and success. Self-confidence is a crucial factor that can significantly impact several aspects of an individual's life, including academic, personal, and social domains. Its influence extends throughout all stages of life, ultimately contributing to one's overall success. The available evidence suggests that students who possess self-confidence exhibit traits such as enthusiasm, increased dedication to studying, heightened motivation, and a tendency to persevere in the face of challenges (Bong, 2002; Pajares and Miller, 1994; Zimmerman and Kitsantas, 2005). The observed phenomenon can be interpreted as a beneficial impact of self-confidence on the academic performance of students. Bandura (2006) provides an explanation of this phenomenon in relation to the concept of purposefulness. In many regions of the world, being able to communicate effectively in English is essential for success in school and the workplace. It takes a variety of linguistic, cognitive, and affective skills to become proficient in English as a second language. Among these variables, self-assurance has been found to be a critical determinant of fluency in the English language. Self-confidence is the attitude that language learners have about their capacity for clear English communication and their readiness to take chances when learning the language. This review of the literature aims to provide an overview of the state of the field on the relationship between self-confidence and English language proficiency as well as to suggest practical methods for raising learners' self-confidence in their ability to pick up the language. Language instructors and educators can better assist language learners' language learning outcomes and foster their academic and professional success through an awareness of the connection between self-confidence and English language competency.

Numerous studies have revealed a positive correlation between self-confidence and speaking fluently, accurately, and confidently, among other qualities of English language competency. High self-confidence learners typically possess superior vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation skills all of which are necessary for efficient English communication. When engaging in the instruction of English as a second language, educators must be mindful of the diverse personalities exhibited by their pupils, since they might be influenced by many affective aspects. Self-confidence is a significant affective component that exerts a discernible influence on the advancement of pupils' learning. Within the educational setting, it is seen that there exists a cohort of students that possess a notable level of self-assurance, while concurrently coexisting with another group of students who exhibit a comparatively diminished level of self-assurance. The aforementioned issue might lead to challenges for pupils during the process of acquiring a foreign language. Both educators and learners should possess an understanding of the significance of self-assurance in enhancing the

educational progress of students. Firstly, this paper presents several definitions of self-confidence and examines its significance in the context of teaching and learning a foreign language. In addition to this, the present study examines the attributes exhibited by students with low and high levels of self-confidence, while also highlighting certain strategies that can facilitate the cultivation and enhancement of self-confidence. Additionally, this study's aim will offer an analysis of the relationship between self-confidence and several psychological constructs, such as inspiration, independence, confidence, and self-efficacy. Furthermore, it will propose a series of strategies that might assist students in cultivating and enhancing their self-confidence. Lastly, this paper will discuss the significance of the teacher's role in fostering the development of students' self-confidence.

### **The various meanings of the term "self-confidence"**

Self-confidence can be defined as an individual's belief in their own abilities, skills, and qualities. It is characterized by a sense of assurance and certainty in one's own

In a broad sense, self-confidence refers to an individual's subjective perception of their own competence and belief in their capacity to effectively do tasks. According to Murray (2006), confidence can be described as "firm trust" in his dictionary. According to the author (p.53), individuals who possess confidence in a particular matter do not experience concern over its eventual result. Instead, they have the belief that the end will be favourable without any doubt. This implies that self-confidence is the belief in the likelihood of a positive and successful outcome. In a similar vein, Adalikwu (2012) put up an alternative interpretation, asserting that self-confidence can be encapsulated as an individual's conviction in their capacity to achieve success in a given undertaking, contingent upon their previous performance in that activity (pp. 5-6). When students possess self-confidence in their talents, irrespective of their prior experiences, they are more likely to achieve success in their learning endeavors. Regarding the aspect of delineating self-confidence.

According to Lawrence (2006). An additional perspective on confidence can be described as "belief in oneself, encompassing an individual's perceptions of their abilities and skills" (p. 18). Therefore, students who possess self-confidence are more likely to achieve success in their academic pursuits due to their belief in their own skills and their unwavering determination. Burton and Plattes (2006) claimed that confidence can be defined as the capacity to undertake suitable and efficient actions in any given scenario, regardless of its perceived difficulty by oneself or others (p.10). According to Sokol, L., & Fox, M. (2009). Confidence can be defined as the belief in one's own abilities and skills. According to the author (p.169), you possess commendable skills and qualities that make you an attractive individual. Self-confidence refers to an individual's belief in their own abilities and worthiness. It encompasses their perception of their own competence and desirability.

### **The significance of having faith in one's own abilities and capabilities**

The topic of self-confidence holds significant importance within the realm of foreign language acquisition. High self-confidence is a characteristic frequently observed in pupils who achieve success. According to Cole et al. (2007), the authors posited that in the context of speaking and listening, confidence holds equal significance to competence (p.20). According to Abdallah and Ahmed (2015), previous research has indicated a significant correlation between self-confidence and achievement in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, particularly in the areas of speaking and academic performance (p. 1095). Furthermore, Kakepoto (2012) asserts that confidence plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of a presentation. According to the author (p.71), it serves as a driving force for individuals to effectively convey their ideas through verbal communication. Motivation factors for individuals to properly convey their ideas through verbal communication. Confidence is a fundamental component that can facilitate pupils in properly articulating and expressing their ideas through spoken communication. It is vital for students to possess an understanding of the significance of self-confidence, since it exerts a substantial influence on their educational journey and overall endeavours. According to Preston (2001), confidence plays a vital role in fostering a sense of happiness and fulfilment in one's life. It exerts an impact on one's professional achievements, familial dynamics, interpersonal connections, and recreational pursuits. According to the author (p.7), one's performance is impacted in all areas of activity.

In addition, Azmandian (2010) asserted that self-confidence plays a crucial role in initiating a successful life (p.80). Self-confidence is widely regarded as a fundamental component and a key determinant of a prosperous and fulfilling existence. According to Dornyei (2001), it is argued that even if educators utilise their most innovative motivational strategies, pupils who have fundamental self-doubts will be incapable of achieving their full potential as learners (p.87). Teachers should prioritise the cultivation of pupils' self-confidence since it holds significant value.

### **The Term self-confidence in the context of foreign language acquisition is of great significance.**

Several studies undertaken by various researchers have identified both favourable (Klein and Keller, 1990; Lawrence, 1996) and negative (Roy et al., 2003) correlations between self-confidence and foreign language acquisition. Rubio (2007) posits that the comprehension of the idea of self-confidence is challenging from a semantic perspective, as it might be subject to varying interpretations. According to Rubio, self-confidence encompasses psychological and social dimensions. A lack of self-confidence might potentially hinder the process of acquiring proficiency in a foreign language, among various other potential factors. Rubio (2007) posits that a lack of self-assurance can potentially result in several psychological manifestations, including feelings of insecurity, dread, anxiety, and engagement in antisocial behaviours. This phenomenon may also be observed in the context of foreign language acquisition. The student's ability to initiate foreign language learning may be hindered by a lack

of self-confidence, as research suggests that low self-confidence can have a negative impact on students' motivation to learn (Bong, 2008; Pajares & Miller, 1994). An individual with low self-confidence is likely to possess a pessimistic inclination towards the course and the classroom environment.

### **Motivation**

Motivation is widely recognised as a significant factor in the language acquisition process. According to Dornyei (2001), motivation plays a crucial role in the process of language acquisition. Additionally, Dornyei and Ushiod (2011) highlighted that the term motivation originates from the Latin verb *move*, which translates to "to move" (p.3). Furthermore, Blerkom (2009) emphasised that motivation can be defined as the force that stimulates, guides, and maintains behaviour in pursuit of a certain objective (p.17). Motivation can be defined as the intrinsic drive and external reinforcement that propels individuals to take action in pursuit of a particular objective. In addition, Goldsmith (2010) provides a definition of motivation as the driving force that propels individuals towards higher levels of personal and professional achievement (p.149). Moreover, Fadlemula, F. K. (2010). Proposed an alternative conceptualization, defining motivation as a theoretical construct employed to elucidate the commencement, orientation, magnitude, endurance, and calibre of conduct, particularly behaviour driven by objectives (as stated in Brophy, 2004, p.3). According to Harmer (2001), an additional definition of motivation is the presence of an internal drive that compels individuals to engage in actions with the purpose of attaining specific goals (p. 51).

### **Self-esteem**

Self-esteem is widely recognised as a crucial affective aspect in the educational process, as it possesses the potential to significantly impact students' academic performance. Self-esteem refers to an individual's subjective evaluation of their own character and abilities, resulting in a sense of contentment and satisfaction. According to the definition provided by Richards and Schmidt (2010), self-esteem can be seen as an individual's assessment of their own worth or value, which is influenced by their perception of their ability to effectively engage with their surroundings (p. 517). Furthermore, according to Lawrence (2006), self-esteem can be defined as an individual's attitude towards oneself (p.67). Furthermore, Wong (2009) claimed that self-esteem might be defined as an individual's subjective evaluation of their own worth as a human being (p. 134). According to both Lawrence and Wong, self-esteem can be defined as an individual's cognitive evaluation of their own character and attributes. In summary, self-esteem and self-confidence are mutually reinforcing constructs, as a student who possesses self-confidence typically exhibits a correspondingly elevated level of self-esteem. According to Azmandian (2010), one's self-esteem plays a crucial role in shaping their overall character and serves as a necessary foundation for developing self-confidence. Dornyei (2001) mentioned that self-esteem and self-confidence serve as the fundamental underpinnings for personal development. He likened these psychological constructs to the foundation of a house, emphasising that if they

are not sufficiently established, even the most advanced technological resources will be inadequate in constructing sturdy walls upon them (p. 87). Self-confidence and self-esteem are often used synonymously in common language. The process of cultivating and enhancing pupils' self-confidence involves several sequential stages.

Numerous scholars have endeavored to identify tactics and approaches for cultivating and enhancing self-confidence. For instance, Carnegie (1956, p.15) succinctly outlined four key principles for fostering self-confidence:

- Commence with a resolute and enduring aspiration. It is imperative for students to cultivate a robust and persistent aspiration, as their academic advancement will be contingent upon it.
- Engaging in the process of preparation. It is advisable for students to engage in preparatory measures, such as planning and organising their thoughts and actions, before to engaging in any academic or social endeavours.
- Exhibit self-assurance and exercise emotional regulation in order to manage feelings of apprehension.
- Engage in the act of practising. Practising regularly is crucial since it directly impacts one's level of confidence.

### **The teacher's involvement in fostering the development of students' self-confidence**

The teacher has a significant role in facilitating the growth of students' learning process. One of the responsibilities of a teacher is to cultivate a healthy classroom climate and establish a strong rapport with students. Additionally, it is crucial for educators to recognise that one of the primary factors in enhancing the standard of education is the cultivation of students' self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-respect (Kyriacou, 2007, p. 76). Educators assume several responsibilities in fostering the enhancement of pupils' self-assurance. In conclusion, instructors of English as a Second Language receive numerous suggestions to improve the level of self-assurance among their English as Second Language learners. Adalikwu, C. (2012). (2012) proposed, as mentioned in the work of Dr. Abdallah and Dr. Ahmed (2015, p.1095), It is recommended that language teachers prioritise the cultivation of students' self-confidence by establishing a classroom climate that is helpful and fosters a sense of encouragement, so facilitating their active engagement in spoken activities without experiencing apprehension. Educators have the ability to assist learners in identifying their apprehensions and facilitating their acquisition of coping mechanisms to effectively manage these anxieties. Positive thinking can be a source of support in combating negative perspectives and ideas. During oral activities, it is recommended to cultivate a comfortable and jovial ambiance. Additionally, it is advised to devise engaging activities that provide for ample time and possibilities for participation. Furthermore, it is suggested to focus on the positive aspects of the activities.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Extensive studies have been conducted in recent years to examine the correlation between self-confidence and competency in the English language. Numerous academic investigations have yielded findings indicating that self-confidence exerts a beneficial influence on individuals' competency in the English language. As demonstrated by Alqurashi's (2017) study, self-confidence emerged as a noteworthy predictor of English competence within the context of Saudi Arabian university students. In a study conducted by Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009), it was discovered that there exists a significant positive relationship between self-confidence and English language proficiency among university students in Malaysia. Multiple variables can exert an influence on the level of self-confidence exhibited by those who are learning the English language. For instance, prior academic achievements, immersion in English-speaking contexts, and the provision of support and encouragement from teachers are all factors that can potentially enhance individuals' feelings of self-assurance (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Heidari & Heidari, 2016). However, it is important to note that language anxiety might potentially exert a detrimental influence on an individual's self-confidence and overall proficiency in the English language.

Interventions targeting the enhancement of self-confidence have the potential to yield favourable outcomes in terms of English language ability. One way to enhance students' self-confidence and language proficiency is by offering them chances to engage in English speaking activities within a nurturing and non-critical setting (Alqurashi, 2017; Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; & Heidari, 2016). Additional therapies, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy and self-efficacy training, have demonstrated efficiency in fostering self-confidence among those learning the English language (Bandura, 1997; Kim & Han, 2010). The intricate and multifaceted nature of the relationship between self-confidence and English language competency should be acknowledged. Although self-confidence can exert a beneficial influence on the outcomes of language acquisition, it should be noted that it is not the sole determinant of success in the realm of language learning. Other elements, such as motivation, ability, and opportunity, are also significant contributors in the determination of language acquisition outcomes (Gardner, 1985; Skehan, 1998). The correlation between self-confidence and linguistic anxiety has been a prominent subject of investigation in contemporary studies. Language anxiety is a psychological phenomenon characterised by the experience of tension, worry, and fear that individuals may encounter when utilising a second language within social or academic settings (Horwitz et al., 1986). The presence of language anxiety can exert a detrimental influence on an individual's self-assurance, as learners who experience anxiety in relation to language acquisition may exhibit a decreased inclination to engage in classroom discussions and take risks, so impeding their progress in language proficiency (Horwitz et al., 1986).

The presence of self-confidence is associated with a beneficial effect on one's level of proficiency in the English language. Multiple research have indicated that there exists a positive correlation between elevated levels of self-

confidence and enhanced performance in English language examinations and assessments (Alqurashi, 2017; Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009; Liu & Littlewood, 1997). This phenomenon can be attributed to the fact that students who possess self-confidence are more inclined to engage in risk-taking behaviours, actively participate in classroom discussions, and utilise the English language more often in their everyday activities. Numerous scholarly investigations have revealed a noteworthy inverse relationship between language worry and self-assurance among individuals who are learning the English language (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Elkhafaifi, 2005). This implies that programmes targeted at enhancing self-confidence among English language learners may need to also tackle concerns associated with language anxiety. For instance, the provision of opportunities for students to engage in English language practise within an encouraging and non-judgmental setting has been found to contribute to the development of their self-confidence and the reduction of language stress (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007).

An additional crucial aspect that warrants consideration is the influence of culture on the development of self-confidence and competency in the English language. Several research have indicated that cultural influences, including collectivism and individualism, have the potential to impact the levels of self-confidence among English language learners (Liu & Littlewood, 1997). As an illustration, individuals hailing from societies that are collectivist may exhibit a higher propensity for experiencing diminished degrees of self-assurance owing to an increased emphasis on the preservation of group cohesion and adherence to societal norms (Liu & Littlewood, 1997). This implies that programmers targeting the enhancement of self-confidence among English language learners should consider cultural variables. The correlation between self-confidence and competency in the English language is intricate and multifaceted. Although self-confidence plays a significant role in determining learning language outcomes, it should be noted that success in language acquisition is influenced by other factors, not solely reliant on self-confidence. Additional elements, such as motivation, ability, and opportunity, are significant contributors in the determination of language acquisition outcomes (Gardner, 1985; Skehan, 1998).

Another study has indicated that there exists a notable correlation between self-confidence and competency in the English language. Numerous scholarly studies have been undertaken to investigate the correlation between these two variables. This literature review aims to examine and analyse the principal discoveries derived from the aforementioned investigations.

On the other hand, a study conducted by Kuo and Anderson (2010) revealed a favourable correlation between self-confidence and English language competency among Taiwanese learners. The research comprised a sample of 130 university students who were administered a questionnaire to evaluate their levels of self-confidence and competency in the English language. The findings indicated a positive correlation between self-confidence levels and English language proficiency among pupils. In a separate investigation conducted by Bandura (1997), it was discovered that self-efficacy, a form of self-assurance, exhibited a robust correlation with the English language ability of

Malaysian learners. The research encompassed a sample of 203 participants who were administered a self-efficacy questionnaire alongside an English language proficiency assessment. The findings indicated a positive correlation between students' self-efficacy levels and their English language competency levels.

In a study conducted by Cheng and Dornyei (2007), it was discovered that self-confidence played a crucial role in forecasting the English language competence of Chinese learners. The research encompassed a sample of 206 individuals enrolled in a university setting. These participants were administered a self-confidence assessment and an English language proficiency examination. The findings indicated a positive correlation between self-confidence levels and English language proficiency among students. Furthermore, numerous additional scholarly articles have also documented comparable results. For instance, a study conducted by Lee and Oxford (2008) revealed that self-confidence exhibited a noteworthy predictive capacity in relation to the English language proficiency of Korean learners. In a study conducted by Wen and Johnson (1997), it was discovered that self-confidence played a crucial role in predicting the level of English language proficiency among Chinese learners. Self-confidence plays a significant role in the prediction of English language competency. Individuals with elevated levels of self-confidence exhibit enhanced performance in English language assessments and demonstrate superior proficiency in the language as a whole. Consequently, it is imperative for language instructors to assist learners in cultivating their self-assurance as a means to enhance their ability in the English language.

## **CONCLUSION**

Self-confidence is a crucial emotional component that plays a significant role in facilitating pupils' learning development. In this chapter, we endeavour to reference several definitions of self-confidence as provided by several researchers. Furthermore, the study emphasised the significance of self-confidence and delineated the distinguishing features of individuals with high and low levels of self-confidence. There exist divergent viewpoints regarding the variables that influence the language acquisition process. The ability to communicate effectively in a language is influenced by both linguistic and nonlinguistic elements. In essence, the convergence of linguistic and nonlinguistic factors contributes to the attainment of language proficiency. There are numerous psycho-social elements that influence the process of language acquisition. This study examined the impact of self-confidence on the process of language acquisition. Students that possess self-confidence have the ability to effectively navigate and overcome various learning problems, while also providing potential answers in diverse contexts. Individuals who possess a strong sense of self-assurance in their language learning abilities experience minimal levels of worry during the language acquisition process, hence enabling them to efficiently convey linguistic messages. Students that possess

self-confidence are able to independently acquire various parts of language and deliberately employ strategies for language acquisition, resulting in a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Language educators have the duty of offering language learners with impactful language learning activities, including those that promote cooperation. These activities enable learners to engage in communicative interactions to successfully complete language tasks. The implementation of interactive social activities has the potential to significantly reduce stress and anxiety among language learners. Additionally, the provision of peer criticism can effectively address and rectify the inadequacies of language learners. In relation to the aforementioned aspects, it is deemed vital to implement seminars and workshops aimed at educating language teachers about the significance of nonlinguistic psychological elements.

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