

ENHANCING STUDENTS' CONFIDENCE THROUGH ENGLISH SELF-INTRODUCTION AT SDN 2 SUKODADI

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana kegiatan perkenalan diri dalam bahasa Inggris dapat meningkatkan kepercayaan diri berbicara siswa sekolah dasar dalam konteks EFL. Penelitian dilaksanakan di SDN 2 Sukodadi dengan melibatkan 22 siswa kelas lima melalui pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi kelas, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan jurnal refleksi siswa. Intervensi terdiri dari kegiatan perkenalan diri berbahasa Inggris yang terstruktur dan dilaksanakan selama empat minggu. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan yang signifikan dalam keberanian siswa untuk berbicara, penurunan kecemasan saat berbicara, serta peningkatan kepercayaan diri yang mereka rasakan. Banyak siswa yang sebelumnya pasif menjadi lebih aktif dan berani berpartisipasi secara sukarela. Jurnal refleksi siswa menunjukkan peningkatan motivasi dan rasa bangga, di mana siswa mengungkapkan pencapaian diri setelah berhasil berbicara dalam bahasa Inggris. Hasil ini menunjukkan bahwa tugas berbicara yang sederhana, berulang, dan menggunakan topik yang familiar mampu menciptakan lingkungan emosional yang aman bagi siswa untuk mengekspresikan diri. Penelitian ini juga menunjukkan bahwa latihan berbicara yang praktis dan konsisten dapat memberikan dampak nyata terhadap perkembangan afektif dan performa lisan siswa. Secara keseluruhan, kegiatan perkenalan diri dinilai efektif, mudah diterapkan, dan dapat disesuaikan dengan berbagai kondisi pembelajaran, terutama di sekolah yang memiliki keterbatasan sumber daya. Guru disarankan untuk mengadopsi kegiatan ini sebagai bagian inti dalam pembelajaran berbicara.

Kata Kunci: *kepercayaan diri berbicara, perkenalan diri, EFL*

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine how English self-introduction activities can enhance speaking confidence among elementary students in an EFL context. Conducted at SDN 2 Sukodadi, the research involved 22 fifth-grade students through a qualitative descriptive design. Data collection was carried out using classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and student reflection journals. The intervention consisted of structured English self-introduction tasks carried out over a period of four weeks. The findings showed significant improvements in students' willingness to speak, reduced speaking anxiety, and increased self-perceived confidence. Many students who were previously hesitant became more active and voluntarily participated in speaking sessions. Reflection journals also revealed increased motivation and pride, with students expressing a greater sense of achievement. The results further indicate that repetitive, low-stakes speaking tasks using familiar content can create a safe emotional environment, enabling students to express themselves more freely. This study also demonstrates that practical and simple speaking exercises, when delivered consistently, can have a meaningful impact on students' affective development and oral language performance. Overall, the research suggests that self-introduction activities are not only effective in improving students' speaking skills but also accessible and adaptable for various educational contexts,

especially in low-resource classrooms. Teachers are encouraged to adopt these activities as a core component of their speaking instruction.

Keywords: *speaking confidence, self-introduction, EFL*

INTRODUCTION

In the process of learning English as a foreign language (EFL), speaking is widely acknowledged as one of the most critical yet challenging skills to acquire (Dincer & Dariyemez, 2020), particularly among elementary school learners. Unlike receptive skills such as listening and reading, which allow learners time to process information passively, speaking demands active, real-time production of language. This immediacy of response and interaction makes speaking not only a cognitively demanding task but also an emotionally charged one. According to Wang et al. (2022), speaking is a productive skill that involves generating language in real-time communication, requiring learners to retrieve vocabulary, structure grammatical sentences, and deliver them fluently and accurately—all within a matter of seconds. More importantly, speaking is not only a means of communication but also a visible measure of language proficiency. A student's ability or inability to speak often becomes the most noticeable indicator of their overall competence in English (Eslit & Valderama, 2023).

At the elementary level, the challenges related to speaking are even more pronounced. Children at this stage are still developing their cognitive and linguistic abilities in their first language, which can further complicate the process of acquiring and using a foreign language. Moreover, many young learners in EFL contexts, such as in Indonesia, have limited opportunities to practice speaking English outside the classroom (Fachrunnisa & Nuraeni, 2022). Abdul Hali et al. (2024) note that common barriers to speaking at this level include a limited range of vocabulary, minimal exposure to authentic English communication, and—most critically—a lack of self-confidence. Without confidence, even students who possess a reasonable understanding of English structures and vocabulary may hesitate or avoid speaking altogether. This reluctance hinders not only their language development but also their overall engagement in the learning process.

Self-confidence, therefore, plays a central role in language acquisition—especially in developing oral communication skills. Affective factors such as anxiety, motivation, and self-efficacy are deeply intertwined with language learning outcomes, particularly speaking performance (Pramadanti, 2024). Mingyan et al. (2025) assert that students with higher confidence levels are significantly more likely to participate actively in speaking activities. These students are also more willing to take risks, attempt new vocabulary, and persevere through errors as part of the learning process. Conversely, students with low confidence tend to remain passive, avoid participation, and exhibit signs of communication apprehension (Murad & Jalalbo, 2019). They often fear making mistakes, being corrected, or judged by their peers and teachers. Such fear can lead to silence, withdrawal from speaking tasks, and eventually a negative attitude toward English learning altogether.

Given these challenges, it is essential for educators to create classroom environments and activities that not only teach linguistic forms but also nurture confidence and reduce anxiety. One practical and effective strategy for building speaking confidence among young EFL learners is the use of structured self-introduction activities (Ramdhano & Jambi, 2025). These activities require students to talk about familiar and personal topics—such as their names, hobbies, favorite foods, or daily routines—which reduces the cognitive load and increases the emotional safety of speaking. When students are asked to speak about content they already know well, the linguistic barrier is lowered, and they are more likely to feel successful (Diep et

al., 2022). In turn, repeated success fosters a sense of achievement, which directly contributes to the development of self-confidence.

Moreover, self-introduction tasks align well with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasize authentic, meaningful use of language in context. Unlike rote memorization or decontextualized grammar drills, self-introductions provide opportunities for students to use language purposefully and interactively. Zúñiga et al. (2023) highlights that when learners engage in communicative tasks that are relevant and low-pressure, their willingness to speak improves, and their language output becomes more fluent and spontaneous. These types of activities also allow for differentiation and can be easily adapted to suit different proficiency levels. For example, beginners may start with simple sentences like “My name is...” or “I like...,” while more advanced students can elaborate with reasons, preferences, or short narratives.

At SDN 2 Sukodadi, a public elementary school with limited resources and exposure to English-speaking environments, the implementation of self-introduction activities presents a promising approach. It offers a practical, low-cost, and culturally adaptable way to engage students in meaningful speaking practice. By incorporating self-introductions regularly into classroom routines, teachers can provide students with consistent opportunities to practice speaking in a supportive and familiar context (Dwigustini et al., 2022). Additionally, this approach can serve as a gateway to broader communicative competence, as students gradually build the confidence to participate in more complex speaking tasks.

Beyond linguistic outcomes, such activities contribute significantly to students' emotional and psychological development. When students are encouraged to express themselves in a non-threatening environment, they not only learn to use the language but also begin to see themselves as capable speakers (Kulsum & Ridwan, 2025). This shift in self-perception is a crucial step in building a positive learner identity and long-term motivation. As Yin (2021) emphasize, affective elements such as enjoyment, pride, and a sense of accomplishment are key predictors of sustained engagement and success in language learning. By prioritizing confidence-building tasks like self-introductions, teachers can support both the cognitive and affective domains of student development.

Moreover, empirical evidence from studies conducted in Indonesian middle schools underscores the crucial role of self-confidence in speaking performance. A qualitative case study at SMP Negeri 9 Palu found that students' reluctance to speak stemmed from psychological barriers such as fear of mistakes, limited vocabulary, and nervousness, all of which hampered their oral participation. The study concluded that bolstering self-confidence is essential to enhancing their willingness to speak (Ananda & Hastini, 2023). In a quantitative study at SMPIT Al Muchtar, researchers examined the relationship between self-confidence and speaking skills among eighth-grade students. The findings showed a strong positive effect of self-confidence on speaking performance, affirming that confidence significantly contributes to better oral fluency and participation (Aulia & Apoko, 2022). Furthermore, research exploring social-emotional learning (SEL) strategies highlighted how structured support, emotional safety, and classroom norms contribute to communicative growth. A report by Malmö University shows that SEL-oriented practices—such as peer encouragement and reflective routines—help reduce speaking anxiety and improve students' engagement and self-esteem in EFL classroom (Cycle, 2025).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was structured using a qualitative descriptive design to facilitate an in-depth exploration of how English self-introduction activities influence the development of speaking

confidence among young learners. Following the principles of qualitative research, which aims to understand the meaning individuals ascribe to a social problem (Lima & Newell-McLymont, 2021), this approach was selected to capture the nuanced experiences and behaviors of students in a natural classroom setting. The research was conducted at SDN 2 Sukodadi, a public elementary school in Lamongan, East Java. The participants were 22 fifth-grade students, aged 10 to 11, who were chosen through purposive sampling. This technique was deemed appropriate for selecting individuals who could provide rich information relevant to the research question, as they were all active participants in regular English classes (Etikan, 2016). This methodological framework allowed for a detailed and contextualized examination of the phenomenon without imposing preconceived categories or statistical measures, focusing instead on the lived experiences of the students.

Data collection was carried out using a triangulated approach that combined three primary instruments: classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and student reflection journals. Over a period of three weeks, with two 35-minute sessions per week, the researcher acted as a participant observer, documenting student behaviors and confidence indicators like eye contact and willingness to speak. The intervention activities progressed from teacher modeling to pair work and individual presentations, supported by visual aids and a session involving video feedback. To gain deeper insights, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight students to explore their feelings and perceptions regarding their confidence levels. Additionally, students were prompted to write weekly reflection journals in their native language, Indonesian, to capture their personal thoughts on the learning process. This combination of observational, interactive, and self-reported data provided a comprehensive and multi-faceted view of the students' development throughout the intervention.

The collected data from observation notes, interview transcripts, and journal entries were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the systematic process described by Segalo & Dube (2022). An inductive approach was adopted, allowing themes to emerge directly from the data. The process involved multiple readings of the data for familiarization, followed by manual coding to identify significant patterns. These codes were then grouped into broader thematic clusters, such as "reduced speaking anxiety" and "positive self-perception." To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings, two key strategies were employed. First, methodological triangulation was used to cross-verify themes across the three different data sources. Second, member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary interpretations with the interviewed students, allowing them to confirm or clarify the findings and ensure their experiences were represented authentically. These rigorous procedures collectively enhanced the validity of the study's conclusions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

Classroom observations across a four-week intervention period demonstrated a marked improvement in students' willingness to speak English in class. On the first observation (Week 1), only 2 out of 22 students voluntarily attempted to introduce themselves in English. Most students avoided eye contact, covered their mouths when prompted to speak, or responded with silence. Teachers noted behaviors such as fidgeting, looking away, or whispering answers in Bahasa Indonesia.

However, by the third and fourth weeks, a distinct behavioral shift was recorded. In one session (Week 3, Session 2), 14 students raised their hands without prompting when the teacher asked for volunteers to do a self-introduction in front of the class. Students began forming simple sentences with more clarity and enthusiasm, such as: "Hello, my name is Fira. I am nine

years old. I like drawing. My favorite food is fried rice." Moreover, students began assisting each other, whispering prompts like "say your hobby!" or "don't forget your age!" when peers struggled, demonstrating peer encouragement and classroom rapport. Anecdotal notes by the teacher (based on a structured observation checklist) highlighted that students used more open body language, such as smiling and standing upright during their turns, suggesting increased confidence and comfort. A significant example was one shy student, R.B., who did not speak at all during Week 1. By the final week, R.B. confidently completed a self-introduction without teacher support and even initiated a simple follow-up question to a peer ("What's your favorite food?"), showcasing a leap in both fluency and initiative.

These behavioral changes validate the effectiveness of repetitive, structured, and personalized speaking tasks in creating a safe environment for language use—one in which students gradually develop confidence and agency in their speech production. This aligns with findings such as Cutrone & Beh (2024), which conclude that 'task-based instruction had a positive effect on the communicative confidence and willingness to communicate in L2 English', Wu & Cai (2025), who observe that 'emotional support helps learners alleviate learning stress and build self-confidence'

A. semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 students from Grade 4 and 5 who participated in the self-introduction activities. Interviews were held individually in a quiet room to ensure comfort, with responses recorded and later transcribed for thematic analysis. The questions focused on students' feelings before and after engaging in self-introduction tasks, perceptions of speaking English, and self-assessment of improvement.

Initially, most students described feelings of nervousness and embarrassment when speaking English. Phrases such as "takut salah" (afraid of being wrong) and "nggak berani ngomong" (not brave to speak) were frequently mentioned during interviews and informal reflections. These emotional responses are not uncommon among young EFL learners, especially when they are required to perform in a second language in front of their peers. The fear of making mistakes, being laughed at, or receiving negative feedback often inhibits participation and hinders language development.

However, as the intervention progressed and students engaged in structured self-introduction activities on a regular basis, a noticeable shift in attitude emerged. Over the course of several weeks, students began to demonstrate greater ease and enthusiasm when asked to speak English in class. Their responses in interviews and journals reflected this positive development, with many students expressing pride in their ability to communicate basic information about themselves.

One student, D.A. (age 10), shared the following reflection:

"Dulu saya takut, sekarang saya senang kalau ditanya pakai Bahasa Inggris. Karena saya tahu jawabannya, seperti nama dan hobi. Jadi lebih gampang."

("Before, I was afraid, but now I enjoy being asked in English. Because I know the answers, like my name and hobby. So it's easier.")

This statement highlights an important element of language learning success: familiarity with the content reduces cognitive and emotional burden. When students are asked to talk about things they already know—such as their name, age, hobbies, or favorite food—they are not required to invent content or search for unfamiliar vocabulary. This allows them to focus on producing the language itself, rather than struggling with the message. Consequently, students feel more competent and experience a sense of achievement, which in turn reinforces their motivation to speak.

Another student, M.R. (age 9), explained:

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“Saya jadi pede/[percaya diri] karena teman-teman juga ngomong walau salah. Jadi saya tidak takut lagi.”

(“I became confident because my friends also spoke even if they made mistakes. So I’m not afraid anymore.”)

M.R.’s comment emphasizes the value of a supportive classroom environment in fostering speaking confidence. When mistakes are normalized and not penalized harshly, students are more willing to take risks. Seeing peers participate, even with errors, helps dismantle the myth of perfection in language learning and encourages a collaborative, rather than competitive, learning atmosphere. Throughout the intervention, patterns of emotional development were observed across the group. In early sessions, students often hesitated before speaking and required teacher prompts or modeling to begin. Many would speak in very low voices, avert eye contact, or look to friends for cues. However, by week four, students began volunteering to speak, initiating conversations during pair work, and even correcting each other’s grammar in a friendly manner. The data from weekly observation logs indicated that more than 80% of students transitioned from passive to active participation during the speaking segments of the lessons.

In their weekly journals, students increasingly used positive language to describe their speaking experiences. Terms such as “seru” (fun), “mudah” (easy), and “berani” (brave) became more frequent, while negative descriptors such as “takut” (afraid) or “bingung” (confused) significantly decreased. This suggests that structured, repeated speaking activities—especially those with clear patterns like self-introduction—help develop both linguistic competence and psychological readiness. From a pedagogical standpoint, this indicates that language educators, particularly at the elementary level, must pay close attention to the emotional dimension of language learning. Confidence is not merely a byproduct of skill acquisition; it is a precondition for engagement. Activities that reduce ambiguity and encourage student voice, such as self-introduction tasks, are therefore essential.

The success of this approach also lies in its balance of structure and flexibility. Students followed a basic sentence frame (e.g., “My name is...”, “I live in...”, “I like...”), but were given the freedom to personalize their responses. This combination allowed for scaffolding—ensuring that students were supported—while also respecting their individuality. As a result, students did not feel they were simply performing memorized language, but genuinely using English to express their identity.

Several students commented that speaking about personal topics like name, age, and hobbies made the experience feel ‘fun’ and ‘familiar.’ They emphasized that they weren’t afraid of making mistakes because the content felt easy and relatable. This shift in perception aligns with research showing that early, low-stakes speaking activities—which are repetitive and structured—help students develop emotional resilience and confidence in using English. For example, Nurfitriana et al. (2024) found that ‘engaging in speaking activities and real-life communication scenarios helps students build confidence making them more willing to communicate in English’. Similarly Zhang (2024) report that ‘self-regulation strategies positively affected willingness to communication self-efficacy,’ reinforcing the role of psychologically supportive communicative tasks.

Additionally, students reported a sense of pride when successfully completing self-introductions. One female student, S.F., described how she practiced in front of a mirror at home and asked her sibling to listen. This level of self-directed preparation suggests an increase in intrinsic motivation and self-belief. The interviews indicate that beyond improving linguistic output, the self-introduction task served as a reflective platform for students to reconstruct their

self-image. They began to view themselves not as passive language learners but as emerging users of English—an essential step in building a confident learning identity.

B. student reflection journals

At the beginning of the four-week intervention program, student reflection journals provided a window into the emotional and linguistic starting points of the learners. These Grade 4 students, aged 9 to 11, were introduced to daily English-speaking practice through self-introduction activities. Despite the familiar content—such as name, age, hobbies, and favorite food—many students exhibited signs of nervousness, hesitation, and low confidence. Their initial journal entries were brief, emotionally flat, and reflective of uncertainty.

For example, in Week 1, one student wrote:

“Today, I said my name. I am shy.”

Another wrote:

“I forgot how to say my hobby. I feel bad.”

These short responses reveal more than just linguistic limitation—they reflect affective states characterized by fear of making mistakes, lack of assurance, and minimal self-expression. The students’ limited verbal output matched their written reflections. Most sentences were fragmented, written with uncertain grammar, and lacking elaboration. The general tone was one of compliance rather than enthusiasm.

Such early entries aligned with observations made during class, where most students avoided eye contact, spoke in whispers, or giggled nervously when called upon. The phrase “takut salah” (afraid of being wrong) emerged frequently during informal interviews, reinforcing the idea that speaking anxiety was a major barrier at the beginning of the program.

By the second week, a subtle shift in tone began to appear in the journals. As students became more accustomed to the daily routines, repeated vocabulary, and classroom environment, their responses started to grow in both length and emotional content. Teacher scaffolding and peer modeling helped create a more supportive setting where students felt less judged.

One student recorded:

“I say my name, age, and hobby today. I am not scared like before.”

Another wrote:

“I try to say it loud. My friend smiles. I feel good.”

These reflections signal the early stages of confidence building. Although some grammatical errors remained, students began to express emotional responses—“feel good,” “not scared”—indicating a reduction in anxiety. This emotional shift was also reflected in class participation: more hands were raised, students smiled after completing their turns, and peer clapping was becoming a routine response after someone spoke.

Peer encouragement proved especially impactful. When one student dared to speak louder or attempted a complete sentence, others followed suit. The presence of shared risk-taking reduced the psychological burden of public speaking. As Krashen (1982) theorized, lowering the affective filter allows input to be more effectively processed. This environment of mutual encouragement clearly contributed to that reduction.

By the third and fourth weeks, student journals transformed into insightful, reflective narratives that showcased not only improved English ability but also emotional and cognitive growth. Most students were able to produce multiple complete sentences and describe their experiences with clear pride.

A student wrote in Week 3:

“I can say my name, age, hobby, and favorite food. I speak without teacher help. I am happy and proud.”

Another reflected in Week 4:

“Before, I feel scared. Now, I speak in full sentence. My friend claps for me. I feel brave.”

These reflections signal a clear progression in students’ self-perception. The phrases “without teacher help” and “I feel brave” illustrate increased autonomy and emotional resilience. Students were beginning to internalize their progress—not just in terms of vocabulary, but in self-assurance. More importantly, students were now describing specific aspects of their speaking performance, such as using full sentences or correct grammar. This indicates metacognitive development, where learners are aware of their learning processes and can evaluate their own language use. For example, one journal entry read:

“Today, I remember to say ‘My name is...’ not ‘I name is.’ I speak better.”

In this sentence, the student reflects both on a past mistake and a corrected usage, showing that language learning is no longer a passive task but an active, self-monitored process.

What was perhaps most striking in the final week of journal entries was the emergence of intrinsic motivation. Students began to describe practicing outside of school and engaging with English in their daily lives.

One student wrote:

“I teach my little brother how to say his name in English. I feel like teacher!”

Another entry read:

“I say my self-introduction in front of mirror. I want to be better.”

These entries show a shift from external motivation—such as teacher instructions—to internal desire to learn and share knowledge. The reference to “feel like teacher” reveals a transformed self-image, one where students see themselves not only as learners but also as capable language users and role models.

This stage of confidence is important. It implies sustainability: students are likely to continue using and practicing English even after the structured intervention ends. Their emotional connection to the language, marked by pride and enjoyment, suggests long-term engagement.

These findings align with Wu & Cai (2025) emphasis on thematic reflection, showing how personal narrative and repetitive practice can support both affective and linguistic domains of learning. The journals thus provide strong qualitative evidence that English self-introduction tasks foster not only speech performance but also a more confident, self-aware learner identity.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that structured, repetitive self-introduction activities serve as a highly effective pedagogical tool for enhancing speaking confidence among young EFL learners. The observable shift from only two students volunteering to speak in the first week to fourteen actively participating by the third week provides clear behavioral evidence of this progression. This quantitative change was mirrored in qualitative data, where students’ initial expressions of fear, such as *takut salah* (afraid of being wrong), transformed into feelings of enjoyment and pride. This outcome aligns with the core principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which prioritize meaningful language use in a low-anxiety environment. Consistent with Zhou (2020), the use of familiar, personal content creates a safe space for linguistic experimentation, allowing students to build confidence as a primary step. This research validates the assertion by Illyin et al. (2021) that affective factors, such as emotional safety and self-belief, are often more critical than initial linguistic competence in fostering a willingness to communicate.

A key factor contributing to the intervention’s success was the use of familiar and personally relevant content, which significantly reduced both cognitive load and emotional burden for the students. By focusing on information they already knew intimately—their name,

age, and hobbies—learners were freed from the dual challenge of generating content and formulating it in a new language. As one student articulated, the task became easier because, “I know the answers.” This allowed them to concentrate their mental resources on the act of language production itself. The structured sentence frames provided essential scaffolding, offering a predictable foundation while still allowing for personalization. This balance ensured students felt supported yet capable of genuine self-expression. This approach directly fosters both linguistic competence and psychological readiness, reinforcing the findings of Nurfitriana et al. (2024) that engaging in real-life communication scenarios is crucial for building the confidence necessary for students to become more willing communicators in English.

The emotional journey of the students throughout the intervention highlights the profound impact of the affective domain on language acquisition. Initial journal entries and interview responses were dominated by feelings of shyness and fear, yet these gave way to expressions of pride, happiness, and bravery by the final week. A pivotal element in this transformation was the supportive peer environment. As one student noted, confidence grew because “my friends also spoke even if they made mistakes.” This normalization of errors was instrumental in creating a collaborative, non-judgmental atmosphere where students felt safe to take linguistic risks. This process directly reflects Krashen’s (1982) theory of the affective filter, demonstrating that when anxiety is low, learners are more receptive to language input and more willing to produce output. This study empirically supports the conclusions of Ananda and Hastini (2023) and Indira (2023), who found that emotional safety and supportive experiences are significant predictors of students' willingness to speak and sustain motivation.

By the latter stages of the intervention, a notable shift from extrinsic compliance to intrinsic motivation and learner autonomy became evident. Journal entries detailing students practicing in front of a mirror, teaching a younger sibling, or successfully speaking “without teacher help” illustrate this progression. These self-directed behaviors indicate that students were beginning to take ownership of their learning, driven by an internal desire for improvement rather than solely by teacher instruction. This process was instrumental in helping students reconstruct their self-image, moving from the identity of a passive language learner to that of an emerging, capable user of English. This aligns with research on self-regulation and willingness to communicate by Zhang (2024), which found that self-regulation strategies positively affected self-efficacy. The development of such intrinsic motivation and confidence is a key indicator of the potential for sustainable, long-term engagement with the language, as noted by Cutrone and Beh (2024).

Beyond affective growth, the repetitive and structured nature of the self-introduction task fostered significant metacognitive development. Students transitioned from simply performing a task to actively monitoring their own language use. A journal entry in which a student celebrated remembering to say “My name is...” instead of the incorrect “I name is...” serves as a powerful example of this emerging language awareness. This self-correction indicates that the learning process had become an active, reflective endeavor rather than a passive act of memorization. The predictability of the task provided the mental space for students to notice their errors, reflect on the correct forms, and consciously apply them in subsequent attempts. This development of metacognitive skills is a crucial higher-order outcome, demonstrating that the intervention did not just improve performance but also enhanced the students’ capacity to learn how to learn, making them more effective and self-aware language learners over time.

The findings of this study carry significant practical implications for EFL instruction, particularly in elementary school settings with limited resources. The self-introduction strategy is cost-effective, requires minimal materials, and is highly adaptable to various proficiency levels.

levels and age groups, making it a scalable and sustainable approach. It provides a concrete model for educators seeking to build foundational speaking skills by prioritizing confidence as a prerequisite for engagement. This research underscores the necessity for teachers to integrate affective considerations into their curriculum design, recognizing that emotional support is a critical component of successful language learning, a point also emphasized by Wu and Cai (2025). By creating structured, low-stakes opportunities for meaningful self-expression, teachers can effectively lower students' speaking anxiety and cultivate a positive classroom environment where all learners feel empowered to use their voice, thereby laying a robust foundation for future language development.

While this study offers valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. The research was conducted with a small sample size of 22 students within a single school, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Furthermore, the four-week duration of the intervention provides a snapshot of short-term gains in confidence, but it does not allow for conclusions about the long-term retention of these affective and linguistic improvements. The data collection relied primarily on classroom observations and self-report measures such as interviews and journals, which could be strengthened by incorporating more objective linguistic assessments of fluency, accuracy, and complexity. Future research should aim to replicate this study with a larger and more diverse sample across multiple schools. A longitudinal design would also be beneficial to track the durability of the observed effects on student confidence and speaking skills over an extended period.

CONCLUSION

This study convincingly demonstrates that structured and repetitive self-introduction activities are a highly effective pedagogical tool for increasing speaking confidence in young EFL learners. Evidence of this success is evident in the increase in the number of students who volunteered to speak, from just two in the first week to fourteen in the third week, accompanied by a qualitative shift from feelings of fear to pride and enjoyment. The success of this intervention is rooted in the use of familiar and personally relevant content, which significantly reduces students' cognitive and emotional burden. By focusing on information they have already mastered, students can focus their energy on language production. Furthermore, a supportive peer environment, where errors are normalized, has proven crucial in creating a sense of psychological safety, in line with Krashen's theory of a low affective filter.

Beyond simply boosting self-confidence, this intervention also successfully fostered autonomy and metacognitive awareness in students. A shift from extrinsic compliance to intrinsic motivation was observed, characterized by self-directed learning behaviors such as practicing in front of a mirror. The repetitive process also provided space for students to actively monitor and correct their own language errors, demonstrating the development of the ability to learn how to learn. The practical implications of these findings are significant, offering educators a cost-effective, adaptable, and scalable strategy for building a foundation of self-confidence, a key prerequisite for language learning. While this study is limited in scale and duration, its findings provide a powerful model for the importance of integrating affective considerations to create classroom environments that empower all students.

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