Ma'am/Sir, May We Speak in Tagalog?: The Unspoken Struggles of English Major Students with Low English Language Confidence

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the factors contributing to students' low confidence in using the English language, focusing on how their background, environment, and emotional experiences influenced their willingness to speak English. Using a qualitative case study approach, researchers gathered student perspectives and analyzed the data thematically, supported by tables. Focusing on three aspects, first, familial roots and parental support were crucial in shaping students' language confidence, as families often serve as early language models. Second, sociocultural influences including community language practices, peer pressure, cultural identity, and code-switching affected how students used and perceived English. Third, educational background and challenges stood out as the most significant theme. Factors such as limited exposure, teacher influence, academic struggles, and classroom environment were found to shape students' ability to use English confidently. Many students attributed their low confidence to a lack of speaking opportunities and negative early schooling experiences. Psychological barriers and unsupported learning environments further contributed to their struggles. In response, the researchers proposed an intervention plan aimed at both learners and teachers. It includes learner-centered speaking activities, teacher training workshops, and flexible language learning tools. A post-intervention assessment tool was also developed to measure improvements in confidence, participation, and communication skills. While the researchers designed this plan, they were not involved in its implementation. In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of understanding and addressing learners' perceptions to improve English language instruction.

Keywords: – Educational Challenges, Familial Roots, Intervention Plan, Language Confidence, Sociocultural Influences

INTRODUCTION

The Philippines is one of the largest English-speaking nations. According to the 2024 EF English Proficiency Index, the Philippines ranked 22nd among 116 countries with high English proficiency. Although many Filipinos had some degree of English fluency, a gradual decline was noticeable. From 13th place in 2016, the country fell to 27th in 2020, briefly climbed to 18th in 2021, and dropped to 20th in 2023—still lower than its peak ranking in 2016. Behind these scores, Filipinos were significantly challenged in using English as a communication medium, leading to low English language confidence. Accordingly, many students struggle with English language, impacting their language confidence use. Studies indicate that Philippine education is declining, as shown by the results of achievement tests and board exams, which reflect students' English proficiency (Racca & Lasaten, 2016). It was also mentioned that various factors contribute to low confidence in English, including self- efficacy, social identity, psychological factors, the influence of education as well as familial backgrounds.

First, self-efficacy was a person's particular set of beliefs that determines how well one can execute a plan of action in prospective situations (Lopez-Garrido, 2023). In simpler terms, low self-efficacy results in negative behavior or performance, hindering a person's success in a particular situation. Second, social identity theory posited that individuals' self-concept was intertwined with their group memberships. This can make them

vulnerable to various identity threats, causing them to question themselves, which might lead to low English language confidence (Ellemers, 2024). Third, a student's psychological state can significantly impact their English language confidence. Negative emotions such as anxiety, fear of failure, or self-doubt can hinder language learning. Emotional factors that may influence language learning and language use include basic personality traits, such as shyness, long-term factors, such as attitudes toward learning, and constantly fluctuating states, such as anxiety, boredom, enthusiasm, and apathy. Emotions were often a feature of language classes (Ras, 2016). Since English served as the second language in the Philippines, one of the researchers' concerns was to understand the level of English confidence among English major students and how they can improve their English language proficiency skills. This study will explore how English language education contributed to the development of students' soft skills and personal attributes, as well as unveiling various challenges faced by English speakers and methods for improving communication skills focusing on self-confidence.

Self-Confidence

Malhotra et al. (2022) state that self-confidence, characterized by positivism and persistence, is a significant personal trait that influences both academic success and overall performance development. The study emphasizes that high selfconfidence plays a crucial role in language learning, as confident learners tend to perform better and approach language tasks more positively. These learners are more willing to take risks in speaking and writing and can quickly recover from mistakes, which contributes to their progress. Self-confidence helps learners reduce self-doubt and negative thoughts, keeping them motivated and focused, which ultimately improves their performance in language learning. Similarly, Suryadi (2018) highlights the impact of self-confidence on learners' ability to learn and use language effectively. Confident learners are more likely to face their fears, make mistakes, and speak more fluently, which enhances their overall language proficiency.

Low Language Confidence

Language proficiency and self-confidence are closely intertwined and self-confidence has a crucial role in achieving English communication skills necessary for academic and professional success (Ghafar, 2023). Research shows that learners with higher self-confidence are more likely to engage in language practice and excel in acquiring a second language, as their belief in their abilities drives motivation and persistence. English major students often face pressure to be fluent in speaking English due to academic expectations, highlighting the importance of strong communication skills for their careers. Leyaley (2023) explains that low language confidence negatively affects learners' sentence construction, pronunciation, and classroom participation due to psychological barriers such as fear and nervousness. Peer pressure further diminishes learners' confidence, making them feel judged and hesitant to speak. A lack of motivation in the classroom leads to disengagement, causing students to rely on tools like translation apps and media instead of direct communication. Similarly, Tridinanti (2018) highlights that anxiety and fear hinder learners' speaking skills by creating mental blocks that limit their performance. According to Akbari and Sahibzada (2020), learners with low language confidence struggle to participate in language practice, reducing their chances of developing proficiency. Insecurity can also prevent learners from engaging in classroom activities and reduce their motivation, further hindering their academic progress. However, more confident students are more likely to participate, engage in activities, and collaborate with others. Ahmad Lone (2021) emphasizes that self-confidence is crucial for language learning, as it encourages learners to take risks, make mistakes, and engage in practices that enhance their skills, especially with positive reinforcement from teachers, parents, and peers.

English Language Confidence among Non-English Majors

According to Tuong (2022), speaking skills are a primary goal for language learners, particularly for non-English major students who face various challenges. A study conducted at Tra Vinh University in Vietnam's Mekong Delta revealed that oral presentations serve as a valuable method for improving speaking skills, allowing students to express themselves, initiate conversations, and communicate without prior preparation. The study, involving 68 first-year students, found that while many struggled to generate ideas and maintain conversations in English, the practice of oral presentations helped improve their speaking performance.

Similarly, Van and Habók (2023) highlighted the role of metacognition as a key factor in academic success, particularly in language learning. Their mixed-method study, conducted with 1,565 students across seven Vietnamese universities, showed that while students had strong general metacognitive skills, they were limited in skills such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating language-specific activities. They recommend enhancing metacognitive knowledge and skills among English language learners to address these issues and support language learning in both Vietnamese and international contexts.

English Language Confidence of Students from other Southeast Asian Countries

According to the study of Abubakar et al. (2023), speaking problems among students in Indonesia's remote areas are influenced by both internal factors and external factors. Internal factors include: (1) fear of making mistakes; (2) unconfident; (3) anxiety. While external factors include: (1) support from teachers; (2) native language use; (3) learning media; (4); and (5) uninvolved parenting. Native language use was the most significant. Students increase their anxiety when speaking English due to their fear of making mistakes. They worry of being laughed at by their classmates when committing mistakes which resulted in having low confidence in speaking English. Frequent reliance on their mother tongue occurs when they struggle to respond in English, further affecting their language practice. Teachers can address this by motivating students, creating a supportive classroom environment, and effectively using learning media, which has been proven to help improve speaking skills. It was supported by Nawir et al. (2022) the utilization of learning media can attract interest and help to motivate the students. Visual aids is one of the examples that can improve the students' speaking skills. Parental support is equally crucial, as students spend more time at home, and a lack of attention from parents can negatively impact their educational outcomes, as noted by Kurnianingsi (2018).

Van Tuyen and Hien (2022) found that student-related factors, such as low English proficiency and frequent use of Vietnamese, had a stronger impact on classroom English teaching than teacher-related factors. Students' reliance on their native language limited opportunities to practice and think in English, hindering the development of their speaking skills. As a result, teachers often adjusted their teaching methods, including switching to the native language, which reduced consistent English exposure. This highlights the importance of building students' confidence and English skills early, especially during middle school. Moreover, in the findings of Chulee et al. (2023), Thai learners at Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University faces challenges in speaking English due to challenges in key areas: (1) vocabulary; (2) pronunciation; (3) grammar; and (4) perceived eloquence. For instance, in vocabulary, having limited vocabulary affected their ability to construct sentences effectively. When it comes to their pronunciation, their mother tongue greatly hindered their pronunciation which discouraged them from speaking in English to avoid making mistakes. Other challenges that added to their hesitation was grammar difficulties and perceptions of being ineloquent decreased their confidence in speaking English. There were internal factors mentioned that further demotivated the students and these are: negative attitude towards speaking, their unpleasant past experiences, being unconfident, and fear of judgement from others.

Familial Background and Roots Influencing Language Confidence

Developing an individual's language confidence is closely linked to their family background, from childhood to adulthood. Chloe (2024) emphasizes that encouraging individuals to express their thoughts and feelings has a profound effect on their communication skills. Cognitive development, the environment, and social interactions all play a significant role in language learning and the confidence to use it. A person's family habits, cultural history, and societal views on language learning can affect their comfort in speaking. For example, their pronunciation and tone may differ because of their ethnic identity, and they might follow specific communication rules within family conversations. Alam et al. (2017) further explain that a child's home background shapes their attitudes toward learning and school, impacting the emotions they experience when using a language. Families who value education and are frequently exposed to English tend to raise children who feel more confident speaking the language, whereas those from less privileged backgrounds, where English is not commonly spoken, often experience a lack of confidence.

Indigenous learners, in particular, face additional challenges in building English language confidence. According to JLeaño et al. (2019), these learners often struggle with English vocabulary, such as identifying

objects or naming days and months, due to limited exposure to English within their cultural and familial backgrounds. This lack of exposure leads to fewer opportunities for practice and low language confidence, which affects both academic performance and social interaction. Briones et al. (2023) found that many second-year English majors at the Philippines State University considered themselves average speakers who needed more practice. These struggles highlight the importance of understanding learners' family and cultural backgrounds when designing educational strategies. Baracheta (2024) also pointed out that cultural and family backgrounds affect learners' English skills, especially for indigenous learners from the Buhid Mangyan Tribe, who face language barriers due to their unique sociocultural traits. Despite these challenges, the study revealed their persistence in learning and using English, showing the resilience and determination to overcome these difficulties.

Sociocultural Influences Affecting Language Confidence

The environment in which students grow up plays a significant role in shaping their speaking abilities and confidence. Periani (2024) emphasized that family, community, and local culture all influence students' speaking skills. A supportive family fosters open communication, while an engaging community provides opportunities for interaction and diverse perspectives. Furthermore, the local culture, with its established norms and values, shapes students' attitudes towards communication. If the environment frequently uses the language, it can positively influence students' confidence, in contrast to environments where the language is rarely spoken. Thus, the environment's language exposure and the interactions within it significantly affect students' speaking abilities and confidence.

Fatmawat and Haura (2020) identified both teacher-related and student-related factors as key influences on students' English-speaking confidence. A supportive and approachable teacher fosters a safe learning environment that encourages participation, while unclear explanations or strict teachers can diminish confidence. Student-related factors such as fear of being teased and lack of preparation can also lead to anxiety and reduced motivation. Cabaltica and Arcala (2021) found that students often feel nervous during unannounced speaking activities, which affects their performance. To combat this, they recommended providing ample time for practice and supportive feedback to help students build confidence. Darasawang and Reinders (2021) highlighted that language proficiency is connected to willingness to communicate, but other factors, such as preparation time and constructive feedback, are also crucial for boosting confidence. Kakita and Palukuri (2020) further emphasized that a supportive learning environment, along with encouragement from parents, peers, and educators, plays a vital role in building students' confidence in speaking English.

Educational Challenges to Student's English Language Confidence

English is recognized as the second official language in the Philippines, serving as the medium of instruction across educational levels (Cabigon, 2015). Despite its early introduction, challenges in teaching and learning English persist, often leading to low language confidence among students. In 2018, the Philippines introduced an English curriculum reform to address issues like low achievement scores and a congested curriculum. However, Barrot (2018) pointed out that the reform's lack of clarity, specificity, and internal coherence caused a mismatch between what teachers aim to teach and what students need, leading to further challenges. The unpreparedness for the changes brought by the curriculum reform has impacted students' English language proficiency and confidence. This misalignment and lack of coherence in the curriculum contributed to difficulties in fostering high language proficiency in English among students.

Proficiency in English requires the mastery of four essential language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with speaking being the primary indicator of language fluency, especially for English majors (Jaya Need, 2022). Quyen et al. (2018) identified several factors that hinder speaking skills, including internal challenges such as limited vocabulary, weak speaking strategies, and low motivation, as well as external factors like the frequent use of the mother tongue in class. These factors significantly affect students' speaking confidence and language proficiency. Biradar (2020) emphasized that self-confidence is crucial for overcoming these barriers, with students' background knowledge, affective factors, and feedback from teachers playing key roles. Encouraging students' participation in class and recognizing their contributions, as suggested by Nidara et al. (2024), can significantly boost their confidence, enhancing their ability to improve

speaking and writing skills. Furthermore, Nety et al. (n.d.) highlighted that self-confidence enables learners to engage more effectively in language practice, helping them overcome the fear of making mistakes and contributing to their overall success in language learning.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researchers employed a qualitative case study design to deeply explore the personal experiences and perspectives of English major students with low language confidence. This approach was well-suited to the study's aim of uncovering the emotional and environmental factors influencing students' language use. A standalone case study allowed for a detailed examination of a specific group, using open-ended survey questionnaires to gather rich, descriptive data. These responses revealed the struggles faced by students, particularly in relation to familial background, sociocultural influences, and educational challenges. According to Cherry (2024), case studies aim to generate insights that may be applicable to broader contexts, which this study achieved through thematic analysis.

Research Instrument

The researcher-made questionnaire consists of two sections which was utilized to gather data from the eight selected participants). The first section contained questions asking for the demographic profile of the participants such as, name (optional), year & section, and the date they had completed answering the questionnaire. The demographic profile of the participants helped the researchers analyze the data from a specific group. The second section contained a total of nine (9) questions. The nine questions are focusing on SOP 2's three aspects: familial roots and background (question 1-3), sociocultural influences (question 4-6), and educational background and challenges (question 7-9). Its purpose was to explore potential solutions to helped address the challenges faced by English major students with low confidence in using the language particularly from the point of view of the participants.

The researchers conducted a study at Bulacan State University – Sarmiento Campus, City of San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan. Currently, there were 223 English major students enrolled from first year to fourth year this Academic Year 2024-2025 from the data given by the Sarmiento Campus' Registrar, excluding the five (5) researchers in which the participants were selected to cover the researchers' aim to reveal their unspoken struggles leading to low English confidence. The goal of the researchers was to collect in-depth insights from selected participants who can offer valuable experiences and sentiments with regards to their English Language Confidence.

The total population of English Majors in Sarmiento Campus took an assessment in which the researchers adapted a Confidence Questionnaire (adapted from Finch, 2004) helped in effectively selecting students with low English language confidence. The researchers conducted the assessment by classroom targeting the total number of students in each section. Permission to conduct the assessment from the necessary authority were provided by the researchers. The students with the lowest scores from each section were selected as participants of the study and were notified about their scores and the next steps they will take. Purposive sampling is a nonrandom method that doesn't require a specific theory or a fixed number of participants (Etikan et al., 2016). Two participants from each academic year were chosen—making a total of eight—from first year to fourth-year English major students. This selection was based on the results of an adapted confidence questionnaire. In including students from all year levels, the researchers ensured a broader and more inclusive representation, rather than limiting the focus to a single group.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Experiences and Sentiments Contributing to Low English Language Confidence in relation to Familial Roots and Background

This section presented how the participants' first language or mother tongue affects their proficiency, the influence of growing up in an English-speaking family on their confidence and communication skills, and the impact of switching between English and Filipino/Taglish in expressing their thoughts.

Table 1.1.1 Familial Roots and Background

Themes Identified on the Influence of First Language or Mother Tongue to the Confidence in Using English Language

Themes	Defining Elements
Accent and fear of judgment	My mother tongue language helps me to be more confident in speaking English even though I am not very popular like other people (English Major Student 1). Well, when I try to say my first language, I am very confident even in writing. But I can say it when in front of all people? (English Major Student 2). So, since my mother tongue is Filipino and I find it easy to use, it is not a struggle for me to express my confidence in some way. But in terms of using English language, sometimes it's hard because instead of thinking Filipino words to come at my mouth, I'm just stuttering. In short, it influences my confidence. Am I making any error ?(English Major Student 3). My first language or mother tongue influence my confidence in using language in speaking because I learned first my Bisaya language and I'm afraid to speak in English because sometimes I have Bisaya accent and afraid my classmates might laugh at me (English Major Student 7).
Role of fluency in first language on English confidence	My first language does not affect my confidence in using English language that much. However, I believe that being able to speak fluently on our first language guides us in speaking English (English Major Student 5). We all know that our first language is Filipino, somehow it will influence me to speak our second language which is English. Identifying first our own, I believe that it will give you confident to try the other language that will help you to enhance your own skills (English Major Student 6).
Support from linguistic similarities (FilipinoSpanish-English connection)	Filipino influenced my acquisition of the English language by being closely related to Spanish (Espanol). Spanish, being an Indo-European language related to English helped me to grasp English smoothly (English Major Student 4).
Influence of language exposure at home and school	At home, we don't really use the English language. We mostly speak Tagalog, Bisaya, and Bisakol. Maybe that's why my confidence in using English isn't that high because even at school, I don't give it much attention (English Major Student 8).

Table 1 explored how the first language or mother tongue of the students influenced their confidence in the English language. In theme 1, four out of eight participants had confidence when speaking their mother tongue, which affected their willingness to speak English. Tridinanti (2018) pointed out that students may struggle to improve their proficiency in English if they lack confidence in speaking the language. Therefore, overcoming struggles in pronunciation should be a focus in teaching English, rather than forcing fluency on learners (Iqbal, 2016).

Moreover, Theme 2 revealed that students' proficiency in their first language could guide their use of English. According to Nishanthi (2020), profound knowledge of the native language aids in learning a new language. Theme 3 showed that knowing multiple languages, such as Filipino and Spanish, supported the students' understanding of English due to linguistic similarities, as indicated by Domke (2019). Lastly, Theme 4 highlighted the importance of language exposure at home and school, noting that limited exposure to English at home could reduce students' confidence and fluency (Jleaño et al., 2019; Alam et al., 2017; Saneka & De Witt, 2019; Hawa et al., 2021).

Table 1.1.2 Familial Roots and Background

Themes Identified on the Impact of Growing Up in an English-Speaking Family on Confidence and Communication Skills

Themes	Defining Elements
Boost in confidence from frequent English use at home	For me yes, because it will boost your confidence to speak or communicate using English language to other people (English Major Student 1). Yes, it has an impact for me, because I can say or speak English to them fluently and to my friends also but when reporting or I'm in front of the class I can do it properly (English Major Student 2). I certainly believe so. How I wish that I grew up in a household like that. For me, it will impact greatly to my ability in communicating (English Major Student 3). Yes, I think so. Growing up in a family that is using English regularly/daily, can somehow make me feel confident enough with my English speaking skills. Additionally, I think that learning starts from home, so for me it is better if I grew up speaking in English for my daily communication (English Major Student 5). I think it has more advantage growing up in a family where English is spoken more frequently because they are used to it and more comfortable to use it. And yes, it will impact the ability to communicate confidently in English (English Major Student 7).
Impact of early language **learning on communication skills**	Yes, more usage and exposure to a specific idea/task greatly affects confidence (English Major Student 4). Yes, because the younger you know how to speak the English language, the more you will be able to use it well (English Major Student 6).
Influence of social judgment on language development	Maybe? I'm still not sure because, yes, we do speak English at home, but if the people around you are judgmental, it doesn't really help. For me, development depends on the people around me (English Major Student 8).

Table 2 presented the impact of growing up in an English-speaking household and its effects on students' confidence and communication skills. In theme 1, the regular use and exposure of English at home influenced their confidence in speaking English. Five out of eight participants mentioned that although they encountered challenges it enhanced their language familiarity in English and positively influenced their confidence in speaking English. Parents' involvement in the social environment, and schools are important to boost learner's language confidence (Lawalata, 2025). Similar to this, Water-Jackson (2021) emphasized the participation of the parents are essential in developing communication skills. Students' language proficiency and confidence is being strengthened when parents integrate language use in their daily routine (Kosanovich et al., 2021). Theme 2 was about the benefits of early language exposure in fostering long-term confidence and skills. Students' responses reflected that early learning contributes to stronger communication abilities over time. Volodina et al. (n.d.) argued that in building proficiency it is critical to expose the learners earlier at home and in schools. In support of, Al-Jarf (2023) added that early learning of English is advantageous in social and academic ways without harming the native language. Theme 3 showed the impact of social judgement in language development. Respondents shared that their progress in English was influenced on how others interacted and perceived them. Learners' motivation and confidence could be diminished by the negative feedback and discouragement from their peers and environment (Alviansyah et al., 2024). Peer pressure and fear of judgement caused less active participation and anxiety (Leyaley, 2024). Having supportive and encouraging environment helped to develop confidence.

Table 1.1.3 Familial Roots and Background

Themes Identified on the Effect of Switching Between English and Filipino/Taglish in Conveying One's Thoughts

Table 3 explored the effects of code-switching between English and Filipino (TagLish) in expressing students' thoughts.

Themes	Defining Elements
Code-switching as a tool for expression	Yes, because it limits your own confidence in communicating English to other people. Switching to Taglish doesn't mean your not good in English language, it means that there are times you also need to use Taglish for conveying your thoughts (English Major Student 1). Well yes, I can do it happily. I know how to speak properly, it enhanced my ability through speaking and writing. It encourages me to read more and study more (English Major Student 2). As of now, I find it easy. The more I switch the use of my language, the more I express well a certain topic and thoughts (English Major Student 3). Using Taglish can make me feel confident because other than I am confident in speaking Tagalog, I can also express myself confidently in English, especially in Tagalog (English Major Student 5).
Code-switching as a barrier to language mastery	Limits. Code-switching is a sign of either language gap or mastery, but for the most part, limits it because it hampers smooth usage of language (English Major Student 4). It is not appropriate but in real-life it's hard to use a full English, especially in communication. Sometimes it helps you to convey an idea but it is also limiting the fact that you can express yourself in the English language (English Major Student 6). Sometimes I feel embarrass but it depends on the situation. Switching to Filipino enhances my ability to convey my thoughts. However, it limits me to

	enhance my ability to try to speak in English because of lack of wordings, phrases, and vocabulary in English (English Major Student 7). Well, at this point, it's kind of embarrassing to be a 4th-year English major but still use Tagalog more often. Although Taglish has helped me express my thoughts better, it's still embarrassing that I can't keep up with others (English Major Student 8).

Theme 1 showed that code-switching was an effective communicative tool for the students' self-expression. TagLish (Tagalog and English) had helped them to better share their ideas comfortably. Supported by Olivera (2021), codeswitching created supportive spaces which helped the students boost their confidence every discussion. Code-switching was recognized by the teachers as valuable strategy in ESL (Almutairi & Alqarni, 2024). Mixing languages created more inclusive and interactive discussions (Mercado, 2015). Code-switching helped the students to build their confidence and encouraged them to engage deeper with English by easily expressing complex thoughts. It was more than convenient. Theme 2 revealed the downside of code-switching in language development. Admittedly, students often use TagLish (Tagalog and English) limited their fluency and vocabulary growth. Explained by Fareed et al. (2016), cognitive skills and vocabulary acquisition was negatively affected by immoderate code-switching. In the observation of Salari et al. (2016), students were struggling with their sentence construction and being hesitant during English conversations due to constantly code-switching. It reduced proper English use as they were too reliant on code-switching. Students' dependency on codeswitching created a comfort zone that hindered their progress in English.

Experiences and Sentiments Contributing to Low English Language Confidence in relation to Sociocultural Influences

This section reveled the participants' comfort in speaking English at home, the impact of peer and social pressure on their confidence, and the effects of derogatory comments on their use of the language.

Table 1.2.1 Sociocultural Influences

Themes Identified on the Comfortability of Speaking English at Home

Themes	Defining Elements
Comfort due to the familiar environment at home	Sometimes I'm speaking in English to them and it makes me comfortable because I know them but when I'm with my friends, I'm good to speak with them (English Major Student 2). Comfortable. You are confined in your comfort (English Major Student 4). I feel comfortable speaking in English at home because I am sure that they will not judge me and correct me without making fun of me. (English Major Student 5). I am comfortable. (English Major Student 6). Speaking in English at home makes me comfortable because none of them will judge me. I
	make myself practice at home. (English Major Student 7).
Discomfort from fear of misunderstanding and judgement	I am uncomfortable speaking English at home, because if I use English as my language at home, maybe some of my family misunderstood what I am saying. (English Major Student 1)

	In my household, it felt awkward. Because in my family, we barely use that language, more Tagalog. We just laugh it off and not use it again. (English Major Student 3). I'm not comfortable speaking English all the time at home since my mom speaks Bisaya and Tagalog. I'm the only one studying in the house, and my brother and I don't get along. My nephew was also taken by my sister, so there's no point in speaking English at home since it's not even needed (English Major Student 8).

Table 4 explored the comfortability of the respondents in speaking English at home, revealing that the environment significantly affects language confidence. Theme 1 showed that five out of eight respondents were comfortable speaking English at home due to their family's non-judgmental attitudes, allowing them to express themselves freely without fear of criticism. Periani (2024) emphasized that the environment, including family, community, and local culture, impacts students' speaking abilities, with a supportive family environment boosting confidence by reducing the fear of making mistakes. Zhang (2023) also highlighted that a positive, supportive, and cooperative social environment positively impacts English proficiency by building language communication and motivating students to engage more confidently.

However, theme 2 revealed that three respondents were not comfortable speaking English at home due to fear of judgment from their family, worrying that their mistakes might be laughed at or misinterpreted. In line with Abubakar et al. (2023), students refrained from speaking English due to associating mistakes with embarrassment, which only increased their anxiety. This caused some to remain silent rather than risk being judged, and Sadeghi et al. (2015) found that negative reactions from peers or family members could lead to greater hesitation in speaking.

Table 1.2.2 Sociocultural Influences

Themes Identified on the Influence of Peer and Social Pressure in Building English Confidence

Themes	Defining Elements
Social pressure as both a barrier and motivator for confidence	My friends help me to improve my English but somehow it pressures me that my grammar is not good and the way I talk is not that confident, and I always stutter (English Major Student 1) Well, when it comes to peer influence, I can do my speaking English but when I'm wrong, it stops me there because I have a phobia when many people looking at me, it's hard to control my emotion in social pressure. It gives me fear when I meet other faces or people (English Major Student 2). Since we joke around our peers most of the time. Whenever I speak English, there are times that they will laugh at you or judge you whenever you make some mistakes (English Major Student 5). To be honest, for me it's okay to be not good at English but knowing that you are in the society or a classroom, where in your classmates good at expressing their thoughts in English language, they somehow affect me and I'm working on it. Building my confidence through demo teaching (English Major Student 6) Before, I used to feel pressured and I still do—by my friends who seem so chill about studying but turn out to be really good at it. Sometimes, they influence me to try so I can build my confidence in speaking

	English, but I just can't because of the trauma I had from elementary to high school (English Major Student 8).
Peer motivation to improve English	So, all of my friends were like used to talk in English language. And for me, it affects me because it makes me want to use it too – for a greater good (English Major Student 3)
	Humans are social animals and friends would greatly affect English language acquisition (English Major Student 4).
	Peer influence and social pressure affect my building my English confidence because of so many positive impact. Whenever I heard new English words, I also using it in my daily life (English Major Student 7).

Table 5 explored the influence of peer and social pressure on students' English confidence. Theme 1 revealed that five out of eight participants viewed social pressure as both a motivator and a barrier in speaking English. While some felt encouraged to improve through peer influence, others became self-conscious due to fear of judgment. Nhan (2024) emphasized that peer interaction increases opportunities for language practice and enhances confidence. However, Alviansyah et al. (2024) found that fear of negative responses can diminish students' self-esteem. Alhamami (2020) also pointed out that expectations from teachers, classmates, and parents contribute to pressure that shapes learners' performance.

Theme 2 showed that peers helped boost confidence by providing a relaxed environment where mistakes were not judged harshly (Romadlon, 2022). Peer feedback and group discussions helped improve fluency and comfort in speaking, supported by findings from Feyli and Ayatollahi (2016) and Sadeghi et al. (2015).

Table 1.2.3 Sociocultural Influences

Themes Identified on the Effects of Derogatory Comments in Using English Language

Themes	Defining Elements
Resilience and determination to improve English skills	It makes me feel uncomfortable because I also know to myself that I am not good but if I didn't try to speak in English, other people may think that I cannot speak English. Maybe you also need to acquire first your mother tongue language, so you can say back that even I use English I am still Filipino because I also know how to speak Tagalog (English Major Student 1)
	Well, when people telling me this kind of phrases, I just laugh at them because I never care about all the people who's saying bad things on me. I have my own accent at speaking, it is my decision to speak it because this generation, English is our second language. We can speak it but not all the people only know it (English Major Student 2).
	If I would rate how these phrases affect my English language confidence, I would take it 7 out of 10. The reason why we use English sometimes because we want to practice using it, but with these kinds of comments, of course, it will hinder us in learning it (English Major Student 5).
	I don't mind hearing those words, because learning English language nor speaking, it will help me to grow as an educator (English Major Student 6).
	Honestly, I used to hear that a lot during my elementary and high school days, but sorry to say, I didn't really care about what they said (English

	Major Student 8).
Emotional setback from derogatory comments	It affects in a worst way. If I ever hear it, my confidence would go down. And like I said before, I feel like I won't use it again (English Major Student 3).
	Being subjected to such statements/ stereotypes would hamper one to fully express themselves in English because they are derogatory (English Major Student 4).
	It affects my language confidence so much that sometimes I don't want to talk with other people using English because most people think I am arrogant and boastful just because I'm using English as my communication (English Major Student 7).

Table 6 reflected the themes identified on the effects of derogatory comments in English language confidence. Theme 1 showed that when students received negative comments about their English skills, they used them as motivation to improve rather than letting it discourage them. Fong et al. (2019) found that while negative feedback can hurt motivation, it becomes helpful when paired with guidance for improvement. Gregersen (2023) also emphasized that feedback should highlight students' strengths, not just their mistakes, as this reduces anxiety and builds confidence.

Theme 2 focused on the emotional setbacks caused by derogatory comments, which lowered students' confidence and self-esteem. Three out of eight participants shared that criticism weakened their belief in their English abilities and made them hesitant to speak. Giray et al. (2022) stated that fear of criticism discourages students from using English, blocking their progress. Rojas et al. (2016) explained that avoiding participation due to fear only worsens students' struggles and limits their language development.

Table 1.3.1 Educational Background and Challenges

Themes Identified on the Influence of the Classroom Environment in Speaking English Language

Themes	Defining Elements
Encouragement and Motivation as Positive influences from peers and professors	It builds me more confidence because they also teach us how to be a good speaker (English Major Student 1).
	In our classroom, yes. All of them are trying hard to speak it so am I. It makes me eager to learn and improve it. So yes, it affects me (English Major Student 3).
	Yes, where in my classmates expressing their thoughts using an English
	language (English Major Student 6).
	Yes, classroom environment affects me when speaking in English whenever I see them very fluent in English and very confident. It makes me inspire to speak more confident and comfortable using English because I want to be like them (English Major Student 7).
Anxiety from comparison with classmates	Yes, because when all my classmates reciting on class in English, it encourages me to speak in English too but my emotion inside it stopping me and hard to say when I'm in front of them. They all looking at me, it gives me nervous and fear on them, I can only

	say it when we bond as friends (English Major Student 2). Somehow? But it does not affect me that much. The main reason why I don't feel confident enough with my English speaking skills is myself (English Major Student 5). Yes, I'm the kind of person who depends on the people around me. If I know that the people I'm with are smart, I get discouraged because, from the start, I already know that my grammar is wrong, etc English Major Student 8).

Table 7 presented themes identified on the influence of the classroom environment in speaking the English language. Theme 1 focused on how encouragement and motivation from peers and professors positively influenced students' confidence. Two participants mentioned that their professors and classmates helped them improve as speakers through constant support and reassurance. Raboca & Carbunarean (2024) highlighted that faculty support and peer relationships shape students' ability to use English confidently. Reindl (2021) also emphasized that strong peer connections reduced anxiety and increased motivation. Similarly, Moradi & Mardani (2024) confirmed that supportive learning environments improve academic performance and language confidence.

Theme 2 revealed that anxiety from comparing oneself to classmates discouraged students from speaking English. Two participants admitted feeling motivated when peers spoke English but also experienced fear and anxiety that held them back. Han et al. (2022) found that emotional intelligence can reduce such language anxiety, helping second-language learners build confidence. Maher & King (2023) stated that anxiety often results from negative self-appraisal during language learning. Additionally, Dauba (2024) noted that students with higher anxiety levels tended to avoid communication, which hindered their English language development. As a result, comparison and judgment within the classroom can negatively affect learners' confidence and performance.

Table 1.3.2 Educational Background and Challenges

Themes Identified on the Influence of English Teacher's Teaching Method in English Language Development and Confidence

Themes	**Defining Elements**
Motivation from teacher fluency and expertise	All my English teachers can speak fluently. They are good at accent too and gives me a knowledge and encourage me to become good at English. It gives me a little confidence on myself to show them what I can do at speaking English (English Major Student 2). They were like super good in using it and they sometimes share some tips in using it. Their teaching methods also affects me greatly – and it makes me want to be a great speaker too in English (English Major Student 3). Good teachers = good output and vice versa. But for me, it depends on the person; learner English Major Student 4). Whenever I see a smart and good English teacher, it makes me want to learn English more. Having a good English teacher can help us enjoy studying the language more (English Major Student 5).
Encouragement and support from	I always remember these words like "you should know how to speak English well", it really hits me because I'm taking BSED English minor in Mandarin. So, I need to be good at it. By hearing that kind of words, it

teachers	really motivates me to learn more (English Major Student 6). The teaching methods of my English teacher influence my development and confidence in the English language as they always encourage me to speak in English without embarrassing me and correcting me in a constructive way which they never ruin my confidence (English Major Student 7).
	It builds me more confidence and help me to improve my English in terms of writing and speaking (English Major Student 1).
Negative impact from teacher criticism	Some teacher influenced my development and I gain my confidence in English language. But almost all teacher embarrassed me when my grammar is wrong, etc.(English Major Student 8).

Table 8 revealed the themes identified by the influence of an English teacher's teaching method in English language development and confidence. Theme 1 highlighted the impact of teachers' fluency and expertise in the English language on motivating students. Four out of eight participants shared that skillful and fluent teachers inspired them to improve their English skills and boosted their confidence. According to Beg (2021), teacher ability enhances student performance through diverse strategies using intrinsic and extrinsic resources, while Usman et al. (2016) emphasized that competencies like cognitive and affective skills help motivate learners. Morales & Vaca-Cárdenas (2023) also stressed that diverse methods are necessary to keep students engaged and to improve their speaking skills.

Theme 2 emphasized the encouragement and support from teachers as essential to developing English language confidence. Some students noted that motivation from teachers helped improve their speaking and writing skills. Nidara et al. (2024) supported that communication-driven strategies during teaching help build students' confidence, and Maisaroh et al. (2024) added that activities like group discussions and vocabulary practice enhance self-confidence by creating an engaging classroom environment.

Theme 3 focused on the negative impact of teacher criticism on language confidence. One student said that even with good English skills, their confidence was lowered by harsh corrective feedback. Kahveci (2023) warned that negative attitudes like discrimination reduce motivation and respect for teachers. In contrast, Nepali (2023) found that a studentfriendly and interactive approach boosts confidence and reduces speaking anxiety.

Table 1.3.3 Educational Background and Challenges

Themes Identified on the Effects of English-Only Policies whether to Improve or Hinder English Speaking Confidence Inside and Outside the Classroom

Themes	Defining Elements
Positive impact through practice and skill development	It can improve my speaking English even when I'm inside or outside of school. Because it gives me skill in pronouncing at English, all people speaking it without any wrong, encourage me to speak it without any wrong. All people outside speaking English so I can do it too (English Major Student 2).
	In my opinion, it's too brutal and heartless. But, I do think it's effective, especially for a person who is in the field of education, majoring in English (English Major Student 3).
	It improves speaking but hinders national identity and the culmination of Filipinism.(English Major Student 4).
	I think English-only policy is a great help, especially for younger students.

	Start them young, they said. As long as there's no negative feedback coming from the teacher that will make their/our confidence low, then this policy is good for everyone (English Major Student 5). I think English-only policy can improve my confidence in speaking English inside and outside of the classroom so we can prevent the code-switching and fillers when talking to someone using English language and it will influence the development and confidence.
Influence of environment on confidence	It can improve your communication to other people and also widened your vocabulary inside and outside the classroom. But for me, the hinder is the way the people judge you if you are not that good in English (English Major Student 1). It depends on the people when they're confident enough to speak or not (English Major Student 6). For me, it depends on the environment and how you handle it. Maybe for others, their English speaking improved, but for someone like me, even before I say anything, I can already feel the judgmental eyes on me. That's probably why I got discouraged (English Major Student 8).

Table 9 mentioned the themes identified on the effects of English-only policies, whether they improved or hindered English-speaking confidence inside and outside the classroom. Theme 1 pointed out the positive impact through practice and skill development. Four out of eight participants stated that the English-only policy helped strengthen their speaking skills and confidence, especially in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. Azhar & Gopal (2021) emphasized that such a policy, when paired with interactive and student-centered approaches, enhances language fluency among college students. However, some respondents raised concerns about its effect on cultural identity and stressed the importance of teacher reinforcement to avoid discouragement. Terzioğlu & Kurt (2022) also supported the idea that diverse and engaging classroom activities are essential in ensuring effective English language learning under the policy. Theme 2 highlighted how the environment could either build or break an English major student's confidence in speaking English. While several participants reported that the English-only policy helped improve fluency, others felt anxious or hesitant due to fear of judgment. Suja'i et al. (2023) pointed out that students thrive in environments where peer support and an accepting atmosphere reduce fear of making mistakes. When students feel safe and encouraged, they are more likely to engage in conversations, leading to improved communication skills and greater language confidence.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

While familial background and sociocultural dynamics lay the foundation for English language development, the educational environment emerges as the most influential factor in shaping students' confidence. The structured practice, consistent feedback, and peer interactions found in academic settings have a uniquely direct impact on linguistic growth. However, confidence is not cultivated in isolation—it results from the dynamic interplay of home, society, and school. This underscores the importance of collaboration among educators, families, and policymakers in fostering environments that support language learning through encouragement, inclusivity, and constructive feedback. In response to this need, the researchers proposed an intervention strategy that integrates interactive pedagogies, accessible learning technologies, and confidence-building activities tailored to the identified challenges. With thoughtful implementation, such measures can empower students to develop the proficiency and self-assurance needed to navigate English in academic, professional, and everyday contexts.

Recommendations on Enhancing English Language Confidence

Strategies

Listyani and Kristie (2018) highlight how role-playing, small group discussions, storytelling, and music integration can be effective to boost the English language confidence of the learners. In role-playing, the learner will be able to portray different kinds of characters, allowing them to express themselves and overcome their fear. Small group discussions are a collaborative activity with their peers that creates a safe space for students to practice and learn the language. As well as storytelling, it will help students to develop their fluency and pronunciation through letting them articulate their own ideas, while integrating music to learn the language is an interactive way to improve their vocabulary retention and helps reduce their anxiety. To strengthen this approach, Chamorro and Paz (2017) suggested that to enhance the English language proficiency of the learners, combining these two strategies, which are the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), can be effective. CALLA helps the learners to develop their cognitive and academic skills through problem-solving and analyzing, while TBLT focuses on real-life scenarios like role-playing and project-based activities, enabling the learners to employ what they have learned in relevant ways. Aside from instructional strategies, there are individual factors that affect language learning. Abdullayeva (2024) states that personality traits, cultural background, and past experiences can influence the self-confidence and English proficiency of the learners. Introverted students preferred to study alone and be independent, while extroverted students stood out in interactive discussions. Language exposure, constructive criticism, and positive reinforcement for students, allowing them to learn and practice their English skills, can be effective.

Interventions

The study revealed that English major students' low language confidence was most significantly influenced by their educational backgrounds and the challenges they encountered. In response, the researchers created an intervention plan designed to improve both language confidence and proficiency among students. The plan includes goals, specific objectives, activities, timelines, monitoring procedures, and a sustainability strategy. According to Ghafar (2023), factors such as individual traits, cultural background, and past language learning experiences play a crucial role in affecting students' self-confidence and English ability. Addressing these issues through structured interventions can enhance both students' confidence and communication skills. Mileo (2023) further emphasized that well-designed interventions are essential in meeting diverse learning needs and fostering significant improvements.

The intervention plan is designed to be practical, achievable, and impactful, contributing to the development of a more confident English-speaking community. Targeted strategies, such as English camps, clubs, and special classes, were created to improve students' skills and build their confidence, while seminars and workshops provide teachers with updated strategies and technological tools. Additionally, free online applications are encouraged to offer self-paced learning opportunities. The plan also stresses the importance of institutional support for successful implementation, with continuous monitoring to ensure long-term progress. The effectiveness of these interventions depends on how well they are executed and managed. Teachers, facilitators, and institutions must follow a structured approach, using assessment tools to evaluate progress. Mowafi and Al-Hasan (2024) pointed out that sustainable education is an investment in fostering a mindset that supports both individual and societal growth. With this, educational institutions play a critical role in implementing these interventions effectively and ensuring lasting success.

Post-Intervention Assessment Tool

The researchers created Post-Intervention Assessment Tool to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies implemented to boost English language confidence among students and teachers. The assessment offered quantifiable insights and firsthand accounts through a combination of Likert scale ratings and open-ended questions – measuring changes in students' confidence, teachers' preparedness, and the impact of various strategies to the institutions. The assessment consists of five sections: general information, students' confidence ratings, teachers' preparedness, evaluation of specific interventions (e.g., English clubs,

workshops), and open-ended feedback regarding the implementation of the intervention plan. Participants will assess their experiences, challenges, and suggest improvements to give insightful feedback that will help develop the initiatives.

The result of the post-intervention assessment tool serves as a guide to the institution future improvements by determining the most and the least effective strategies – highlighting areas needed to enhance. Ultimately, the assessment supports progress English language teaching and confidence-building practices by creating an evidence-based adjustments and sustainable implementation.

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