



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GROWTH MINDSET AND ENGLISH SPEAKING CONFIDENCE OF EFL LEARNERS

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Abstract: *The present study sets out to explore the correlation between growth mindset and English-speaking confidence among university-level EFL learners. Quantitative in nature, the correlational research design employed in this study purposively selected 29 third-semester students from the English Education Department, UIN, who had completed at least one speaking course prior to this research. The two standardized instruments utilized were an adapted version of the Growth Mindset Inventory from Dweck (2006), which was comprised of eight items, and the adapted version of the English-Speaking Confidence Scale from Ozdemir and Papi (2022), made up of ten items. Both questionnaires applied a five-point Likert scale and obtained a high reliability rate with Cronbach's alpha coefficients at .86 and .89, respectively. Data was collected for a week in speaking lessons, and taking these questionnaires took about 15 minutes. Then, analysis of the obtained data using SPSS version 26 was conducted. The analysis used descriptive statistics, tests for normality, and Pearson product moment correlation analysis. The descriptive analysis shows that the subjects have a moderately high level of both growth mindset and speaking confidence. Although the growth mindset did not meet the requirement in regards to normality, a strong positive relationship can be observed in the correlation analysis between both growth mindset and speaking confidence with a correlation coefficient of $r = .853$ and significance of $p < .001$. This means that students who view their abilities as something to be developed through effort feel more confident when speaking English.*

Keywords: *growth mindset, speaking confidence, EFL learners, English speaking, language psychology*

Abstract: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi korelasi antara mindset pertumbuhan dan kepercayaan diri dalam berbahasa Inggris di kalangan mahasiswa program bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL) tingkat universitas. Desain penelitian korelasi kuantitatif yang digunakan dalam studi ini secara sengaja memilih 29 mahasiswa semester ketiga dari Departemen Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, UIN, yang telah menyelesaikan setidaknya satu kursus berbicara sebelum penelitian ini. Dua instrumen standar yang digunakan adalah versi yang disesuaikan dari Growth Mindset Inventory karya Dweck (2006), yang terdiri dari delapan item, dan versi yang disesuaikan dari English-Speaking Confidence Scale karya Ozdemir dan Papi (2022), yang terdiri dari sepuluh item. Kedua kuesioner menggunakan skala Likert lima poin dan memperoleh tingkat reliabilitas tinggi dengan koefisien Cronbach's alpha sebesar .86 dan .89, masing-masing. Data dikumpulkan selama seminggu dalam pelajaran berbicara, dan pengisian kuesioner memakan waktu sekitar 15 menit. Analisis data yang diperoleh menggunakan SPSS versi 26 dilakukan. Analisis tersebut menggunakan statistik deskriptif, uji normalitas, dan analisis korelasi momen produk Pearson. Analisis deskriptif menunjukkan bahwa subjek memiliki tingkat yang cukup tinggi baik dalam mindset pertumbuhan maupun kepercayaan diri berbicara. Meskipun pola pikir pertumbuhan tidak memenuhi persyaratan terkait normalitas, hubungan positif yang kuat dapat diamati dalam analisis korelasi antara pola pikir berkembang dan kepercayaan diri dalam berbicara, dengan koefisien korelasi $r = 0,853$ dan tingkat signifikansi $p < 0,001$. Hal ini berarti bahwa siswa yang memandang kemampuan mereka sebagai sesuatu yang dapat dikembangkan melalui usaha merasa lebih percaya diri saat berbicara dalam bahasa Inggris.

Keywords: pola pikir bertumbuh, kepercayaan diri dalam berbicara, pelajar bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing, kemampuan berbicara bahasa Inggris, psikologi bahasa

INTRODUCTION

Recently, the importance of incorporating psychology constructs like mindset and affectively related variables into foreign language learning has been a key trend for researchers working in applied linguistics and educational settings. English language ability, especially speaking skills, has long been recognized as a key for effective communication and academic performance. Unfortunately, many Indonesian EFL learners display a lack of confidence when speaking a foreign language that may serve as a barrier to fluency and communicative ability (Lou & Noels, 2020; Ozdemir & Papi, 2022).

Growth mindset was first described by Dweck (2006), which refers to the view that one's intellect and ability can be increased. In the context of EFL learning at Indonesian institutions of learning, the emphasis that has been put on academic excellence and fear of error have led to a situation

where some Indonesian learners lack confidence to speak English (Leis, 2021; Suriyah Adisti et al., 2024). Therefore, comprehension of the relationship between a mindset of growth and confidence to speak English assumes importance.

Recently, some studies have verified the positive relationship between mindset and performance. Kim (2024) indicated that EFL learners who held a growth mindset showed a higher level of perseverance and speaking fluency ($r = .46$, $p < .01$). In a similar vein, Cao et al. (2024) demonstrated that EFL learners who held an ability-by-effort mindset felt more confident about doing oral communication activities. Yet, to date, only a few quantitative studies exist on mindset for EFL university-level learners in the Indonesian context.

All of which raise the following urgent questions:

1. How strong is the level of growth mindset and English-speaking confidence of third-semester English Education Department students at UIN?
2. Is a strong relationship between a growth mindset and confidence in English speaking found in this EFL population?

The findings should help to enhance the empirical basis for incorporating mindset strategies into English-speaking instruction at Indonesian institutions, and for the literature review growth mindset, proposed by Dweck (2006), is another theoretical framework which has become one of the key concepts defining the motivational processes of learners studying a foreign language, including learning any second language such as English for communication purposes. A growth mindset believes that one's abilities can be developed instead of being fixed. Thus, people who embrace the growth mindset look at tasks that threaten their self-esteem as chances for development, whereas, on the other hand, a fixed mindset leads to avoiding tasks that require higher levels of ability, such as feared failure (Dweck & Yeager, 2019). In regard to second language learning or any other foreign language learning, for example,

English language learning for communication purposes, people with a growth mindset look at any communicative speaking task with optimism and positive expectations. According to Hu, Sidhu, & Lu (2022), students who believe that mastery of English is achievable through deliberate practice tend to embrace a proactive attitude in dealing with any type of communication tasks despite their mistakes.

Speaking confidence has also been explored as a focus of affect-related EFL learning outcome study. Speaking confidence can be viewed as EFL learners' perception of their self-efficacy and confidence to articulate ideas fluently and correctly in English (Ozdemir & Papi, 2022). Lou and Noels (2020) suggested that speaking confidence plays a strong role in EFL learners' Willingness to Communicate (WTC), level of classroom discussion activity, and participants' oral performance. Those who display strong confidence tend to be more active communicators, dominate discussions, and attempt to repair fluently. Yet confidence can lead to fear of public speaking and speakers' avoidance of EFL conversations. Recently, scholars have found that confidence was positively related to self-efficacy and motivation (Barber, 2023; Li, 2023; Kim, 2024). This argument was proved by Kim's study (2024), which indicated that confidence acts as a mediating variable between mindset and oral performance by means of influence of mindset on EFL communicators' confidence levels and emotional control.

More recent evidence-based research is shedding new light on the correlations between growth mindset and speaking confidence. Cao et al. (2024) found that students with a strong growth mindset tend to reach higher levels of speaking confidence with a mean correlation of $r = .40$ to $.50$, while concurrently showing lower levels of speaking anxiety. Consistent with previous research, Suman (2023) found that mindset interventions showed significant effects on students' speaking confidence, with the mindset group scoring a mean of $M_{\text{post}} = 3.87$ ($SD = 0.41$) on the post-test, unlike the control group. Taken together, the results of these studies imply that

mindset interventions could help enhance self-perceptions among EFL speakers with regards to their communication skills. On the other hand, for Indonesian EFL students in a context in which educational needs such as promoting grammatical correctness, examination results, or other educational aspects could demotivate EFL students from speaking (Leis, 2021; Suriyah & Adisti, 2024), students tend to follow non-risk-taking approaches that eventually contribute to decreased speaking activities in English. Therefore, a quantitative analysis of the relationship between Indonesian EFL students' growth mindset orientation with regard to their speaking confidence levels could significantly contribute to the development of relevant educational approaches that associate cognitive growth mindset development with enhanced EFL language abilities.

In conclusion, previous research agrees that a growth mindset positively affects language learning motivation and confidence (Hu et al., 2022; Li, 2023; Kim, 2024). However, empirical studies that investigate this issue in the context of Indonesian EFL institutions of higher learning are still limited, as affective learning is influenced by cultural backgrounds. Therefore, this study aims to fill that observation gap by investigating the relationship between growth mindset and public speaking confidence for English Education students in their third semester at UIN.

METHOD

Research Design

This study uses a quantitative design of correlations to establish the link between a mindset of growth and confidence in English speaking abilities for Indonesian EFL speakers. This design enables the researcher to investigate the strength and nature of the relationship between the mental variables.

Participants

The main subject population consisted of 29 students in the third semester at the English Education Department of UIN. The purposeful

sampling method was used to ensure that the samples were well-represented in terms of gender and achievement. All participants had also completed at least one public speaking course.

Before joining this subject, all students are supposed to have satisfied the requirements for competent achievement in Speaking I and Speaking II, which are English Education compulsory courses. Speaking I is generally taken during the early semesters and aims to cultivate beginning to intermediate-level English speaking skills for pronunciation, vocabulary use, and grammar. The subject is taught in a foreign language classroom environment with student-centered and interactive learning processes that emphasize class and group discussions, pair and group work, individual speaking presentations, role-playing exercises, and fluency practice activities.

Speaking II builds upon the skills developed in Speaking I, this time focusing even more on speaking fluently, cohesively, and confidently in extended speech situations. The classwork preserves the interactive, team-based learning approach, which allows students to carry out task-based speaking, as well as extemporaneous speaking, in class.

Before conducting the main data gathering, a pilot study was also performed on 29 EFL students in a higher educational institution. These students possessed characteristics similar to those of the main data subjects but were not considered in the main study. The pilot study aimed to check if all questions in the questionnaire were clear, valid, and appropriate.

Research Instruments

Two standardized questionnaires are employed in this study:

1. Growth Mindset Inventory (adapted from Dweck, 2006)
 - a. Consists of 8 items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).
 - b. Example item: "No matter who you are, you can significantly change your intelligence level."

- c. Reliability from pilot testing with 29 EFL students: Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$.

2. English-Speaking Confidence Scale (adapted from Ozdemir & Papi, 2022)

- a. Consists of 10 items on a 5-point Likert scale.
- b. Example item: "I feel confident expressing my ideas in English during class discussions."
- c. Reliability from the same pilot test: Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$.

The English-Speaking Confidence Scale has been incorporated in the testing procedure of the pilot study. It has been found to have high internal consistency, indicating that it can be used appropriately for measuring EFL students at the university level in Indonesia.

Data Collection Procedure

1. Data Collection Period

The gathering of data was done within a one-week time span.

2. Questionnaire Distribution

Questionnaires were also distributed to the participants during their speech classes.

3. Educational Qualification

Each participant was done separately, and the whole exercise was completed within 15 minutes.

4. Data Review

The data collected from the questionnaires was then scrutinized in order to confirm correctness and completeness prior to data analysis.

Data Analysis Technique

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 26. The following statistical techniques were applied:

1. Descriptive Statistics – to determine mean, standard deviation, and level categories of both variables.
2. Normality Test (Kolmogorov–Smirnov) – to ensure data distribution meets correlation assumptions.

3. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation – to test the relationship between growth mindset and speaking confidence.

4. Interpretation Criteria:

- 0.00–0.19 = Very weak
- 0.20–0.39 = Weak
- 0.40–0.59 = Moderate
- 0.60–0.79 = Strong
- 0.80–1.00 = Very strong

If the Pearson correlation yielded $r = .52$ ($p < .05$), it indicated a moderate positive correlation between growth mindset and English-speaking confidence among the participants.

The data analysis process was undertaken in a systematic and sequential way. First, the use of descriptive statistical analysis was undertaken with the aim of establishing the growth in the mindset and confidence levels of the respondents. Second, normality test analysis using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test was undertaken with the aim of finding out if the assumptions required in the analysis were applicable. Third, Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was undertaken with the aim of finding out the degree of association between the variables of growth mindset and speech confidence levels. Finally, the interpretation of the correlation coefficient was undertaken using predetermined guidelines.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were conducted to determine the levels of growth mindset and English-speaking confidence among the 29 participants. As shown in Table 1, the Growth Mindset total score ranged from 10 to 39, with a mean of $M = 31.97$ and a standard deviation of $SD = 7.38$. Meanwhile, the Speaking Confidence total score ranged from 18 to 43, with a mean of $M = 34.55$ and a standard deviation of $SD = 5.79$. These

values provide an overview of the participants' overall tendencies in both variables.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
GM_Total	29	10	39	31.97	7.375	54.392
SC_Total	29	18	43	34.55	5.785	33.470
Valid N (listwise)	29					

Normality Test

A normality test was conducted to examine whether the data for Growth Mindset and Speaking Confidence were normally distributed. As presented in Table 2, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk results for Growth Mindset (GM_Total) showed significant values ($p < .001$), indicating that the GM_Total scores did not meet the assumption of normality. In contrast, the Speaking Confidence variable (SC_Total) obtained non-significant results in the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test ($p = .086$), although the Shapiro–Wilk value was significant ($p = .023$). These results suggest that the SC_Total distribution is marginal and does not fully satisfy the normality assumption.

Table 2. Test of Normality

Kolmogorov-Smirnov

Shapiro-Wilk

	Statistic	dif	Sig	Statistic	dif	Sig.
GM_Total	.295	29	<.001	.723	29	<.001
SC_Total	.152	29	.086	.915	29	.023

1. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Correlation Analysis

A Pearson product–moment correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationship between Growth Mindset and Speaking Confidence. As shown in Table 3, the results indicate a strong and positive correlation between GM_Total and SC_Total ($r = .853$, $p < .001$). This finding suggests that students with higher levels of growth mindset tend to demonstrate higher levels of English-speaking confidence. The correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, confirming a robust association between the two variables.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation between Growth Mindset and Speaking Confidence\

		GM_Total	SC_Total
GM_Total	Pearson Correlation	1	.853**
	Sig.(2-tailed)		<.001
	N	29	29
SC_Total	Pearson Correlation	.853**	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	29	29

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Interpretation of findings

The findings show a major relationship between Growth Mindset and speaking confidence in English among the respondents. Correlation analysis shows a high positive correlation between these variables, as $r = .853$, $p < .001$, which suggests that students with higher growth mindset characteristics manifest a greatly enhanced level of confidence in their oral expression of English.

The above findings are consistent with previous studies, for example, Kim (2024), Cao et al. (2024), and Ozdemir, and Papi (2022), which showed that students who possess a more prominent mindset attitude usually display higher confidence, lower anxiety, and a deeper desire to communicate in English. With a correlation coefficient of $r = .853$, mindset can be seen as a very important factor influencing students' self-confidence in English-speaking capabilities.

DISCUSSION

In the current research, it is found that there is a significant link between students' growth mindset traits and their confidence levels with regard to English-speaking abilities. Descriptive statistics reveal that both growth mindset traits and confidence levels are moderately high among participants, indicating that students tend to believe in their abilities to improve their performance through persistent efforts. This is consistent with Dweck's growth mindset concepts, which assert that people having malleable beliefs about their abilities tend to actively embrace learning, undertake positive risk-taking behaviors, and remain resilient in overcoming obstacles. Derakhshan & Fathi (2024) also support that the presence of growth mindset helps significantly with self-regulation and motivation for self-confidence in L2 speaking performance, as students with malleable beliefs about improvement tend to be more willing to engage with tasks that can enhance their speaking skills. These positive beliefs help students remain persistent in the face of obstacles, which could be a reason for their

moderate to high levels of speaking self-confidence shown by students in the current study.

Their self-reported speaking confidence confirms their readiness to use English for communication purposes and their reduced feelings of nervousness related to their possible mistakes. Cao et al. (2024) showed that EFL students' speaking confidence is enhanced if they feel that the learning context encourages their identity as English speakers and that language learning practices support their feelings of belonging to the community of English speakers. This external support, in combination with internal beliefs about one's own learning abilities, works in a synergistic way to boost students' confidence in speaking. Additionally, Barber (2023) states that language mindsets play a crucial role in foreign language anxiety, as students who develop a growth mindset tend to feel less anxious about their language learning activities. As students feel less anxious, they become more confident about speaking activities, so they become more active in language learning tasks. Therefore, the descriptive data of this study confirms that of current literature research, revealing that students' psychological beliefs influence their attitudes, motivations, and speaking confidence.

Although the results of the normality test revealed that the Growth Mindset data did not follow a normal distribution, this is not uncommon in psychological research. Mindset-related constructs, such as beliefs, attitudes, and motivations, are influenced by a wide range of individual differences, which makes symmetric distributions rare. According to Liu et al. (2025), student mindsets often exist within distinct psychological profiles that vary based on emotional states, burnout, anxiety, and engagement. These complex factors naturally contribute to variations in mindset scores, leading to non-normal distributions. Nevertheless, because the sample size in the present study is sufficiently large and Pearson correlation is known to tolerate minor deviations from normality, using a parametric test remains justifiable. Moreover, the non-normal distribution does not compromise the

interpretability of the results but instead reflects the authentic diversity in learners' beliefs and experiences regarding their ability to learn English.

One of the major research findings is that there is a strong positive relationship between growth mindset and speaking confidence, indicating that those students who believe in the possibility of improving their abilities tend to feel more confident while speaking in English. This finding is in support of the theoretical observation that mindset influences behavior: if students believe that their skills can be shaped, then they tend to feel more encouraged to make mistakes and learn from those mistakes, thereby leading to the development of better speaking confidence. This is also validated by other research studies. A study by Lou & Noels (2020) revealed that growth language mindsets break the language anxiety cycle, especially for low-competency language speakers, which helps achieve more authentic forms of intercultural communication and boosts confidence. Similarly, a study by Ozdemir & Papi (2022) revealed that fixed mindsets predict levels of speaking anxiety, whereas growth mindsets predict high levels of self-confidence and motivational communication.

The role of self-efficacy further strengthens the interpretation of this correlation. Graham (2022) argues that self-efficacy, learners' belief in their ability to succeed, is essential for language learning success, especially in speaking tasks that require real-time processing and communication. Growth mindset enhances self-efficacy by encouraging learners to attribute mistakes to temporary factors rather than fixed traits, making them more resilient and confident. Kim (2024) adds that language mindsets interact with learners' engagement and perceived proficiency, suggesting that mindset not only shapes confidence but also influences how learners evaluate their own competence. When students perceive themselves as capable, they are more likely to engage in speaking tasks, leading to improved performance and stronger confidence over time. Additionally, Hu et al. (2022) demonstrated that a growth mindset predicts language performance through grit and foreign language enjoyment, both of which are

known to reduce anxiety and increase learners' comfort in speaking situations.

The results of this study are further reinforced by local findings. Suriyah and Adisti (2024) reported a significant correlation between growth mindset and speaking ability among Indonesian EFL learners, suggesting that the connection between these two variables is not restricted to international contexts. Suman (2023) also emphasized that students with a growth mindset consistently outperform others in foreign language learning because they perceive challenges as opportunities for development. These findings suggest that mindset plays a universally important role across learning environments, cultures, and proficiency levels.

Although the results are in line with the findings in the related studies, this study sheds light on the role of the Indonesian EFL learning environment in particular in determining the relationship between having a growth mindset and speaking confidence. Within an environment in which accuracy, evaluation, and examination are considered important elements in learning, having a growth mindset could work as an important psychological facilitative mechanism for students in learning and sustaining speaking confidence. These results imply moving beyond limitations in conceptual treating growth mindset, in which it is considered mainly as an individual psychological characteristic.

In conclusion, the findings of the study strongly support existing research that suggests growth mindset is a strong predictor of confidence in English-speaking abilities. It is evident that their relatively high scores on growth mindset were what drove their enthusiasm for speaking, reduced levels of anxiety, and perseverance in practicing speaking skills. This strong correlation that existed between variables in this study verifies the significance of developing growth mindset ideas in English language learning. Encouraging students' embrace of mistakes, persistence when faced with obstacles, and seeing learning as a continuous process would

be significantly beneficial for improving their confidence levels, active participation, and speaking abilities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the participants generally demonstrated moderately high levels of both growth mindset and English-speaking confidence. The descriptive statistics indicate that students tend to believe in their capacity for improvement and display confidence in using English in oral communication. Although the Growth Mindset scores did not meet the assumption of normality, this variation is typical for psychological constructs and does not undermine the overall interpretation of the results. More importantly, the correlation analysis revealed a strong and significant positive relationship between growth mindset and English-speaking confidence ($r = .853$, $p < .001$). This demonstrates that students who hold stronger growth-oriented beliefs are more likely to feel confident when speaking English.

The strength of this correlation confirms that growth mindset is a key psychological factor influencing students' willingness to communicate, their ability to manage language-related anxiety, and their overall self-assurance in speaking performance. These findings are consistent with a wide body of literature showing that a growth mindset fosters motivation, resilience, self-efficacy, and reduced speaking anxiety, all of which contribute to higher confidence in language use. The results also highlight the importance of cultivating growth mindset principles in language learning environments, as doing so can significantly enhance students' confidence and engagement in speaking tasks. Overall, this study underscores the critical role of mindset in shaping learners' English-speaking confidence and suggests that educators should incorporate mindset-enhancing strategies to support students' communicative development.

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