

L2 speaking confidence of Indonesian senior high school learners: Influence on willingness to communicate

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Abstract

The present study investigated Indonesian senior high school learners' level of second/foreign language (L2) speaking confidence and the influence of this confidence on their L2 Willingness to Communicate (WTC). To this end, this study employed an online survey method using Google Forms. 159 learner participants from more than six islands in Indonesia participated in this study. It found that generally, learners reported a moderate level of L2 speaking confidence. They had a moderately high perception of competence, were moderately enthusiastic about using English in communication, and had generally positive feelings when using English. This study further found a statistically significant, positive predictive power of learners' L2 speaking confidence on their L2 WTC. L2 confidence accounted for 30% of the total variance in L2 WTC. Implications include the suggestion that teachers create a supportive environment that boosts learners' confidence and minimises negative emotions like anxiety through well-informed daily teaching practices. Suggested future studies include investigations on how certain instructional practices negatively or positively affect confidence and WTC.

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1. Introduction

This section introduces the research background, gaps, objectives, and questions as well as the significance of the present study.

1.1. Background information

Among activities in a second/foreign language (L2) intended to sharpen learners' language skills, namely reading, listening, writing, and speaking, speaking activities seem to make learners feel anxious the most (Steinberg & Horwitz, 1986; Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009). That speaking being the most anxiety-provoking may be especially true because spoken interactions are inherently so complex and unpredictable that they are tricky to control (Richards, 2006). For this reason, learners' L2 speaking confidence becomes very important. It creates courage, enthusiasm, and stimulation for learners, and thus, learners with a high L2 speaking confidence can communicate more optimally than other learners with lower confidence (Liandika, 2021; Roysmanto, 2018). Learners' self-confidence is especially

important in the case of L2 learning because learners face continuous trials and errors, experiencing both success and failure (Shelton-Strong & Mynard, 2020). A study in Hong Kong also reported that a lack of speaking confidence was a serious issue hampering L2 learners of English at the university level (Evans & Green, 2007).

Furthermore, L2 speaking confidence could be an important antecedent of L2 willingness to communicate (WTC). L2 WTC is learners' "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using an L2" (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547). With L2 instruction focusing on the communicative aspects of language used in communication, L2 WTC is considered the closest determinant of whether L2 learners use L2 (Clément et al., 2003). Quite strongly, MacIntyre et al. (1998) argued that the primary objective of any L2 instruction should be to improve learners' L2 WTC. Only then will the taught L2 be put into use in real communications. That is because L2 WTC is regarded as "the most immediate determinant of L2 use" (Clément et al., 2003, p. 191), leading to better communicative language attainment (Amiryousefi, 2016).

Due to the importance of both L2 confidence and WTC in L2 learning, it becomes important to investigate these two constructs and contemplate the possible interaction between them.

1.2. Research gap

Despite the importance of L2 confidence and WTC in L2 learning, and the availability of such studies in Indonesia (Aritonang, 2014; Dewi & Subekti, 2024b; Hadi et al., 2021; Lee & Drajati, 2019; Liandika, 2021; Muin & Aswati, 2019; Roysmanto, 2018; Sari, 2018; Suseno & Rasul, 2022; Tridinanti, 2018), several gaps must be addressed. First, most studies in Indonesia solely investigated their respective participants' confidence using qualitative designs or investigated confidence along with other variables such as anxiety. Only the study by Lee and Drajati (2019) tried to contemplate the possible interaction between L2 confidence and L2 WTC, where they found a significant, positive, and moderate relationship between L2 confidence and L2 WTC. Next, to the best of our knowledge, no quantitative study has yet contemplated whether Indonesian senior high school learners' L2 confidence influenced L2 WTC. English is a foreign language in Indonesia, and there is limited English class time at the high school level in the country. As such, L2 learners at high school level may not have sufficient exposure to English and may use the language limitedly, thus potentially affecting their L2 confidence and WTC. By involving sufficient samples of these high school learner participants, such a study may provide generalisable data on the interaction between these two variables among senior high school learners in Indonesia, in an eagle-eyed view from which future researchers could conduct further relevant studies in the field.

1.3. Research objectives

There are two objectives of this study as follows.

1. To investigate the level of confidence of Indonesian senior high school learners in L2 speaking.
2. To investigate the influence of learners' L2 speaking confidence on their L2 WTC.

1.4. Research questions

There are two research questions in the present study as follows.

1. What is the level of confidence of Indonesian senior high school learners in L2 speaking?
2. Is there any influence of learners' L2 speaking confidence on their L2 WTC?

1.5. Significance of the study

The significance of the present study can be viewed from several angles. Theoretically, this study contributes to refining L2 WTC concerning L2 confidence at least in the Indonesian context. Pedagogically, the findings of this study may inform practitioners on the possible relationship between confidence and WTC that can be utilised to create a classroom atmosphere that is psychologically friendly for learners to use L2 in communication. For example, if L2 confidence is found to strongly predict L2 WTC, the finding can be a basis for teachers to create confidence-building activities in L2 classes, which may eventually lead to a higher level of L2 WTC.

2. Literature review

This section discusses previous studies pertinent to L2 speaking confidence and its possible relationship with L2 WTC. The section specifically highlights possible factors affecting L2 confidence and the potential interlink between L2 confidence and WTC in the Indonesian context.

2.1. L2 speaking confidence

Several factors are reported to affect L2 learners' speaking confidence negatively. A qualitative study by Fatmawati et al. (2020) in Indonesia reported several factors that negatively affect learners' speaking confidence. These included being laughed at by their friends, incomprehensible input, lack of preparation, and teachers' personalities. Earlier, several studies also reported that negative evaluations from peers or teachers became a spectre hindering learners from speaking confidently (Gan, 2012; Joe et al., 2017; Kitano, 2001; Subekti, 2018b). Learners felt less confident when their teachers demanded that they understand the materials and perform well quickly (Fatmawati et al., 2020). Several studies also suggested that learners became more anxious and afraid of talking if their teachers gave discouraging facial expressions (Peng, 2015; Subekti, 2018a) or if they perceived their teachers to be unfriendly (Effiong, 2016; Trang et al., 2013).

Furthermore, a qualitative study in Pakistan also reported the importance of teachers' role in familiarising learners with public speaking (Khan & Ali, 2010). In Turkey, a quantitative study involving high school learners also reported that learners' problems in L2 speaking were mainly attributed to insufficient language and content knowledge and limited exposure to the L2 outside classroom contexts (Tokoz-Goktepe, 2014). In line with that, a study in China suggested that English was relatively known as a subject rather than a language or a means of communication. The situation explained why L2 learners of English were reluctantly involved in English discussions in class (Peng, 2015). Generally, the use of L2, which is constrained in classroom contexts as in foreign language contexts, leads to limited opportunities for learners to train themselves outside class (Kirkpatrick, 2012), which may lead to a lack of confidence.

On a positive note, several other studies also reported several factors positively affecting learners' L2 confidence. A study by Alam et al. (2021) in Bangladesh reported that motivation was positively associated with L2 confidence. The study further reported that, apart from motivation as an intrinsic factor, social and environmental factors also play a part in affecting

learners' L2 confidence. This was in line with the results of previous studies, for example, a study in Iran by Doqaruni (2014), which found that collaborative speaking activities with peers made learners feel more confident.

In collaborative activities, self-comparison with peers may be lessened (Bao & Du, 2015), and learners may not feel burdened even if they are lagging behind their peers. Next, preparation before language performance seemed to be a key factor (Badrasawi et al., 2021; Ocak et al., 2010). A quantitative study in Malaysia by Badrasawi et al. (2021) reported that learners could speak English confidently, provided they were familiar with the topic. Likewise, an earlier study in Turkey reported that practising speaking in a quiet place could help learners minimise nervousness in pronouncing vocabulary, thus improving confidence (Ocak et al., 2010).

Similarly, L2 confidence could increase through frequent use of the language in the country where the language is spoken (Fidan & Karatepe, 2021), for example, through study abroad programmes. Though not specifically investigating L2 confidence, Glory and Subekti (2022) found that Indonesian learners' desire to pursue further studies abroad compelled them to be confident and improve their English regardless of the hardship. Activities in pairs, such as interview activities in speaking classes, were also reported to allow learners to communicate in L2 continuously, thus increasing their confidence step-by-step (Hasriani, 2019; Nazara, 2011; Rahayu, 2010).

A recent study in Indonesia by Hendrian and Kurniawati (2024) also suggests that when learners perceived themselves to have good relationships with their teachers, they tended to engage themselves in classroom activities more. The findings may indicate that when learners feel 'safe' in class, they tend to be more courageous in L2 learning. In summary, an array of possible factors has been reported to contribute to learners' L2 confidence, ranging from those within learners themselves and those of external origins.

2.2. Interaction between L2 speaking confidence and willingness to communicate

Studies in several contexts contemplated the interactions between L2 confidence and L2 WTC (Aoyama, 2020; Lee & Drajati, 2019; Peng & Woodrow, 2010). A quantitative study involving 579 Chinese university learners reported that learners' communication confidence, which is the combination of perceived competence and a lack of anxiety, strongly predicted L2 WTC (Peng & Woodrow, 2010). Communication confidence accounted for 54% of the total variance in L2 WTC. In line with that, correlation studies involving Indonesian university learners of English (Lee & Drajati, 2019) and Japanese learners of English (Aoyama, 2020) found that L2 confidence and L2 WTC were significantly correlated with moderate strengths. These studies uniformly suggested positive relationships between L2 speaking confidence and L2 WTC.

Specific to the Indonesian context, there have been several studies focusing on L2 confidence in various education levels and contexts (Aritonang, 2014; Dewi & Subekti, 2024b; Hadi et al., 2021; Lee & Drajati, 2019; Liandika, 2021; Muin & Aswati, 2019; Roysmanto, 2018; Sari, 2018; Suseno & Rasul, 2022; Tridinanti, 2018). Aritonang (2014), for example, investigated Indonesian non-English language teachers' confidence in using English as a medium of instruction. The study found that teachers' confidence increased to varying degrees, and there was a transformation from the extrinsic motivation of using L2 to intrinsic motivation. Other studies contemplated the confidence of Indonesian L2 learners at the university level (Dewi & Subekti, 2024b; Lee & Drajati, 2019; Roysmanto, 2018; Tridinanti, 2018), senior high school level (Liandika, 2021; Suseno & Rasul, 2022), junior high school level (Hadi et al., 2021; Muin & Aswati, 2019) and private courses (Sari, 2018). In the university context, for example,

Tridinanti (2018) conducted a small-scale quantitative study and revealed that L2 confidence was positively associated with L2 achievement of English department students. Next, in the senior high school context, an action research study by Suseno and Rasul (2022) revealed that as students became more confident in their ability through teachers' guidance in their first language (L1), they became more willing to participate in class. This finding conformed to the findings of previous relevant studies (Arung et al., 2019; Nety et al., 2020). A qualitative study by Nety et al. (2020), for instance, also reported that participants who had self-confidence tended to be braver and were not afraid of making mistakes in L2 classes. All in all, though perhaps not straightforwardly, several studies in Indonesia have suggested a potential connection between L2 confidence and L2 WTC.

3. Methodology

This section outlines the research design, participants, and instruments as well as the data collection procedure, data analysis, and ethical principles practised throughout the research process.

3.1. Research design

This study employed an online survey in the form of a Google Forms questionnaire as the method of collecting data. Quantitative methods such as surveys have been very popular in L2 confidence and WTC. It can be seen from many more studies conducted using such a design (Aoyama, 2020; Badrasawi et al., 2021; Liandika, 2021; Roysmanto, 2018; Shelton-strong & Mynard, 2020; Subekti, 2019b) than those conducted in qualitative designs (Hasriani, 2019; Subekti, 2019a). Studies contemplating the possible interaction between high school learners' L2 confidence and L2 WTC may be rare, if not non-existent, in the Indonesian context. So far, researchers in this context have conducted studies involving either speaking L2 confidence or L2 WTC and other variables (Dewi & Subekti, 2024a, 2024b; Liandika, 2021; Nazara, 2011; Paradewari, 2017; Roysmanto, 2018). For this reason, a quantitative study involving a representative sample may provide data with the possibility of generalisation (Gray, 2022) on the interaction between Indonesian high school learners' L2 confidence and L2 WTC.

3.2. Participants

159 Indonesian senior high school learners participated in this study regardless of their grades, levels, or institutions. Of these 159 participants, 37 participants (23.3%) were from Java, 17 (10.7%) were from Sumatera, 70 (44.4%) were from Kalimantan, 25 (15.7%) were from Sulawesi, 2 (1.3%) were from Bali, 1 (0.6%) from Nusa Tenggara, and 7 (4.4%) from other islands or regions in Indonesia. Senior high school learners were targeted in this study because, thus far, studies on L2 confidence (Khan & Ali, 2010; Kumar et al., 2021; Tokoz-Goktepe, 2014) and L2 WTC (Aoyama, 2020; Manipuspika, 2018; Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Subekti, 2019b) predominantly involved learners at the university level. Hence, a quantitative study involving senior high school learners was arguably more urgent in providing an eagle-eyed view regarding the relatively under-researched education context.

3.3. Instruments

The present study employed questionnaires on L2 speaking confidence and L2 WTC adapted from several previous works. Eleven Likert-scale items were used to measure L2 confidence, adapted from the work of Griffiee (1997). An example of the statement is "I can talk to a group of people in English". Furthermore, there were a total of fifteen Likert-scale items on L2 WTC.

Nine items were adapted from a study in China (Peng & Woodrow, 2010), whilst the other six items were from a study in Japan (Matsuoka et al., 2014). An example of the items is “I am willing to speak English without preparation in class”. Four possible responses were available: “Strongly agree”, “Agree”, “Neither agree nor disagree”, “Disagree”, and “Strongly disagree”. These questionnaire items were translated into Indonesian to ensure that the targeted senior high school participants could better understand the contents and could give more accurate responses. Back translation to English was conducted to ensure that the translation was correct. The questionnaire items were piloted to ensure that the questionnaires were unambiguous, precise, and simple to complete (Gray, 2022). Furthermore, for a clearer presentation of findings and more thorough analyses, the questionnaire items on L2 confidence were divided into three categories: “Perceived ability to communicate in English”, “Enthusiasm to use English in communication”, and “Positive feeling when communicating in English.”

3.4. Data collection procedures

The Google Forms questionnaire link was shared and distributed via social media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter from 24 September 2021 to 4 February 2022. Out of 161 learners filling out the questionnaires, only the data from 159 learners were further analysed as two participants did not provide complete data and were thus disregarded.

3.5. Data analysis

The data from the 159 participants were recorded in SPSS 25 for further analysis. In this stage, the responses to the Likert-scale items were recorded as follows. “Strongly agree” was recorded as five points, “Agree” as four points, “Neither agree nor disagree” as three points, “Disagree” as two points, and “Strongly disagree” as one point. The authors employed descriptive statistics to answer the first research question on learners’ level of L2 speaking confidence. The data were presented as mean scores, standard deviations, and percentages. To answer the second research question on the influence of L2 speaking confidence on L2 WTC, a bivariate regression analysis was performed with L2 speaking confidence as the independent variable and L2 WTC as the dependent variable. The sequence of data collection and analysis can be seen in Figure 1.

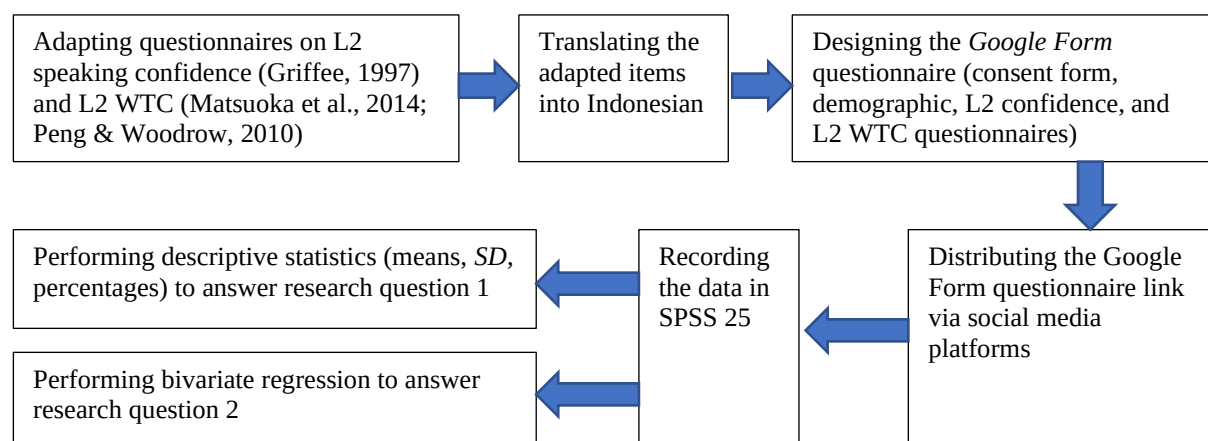


Figure 1. The sequence of data collection and analysis

3.6. Ethical consideration

This study employed the principles of autonomy and beneficence. To ensure the participation was voluntary, the authors provided an informed consent form at the beginning before the prospective participants filled in the main questionnaire items. The consent form provided information such as the study's objectives, the researchers' identities, and their rights and responsibilities if they decided to participate (Israel & Hay, 2006). If the prospective participants indicated their agreement to participate, they were directed to fill out the questionnaires, and if they did not, they could stop immediately. Second, the participants only needed approximately ten minutes to complete the questionnaires, and they were given monetary appreciation, suggesting the implementation of the beneficence principle of maximising benefits for the participants.

4. Findings

The eleven questionnaire items on L2 speaking confidence produced a 0.66 McDonald's omega coefficient and a 0.65 Cronbach's alpha coefficient, suggesting that these items were reliable. The fifteen items on L2 WTC produced 0.70 MacDonal's omega and Cronbach's alpha coefficients, suggesting the items on L2 WTC were also reliable.

4.1. Indonesian senior high school learners' L2 speaking confidence

From eleven statements on L2 speaking confidence, the maximum composite score was 52, and the minimum was 20, with ($M = 38.55$, $SD = 6.60$). The average mean score ($M = 3.50$) on a scale of 1 to 5. This indicated that the participants' speaking confidence was generally at a moderate level.

4.1.1. Perceived ability to communicate in English

Table 1 shows the participants' responses to the "perceived ability to communicate in English" category, which comprises items 1, 4, 6, 8, and 10.

Table 1. Confidence in the use of English in communication

Item No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score	SD
1	I can be interviewed in English.	29.6%	52.8%	0%	15.7%	1.9%	3.92	1.05
4	I can do discussions in English.	17.0%	52.2%	0%	22.0%	8.8%	3.47	1.25
6	I can speak English easily.	17.0%	40.9%	0%	31.4%	10.7%	3.22	1.34

Item No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score	SD
8	I can express my opinion in English while speaking with native speakers.	22.6%	40.3%	0%	27.7%	9.4%	3.39	1.35
10	I can talk to a group of people in English.	17.0%	42.8%	0%	30.2%	10.0%	3.26	1.32

From Table 1, it can be seen that apart from item 1 on the confidence of being interviewed in English, producing a fairly high mean score ($M = 3.92$), the other items produced lower mean scores ($M = 3.26$ to 3.47), suggesting lower moderate L2 speaking confidence.

4.1.2. Confidence in the use of English in communication

Table 2 shows the participants' responses to the "confidence to use English in communication" category, comprising items 2, 7, and 9.

Table 2. Confidence in the use of English in communication

No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score	SD
2	I could study in a country where English is the official language.	35.9%	45.9%	0%	15.1%	3.1%	3.96	1.12
7	I say something to other people in English every day.	17.0%	42.1%	0%	30.2%	10.7%	3.25	1.33
9	I am looking for an opportunity	13.8%	54.7%	0%	22.1%	9.4%	3.42	1.24

No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score	SD
	to speak English.							

Table 2 shows that only item 2 on the desire to study in a country where English is used as the official language produced a high mean score, at 3.96. Both item 7 on the frequency of learners speaking in English and item 9 on looking for an opportunity to communicate in English only produced low-moderate mean scores of 3.25 and 3.42, respectively.

4.1.3. Positive feelings when communicating in English

Table 3 shows the participants' responses to the "positive feelings when communicating in English" category, comprising items 3, 5, and 11.

Table 3. Positive feelings when communicating in English

No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score	SD
3	I like to speak English.	22.0%	42.1%	0%	25.2%	10.7%	3.40	1.36
5	When I speak English, I feel cheerful.	23.9%	46.0%	0%	22.6%	7.5%	3.56	1.28
11	I am relaxed when speaking English.	32.1%	40.9%	0%	20.1%	6.9%	3.71	1.29

From Table 3, it can be seen that all three items produced relatively the same mean scores ($M = 3.40$ to 3.71), with no mean score in stark contrast to the others. This indicated concerning feelings when using English; the participants reported relatively the same moderate responses, perhaps suggesting moderately positive feelings when using English.

4.2. The influence of learners' L2 speaking confidence towards their willingness to communicate

The composite scores of both variables were obtained to find the influence of learners' L2 speaking confidence on their L2 WTC. From this procedure, this study found a moderate level of L2 WTC with an overall mean score ($M = 54.61$; $SD = 8.08$) and an average mean score (M

= 3.64) on a scale of 1 to 5. This finding was not further elaborated as this was not the present study's focus.

Using the composite scores of L2 speaking confidence and those of L2 WTC, this study employed bivariate regression analysis to find the influence of learners' L2 speaking confidence on their L2 WTC. The results can be observed in Table 4.

Table 4. Regression Results with Speaking Confidence as the Independent Variable

Regression weights	R^2	β	t	F	p
L2 Speaking confidence → L2 WTC	0.30	28.69	8.99	67.85	0.000

From Table 4, the main findings can be highlighted. Learners' L2 speaking confidence significantly influenced their L2 WTC positively, $\beta=28.69$, $F(1, 157) = 67.85$, $p < 0.001$. The higher learners' L2 speaking confidence, the higher their L2 WTC. L2 speaking confidence could explain 30% of the total variance in L2 WTC.

5. Discussion

The present study had two research objectives. These are to investigate the participants' level of L2 speaking confidence and to see whether their L2 confidence could predict their L2 WTC. In the following sections, these two objectives are discussed one by one.

5.1. Indonesian senior high school learners' L2 speaking confidence

Regarding the participants' L2 speaking confidence, the results are divided into categories to ensure thorough analyses. The analyses for each category can be observed in the following parts.

5.1.1 Perceived ability to communicate in English

In this category, the study found that learners expressed higher confidence in using English when being interviewed. Though still at moderate levels, they were less confident concerning their ability to have discussions, express opinions, and talk to a group of people in English. Learners' higher level of confidence when being interviewed in English could be attributed to the fewer initiatives on the part of the interviewees in an interview situation. When being interviewed, learners did not need to initiate conversation and were merely required to respond to the interviewers' questions. In comparison, in discussion contexts, learners needed to be ready to take turns and initiate conversations per the dynamics of the discussions, very often in impromptu situations. Hence, this may require a higher mastery of the language, thus the lower mean scores of the responses to the statements regarding these relevant situations.

On a positive note, these findings suggest that interviews can be used as a strategic class activity. A study involving learners from an English Language Education in Indonesia by Nazara (2010) reported that activities allowing pair direct communication could facilitate learners to show their L2 mastery more optimally. Specific to doing interviews as a learning activity, in another English Education context in Indonesia, Hasriani (2019) found that

interview techniques used in the Speaking class could improve learners' speaking skills. They could also socialise due to the interactions, eventually increasing confidence. An earlier study in an Indonesian high school context reported that the interview technique could improve learners' fluency as it created a condition requiring learners to speak continuously (Rahayu, 2010).

The relatively lower mean scores on items concerning interactive communication necessitating impromptu L2 production in front of a group of people may be attributed to several factors. Interaction may be the most difficult skill to teach because interactional activities are so complex and delicate that they cannot be controlled (Richards, 2006). A quantitative study involving 120 Junior High School learners in Turkey by Tokoz-Goktepe (2014) reported that most participants feared conversations in English because limited vocabulary mastery made them unable to express ideas in their minds, and thus, they gave up speaking. Another possible factor is their perceived communication competence. At times, not learners' competence but their perceived competence affects their language performance (Bandura, 1997). Learners' perceived competence being more determinant than their actual competence may especially be the case in Asian contexts, including Indonesia, where learners tend to care about how others think of them, including as L2 speakers (Joe et al., 2017; Subekti, 2018b).

5.1.2. Confidence in the use of English in communication

The findings in this category suggested that despite learners' relatively high confidence in being able to study abroad in countries using English as the official language one day, they reported low-moderate confidence regarding the frequency of using English and their effort to find the opportunity to use the language. The finding on confidence in the study abroad prospect aligned with a finding of mixed-method research by Fidan and Karatepe (2021) involving 100 learners in Turkey. The study reported that the participants had positive thoughts about studying abroad to improve their English mastery. Though not specifically investigating L2 speaking confidence, a qualitative study by Glory and Subekti (2022) found that the desire to study abroad in the future was associated with a lower fear of negative evaluation, promoting more confidence in L2.

Furthermore, learners reported low-moderate L2 confidence in a way that some of them did not use English frequently and did not try to find an opportunity to do so. This result could be attributed to the position of English as a foreign language in Indonesia. Hence, outside classroom contexts, learners are unlikely to find sufficient opportunities to use English in daily communications (Kirkpatrick, 2012). A study in Indonesia by Fatmawati et al. (2020) investigating speaking confidence also reported that one of the factors attributed to learners' lack of confidence was the limited opportunity to use English outside classroom contexts. To compensate for this condition, teachers should use classroom activities more optimally to facilitate learners' more frequent and extensive use of English. A quantitative study involving 300 learners in Malaysia by Badrasawi et al. (2021) found that learners did not feel confident when asked to communicate on unfamiliar topics, talk to strangers, or when they did not have enough time to prepare. Informed by the findings of the present study and those of Badrasawi et al. (2021), teachers, for example, can promote more small group activities rather than whole-class discussions led by the teachers, can give learners the freedom to choose their group mates, and only ask for impromptu language production in a psychologically safe environment, such as small groups whose members learners are already familiar with.

5.1.3. Positive feelings when communicating in English

In this category, the participants reported relatively the same moderate responses, and this result probably indicates the participants' moderately positive feelings when using English.

That being said, seen from the responses on all three items in more detail, it was found that 57 participants (35.9%) did not like to speak English, 48 participants (30.1%) did not feel cheerful when speaking in English, and 43 participants (27%) did not feel relaxed when speaking in English. This could be attributed to speaking anxiety. In an old yet still relevant canon, it is posited that oral classroom activities are the most problematic as well as anxiety-provoking (Steinberg & Horwitz, 1986), and this negative feeling could be attributed to several possible factors within learners, such as low proficiency (Subekti, 2018a), and beyond such as teachers and instructional practices (Manipuspika, 2018; Peng, 2015; Subekti, 2018a). Among others, the external factors instilling speaking anxiety could include teachers' discouraging facial expressions (Peng, 2015; Subekti, 2018a), perceived unfriendliness of teachers (Effiong, 2016; Trang et al., 2013), and some classroom activities such as speaking in front of the whole class and doing an impromptu L2 production.

5.2. The influence of learners' L2 speaking confidence on their willingness to communicate

The data generally indicates that learners' L2 speaking confidence significantly influenced their L2 WTC positively. This finding could align with several previous studies' findings (Aoyama, 2020; Lee & Drajati, 2019; Peng & Woodrow, 2010). The study by Lee and Drajati (2019) involving 183 L2 learners at the university level in Indonesia reported a significantly moderate association between confidence and L2 WTC. Similarly, the study by Aoyama (2020) involving 88 Japanese L2 learners in California reported that learners' L2 confidence moderately correlated with their L2 WTC. A large-scale quantitative study involving 579 Chinese learners of English at the university level also noted that communication confidence, a combination of lack of anxiety and perceived competence, could predict 54% of the total variance of their L2 WTC (Peng & Woodrow, 2010). The relatively uniform findings between the present study involving senior high school learners and those of the previous studies involving university learners in various contexts suggest that the positive influence of L2 confidence on L2 WTC has thus far been undisputed even across education levels.

As L2 WTC is seen as the most immediate factor in the use of L2 (Clément et al., 2003), improving learners' L2 confidence could indirectly facilitate more extensive use of L2 by learners. A study involving 65 Indonesian L2 learners by Liandika (2021) suggested that most of the learners with high confidence bravely spoke English even though they were not good at their pronunciation, whilst other learners having low confidence tended to be silent, ignored the subject, and did not dare to answer teachers' questions. L2 confidence could be what mattered to a certain extent. Teachers need to provide an environment that nurtures these learners' confidence whilst reducing their negative emotions, such as anxiety, through daily informed instructional practices.

6. Conclusion and recommendation

The present study contributes to understanding Indonesian senior high school learners' level of L2 speaking confidence and the interaction between the confidence and their L2 WTC. Considering that the participants of this study were from various areas in Indonesia, the findings may be generalised to contexts whose participants share approximately similar

characteristics with those of this study. Hence, this study could provide an eagle-eyed understanding of the rather under-researched participants' L2 speaking confidence and L2 WTC. The findings of this study could be compared to future studies involving participants from the same education level, regardless of context.

Pedagogical implications can be outlined. For example, teachers can design activities that provide conducive environments for learners to be confident in using L2 regardless of their competence. This can be achieved, among others, by minimising or omitting, where possible, evaluative situations where learners are directly judged in a right-or-wrong fashion, such as multiple-choice fill-in-the-blank assessments. Teachers can minimise teacher-talk time and promote more interactive activities conducted in small groups, allowing individual learners to utilise the precious class session to use English optimally. This may not have been possible if the class relied too much on whole-class activities.

6.1. Limitations and future studies

This study may have several limitations. The findings on learners' confidence in studying abroad in the future should be considered with caution. On our reflection after the data collection phase, this could be more of responses reflecting their hope and optimism rather than their actual L2 confidence, considering that the participants' responses produced a particularly high mean score and the highest mean score across all the questionnaire items. Furthermore, seen from the relatively high standard deviations across all questionnaire items ranging from 1.05 up to 1.36, the participants' responses were quite dispersed. This indicated that differences among participants' responses could be quite extreme, perhaps attributed to the various geographical areas they were from, which could have indirectly affected the quality of L2 instruction, the frequency of L2 use, and other relevant aspects.

Furthermore, relevant future studies can be suggested as follows. Contemplating senior high school learners' L2 speaking confidence or L2 WTC concerning instructional practices in a mixed-method design can be worthwhile. Such studies may investigate how certain instructional practices negatively or positively affect confidence and WTC. Involving teachers and learners in these studies can also be strategic to see if their views conform to each other or if any mismatch may hinder learners' learning. Furthermore, considering that Indonesian senior high school learners were still fairly under-involved in this field, it may be worthwhile to compare the L2 speaking confidence and L2 WTC among such learners from several geographical areas in Indonesia.

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Conflict of interest

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Declaration of AI usage

The authors used Grammarly to polish the language in some parts of the article. However, they declared that the content of the article is totally theirs.

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