

Lack of Self-confidence in Speaking English language Fluently of English Language Teachers at Public Basic Schools in Erbil

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Abstract: This research investigates the pivotal role of self-confidence in fostering success in acquiring a second language, with a specific emphasis on the proficiency in the English language exhibited by elementary school English teachers in Erbil, Kurdistan. The study seeks to identify the impediments that hinder language educators from attaining fluency in spoken English and delves into the ways in which self-confidence exerts influence over their journey in language acquisition. Employing a quantitative research approach, a questionnaire was administered to a cohort of 41 elementary school English teachers hailing from diverse backgrounds and representing 41 distinct public schools during the academic year of 2021. The analysis of the data hinged on Likert scales applied to assess various variables, ultimately revealing several noteworthy barriers. These barriers encompassed a dearth of motivation, the practice of code-switching between Kurdish and English in classroom communication, inadequate opportunities for English language practice, both within and outside the classroom setting, alongside challenges linked to grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The English language, serving as a global medium of communication, finds extensive application in diverse spheres including daily interactions, business transactions, and academic pursuits. Among the array of language skills, spoken English is often regarded as the most challenging. A prominent psychological impediment that obstructs learners' mastery of the language is the deficiency in self-confidence. Proficiency in the English language, particularly among educators in governmental basic schools, holds profound significance. Evidently, not all English instructors possess a fluent command of the language they are entrusted to teach. This deficiency stems from a myriad of factors, encompassing psychological, sociological, educational, and cultural dimensions. When left unaddressed, these inadequacies create a significant void within the educational framework.

Psychologically, educators may grapple with a lack of self-assurance in delivering effective language instruction, thereby undermining the quality of the learning experience for their students. Sociologically, disparities in socioeconomic backgrounds can influence language exposure and competence, thereby impacting the language skills of educators. From an educational perspective, inadequate language proficiency can impede the seamless delivery of the curriculum, thereby hampering students' language acquisition. Additionally, cultural disparities can lead to miscommunication and difficulties in conveying nuanced concepts. Consequently, the imperative lies in confronting these multifaceted challenges, as doing so is pivotal to bridging the language proficiency gap and elevating the overall quality of English education in governmental basic schools.

As Gürler [1] accentuates, self-confidence plays a critical role in effective communication and the initiation of meaningful conversations. Similarly, Chaney and Burk [2] define speaking as the process of conveying meaning through both verbal and non-verbal symbols within diverse contextual frameworks. Regardless of English language learning at different educational stages, learners often grapple with the attainment of fluency, even those who have graduated from English language departments. Furthermore, elementary school English educators frequently encounter limitations in their English language proficiency, which subsequently impacts their capacity to facilitate students' language acquisition. Consequently, the investigation of barriers to English-speaking skills, with a specific emphasis on self-confidence, assumes paramount importance for language educators. The researcher acknowledges the significance of this issue and endeavors to identify impediments to teachers' fluency in English and comprehend its implications on student learning. This study seeks to address a critical concern affecting language acquisition in the contemporary generation. In particular, it delves into the barriers that hinder the fluency

of English teachers in public schools. Notably, there is a paucity of studies exploring self-confidence barriers among educators in Kurdistan, rendering this sample vital for both problem identification and the quest for viable solutions. Furthermore, the research examines the role of self-confidence in motivating learners to attain fluency in the English language. To this end, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- Does a deficiency in self-confidence impede the fluency of English teachers in basic public schools in Erbil?
- What are the barriers that impinge upon the fluency of English language educators, even subsequent to their graduation from English language departments?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Background

Self-confidence constitutes a pivotal determinant in motivating an individual's language proficiency, thereby occupying a significant position within the discourse on second language acquisition. The research literature has delved extensively into the multifaceted nature of speaking proficiency, which encompasses not only the formal linguistic aspects but also the communicative functionality, thereby entailing both language elements and communicative purposes [3]. The significance of self-confidence in acquiring a second language, be it for teachers or students, transcends the boundaries of the language classroom. Mastering these aspects presents significant hurdles for individuals striving to learn a second language, with a notable emphasis on English learners.

Further nuances in the discourse of self-confidence within the context of second language acquisition can be elucidated through the categorization of speaking barriers, as advanced by Gürler [1]. These barriers are bifurcated into two overarching categories: internal barriers, which encompass psychological and attitudinal factors, and external barriers, which include physiological, physical, and systematic factors. It is in this framework that self-confidence emerges as a linchpin for the augmentation of language proficiency. Ebata (2008) reinforces this standpoint by emphasizing self-confidence's capacity to act as a potent catalyst for positive motivation and the cultivation of enjoyable language learning experiences. Consequently, within the intricate web of second language acquisition, self-confidence assumes a central role, influencing the motivational dynamics and, ultimately, the language proficiency of individuals.

The profound impact of self-confidence on English learners' speaking performance is underscored by Leong and Ahmadi [4], who note that despite acceptable linguistic abilities, low self-esteem, high anxiety, and low motivation can hinder speaking skills. This highlights the need for teachers to provide support in creating a motivating environment that boosts students' confidence in English communication. Krashen (1985) corroborates this perspective, emphasizing the role of self-confidence and motivation in language acquisition through diverse communicative activities [5]. Juhana [6] adds that students' lack of self-confidence often stems from their fear of being misunderstood or not understanding others, which leads them to avoid participating in classroom discussions. Hence, teachers play a pivotal role in motivating students to engage in class discussions and build their self-confidence.

Al Asmari [7] argued that using one's native language in education may not lead to high second language oral proficiency. This is because achieving proficiency in a second language requires consistent practice and mastering pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Al Asmari [7] also suggested that learners are hesitant to use the target language in front of peers due to fear of making mistakes. Additionally, Al-Nakhalah [8] delves into the psychological barriers that hinder students from speaking a second language, highlighting fear of making mistakes, lack of motivation, lack of self-confidence, shyness, and anxiety. These psychological factors are often exacerbated by concerns related to negative criticism and the fear of evaluation by teachers and peers. It becomes evident that self-confidence plays a pivotal role in overcoming these psychological hurdles, and teachers can contribute significantly by creating a communicative language learning environment. Learners often require either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation to empower and activate them, ultimately fostering self-confidence. Teachers, as key

influencers, have a pivotal role in motivating students through various engaging activities that connect learning to the real world, making lessons enjoyable and interesting. The significance of self-confidence in language learning, particularly in speaking proficiency, cannot be overstated. It not only acts as a motivator but also serves as a catalyst for overcoming various internal and external barriers. The expert perspectives discussed in this expanded discussion underscore the critical role of teachers in nurturing self-confidence and creating an environment conducive to effective language communication.

2.2. Previous Related Studies

The significant impact of various factors on acquiring second language speaking skills has prompted researchers to conduct extensive investigations and studies. Gürler [1] conducted a research investigation during the fall semester of 2014-2015, focusing on the influence of self-confidence on the attainment of speaking skills among 77 preparatory students. Data collection entailed the use of self-confidence questionnaires, which unveiled a statistically significant correlation between self-confidence levels and the activation of speaking skills. Conversely, Tokoz-Goktepe [9] undertook an examination of speaking difficulties and associated factors among 9th-grade high school Turkish EFL learners, employing a multifaceted approach encompassing questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. The research findings elucidated personal factors, such as limited exposure to the English language and content knowledge, along with pedagogical issues, including non-communicative teaching methods and limited utilization of teaching aids, as the principal impediments to achieving fluency in spoken English.

In a separate study, Arango [10] delved into the repercussions of low self-confidence on the oral production of the target language, focusing on tenth-grade students at Ricaurte School. The investigation incorporated diverse confidence-enhancing activities within the classroom, underscoring the pivotal role of educators in employing versatile techniques to foster students' self-expression and recognition of their latent capabilities. The study also emphasized the scaffolding function of teachers in facilitating the language acquisition process. Jamila [11] scrutinized the factors influencing the oral performance of university learners in Bangladesh, involving 83 adult participants. Data acquisition encompassed the utilization of questionnaires and interviews, with self-confidence emerging as a significant, albeit not the predominant, factor impeding oral performance. Students attributed varying degrees of importance to self-confidence, with additional factors, including limited practice and vocabulary, exerting notable influences on their speaking skills. Jamila posited that enhanced English proficiency naturally bolsters learners' motivation, enabling them to vie on a global scale based on their linguistic competence.

Rafieyan [12] embarked on an investigation into the factors instigating anxiety in second language speaking and the corresponding coping strategies. The research entailed qualitative interviews conducted with 10 female students enrolled in English education programs at the University of Technology Malaysia. The outcomes underscored anxiety as a pivotal determinant affecting students' second language performance, advocating for a stimulating learning environment enriched with diverse activities to alleviate anxiety in English language classes.

Concurrently, Al-Nakhlah [8] explored speech impediments among English language students at Al Quds Open University, employing experimental methods and interviews. The research exposed fear of errors, shyness, anxiety, and a deficiency in confidence as deterrents to proficient English speaking. Recommendations included the establishment of a nurturing milieu conducive to fostering English communication. Asmari [17] delved into the factors influencing oral proficiency among 142 Saudi preparatory students and 47 English language teachers at Taif University. A Likert-scale questionnaire was utilized for data collection, revealing impediments such as attitudes toward the second language, frequency of mother language usage, difficulty adhering to sentence structure, and apprehension of making errors. The study underscored the imperative role of faculty in addressing these barriers.

Martinez and Villa [5] conducted an examination of self-confidence in English language learning at the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon. The research incorporated a questionnaire predicated on Griffie's [13] confidence construct, uncovering students' enthusiasm for English utilization while grappling with fluency issues. Substantive enhancements in speaking performance were discernible between the third and fourteenth weeks, elucidating the advantages of exposure to the foreign language and in-class practice. Lastly, Juhana [6] probed into

the psychological impediments obstructing students from engaging in English communication within an Indonesian high school context. The research methodology encompassed questionnaires, observations, and interviews, disclosing fear of errors, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, and absence of motivation as formidable barriers to effective English communication in the classroom. Educators were advised to address these hindrances while actively encouraging students to cultivate self-assurance.

3. PROCESS AND PRACTICAL PROCEDURAL OF THE STUDY

3.1 Process and Procedure of the Study

In the study, a meticulously designed structured questionnaire was administered to the participants, aimed at evaluating their self-assurance levels pertaining to the fluency of spoken English. Additionally, an open-ended query was incorporated within the questionnaire to solicit participants' candid insights into the challenges faced by teachers in achieving English fluency. Subsequent to obtaining formal authorization from the educational institution, the distribution of the questionnaire to the selected participants commenced. The respondents were provided with a range of response options designed to closely align with their individual perspectives. The data collection process was conducted during two-hour-long lecture sessions, with data acquisition culminating on December 18, 2021.

3.2 Population of the Study

The study focused on a population of 41 English basic school teachers, specifically targeting individuals aged between 30 and 50. This sample was comprised of 19 male and 22 female teachers, representing a diverse cross-section of educators from various backgrounds and originating from 41 distinct schools situated in the vicinity of Erbil. Importantly, all participants possessed an English diploma, ensuring a uniform baseline of qualification within the sample. The sampling method employed in this study was purposive or judgmental sampling. This method was chosen because the researchers sought to specifically select English teachers within the specified age range and possessing English diplomas. The rationale behind this choice was to ensure that the sample was highly relevant to the research objectives, as English teachers in this age group with specialized qualifications were more likely to possess insights into self-confidence issues related to language proficiency, which aligned with the research's aim to explore factors contributing to a lack of confidence in this professional group. By focusing on this specific population, the study aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, making purposive sampling the most suitable approach.

3.3 Instruments of the Study

A quantitative research approach was employed, utilizing a comprehensive questionnaire comprising 31 questions, with one additional inquiry, as the primary data collection tool. This questionnaire incorporated a four-point forced Likert scale, spanning from 4 denoting "Strongly Agree" to 1 indicating "Strongly Disagree," to systematically evaluate English basic school teachers' perspectives concerning the impediments affecting their proficiency in the English language. Prior to implementation, the questionnaire's validity and reliability were rigorously confirmed through the scrutiny of previous scholarly studies and the expert insights of applied linguistics authorities.

The questionnaire was a hybrid construct, amalgamating elements from three distinct sources. Notably, select items were borrowed and adapted from the works of Griffiee [13] and Martínez and Villa [5] to gauge language proficiency and confidence levels. Furthermore, the questionnaire featured self-confidence inquiries sourced from Park and Lee [14], and oral barriers related queries were a composite derived from the research of Al-Ma'shy [15] and innovatively developed by Al-Asmari [7]. The comprehensive questionnaire encompassed a spectrum of pertinent variables, encompassing situational confidence, communicational confidence, language ability confidence, oral barriers specific to EFL teachers, oral barriers influenced by social and peer pressures, attitudes toward speaking skills, and oral barriers intricately tied to the English language. This meticulously designed questionnaire served as the principal instrument to capture the multifaceted aspects of English fluency barriers faced by the participating teachers.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Analysis of Data

Within the scope of this research, the administered questionnaire served as a pivotal tool for elucidating the intricate facets associated with English fluency. Subsequently, the gathered data underwent a meticulous analytical process wherein the researcher systematically assessed the responses to each questionnaire statement. Furthermore, a comparative analysis was conducted, juxtaposing the various variables to discern patterns, correlations, and relationships inherent in the dataset. This methodical examination facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing English fluency as perceived by the study participants.

Table 1. Situational Confidence, adapted from English education and developed [ref. 14]

	Statement	SA	A.	D.	S. D.
1.	I am a good English teacher.	12.1%	80.4%	2.4%	4.8%
2.	I am an important teacher of my group.	9.7%	46.3%	43.9%	0%
3.	My colleagues need me to come to school every day.	29.2%	65.8%	2.4%	2.4%
4.	I think that I will be the best teacher among my group.	14.6%	51.2%	31.7%	2.4%

The initial table within this study offers an insight into teachers' perceptions of their situational confidence. Notably, a substantial majority of 80.4% expressed their self-perceived efficacy as teachers, reflecting a noteworthy degree of confidence in their instructional roles. Nevertheless, the second query yielded divergent viewpoints, with 46.3% affirming their significance within their peer group, while 43.9% held contrasting opinions, indicating a certain degree of disparity in teachers' self-conceptions. The third question reinforced the trend of high confidence levels, as a significant 65.8% of respondents believed that their colleagues depended on them within the school context. Collectively, these responses underscore the prevalent positive disposition of teachers towards their situational confidence. Furthermore, Question (4) garnered a 51.2% agreement rate, reaffirming a robust sense of self-assuredness among teachers in the study.

Table 2. Communicational Confidence, adapted from English education and developed [ref.14]

	Statement	S.A.	A.	D.	S.D.
5.	I feel shy speaking English with native speakers.	19.5%	26.8%	34.1%	17%
6.	I feel embarrassed when I speak English in the classroom.	12.1%	12.1%	39%	36.5
7.	I feel shy speaking English with English teachers	7.3%	34.1%	31.7%	26.8%

The subsequent table within this research study provides insights into teachers' levels of communication confidence. In reference to Question (5), it is notable that 26.8% of respondents expressed agreement, while 34.1% indicated disagreement regarding feelings of shyness when engaging in English conversation with native speakers. Despite the relatively higher proportion of disagreement, this aspect warrants attention, underscoring a discernible lack of confidence among teachers when communicating with native English speakers. Moving on to Question (6), a distinct pattern emerged, with 39% expressing disagreement and 36.5% strongly disagreeing regarding feelings of embarrassment while conversing in English within the classroom environment. This indicates a notably elevated level of confidence in classroom communication. Intriguingly, for Question (7), 34.1% acknowledged feelings of shyness, while 31.7% disagreed, when communicating with fellow English teachers in the second language. This duality in responses underscores a prevailing sense of insecurity among teachers when engaging in communication using a second language in their immediate professional circles, as evident in both Questions (6) and (7).

Table 3. Language ability confidence, adapted and developed [ref. 5,13]

	Statement	S.A.	A.	D.	S.D.
8.	I can show an English-speaking visitor around the campus and answer questions.	14.6%	53.6%	29.2%	2.4%
9.	I can give my views in English when talking to a native speaker.	9.7%	46.3%	29.2%	14.6%
10.	I am relaxed when speaking English.	41.4%	51.2%	7.3%	0%
11.	I look for chances to speak English.	63.4%	29.2%	2.4%	4.8%
12.	I can learn to speak English fluently.	14%	78%	7.3%	0%

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As depicted in Table 3, the findings reveal that a significant portion of teachers, precisely 53.6%, exhibited the capability to engage in English conversations when guiding visitors around the campus and addressing their queries. Moreover, 46.3% of the respondents demonstrated proficiency in expressing themselves in English during interactions with native speakers. Noteworthy is the fact that a combined 51.2% expressed agreement, while an additional 49.4% strongly concurred that they felt at ease when conversing in the English language. Furthermore, Questions 11 and 12 underscored a substantial degree of language ability confidence among the participants. Specifically, a notable 63.4% of teachers actively sought opportunities to engage in English discourse, signifying their proactive stance towards language practice. Impressively, an overwhelming 78% of the educators exhibited unwavering belief in their capacity to attain fluency in spoken English. These findings collectively emphasize a commendable level of confidence in language proficiency and a keen motivation to further enhance their English speaking skills among the teacher cohort.

Table 4. Oral barriers related to EFL teachers, adapted and developed [ref. 7,15]

	Statement	S.A.	A.	D.	S.D.
13.	I am afraid that my English teacher colleagues will laugh if I make a mistake.	9.8%	21.9%	56%	19.5%
14.	I hate speaking English because of my former English language teachers.	2.4%	2.4%	21.9%	73.1%
15.	My former English teachers did not encourage us to speak English in the classroom.	46.3%	41.4%	12.1%	7.3%
16.	My former English teachers usually speaks in Kurdish in the classroom.	36.5%	41.4%	9.7%	12.1%
17.	I prefer to mix between English and Kurdish in the classroom.	9.7%	31.7%	26.8%	31.7%

Table 4 provides an insightful depiction of the oral barriers encountered by English foreign language teachers. Commencing with Question (13), it is noteworthy that a significant proportion, precisely 56%, expressed disagreement, indicating their belief that their colleagues would not deride them for English language mistakes, suggesting a supportive professional environment. Moving to Question (14), a robust 73.1% strongly disagreed, highlighting that their previous English teachers did not instill a dislike for the English language, signifying a positive influence in their formative language education. Remarkably, Question (15) unveiled highly significant findings, indicating that their former English teachers lacked the motivation and inclination to encourage English language use within the classroom, which in turn had an adverse impact on the teachers' self-confidence in fluent English speaking. Question (16) also yielded substantial significance, with 36.5% strongly agreeing and an additional 41.4% agreeing that their former English teachers predominantly employed Kurdish as the medium of instruction in the classroom, revealing potential language preference issues among educators. Question (17) presented a mixed response, with 31.7% expressing a preference for incorporating both Kurdish and English in their classroom instruction, while an equivalent percentage disagreed. This reflects a diversity in the current pedagogical approach to English language teaching among the participating teachers.

Table 5. Oral barriers related to social/peer pressure, adapted and developed [ref. 7,15]

	Statement	S.A.	A.	D.	S.D.
18.	I never feel confident when speak English in the classroom.	2.4%	21.9%	39%	24.3%
19.	I prefer not to speak in the classroom because I am afraid of making mistakes.	0%	19.5%	46.3%	34.1%
20.	I prefer not to speak English in the classroom because my students will laugh at me.	0%	7.3%	26.8%	65.8%
21.	I enjoy when I speak English in the classroom.	53.6%	41.4%	4.8%	0%
22.	I get nervous when I speak English in the classroom.	2.4%	19.5%	39%	39%

Table 5 provides a comprehensive overview of the oral barriers experienced by teachers, particularly those related to social and peer pressure. Beginning with Question (18), a noteworthy 39% of teachers expressed disagreement, while 24.3% strongly disagreed, collectively indicating their confidence in speaking English within the

classroom setting, thereby suggesting a certain level of self-assurance in this context. Transitioning to Question (19), it is evident that 46.3% opposed, and an additional 34.1% strongly disagreed with the notion of refraining from English conversation in class to evade making mistakes. This data indicates a clear inclination among teachers to engage in English discourse despite potential errors, underscoring their commitment to language development. Intriguingly, Question (20) revealed that a significant majority, specifically 65.8% of teachers, strongly disagreed with the notion of abstaining from English communication due to the fear of ridicule from students, signifying their resolute determination to communicate in English within the classroom environment.

Shifting to Question (21), a substantial proportion, comprising 53.6% who strongly agreed and an additional 41.4% who agreed, indicated their genuine enjoyment of speaking English in the classroom. This data reflects a positive attitude towards English language usage among teachers. Finally, Question (22) demonstrated a relatively balanced response, with 39% of teachers expressing disagreement and another 39% strongly disagreeing about experiencing nervousness while speaking English in class. This suggests that the barriers associated with social and peer pressure did not emerge as highly significant challenges, as perceived by the surveyed teachers.

Table 6. Attitudes towards speaking skills, adapted and developed [ref. 7, 15]

	Statement	S.A.	A.	D.	S.D.
23.	Speaking English is an important skill for my career.	80.4%	17%	0%	2.4%
24.	Speaking English is very interesting.	87.8%	12.1%	0%	0%
25.	Speaking English is tedious.	0%	0%	17%	82.9%
26.	I cannot speak English fluently because it is difficult to speak like natives.	14.6%	31.7%	34.1%	19.5%
27.	English contact hours are not sufficient to have enough practice of speaking skills.	46.3%	39%	4.8%	9.7%

Table 6 provides a comprehensive insight into the attitudes of teachers regarding speaking skills. To begin with, in response to Question (23), an overwhelming majority, precisely 80.4% of teachers, expressed strong agreement regarding the paramount importance of speaking English as a critical career skill. This signifies the high regard in which they hold proficient speaking skills within their professional context. Likewise, Question (24) garnered strong support, with an impressive 87.8% of teachers strongly endorsing the view that communication in English is genuinely engaging and interesting, underscoring their enthusiasm for this linguistic aspect. Question (25) emerged as significantly noteworthy, as a substantial 82.9% of teachers strongly disagreed with the notion that speaking English is a tedious endeavor, indicating their positive disposition towards language engagement. Moving to Question (26), a mixed response was observed, with 31.7% in agreement and 34.1% in disagreement regarding the challenges associated with conversing like a native speaker. This diversity in perspectives implies that teachers exhibit varying degrees of confidence and self-perception in relation to native-like fluency. Lastly, it is notable that teachers perceive a limitation in English contact hours for practicing speaking skills. Specifically, 46.3% strongly agreed, and an additional 39% agreed with the corresponding question, affirming the insufficiency of opportunities for honing their speaking abilities.

Table 7. Oral Barriers related to English language, adapted and developed [ref. 7, 15]

	Statement	S.A.	A.	D.	S.D.
28.	English pronunciation is difficult for me when I speak.	14.6%	43.9%	29.2%	12.1%
29.	English grammar is difficult for me when I speak.	14.6%	39%	36.5%	9.7%
30.	Lack of adequate vocabulary makes speaking difficult for me	17%	56%	12.1%	14%
31.	The difference between English and Kurdish makes English speaking difficult for me.	19.5%	26.8%	39%	36.5%

Table 7 provides a comprehensive depiction of the oral barriers related to the English language experienced by teachers. Commencing with Question (28), it is evident that a notable 43.9% of teachers expressed agreement, signifying the recognition of the inherent challenges associated with English pronunciation. Proceeding to Question (29), a notable proportion, 39% of teachers, voiced agreement regarding the difficulty of English grammar, while 36.5% held a contrary view by expressing disagreement. Question (30) underscored that a significant 56% of teachers believed that a limited vocabulary posed a hindrance to speaking the English language fluently, indicating

the perceived importance of vocabulary development in language proficiency. Conversely, Question (31) yielded divergent opinions, with 39% of teachers in disagreement and an additional 36.5% strongly disagreeing with the notion that the disparity between their native language and the foreign language significantly hindered their ability to speak English. This variance in responses highlights the complexity and subjective nature of language barriers among the surveyed teachers.

5. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The data analysis in this study has unearthed several noteworthy insights. Participants in the research demonstrated a notable level of situational confidence, showcasing their competence in adapting to external circumstances. They perceived themselves as effective teachers, considering their role significant within their educational milieu, affirming positive situational confidence. In terms of communication confidence, a pivotal attribute for English language educators, results exhibited variation among participants. While some displayed high levels of confidence, others demonstrated lower levels. It is imperative for teachers to focus on enhancing their communication confidence, given its pivotal role in their careers. These findings align with the study [8], underscoring the importance of robust communication skills in successful language teaching. Teachers must effectively communicate with students and peers, embracing mistakes as part of the learning process. Analysis of language ability confidence revealed that a majority of participants exhibited a high degree of confidence, albeit with some dissenting views, indicating a presence of teachers with lower language ability confidence. To enhance language skills, teachers should prioritize the development of confidence alongside skill refinement.

The data analysis uncovered relatively low significance regarding former English teachers being the cause of aversion to the second language or heightened fear of ridicule due to errors. However, two questions, specifically 'My former English teachers did not encourage us to communicate in English in the classroom' and 'My ex-English teachers usually spoke in Kurdish in the classroom,' emerged with high significance, viewed as demotivating factors for learners aspiring to speak English fluently. These findings resonate with prior research [8, 7]. With regards to oral barriers related to social and peer pressure, the data demonstrated high significance in teachers' disagreement with questions pertaining to lacking confidence while speaking English in class, avoiding it due to fear of mistakes, and apprehension of being ridiculed by students. These findings diverge from the outcomes of a previous study [6], but it's important to note that the two studies involved distinct categories: students and teachers. The responses collectively indicate that teachers do not grapple with significant issues concerning social and peer pressure in their English language communication.

Interestingly, participants expressed a high level of agreement that they enjoy speaking English in the classroom and rarely experience nervousness. However, teachers' responses to the statement 'English contact hours are not sufficient to practice speaking skills' were notably high. This highlights that the primary reason for the limited proficiency in learning English speaking skills is the dearth of English language practice. Teachers' attitudes towards speaking skills exhibited high significance, as they placed substantial value on the importance of English language speaking skills and found the English language inherently interesting, aligning with the findings of [5]. Some teachers acknowledged the challenge of speaking like a native speaker, while others held divergent views, suggesting that native-like proficiency was not an insurmountable goal. The research underscored that effective English communication doesn't necessitate native-like fluency; the key is effective communication. Teachers identified the insufficiency of contact hours for practicing speaking skills as a notable concern. The study highlighted that the limited time allocated for covering the four language skills often neglects the crucial aspect of speaking practice. It was recommended to adopt communicative language learning approaches to make lessons engaging and comprehensible, benefiting both teachers and students.

The analysis pertaining to oral barriers related to the English language unveiled challenges with grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. These linguistic elements were recognized as potential impediments to achieving fluency in spoken English, aligning with the findings of [11]. However, participants generally disagreed with the

notion that linguistic differences between their native language and English posed significant obstacles to their speaking skills. Participants also provided valuable qualitative insights. Firstly, they noted changes in curriculum implementation, teaching methods, and technological advancements, which have influenced the English language. The global promotion of English from an early age was also recognized as a contributing factor. Secondly, participants observed a lack of quality assurance and supervision for improving teachers' language proficiency. Thirdly, many elementary school teachers held diplomas in their respective fields, which may not suffice for mastering a second language. Finally, limited opportunities for English language practice, both within classrooms and outside, were identified as significant constraints. Participation in training courses was limited, and supervisors did not consistently encourage or empower teachers to enhance their language skills, as they themselves often required similar support. Furthermore, there was a perceived lack of motivation from both teachers and the Ministry of Education, with an emphasis on completing the curriculum rather than fostering language understanding and practice. Collaboration and cooperation to address teachers' needs were deemed insufficient, and public schools were found to possess limited teaching aids. Additionally, there was a dearth of educational channels for fostering teacher consciousness development. The researcher underscores the necessity for the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to address these deficiencies, recognizing that education is pivotal for national development. Collaboration between teachers and the Ministry of Education is vital in tackling these interconnected issues.

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

Based on the comprehensive data analysis conducted, the researcher has drawn several significant conclusions. It has been determined that teachers exhibit a relatively high level of self-confidence, although there exist notable barriers hindering the enhancement of their speaking skills. It is crucial to acknowledge that these findings are specific to the sample of 41 teachers from Erbil city and may not be readily generalizable to the entirety of Kurdistan.

In order to bolster self-confidence among teachers, it is recommended that they engage in diverse teaching methods and embrace the principles of communicative language teaching. Furthermore, the researcher advises against mixing Kurdish and English within the classroom environment to foster more effective language learning. Quality assurance mechanisms should be established to differentiate between active and passive teachers, with a concerted effort made to enhance their skills for the purpose of delivering successful education. For future research endeavors, it is suggested that investigations delve into teachers' motivation in both learning and teaching contexts, as well as exploring students' motivation in actively participating in English language class activities. Additionally, the Ministry of Education is encouraged to consider offering English language training courses tailored to the needs of teachers and basic school educators, with a specific focus on improving their speaking skills.

Ultimately, this research study serves as a valuable resource for teachers to identify and address the challenges they face. Moreover, it offers guidance to the Ministry of Education in formulating comprehensive plans aimed at equipping teachers with effective language skills, thereby contributing to the improvement of English language education in the region.

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