A Preliminary Study On The Speaking Confidence Of Non-Formal Learnes In Indonesia Through Tiktok-Based Learning

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Abstract

In the 21st century, education requires learners to develop cognitive knowledge alongside critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills, with English serving as a key medium for global interaction and professional growth. Adult learners in non-formal settings, such as a non-formal education institution in Magelang, Indonesia, often face challenges in speaking due to anxiety, limited exposure, low self-efficacy, and competing work–family responsibilities. This descriptive qualitative study aimed to describe classroom conditions and learner participation, identify indicators of speaking confidence, and explore the potential of TikTok from a teacher's perspective. Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews, and then analysed thematically. Findings revealed that psychological barriers, teacher-centred instruction, minimal feedback, and contextual fatigue hinder participation and fluency, while TikTok promotes confidence through rehearsal, creativity, peer interaction, and reduced performance pressure. The study concludes that supportive feedback, learner-centred approaches, and careful digital integration can enhance motivation and speaking skills. The implications emphasise the need for emotionally safe learning environments, teacher development in providing constructive feedback, and attention to digital privacy. Future research should employ mixed-methods, longitudinal tracking, and multi-site frameworks to explore how digital platforms and teacher assistance can further enhance speaking confidence in diverse non-formal EFL contexts.

Keywords: digital learning, non-formal learners, qualitative study, speaking Confidence, TikTok

Abstrak

Di abad ke-21, pendidikan menuntut peserta didik untuk mengembangkan pengetahuan kognitif sekaligus keterampilan berpikir kritis, kreativitas, kolaborasi, dan komunikasi, dengan bahasa Inggris sebagai media utama untuk interaksi global dan pengembangan profesional. Pembelajar dewasa di lembaga pendidikan non-formal, seperti di Magelang, Indonesia, sering menghadapi tantangan dalam berbicara karena kecemasan, keterbatasan paparan, rendahnya efikasi diri, dan tanggung jawab pekerjaan–keluarga yang bersaing. Penelitian kualitatif deskriptif ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan kondisi kelas dan partisipasi peserta didik, mengidentifikasi indikator kepercayaan diri berbicara, serta mengeksplorasi potensi TikTok dari perspektif guru. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas dan wawancara semi-terstruktur, kemudian dianalisis secara tematik. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa hambatan psikologis, pengajaran berpusat pada guru, minimnya umpan balik, dan kelelahan kontekstual menghambat partisipasi dan kefasihan, sedangkan TikTok meningkatkan kepercayaan diri melalui latihan, kreativitas, interaksi teman sebaya, dan pengurangan tekanan performa. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa umpan balik yang mendukung, pendekatan berpusat pada peserta didik, dan integrasi digital yang hati-hati dapat meningkatkan motivasi dan keterampilan berbicara. Implikasi menekankan pentingnya lingkungan belajar yang aman secara emosional, pengembangan guru dalam memberikan umpan balik konstruktif, dan perhatian terhadap privasi digital. Penelitian selanjutnya disarankan menggunakan metode campuran, pemantauan longitudinal, dan kerangka multi-lokasi untuk meneliti pengaruh platform digital dan dukungan guru terhadap kepercayaan diri berbicara dalam konteks EFL non-formal yang beragam
Kata Kunci: kepercayaan diri berbicara, pembelajaran digital, pembelajar nonformal, studi kualitatif, TikTok

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INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly evolving world, 21st-century pressures have intensified competition across all domains of life, primarily driven by the rising qualifications required in the modern labour market. Consequently, this condition underscores the urgent need for a highly skilled and professional workforce. In response, education in the 21st century adapts to swift technological, social, and economic changes (Hamedani et al., 2024). Learners must build cognitive knowledge and key 4Cs skills: critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication (Asri et al., 2023; Pahrijal et al., 2023; Ye & Xu, 2023). Communication is vital since English is the global language for knowledge and career growth (Safira & Azzahra, 2022; Sari, 2024). Mastering English opens access to global knowledge, cross-cultural communication, and broader academic and career opportunities. Although mastery of English is valued as a 21st-century skill, many learners struggle with speaking, particularly when exposure is limited.

This challenge becomes more apparent in non-formal education contexts, where learners often balance learning with work and family responsibilities, reducing their time and confidence to practise English. Rahmadani and Etfita (2022) found that limited English proficiency beyond school leads to communication problems, as learners rarely engage in honest conversations. These circumstances are even more pronounced in non-formal education, where learners juggle work and family responsibilities (Andrade et al., 2024). These factors affect psychological well-being and pose barriers to speaking. Anxiety, low self-efficacy, and fear of mistakes hinder the willingness to participate (Kuswantoro Novita, 2024; Okyar, 2023). Building speaking confidence is a persistent challenge in English learning. These findings support the argument that developing speaking confidence remains a persistent and critical issue in English learning, particularly in non-formal educational settings, where learners require supportive, context-sensitive pedagogical interventions to develop the communication skills required to meet today's academic and professional expectations. These findings support the argument that developing speaking confidence remains a persistent and critical issue in English learning, particularly in non-formal educational settings, where learners require supportive, context-sensitive pedagogical interventions to develop the communication skills needed to meet today's academic and professional expectations.

Non-formal education in Magelang, Indonesia, poses additional challenges for English learners compared to traditional schools. Non-formal education offers programs to learners with varying socio-economic backgrounds, aiming for an accessible, adaptable classroom. Non-formal education is flexible, serves diverse learners, and welcomes those who may not thrive in standard schools (Elice et al., 2023; Simándi, 2023). This diversity, however, also entails variations in learners' language exposure, learning readiness, and continuity of academic experience. From the researcher's perspective, such conditions make it more difficult to establish uniform classroom engagement and sustained participation in English learning activities. Furthermore, many non-formal learners must balance studies with work and family responsibilities, which may negatively affect their motivation, consistency, and concentration (Andrade et al., 2024; Lang, 2025). In light of these considerations, it can be concluded that while the flexibility of non-formal education

enhances access to learning, it also leads to uneven learning readiness, which, in turn, influences learners' engagement and speaking confidence.

These issues affect both engagement and Confidence in English, as observed during classroom visits at non-formal education. The flexible and heterogeneous nature of non-formal education, in which learners come from diverse academic backgrounds and possess varying levels of learning readiness, may intensify feelings of uncertainty and performance pressure when they are required to communicate in a foreign language. In such contexts, learners often feel insecure about their linguistic competence, which can heighten anxiety and reduce their willingness to speak. This condition was evident during classroom observations, where many learners hesitated to use English, frequently relied on their first language, and displayed signs of nervousness. Supporting this observation, Rahmawati and Irawan (2025) reported that pressure to demonstrate ability decreases learners' engagement, while fear of negative evaluation further increases anxiety and limits participation. Similarly, King and Harumi (2020) found that evaluative classroom situations may trigger foreign language anxiety, leading learners to withdraw from speaking activities. Observable behaviours like stuttering, avoiding eye contact, or speaking softly indicate low Confidence (Botes et al., 2020; Yuan, 2025). This cycle of anxiety and insecurity causes learners to say less. Taken together, these findings suggest that the characteristics of non-formal learning environments, combined with learners' psychological vulnerability, can contribute to a cycle of anxiety and insecurity that limits oral participation.

Recent developments in English education under the Kurikulum Merdeka have emphasized student-centered, communicative approaches such as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). According to Hadiyanto (2024), TBLT aims to enhance learners' communicative competence and speaking fluency. Previous studies have demonstrated that TBLT effectively improves learners' oral proficiency and interactional skills (Aqila, 2025; Chunliu & Guangsheng, 2025; Detken et al., 2024; Hisbullah, 2022; Sabaruddin & Amir, 2022; Sumarsono et al., 2020), and theoretically, it should also foster learners' speaking confidence. However, a noticeable gap persists between these aims and the reality of non-formal education in Magelang city. Although teaching practices target communicative competence, they often fail to reduce learners' anxiety, which in turn limits participation and results in low speaking confidence, particularly in classrooms with minimal teacher and peer support. The inability of these methods to address affective barriers leaves learners embarrassed and hesitant to speak. Given that confidence plays a crucial role in successful language learning (Cao et al., 2024), this mismatch highlights the need for more supportive strategies to build learners' confidence and participation. Addressing these challenges requires learning tools that align with learners' interests and technological habits. Recent studies indicate that digital platforms such as TikTok can enhance speaking performance and learner engagement (Efivania et al., 2025; Hidayat & Lolita, 2025; Rahmawati & Irawan, 2025); however, their impact on speaking confidence in non-formal settings remains underexplored. Therefore, this descriptive study explores English learning at Non-formal education in Magelang city by (1) describing classroom conditions and learner participation, (2) identifying indicators of speaking confidence, and (3) exploring the potential of TikTok from the teacher's perspective.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to provide an accurate and detailed account of naturally occurring phenomena within a non-formal educational context (Aflah & Murhayati, 2025; Daruhadi, 2024). This approach was selected to describe learners' observable behaviours, participation, patterns, and responses during English-learning activities without imposing predetermined theoretical interpretations. A descriptive qualitative approach is systematic and context-oriented (Villamin et al., 2025). Descriptive qualitative research ensures a logical flow from data collection to analysis and interpretation, while enhancing dependability through close attention to authentic interactions and lived experiences. Such an approach is particularly appropriate for examining how digital media shapes speaking confidence in dynamic, real-world learning environments, where meaning emerges from participants' actual practices rather than from controlled experimental conditions.

To operationalise this methodological framework, the investigation was conducted at one of the non-formal educational institutions in Magelang, Indonesia, that provides English language learning programmes, which was purposefully chosen for its distinct qualities that aligned with the study's objectives. Unlike formal schools, which have fixed curricula and standardised tests, non-formal education provides a flexible atmosphere that emphasises the practical application of real-world skills. The participants consisted of one English teacher and six (N=6) learners, three females and three males, who actively participated in English-learning sessions at a non-formal education centre in Magelang, Indonesia. The location for this research was chosen purposively for its flexibility, digital integration, and suitability for exploring authentic digital-based speaking practices. Purposive sampling was applied to select participants based on their involvement, motivation, and initial level of speaking Confidence (Wardah et al., 2023). A gender-balanced composition was intentionally maintained to ensure representativeness and to capture possible gender-related differences in communication styles, anxiety levels, or digital engagement. This sampling strategy prioritised depth and relevance over randomness, enabling the collection of rich, meaningful qualitative data.

This research included six Level B learners, aged 18 to 23, with an even gender distribution of three females and three males. This makeup mirrors the varied profiles standard in non-formal education settings. The participants were purposively sampled according to the following criteria: current enrollment in Level B, age 17 or older, English proficiency at a basic-to-intermediate level, prior involvement in TikTok-driven English exercises, readiness to discuss their experiences, and equal gender representation. Level B, equivalent to eighth grade in junior high school, supports learners from diverse age groups and educational backgrounds, fostering an adaptable and welcoming learning space that aligns well with investigations into genuine, technology-enhanced speaking activities. Classroom observations and consultations with the English instructor informed the selection, ensuring these individuals could offer detailed, pertinent, and insightful perspectives on building English-speaking confidence through TikTok.

Data were collected from May to October 2025 using multiple qualitative methods, including classroom observations conducted from May 22 to September 19, 2025, semi-structured interviews with six Level B learners held from September 23-30, 2025, and a semi-structured interview with the English teacher on October 7, 2025 (Alzahrani & Almalki, 2025) Methodological triangulation was employed to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings by capturing the phenomenon from multiple perspectives. Classroom observations provided real-time evidence of learners' participation, attention patterns, and levels of speaking confidence in both face-to-face and Zoom sessions. Learner interviews elicited in-depth insights into learners' confidence, anxiety, and experiences using TikTok as a communication tool.

The teacher interview served as supporting data to provide instructional context regarding classroom management and learner engagement, as well as to explain the pedagogical rationale for incorporating TikTok. The researchers acted as the primary instruments of data collection, ensuring credibility through triangulation and adherence to ethical principles, including informed consent and the protection of participants' identities. Data were analysed using Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic analysis, a systematic and iterative process comprising six phases: data familiarisation, initial code generation, theme searching, theme reviewing, theme defining and naming, and report writing. This analytical approach was selected for its ability to organise large qualitative datasets into coherent themes while preserving the depth and richness of participants' lived experiences. After the familiarization phase, the researchers separately examined the observation notes and interview transcripts to produce preliminary codes. To resolve conflicts and ensure consistency, these preliminary codes were inductively derived from the data and subsequently compared and debated collaboratively. Similar codes were sorted into more general categories through iterative discussions, and these were then further honed into themes that captured trends in learners' speaking confidence and TikTok-based learning experiences. This cooperative, iterative coding procedure enhanced the reliability and validity of the theme analyses.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and discussion derived from the data collected in this study. The findings are organised according to the three research questions that guided the investigation.

RESULT

This study presents the preliminary findings on speaking confidence among non-formal learners at Non-formal Education Magelang, Indonesia. The results were derived from classroom observations and learner interviews conducted over five months. A total of seven observations were conducted, during which classroom activities, learner behaviours, and instructional dynamics were examined. The data were organised thematically to identify recurring patterns that reflected learners' learning conditions, emotional challenges, socio-economic backgrounds, and speaking behaviours. Similar data were grouped into categories to form a descriptive overview of how contextual, pedagogical, and psychological factors shaped learners' speaking confidence.

Classroom Conditions and Learner Participation

The researchers observed classroom conditions and learner participation during English classes in this study. These observations were thoroughly analysed using data reduction techniques, which aided the identification and categorisation of recurrent patterns into important themes (Milles et al., 2014). Each observation session aimed to document classroom activity, learner behaviour, and teacher-learner relationships. Table 1 summarises these themes, emphasising how classroom dynamics and learner participation influenced the overall results.

Table 1. Summary of Observation Themes

Observation	Key Focus	Theme Identified	Short Description
Obs 1	Classroom instruction	Traditional Pedagogy	Teacher-centred, low interaction, unclear goals
Obs 2	Speaking assessment	Speaking anxiety	Learners avoid speaking; they prefer digital tasks
Obs 3	TBLT + Digital Media	Motivation & engagement	Learners are more confident with digital media
Obs 4	Contextual Factors	Fatigue & Socio-economic pressure	Work schedules affect focus/motivation
Obs 5	Anxiety indicators	Emotional barriers	Fear of judgment is a physical anxiety symptom
Obs 6	Teacher influence	Social–emotional	A supportive attitude increases participation
Obs 7	TikTok project	Self-efficacy & creativity	Learners rehearse, collaborate, and gain confidence

Based on the observation, the table shows the classroom situation. The first observation revealed that the class relied predominantly on traditional, teacher-centred approaches. Instruction focused mainly on board writing, note-taking, and textbook exercises, with minimal interaction among learners. Although speaking tasks were occasionally assigned, lesson objectives were not clearly communicated, leaving learners uncertain about the purpose of the activities. Many learners avoided participation, appeared disengaged, and responded in low volume or switched to their first language when called upon. The second observation showed a shift in dynamics during a speaking assessment. Learners were asked to present their written work orally without notes, which triggered noticeable discomfort and resistance. Some learners even left the classroom due to embarrassment. To reduce anxiety, the teacher introduced an English vlog video as an alternative model. This activity captured learners' attention and increased participation, although many still relied on Indonesian. When given a choice between performing live or creating a short TikTok video, most learners preferred the latter because it allowed preparation and reduced the fear of peer judgment.

In the third observation, the teacher implemented a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach through digital video assignments. Learners were instructed to prepare scripts (e.g., narratives, procedures, news reports, or self-introductions) in class and then produce short English videos at home. TikTok's incorporation as a learning platform significantly increased learner interest, as many were already familiar with the app and motivated by its creative features. During this activity, learners worked in groups to help each other create their scripts. Several learners told the teacher that they recorded multiple takes before submitting their videos, and some utilised TikTok's tools to add effects or music, which they greatly enjoyed. The teacher observed greater engagement with this assignment than in previous speaking projects.

The fourth observation, supported by interviews, highlighted the influence of contextual factors such as fatigue and socio-economic pressure. Many learners attended class after working earlier in the day, resulting in varied levels of focus and engagement. While some participated actively, others were fatigued or disengaged. Although the teacher attempted to use simple speaking tasks such as storytelling, learner motivation fluctuated due to limited novelty and emotional connection. Interview data further indicated that financial stress and exhaustion reduced learners' intrinsic motivation.

The fifth observation concerned learners speaking fear. Classroom observations revealed common emotional barriers, including trembling, stuttering, avoidance, and refusal to communicate when they perceived the environment as tense. Most learners showed a great hesitation to speak in front of their friends, but felt more at ease making videos privately. Several learners hesitated or delayed their responses for extended periods before replying to class questions. When requested to participate in speaking activities, some kids spoke quietly, avoided eye contact, or remained mute.

The sixth observation addressed the role of teacher influence. Teacher-centred instruction limited opportunities for peer collaboration, creativity, and interaction. Learners reported that strict or demanding teaching styles reduced their willingness to communicate, whereas supportive teacher attitudes increased confidence. Informal digital interactions, such as TikTok live sessions, were preferred because they felt more relaxed and authentic. Finally, the seventh observation involved a structured TikTok-based task within the TBLT framework. Learners created English videos (e.g., recounts, procedural demonstrations) and uploaded them to TikTok. The activity resulted in notable improvements in enthusiasm, creativity, and collaboration. Learners rehearsed multiple times, exchanged feedback, and refined their videos before uploading, demonstrating higher self-efficacy compared to traditional presentations.

Indicators of Speaking Confidence

The indicators of speaking confidence in this study were assessed by the researchers through direct observations during classroom activities, focusing on observable behaviours such as learners' willingness to talk spontaneously, maintenance of eye contact, clarity and audibility of speech, and responsiveness to constructive feedback. These indicators were then triangulated with interview data to gain deeper insights into the underlying emotional and contextual factors influencing learners' confidence, particularly their experiences of anxiety when speaking English. To effectively visualise and organise these significant findings, the interview data were presented using display techniques. After being reduced and categorised by theme, the learners' responses were organised to emphasise patterns and correlations (Mezmir, 2020), thereby developing insights into their speaking confidence. This structured display of information facilitates a clearer understanding of the relationships between emotional elements, teacher feedback, digital media preferences, and contextual problems. Table 2 summarises the interview themes, showing how these interrelated factors influenced learners' willingness and self-assurance in English-speaking activities. All interview participants are represented using pseudonym codes S1–S6, which stand for learners 1- 6, to ensure confidentiality, and direct quotations are presented using these codes.

Table 2. Learner Interview Themes

Theme	Summary of Learners' Responses	Representative Quotes
Speaking Confidence	Nervous, embarrassed, avoid eye contact, low volume.	*"Saya gak suka kalau sedang maju ke depan kelas untuk bicara bahasa Inggris tapi ditertawakan teman."* (S1) "I don't like speaking English in front of class when friends laugh at me."
Fear of Evaluation	Prefer video tasks; afraid of making mistakes in front of peers.	*"Lebih nyaman rekam video, kalau salah bisa ulang tanpa malu."* (S3) "More comfortable recording videos; can retry mistakes without embarrassment."
Impact of Teacher Feedback	A harsh tone decreases motivation; a supportive tone increases confidence.	*"Saya gaksuka jika sedang berpendapat di depan kelas pake inggris, kalo salah gak dibenarkan gurunya dengan bahasa yang halus, mestinya harus tetap diapresiasi"* (S2) "I don't like it when I'm explaining in front of the class using English. If I'm wrong, the teacher can't correct me politely. I should still appreciate it." *"Kalo sama guru yang baik, saya mau maju ke depan, soalnya dia kalo ngasih komentar yang halus bikin saya ngerasa tetap dihargai walaupun salah."* (S6) "If it's with a good teacher, I'm willing to come to the front because their gentle comments make me feel valued even when I'm wrong."
Digital Media Preference	TikTok feels safe, allows rehearsal, and increases comfort.	*"Yang paling ngebantu itu fitur edit sama bisa ngulang video. Kalo salah ngomong bisa diulang, nggak kayak di kelas yang cuma sekali. Filter juga bikin saya agak lebih pede karena nggak terlalu keliatan groginya."* (S4) "The most helpful features are editing and video re-recording. If I make a speaking mistake, I can repeat it, unlike in class, where I can only repeat it once. Filters also make me a bit more confident because my grogginess isn't too visible."
Work and Fatigue	Working before class reduces focus and energy.	*"Habis kerja capek, susah konsentrasi ngomong Inggris."* (S5) "After work, I'm tired, and it's hard to focus on speaking English." *"Banyak yang saya pikirin jadi rasanya susah mikir, apalagi denger bahasa yang beda kaya biasanya jadi tambah pusing"* (S2) "I have so many things on my mind that it's hard to think, especially hearing a different language than usual makes me even more confused."

The interview data demonstrated several interconnected factors contributing to learners' low speaking confidence. All six participants consistently reported feelings of nervousness and embarrassment during front-of-class English activities, often manifesting as avoiding eye contact, reduced vocal volume, or complete withdrawal from tasks due to anticipated negative peer judgment. S1 directly attributed this discomfort to classmates' reactions, a concern echoed by S3, who expressed a marked preference for video assignments that enable private error correction over public performance.

Such apprehensions naturally directed learners toward recorded tasks, which offered opportunities for discreet practice away from immediate scrutiny. Complementing these dynamics, teacher feedback proved pivotal: S2 underscored the discouraging effects of abrasive corrections, while S6 highlighted contrasting gains in participation from gentle, supportive responses. Together, these accounts illustrate the substantial role of feedback delivery in shaping classroom involvement. Limited practice opportunities further contributed to learners' discomfort with oral English production, as S6 noted that infrequent exposure led to disengagement and reluctance to attempt speaking tasks. This lack of habituation, combined with external fatigue from commuting to evening classes after work, creates additional barriers to active participation. S6's observations were reinforced by S2, who described the mental strain of juggling occupational responsibilities alongside family obligations and household needs, which diminished cognitive resources for language processing.

Beyond interpersonal factors, insufficient practice opportunities exacerbated oral production challenges, with S6 noting how sporadic exposure fostered disengagement from speaking attempts. This pattern is intertwined with post-work fatigue and commuting demands, further hindering engagement, particularly as S2 elaborated on the cognitive burden of balancing job demands, family duties, and domestic responsibilities alongside second-language processing. This highlights how feedback tone substantially shaped learners' emotional readiness to speak, with S2 and S6 contrasting harsh corrections' demotivating effects with supportive responses that enhanced participation and comfort. TikTok emerged as particularly valuable, as S4 noted its editing and rehearsal features created a safer practice environment with greater performance control. Nevertheless, contextual barriers persisted, since many learners arrived for evening classes fatigued from work, experiencing reduced focus and heightened anxiety during live activities (S2, S5).

Exploring The Potential of TikTok from a Teacher's Perspective

The results in Table 3 are based on the teacher's interview responses, which provide an in-depth picture of learners' actions, levels of engagement, and rising Confidence after TikTok was introduced as a classroom activity. The teacher's perspective offers valuable insights into how technology-supported tasks, particularly TikTok-based activities, influenced learners' involvement and speaking confidence throughout the learning process.

Table 3: Teachers' Perspectives on the Potential of TikTok

Theme	Teacher's Responses
Classroom attention challenges	Learners usually lack focus; many are preoccupied with their own hobbies and, on occasion, livestream on social media; and they routinely make excuses when prompted to speak up.
Efforts to maintain a supportive environment	The teacher continually seeks to control the classroom atmosphere so that no one mocks or discourages Learners who speak in front of the class; the teacher tries numerous innovations to pique Learners' interest, but these efforts yield no substantial benefits.
Technology as an engagement trigger	The teacher begins incorporating technology by displaying vlog assignments from other schools; Learners appear more attentive and show modest curiosity as they watch the videos.
TikTok as a preferred performance platform	The teacher provides two options: presenting to the class or creating a vlog with a self-written screenplay to submit to TikTok. Learners are more engaged in uploading TikTok videos and believe they can express themselves more effectively when creating their own.
Growth of Confidence through Social Feedback	The teacher notes that Learners gradually alter, beginning with the third meeting; likes and comments from others on their TikTok uploads influence their motivation and inspire them to gain confidence.

According to Table 3, the teacher reported that maintaining learners' attention during English classes was a constant issue. Many learners were easily distracted, engaged in personal activities, and occasionally livestreamed from their social media accounts throughout class. When asked to speak in front of the class, individuals often avoided participation, citing various reasons. To address these challenges, the instructor sought to create a supportive environment by avoiding adverse peer reactions such as taunting or ridicule. Several instructional innovations were implemented to improve engagement, but these early efforts

did not result in significant increases in learners' willingness to participate. The incorporation of technology was a watershed moment in catching learners' interest. By viewing vlog-style assignments from learners at other schools, the teacher noticed that learners became more attentive and curious.

DISCUSSION

Speaking confidence among non-formal learners at non-formal education in Magelang, Indonesia, remains relatively low, particularly in formal learning contexts. To begin with, the underlying causes extend beyond teaching strategies and encompass psychological, social, and contextual dimensions embedded in learners' learning profiles. One of the most consistent findings across observations was the high level of speaking anxiety among learners. Observable behaviours such as trembling, avoiding eye contact, stuttering, low-volume talking, and silence show a widespread fear of unfavourable evaluation, as stated in the second and fifth observations, as well as Table 2 (e.g., themes of "speaking confidence" and "fear of evaluation"). These patterns strongly align with Foreign Language Anxiety Theory by Horwitz et al. (1986) and Krashen (1985), which emphasises fear of being judged as incompetent as a central barrier to oral performance.

Moreover, this anxiety was intensified by low self-efficacy and limited experience in public speaking. According to Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory, learners' beliefs in their ability to perform a task significantly influence their willingness to engage in the task. In this study, learners' lack of confidence led to the avoidance of formal presentations, to the point of leaving class due to embarrassment, as analysed from the second observation. Recent empirical studies further support these theoretical assumptions, demonstrating that foreign language speaking anxiety is closely associated with fear of negative evaluation and low self-efficacy, both of which significantly reduce learners' willingness to communicate and participate in oral tasks (Okyar, 2023; Xu & Xu, 2025). These findings confirm that high anxiety and weak self-efficacy are significant psychological barriers to speaking performance in EFL contexts, thereby reinforcing the continued relevance of Horwitz's, Krashen's, and Bandura's theoretical frameworks in explaining learners' speaking confidence.

Beyond psychological factors, contextual challenges also exacerbated anxiety. Many learners worked before attending classes, causing fatigue and reduced cognitive energy. Consequently, these socio-economic factors contributed to emotional exhaustion, reduced concentration, and greater reluctance to engage in cognitively demanding activities, such as speaking in front of peers. When fatigued, learners became more self-conscious and more sensitive to perceived judgment, amplifying their anxiety. Interestingly, when learners were allowed to express themselves outside formal classroom contexts, particularly through TikTok videos, they displayed greater expressive freedom and confidence. The digital environment enabled gradual rehearsal, self-monitoring, and editing, thereby creating a psychologically safer space for performance. These conditions appeared to strengthen learners' self-efficacy and reduce their fear of public judgment, as reflected in the third, seventh, and eighth observations and in Table 3. Taken together, the interaction of contextual and psychological components suggests that speaking confidence is highly dependent on context, emotional safety, and manner of expression. Recent empirical evidence (Solhi, 024) highlighted that language anxiety is the strongest negative predictor of willingness to communicate in both in-person and digital learning contexts, underscoring how affective orientations interact with learning environments to shape communicative behaviour. Taken together, the interaction between contextual conditions and psychological factors suggests that speaking confidence is highly dependent on emotional safety, task design, and the mode of expression, thereby confirming that reduced anxiety and strengthened self-efficacy are central to fostering oral participation in EFL learning.

Furthermore, pedagogical factors also shaped learners' confidence. The first and third observations suggested that English education in Non-formal Education remained predominantly teacher-centred, with few opportunities for meaningful communication. Presentation tasks were offered without defined learning objectives or formative feedback, leading learners to question the relevance of the activities and to disengage from the learning process. Ramasari and Ardayati (2025) emphasised that EFL learners require repeated exposure to authentic communication to build fluency and confidence, conditions that were not consistently

present in the observed classroom. Consequently, the rigid classroom structure and lack of affective support further contributed to discomfort and apprehension. In line with Krashe's (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis, high anxiety and low motivation restrict the intake of linguistic input necessary for language acquisition. This impact was evident when learners disengaged or refused to speak due to emotional discomfort, as seen in the first observation This pattern is consistent with current research showing that foreign language anxiety negatively affects willingness to communicate in EFL classrooms and that insufficient supportive teaching practices can exacerbate reluctance to engage in spoken interaction (Khoudri, 2024; Lin et al., 2025; Wang & Sun, 2024).

Additionally, interpersonal dynamics between teachers and learners also played a crucial role, as seen in the sixth observation and in Table 2, theme "impact of teacher feedback". Several learners reported a loss of motivation when they disliked or feared the teacher, whereas supportive and empathetic teaching styles encouraged participation and reduced anxiety. Harmer (2007) highlights that constructive and positive feedback can effectively promote intrinsic motivation and the willingness to communicate, both of which are essential for building speaking confidence among non-formal learners; moreover, traditional instruction limited opportunities for collaborative or interactive learning. Recent research has found that context-appropriate corrective feedback not only facilitates improvements in accuracy and fluency but also helps learners build confidence and engage more actively in speaking tasks. Similarly, Dilasani et al. (2025) reported that teachers' emotional intelligence positively influences learners' speaking confidence and motivation, whereas negative teacher emotional expressions can increase anxiety and reduce engagement.

In contrast, research on (TBLT) demonstrates its effectiveness in promoting communicative competence and fluency (Aqila, 2025; Chunliu & Guangsheng, 2025; Hisbullah, 2022; Sabbarudin, 2022). Before TikTok integration, learners often avoided eye contact and spoke hesitantly, behaviours associated with anxiety (Botes et al., 2020; Yuan, 2025). After incorporating digital tasks, learners demonstrated more precise articulation, increased participation, and more confident language use, indicating that a more supportive environment positively impacts speaking performance. Findings from the third, fourth, and fifth observations consistently demonstrate that TikTok can be an effective tool for developing speaking skills and confidence. The platform enables learners to practise repeatedly, re-record mistakes, and present their best performance without the immediate pressure of classroom evaluation. These features create a psychologically safe learning space, which Schunk and Zimmerman (2012) identify as crucial for self-regulated learning and for building confidence. TikTok also strongly encourages creativity, collaboration, and authentic self-expression, elements closely aligned with TBLT principles (Ellis, 2024). By integrating digital platforms into TBLT, learners gained opportunities for meaningful, real-world communication, which naturally increased their motivation and willingness to participate.

Peer feedback through video comments and informal collaboration also served as affective scaffolding, reinforcing Vygotsky's (1978) notion that supportive social interaction enhances both cognitive and emotional development, which is mediated through social interaction. Recent studies have confirmed that collaborative digital speaking environments can reduce fear of negative evaluation, lower speaking anxiety, and increase learners' willingness to communicate and confidence through supportive peer interaction and video-based feedback (Liu et al., 2023). Through TikTok, learners could practise speaking freely without fear, while improving fluency, pronunciation, and expressive clarity. From a motivational perspective, these findings are also supported by Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which asserts that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are essential for sustained motivation. Contemporary research further indicates that digital platforms that allow learners to control their performance and receive positive peer responses fulfil these needs and significantly enhance speaking confidence and engagement (Alamer et al., 2025; Efivania et al., 2025). However, most previous studies primarily focus on general language improvement and motivation, paying limited attention to learners' lived emotional experiences, particularly anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and the developmental process of speaking confidence. In contrast, the present study reveals how TikTok-mediated interaction in a non-formal educational context provides an emotionally safe space that

facilitates not only linguistic practice but also affective scaffolding and the gradual construction of speaking confidence.

According to the teacher (Table 3), TikTok increased engagement by resolving attention difficulties and providing a preferred performance platform. The teacher noticed that after viewing vlog assignments, learners became more attentive and chose TikTok for self-expression, leading to steady growth in confidence through social feedback such as likes and comments. This alignment between teacher and learner data (Table 2) from the third and seventh observations supports TikTok's role in lowering fear and increasing participation. These findings build on previous research on speaking anxiety in EFL environments, particularly among non-native speakers. For example, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1986) indicates that fear of unfavourable evaluation is a primary barrier, reflected in learners' avoidance of eye contact and a preference for private video assignments. Similarly, research on digital media in education (Madzlan et al., 2020) shows that tools such as video recording alleviate anxiety by providing control over performance, which is consistent with the observed increase in involvement on TikTok. However, unlike formal classroom studies that frequently focus on younger learners, this research emphasises the unique challenges of adult non-formal learners, such as work-related fatigue, echoing findings from the adult education literature (Livingston & Cummings-Clay, 2023) on andragogy, where relevance and autonomy are key to motivation.

Classroom conditions in non-formal education were initially dominated by teacher-centred instruction, with limited opportunities for interaction and affective support. In such contexts, learners tended to remain passive and anxious, which reduced their willingness to participate orally. However, integrating TikTok created a more participatory learning environment by facilitating peer feedback, collaborative engagement, and psychologically safe spaces for expression. In line with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978), in which supportive scaffolding promotes learner agency. and active participation, indicating that classroom climate and instructional design strongly influenced learners' engagement and emotional readiness to speak.

Speaking confidence in this study was reflected not only in linguistic performance (e.g., fluency, pronunciation, and clarity) but also in affective and behavioural indicators, such as reduced anxiety, increased willingness to speak, and greater expressive freedom. Confidence develops through positive emotional experiences, supportive peer responses, and opportunities for safe rehearsal, which align with Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory, which emphasizes mastery experiences and social persuasion as key sources of confidence. This interpretation is reinforced by empirical evidence showing that speaking anxiety is negatively associated with self-efficacy and positively associated with fear of negative evaluation in EFL contexts (Okyar, 2023) and that higher speaking self-efficacy predicts greater communicative confidence and motivation (Wang & Sun, 2024).

From the teacher's perspective, TikTok served not merely as a social media platform but also as an innovative instructional tool that integrated Task-Based Language Teaching with digital multimodality. By enabling repeated practice, peer interaction, and low-pressure performance, TikTok strengthened both cognitive scaffolding and affective support, even in resource-limited non-formal contexts. Compared with findings from formal Indonesian EFL settings (Aqila, 2025), this study highlights TikTok's distinctive potential for adult non-formal learners, demonstrating how technology-supported, emotionally supportive, and task-based environments can jointly foster speaking confidence and participation.

Collectively, these findings highlight the potential to incorporate familiar internet platforms into language instruction to boost participation and reduce fear. Therefore, professional development for teachers should emphasise the need to offer constructive feedback and to develop psychologically comfortable learning environments. Unlike previous research that focused on formal settings, this study demonstrates TikTok's unique potential for Indonesian non-formal education, thereby advancing understanding of digital multimodality in language acquisition. Nevertheless, although the majority of learners loved digital assignments, a minority expressed concerns about internet exposure, highlighting the significance of considering learner privacy in future treatments.

Limitations

While this study offers valuable insights, one limitation is the small sample size (seven observations and six Learner interviews), which may not reflect all non-formal learners in Indonesia. Relying on self-reported data from interviews could create bias, as individuals may underreport anxiety to look competent. Furthermore, the five-month timeframe captures preliminary findings, which may miss the long-term effects of TikTok integration. The concentration on a single institution limits its applicability to other non-formal environments.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research could use bigger, multi-site samples to validate these findings across a variety of non-formal settings. Quantitative measurements, such as pre- and post-intervention surveys with anxiety scales (e.g., FLCAS), could supplement qualitative data in a mixed-methods study. Longitudinal research measuring increases in confidence over semesters would analyse the long-term effects of digital tools. Exploring gender or age disparities in digital preferences, or comparing TikTok to other sites (such as Instagram or YouTube), could help to refine pedagogical recommendations. Finally, examining teacher-training interventions that promote supportive feedback would offer concrete ways to increase speaking confidence in non-formal EFL instruction.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that a combination of psychological, pedagogical, and contextual factors strongly influences learners' speaking confidence in non-formal education in Magelang, Indonesia. Classroom observations and interviews consistently showed that traditional, teacher-centred instruction and unclear learning objectives limited learners' opportunities to practise speaking in a supportive environment. Many learners frequently experienced anxiety, embarrassment, and fear of evaluation during live speaking tasks, which led to avoidance behaviours such as low-volume speech, lack of eye contact, and refusal to participate. The interview results emphasise additional indicators of speaking confidence, including facial expressions, posture, gestures, eye contact, speech clarity, and responsiveness to feedback. Supportive, constructive instructor feedback improved learners' comfort and motivation, whereas harsh or intimidating tones decreased confidence and involvement. Digital media, particularly TikTok, emerged as a highly effective alternative medium for reducing speaking anxiety and increasing learner engagement. Learners preferred video-based tasks because they allowed rehearsal, multiple attempts, and greater control over their performance. The integration of TikTok within a Task-Based Language Teaching framework significantly increased motivation, creativity, and willingness to communicate. Contextual factors, such as work-related exhaustion, irregular learning schedules, and socio-economic demands, also influenced learners' desire to participate in speaking practices. These difficulties are more pronounced among adult learners in non-formal education, who frequently balance learning with work and other responsibilities. Teacher feedback also significantly impacted learners' confidence. Supportive and encouraging remarks increased learners' comfort and participation, but harsh or scary tones reduced motivation.

Furthermore, contextual factors, such as work-related exhaustion and socio-economic demands, reduced learners' energy, focus, and emotional readiness to participate in live speaking events. Overall, this study found that learner-centred approaches, constructive criticism, and judicious use of digital resources can help learners improve their speaking confidence. TikTok-based activities provide a low-pressure environment that encourages practice, boosts motivation, and aligns with learners' digital habits and real-life circumstances. These findings highlight the need to redesign speaking training to accommodate learners' emotional requirements, contextual challenges, and technological preferences.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Observation Sheet

No	Observation Focus	Indicator	(✓/X)	Notes
1	Student-centered learning	Learners actively participate, ask questions, interact, and discuss tasks		
2	Pedagogical shift	Teacher dominance reduced; learning becomes discussion- and activity-based		
3	Student engagement	Learners show enthusiasm, focus, and motivation when preparing TikTok scripts.		
4	TikTok-based learning activity	Learners record speaking videos, follow instructions, and upload tasks		
5	Digital literacy	Learners use smartphones confidently to support speaking practice		
6	Collaboration	Learners support peers in recording, editing, or planning TikTok content		
7	Speaking production	Learners actively speak English during recording or practice		
8	Fluency	Learners speak with reduced hesitation during video tasks		
9	Pronunciation	Learners attempt to achieve clear and understandable pronunciation		
10	Anxiety reduction	Learners appear less nervous while recording		
11	Speaking confidence	Learners show greater confidence speaking on camera		

12	Willingness to communicate	Learners voluntarily join recording or re-recording videos		
13	Self-efficacy	Learners demonstrate belief in their ability to complete speaking tasks		
14	Metacognitive strategy	Learners revise, re-record, and correct mistakes independently		
15	Multimodal expression	Learners use subtitles, filters, or audio to support meaning		
16	Use of technology	Learners operate the camera, editing tools, and TikTok features well		
17	Teacher role	The teacher gives guidance, encouragement, and corrective feedback		
18	Peer support	Learners receive positive feedback or help from peers		
19	Negative peer reaction	Observed teasing, embarrassment, or judgment from peers		
20	Safe learning environment	Classroom atmosphere is supportive, relaxed, and non-threatening		
21	Speaking independence	Learners practice or record outside class		
22	Speaking improvement	Noticeable progress in fluency, clarity, or confidence		
23	Adult learner factor	Older learners appear more hesitant or careful		
24	TikTok effectiveness	TikTok helps learners feel more confident and expressive		

Appendix 2. Interview Guide (for Teacher)

Lead: Recognizing that classroom conditions and learner participation are shaped by instructional practices, emotional climate, and social interaction, this study draws on teachers' observations to examine how classroom atmosphere, teaching style, and contextual factors influence learners' willingness and level of engagement in English speaking activities.

Source: Hu, M. F., & Wang, Y. (2023). The predicting role of EFL teachers' immediacy behaviors in students' willingness to communicate and academic engagement. *BMC Psychology, 11.* https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-023-01378-x

Research Objective 1: Classroom Conditions and Learner Participation

1. How would you describe the general classroom atmosphere during English speaking activities (e.g., teacher-centred, interactive, relaxed, or tense)
2. How do learners usually participate in speaking activities in class (e.g., actively, passively, avoiding participation, using L1)?
3. What differences do you observe in learners' participation when speaking tasks are conducted traditionally (face-to-face presentations) and when digital media such as TikTok are used?
4. How do learners respond emotionally during speaking assessments in class (e.g., anxiety, reluctance, confidence, fear of making mistakes)?
5. How do contextual factors such as learners ' fatigue, work background, or socio-economic conditions affect their classroom participation?
6. How does your teaching style (e.g., supportive, strict, teacher-centred) influence learners' willingness to participate in speaking activities?
7. How does the use of TikTok-based tasks change classroom interaction, collaboration, and learner engagement compared to conventional speaking tasks?

Research Objective Two: Indicators of Speaking Confidence

Lead: Building learners' speaking confidence often involves internal factors such as self-efficacy, motivation, and emotional control. TikTok's environment, characterized by autonomy, repetition, creativity, and peer influence, may

strengthen or hinder these factors. The researcher aims to explore teachers' insights into how TikTok serves as a source of vicarious learning, practice, and feedback, thereby contributing to learners ' speaking self-efficacy.

Source: Suprihatin, T. S. (2023). TikTok as a formative assessment in English classes. *Journal of English Education Research.* Retrieved from https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/JER/article/view/61198

8. What verbal indicators show that learners are confident or not confident when speaking English (e.g., volume, clarity, fluency, willingness to speak)?
9. What non-verbal indicators do you usually observe (eye contact, facial expression, posture, gestures) when learners feel anxious or confident?
10. How do learners usually respond when they make mistakes while speaking (e.g., silence, hesitation, continuing to talk, self-correction)?
11. How does learners' fear of peer evaluation affect their speaking behaviour in class?
12. How does your feedback style (supportive vs. harsh correction) influence learners' confidence and willingness to continue speaking?
13. Do learners show different confidence indicators when speaking live in class compared to when recording TikTok videos? What differences do you notice?
14. How do rehearsal opportunities (re-recording, editing) on TikTok affect learners' fluency, accuracy, and self-confidence?
15. How do fatigue and emotional conditions (tiredness, stress) influence learners' speaking confidence indicators in class?

Lead: Recognizing that teachers play a crucial role in understanding learners' learning behaviors, emotional readiness, and confidence-building processes, the researcher aims to explore teachers' perspectives on how TikTok influences learners' English-speaking confidence. In digital learning environments, platforms such as TikTok offer multimodal features that may reduce anxiety, provide opportunities for repeated practice, and encourage expression.

 communication. Therefore, this section seeks to uncover how teachers observe learners ' confidence levels in both classroom and TikTok contexts, including verbal and nonverbal indicators of speaking performance.

Source: Utami, N. M. K. L., Nur'Aini, S., & Senowarsito, S. (2025). Teachers' perspectives on the use of microlearning TikTok in assessing students' speaking skills within the Merdeka curriculum: An exploratory study. EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature and Culture, 10(1), 86–102. https://doi.org/10.30659/e.10.1.86-102

Research Objective Three: Teachers' Perspectives on the Potential of TikTok

16. How do you usually describe learners' attention and engagement during conventional speaking activities in class?
17. What challenges do you face in encouraging learners to speak English in front of the class?
18. How did learners ' behaviour and attention change after TikTok or video-based tasks were introduced?
19. In your observation, how does TikTok function as an alternative performance platform compared to live classroom presentations?
20. How do TikTok features (re-recording, editing, uploading, creativity) influence learners' willingness and confidence to speak English?
21. What changes in learners' motivation and participation did you notice after they received likes, comments, or views on their TikTok video?
22. How do you see the role of peer and audience feedback on TikTok in shaping learners' speaking confidence?
23. From your perspective, how does TikTok help create a more emotionally safe and supportive learning environment?
24. What pedagogical potential do you see in integrating TikTok with Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) for developing speaking confidence?
25. What limitations or concerns do you notice in using TikTok for speaking instruction (e.g., distraction, privacy, internet access)?

Appendix 3. Interview Guide (for learners)

Lead: Recognizing that classroom conditions and emotional climate play a crucial role in shaping learners' willingness to participate in speaking activities, this study explores students' experiences with English-speaking tasks in both traditional classroom settings and TikTok-based learning contexts. This section focuses on how classroom atmosphere, teacher support, peer reactions, and learners' personal conditions (such as fatigue and anxiety) influence their participation and engagement in speaking English.

Source: Kurniawan, M. B. (2023). Classroom interaction in the EFL speaking class in junior high school. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, 10*(1). https://doi.org/10.23887/jpbi.v10i1.47994

Research Objective 1: Classroom Conditions and Learner Participation

1. How do you usually feel and behave during English speaking activities in the classroom (e.g., confident, nervous, silent, active)?
2. Do you prefer speaking English in front of the class or by making videos (such as TikTok)? Why?
3. What makes you reluctant or willing to participate in classroom speaking activities?
4. How does the classroom atmosphere (teacher's attitude, classmates' reactions, noise level, pressure) affect your willingness to speak English?
5. How do your daily conditions (fatigue, work after school, personal problems) influence your participation in English class?
6. When the teacher uses TikTok or video projects, do you become more active in participating? In what ways (discussion, rehearsal, collaboration, asking questions)?
7. How is your participation different when doing speaking tasks individually in class and when working in groups for TikTok projects?

Research Objective Two: Indicators of Speaking Confidence

Lead: Building confidence in speaking often involves practice, observation, and feedback from the learning environment. TikTok offers opportunities for repeated recording, self-correction, peer modeling, and social encouragement, all of which can influence learners' motivation and self-efficacy. The researcher intends to explore the internal and external factors that support or hinder learners' confidence when using TikTok for English-speaking practice.

Source: Sarkila, D., Hifdil Islam, M., & Fatmawati, R. (2024). Students' perceptions of the use of TikTok for learning English. *Fonologi: Jurnal Ilmuan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris, 2*(2), 01-14. https://doi.org/10.61132/fonologi.v2i2.577

8. Which features of TikTok (filters, editing tools, duets, drafts, sound effects, etc.) help you feel more comfortable or confident when speaking English?
9. How do your nonverbal expressions (facial expressions, posture, gestures, eye contact, appearance) affect the way you speak or feel when recording English videos on TikTok?
10. How does repeated practice or re-recording your videos help you improve your speaking confidence?
11. What emotions do you feel before, during, and after recording your English-speaking videos?
12. How does creating and sharing English-speaking videos on TikTok affect your self-confidence?
13. Which types of audience reactions (likes, views, comments) influence your confidence the most? Why?