



Investigating Teachers' Roles in Forming EFL Learners' Self-Confidence: A Lesson Learned for Young Learners

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Abstract

Trust in oneself is a crucial aspect of personality development for students. The role of teachers is pivotal in fostering this self-trust among students. However, the implementation of this role often falls short, leading to instances where students lack confidence, such as feeling embarrassed when answering questions in front of the class. This study aims to delve into the teacher's role in cultivating students' self-trust, particularly among young learners in elementary schools. It employs a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing observation sheets, interview guidelines, and documentation to gather data. The data is analyzed qualitatively through techniques such as data condensation, data display, and drawing conclusions. The findings reveal several key roles that teachers play in nurturing EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners' self-confidence, including acting as motivators, providing feedback, facilitating communication, and offering information. Implications for further studies include exploring the effectiveness of specific teaching strategies in enhancing students' trust in themselves and investigating the long-term effects of teacher-student interactions on self-confidence development.

Keywords: Teacher's role, self-confidence, elementary school

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INTRODUCTION

The significance of character in shaping the internal confidence of students cannot be overstated. Character forms the bedrock upon which students can build a resilient sense of self-assurance, which is crucial for navigating the challenges of academia and life. The development of student self-confidence requires varied strategies, and it falls upon educators to employ creativity in their approaches (Abdullah et al., 2021). The goal is to cultivate an environment where students are encouraged to trust in their capabilities, fostering a positive belief system about their potential to succeed (Yestiani & Zahwa, 2020). This process is inherently linked to the motivation to learn, which is a critical component of educational success. Educators play a key role in instilling a passion for learning in their students, emphasizing the value of education not just as a means to an end, but as a lifelong pursuit. Education, in its essence, is a concerted effort aimed at identifying and nurturing the talents of students. This involves a progression of teaching methodologies and the exploration of alternative educational approaches that cater to the diverse needs of the student population. These strategies prepare students to contribute

meaningfully to society, underlining the broader purpose of education as a tool for nation-building.

The influence of the surrounding environment on a student's development is profound. Therefore, it is imperative that the community at large—parents, guardians, and other stakeholders—actively participate in the educational process. Bensalem and Thompson (2021) argue the collective involvement ensures a supportive framework that reinforces the values and principles being taught within the classroom, further amplifying the impact of formal education. Central to the realization of these educational objectives is the cultivation of self-confidence within students. Feri et al. (2017) suggest that possessing identifiable personal characteristics, such as self-confidence, is a marker of potential success. Self-confidence acts as a catalyst, enabling students to harness their abilities, face challenges with resilience, and achieve their educational and personal goals. It is through the systematic nurturing of these qualities that educators can truly make a difference in the lives of their students, equipping them with the tools necessary to excel and contribute positively to their communities and beyond.

In the context of teaching and learning activities, the role of teachers extends far beyond the mere transmission of knowledge. Teachers are pivotal in ensuring that the information and skills being imparted are accessible and comprehensible to all students, taking into account the diverse learning styles and needs present within a classroom. Their responsibility is not confined to the domain of teaching academic content; rather, it encompasses a multifaceted involvement in the students' learning journey. The pedagogical roles that teachers assume are varied and complex. Beyond acting as conveyors of scientific knowledge, teachers embody several critical functions that significantly enhance the learning experience. According to Yestiani and Zahwa (2020), these roles include but are not limited to, educators, guides, facilitators, managers, and advisors. Each role serves a distinct purpose in the educational process, contributing to a holistic and enriching learning environment.

As educators, teachers are charged with the task of not only delivering curriculum content but also instilling a love for learning and intellectual curiosity among their students. In the role of a guide, teachers help students navigate the complexities of the learning material, providing direction and support as they explore new concepts. Acting as facilitators, teachers create an interactive and engaging classroom atmosphere that encourages students to actively participate in their own learning process. Moreover, in their capacity as managers, teachers organize and oversee the classroom dynamics, ensuring that the learning environment is conducive to all students' success. This involves managing time, resources, and classroom activities efficiently. Lastly, as advisors, teachers offer individualized support and counsel to students, addressing their academic concerns and personal development needs. These roles highlight the multifaceted nature of teaching and underscore the importance of teachers in shaping a positive and effective learning environment. By embracing these diverse roles, teachers facilitate a comprehensive educational experience that not only imparts knowledge but also fosters critical thinking, creativity, and personal growth among students. The influence of a teacher, as delineated by Yestiani and Zahwa (2020), is profound and extends well beyond the traditional boundaries of education, underscoring the pivotal role teachers play in the development and success of their students.

Teachers as self-confidence guides can improve student learning achievement. Belief in one's own abilities is a mental or psychological state known as "self-confidence." Individuals who lack self-confidence view themselves negatively and have less confidence in their own talents. Sources of self-confidence include upbringing and formal education (Khukmiati, 2018).

Observations in the context of EFL education reveal that students frequently encounter barriers to learning. These challenges include a marked disengagement from learning activities, a lack of active participation in class, and diminished motivation to learn. Such issues have a direct and negative effect on students' comprehension of the subjects being taught, invariably leading to substandard academic performance. Moreover, these learning difficulties are further exacerbated by students' tendencies to exhibit passive behavior, a lack of confidence, and hesitance in interactions within the classroom setting. These observations suggest that the root of these learning impediments might be linked to the efficacy of the roles played by teachers in fostering a conducive learning environment. The assumption here is that there may be a gap in the optimal execution of teachers' responsibilities (Nita, 2022; Khukmiati, 2018), particularly in guiding and motivating students. This gap is critical to address, as the role of teachers is not only to impart knowledge but also to cultivate a learning atmosphere that promotes self-assurance, engagement, and active participation among students.

Critically examining the roles of teachers in this context brings to light several key considerations. First, it is essential to acknowledge that the construction of self-confidence in learners is a multifaceted process that requires more than just academic support. Teachers must adopt a holistic approach that addresses both cognitive and emotional needs. This involves creating a positive and supportive classroom environment, offering constructive feedback, and encouraging risk-taking and experimentation without fear of failure (Bensalem & Thompson, 2021; Gazibar et al., 2019). However, the effectiveness of teachers in building self-confidence can be hampered by several factors. For instance, the traditional teacher-centered approach to education, which emphasizes rote learning and passive reception of knowledge, does little to foster self-confidence in students. This method can stifle creativity, discourage critical thinking, and lead to a sense of disempowerment among students.

Furthermore, the pressure to cover the syllabus and achieve standardized test scores may lead teachers to prioritize content delivery over the development of soft skills, such as self-confidence and interpersonal communication. In light of these challenges, this study aims to explore the specific roles that teachers can play in nurturing self-confidence among EFL learners in elementary schools. By investigating these roles, the study seeks to identify effective strategies and pedagogical practices that can be employed to overcome the observed learning problems. The goal is to provide insights into how teachers can better support their students' emotional and psychological well-being, alongside academic achievement, to enhance overall learning outcomes. Through this inquiry, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the critical role teachers play in shaping the self-confidence of EFL learners, a key determinant of their success both in and out of the classroom.

The role of teaching staff regarding guiding student self-confidence is to motivate students, respect them, invite them to interact pro-actively, present specific messages to students with less self-confidence, and organize student benches. The role of a teacher is a series of behaviors carried out by a student related to a particular situation to achieve desired goals. The role of teaching staff is still not optimal because there are obstacles in the learning process, so the teacher's task is to make students take advantage of the surrounding environment and use variations in learning. Based on this description, researchers conducted a study on investigating teachers' roles in constructing EFL learners' Self-Confidence at elementary schools.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This type of research is qualitative research. According to Siyoto (2015), qualitative research is a type of research whose findings are not obtained through quantification procedures. Qualitative means referring to the quality, value or meaning behind the facts which can only be expressed and explained through linguistics, language or words. Qualitative descriptive methods were used in this research because in general this research explains the role of teachers in learning. In this research, researchers interpret how subjects derive meaning from their environment and how this meaning influences their behavior. Research is carried out in an environment of knowing the phenomena experienced by research subjects, for example motivating behavior, student achievement and their actions, not as a result of processing or manipulating variables.

Research Instruments

This research was conducted at Elementary schools at Riau. The research instruments use observation sheets, interview guideline, and documents. The observation was done during the study is started. The observation was approved by the school principles. The observation is done to see the teachers' roles during the learning process. To support the observation data, researchers do interview activities. By interviewing teachers and class IV students to get more detailed information. This research was conducted to find out the role of teachers in shaping students' self-confidence from December to January 2023. In this research, data was obtained through observation by looking at class conditions and methods for developing self-confidence. Observation is a data collection technique that has special characteristics compared to other techniques (Sugiyono, 2018).

According to Saroso (2017), interviews are one of the most commonly used tools for collecting qualitative research data. Interviews allow researchers to collect different information from respondents in different settings and contexts. Data collected using interview techniques is data about methods for developing self-confidence. According to Fuad and Nugroho (2014), documentation is one source of secondary data needed in research. In this research, researchers used documents in the form of writing and images. Meanwhile, the instruments in this research are observation guidelines, interview guidelines and documentation guidelines.

Data Analysis Technique

In this research, the methodology for data analysis is grounded in the framework proposed by Miles and Huberman, which emphasizes an intuitive and iterative approach to scrutinizing qualitative data. Miles and Huberman advocate for a thorough engagement with subjective information, suggesting that analysis should be an ongoing process that continues until a comprehensive understanding is achieved. Within this framework, the analysis is structured around three core techniques: data reduction, data display, and the drawing of conclusions (Moloeng, 2018). Data reduction involves the process of distilling and summarizing vast amounts of data into more manageable chunks. This step is crucial for focusing on what is most relevant to the research questions at hand. It entails categorizing and filtering the collected data—from observations, interviews, and documents—into essential elements that are pertinent to the study. This phase is where the information relating to students and the roles of teachers is meticulously organized, allowing for the identification and classification of key items and themes.

The next stage, data display, involves the arrangement and layout of this compressed data in a format that facilitates understanding and interpretation. Here, the researchers organize the condensed data visually or textually, making it easier to identify

patterns, relationships, and emergent themes. This step is particularly vital for synthesizing complex information and highlighting the dynamics of teachers' roles in the educational process. Finally, the drawing of conclusions is where insights are derived from the data. The researchers engage in a process of comparison, connecting dots between different data points, and evaluating the implications of their findings. It is in this phase that the researchers articulate the impact of teachers' roles on student self-confidence, synthesizing the evidence gathered to make informed judgments about the phenomena being studied.

To ensure the validity of the research data, the study employs triangulation, a technique that involves using multiple data sources or methods to cross-verify the findings. By integrating data from observations, interviews, and document analysis, the research achieves a more comprehensive and reliable understanding of the subject matter. Triangulation strengthens the study's conclusions by confirming that the interpretations are not the result of a single perspective or source of data but are supported by various pieces of evidence. In essence, this research meticulously follows Miles and Huberman's methodological guidelines for qualitative data analysis. Through the systematic application of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing—coupled with the validation technique of triangulation—the study aims to uncover nuanced insights into the roles teachers play in fostering self-confidence among their students. This methodological rigor ensures that the conclusions drawn are both valid and grounded in a rich tapestry of qualitative data, providing valuable contributions to the understanding of educational dynamics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

In this research, activities that show the role of teachers in constructing students' self-confidence are classroom conditioning in the learning process, methods for developing self-confidence and teachers' roles.

Conditioning class in the learning process

The strategic arrangement of students into groups, coupled with the roles of teachers as motivators and facilitators, forms a powerful pedagogical approach to constructing self-confidence in students. This method emphasizes the importance of a supportive and interactive learning environment, as well as the crucial role of teachers in guiding and encouraging students to believe in themselves. Through this comprehensive and thoughtful approach, teachers are able to make significant strides in helping students develop the self-confidence necessary for academic success and personal growth. The classroom setting can be presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Observation condition class

Observational data has underscored the efficacy of group seating arrangements in classrooms as a potent mechanism for bolstering student self-confidence. This phenomenon is particularly evident during group discussion activities, where the

dynamics of collaborative engagement appear to encourage even the most reticent students to take an active role. The interplay of group interactions serves as a catalyst for participation; for instance, when a group leader offers input or suggestions, it sets a precedent that encourages other group members to contribute as well. This is not merely about the exchange of ideas but also about the creation of a supportive environment where students feel valued and heard. The active participation engendered by this setup demonstrates a crucial point: that the physical arrangement of the classroom and the structuring of activities can significantly impact students' willingness to engage and their confidence to express themselves. Through these group discussions, students are afforded the opportunity to voice their thoughts and ideas, receive feedback, and interact with their peers in a constructive manner. The resulting increase in self-confidence stems not only from the act of participation itself but also from the recognition and affirmation of their contributions by their peers and instructors. This evidence suggests that thoughtfully designed seating arrangements and structured group activities are key to creating an inclusive and empowering learning environment that nurtures students' self-confidence.



Figure 2. Students do discussion group

It can be seen during group learning process activities in creating a village structure, group members are actively involved in making assignments and work together in completing assignments given by the teacher and compete to get the best grades. Can be seen in group activities of students, homeroom teachers also checked each group one by one and gave encouragement to students so that the group assignments that had been given were completed on time and got the best grades.

Development Methods Trust Self

In the learning process, the first learning activity begins with opening activities, core activities and closing activities. The opening activity is carried out with students reading prayers and greetings after which the teacher presents the learning material. The homeroom teacher trains students to speak in front of the class by asking students to answer questions given in front of the class, giving assignments and students to answer on the blackboard. During the learning process the homeroom teacher gives assignments or questions regarding the learning material that has been presented. The homeroom teacher gives assignments to students and students answer questions on the board, asking students to come forward to answer the questions that have been given to help students build self-confidence.

Based on interviews with homeroom teachers regarding how to train students by giving assignments and questions, namely: "Providing students with activities outside of class according to the learning material, apart from providing questions so they can be answered in front of the class." The method created by the homeroom teacher has several responses from students through interviews conducted with two students. The researcher asked "How do you feel when learning is done outside the classroom?", students answered

"happy because you can learn while playing." Apart from that, students' responses when researchers observed students who were asked to answer questions in front of the class were that there were students who were confident to answer and there were students who were embarrassed.

From the results of the observations made by the researcher, the class teacher took action to approach students who lacked self-confidence to provide motivation to students to be enthusiastic about participating in learning activities and answering questions that had been given to the class teacher. Based on the results of observations made by researchers, the homeroom teacher gives rewards by saying words of encouragement to students who have the courage to answer questions or questions in front of the class, and the homeroom teacher also does not forget to give encouragement to students who are still shy or make mistakes in answering. For example, the questions given are: good for having the courage to answer. The homeroom teacher conveys errors in the answers that students answer to find out their potential, but the homeroom teacher continues to encourage students to be even more enthusiastic about answering the questions and questions that follow.

Discussion

This study aims to investigate teachers' roles in constructing EFL students' self-confidence at elementary schools in Riau, Indonesia. In the quest to enhance students' self-confidence within the classroom setting, teachers have adopted an innovative approach by organizing their classes into smaller groups. This methodological strategy is grounded in the understanding that group settings can foster a more collaborative and supportive learning environment, which is conducive to building self-assurance among students. By dividing the class into groups, teachers are able to create a more intimate and interactive atmosphere, encouraging students to participate actively, share their thoughts, and support their peers. This arrangement not only promotes a sense of belonging and community among students but also helps to diminish the anxiety and pressure that often accompany individual performance in front of a large class. Within this group-based framework, teachers assume critical roles as motivators and facilitators, pivotal to nurturing self-confidence in students.

As motivators, teachers inspire and encourage students to set personal goals, overcome challenges, and recognize their own achievements. They provide positive reinforcement and constructive feedback, highlighting students' strengths and progress, which bolsters students' belief in their own abilities. This motivational role is essential in helping students to develop a growth mindset, where challenges are seen as opportunities for learning rather than obstacles. Furthermore, as facilitators, teachers guide the learning process rather than dictating it (Suhandra & Ariawan, 2023). They create learning activities that require active engagement and collaboration, allowing students to take ownership of their learning. This approach empowers students, as they feel more in control of their educational journey, which in turn boosts their self-confidence. Teachers support students in navigating the learning material, encouraging critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and facilitating discussions that enable students to articulate their ideas and listen to others (Bensalem & Thompson, 2021; Sun & Gao, 2019). This facilitative role ensures that learning is a shared experience, fostering a classroom culture where all contributions are valued and where students can build confidence in their intellectual capabilities.

In the comprehensive effort to develop student self-confidence, educators implement a multi-faceted approach that encompasses a variety of learning activities designed to foster a conducive classroom environment (Hamidi et al., 2022; Bracken & Lombard, 2004). This approach begins with classroom conditioning, where teachers create a physical and psychological space that is welcoming, safe, and conducive to learning. By ensuring that the classroom environment is supportive, students feel more comfortable and are more likely to engage in the learning process. Further contributing to the development of self-confidence, teachers actively provide motivation and appreciation. Recognizing and celebrating students' efforts and achievements, no matter how small, can have a profound impact on their self-esteem (Guillen-Gamez et al., 2019). This positive reinforcement encourages students to take risks and challenge themselves, knowing that their efforts will be acknowledged. Building effective communication within the classroom is another critical strategy.

Teachers encourage open dialogue, promote active listening, and facilitate respectful interactions among students. This not only enhances social skills but also empowers students to express their ideas and opinions confidently (Natalia, 2015; Martina et al., 2021). Assigning special tasks or responsibilities to students is another technique employed by teachers to boost self-confidence. When students are entrusted with roles that contribute to the classroom or a group project, they gain a sense of importance and capability (Sun & Gao, 2019; Haerazi et al., 2023). This responsibility fosters a sense of ownership over their learning and achievements. These strategies collectively contribute to shaping and increasing students' self-confidence, which in turn leads to the cultivation of a positive attitude towards oneself. This positive self-view is crucial not only during the learning process but also in everyday life, where confidence can influence how challenges and opportunities are approached.

In their role as educators, teachers also serve as vital information providers, especially when students encounter challenges in their learning. When a student is stuck or confused, the teacher's role is to provide insightful information and guidance related to the learning topics (Zhunussova et al., 2022; Haerazi, 2023). This support helps students overcome obstacles, further reinforcing their self-confidence by showing them that obstacles in learning can be surmounted with the right assistance and attitude. Through these thoughtfully designed activities and roles, teachers play an instrumental role in not only imparting knowledge but also in nurturing the self-confidence of their students. This holistic approach to education ensures that students are not only academically prepared but also equipped with the self-confidence to navigate both academic and real-world challenges effectively.

In the realm of EFL education for young learners, the enthusiasm of students towards learning activities is a pivotal aspect that shapes their educational experience. Observations reveal a spectrum of engagement among EFL students, with many displaying eagerness and participation in the activities facilitated by the teacher (Suhandra & Ariawan, 2023). This enthusiasm is particularly evident when students demonstrate their comprehension and ability to answer questions posed by the teacher, reflecting a level of engagement and understanding of the learning material. However, amidst this enthusiasm, there exists a subset of students who encounter difficulties in grasping the assignments provided by the teacher. This challenge stems from a reluctance to seek clarification when faced with unfamiliar concepts or instructions. Haerazi (2023) notes that some students refrain from asking questions out of fear or hesitation, leading them to remain silent and disengaged from the learning process. This reticence to seek clarification can hinder students' ability to fully comprehend the material being presented, resulting in feelings of frustration and isolation.

The phenomenon of students' reluctance to ask questions highlights the importance of fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment within the EFL classroom. Teachers play a critical role in creating a culture where students feel comfortable seeking clarification and expressing their uncertainties without fear of judgment or reprisal (Gazibara et al., 2019; Haerazi, 2023). By encouraging open communication and actively soliciting questions from students, teachers can address misconceptions and provide the necessary guidance to facilitate deeper understanding. Moreover, strategies such as incorporating collaborative learning activities and providing individualized support can help mitigate students' apprehensions and encourage active participation. By fostering a classroom environment where questions are welcomed and celebrated as opportunities for growth, teachers can empower students to take ownership of their learning journey and cultivate a sense of confidence in their abilities to overcome challenges.

CONCLUSION

The study conducted to explore teachers' roles in cultivating self-confidence among EFL learners in elementary schools in Riau has yielded significant insights. The findings indicate that the arrangement of classroom desks into groups by the homeroom teacher plays a pivotal role in enhancing students' self-confidence. This arrangement fosters an environment conducive to collaboration and peer support, as students are observed to actively assist each other during learning activities. Additionally, the active involvement of the homeroom teacher emerges as a key factor in the learning process, where teachers play a crucial role in nurturing self-confidence and recognizing students' potential. Notably, effective teacher roles identified in the study include those of motivator, feedback giver, information provider, and facilitator. These roles collectively contribute to creating a supportive and empowering learning environment where students feel valued, motivated, and capable of achieving success. Thus, the study underscores the importance of teachers' active engagement and strategic approaches in fostering self-confidence among EFL learners, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of education in elementary schools.

RECOMMENDATION

Further studies investigating teachers' roles in constructing students' self-confidence could explore several avenues to deepen our understanding and inform educational practice. Other researchers can conduct comparative studies across different educational contexts, such as urban versus rural schools or public versus private institutions, to examine how variations in teaching practices and classroom dynamics influence the development of self-confidence in students. Also, they can undertake longitudinal studies to track the development of self-confidence among students over an extended period. This would allow researchers to explore the long-term effects of specific teaching strategies and interventions on students' self-confidence levels. In addition, other researchers can investigate the efficacy of specific teacher training programs or interventions aimed at enhancing teachers' abilities to foster self-confidence in students. This could involve implementing and evaluating professional development workshops focused on effective teaching practices for promoting self-confidence.

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