

Teaching English Language Journal

ISSN: 2538-5488 – E-ISSN: 2538-547X – <http://tel.journal.org>

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Please cite this paper as follows:

Ismail, S.M., & Çakmak, F. (2025) The effects of positive self-talk on EFL learners' speaking skills, language learning motivation, autonomy, and self-confidence. *Teaching English Language*, 19(2), 217-253. <https://doi.org/10.22132/tel.2025.462466.1629>

Research Paper

The Effects of Positive Self-Talk on EFL Learners' Speaking Skills, Language Learning Motivation, Autonomy, and Self-Confidence

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Abstract

As there are different psychological variables involved in English language learning, this study investigated how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' speaking ability, motivation for language acquisition, learner autonomy (LA), and self-confidence were affected by positive self-talk (PST). To achieve this goal, the researchers recruited sixty EFL learners using the convenience sampling method and then divided them into two groups. Subsequently, both groups were pretested for speaking ability, language learning motivation, LA, and self-confidence. The participants in one group received an intervention through PST, while those in the other group received traditional training without applying PST. After the treatment, both groups took post-tests on their speaking ability, motivation for language

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acquisition, LA, and self-confidence. The results displayed variations in the post-test scores of the two groups, with the experimental group (EG) outperforming the control group (CG). Some implications and conclusions were drawn from the results.

Keywords: Positive self-talk, L2 speaking skill, language learning motivation, learner autonomy, self-confidence

Received: June 11, 2024

Accepted: April 11, 2025



1. Introduction

Using PST helps learners feel good about their lives and themselves. It provides them with an upbeat inner voice that always finds the positive side of things and leads them to positive thinking, which in turn leads to greater satisfaction and happiness (Alteneiji et al., 2023). It has been demonstrated that using positive language to communicate with oneself may increase positive thinking and self-esteem. Several strategies for self-talk include mirroring, thankfulness, writing letters to yourself, and giving yourself butterfly hugs (Sureka, 2023). PST, also known as “private speech, verbal rehearsal or inner dialogue” (Hardy & Oliver, 2014, p. 659), is defined by Iriyanti and Kinayung (2021) as the positive remarks people say to themselves, either silently or verbally. It is an internal conversation which people use to process their perceptions and feelings, control and modify their assessments, and provide guidance and reinforcement to themselves. PST has three primary advantages. Firstly, it can enhance one’s quality of life. Secondly, it improves performance and self-confidence by reducing negative feelings such as anxiety (Hardy & Oliver, 2014). Thirdly, it can preserve bodily health and strengthen the mind (Gibson & Foster, 2007).

Self-talk is multifaceted with both cognitive and behavioral aspects; (Hardy, 2006) and provides one with both guidance and motivation (Latinjak et al., 2023). Guiding can be associated with skill and strategy instructions, and motivation can be reflected through excitement, sense of accomplishment, and determination (Hardy, 2006). According to Galanis et al. (2018), self-talk motivates people to accomplish a task by directing their attention toward the most critical elements of the skills required.

In foreign language learning, self-talk helps language learners improve their speaking abilities. Al-Snani (2021) states that one of the chief aims of learning a foreign language is to talk, which enables learners to converse with people beyond their native diaspora. Speaking is a crucial skill as it enables one to interact and connect with others. Fulcher (2003) defined speaking as the oral use of language for interpersonal communications. It describes an individual's actions, entailing the spoken transfer of information from a communicator to a communicant. Furthermore, Gan et al. (2022) clarify that speaking in interactive discourse with other language speakers accomplishes pragmatic goals. They stated that speaking is a task in which a person establishes communication with others to convey ideas, opinions, and feelings to achieve a specific objective. These include the following: using speech to be friendly with others; using speech to ask for what we want; using speech to get others to do something; advocating on behalf of others; expressing feelings or opinions; exchanging information; referring to actions or events that have happened and the possibility of something happening (Humairoh & Harmayanthi, 2021). It implies that everyone should learn to speak correctly and clearly, since the ability to speak well confers numerous benefits in life (Palmer, 2011).

Students with high learning motivation can improve their speaking abilities. In education, motivation is defined as students' readiness,

requirement, yearning, and duty to engage in and succeed in the learning process, according to Binalet and Guerra (2014). Generally, an individual's activities are motivated by emotions and objectives connected to achieving their personal goals. Consequently, it is possible to consider the desire to learn English as an indicator of success in learning English. Students with high levels of motivation can adapt to the learning environment, utilize English language learning opportunities, and produce positive learning outcomes, all of which also contribute reciprocally to increased motivation (Cocca & Cocca, 2019). As Fuertes et al. (2020) stated, motivation is a key element for foreign language learning as it encourages learners to start and persevere with studying the language. It also helps students meet academic requirements and achieve learning goals. Therefore, it might be helpful to focus on students' motivation for learning English to understand their success better.

High self-confidence is another aspect that might affect EFL learners' speaking abilities. Becoming proficient in English as a second/foreign language takes various cognitive, linguistic, and emotional skills. Among these variables, self-assurance is a critical predictor of fluency in the English language (Dev & Qiqieh, 2016). Self-confidence is reflective of a language learner's attitude regarding their capacity for clear English communication and their readiness to take chances when learning the language. Since self-confidence is linked to learners' desire, perseverance, and readiness to take risks when learning a language, it is considered a critical component (Moradiyousefabadi et al., 2022). Similarly, Pulford and Woodward (2018) stated that a learner's preparedness to practice speaking in a classroom setting is determined in part by their level of self-confidence. It is, thus, reasonable to believe that learners' strong speaking performances result to an extent from their innate confidence.

Learners who possess a strong sense of self-confidence in their ability to communicate in English are more inclined to participate in conversational activities, look for chances to improve their language skills, and persevere through challenges and disappointments in their language journey (Saleem et al., 2018). Conversely, students who lack confidence in speaking and comprehending English might feel scared or anxious which could hinder their language acquisition (Chen, 2024; Rajitha & Alamelu Dr., 2020). Students who lack confidence may give up on language acquisition entirely, engage in fewer communication activities, and steer clear of or fail to recognize opportunities to develop their language abilities. Language instructors and educators can better assist language learners' language learning outcomes and foster their student's academic and professional success by knowing and exploiting the association between self-confidence and English language competency (Çakıcı, 2015).

Another psychological variable that can affect students' speaking skills is learner autonomy (LA). Setting objectives, trying to meet them, reflecting on successes, setting new goals or modifying existing ones, and continuing the learning cycle constitute LA (Little et al., 2017). According to Thorne and Little (2017), LA is transient and innately polymorphic. Target language usage is essential for language learners to establish LA since language acquisition is impossible without usage. As language learners, autonomous learners are skilled at picking up new skills and are also conscious of their areas of strength and weakness. They assess themselves, create objectives, keep track of their progress, and reflect on what they have learned (Ayako, 2020).

The variables noted here are vital to English language learning. Fostering their development can positively influence the English learning performance of language learners. EFL learners and educators both benefit from knowing

the importance of the variables mentioned. EFL learners can develop a healthy self-image and, in turn, enhance their self-confidence by using PST. Employing PST, educators may motivate and encourage students to persevere, maintain an optimistic outlook, and contextualize their experiences. Regarding the importance of PST, this study intended to investigate the effect of this variable on Turkish EFL students' speaking ability, motivation for language learning, LA, and self-confidence.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Positive Self-Talk (PST)

Some studies defined and highlighted the occurrence and function of self-talk in life. For example, Glăveanu (2017) stated that self-talk encourages students to be creative and helps them feel like they can explore their knowledge. It can also help them communicate their thoughts and feelings more easily. According to Morin (1993), engaging in self-talk may connect personal thoughts with external feedback, hence enhancing self-awareness. Therefore, it can be considered as an essential technique for individuals engaging in personal development as it can provide a means for learners to assess their behaviors and emotions critically, allowing them, in turn, to more closely align those behaviors and feelings with their objectives and beliefs.

Hardy (2006) mentioned the natural occurrence of self-talk. Self-talk happens whenever someone thinks; through internal or external dialogues, interprets perceptions and feelings, or controls and modifies assessments and principles, to provide guidance and support to themselves. In the field of education, students can utilize self-talk to encourage themselves to interact or speak with people more assertively (Boulkraa, 2016; Humairoh & Harmayanthi, 2021) and in a more positive manner (Oliver et al., 2008). According to Oliver et al. (2008), self-talk occurs as an essential cognitive process by which individuals analyze and assimilate their experiences. When

facilitated by autonomy-supportive contexts, it can cultivate a more robust psychological state, aiding in the development of effective coping mechanisms and thereby improving task execution. Conversely, engaging in negative self-talk, often in the form of negative emotional words, might obstruct these cognitive processes and adversely affect execution.

Similarly, Kyeong et al. (2020) noted that self-talk is the practice of verbal address to oneself and differentiated positive self-talk (self-respect) from negative self-talk (self-criticism) while exploring the neural effects of both. They found that positive self-talk has an impact on one's cognitive functions and mental health and that through self-talk interventions, it may be feasible for individuals to autonomously provide psychological support, which, in turn, could have a positive impact on overall life satisfaction.

2.2 Speaking Skill

Being a productive skill, speaking can be a challenging language skill for language learners to acquire due to some limitations in opportunities for practice (Al-Jamal & Al-Jamal, 2014; Tai, 2022). Complicating the issue learners are expected to master speaking via practice of the L2 through the use of receptive materials such as reading and aural comprehension exercises (Kardaş, 2016) rather than being explicitly taught the skill (Bahrani & Soltani, 2012). Furthermore, effective oral communication in most contexts depends on the ability to communicate well. Learning to speak a language requires regular practice, optimally in conjunction with other language skills (Özbay & Kardaş, 2015). If students ignore this factor, new material will not effectively integrate thereby hindering their learning. Speaking is the ability on which learners will be evaluated the most in real-world scenarios, according to Khamkhien (2010). Therefore, language instructors must encourage students to speak the target language. Learners of foreign languages face challenges with speaking practice due to outdated content, an

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initial lack of competency, and a lack of motivation (Salamea-Avila & Fajardo-Dack, 2023), as well as difficulties with receiving corrective feedback (Farrokhi et al., 2017).

In teaching settings, most EFL/ESL instructors primarily teach speaking skills through rote drills, exemplary role-playing, or memorizing dialogue. However, the modern world requires that students have communication skills, and English teachers must impart these skills to English language learners so that they may become more proficient speakers and function well in everyday contexts (Putri et al., 2020). Mahdavi et al. (2024) suggested that interactive teaching methodologies can enhance the communication skills of EFL learners and may be beneficial in certain EFL contexts for developing the listening and speaking skills of EFL learners. The study concludes that integrating such interactive teaching strategies significantly enhances EFL learners' communicative competence and that practicing speaking could be beneficial across various educational settings.

Oral skills are not always practiced in the current EFL educational environment for several reasons. The fact that language is taught using traditional approaches and limited, non-authentic materials has made it problematic for English language learners to develop their oral speaking abilities (Tran et al., 2024). Thus far, reading and writing abilities have received greater attention. Since oral communication skills are critical and bring recognized academic, social and professional advantages (Penrose, 2022), learning to speak a foreign language well has become essential for helping students to succeed in their academic endeavors and careers once they graduate.

2.3 Self-confidence

Ningsi (2020) claimed that persons with self-confidence can learn effectively, self-advocate, and are receptive and empathetic to other people's perspectives. Nadiah (2019) asserted that self-confidence can be considered as the conviction that one can effectively execute the intended conduct. There are two forms of self-confidence: general and specific confidence (Axelrod, 2017). A person's general self-confidence is reflective of their upbringing and experiences and is generally stable. In contrast, specific self-confidence is a psychological state that may shift in response to specific activities or circumstances (Axelrod, 2017).

Confidence in oneself is crucial but regarding self-confidence's impact, specialists have differing opinions. First, confidence levels might influence people's conduct (Ballane, 2019). Öksüzoğlu-Güven and Öney (2015) state that self-confidence significantly affects people's behaviors. Furthermore, having self-confidence does not suggest indifference towards one's mistakes; rather, it indicates the contrary. Tridinanti (2018) also asserted that self-confident individuals are prepared to own up to their mistakes since they understand that doing so does not diminish their moral authority or skills.

Self-confidence has a significant impact on a student's success in the classroom. Thus, according to experts' opinions, people who possess self-confidence will have faith in their skills and the courage to behave appropriately in particular circumstances, which includes owning up to their errors. Significantly, students' learning may be impacted by their baseline level of confidence (Mulyono & Saskia, 2020).

2.4 Learner Autonomy (LA)

The ability of a student to take charge of their education and freely plan, organize, and oversee the learning process is known as LA. LA is a

significant variable that influences students' competency in learning the English language. Melvina and Julia (2021) defined LA as the ability to be accountable for one's learning. Phung and Dang (2016) also defined LA as circumstances in which students make decisions about every part of their education and are responsible for the results of those decisions. This indicates that with complete LA, neither an institution nor a teacher is involved in the autonomous learner's process. Because they are aware of their advantages and disadvantages, autonomous learners are motivated to take responsibility for their own education (Jianfeng et al., 2018).

Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) suggested that enhancing LA can improve language acquisition, equip students with lifelong learning skills, and facilitate the most efficient use of both in-class and extracurricular learning opportunities. Learners can succeed, especially if they take the initiative, try to learn, and plan their learning (Phuong & Vo, 2019). Learners who take on new challenges can enhance their performance on learning assignments, increasing their likelihood of success in their endeavors (Minh & Duong Ngoc, 2023). Thus, it follows that fostering LA is one of the strategies that may be used to enhance the degree of English language competency among learners.

2.5 Motivation

Academic achievement has been linked to motivation, especially when learning a foreign language. Motivation is especially important where students might have limited opportunities to practice the target language with the other target language users (Solak, 2013). It is said that motivated students are more inclined to be prepared for and engage in active learning (Owens et al., 2020), which facilitates the use of linguistic knowledge that supports their language learning. Motivation is considered an innate force

that propels a student's capacity for excellence. However, it is vital to remember that motivation for foreign language learning is complex because each learner varies in their degree of motivation when they enter the classroom. As a result, language instructors must be creative in their teaching to foster motivation and aid their students' language learning processes (Dörnyei, 2018).

Since having a desire to take action is necessary for achievement, motivation is commonly thought to be a key element influencing performance in most learning domains. Without motivation, someone might not try to accomplish a goal (McCoach & Flake, 2018). Thus, student motivation may be a determinant of success or failure in learning a foreign language (Thohir, 2017). It has been noted that if an individual lacks desire, it may be challenging for them to attain L2 learning objectives (Melzi & Schick, 2012). According to Filgona et al. (2020), motivated students are cognitively equipped to acquire new knowledge, and their enthusiastic engagement renders the classroom environment interactive and enjoyable. In contrast, unmotivated students merely physically attend the class without fully engaging their cognitive capacities and with no real intention of learning anything.

L2 motivation is one field of language studies that is mainly affected by these shifts. As English is a worldwide language, learners are driven to acquire the language successfully, claimed Rasool and Winke (2019). It is, therefore, recommended that studies on L2 motivation have a dual perspective, with one level focusing on learning English specifically, and the other on learning second languages generally (Erickson et al., 2022).

Due to the global status of English, it is necessary to reconsider Wang and Li's (2019) socio-educational model of second language acquisition to better understand L2 motivation in relation with task

motivation, especially when it comes to inherent motivation to complete tasks. According to Gardner's socio-educational model, motivation can be described as an inner force behind learning a second language, which comprises three main mediators: desire, effort, and passion (Gardner, 2010). People first attempt to learn English casually (Ji et al., 2022). They make an effort to engage in the language consistently and persistently. Secondly, the driven individuals aspire to achieve the objective of learning English well. These individuals will state that they want to be successful and will do everything in their power to achieve this goal (Allouh et al., 2021), which creates favorable attitudes toward learning English.

Thirdly, the driven individual will begin to look forward to language learning challenges, extending the desire to learn the language at the initial phase (Alamer & Al Khateeb, 2023). Gardner's model and its components serve as essential indicators for differentiating between highly and poorly motivated people. Individuals are motivated by various factors, and experts do not agree on which is the most important (Al-Jarf, 2023). Comparisons between instrumental and integrative variables, as well as between extrinsic and intrinsic variables, are frequently discussed. However, there is still a scarcity of studies in foreign language education that integrate multiple motivational components in different language learning settings.

2.2 Experimental Background

The implementation of PST has been explored in the literature review for its effects on affective states in sports (Hatzigeorgiadis et al., 2011; Thibodeaux & Winsler, 2021). Concerning the impacts of PST on EFL settings, a few investigations have been conducted; for example, Shabani and Habibi (2019) examined how PST affects the speaking fluency of EFL students. Fifty high school students participated in this investigation. Two groups: EG and CG

were formed. The EG was taught how to talk to themselves in a positive manner. To evaluate each participant's fluency, the researcher gave post-tests to both groups after the experiment. According to the data, the EG did better in speaking fluency than the CG.

The aim of Sadipour et al.'s (2019) research was to investigate the effects of self-control training and PST on the self-efficacy of female students in their tenth year of high school. There were 60 participants in the study, randomly divided into three groups: a CG, two EGs: one for self-talk, and the other for self-control training. The findings showed that self-control training and encouraging self-talk had a positive impact on students' self-efficacy.

To determine if performance and self-talk were individually related to self-efficacy, Hunter and Sullins (2020) conducted a study. Forty-two students at a higher institution evaluated their self-efficacy and recall skills while practicing self-talk. The findings indicated that PST had a negative impact on memory recall for students with high self-efficacy, but students who had low self-efficacy and students who had high self-efficacy in combination with self-talk practice benefited from it.

Humairoh and Harmayanthi (2021) assessed the effectiveness of the self-talk technique in improving students' speaking abilities and self-confidence in learning English. Twenty students took part in the study. The questionnaires, speaking assessments, interviews, and observation notes were utilized to collect data. The research findings suggested that self-talk might increase students' confidence in speaking English and improve their speaking performance in English.

Recently, Indari and Surbakti (2022) examined the impact of the self-talk strategy on students' speaking abilities. This investigation was conducted using three classes, comprising a total of 88 students who were randomly assigned to either the EG or the CG. Students in the EG were

exposed to self-talk strategies where their counterparts were not. According to the findings, students' speaking abilities in the EG improved when they used the self-talk strategy.

More recently, Rakhmadiyah (2023) investigated how students' speaking abilities may be enhanced by using the self-talk technique. The researcher employed document reviews, field notes, interviews, and student-speaking assessments to gather the data. The outcomes showed that students were eager to finalize tasks and learn through the self-talk approach, as the researcher had provided them with numerous opportunities to practice the self-talk technique of speaking aloud.

The investigation performed by Dimala et al. (2023) inspected the impact of PST on boosting students' self-confidence. Pre- and post-testing were conducted on a single group in this investigation. The study's participants included undergraduates studying psychology. Purposive sampling was employed, and the sample size comprised eleven pupils. A self-confidence measure that underwent reliability and expert judgment testing served as the study instrument. The outcomes demonstrated that using PST tactics in treatment successfully boosted the confidence of psychology students.

Reviewing the related literature reveals that PST can positively impact the language learning performance of EFL learners. Moreover, the literature review depicts that EFL learners should be more motivated and autonomous to learn English more successfully. Furthermore, based on the existing literature, there are inadequate empirical studies on the effects of using PST as a technique in applying positive psychology in language learning on EFL learners' speaking skills, language learning motivation, LA, and self-confidence in a Turkish context. Consequently, this study aimed to

cover the existing gap by formulating the following questions and hypotheses:

Four questions were posed in this research:

RQ1. Does applying PST produce constructive effects on EFL students' speaking skills?

RQ2. Does applying PST positively influence EFL students' language learning motivation?

RQ3. Does applying PST produce positive influences on EFL students' autonomy?

RQ4. Does applying PST produce positive influences on EFL students' self-confidence?

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

Sixty EFL students from a state university in a southern city in Türkiye participated in this research. They were selected from a convenience sample of 93 students aged between 18 and 21. The participants all volunteered to participate in the research. At the time of the study, they were learning English in preparation to study their departmental programs at the university. They were A2-level learners of English, according to the placement test (Allan, 2004), and were randomly split into two groups: the Control Group (CG) and the Experimental Group (EG).

3.2 Instruments

Four instruments were used in the current study: a speaking test, a self-confidence questionnaire, a learner autonomy questionnaire, and an

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attitude/motivation test battery. They were all employed as pre-tests and post-tests.

The first instrument, a speaking pre-test made by the researcher, served as the initial instrument to gather the required data. Two subjects were taken from the participants' textbooks and included in this instrument (Touchstone Level 3). The participants were invited to speak on the chosen themes for approximately three to four minutes; their speeches were videotaped for future evaluation. Ultimately, Cronbach's alpha was measured to evaluate the reliability of this pre-test, which turned out to be ($r=.82$). Like the pre-test, the participants were given two subjects from the textbook for the post-test. They had to talk on each theme for three or four minutes, and they were videotaped for further evaluation. Cronbach's alpha was utilized to gauge the posttest's inter-rater reliability ($r=.89$). Three English language specialists assisted the researcher in validating the speaking pre-and post-test results. In addition, the raters utilized Hughes's (2003) speaking checklist as a final tool to assist them in scoring the participants' speech.

The second instrument employed in this investigation was a self-confidence questionnaire (SCQ) created by Akın (2007). The SCQ, a 33-item, five-point Likert scale, was used to assess each learner's level of self-confidence. The highest point demonstrated great self-confidence without having any reservations. Akın (2007) reported that the Cronbach alpha value for the scale was .94, and the internal consistency coefficient was .83.

Additionally, as the third instrument, the researchers employed the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (LAQ) to assess learners' autonomy. This measure, which ranged from *never* to *always*, was created by Shirzad and Ebadi (2020). It consists of 21 items, arranged on a five-point Likert scale. Similar to the prior test's validity, two psychology professors attested to the

validity of this scale. For this test, Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was .79.

The fourth instrument, Gardner's (2004) Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), was employed to measure learners' motivation. Each of the 26 statements on this battery had a ranking: (1) *totally disagree* to (5) *totally agree*. The reliability of the scale was assessed ($r=.88$), and four language experts confirmed its content validity.

3.3 Data Collection and Analyses Procedures

Thirty participants were designated as the CG and thirty as the EG. Subsequently, each participant received four pre-tests to evaluate their speaking ability, motivation for language acquisition, independence, and self-assurance. PST was used to teach eight lessons (conversations) from Touchstone Level 3 to EG. To provide participants with advanced knowledge of PST and self-confidence, as well as an understanding of the intervention procedure, the researcher utilized a Padlet platform to present material on these topics prior to the treatment. The second session lasted for ninety minutes. Following a description of the subject matter, the applicants listened to a song entitled "Fight Song" by Rachel Platten, which has a theme of self-confidence and encouraging self-talk practice for positive self-affirmation and decisiveness. The researcher then instructed the subjects to use PST strategies, such as butterfly hugs, appreciation, writing letters to themselves, and mirroring, while playing relaxing music. The researcher asked individuals to express their feelings after completing the PST method at the end of each session.

Conversely, the CG received traditional instruction in the same subjects without using PST. Following the instruction of all eight lessons to both groups, post-tests measuring speaking proficiency, motivation for

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language acquisition, LA, and self-assurance were given out. Ultimately, the data were statistically analyzed using independent samples t-tests and paired samples t-tests.

4. Results

The necessary data were acquired, and conclusions were drawn once that data was analyzed. The K-S test results indicated that the data distribution was normal. Parametric statistics were exploited to analyze the data accurately.

Table 1 demonstrates that an independent samples t-test was employed to compare learner autonomy scores between the CG and EG prior to the intervention.

Table 1.

Independent Samples T-Test On LA Pre-Test

Groups	N	M	SD	SEM	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
CG	30	53.06	7.43	1.35	.07	.78	.44	58	.65
EG	30	53.90	7.13	1.30	-	-	.44	57.90	

The findings indicated no significant difference in the pre-test scores between the CG ($M = 53.06$, $SD = 7.43$) and the EG ($M = 53.90$, $SD = 7.13$), $t(58) = .44$, $p = .65$. The differences between the two groups were not statistically significant, as demonstrated by the results of the F-test, $F(58) = .07$, $p = .78$. This indicates that the two groups exhibited similar degrees of LA before any intervention.

An independent samples t-test was used to compare post-test scores of learner autonomy between the CG and EG in Table 2.

Table 2.

Independent Samples T Test On LA Post-test

Groups	N	M	SD	SEM	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
CG	30	56.50	9.75	1.78	4.62	.03	13.54	58	.00
EG	30	84.83	6.01	1.09	-	-	13.54	48.29	

The findings revealed a statistically significant difference between the two groups, with the CG ($M = 56.50$, $SD = 9.75$) that had lower scores than the EG ($M = 84.83$, $SD = 6.01$), $t(58) = -13.54$, $p < .001$. Levene's test for equality of variances yielded a significant result, $F(58) = 4.62$, $p = .03$. This finding indicates that the intervention of employing PST significantly enhanced LA in the EG.

Table 3.

Paired Samples of Test of Learners' LA

Groups	N	M	SD	SEM	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
CG	30	3.43	6.48	1.18	-2.90	29	.00
EG	30	30.93	5.65	1.03	-	29	.00
					29.98		

The findings indicated a significant difference in learner autonomy between the CG ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 6.48$) and the EG ($M = 30.93$, $SD = 5.65$). The test statistic for CG was $t(29) = -2.90$, $p < .001$, whereas it was $t(29) = -29.98$, $p < .001$ for the EG. These results indicate a significant difference in

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learner autonomy between the two groups, with the EG demonstrating a considerable effect.

Table 4.

Independent Samples T Test on Self-confidence Pre-test

Groups	N	M	SD	SEM	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
CG	30	61.56	13.99	2.55	.12	.72	.16	58	.86
EG	30	62.20	15.27	2.78			.16	57.56	

As seen in Table 4, the results of independent samples t-test on self-confidence pre-test scores show that there was no statistically significant difference in self-confidence between the CG ($M = 61.56$, $SD = 13.99$) and the EG ($M = 62.20$, $SD = 15.27$), $t(58) = .16$, $p = .86$. Also, Levene's test for equality of variances was not significant, $F(58) = .12$, $p = .72$, which confirmed that the assumption of equal variances was satisfied prior to the intervention.

The findings revealed a significant difference in self-confidence levels between the two groups in Table 5.

Table 5.

Independent Samples T-Test on Self-confidence Post-test

Groups	N	M	SD	SEM	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
CG	30	65.86	16.58	3.02	4.78	.03	4.65	58	.00
EG	30	92.33	26.34	4.80			4.65	48.86	

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									tailed)
CG	30	84.80	10.49	1.91	.03	.85	.26	58	.79
EG	30	85.50	10.12	1.84			.26	57.92	

Table 7 indicates no significant difference in motivation between the CG ($M = 84.80$, $SD = 10.49$) and the Experimental Group ($M = 85.50$, $SD = 10.12$), $t(58) = .26$, $p = .79$. Levene's test for equality of variances was not significant, $F(58) = .03$, $p = .85$, confirming that the assumption of equal variances was met and that the motivation levels of both groups were equal prior to the intervention.

Table 8.*Independent Samples T-Test on Motivation Post-test*

Groups	N	M	SD	SEM	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
CG	30	87.86	9.16	1.67	6.62	.01	2.45	58	.01
EG	30	96.73	17.56	3.20			2.45	43.70	

As seen in Table 8, the results of the independent samples t-test motivation post-test revealed a significant difference in motivation between the CG ($M = 87.86$, $SD = 9.16$) and the EG ($M = 96.73$, $SD = 17.56$), $t(58) = 2.45$, $p = .01$. Levene's test for equality of variances was significant, $F(58) = 6.62$, $p = .01$. These results demonstrate that the intervention led to a notable enhancement in motivation of the participants in the EG as compared to their counterparts in the CG.

The results of the motivation pre-and post-tests for the two groups were compared in Table 9 below.

Table 9*Paired Samples Test of Motivation*

Groups	N	M	SD	SEM	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
CG	30	-3.06	5.32	.97	-3.15	29	.00
EG	30	-11.23	16.46	3.00	-3.73	29	.00

A paired-samples *t*-test showed that both groups experienced significant gains in motivation from pre-test to post-test. For the control group, $t(29) = -3.15$, $p < .001$ ($M_{diff} = -3.06$, $SD = 5.32$), while for the experimental group, $t(29) = -3.73$, $p < .001$ ($M_{diff} = -11.23$, $SD = 16.46$). The negative mean differences indicate that post-test motivation scores were higher than pre-test scores in both groups.

An independent samples *t*-test was performed to compare pre-test speaking scores between the CG and the EG in Table 10.

Table 10.*Independent Samples T Test on Speaking Pre-test*

Groups	N	M	SD	SEM	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
CG	30	13.20	2.00	.36	.06	.79	1.27	58	.20
EG	30	12.53	2.04	.37			1.27	57.97	

The findings indicated no significant difference in speaking proficiency between the CG ($M = 13.20$, $SD = 2.00$) and the EG ($M = 12.53$, $SD = 2.04$), $t(58) = 1.27$, $p = .20$. Levene's test for equality of variances yielded a non-

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significant result, $F(58) = .06$, $p = .79$. The two groups exhibited comparably similar speaking ability prior to intervention.

Table 11.

Independent Samples T-Test on Speaking Post-test

Groups	N	M	SD	SEM	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
CG	30	14.43	1.88	.34	.00	.94	2.70	58	.00
EG	30	15.80	2.02	.36			2.70	57.72	

Table 11 shows a notable difference in speaking proficiency between the CG ($M = 14.43$, $SD = 1.88$) and the EG ($M = 15.80$, $SD = 2.02$), $t(58) = 2.70$, $p = .00$. Levene's test for equality of variances yielded a non-significant result, $F(58) = .00$, $p = .94$, confirming that the assumption of equal variances was satisfied. The results indicate that the intervention significantly enhanced the speaking abilities of the participants in the EG.

Table 12.

Paired Samples Test of Speaking Skill

Groups	N	M	SD	SEM	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
CG	30	-1.23	2.16	.39	-3.12	29	.00
EG	30	-3.26	2.31	.42	-7.71	29	.00

As seen in Table 12, there was a notable improvement in speaking skills from pre-test to post-test ($M = -1.23$, $SD = 2.16$), $t(29) = -3.12$, $p = .00$ in the GG. The EG showed a more significant change in speaking skills ($M = -3.26$, $SD = 2.31$), $t(29) = -7.71$, $p < .00$. The results revealed that although

both groups demonstrated significant improvement, the EG experienced a more pronounced change due to the intervention.

In summary, the findings demonstrate that both groups exhibited improved performance on their post-tests; notably, the experimental group surpassed the control group in all post-tests of this study. This improvement can be attributed to the effectiveness of the treatment applied in the EG class.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The research findings showed that the EG performed significantly better in the post-tests of speaking ability, motivation, self-confidence, and LA when compared with their CG counterparts. This strongly suggests that PST might have improved students' performance in each assessment. The results support Lu's (2020) claim that negative states such as anxiety and depression can be lessened by using PST, which can help to maintain the positive psychological state of language learners. According to Kross et al. (2014), encouraging self-talk might help students overcome language learning challenges and feel less stressed. Students who engaged in PST during the intervention in the current study might have found it easier to remain composed and focused during speaking tasks. Our study's findings also align with those of Dimala et al. (2023), who found that using PST tactics in the treatment successfully enhanced students' self-confidence. PST might have enabled Turkish EFL students to put positive inner dialogue into practice through classroom activities, thereby encouraging self-reflection.

Moreover, our findings are in line with the findings of the study by Humairoh and Harmayanthi (2021), which claimed significant effects of the self-talk technique on improving speaking abilities and students' self-confidence in learning English in an EFL setting. Additionally, the findings are consistent with those of Rakhmadiyah (2023), who examined how self-talk strategies can help students become more proficient speakers. PST might

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have enabled students to complete tasks eagerly and might have benefited from extra opportunities to practice speaking aloud. Through PST practice, students might have had a window of opportunity to “voice out” the inner dialogue, get motivated, and accomplish their personal goal of learning a foreign language.

Self-talk can help learners become more confident in their ability to communicate ideas when speaking, according to Cutton et al. (2015). It could have helped the learners to pay closer attention and actively participate in EFL learning. Put another way, they might have maintained concentration on a task in the face of distracting outside inputs using PST. For example, when completing performance-based activities in a distracting setting, those who actively practice self-talk could be more concentrated and perform better than their silent counterparts (Galanis et al., 2018). With the aid of self-talk, learners can stay focused and motivated because of their commitment (Feeney, 2019) thus lessening the negative impacts of the environment. Whether self-talk is in the native language or the target language still requires exploration. According to sociocultural theory and self-regulation mechanisms (Lantolf, 2011), self-talk can cause less cognitive load (Alderson-Day & Fernyhough, 2015), making it less distracting and activating linguistic knowledge, which acts as a bridge between thoughts and communication (Wiltschko, 2025).

Language learners need to develop self-confidence because active learning is necessary for effective communication in both personal and public settings. Students who lack confidence in themselves may impede their emotional and psychological growth. Furthermore, a student with a low level of self-confidence may find it challenging to establish supportive relationships with others in their society. According to the study data, teaching EFL students the PST approach could be an effective way to help

them feel more confident and capable of maintaining oral interactions, which could foster their social relationships with others. It makes sense that using a self-talk technique to improve speaking skills can help students feel more confident by practicing the language whenever they want, discussing their preferences with increased eagerness, and potentially sounding more relaxed and natural.

This research has some implications for EFL learners. The results may encourage EFL students to use PST to promote their English-speaking capabilities. By employing self-talk technique, students can gain confidence in discussing their opinions on academic issues, current events, politics, and religion. The outcomes of this investigation can also encourage students to become more motivated, more independent, and self-assured by incorporating PST into their English learning process. Also, by adopting this technique, they can cultivate a growth mentality with lessened stress and anxiety when confronting challenges.

The results of this research suggest using PST in EFL classes to develop positive self-esteem, effective stress management, and promote the positive psychology of EFL learners. When students believe in themselves, they can be more inclined to accept changes, take risks, and explore novel experiences. When learners repeat positive statements to themselves, they might begin to accept them, which can help them cope with stress and self-destructive experiences. In addition, using PTS might lessen any indications of anxiety, depression, and other negative states among EFL learners. When students are motivated to take actions in line with the goals set and feel more confident in themselves, they are less likely to have unnecessary negative emotions such as stress and anxiety, and they can be more inclined to engage in language learning.

The research findings have the potential to benefit EFL instructors. These findings encourage teachers to assist students in developing their long-term learning by encouraging them to engage in constructive self-talk. Also, employing PST teachers may directly help students feel more confident in their oral communication skills. Through PST, students might be less likely to encounter unneeded tension and worry, resulting in greater self-confidence, which creates a positive and supportive learning setting.

To conclude, this study investigated the effect of PST on EFL students' speaking skills, language learning motivation, learner autonomy, and self-confidence. The results showed that using PST generated constructive effects on speaking skills, language learning motivation, LA, and self-confidence of EFL learners. It can be inferred that using PST in EFL classrooms can be a powerful tool for promoting a growth mindset, building self-confidence, and inspiring curriculum designers. Additionally, this investigation can provide insights to language instructors and researchers examining PST and self-confidence among language learners in various EFL contexts. By modeling PST and employing it in the classroom, teachers may foster a pleasant learning environment that supports student achievement.

This study has certain limitations. It had a minimal sample size. It may be repeated with more participants from other higher education contexts in different regions. The course of PST practice was limited to two months due to scheduling limitations and intensive syllabus content. Students with an intermediate level of English language proficiency were the subjects of this research. To acquire additional knowledge about the effects of PST on learning the English language, students from higher or lower proficiency levels should also be involved, and the number of PST practice sessions may be increased in follow-up research investigations. Furthermore, only quantitative data could be gathered to address the study issues. Future

research should incorporate open-ended questionnaire items, observations, and interviews to gain a deeper understanding of the perspectives of instructors and students regarding PST.

Funding: *This study is supported via funding from Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University Project Number (PSAU 2024 /R/1447).*

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