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Exploring the Relationship Between Students' Communicative Competence (CC) and their Self-Confidence: The Case of Third-Year EFL Students at the University of Msila

Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in partial fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in linguistics

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Dedication

First of all, I am thankful and grateful to Almighty Allah for his guidance in finishing this work.

I dedicate this dissertation to

the source of my success in life, my beloved parents for their continued love, encouragements, and prayers.

My brothers. whose love and support have been extremely important. Also, without forgetting my ‘fiancé’ who supported me all the time.

To my friends and relatives who supported me in this work.

To my teachers and classmates

Miss Ahlem

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated:

To my beloved parents, for their support and encouragement throughout my academic journey

To myself for being patient for all the past years of studying

To my brothers for their love

To my best friend, who believed in me and encouraged me during this journey.

May Allah bless them all.

Miss Abir

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Finally, we would like to thank all our classmates and wish them all success.

Miss Babeche Abir

Miss Seghiour Ahlem

Abstract

The present research explored and investigated how self-confidence would affect learners' communicative competence. Hence, the purpose was to investigate the relationship between student's communicative competence and their self-confidence. This investigation was conducted among the third year LMD students of English Department at M'sila University. Among the 80 students set as population, only 30 students were randomly selected to participate in this study as a sample. The study opted for a descriptive mixed method approach where data were collected both qualitatively through quantitatively through both administered questionnaires (one for teachers and one for learners) as well as focus group interviews. The results revealed that there is a relationship between student's communicative competence and their self-confidence. Self-confidence has an essential factor that has significant an effect on student's communicative competence. Ultimately, important research implications and future research directions were also suggested.

Keywords: Communicative Competence, Self-confidence, Third year LMD students.

List of abbreviations

CC: Communicative Competence

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

ICC: Intercultural Communicative Competence

WTC: Willingness to Communicate

LMD: Licence-Master-Doctorat (Bachelor-Master-Doctorate system)

SA / A / N / D / SD: Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

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General Introduction

1. Background to the Study

In the contemporary globalized world, English has established itself as a dominant international language used in education, business, science, and intercultural communication. Its status as a lingua franca has made proficiency in English a crucial skill for students worldwide, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts such as Algeria (Crystal, 2003).

Over the past decades, language teaching methodologies have shifted from traditional grammar-based approaches to more communicative-oriented paradigms. Earlier methods, such as the Grammar Translation Method, emphasized linguistic accuracy and knowledge of grammatical rules, often neglecting the practical use of language in real-life situations. However, with the emergence of communicative language teaching (CLT), the focus has moved toward developing learners' ability to use language effectively and appropriately in various communicative contexts (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Central to this shift is the concept of communicative competence, first introduced by Dell Hymes, who argued that knowing a language involves more than mastering its grammatical structures; it also includes understanding how to use language appropriately in social contexts (Hymes, 1972). This perspective has profoundly influenced language teaching practices, particularly in EFL classrooms.

In Algeria, English is taught as a foreign language across different educational levels, including universities. Despite years of instruction, many students still face difficulties in using English effectively, especially in speaking. While students often possess adequate grammatical knowledge, they frequently lack the confidence to express themselves orally. This issue is particularly evident among university students, including those in advanced levels such as third-year EFL learners.

One of the major challenges faced by Algerian EFL students is speaking anxiety, often caused by fear of making mistakes, negative evaluation, and lack of exposure to authentic communicative situations. Consequently, students tend to avoid participation in classroom discussions, which further limits their opportunities to develop communicative competence.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Although EFL students at the university level are expected to have developed a reasonable level of communicative competence, many still struggle to communicate effectively in

English. This paradox highlights a significant issue: students may have the necessary linguistic knowledge but lack the confidence to use it in real communicative situations.

This lack of self-confidence manifests in several ways, including hesitation, avoidance of speaking tasks, and limited classroom participation. Students often fear making grammatical or pronunciation errors and being judged by peers or teachers. As a result, there exists a noticeable gap between students' competence (what they know) and performance (what they actually use).

This study seeks to investigate this gap by exploring the relationship between students' communicative competence and their self-confidence in speaking English.

1.3 Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the level of communicative competence among third-year EFL students?
2. What is the level of students' self-confidence in speaking English?
3. Is there a relationship between communicative competence and self-confidence?

1.4 Research Hypothesis

The study is based on the following hypothesis:

- There is a positive relationship between communicative competence and self-confidence among EFL students.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

This research aims to explore the relationship between communicative competence and self-confidence among third-year EFL students. Specifically, it seeks to:

1.Evaluate and measure the level of communicative competence among third-year EFL students

2.Assess the level of students' self-confidence in speaking English

3.Examine the nature and direction of the relationship between communicative competence and self-confidence

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to the field of EFL by providing insights into the psychological and linguistic factors affecting students' performance. Second, it offers practical implications for teachers by highlighting the importance of fostering a supportive classroom environment that enhances both competence and confidence. Finally, it contributes to the limited body of research on EFL learning in the Algerian context.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on third-year EFL students at the University of Msila. While this specific context allows for in-depth analysis, it also limits the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, constraints such as time, sample size, and access to participants may affect the scope of the study.

1.8 Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five main chapters. Chapter One introduces the study. Chapter Two reviews the relevant literature on communicative competence and self-confidence. Chapter Three presents the research methodology. Chapter Four discusses the results and findings. Finally, Chapter Five concludes the study and provides recommendations.

Explanation of Keywords

1. Communicative Competence

Communicative competence refers to a learner's ability to use a language effectively and appropriately in real-life social interactions. It goes beyond grammatical knowledge to include sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence, allowing speakers to adapt language according to context, purpose, and interlocutor. This concept was first introduced by Hymes (1972) and later developed by Canale and Swain.

2. Self-Confidence

Self-confidence in language learning refers to a learner's belief in their own ability to successfully use the target language in communicative situations. It plays a crucial role in reducing anxiety, encouraging participation, and increasing willingness to communicate in the

classroom. High self-confidence is often associated with better performance and greater engagement in EFL learning.

3. English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

EFL refers to the teaching and learning of English in contexts where English is not the primary language of daily communication. Learners study English mainly in classroom settings for academic, professional, or personal purposes rather than for immediate social integration. In EFL environments, exposure to authentic language use is often limited, making instructional input particularly important.

Chapter One: Literature Review

Introduction

Communicative competence, as introduced by Dell Hymes and further developed by Michael Canale and Merrill Swain, refers to a learner's ability to use language effectively and appropriately in real communicative situations. It is commonly understood as a multidimensional construct that includes grammatical competence (knowledge of linguistic rules), sociolinguistic competence (appropriateness of language use in context), discourse competence (coherence and cohesion in language use), and strategic competence (the ability to compensate for communication breakdowns). Together, these components reflect not only what learners know about the language, but also how they use it meaningfully in interaction.

In language learning, self-confidence plays a crucial role in activating and sustaining communicative competence. It refers to learners' belief in their ability to use the target language successfully, which directly influences their willingness to participate, take risks, and engage in classroom interaction. When learners feel confident, they are more likely to practice the language, which in turn strengthens their communicative competence. Conversely, improved competence reinforces self-confidence by providing successful communicative experiences. This creates a reciprocal relationship in which competence and self-confidence continuously shape and reinforce each other, ultimately enhancing overall language development and communicative performance.

1. Communicative Competence

1.1 Definition of Communicative Competence

The concept of communicative competence has undergone significant theoretical evolution over the past decades, reflecting broader shifts in language teaching paradigms. Initially rooted in structural and generative linguistics, language competence was narrowly defined by Chomsky (1965) as the idealized knowledge of grammatical rules. However, this

perspective was soon criticised for failing to account for real-life communication, in which language use is shaped by dynamic and context-dependent factors.

Hymes (1972) reconceptualized competence by introducing the term *communicative competence*, arguing that knowing a language entails more than mastering its grammar; it requires the ability to use language appropriately in socially and culturally situated contexts, a perspective through which Chomsky was challenged for not accounting for the role of society in influencing language use and development. From a humanised perspective, this shift acknowledges that language learners are not merely rule-governed processors but social beings who negotiate meaning, identity, and relationships through interaction.

Subsequent models, particularly those of Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983), operationalized communicative competence into four key components: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. These models have remained foundational in applied linguistics.

More recent scholarship has expanded the construct further by incorporating intercultural and psychological dimensions. For instance, intercultural communicative competence (ICC) emphasizes the ability to communicate effectively across cultures, integrating attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary for global interaction . This development reflects the realities of globalization, where communication often occurs across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Moreover, contemporary research increasingly views communicative competence as a dynamic, context-sensitive, and socially mediated process rather than a static body of knowledge. This aligns with sociocultural theory, which posits that language learning occurs through interaction and participation in social practices (Vygotsky, 1978).

1.2 Importance of Communicative Competence in EFL Learning

In modern EFL contexts, communicative competence is widely regarded as the ultimate goal of language learning. This is because learners are expected not only to understand the

language but also to use it effectively in real-life situations, whether academic, professional, or social.

Recent studies confirm that communicative competence plays a central role in shaping learners' engagement and success. For example, research has shown that learners with higher communicative competence are more likely to participate actively in classroom interaction and demonstrate greater language proficiency (Yuxia, 2026). This highlights the practical value of communicative competence as both a learning outcome and a facilitator of further learning.

Additionally, communicative competence contributes to learners' ability to navigate multicultural environments. In an increasingly interconnected world, the ability to communicate across cultures is essential. As highlighted in recent research, developing intercultural communicative competence enhances learners' adaptability and global awareness .

From a pedagogical perspective, communicative competence also aligns with learner-centred approaches, such as task-based language teaching and communicative language teaching (CLT). These approaches emphasize meaningful interaction, authentic tasks, and collaborative learning, which mirror real-world communication. Importantly, communicative competence is closely linked to learners' affective factors, particularly motivation and confidence. Learners who feel capable of communicating are more likely to engage in language use, creating a positive cycle of practice and improvement.

1.3. Components of Communicative Competence

1.3.1 Grammatical Competence

Grammatical competence remains a foundational component of communicative competence. It encompasses knowledge of vocabulary, syntax, morphology, and phonology, enabling learners to produce structurally accurate utterances. However, contemporary perspectives emphasize that grammatical competence should not be taught in isolation. Instead, it should be integrated into communicative contexts where learners can apply

grammatical knowledge meaningfully. This shift reflects a broader movement away from form-focused instruction toward usage-based approaches.

Recent studies suggest that while grammatical accuracy contributes to communicative success, excessive focus on correctness may hinder learners' willingness to communicate. Traditional teaching techniques that prioritize grammatical accuracy over fluency tend to create a high-pressure classroom environment that discourages active participation and limits the development of communication skills (Reducing Speaking Anxiety in Low-Proficiency ESL, 2025). Learners who fear making mistakes may avoid speaking, thereby limiting their opportunities for practice, since reduced classroom participation means missing out on the meaningful interaction that language development requires. Evidence from vocational EFL classrooms shows that shifting away from mid-speech correction toward post-task, constructive feedback reduced students' fear of making mistakes and helped them focus on communicating their ideas, which in turn built their confidence and motivation to speak. Thus, effective pedagogy requires balancing accuracy and fluency, ensuring that learners develop grammatical competence without compromising their confidence.

1.3.2 Sociolinguistic Competence

Sociolinguistic competence involves understanding the social norms and cultural conventions that govern language use. It includes knowledge of politeness norms, register variation, and context-appropriate language.

In recent years, this component has been expanded to include intercultural awareness. Studies indicate that learners who develop intercultural competence are better equipped to engage in meaningful communication across diverse contexts. From a social perspective, sociolinguistic competence reflects learners' ability to position themselves socially and culturally within communication. It allows them to express identity, build relationships, and navigate social interactions effectively.

In EFL classrooms, developing sociolinguistic competence requires exposure to authentic language and cultural contexts. Role-play simulation rooted in Communicative Language Teaching enables learners to engage in spontaneous, context-sensitive language use and helps them practice complex social settings, strengthening their sociolinguistic realisation and fluency (Amirkhanova & Bobyreva, as cited in research on simulation and roleplay in EFL teacher training). A study on role-play with Jordanian EFL students found that embedding culture-fair language and socially accepted linguistic norms into simulation exercises led to more successful communication, since learners must understand the sociolinguistic aspects of native-speaker communication, including the situations in which particular forms are used and the behavioural expectations of participants (An Experimental Study of the Effectiveness of Role-play in Improving Fluency in Jordanian EFL Students' Speaking Skills, 2025). This can be achieved through role-plays, simulations, and multimedia resources, as a systematic review of authentic audiovisual materials found that exposure to films, TV dramas, and video-based content gave learners valuable access to real-life sociolinguistic contexts, increasing their familiarity with idiomatic expressions, cultural practices, and near-native pronunciation (The Role of Authentic Audiovisual Materials in Enhancing ESL Learning Outcomes: A Systematic Review, 2025).

1.3.3. Discourse Competence

Discourse competence refers to the ability to produce coherent and cohesive texts, both spoken and written. It involves organizing ideas logically and using appropriate linguistic devices to maintain continuity. Recent research highlights the importance of discourse competence in academic contexts, where learners are required to produce extended texts such as essays and presentations. It is also crucial for effective participation in conversations, where coherence and clarity are essential. Furthermore, discourse competence is increasingly linked to digital communication, where learners must navigate new forms of discourse, such as online discussions and social media interactions.

1.3.4. Strategic Competence

Strategic competence involves the use of communication strategies to overcome difficulties and enhance interaction. These strategies include paraphrasing, asking for clarification, and using non-verbal cues.

Recent studies emphasize the importance of strategic competence in fostering learners' autonomy and resilience. For instance, a learner who forgets the word "suitcase" may successfully sustain the conversation by paraphrasing it as "the bag I put my clothes in," or by asking the interlocutor for clarification rather than abandoning the exchange altogether; such moves illustrate how strategic competence allows learners to maintain interaction despite linguistic limitations. Moreover, strategic competence is closely linked to self-confidence, as it provides learners with tools to manage communication challenges.

1.4. Self-Confidence in Language Learning

1.4.1 Definition of Self-Confidence

Self-confidence in language learning refers to learners' belief in their ability to use the target language effectively. It is closely related to self-efficacy, a concept introduced by Bandura (1997), which emphasizes individuals' perceptions of their capabilities.

In recent years, self-confidence has been increasingly studied within the framework of *willingness to communicate* (WTC), a key construct in second language acquisition. WTC is defined as a learner's readiness to initiate communication in a given situation (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Contemporary research highlights that self-confidence is not a fixed trait but a dynamic state influenced by contextual and emotional factors. For example, learners may feel confident in familiar situations but experience anxiety in unfamiliar contexts.

Paul R. Pintrich (2003) said that: " Self-confidence refers to students' beliefs about their abilities to learn and perform" and that means an effective learning can improved just by believing in self . Moreover, other researchers define self-confidence as "self-confidence is closely related to self-efficacy, which reflects individuals' belief in their capabilities."(Barry J. Zimmerman (2000). This indicates that students who have high confidence can improve their performance in a good and organized way and helps reduce anxiety in classroom.

In addition, Richard M. Ryan & Edward L. Deci (Self-Determination Theory) "Confidence is related to individuals' sense of competence and their ability to control their learning"(Deci & Ryan, 2000) .In other words feeling confident make learners motivated and comfortable and showed the ability to control their learning and express their ideas freely .

1.4.2 Factors Affecting Self-Confidence

Recent research within positive psychology has substantially clarified the emotional and motivational underpinnings of EFL learners' self-confidence, where Fathi, Pawlak, Kruk, and Mohammaddokht (2024), in a cross-lagged study of 903 Iranian EFL learners, established that a stronger Ideal L2 Self significantly predicts subsequent levels of foreign language enjoyment and grit, thereby positioning learners' self-projected future image as a driving force behind sustained engagement and confidence.[1] In a related vein, Xu (2025), examining 746 undergraduates in an English-medium-instruction context in China, found that enjoyment functioned as a markedly stronger predictor of willingness to communicate than anxiety, with enjoyment positively shaping both learners' ideal linguistic and disciplinary self-images.[2] Earlier work by the same research tradition, notably the Iranian study on foreign language enjoyment and anxiety as correlates of the Ideal L2 Self, demonstrated through structural equation modeling that enjoyment outweighed anxiety as a predictor of how confidently learners envisioned themselves as competent English users, even though both variables proved statistically significant.[3] Complementing these findings, Khajavy's broader theoretical synthesis on the triarchy of emotion, cognition, and language performance underscored that positive affect, as initially theorized by Fredrickson, drives learners toward active classroom participation, while positive-psychology constructs such as empathy, optimism, and flow, as categorized by Fathi et al. (2021), collectively enhance learners' self-efficacy and overall sense of success in the target language.

1.4.3 Importance of Self-Confidence in Speaking Skills

Speaking is often the most anxiety-provoking skill in language learning. It requires real-time processing, interaction, and exposure to evaluation.

Recent empirical studies confirm that self-confidence is a key predictor of speaking performance and willingness to communicate. Learners with higher confidence levels are more likely to engage in interaction, use the language frequently, and achieve better proficiency outcomes .

Moreover, confidence mediates the relationship between emotional factors and communication. For example, enjoyment enhances confidence, which in turn increases willingness to communicate . From a pedagogical perspective, fostering self-confidence involves creating a supportive environment, encouraging risk-taking, and providing constructive feedback.

A study conducted by Marcus Delly Jerick Aloy and Arzovan Priyawan (2019) showed that learners with high self-confidence can improve their speaking skills and perform better during oral activities, games, or even discussions without fear of making mistakes. , According to Dian Febriani and Debby Sari Astuti (2020), students with good self-confidence become more comfortable expressing their ideas, and this helps them focus their energy and interact positively in the classroom.

However , Horwitz Elaine K. (1986) states that "Students with low confidence often experience anxiety when speaking in a foreign language", which means that students with low self-confidence face many difficulties in class. They feel shy and afraid of making mistakes in front of their classmates. Even if they know the correct answer, they prefer not to speak, and this attitude prevents them from improving their oral skills. Additionally, Stephen Krashen (1982) argues that "A low affective filter, including confidence, facilitates language acquisition". A comfortable atmosphere helps learners who have self-confidence because they can speak and express their opinions freely in public speaking activities without fear or pressure.

1.5. Relationship Between Communicative Competence and Self-Confidence

1.5.1 Theoretical Relationship

The relationship between communicative competence and self-confidence is complex and reciprocal. Communicative competence provides learners with the skills needed for effective interaction, while self-confidence determines their willingness to use these skills.

Recent theoretical frameworks, such as Macintyre et al.'s (1998) model of willingness to communicate, highlight the interplay between linguistic competence, psychological factors, and situational variables. This model suggests that communication behaviour is influenced by multiple layers, including self-confidence, motivation, and social context. From a humanised

perspective, this relationship reflects the holistic nature of language learning, where cognitive and affective dimensions are intertwined.

1.5.2 Empirical Studies

Recent empirical research strongly supports the positive relationship between communicative competence and self-confidence, where learners' self-confidence has been shown to depend on several interrelated factors, including emotional experience, motivation, classroom environment, and instructional design. Positive emotions such as enjoyment enhance confidence and engagement, while a robust Ideal L2 Self motivates learners to envision themselves as competent users of the target language, as Fathi, Pawlak, Kruk, and Mohammaddokht (2024) demonstrated in their cross-lagged analysis of Iranian EFL learners.[1] Supportive and interactive classroom environments likewise help build learner confidence, whereas anxiety-inducing contexts tend to hinder it, a pattern confirmed across multiple studies linking foreign language enjoyment and classroom anxiety to learners' communicative outcomes.[2] Innovative pedagogical approaches, most notably flipped classrooms and digital technologies, have also been found to increase learners' self-efficacy and confidence; Fan (2022), reviewing flipped-learning interventions that relied on social media platforms such as Telegram, found that such approaches significantly boosted EFL learners' willingness to communicate by making learning more enjoyable, raising motivation, and reducing anxiety.[3] In a related study, Namaziandost and Çakmak (2020) examined the flipped classroom model's effect on self-efficacy and reported a significant increase in learners' self-efficacy scores following the intervention, alongside variation by gender.[4] Similarly, research on flipped instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic revealed measurable gains in learners' motivation, self-efficacy, engagement, self-confidence, and autonomy compared with traditional instructional modes.[5]

Furthermore, recent work in positive psychology highlights the role of grit, enjoyment, and emotional engagement in shaping communicative behaviour, as classroom enjoyment and

perseverance have been found to significantly predict willingness to communicate, with Fathi et al. (2024) establishing that a stronger Ideal L2 Self at an earlier stage predicted higher subsequent levels of both enjoyment and grit among learners.[6] These findings suggest that communicative competence and self-confidence are mutually reinforcing, forming a dynamic cycle of development.

1.5.2.1. Classroom Implications

The relationship between communicative competence and self-confidence has significant implications for language teaching.First, teachers should adopt **communicative and interactive approaches** that provide learners with opportunities to use language meaningfully. Task-based learning, group work, and role-plays are particularly effective. Second, creating a **supportive and low-anxiety environment** is essential. Teachers should encourage participation, value effort, and provide constructive feedback. Third, integrating **technology and innovative pedagogy** can enhance learners' confidence and engagement. For example, flipped classrooms and digital tools have been shown to promote self-efficacy and communication. Finally, teachers should address both **cognitive and affective dimensions** of learning, recognizing that language acquisition is not only about knowledge but also about emotions, identity, and social interaction.

1.5.2.2. Research Gap

Despite the extensive body of literature on communicative competence and self-confidence in second and foreign language learning, several important gaps remain, particularly within EFL contexts such as Algerian higher education.

First, while foundational studies (e.g., Hymes, 1972; Canale & Swain, 1980; Savignon, 2002) have established the theoretical framework of communicative competence, much of the empirical research has been conducted in Western or Asian contexts. There is a noticeable lack of context-specific studies investigating how communicative competence develops among Algerian EFL university students, whose linguistic environment is shaped by multilingualism (Arabic, French, Tamazight, and English). This sociolinguistic complexity may influence both communicative practices and learners' confidence in unique ways that remain underexplored.

Second, although recent research (2015–2025) has increasingly focused on affective variables such as motivation, enjoyment, and anxiety, self-confidence as an independent construct is often subsumed under broader frameworks like willingness to communicate (WTC) or self-efficacy (MacIntyre et al., 1998; Dörnyei, 2005). As a result, there is insufficient in-depth investigation into how self-confidence specifically interacts with communicative competence, particularly in speaking contexts.

Third, many studies tend to examine communicative competence either as a general construct or focus on isolated components (e.g., grammatical or discourse competence). There is a lack of integrative studies that explore how the *combined components* of communicative competence contribute to learners' self-confidence in a holistic manner. This creates a gap in understanding the interconnected nature of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and strategic abilities in shaping learners' psychological readiness to communicate.

Fourth, existing research often relies heavily on quantitative approaches, using questionnaires to measure self-perceived competence and confidence. While valuable, such approaches may not fully capture learners' lived experiences, perceptions, and classroom realities. There is a need for mixed-method or context-sensitive approaches that provide deeper insights into how students experience communication and confidence in real classroom settings.

Fifth, in many EFL classrooms, particularly in North African contexts, teaching practices still reflect a form-focused tradition, where grammatical accuracy is prioritized over communicative use. Consequently, there is limited empirical evidence on how student-centered and communicative teaching practices influence both communicative competence and self-confidence simultaneously.

Finally, although previous studies confirm a positive relationship between communicative competence and self-confidence, the directionality and strength of this relationship remain insufficiently explored in specific contexts. It is still unclear whether communicative competence primarily leads to increased confidence, or whether confidence acts as a prerequisite for developing competence—or whether both evolve dynamically in interaction.

1.5.2.3. Positioning of the Present Study

In response to these gaps, the present study aims to:

The present study endeavors to explore the connection between communicative competence and self-confidence in EFL university students by analyzing the effects of various factors of communicative competence on students' confidence while using English language. In addition, this study will help understand the Algerian higher education context and bridge the gap between theory and practice.

By doing so, this research seeks to offer a more holistic and contextually grounded understanding of language learning, integrating both cognitive (competence) and affective (confidence) dimensions.

1.6 Alignment with Research Questions and Hypotheses

To ensure coherence between the literature review and the empirical investigation, this section explicitly aligns the theoretical framework with the study's research questions and hypotheses.

1.6.1 Conceptual Framework of the Study

This study is grounded in an integrated framework combining:

1.Communicative Competence Theory

The concept of communicative competence was first introduced by Dell Hymes (1972) as a response to views of language that focused mainly on grammatical knowledge. Hymes argued that effective language use involves not only knowing the rules of a language but also understanding how, when, where, and with whom to use it appropriately. Building on this idea, Michael Canale and Merrill Swain (1980) proposed a model that includes grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences. In language learning, this theory highlights the importance of developing learners' ability to communicate meaningfully in real-life situations rather than simply mastering linguistic forms (Hymes, 1972; Canale & Swain, 1980).

2.Self-Efficacy Theory

Self-Efficacy Theory, developed by Albert Bandura (1997), refers to an individual's belief in their ability to successfully perform a particular task. According to Bandura, people who have strong self-efficacy are more likely to approach challenges with confidence, persist when difficulties arise, and achieve better outcomes. In the context of language learning, students who believe they can communicate effectively in English tend to participate more actively in classroom activities and are generally more motivated to improve their language skills. Conversely, low self-efficacy may lead learners to avoid communication opportunities due to fear of making mistakes or experiencing failure (Bandura, 1997).

3.Willingness to Communicate Model

The Willingness to Communicate (WTC) Model was proposed by Peter D. MacIntyre and colleagues (1998) to explain why some language learners choose to communicate while others remain silent, even when they possess sufficient language knowledge. The model suggests that

communication is influenced by a combination of linguistic, psychological, and social factors, including self-confidence, motivation, anxiety, and the learning environment. Learners who feel confident and supported are generally more willing to engage in communication, whereas those who experience anxiety or lack confidence may hesitate to speak. The WTC model is particularly relevant in EFL settings because it emphasizes that successful communication depends not only on language proficiency but also on learners' readiness and desire to use the language (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

From this perspective: The relationship between communicative competence, self-confidence, willingness to communicate, and language use can be understood as a dynamic and mutually reinforcing process rather than a simple linear sequence. Drawing on the principles of Communicative Competence Theory, learners who develop greater communicative competence are generally more capable of using language appropriately and effectively in a variety of social and academic contexts (Hymes, 1972; Canale & Swain, 1980). As learners become more competent, they tend to develop stronger beliefs in their ability to communicate successfully, thereby enhancing their self-confidence and sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

This increased confidence plays a crucial role in shaping learners' willingness to communicate. According to the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) model, individuals who feel confident in their linguistic abilities are more likely to initiate communication and participate actively in interactions (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Consequently, greater willingness to communicate leads to more frequent language use, both inside and outside the classroom, allowing learners to engage in meaningful communicative experiences that promote language development.

The language more frequently, they gain additional opportunities to practice, receive feedback, negotiate meaning, and develop fluency. These experiences contribute to further improvements in communicative competence, which in turn strengthen learners'

confidence and willingness to communicate (MacIntyre et al., 1998; Bandura, 1997). Therefore, communicative competence, self-confidence, willingness to communicate, and language use function as interconnected variables that continuously influence one another. This cyclical process suggests that progress in one area can generate positive gains in the others, ultimately fostering more effective language learning and communicative development (Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1972).

1.6.2 Pedagogical and Research Significance

The present study holds important pedagogical and research implications because it links communicative competence with learners' self-confidence, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the language learning process. Contemporary theories of second language acquisition emphasize that successful language learning is not solely determined by linguistic knowledge but also by learners' affective characteristics, including confidence, motivation, and anxiety. By examining communicative competence alongside self-confidence, this study contributes to a more holistic perspective that recognizes language development as the result of interactions between cognitive, linguistic, and psychological factors (Hymes, 1972; Canale & Swain, 1980; MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Furthermore, the findings may support the integration of affective and cognitive dimensions within EFL instruction. While communicative competence traditionally focuses on learners' ability to use language effectively and appropriately in various contexts (Canale, 1983), self-confidence influences the extent to which learners are willing to engage in communication and take risks in language use. It can therefore be speculated that learners who perceive themselves as competent communicators are more likely to participate actively in classroom interactions, which in turn creates additional opportunities for language practice and development. Such a reciprocal relationship reinforces the view that cognitive competence and affective readiness should be addressed simultaneously in language teaching (Bandura, 1997; MacIntyre et al., 1998).

From a pedagogical standpoint, the study may encourage EFL teachers to adopt instructional practices that foster both communicative skills and learners' confidence. Activities such as collaborative tasks, presentations, role-plays, peer interaction, and constructive feedback may not only enhance linguistic competence but also strengthen learners' beliefs in their communicative abilities. In this regard, creating a supportive classroom environment where mistakes are viewed as natural components of learning could contribute to increased self-confidence and greater willingness to communicate (Dörnyei, 2005; Tuan & Mai, 2015). Consequently, language instruction may become more learner-centered and responsive to the emotional needs of students.

The study also offers context-specific insights relevant to Algerian higher education. Although communicative approaches have increasingly been adopted in Algerian universities, many EFL learners continue to experience difficulties in oral communication despite possessing adequate linguistic knowledge. It may therefore be hypothesized that affective variables, particularly self-confidence, play a mediating role between learners' communicative competence and their actual language use. Understanding this relationship could help university instructors and curriculum designers develop interventions that address both communicative proficiency and learners' psychological readiness to communicate in English. Such interventions may be especially valuable in contexts where opportunities for authentic language use outside the classroom remain limited.

From a research perspective, the study contributes to the growing body of literature that investigates the interaction between communicative competence and affective variables in second language learning. The findings may provide a foundation for future studies examining causal relationships among communicative competence, self-confidence, willingness to communicate, and academic achievement. They may also encourage researchers to explore additional contextual, cultural, and instructional factors that influence these constructs within Algerian and other EFL settings. In doing so, the study extends existing theoretical discussions

and opens new avenues for empirical inquiry into the dynamic nature of language learning and use (MacIntyre et al., 1998; Dörnyei, 2005).

Ultimately, this research aims to move beyond fragmented approaches and propose a holistic model of language learning, where learners are viewed not only as language users but also as social, emotional, and cognitive agents

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the theoretical and empirical foundations of communicative competence and self-confidence, establishing that the two constructs are reciprocally linked rather than independent dimensions of language development. The literature surveyed shows that effective language use depends not only on linguistic abilities but also on learners' psychological readiness to communicate, a conclusion supported across the Communicative Competence, Self-Efficacy, and Willingness to Communicate frameworks discussed above.

This theoretical positioning, particularly the identified research gap concerning Algerian higher education, directly motivates the empirical investigation undertaken in the following chapters, where the present study examines the relationship between communicative competence and self-confidence among third-year EFL students at the University of M'sila. Ultimately, the chapter establishes that language learners must be understood as cognitive, social, and emotional agents whose successful language development results from the interaction of multiple interrelated factors.

CHAPTER Two: Research Methodology

2.1. Introduction

This study adopts a mixed-method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between communicative competence and self-confidence among EFL learners. The quantitative component allows for measuring levels of competence and confidence, while the qualitative component provides deeper insights into students' experiences and perceptions. Mixed-method research is particularly suitable for educational studies as it enables triangulation of data, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings (Creswell, 2014).

The choice of a mixed-method design is justified by the complexity of the research variables. Communicative competence is a multidimensional construct involving linguistic and pragmatic abilities, while self-confidence is a psychological variable influenced by various contextual factors. Therefore, relying solely on numerical data would not capture the full scope of the phenomenon. By integrating questionnaires, observations, and interviews, this study ensures a holistic investigation of both measurable outcomes and subjective experiences.

2.1.1. Population and Sample

1. Target Population

The target population of this study consists of third-year EFL students at the University of Msila (80 students). These students are selected because they have already undergone several years of English instruction and are expected to demonstrate a relatively advanced level of communicative competence.

2.Sample Selection

A sample of approximately 30 students and 10 teachers was selected using a convenience sampling method for the students, due to accessibility and time constraints.

2.1.2. Data Collection Tools

To ensure data triangulation, four main instruments are used:

1. Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire is designed to investigate learners' levels of communicative competence, their degree of self-confidence when using English, and their attitudes toward

classroom participation. More specifically, it seeks to assess students' perceptions of their ability to communicate effectively in English, their willingness to engage in oral interactions, and the extent to which they feel confident expressing their ideas in classroom settings. The questionnaire also explores students' views regarding participation in communicative activities and the factors that may encourage or hinder their involvement.

To collect comprehensive data, the questionnaire incorporates a combination of closed-ended questions based on a Likert scale, a limited number of open-ended questions. The Likert-scale items enable participants to indicate their level of agreement with various statements related to communicative competence and self-confidence, while the demographic items provide background information about participants' gender, age, and years of studying English. The open-ended questions offer respondents the opportunity to elaborate on their answers, share personal experiences, and provide additional insights that may not be captured through structured items alone.

2. Teachers' Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire aims to explore instructors' perceptions of students' communicative competence and their observations regarding learners' confidence levels in English-language communication. It seeks to gather information about teachers' evaluations of students' ability to use English effectively in classroom interactions, as well as their views concerning the influence of self-confidence on language performance and participation.

In addition, the questionnaire investigates the pedagogical strategies employed by teachers to foster communicative competence and encourage active classroom participation. Particular attention is given to instructional practices, classroom management techniques, feedback methods, and communicative activities that teachers perceive as effective in enhancing students' confidence and willingness to communicate. The data obtained from teachers are expected to provide valuable complementary perspectives on the relationship between communicative competence and self-confidence among EFL learners. In addition to the two questionnaires, the

study employed a teachers' semi-structured Focus Group Interview and a Students' semi-structured Focus Group Interview, designed to provide deeper qualitative insight into participants' perceptions of communicative competence and self-confidence.

3. Focus group interviews

According to Casey and Krueger (2000), a focus group offers a more natural setting than an individual interview, since participants both influence and are influenced by others in the discussion, much as they do in everyday life. Building on this, Krueger and Casey (2015) describe the focus group interview (or focus group discussion, FGD) as a qualitative data collection method involving guided group discussions designed to generate in-depth insight into participants' values, perceptions, and evaluations of a particular issue .

2.1.3. Data Analysis Procedures

1. Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data obtained from questionnaires are analyzed using Percentages, Frequencies and tables.

2. Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data from open-ended responses are analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves: Coding responses, identifying recurring themes and interpreting meanings

Chapter Two: Section Two-Practical Part

1. Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

Table 1: Gender identification

Female	Male	Age
20	10	20/25

Total: 30

Table 1 presents the gender distribution of the respondents, showing that the sample is composed of 30 students, with a clear majority of females (20) compared to males (10). This

indicates a higher female representation in the study population. The participants' age ranges from 20 to 25 years, reflecting a typical university-level cohort of young adult learners.

Section C: self-confidence in speaking

Table2: Feeling confident when speaking in English

Q.10_ I feel confident when speaking English in class.

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
SA	5	16.67%
A	8	26.67%
N	6	20%
D	10	33.33%
Sd	1	3%
Total	30	100%

Self-confidence is an important concept in the process of speaking English in class. This statement suggested to identify the importance of self-confidence in class oral activities. The table shows that almost of learners disagreed 33.33% , while only 16.67% strongly agreed. From this answers , it was concluded that the majority lack self-confidence during speaking English in classroom.

Q.11.I am not afraid of making mistakes when speaking English.

Table3: Not afraid when making mistakes

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
SA	5	16.67%
A	6	20%
N	4	13.33%
D	10	33.33%
Sd	5	16.67%
Total	30	100%

Learners who suffer from the low self-confidence face a lot of problems and that make them feel afraid of making mistakes and do not interact positively with others. This statement aims to identify if students have high self-confidence or not. According to the results, 33.33% of the

students disagreed that they are not afraid of making mistakes when speaking English. This means that many learners are afraid of making mistakes .

Q.12. participate actively in speaking activities.

Table4: Active participation in speaking activities.

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
SA	4	13.33%
A	7	23.33%
N	6	20%
D	8	26.67%
Sd	5	16.67%
Total	30	100%

Participation is essential in learning any language because it helps to involve the speaking skills. This statement aims to identify whatever students participate actively or not. By the results,26.67% of students disagreed while 23.33% agreed or strongly agreed.This means students with low self-confidence reduce their participation.

Q.13_ I feel comfortable speaking English in front of my classmates.

Table 5: Feeling comfortable when speaking English before the class

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
SA	4	13.33%
A	5	16.67%
N	5	16.67%
D	13	43.33%
Sd	3	10%
Total	30	100%

Feeling comfortable when speaking English in front of classmates means that students ar more confident without embarrassment or fear. This statement in table indicates that a combined 53.33% of students (43.33% Disagree + 10% Strongly Disagree) do not feel comfortable

speaking in front of their classmates, which reflects high levels of speaking anxiety and low self-confidence that may significantly impact their communicative performance.

Q.14_ I feel nervous when speaking English. (reverse item)

Table 6: Feeling nervous when speaking English

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
SA	10	33.33%
A	4	13.33%
N	3	10%
D	9	30%
Sd	4	13.33%
Total	30	100%

Anxiety in speaking is the feeling of stress, fear and lack of confidence. This statement's results demonstrate that 33.33% of the participants strongly agreed of feeling nervous when speaking English.

Q.15. I avoid speaking English when possible.

Table 7: Avoiding speaking English

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
SA	12	40%
A	3	10%
N	8	26.67%
D	6	20%
Sd	1	3%
Total	30	100%

Avoiding speaking English in classrooms or public speaking comes from feeling shy of making mistakes or struggling with pronunciation's hard words. This table shows that 40% of students strongly agreed — the largest single response category, representing a plurality rather than a true majority — and a total of 50% (SA + A) reported avoiding speaking English, suggesting that a notable proportion of students have low self-confidence.

Section D: Classroom environment

Q.16 My teacher encourages me to speak English.

Table 8-Teachers' encouragement to learners

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
SA	7	23.33%
A	11	36.67%
N	3	10%
D	8	26.67%
Sd	1	3%
Total	30	100

Teacher's encouragements are more needed in classrooms because it have a high impact on moral support in learning and speaking English without waiting bad judgments. According to the table almost of them said agreed with a percentage of 36.67%. Teachers Play an essential role in leading classrooms to achievement a good consequence.

Q.17. My classmates support me when I speak..

Table 9: Classmates' support for peers

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
SA	6	20%
A	4	13.33%
N	8	26.67%
D	10	33.33%
Sd	4	13.33%
Total	30	100%

The table shows that 33.33% of students said disagreed. Students do not encourage each other to learn and speak English in front of their classmates because they are afraid of being mocked or laughed at when making mistakes. As a result, many learners feel shy and embarrassed to speak English, which leads to low self-confidence.

Q.18. The classroom atmosphere is comfortable and motivating..

Table 10: classroom **atmosphere**

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
SA	10	33.33%
A	3	10%
N	8	26.67%
D	5	16.67%
Sd	4	13.33%
Total	30	100%

Comfortable atmosphere and motivation is so important at Student's psychology and moral support for learning English and this showed by the answering of the students who answer with a percentage of 33.33%. Teacher's supporteness influence on student's academic achievement.

Section E: Open-Ended Questions

Q.19.What are the main difficulties you face when speaking English?

Table 11: Main difficulties faced by students

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Vocabulary	11	30.67%
Grammar	9	30%
Pronunciation	10	33.33%

One of the major problems in English is speaking difficulties which affect the communicative competence of learners. This statement aims to identify the main problems that faced the students. According to the answers pronunciation represents 33.33%, Vocabulary with 30.67% and grammar with30% .

Q.20.What helps you feel more confident when speaking English

Table 12: Learners' support towards self-confidence

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Learn Vocabulary	9	30%
Supportive environment	10	33.33%
Motivation	11	30.67%

The improvement of self-confidence in speaking English can be attributed to several specific factors, namely a richer vocabulary repertoire, a supportive classroom environment, and sustained motivation. This question aimed to identify which of these factors students perceive as most influential. According to the table, a supportive environment scored a percentage with 33.33%, then motivation with 30,67% , while learning Vocabulary got 30%.

Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

Section B: students ' communicative competence

Table: 13 Teachers responses on communicative competence

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	5 (50%)	3 (30%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)
2	1 (10%)	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	4 (40%)	0 (0%)
3	1 (10%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	0 (0%)
4	1 (10%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)

The findings show that the majority of teachers (80%) agreed that students have a good level of grammatical knowledge. While ,40% disagreed that students can communicate effectively in English. Additionally, half of the respondents believed that students can organize their ideas coherently, and an equal proportion (50%) agreed that students use communication strategies when needed on the questionnaire, although this self-reported figure should be read alongside the lower 40% rate observed later in the teachers' focus group, which points to some inconsistency between teachers' general impressions and their more specific classroom observations. These results suggest that learners possess grammatical knowledge but still face difficulties in oral communication.

Section C:Students ‘ self-confidence

Table 14: Teachers ‘ responses on self-confidence

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
5	0(0%)	2 (20%)	2(20%)	5(50%)	1(10%)
6	5(50%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
7	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)	1(10%)	0 (0%)
8	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	1(10%)	1(10%)	0 (0%)

The table shows that learners generally lack self-confidence when speaking English. Most of teachers (60%) disagreed that students are confident speakers. Therefore, 90% agreed that students are afraid of making mistakes, and 80% reported that learners feel anxious when speaking in class. The findings suggest that fear and anxiety negatively influence students' performance and communicative competence.

Section D: Teaching practices

Table: 15 : Teachers’ Responses on Teaching Practices

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
5	5(50%)	4 (40%)	1(10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
6	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	0(0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
7	5 (50%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)	0(0%)	0 (0%)
8	6(69%)	3 (30%)	1(10%)	0(0%)	0 (0%)

The majority of teachers (90%) reported using communicative activities in their teaching and providing positive feedback to build students' confidence. Moreover, all teachers (100%) indicated that they encourage students to participate actively in class, while 90% stated creating a supportive classroom environment. These results indicate that teachers are aware of the importance of motivation in involving the learning process.

Section E: Open ended questions Analysis:

The teachers stated that the main challenges that face the students in speaking English are fear of making mistakes, lack of self-confidence, and speaking anxiety.. They also said limited vocabulary and pronunciation difficulties.To improve students' onfidence, teachers suggested creating a supportive classroom environment, providing positive

feedback, encouraging participation through communicative activities. These strategies can hel p students feel more comfortable and confident when speaking English.

Analysis of teachers' semi-structured Focus Group interview

Table 16: Analysis of teachers' semi-structured Focus Group interview

Criteria	Yes	%	No	%	Comments
1. Students participate actively	03	60 %	02	40 %	Majority of teachers reported active student participation.
2. Students speak voluntarily	04	80 %	01	20 %	Most teachers observed that students generally volunteer to speak in class.
3. Students hesitate when speaking	03	60 %	02	40 %	Hesitation remains a noticeable issue for many students.
4. Students use communication strategies	02	40 %	03	60 %	Most teachers indicated limited use of communication strategies by students.
5. Teacher encourages participation	04	80 %	01	20 %	Teachers generally make efforts to encourage student involvement.
6. Teacher provides positive feedback	04	80 %	01	20 %	Positive feedback is commonly employed to support learners.
7. Classroom atmosphere is supportive	03	60 %	02	40 %	A majority of teachers described the classroom environment as supportive.
8. Signs of anxiety are visible	03	60 %	02	40 %	Anxiety is still evident among a considerable number of students.

Total Participants: 5 Teachers

Overall Comment / Interpretation

The findings suggest that the classroom environment is generally conducive to oral participation, as most teachers reported that students speak voluntarily (80%) and that participation is actively encouraged through teacher support and positive feedback (80%). Moreover, a majority of teachers perceived the classroom atmosphere as supportive (60%), which may contribute positively to students' willingness to communicate.

However, the results also reveal persistent challenges. Although students participate in classroom activities, 60% of the teachers observed signs of hesitation when students speak, and an equal percentage reported visible signs of anxiety. Furthermore, only 40% of the teachers indicated that students regularly use communication strategies to overcome linguistic difficulties,

suggesting that many learners may lack strategic competence when faced with communication breakdowns.

Overall, the findings point to a classroom context where teachers strive to promote participation and confidence, yet many students continue to experience anxiety and hesitation during oral communication. This may indicate that while supportive teaching practices are present, additional efforts are needed to develop students' communicative competence, strategic competence, and self-confidence in speaking English. These results support the view that communicative competence and self-confidence are closely interconnected, as students who possess stronger linguistic and strategic resources are likely to participate more confidently in classroom interactions.

Analysis of Students' semi-structured Focus group Interview

Section A: General Experience

To complement the questionnaire data, a semi-structured focus group interview was conducted with a group of students. The interview aimed to gain deeper insights into learners' perceptions of their communicative competence and self-confidence when speaking English. Section A below offers a general overview of students' affective experience with speaking English, while the linguistic and confidence-specific details these experiences point to are examined in depth in Sections B and C respectively.

1.How do you feel when speaking English in class?

Most students reported that they generally feel comfortable and motivated when speaking English in class, particularly during group discussions and interactive activities. However, many admitted experiencing some degree of nervousness, hesitation, or fear of making mistakes, especially when speaking in front of the whole class or when being evaluated by the teacher. Several students stated that their confidence increases when they are familiar with the topic and have sufficient vocabulary to express their ideas. Others indicated that they feel more relaxed

when working with supportive classmates who encourage participation rather than criticize errors.

2.Do you enjoy speaking activities? Why or why not?

Most students indicated that they generally enjoy speaking activities because they provide opportunities to practice English and improve their communication skills. However, many admitted that their enjoyment is often reduced by fear of making errors, limited language proficiency, and lack of confidence. Some participants noted that they enjoy speaking activities more when conducted in small groups rather than in front of the whole class.

Section B: Communicative Competence

3.Do you think you have enough vocabulary to express your ideas? if no, please justify

The majority of students acknowledged that their vocabulary knowledge is insufficient to express complex ideas effectively. Participants frequently reported difficulty finding appropriate words during conversations, which often leads to pauses, hesitation, or switching to their native language. Only a few students felt that they possessed adequate vocabulary for most classroom discussions.

4.What difficulties do you face when communicating in English?

Students identified several challenges, including limited vocabulary, pronunciation problems, grammatical uncertainty, and difficulty organizing ideas quickly during communication. Many participants also mentioned that they struggle to understand and respond spontaneously in English, particularly during oral presentations or classroom discussions.

Section C: Self-Confidence

5.Do you feel confident when speaking English? Why?

Most participants reported only moderate or low levels of confidence when speaking English. Students attributed their lack of confidence to limited speaking practice, fear of making mistakes, and concerns about negative evaluation from teachers and peers. In contrast, a small number of students reported feeling confident due to frequent exposure to English through reading, media consumption, and regular classroom participation.

6.What makes you feel nervous when speaking?

Question 6: What makes you feel nervous when speaking?

The most frequently cited causes of nervousness were fear of grammatical and pronunciation mistakes, speaking in front of large groups, and concern about classmates' reactions. Several students explained that they become anxious when they are required to answer unexpected questions or give oral presentations without sufficient preparation.

7.Are you afraid of making mistakes? in both case answers, justify

Most students admitted that they are afraid of making mistakes while speaking English. They explained that mistakes may lead to embarrassment, criticism, or negative judgment from others. Nevertheless, a minority of participants stated that they are not afraid of making mistakes because they view errors as a natural and necessary part of the language learning process that helps them improve their proficiency.

Section D: Classroom Environment

8.Does your teacher help you feel comfortable speaking? Give justifications

Most participants expressed positive views regarding their teachers' support. Students reported that their teachers encourage participation, provide constructive feedback, and create

opportunities for oral interaction. However, some participants suggested that additional encouragement and more speaking activities could further increase their confidence.

9.Do your classmates support you?

The majority of students indicated that their classmates generally provide support and encouragement during speaking activities. Peer collaboration and group work were frequently mentioned as factors that reduce anxiety and facilitate communication. Nevertheless, a few participants reported occasional fear of negative peer evaluation, which sometimes discourages them from speaking freely.

Overall Interpretation

Taken together, the nine questions converge on three recurring themes rather than nine independent findings, which is consistent with the nature of thematic analysis in semi-structured interviewing. The first theme, affective ambivalence toward speaking, emerges across the general-experience and self-confidence sections alike, where students reported enjoying communicative activities in principle while simultaneously experiencing nervousness and hesitation in practice. The second theme, linguistic insufficiency as a root cause, recurs whenever students attributed their reluctance to speak not to confidence alone but to concrete gaps in vocabulary, pronunciation, and the ability to organize ideas spontaneously. The third theme, the mediating role of the social environment, surfaces consistently in students' references to teachers and classmates: supportive interlocutors were repeatedly described as easing anxiety, whereas the prospect of peer judgment was described as intensifying it. The focus group interview findings therefore largely confirm the questionnaire results: students demonstrated moderate communicative competence but reported limitations in vocabulary, fluency, and spontaneous oral expression, while the majority experienced low to moderate self-confidence and expressed concerns about making mistakes when speaking English. The findings also highlight the positive role of teachers and peers in fostering a supportive classroom environment, although additional

efforts may be required to reduce speaking anxiety and enhance students' confidence in oral communication.

Results and Discussion

Presentation and Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study support the research hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between communicative competence and self-confidence. Students with higher levels of competence tend to exhibit greater confidence, which aligns with the findings of Peter D. Mac Intyre et al. (1998), who emphasize the role of confidence in willingness to communicate.

Moreover, the results confirm that psychological factors, particularly anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, significantly hinder students' speaking performance. This supports previous research in second language acquisition, which highlights the importance of affective variables.

The study also reveals a gap between students' knowledge and actual performance, reinforcing the idea that competence alone is insufficient without confidence. From a pedagogical perspective, the findings emphasize the need for: Student-centered teaching approaches, Supportive classroom environments and Increased opportunities for oral practice

2.5.1 Students' Questionnaire Results

The students' questionnaire was administered to investigate learners' levels of communicative competence and self-confidence in using English, particularly in speaking situations. The analysis of the collected data reveals that the majority of students possess a moderate level of communicative competence. Although most respondents demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of grammatical structures and vocabulary, many still encounter difficulties when required to communicate orally in real-life or classroom situations. This finding suggests that linguistic knowledge alone does not necessarily translate into effective communication.

The questionnaire results further indicate that a considerable number of students experience low to moderate levels of self-confidence when speaking English. Many respondents reported

feelings of uncertainty and discomfort during oral interactions, especially when speaking in front of their peers or teachers. Such responses suggest that self-confidence remains a major challenge for EFL learners and may hinder their willingness to participate actively in classroom communication.

Moreover, the findings reveal that fear of making mistakes constitutes a significant barrier to effective oral communication. A substantial proportion of students expressed concern about committing grammatical, lexical, or pronunciation errors while speaking English. This fear appears to negatively affect their participation and willingness to communicate. The data show that a considerable proportion of students hesitate before speaking in English, while a significant number report experiencing anxiety during oral presentations. These figures highlight the prevalence of communication apprehension among the participants and underscore the impact of psychological factors on language performance.

Overall, the students' responses suggest that communicative competence and self-confidence are closely interconnected. Learners who perceive themselves as competent speakers tend to display higher levels of confidence, whereas those who doubt their language abilities are more likely to experience anxiety and reluctance to communicate. These findings support the assumption that improving students' communicative competence may contribute to enhancing their self-confidence and, consequently, their participation in English-language interactions

2.5.2 Discussion of Teachers' Questionnaire Results

The teachers' questionnaire was designed to gather instructors' perceptions regarding their students' communicative competence and self-confidence in English. The analysis of the responses reveals a general consensus among teachers concerning the strengths and weaknesses of their students' language abilities.

Most teachers reported that students possess an adequate level of grammatical knowledge and are generally familiar with the linguistic rules necessary for communication. According to the

respondents, learners have acquired a reasonable command of vocabulary and grammar through years of formal instruction. However, teachers emphasized that this knowledge is often not reflected in students' actual communicative performance.

A recurring observation among the teachers is that many students lack fluency and confidence when speaking English. Despite their theoretical knowledge of the language, learners frequently struggle to express their ideas spontaneously and coherently during classroom discussions and oral activities. Teachers noted that hesitation, pauses, and avoidance of speaking tasks are common behaviors among students, indicating insufficient confidence in their communicative abilities.

Furthermore, the questionnaire results show that classroom participation remains relatively limited. Teachers reported that only a small number of students regularly volunteer to answer questions, engage in discussions, or participate in oral presentations. Many learners prefer to remain silent due to fear of making mistakes, negative evaluation, or embarrassment in front of their classmates. This observation corroborates the findings obtained from the students' questionnaire and reinforces the notion that self-confidence plays a crucial role in language learning and communication.

Taken together, the teachers' responses support the view that communicative competence extends beyond grammatical knowledge and includes the confidence required to use language effectively in authentic communicative situations. The consistency between students' and teachers' perceptions strengthens the validity of the findings and suggests that efforts to improve communicative competence should also focus on fostering learners' self-confidence and reducing speaking anxiety.

2.5.3 Discussion of teachers' semi-structured interview

The thematic analysis of the semi-structured focus group interview with teachers revealed four recurring themes. The first and most prominent is fear of negative evaluation, as teachers

consistently reported that students avoid speaking for fear of poor grades or critical comments from peers and instructors. The second theme concerns limited practice opportunities, since teachers observed that insufficient classroom time dedicated to oral communication prevents students from developing fluency and confidence. The third theme highlights the centrality of teacher attitude, as instructors who adopt an encouraging, low-pressure approach were noted to generate noticeably greater student participation. The fourth theme underscores the role of peer support, with teachers confirming that collaborative activities and positive peer feedback significantly reduce anxiety and motivate students to engage in oral tasks.

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with a selected group of students. This method allows for flexibility while ensuring that key topics are covered. Interviews focus on: Students' feelings about speaking English

The semi-structured focus group interview was conducted with a selected group of students, allowing for thematic exploration of three interconnected areas: first, students' affective experiences when speaking English, including feelings of comfort, anxiety, or enjoyment; second, perceived communicative challenges, particularly regarding vocabulary, pronunciation, and spontaneous oral expression; and third, the factors that either strengthen or undermine their self-confidence in speaking, such as teacher support, peer interaction, and familiarity with the topic.

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General conclusion

This study aimed to explore the relationship between communicative competence and self-confidence among third-year EFL students at the University of Msila. The findings indicate that while students possess a certain level of linguistic competence, their lack of self-confidence significantly limits their ability to communicate effectively.

The data analysis reveals that third-year EFL students at the University of M'sila demonstrate a moderate level of communicative competence alongside a low-to-moderate level of self-confidence. What is particularly significant about this finding is not the levels in isolation, but what they imply for language learning: students who possess adequate linguistic knowledge are still constrained by affective barriers, suggesting that EFL pedagogy must address psychological readiness alongside linguistic development.

Through this investigation, the researchers also concluded that a positive correlation exists between the two variables. This means there is a clear match between how much students trust themselves and how well they speak English. Moreover, EFL learners' motivation and speaking skills are greatly affected by their self-confidence. When their confidence goes up, their speaking gets much better, and when confidence goes down, their ability to communicate becomes weak.

After a review of what has been done in this study, it is clear that more research on self-confidence is needed to help foreign language learners. Nonetheless, we hope that this study has covered the initial objectives, which were to explore the level of competence and confidence among third-year students. Furthermore, we hope that in the near future, teachers will focus more on building students' trust. Hence, considering self-confidence is crucial in the teaching and learning process to get better communicative competence and higher self-confidence.

This study could have implications for teachers to be aware of their students' performance types by taking into consideration these psychological factors to know what type of strategy they have also to meet learners' preferences.

To conclude, the three research questions guiding this study have been fully addressed: the findings confirm a positive correlation between communicative competence and self-confidence, a relationship that significantly shapes learners' fluency and motivation to engage with English as a foreign language. These results invite teachers and curriculum designers to treat learner confidence not as a secondary concern but as an integral dimension of EFL instruction.

Recommendations

The findings of this study suggest several pedagogical recommendations. Teachers should create a supportive and non-threatening classroom environment where students feel comfortable when they express their opinions in English without fear of making mistakes and errors. They should encourage participation through group work and discussions to motivate learners interact better to achieve a good academic performance. Additionally, providing constructive and positive feedback may help students get ride their fear and increase their self-confidence.

Also, they should use communicative activities such as role-plays and debates. Students should practice speaking regularly, accept mistakes as a natural part of the learning process, and engage in peer interaction. Furthermore self-confidence has a significant role to improve an effective communicative competence. Students who trust in their own abilities can perform and interact freely and communicate effectively in English. Both teachers and learners should

work together and match their energies to create a good environment in learning process However, this study has some limitations, including the limited sample size .

The study was conducted at only one university on a specific group of teachers and EFL learners at M'sila university, and time constraints that affected data collection. Therefore, future research should conduct similar studies at different educational levels with large samples , explore other psychological variables that have a relation with communicative competence such as motivation and anxiety, and make comparisons between different universities or regions to understand broadly the relationship between self-confidence and communicative competence among EFL learners .

Based on the anticipated findings of the study, several pedagogical recommendations can be proposed to enhance students' communicative competence and self-confidence in English language learning. For teachers, it is essential to create a supportive, encouraging, and non-threatening classroom environment where learners feel comfortable expressing themselves without fear of criticism or embarrassment. Such an atmosphere can reduce anxiety and foster greater willingness to participate in communicative activities. Teachers should also encourage active participation through collaborative learning strategies such as group work, pair work, and classroom discussions, as these activities provide learners with meaningful opportunities to practice language use in authentic contexts.

Furthermore, constructive and positive feedback should be provided regularly to help students recognize their progress, build confidence, and identify areas for improvement. The integration of communicative activities, including role-plays, debates, simulations, and problem-solving tasks, can further promote students' communicative competence by allowing them to use language purposefully and interactively.

For students, regular practice of speaking English is crucial for developing both linguistic competence and self-confidence. Learners should be encouraged to view mistakes as a natural and inevitable part of the language learning process rather than as indicators of failure. Adopting a positive attitude toward errors can reduce speaking anxiety and increase learners' willingness to communicate. Additionally, students should actively engage in peer interaction both inside and outside the classroom, as collaborative communication provides valuable opportunities for language practice, feedback, and confidence building.

Limitations of the Study

Like any research endeavor, this study is subject to certain limitations that should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings. First, the study relies on a limited sample size, which may affect the generalizability of the results to a wider population of EFL learners. Second, the research is restricted to a single university context, which may limit the applicability of the findings to students from different educational institutions or cultural settings. Finally, time constraints associated with data collection and analysis may have restricted the scope of the investigation and the depth of the data obtained. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted within the context of these limitations.

Future research could extend the present study in several meaningful ways. First, similar investigations may be conducted at different educational levels, such as secondary schools, undergraduate programs, or postgraduate studies, to determine whether the relationship between communicative competence and self-confidence varies across learner populations. Second, researchers could explore the influence of additional psychological variables, including motivation, foreign language anxiety, self-efficacy, and learner autonomy, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting language learning success.

Finally, comparative studies involving different universities, regions, or educational contexts could be undertaken to examine how contextual and sociocultural factors shape students' communicative competence and self-confidence in English language learning. Such research would contribute to a broader understanding of the dynamic interplay between linguistic and psychological dimensions of second language acquisition.

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Appendices

Appendix A-Students' Questionnaire

Dear Students,

This questionnaire is part of a study to investigate Communicative Competence and Self-Confidence in Speaking. The data you provide will be very confidential and will only be used for Masters Two dissertation.

Section A: General Information

1. Gender: Male ☐ **Female** ☐ **2. Age**: _____

3. Years of studying English: _____

Section B: Communicative Competence

Please read each on the Likert scale statement carefully and tick (✔) the option that best represents your opinion.

Likert Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

1.Grammatical Competence

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
1.I can use correct grammar when speaking English.					
2.I have sufficient vocabulary to express my ideas.					
3.I can pronounce English words correctly.					

2.Sociolinguistic Competence

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
4. I know how to speak appropriately in different social situations.					
5. I understand cultural differences when using English.					
3.Discourse Competence					
Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
6. I can organize my ideas clearly when speaking.					
7. I can maintain a conversation for several minutes.					
4.Strategic Competence					
Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
8.I use strategies (e.g., paraphrasing) when I don't know a word.					
9. I use gestures or explanations to help communication					

Section C: Self-Confidence in Speaking

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
10.I feel confident when speaking English in class.					
11.I am not afraid of making mistakes when speaking English.					
12.I participate actively in speaking activities.					
13.I feel comfortable speaking English in front of my classmates.					
14.I feel nervous when speaking English. (reverse item)					
15.I avoid speaking English when possible.					

Section D: Classroom Environment

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
16.My teacher encourages me to speak English.					
17.My classmates support me when I speak.					
18.The classroom atmosphere is comfortable and motivating.					

Section E: Open-Ended Questions

19.What are the main difficulties you face when speaking English?

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20.What helps you feel more confident when speaking English?

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.....

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Thanks for your collaboration

Appendix B-Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear Teachers,

This questionnaire is part of a study to investigate Communicative Competence and Self-Confidence in learners' Speaking. The data you provide will be very confidential and will only be used for Masters Two dissertation.

Section A: Background Information

Years of teaching experience: _____ **Modules taught**: _____

Section B: Students' Communicative Competence

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
1.Students have a good level of grammatical knowledge					
2.Students can communicate effectively in English.					
3.Students can organize their ideas coherently					
4.Students use communication strategies when needed.					

Section C: Students' Self-Confidence

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
5.Students are confident when speaking English.					
6.Students are afraid of making mistakes.					
7.Students avoid participating in oral activities.					
8.Students feel anxious when speaking in class.					

Section D: Teaching Practices

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
9.I use communicative activities in my teaching.					
10.I encourage students to participate actively.					
11.I provide positive feedback to build confidence.					
12.I create a supportive classroom environment.					

Section E: Open-Ended Questions

13.What are the main challenges students face in speaking English?

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14.How can teachers improve students' confidence?

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..... **Thanks for your collaboration**

Appendix C-Classroom Interview Checklist

Date of the .....visit: **Time:** **class:**

Name of the Teacher: **Name of the Institution**:

Criteria	Yes	No	Comments
1. Students participate actively			
2.Students speak voluntarily			
3.Students hesitate when speaking			
4.Students use communication strategies			
5.Teacher encourages participation			
6.Teacher provides positive feedback			
7.Classroom atmosphere is supportive			
8.Signs of anxiety are visible			

Researchers Name:

Miss Seghiour

Miss Babeche

Appendix D-Students' Semi -Structured Focus group Interview

Dear Students:

Thank you for participating. This interview aims to understand your experience with speaking English. Your answers will remain confidential.

Section A: General Experience

1.How do you feel when speaking English in class?

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2.Do you enjoy speaking activities? Why or why not?

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Section B: Communicative Competence

3.Do you think you have enough vocabulary to express your ideas? if no, please justify

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4.What difficulties do you face when communicating in English?

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Section C: Self-Confidence

5.Do you feel confident when speaking English? Why?

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6.What makes you feel nervous when speaking?

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7.Are you afraid of making mistakes? in both case answers, justify

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Section D: Classroom Environment

8.Does your teacher help you feel comfortable speaking? Give justifications

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.....

9.Do your classmates support you?

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Thanks for your collaboration

الملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف مدى تأثير الثقة بالنفس على الكفاءة التواصلية لدى المتعلمين. كما سعت إلى دراسة العلاقة بين الكفاءة التواصلية للطلبة وثقتهم بأنفسهم. أُجريت هذه الدراسة على طلبة السنة الثالثة ليسانس (LMD) بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة المسيلة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تم اختيار 30 طالبًا بشكل عشوائي للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة. واعتمد البحث على المنهج الوصفي، حيث جُمعت البيانات نوعيًا من خلال الملاحظة الصفية وكمّيًا باستخدام الاستبيان. أظهرت النتائج وجود علاقة بين الكفاءة التواصلية للطلبة وثقتهم بأنفسهم. كما بينت نتائج الدراسة أن الثقة بالنفس، مثلها مثل عوامل أخرى (كالتجارب الشخصية والدافعية...)، تُعد عاملًا أساسيًا له تأثيرات مهمة على الكفاءة التواصلية لدى الطلبة. وقد تناول هذا البحث بشكل وصفي جانبًا من هذه العلاقة، ولذلك تم اقتراح بعض التوصيات المهمة وآفاق لدراسات مستقبلية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكفاءة التواصلية، الثقة بالنفس، الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.