

Indonesian Teachers' Affective Roles And Students' English Speaking Confidence In A Multilingual Learning Environment At Nonformal School Context In Malaysia

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Abstract

This study investigated Indonesian teachers' affective roles in supporting English-speaking confidence and explored how a multilingual learning environment shaped elementary students' confidence in a nonformal school in Malaysia. A qualitative case-study design involved ten elementary students and two English teachers selected purposively. Data were collected through online questionnaires, semi-structured teacher interviews, and classroom observations, and analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing following Miles and Huberman. Findings related to the first research question showed that teachers supported learners through emotional care, encouragement, constructive responses to errors, interactive classroom practices, and repeated opportunities to speak. In the second research question, students described Indonesian, Malay, and English as useful resources for understanding lessons and communicating; peer participation and flexible language use often supported confidence. However, code-switching, limited vocabulary, fear of mistakes, and anxiety remained challenges. Overall, teacher affective support and a psychologically safe multilingual environment appeared to encourage participation, although multilingual flexibility needed to be paired with purposeful opportunities to practice English. The study highlights the value of supportive feedback, collaborative speaking tasks, and gradual movement toward more sustained English use in nonformal multilingual education.

Keywords

Affective Support; English Speaking Confidence; Multilingual Learning; Nonformal Education; Teacher Roles



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INTRODUCTION

Nonformal schools in Malaysia provide educational access for children of migrant workers who may face administrative, socioeconomic, and mobility-related barriers to formal schooling. English learning in these settings takes place within complex multilingual environments: students may use Indonesian or other home

languages, Malay in daily interaction, and English in classroom activities. This diversity provides communicative resources but may also make English speaking demanding when learners have to retrieve vocabulary, organize ideas, and manage anxiety at the same time.

Speaking confidence is not simply a reflection of linguistic knowledge. Learners' willingness to communicate is also shaped by their emotions, perceptions of error, classroom relationships, and opportunities to participate. Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis emphasizes the relevance of anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence to second-language acquisition. Research on speaking and language learning likewise highlights the interaction between psychological factors, communicative practice, and language performance (Derakhshan et al., 2022; Ockey & Wagner, 2022; Teimouri et al., 2022). Teachers therefore have responsibilities beyond explaining language forms: they can encourage participation, respond constructively to mistakes, and create a classroom climate in which learners feel safe enough to try.

Multilingual practices are also important to consider. Students may draw on Indonesian, Malay, and English in a single interaction, particularly when they lack a word or need to clarify meaning. Translanguaging perspectives treat learners' linguistic repertoires as resources for meaning-making rather than automatically as deficits (García & Wei, 2021). At the same time, flexible language use should be balanced with opportunities to produce English so that support does not unintentionally reduce practice in the target language. Peer interaction and collaborative speaking tasks can offer low-pressure opportunities to rehearse language and negotiate meaning (Sato & Ballinger, 2021).

Although prior research has discussed teacher support, multilingual practice, and speaking anxiety, the present thesis identifies a contextual gap: the experiences of elementary students in a multilingual nonformal school serving migrant communities in Malaysia. The setting differs from many formal EFL classrooms because of its flexible instructional context and the routine coexistence of Indonesian, Malay, and English. Understanding both the affective practices of teachers and the influence of multilingual communication may help clarify how confidence is supported in this context.

This article addresses the two research questions stated in the thesis: (1) What roles did teachers play in supporting English language learning in a multilingual learning environment at a nonformal school in Malaysia? and (2) How did a multilingual learning environment influence Indonesian elementary students' confidence in speaking English in that context? The analysis and discussion are

organized around these two questions.

METHODS

The study employed a qualitative approach with a case-study design to examine teachers' affective roles and students' English-speaking confidence in a specific multilingual nonformal school context in Malaysia. Participants were ten elementary school students and two English teachers selected through purposive sampling. The study focused on classroom experiences and speaking confidence rather than measuring students' overall English proficiency or other language skills.

Data were collected through online student questionnaires, semi-structured online interviews with teachers, and classroom observations during the researcher's KKN activities. The questionnaire elicited students' perceptions of emotional support, encouragement, teacher responses to errors, classroom comfort, confidence support, language use, code-switching, peer influence, speaking anxiety, and confidence development. Teacher interviews provided explanations of classroom practices and students' responses, while observations offered contextual evidence of participation and interaction.

Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman qualitative model: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles & Huberman, 2014). Questionnaire responses were summarized descriptively and interpreted alongside interview statements and observations. Triangulation across these sources was used to compare students' perceptions with teachers' accounts and observed classroom interactions. Because the study was qualitative and involved a small, context-specific sample, the findings are interpreted as contextual insights rather than statistically generalizable effects.

The analytical framework followed the thesis research questions: teacher affective practices (emotional support, encouragement, constructive error response, classroom comfort, and confidence support) were examined in relation to students' speaking experiences; multilingual-environment dimensions (language use, code-switching, peer influence, anxiety, and confidence development) were then examined to understand how language practices shaped participation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. TEACHERS' ROLES IN SUPPORTING ENGLISH LEARNING AND SPEAKING CONFIDENCE

The first research question concerned the roles teachers played in supporting English learning in the multilingual nonformal school. Five interrelated roles emerged: providing emotional support, encouraging participation, responding constructively to

errors, creating a comfortable classroom, and supporting confidence through repeated practice. The questionnaire results reported in the thesis generally showed positive perceptions across these dimensions.

Table 1. Summary of students' perceptions of teachers' affective roles

Affective dimension	Reported response pattern	Interpretation from the thesis
Emotional support	80% strongly agreed/agreed on a key item	Teacher care helped students feel more comfortable speaking.
Encouragement	80% strongly agreed/agreed on a key item	Motivation and positive reinforcement encouraged participation.
Response to errors	80% strongly agreed/agreed on a key item	Polite correction and patient guidance reduced embarrassment.
Classroom comfort	80% strongly agreed/agreed on a key item	Interactive activities and two-way communication supported participation.
Confidence support	80% strongly agreed/agreed on a key item	Speaking opportunities and continued support helped confidence develop.

Source: Summarized from the thesis questionnaire findings (Tables 3.1–3.5).

Emotional support was reflected in teachers' attention to students' feelings and efforts to reduce nervousness during speaking activities. The thesis reports that students generally felt more comfortable when teachers acknowledged their emotional condition and offered support. This pattern is consistent with the Affective Filter Hypothesis, which proposes that anxiety and confidence are relevant to language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). In this setting, emotional support was not separate from teaching; it helped create conditions in which students were more willing to attempt oral communication.

Encouragement was another central role. Teachers motivated students and reinforced their attempts to speak, while some students remained concerned about being laughed at or judged by classmates. Such concerns could discourage participation even when learners had ideas to express. The findings suggest that praise

and encouragement helped students take part in classroom speaking. This interpretation aligns with work emphasizing the role of motivation and supportive interaction in speaking performance (Derakhshan et al., 2022).

Teachers' responses to mistakes also mattered. In the interviews, Cikgu A stated, "Kita tidak boleh langsung mengatakan bahwa siswa itu salah" ("We should not directly say that the students were wrong"), while Cikgu DN explained that students should be guided gradually so that they would not feel embarrassed. These accounts illustrate a preference for constructive correction rather than blame. The approach is relevant because fear of negative evaluation can constrain oral participation (Ockey & Wagner, 2022). Feedback can preserve confidence when it identifies a path forward without humiliating the learner.

Classroom comfort was supported through two-way interaction, group repetition, and collaborative practice before individual performance. One teacher described having the whole class repeat a sentence together until everyone participated. This gradual structure may reduce the pressure associated with speaking alone in front of peers. The findings are compatible with the view that speaking develops through meaningful interaction and collaborative communication (Sato & Ballinger, 2021).

Finally, teachers supported confidence by providing repeated opportunities to practice. A teacher noted that students gradually became more confident when they were trained to speak frequently. The findings therefore indicate that confidence was nurtured through a combination of emotional safety, encouragement, constructive feedback, interactive practice, and repetition. The nonformal context appeared to allow close teacher–student relationships and flexible responses to individual needs. These conclusions describe perceived and observed patterns in this case; the design does not establish a causal effect or quantify changes in proficiency.

2. INFLUENCE OF THE MULTILINGUAL ENVIRONMENT ON STUDENTS' ENGLISH-SPEAKING CONFIDENCE

The second research question examined how the multilingual environment influenced students' confidence. The thesis identified five related dimensions: the use of multiple languages, code-switching, peer influence, speaking anxiety, and confidence development. The results showed both enabling and challenging features of multilingual communication.

Table 2. Summary of students' perceptions of the multilingual learning environment

Dimension	Reported response	Interpretation from
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	pattern	the thesis
Use of multiple languages	100% strongly agreed/agreed on a key item	Indonesian and Malay helped students understand English lessons.
Code-switching	70% strongly agreed/agreed on a key item	Mixing languages helped communication but shaped speaking habits.
Peer influence	80% strongly agreed/agreed on a key item	Classmates' participation motivated others to speak.
Speaking anxiety	70% strongly agreed/agreed on a key item	Nervousness and fear of mistakes remained challenges.
Confidence development	80% strongly agreed/agreed on a key item	Flexible multilingual interaction was perceived as confidence-supportive.

Source: Summarized from the thesis questionnaire findings (Tables 3.6–3.10).

Students generally viewed Indonesian, Malay, and English as useful resources for classroom communication. Teachers explained that when students did not understand English, explanations could be repeated in Malay or Indonesian. This flexibility helped students understand instructions and vocabulary and reduced the pressure to communicate only in English before they were ready. From a translanguaging perspective, the use of several languages can mobilize learners' full linguistic repertoires to support meaning-making (García & Wei, 2021).

Code-switching was a regular feature of everyday communication. The thesis gives examples combining Indonesian, Malay, and English, such as “Saya busy hari ini, sebab tak de assignment” and “Nanti kita orang discuss selepas lunch.” Interview accounts indicated that students often switched languages when they could not recall an English word. In this context, code-switching helped sustain communication and allowed students to express ideas rather than remain silent. However, habitual mixing also influenced speaking patterns and indicates the need for guided practice that gradually expands students' ability to sustain communication in English.

Peer influence was largely supportive. Teachers observed that students were more likely to speak when classmates participated actively. Shared practice could

make learners feel that speaking difficulties were common rather than a personal failure. This finding underlines the social nature of speaking development and the value of pair or group tasks before individual speaking. It also suggests that classroom routines should encourage respectful peer responses so that group participation does not become a source of ridicule.

At the same time, anxiety remained visible. The thesis reports that 70% of students strongly agreed or agreed with a key item related to nervousness, and interviewees described students' fear of making mistakes or being laughed at. Some students appeared nervous when asked to speak individually and relied on Indonesian or Malay before attempting English. These findings complicate a simple claim that multilingualism always improves confidence: the environment can provide resources and emotional relief, while performance pressure and limited vocabulary can still inhibit participation. This is consistent with research identifying anxiety as a factor in second-language speaking (Teimouri et al., 2022; Huang, 2024).

Overall, students and teachers perceived the multilingual environment as helpful for confidence when multiple languages were used flexibly and peers and teachers offered support. The classroom observations described students becoming more active during group practice and discussion when allowed to use familiar languages as a bridge. The pedagogical implication is not to prohibit Indonesian or Malay, nor to leave English practice entirely optional. Instead, teachers can acknowledge students' linguistic resources, clarify meaning through familiar languages when needed, and then invite students to reformulate or extend their ideas in English. This balance may sustain psychological safety while protecting opportunities for target-language practice.

CONCLUSION

This study addressed two research questions concerning teacher roles and the influence of a multilingual learning environment on English-speaking confidence among elementary students in a nonformal school in Malaysia. For the first question, teachers supported English learning through emotional care, encouragement, constructive responses to mistakes, comfortable and interactive classroom practices, and repeated speaking opportunities. These practices appeared to reduce embarrassment and encourage participation. For the second question, the use of Indonesian, Malay, and English supported comprehension and communication, while code-switching and positive peer interaction offered ways to maintain participation. Nevertheless, speaking anxiety, fear of mistakes, and limited vocabulary remained challenges.

The findings suggest that confidence-building in multilingual nonformal education requires both affective support and structured opportunities to speak English. Teachers may use group rehearsal, supportive feedback, collaborative tasks, and gradual transitions from multilingual explanation to English production. The study is limited to ten students and two teachers in one context, and its qualitative findings should not be generalized statistically. Future research could examine other nonformal schools, follow learners over time, and combine qualitative evidence with systematic measures of speaking participation and confidence.

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