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Investigating the Effectiveness of Positive Self-Talk in Boosting Master One EFL Students' Self-Confidence and Reducing Their Anxiety. The Case of Saida University

A thesis submitted as partial fulfillment for the requirements of the degree of *Master* in Didactics.

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this submission is my work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material that has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution.

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Dedication

To my beloved parents, sisters, brother, and friends (Fatima, Faiza, Hayat, and Miloud).
Thank you for the unwavering love and support that you filled my journey with. I am truly
grateful to all of you for always believing in me, even when I struggled to believe in myself.

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Abstract

EFL learning process presents various academic stressors that hinder students' progress, notably low self-confidence and anxiety. While significant, these challenges can be effectively managed by applying suitable strategies such as positive self-talk. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of positive self-talk in enhancing self-confidence and reducing anxiety levels of Master One EFL students. Additionally, it seeks to explore the potential contribution of positive self-talk to students' overconfidence. To reach these objectives, a mixed methods approach comprising both quantitative and qualitative research instruments was employed. A semi-structured questionnaire was administered to 19 Master One EFL students of Didactics, and a semi-structured interview was conducted with 10 students from the literature and civilization group, the third research tool is classroom observation through which the researcher selected the interviewees. The study findings revealed that Master One EFL students utilize positive self-talk and perceive it as effective in enhancing self-confidence and alleviating anxiety, particularly in verbal communication. Moreover, the students expressed that excessive use of positive self-talk leads to overconfidence, which they have experienced personally. This study underscores the significance of positive self-talk and encourages future researchers to delve deeper into its influence on the academic performance of EFL students.

Keywords: academic achievement, anxiety, overconfidence, self-confidence, positive self-talk

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

ST: Self-talk.

PST: Positive self-talk.

NST: Negative self-talk.

SC: Self-confidence.

M1: Master One.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Education plays a crucial role in the lives of individuals, providing them with numerous opportunities. Learning is a rewarding process that leads to unlimited knowledge and equips learners with essential skills for personal and professional growth. However, achieving success in higher education, particularly at the university level, is challenging and requires specific traits such as self-confidence and reduced anxiety. These traits significantly impact students' academic performance, personality, and mental well-being.

In the context of EFL learning, students often struggle with self-confidence and anxiety due to various factors, both internal and external. Negative self-talk, through which students criticize themselves and their performance, can significantly affect their self-confidence and contribute to increased anxiety. In this regard, positive self-talk is proposed as an effective strategy to counter low self-confidence and anxiety among EFL students. Positive self-talk involves internal encouraging dialogue, and it is suggested to enhance students' self-confidence and alleviate their anxiety as the power of words and thoughts within the human mind is profound.

Self-confidence is a critical trait for learners, helping them overcome psychological barriers and academic discomfort. However, if self-confidence is lacking, positive self-talk offers a solution to mitigate the impact of academic stressors. Many students may not be aware of the influence of their self-talk on their academic performance or the potential of positive self-talk to empower them and reduce anxiety.

The present study aims to investigate the effectiveness of positive self-talk among Master One EFL students in enhancing their self-confidence and reducing anxiety level. Additionally, the study aims to address the issue of overconfidence resulting from excessive practice of positive self-talk. It emphasizes providing effective strategies related to positive self-talk to support students struggling with low self-confidence and anxiety, and raising awareness about the potential negative effects of overconfidence. The study provides insights as well for instructors on integrating positive self-talk into their teaching process to support their students.

To attain these objectives, the study will focus on the following:

- Detailed examination of self-talk, self-confidence, and anxiety.

- The evaluation of the efficacy of positive self-talk in boosting students' self-confidence and reducing their anxiety.

- The exploration of the potential negative effects of overconfidence resulting from positive self-talk.

The study addresses the following research questions:

- What kind of effects does self-talk have on learners' self-confidence and anxiety?
- Can positive self-talk result in overconfidence? How?

To answer these questions, the researcher hypothesizes that:

- Positive self-talk may make students believe in their abilities and could turn them into self-assured individuals, and in turn, it might provide them with relief that reduces their anxiety.
- Positive self-talk can lead to overconfidence through overestimating abilities, disregard for others, and alienation.

The investigation utilizes a mixed-method approach, incorporating three distinct research instruments to collect data from Master One EFL students at Saida University. These instruments include a semi-structured questionnaire for the Didactics stream, classroom observation, and semi-structured interviews with the literature and civilization stream.

The research will be presented in three chapters, with the first one focusing on the existing literature related to students' positive self-talk and its relationship with their self-confidence and anxiety. The second chapter will be dedicated to a detailed description of research methods, participants, and research instruments. Moreover, it will include an analysis of data collected from the participants and results interpretation. The third chapter will be devoted to some suggestions and recommendations for both teachers and learners to help them foster the practice of positive self-talk.

As far as findings of the study are concerned, the majority of participants reported the efficacy of positive self-talk in making them more self-assured and less anxious mainly when speaking in public, they have also highlighted their experiences with overconfidence as a result of their excessive use of positive self-talk confirming the researcher's hypotheses.

Chapter One:

Positive Self-Talk, Self-Confidence and Anxiety- A Review of Related Literature.

1.1 Introduction

Lack of self-confidence (SC) and anxiety continue to be the most pervasive psychological discomforts encountered by the majority of EFL learners during their language learning process. Both significantly influence the academic success and accomplishments of students. However, practicing positive self-talk (PST) contributes in effectively addressing these hindrances. It has been demonstrated through empirical research that the latter is efficacious in enhancing SC and alleviating anxiety.

In this regard, the present chapter covers a review of literature related to the impact of PST on EFL students' SC and anxiety.

1.2 Self-Talk: An Overview

Self-talk (ST) is an instance of private speech that falls under the category of intrapersonal communication, it pertains to the way people talk to themselves via an ongoing internal monologue. This topic has garnered attention from researchers across different disciplines.

In his social-cultural theory of cognitive development (1938/1987), Vygotsky emphasized the notion of ST using other concepts such as egocentric speech. According to him, children aged 3 to 7 begin to engage in egocentric speaking, a cognitive process through which they think aloud to direct their actions. Subsequently, the outwardly speech transitions into an inwardly directed form as a deliberate mode of thinking which refers to ST (Johnson, 2010). Vygotsky's perspective aligns with the assertion of Sarraj et al. (2022) that children initially engage in overt private speech which gradually switches to a more covert form as they develop. They argued that ST is an innate phenomenon that the majority of adults use more than they speak to others. Winsler (2006) confirmed this maintaining that ST is a prevalent behavior among 96% of individuals and is deemed advantageous by 72% of them (as cited in Sánchez et al., 2016). ST, according to Latinjak et al. (2019), is characterized by its possession of two distinct features that fully encapsulate its essence. Firstly, ST manifests itself through vocal expressions. Secondly, in its context, the individual who conveys the message is also the recipient of that same message.

ST has been variably defined by different authors. According to Kim et al. (2021), ST refers to the deliberate and structured practice of using specific words or phrases in an internal or external dialogue with oneself. It is the combination of both conscious and unconscious

thoughts that influence and control one's actions, emotions, gestures, and physical activities (Helmestetter, 2011). In the same line of thoughts, Trenton (2020) argued that ST is the continuous internal monologue that occurs within one's thoughts and has an impact on various aspects of life including emotions, actions, self-assurance and evaluation of potential outcomes.

1.3 Types of ST

ST has different forms; each has some unique features and exerts a specific impact on humans' lives. It encompasses a spectrum of emotions, ranging from constructive self-affirmations to detrimental self-criticism with various other varieties falling in between.

1.3.1 Positive Self-Talk

The act of engaging in PST is an efficacious technique that cultivates a sense of confidence and self-esteem. It is an effective technique individuals employ to remind themselves of their self-worth and capabilities of achieving great things (Knego, 2023). The frequency of PST tends to increase when the situation gets more complex, as it helps in improving performance and fuels motivation along with positivity (Richards, 2022). Many people struggle to keep themselves uplifted with positive thoughts, they often get defeated by negative ones. The key, according to Gaskins (2005), is to appreciate individual differences, promote fairness, and accept mistakes (cited in Sihombing & Purba, 2017).

Scott (2023) defined PST as the act of reciting an internal monologue that is predominantly constructive and optimistic in nature. Scott further asserted that this type of monologue inspires and motivates individuals, fosters a positive self-image, and increases confidence in one's own abilities. Furthermore, engaging in PST on a regular basis can greatly boost an individual's self-esteem. This practice possesses the capacity to motivate one to keep going, sustain an optimistic perspective, and develop a more comprehensive comprehension of circumstances (Richards, 2022). Moreover, individuals who practice PST may possess cognitive capacities that empower them to handle challenges with efficacy, demonstrate innovative thought processes, and exhibit heightened resilience when confronted with obstacles (Holland, 2020).

PST can be motivational or instructional in nature. Motivational ST, according to Theodorakis et al. (2000), improves performance by encouraging confidence, positive mood, and greater energy. Instructional ST, on the other hand, implies the use of instructions and cues that aid individuals to keep focused on the most important task.

1.3.1.1 Techniques of PST

PST is an essential skill that anyone can master with the right strategies. Referring to a study conducted by Septriasih (2021), Dimala et al. (2023) highlighted four highly effective PST techniques.

- **Butterfly hugs:** a technique that can create a powerful and positive energy within individuals. One way to practice self-care is by hugging oneself, closing the eyes, and reflecting on happy memories about oneself. A simple hug can be incredibly powerful.
- **Gratitude:** an effective technique that plays a crucial role in generating positive emotions from within. To be well practiced, it should be used regularly before going to bed as a way of greeting the heart and expressing feelings of thankfulness to everything one has in life.
- **Letter to myself:** a technique that involves writing a letter that is kept secret and only the writer knows the content of it. When writing it, one can begin by introducing themselves, identifying a theme, emphasizing an aspect that has been blocking them, and then ending with a positive affirmation while thanking themselves. Individuals can read their secret letters whenever they feel down to foster their confidence.
- **Mirroring:** It is the simplest technique that helps boost confidence. It involves practicing positive affirmations while looking at oneself in the mirror.

1.3.1.2 Concepts Related to PST

The concept of PST is often used in conjunction with other related concepts such as positive thinking, self-compassion, and positive affirmations. Although they are strongly interconnected, they hold different and unique meanings.

- **Positive Thinking:** a mental attitude in which people expect only the best to happen and face the hardships of life with a positive outlook (Wilson, 2017). Positive thinkers acknowledge unpleasant aspects but believe that they can get through them, which enhances not only their mental health but also their physical well-being (Perry, 2022).
- **Self-Compassion:** it is treating oneself with the same care and love as one would extend to a beloved individual. It refers to the act of being kind and compassionate with oneself rather than harsh and judgmental, especially during hard times. Self-compassion is based on the understanding that everyone experiences failure, mistakes, and feelings of inadequacy to some extent (Neff, 2011).

- **Positive Affirmations:** involve repeating positive words and statements that contradict negative thoughts (Moore, 2019). This process is part of the self-affirmation theory, which was introduced by Steele in 1988. To be effective, positive affirmations should be practiced on a daily basis.

1.3.2 Negative Self-Talk

Negative self-talk (NST) is often referred to as self-defeating, self-detrimental, and self-criticism. It is an inner pessimistic critic that belittles individuals, underestimates their competencies, and constantly asserts that they lack enough capability to reach their goals. It negatively influences self-esteem, motivation, confidence, mental health, and overall well-being. NST is considerably more prevalent than PST among individuals (Sánchez et al., 2016). This has piqued the attention of many researchers and authors, triggering them to undertake in-depth investigations into NST to identify its underlying causes, effects, and alleviation strategies.

One of the pioneers in the field of ST and personal growth "Shad Helmstetter "defined NST in one of his books as a disorder that refers to anything that focuses on one's limitations, problems, faults, and fears rather than strengths and opportunities. According to him, NST is "*anything you think or say that limits you from being or achieving anything that is real and possible. It is anything you think or say that limits your belief in yourself or your future* "(Helmstetter, 2019, p.13). In another book, Helmstetter (2011) defined NST as a wall that individuals make without even being aware of its existence.

Most of the negative thoughts individuals have in their minds are not true and are a result of their negative past experiences. Furthermore, all of the negative judgments, limiting opinions, and fictional narratives originate from words received from parents, friends, teachers, and society since childhood (Cuthbertson, 2020). This is referred to as neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) which reflects the connection between the way the brain functions, the way people communicate and the way they behave.

Despite being detrimental to confidence and mental well-being, NST has some benefits. According to English Worksheet Land (n.d), NST improves performance by shedding light on areas of weakness that individuals need to work on, allows individuals to predict unforeseen problems and prepare for them, and fosters creativity by encouraging individuals to have a critical view on their performance.

1.3.2.1 Forms of NST

NST can manifest in various forms. Decker (2023) emphasized them all, but the most common ones are:

- **Generalizing:** involves transforming a single negative event into a continuous and pervasive conclusion, often using words such as "*no one*", "*everyone*", and "*never*".
- **Blaming:** can take two forms, either taking full responsibility for everything or placing blame on others for any negative outcome.
- **Filtering:** involves focusing solely on the negative aspects of a situation, ignoring any positive aspects.
- **Comparing**: the act of always trying to prove that you are way better than others, or seeing others as more competent than you leading to feelings of inadequacy or arrogance.
- **Predicting the future:** involves making negative predictions about what will happen in the future. Such predictions often come true and lead to their own fulfillment.

1.3.2.2 NST and Learned Helplessness

NST and learned helplessness have a strong connection. The latter is a motivational theory introduced by Martin E. Seligman and Steven F. Maier in the late 1960s. It refers to a psychological state where individuals believe that failure is their companion due to their negative past experiences. As a result, they learn to become helpless and stop trying, believing their efforts are futile. NST and learned helplessness are interconnected and perpetuate a negative cycle. When an individual continually tells themselves that they are a failure, they are more likely to stop trying altogether. Likewise, negative experiences can lead individuals to blame themselves and engage in more NST, reinforcing feelings of helplessness.

1.4 ST in EFL Learning Context

The process of learning English as a foreign language is often seen as a difficult task by many learners. This is due to the psychological barriers that can hinder their progress in the four language skills, particularly speaking. The latter is considered the most important skill, but also the most challenging one. According to Humairoh (2022), speaking enables the learner to communicate with others, express ideas, and share knowledge. Yet, many of them feel reluctant to speak as they lack confidence and motivation.

In this regard, EFL learners can improve their language learning proficiency by implementing effective learning strategies to handle their psychological discomforts. ST seems to be one of the most helpful strategies that enable learners to become better performers as it motivates then and handles their anxiety (Holland, 2020). ST is a common practice in education, and it can either be positive or negative. NST includes thoughts such as "I'm terrible at this", "My classmates will make fun of me for my pronunciation", or "The teacher will criticize my ideas". These thoughts can lower students' confidence and self-esteem, which may prevent them from trying new tasks or completing them (Scott, 2023).

PST, on the other hand, boosts students' self-efficacy and self-perception, it motivates them and directs their focus towards tasks that should be accomplished rather than ones that should be avoided (Sihombing & Purba, 2017). It can also increase their enthusiasm for school and help them avoid making the same mistakes repeatedly (Choeruddin, 2023). ST is a powerful technique that empowers learners and provides them with assistance to manage their stress and anxiety, particularly when it comes to oral presentations and exams.

1.5 ST versus the Attribution Theory

The relationship between self-talk and the attribution theory is particularly strong in the field of education. The attribution theory is a psychological concept closely linked to motivation, it explains how students' perceptions of the contributing factors to their past failures or successes can affect their performance. Students' attributions may be either internal or external. Internal attributions refer to factors within the student, such as a lack of ability, while external attributions involve non-stable factors such as task difficulty. Both types of attributions can be influenced by ST.

When a student fails an exam, for instance, they might say something like "I am an idiot" or "I failed again", thereby making internal attributions to their failure. However, if they say "Perhaps I got this mark because I did not understand the teacher's question", they are more likely to make external attributions to their failure. This reflects the influence of attributions on ST, as attributing failure to internal factors results in critical and self-detrimental ST, while attributing failure to external factors leads to more positive and encouraging ST.

The practice of NST alongside internal attributions results in low self-esteem, learned helplessness, increased anxiety, and decreased motivation. In contrast, engaging PST and making internal attributions for success leads to high self-esteem, increased motivation, and reduced anxiety.

1.6 PST and SC

SC is a crucial mental attribute that most students aspire to possess, as it can significantly aid them throughout their educational journey. Though it may not be easy to acquire, with the practice of PST, one can attain high levels of SC.

1.6.1 Self-confidence

SC is a vital personality trait that has been extensively researched, particularly in the field of education. Students often encounter a host of challenges that they can quickly overcome with a strong belief in their abilities. Researchers have defined SC differently: Kay and Shigman (2014) view it as "*the purity of action produced by a mind free of doubts*" (p.15), while Murray (2006) sees it as having firm trust and knowing what to do and how to do it (as cited in Baggour, 2016, p.31).

A high level of SC offers numerous benefits for individuals, including students. According to Norman and Hyland (2003), it enables them to take greater responsibility, be more motivated, engaged, feel at ease, and enjoy the learning process. Furthermore, it significantly contributes to their problem-solving skills (Benabou & Tirole, 2001; as cited in Akbari & Shahibzada, 2020), and enhances their proficiency in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, leading to more effective English communication (Ghafar, 2023).

Low SC, on the other hand, can have detrimental effects on the academic performance of students, particularly during presentations. Students who lack SC often struggle to stay focused on their goals and are easily distracted by unfavorable outcomes, which ultimately leads them to develop negative attitudes towards their presentations (Rahma, 2017). Such negative attitudes can make their low self-esteem even worse, leading to a vicious cycle of poor academic performance.

1.6.2 High SC versus Low SC

High and low SC are the opposite extremes that influence one's state of mind. Wright (2009) made a difference between them referring not only to students but also to all individuals in general.

How does high SC look like?	How does low SC look like?

Confident people are ambitious. For them, life is about more than just getting by.	People who have a low SC struggle with change and react more than they take the initiative.
Goal-oriented, always willing to set new goals and finish old ones.	Pessimistic and expect only the worst to happen.
Good communicators, being useful is much more important for them than being right.	Communicating their life desires and values is a challenge for them.
Kind and affectionate, possess a positive self-image, and tend to avoid inauthentic relationships.	Pleasing others is often a priority over being truthful and realistic.
Attractive and sociable, they often attract others who share their confidence.	Insecure and drawn to toxic people who keep playing the role of a victim.

Table 1.1: The Difference Between High SC and Low SC. Adapted from Wright (2009).

1.6.3 The cousins

The notion of "SC cousins" is a metaphorical expression that refers to a set of closely related concepts that have a strong association with SC. These concepts are self-efficacy and self-esteem, which in collaboration with SC, can significantly contribute to improving students' academic performance.

1.6.3.1 Self-efficacy: in the educational context, self-efficacy pertains to students' judgment of their abilities to deal with a particular learning situation. Research suggests that self-efficacy plays a pivotal role in influencing students' motivation and engagement (Sökmen, 2019). Additionally, high self-efficacy levels correlate positively with greater effort and persistence, whereas low self-efficacy levels tend to result in stress (Rahimi & Abidini, 2009). Studies have also revealed that students with high levels of self-efficacy tend to be more confident when learning a new language (Sabti et al., 2019, as cited in Ozdemir & Karafil, 2023, p.2239).

1.6.3.2 Self-esteem: an essential factor that significantly impacts an individual's mental health and overall well-being (Schlenker, 2017). In the educational context, self-esteem is closely linked to academic performance. It refers to students' self-evaluation and perceptions of their worth, which can significantly impact their ability to succeed or fail in their academic pursuits (Gonzaga, 2023). High self-esteem levels are associated with increased motivation, similar to high SC levels, while low self-esteem levels tend to lead to anxiety.

It is important to note that SC, self-efficacy, and self-esteem are highly interconnected and are often used interchangeably. Although they share similar effects on motivation, engagement, well-being, and academic performance, they are distinct concepts and cannot substitute for each other. It is possible for students to possess high SC levels but lack self-efficacy or self-esteem, or have all three concepts in varying degrees of intensity.

1.6.4 Factors Affecting Students' SC

English has become a prominent language in the contemporary world, appreciated for its use as a lingua franca. The ability to speak English effectively enhances global communication, employment opportunities, and access to higher education. While all four language skills are equally essential, speaking tends to receive more emphasis as it demonstrates a person's competence. However, EFL learners often prefer to express themselves in writing rather than verbally.

A study conducted by Nadila et al. (2020) discovered that language learners, despite having excellent reading, writing, and listening skills, tend to stay silent when asked to speak. Furthermore, they identified several factors contributing to the students' low SC, including lack of vocabulary, poor pronunciation, inadequate grammar knowledge, downward social comparison, discomfort and fear of being ridiculed by classmates, and insufficient preparation.

Many researchers have explored the factors affecting students' SC, including AL Younus (2018), who suggested that low SC results from psychological factors such as lack of motivation, low self-esteem, and fear of making mistakes. Selvaraj and Cnanadevan (2014) & Carter and Garber (2011) have ranked high-stress levels as the primary contributing factor to low SC (in Rahimi, 2019). Additionally, Ayers (2006) as cited in Hamad (2013) and Pasarlay (2020) emphasized the negative correlation between anxiety and SC, highlighting other factors such as teacher feedback, students' lack of interest in learning, classroom atmosphere, repeated failures, learning disabilities, low self-efficacy, learned helplessness, fear of failure, and others. These factors have been categorized as internal and external by Pratama (2017). Furthermore, Fatmawati et al. (2020) divided these factors into teachers' factors such as personality, speaking skills, and quality of explanation, and students' factors, including self-doubt and perceiving English as difficult.

1.6.5 The Efficacy of PST in Boosting SC

SC is not an innate trait that individuals are born with; it is a skill that can be developed. Research has shown that PST plays a crucial role in boosting one's self-assurance.

According to Straw (2023), PST serves as a motivational speaker that directly influences an individual's feelings and emotions. The internal thoughts that one has in their mind significantly determine their emotional state. Similarly, Robbins (2024) has also shared the same idea, including positivity, which is closely related to PST, as one of the principles of SC. In a recent study conducted by Morin (2024), PST has been classified as the most effective strategy to boost confidence. Morin explained that PST helps in promoting self-compassion, dealing with self-doubt, and overcoming challenges.

Several other concepts, often used interchangeably with PST, have also been found to impact SC. For example, Paulise (2023) claimed that being compassionate and talking to oneself kindly is essential for building SC. In the same vein, Perry (2022) emphasized the practice of self-compassion as a way to overcome self-doubt and stop holding oneself back. While PST, self-compassion, and positivity are three different concepts, the three of them share some common effects on SC.

Low SC is a persistent issue for many students, especially those learning English as a foreign language. According to Dimala et al. (2023), PST is urgently needed to increase SC, which tends to be low among students. Styzek and Gibson (2023) suggested that students must put limits to their inner critic and replace it with positive thoughts through the use of positive affirmations. Changing NST to positive one is among the strategies suggested by IvyPanda (2024) in a study investigating self-doubt. Self-doubt is one of the primary signs of low SC. Students who doubt their abilities cannot acknowledge their strengths. Changing their ST can help them handle their doubts and become more confident.

1.7 PST and Overconfidence

The impact of PST on the level of SC is noteworthy. Yet, it is important to be cautious when using it to avoid falling in the trap of overconfidence, which can be as harmful as low SC.

1.7.1 Overconfidence

Overconfidence is a widely known notion that has been defined by Schatz and Moore (2017) as "*greater confidence than reality justifies*" (p.2). It is one of the most pervasive psychological biases that takes, according to Moore and Healy (2008), three different forms,

namely overestimation which refers to an individual's tendency to overestimate their abilities, performance, and chances of success. Overplacement that is the belief that one is superior to others, and overprecision which is an excessive confidence regarding the validity of one's opinions and beliefs.

1.7.2 How Does It Look Like?

The phenomenon of overconfidence is pervasive in societies, with some individuals often exaggerating their sense of self-belief that can lead to arrogance. In contrast, those who possess a healthy level of confidence tend to exhibit greater levels of humility and respect for others.

According to Mick (2023) and Brown (2022), overconfident individuals often display a range of negative behaviors, including a belief in their own perfection and superiority, a know-it-all attitude, a lack of interest in other people's opinions, and a tendency to belittle others and underestimate their abilities.

Furthermore, overconfident individuals often seek to cover up their limitations rather than accepting and addressing them, and they may be resistant to constructive feedback, preferring instead to focus only on positive one. They may also be prone to sharing their opinions on all topics, criticizing others while being unwilling to accept criticism themselves, and believing that everyone in the world loves them. Finally, overconfident individuals may be reluctant to ask for help, seeing it as a sign of weakness.

1.7.3 How Does PST Contribute to Overconfidence?

It is important to note that even good things can backfire when overdone. PST has proven to be an effective tool in enhancing individuals' emotional states. However, when used excessively, it can have negative effects on students' learning performance.

Excessive PST can lead to overconfidence, making students feel like they do not need to learn or prepare for their exams. In the words of Gosen (2015), this is because it feeds their ego and gives them an unrealistic sense of their abilities. Statements like "I know everything" and "I never fail" fuel arrogance and can lead to repeated failures, thus hindering their learning and growth.

But there is more to this than just excessive PST. Human nature also plays a significant role in this. Humans tend to compare themselves to others, this behavior is called the social

comparison theory that takes its roots from social psychology. It was developed by a psychologist named Leon Festinger in 1954. It is divided into two major types, upward social comparison which happens when individuals compare themselves to people who are better than them, and downward social comparison that happens when individuals compare themselves to those who are worse than them. However, the latter can lead to negative effects like arrogance and hatred (Mid-Life Careers, 2023).

Burson et al. (2005) emphasized the close connection between the downward social comparison (better-than-average bias) and overconfidence claiming that they are in fact "*fundamentally related, and therefore the common academic practice of linking them together is justified*" (p.6).

In conclusion, it is essential to make a balance between PST and realistic expectations. Excessive PST and downward social comparison which is one of the main forms of NST can lead to overconfidence, which can hinder growth. It is crucial to acknowledge one's strengths and weaknesses and work on improving them instead of working on covering them by comparing oneself to others.

1.8 PST and Anxiety

The topic of SC inevitably involves considerations of anxiety given their strong interconnection and mutual influence. In this regard, PST can be a valuable tool as it not only enhances SC but also mitigates anxiety, thus minimizing the negative effects that each can have on the other.

1.8.1 Anxiety

Human psychology plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' personalities and behaviors. Emotional states are a significant factor in this process, and anxiety is one of the most prevalent emotions that individuals experience. Anxiety has been the subject of extensive research across various fields due to its remarkable impact on the human psyche. According to Flaxington (2013), the word anxiety itself makes individuals feel anxious.

Anxiety is defined by the International Organization for Migration (n.d) as a natural reaction to danger that affects one's feelings, behaviors, thoughts, and physical state. Similarly, Berbar (2023) described anxiety as a psychological factor that is characterized by stress and worry in response to threatening circumstances. Anxiety is a significant academic stressor, particularly in foreign language learning. According to Al Qadri et al. (2023), anxiety is one of

the most severe and frustrating obstacles that language learners face. Foreign language anxiety comprises several components, including communication issues, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety (Richards, n.d).

It is essential to understand that anxiety is a normal phenomenon and can even be helpful in some cases. However, there is a difference between facilitating and debilitating anxiety. Scovel (1978) differentiated between the two, stating that facilitating anxiety drives the learner to face and overcome the task, while debilitating anxiety induces avoidance and resignation (cited in Alsaif, 2021).

1.8.2 Types of Anxiety

Anxiety is a complex process that manifests differently in individuals. Khiron Clinics (2023) has classified anxiety into two main types, namely trait, and state anxiety while situational anxiety has been emphasized by Cherry (2023).

1.8.2.1 Trait Anxiety: one of the permanent aspects of personality. It refers to a long-lasting feeling of anxiousness that individuals experience often in their day-to-day life.

1.8.2.2 State Anxiety: this type of anxiety is a natural reaction to situations that cause stress, which dissipates once the situation has passed. For instance, EFL students may experience state anxiety during oral presentations.

1.8.2.3 Situational Anxiety: According to Cherry (2023), situational anxiety is specific to unfamiliar situations. EFL students, for instance, may experience situational anxiety during oral exams.

1.8.3 Symptoms of Anxiety

Anxiety, like other stress-inducing factors, can exhibit itself through a distinct set of symptoms. Anxiety UK (2012) has grouped these symptoms into three categories - physical, psychological, and behavioral.

1.8.3.1 Physical Symptoms

- Difficulty breathing.
- Stress and shaking.
- Headaches.
- Dryness in the mouth.

1.8.3.2 Psychological Symptoms

- Fear and panic.

- Thoughts of death or having a heart attack.

- A sense of shame.

- Persistent belief that one's anxiety is being observed.

1.8.3.3 Behavioral Symptoms

Behavioral symptoms of anxiety are characterized by avoidance behavior, where individuals tend to avoid social situations and feel the need to quickly exit situations that trigger their anxiety.

1.8.4 Factors Fueling Students' Anxiety

Discussions revolving around the factors that contribute to anxiety do not necessarily imply that anxiety is only triggered by these factors. Rather, anxiety is a common experience among individuals, but it may reach a threatening level of severity in certain situations. For instance, when it comes to EFL learning, anxiety, particularly speaking anxiety, is a major barrier that hinders students' progress. Some learners become so anxious that they tend to skip speaking classes (Khouni et al., 2022, p.108).

Given that all learners experience anxiety, several authors have extensively examined the factors that contribute to this stressor. Weda and Sakti (2018), for instance, highlighted two primary factors that influence students' anxiety, namely their inability to comprehend the teacher's inquiries and the difficulty in understanding the course material. Sometimes, teachers fail to consider their students' proficiency levels and use complex language that students may not understand. As a result, students refrain from speaking and requesting clarification from the teacher, out of fear of mispronunciation. Additionally, they struggle with grammar and vocabulary, which further exacerbates their anxiety levels (Mulyono et al., 2019).

Toubot (2018) stressed the impact of limited linguistic abilities, with an emphasis on low SC which strongly correlates with high anxiety levels. Furthermore, low self-esteem is another psychological factor that contributes to students' anxiousness, (Hanifa, 2018). Being part of a group or receiving feedback and assistance from peers can help students overcome their anxiety and become more relaxed while speaking.

In their qualitative study, Fikni et al. (2022) interviewed several students to determine the factors that make them anxious, concluding that anxiety is influenced by shyness, unpreparedness, and fear of miscommunicating the message. Sulistyowati (2023) highlighted other factors including perfectionism, forgetfulness, fear of judgment, and limited language proficiency as key contributors to their anxiety.

1.8.5 The Efficacy of PST in Reducing Anxiety

Anxiety is a serious issue that can have adverse impacts on an individual's performance in various aspects of life. However, anxiety can be mitigated with suitable treatment strategies. In addition to mindfulness, relaxation breathing techniques, and medication, which are highlighted as key factors by Better Health (2022), PST also plays a crucial role in reducing anxiety.

According to a study conducted by Lasai (2022) on the effect of ST on students' anxiety, changing negative thoughts to positive ones was found to be a contributing element in treating anxiety. Similarly, Abraham (2020) recommended the use of ST strategies for anxiety, claiming that PST helps in coping with such stressor. Moreover, Casabianca (2022) emphasized the efficacy of utilizing positive affirmations, which are strongly interconnected with practicing PST, in handling anxiety.

Not only does PST treat anxiety, but its techniques, such as meditation, are also useful in managing university students' anxiety, as noted by Mayo Clinic (2017) and Danzman (2023).

It has been observed that practicing PST during challenging and stressful situations can be helpful in promoting relief and calmness, particularly among students. Such positive affirmations can even aid individuals in managing their anxiety and utilizing it to their advantage. Despite being one of the most effective techniques for reducing anxiety, there is limited research available to establish the correlation between PST and anxiety.

1.9 Conclusion

Although the journey of EFL learning may present its share of challenges, the rewards are abundant and can lead to great success in life. Students often face psychological barriers such as low SC and anxiety, but practicing PST can help them overcome these obstacles and fully enjoy the journey while successfully reaching their destination.

It all starts from within, engaging in PST, supporting oneself, acknowledging one's good qualities, and being one's own best friend are key to handling any discomforts and truly embracing the process of learning English as a Foreign Language.

Low SC and high anxiety are serious issues that impede the progress of individuals not only in the academic context but in many other situations, yet overcoming both of them is a possible task that anyone can do by considering the most appropriate strategies.

Positive self-talk is one of the strategies that is so beneficial that one needs to develop and put into action mainly in EFL learning context as it provides students with the traits they need the most.

Chapter Two:

Research Methodology and Design- Data Analysis and Interpretation.

2.1.Introduction

The present study aims to explore the potential impact of positive self-talk (PST) on self-confidence (SC) and anxiety levels of EFL learners. The first chapter highlights that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners often struggle with low SC and high anxiety, particularly when communicating in English. Therefore, the study proposes PST as an effective strategy to manage academic stressors in this context. This chapter aims to evaluate students' understanding of the concept of PST and their practices regarding its application. Additionally, it seeks to examine their perceptions of the effectiveness of PST in managing low SC and high anxiety levels. The chapter also delves into the students' experiences of overconfidence and whether excessive PST has resulted in this phenomenon.

The chapter focuses on analyzing the study's findings, beginning with a description of the research methods, participants, and data collection tools. It then moves on to present the results and interpret them.

2.2 Research Methods

In order to examine the impact of PST on SC and anxiety levels of Master One (M1) EFL students, a mixed-method approach has been implemented. This approach involves the utilization of both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools, including a semi-structured questionnaire administered to a group of the target population, classroom observation with a second group of participants, and semi-structured interviews conducted with a sample of students selected based on specific criteria. By implementing the triangulation method, the researcher was able to gather in-depth information and varied data on M1 EFL students' SC and anxiety, as well as their experiences and perspectives on the usefulness of PST.

2.3 Participants

The participants of a research study are the core that transforms theoretical concepts into practical applications. In this particular study, the researcher chose to focus on M1 EFL students as the target population to test the hypotheses. As it is well known, the process of applying for a Master's degree at Saida University involves selecting one of two different specialties - Didactics and Literature/Civilization. Therefore, students from both of these specialties were selected by the researcher. Specifically, the first group of Didactics comprised 19 students who were randomly selected to answer the questionnaire, while the second group of Literature and Civilization consisted of ten students who were chosen based on a nonrandom selection to be interviewed.

The selection of M1 EFL students was not arbitrary. Unlike first, second, and third year LMD students, M1 students often struggle with low SC and anxiety, which can be particularly problematic on the day of their viva when they must present their thesis to graduate. Consequently, this category of learners is in greater need of a strategy that helps them reduce anxiety and manage low SC. They may be using such strategies as PST more often than License students do.

2.4 Research Instruments

No matter how much important they are, the participants can do nothing without research instruments which are a crucial component of any study. These tools serve as the foundation of research and aid researchers in drawing well-informed conclusions. In order to address the research questions effectively, the researcher utilized three distinct research instruments, namely a questionnaire, a classroom observation, and an interview. Since ST is an internal phenomenon that only students can provide insights into, the three research instruments focused solely on the students, enabling the researcher to reach the study's objectives efficiently.

2.4.1 Questionnaire

Due to its unique advantage, the researcher has been encouraged to utilize the questionnaire as a primary data collection instrument.

2.4.1.1 Description of the Questionnaire

The researcher opted for a semi-structured questionnaire, given its potential to provide more comprehensive data. The questionnaire consisted of twenty questions, divided into five sections, each addressing a specific aspect of the study's primary theme. The researcher began with a brief introduction, inviting students to share their answers. To encourage more honest responses, the researcher emphasized anonymity and confidentiality. The first section of the questionnaire aimed to uncover the participants' background information, including their proficiency level, perspectives on the EFL learning process, degree of engagement in the classroom, and the primary challenges they face.

The second section, titled PST, focused on the participants' knowledge and frequency of PST use, situations in which they find it most helpful, and their improvement observations after using PST. The third section was devoted to SC, while the fourth one revolved around anxiety. The last section of the questionnaire addressed overconfidence, aiming to measure participants' ability to distinguish between confidence and overconfidence. The section ended

with a Yes/No question that proposed some statements and asked participants whether or not they use them as a source of encouragement.

The questionnaire was administered by the researcher in the classroom, and the researcher was present to provide explanations and clarifications regarding the research topic and the questions included in the questionnaire.

2.4.1.2 Questionnaire Analysis

The proper analysis of research results plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between theory and practice. In this regard, the analysis section is a vital element that assists the researcher in verifying or rejecting the hypotheses. As previously mentioned, the study employed a questionnaire consisting of various questions that the researcher analyzed to gain a deeper understanding of the subject under investigation.

Section One: Background Information

In the first section, the fourth question pertains to the difficulties that most EFL students encounter during their EFL learning journey.
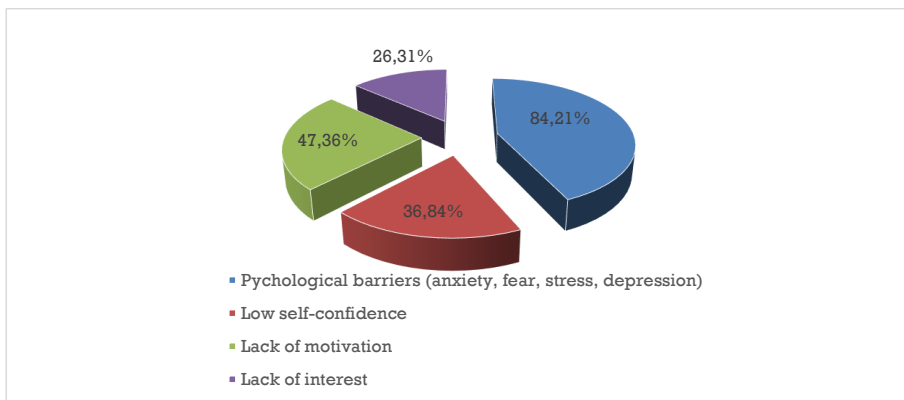
Pie-chart 2.1: Students' challenges in EFL learning process.

According to pie-chart 2.1, the majority of students, which amounts to 84.21%, face psychological barriers, mainly anxiety, fear, and stress. Furthermore, 47.36% of them struggle with a prevalent issue, which is the lack of motivation. In addition, low SC has been reported as a hindrance for 36.84% of students. Lastly, 26.31% of them have reported their lack of interest as a significant challenge they have encountered in their learning experience.

Section Two: Positive Self-Talk.

Q1: Do you know what positive self-talk is?

Table 2.1: Students' familiarity with PST.

Yes	No
100 %	0 %

The researcher commenced the section on PST by a question that aims to uncover the level of awareness among students. The results, as depicted in Table 2.2, demonstrate that all of the participants (100%) are well-informed about PST and utilize it regularly, providing strong evidence of its widespread adoption among language learners.

Q3: In which situations do you find positive self-talk more helpful?
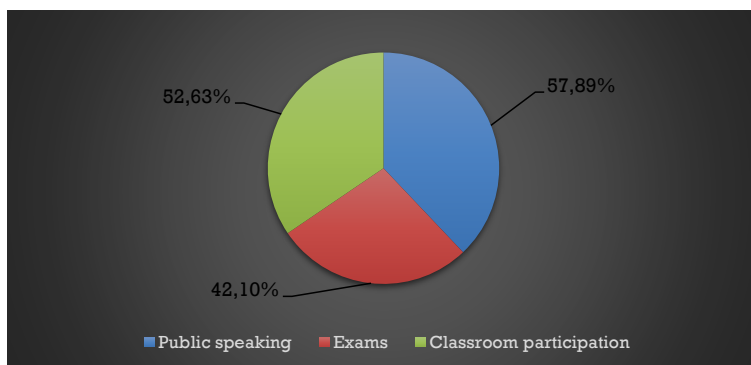
Pie-chart 2.2: Scenarios where PST is beneficial.

Pie-chart 2.2 reveals that a majority of students (57.89%) find PST more helpful during public speaking, while a significant number of respondents (52.63%) consider it effective for classroom participation. Additionally, 42.10% of the participants find PST helpful during exams. Furthermore, some of them have also highlighted that it assists them in improving their problem-solving skills and makes them better communicators in their daily conversations with peers.

Q4: Which techniques of positive self-talk do you use the most?
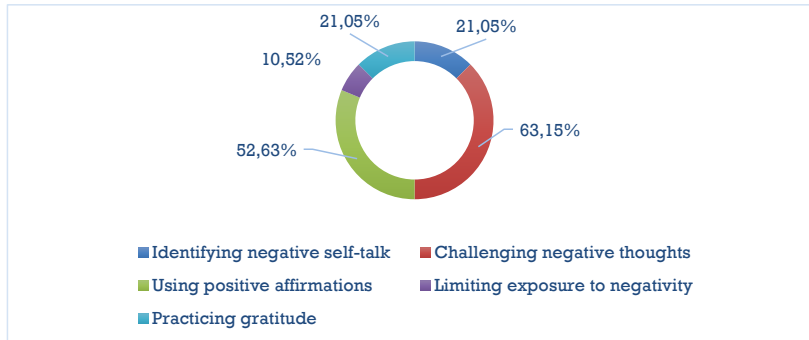
Pie-chart 2.3: Most used techniques of PST.

The researcher found the various techniques used by students to practice PST intriguing. As per the data presented in Pie-chart 2.3, it was observed that the most popular technique employed by the students is challenging negative thoughts, with 63.15% of respondents claiming to follow it. Positive affirmations were also a frequently used technique, with 52.63% of respondents using it as a means to talk positively to themselves. Identifying NST was another technique that approximately 21.05% of students employed. Similarly, 21.05% of respondents also practiced gratitude, while only 10.52% limited their exposure to negativity to increase positivity. In addition, the participants were given the freedom to mention any other techniques they employed, and one response indicated that reminding oneself of their past success in overcoming challenging situations helps them maintain PST.

Q5: After making use of positive self-talk, have you noticed any improvements in your performance? Explain please.
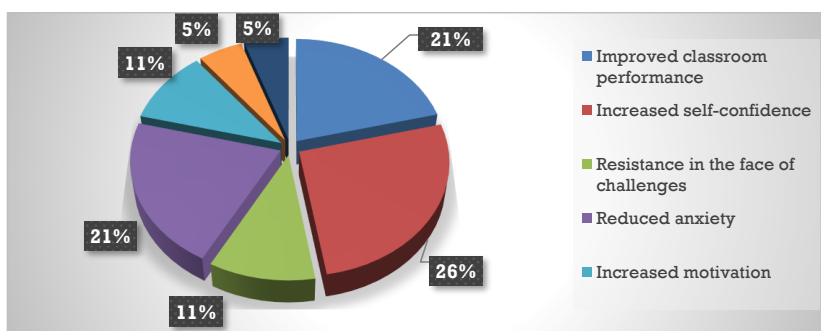
Pie-chart 2.4: Students' improved performance after using PST.

This particular question holds great significance as it aims to shed light on the impact of PST not only on the SC and anxiety levels of students but also on their overall academic performance. As indicated in Pie-chart 2.4, the highest percentage of participants (26.31%) claimed that PST made them more confident students, particularly when it comes to speaking and presenting. 21.05% of the respondents reported that PST effectively reduced their anxiety levels, leading to a more relaxed state of mind. Additionally, 21.05% of the participants have emphasized the improvements in their classroom performance due to the utilization of PST, which prompts them to participate more actively. 10.52% of the respondents have endorsed the fact that PST has increased their motivation levels, and another 10,52% accentuated its effectiveness in making them more resistant in face of challenges. PST has helped 5.26% of the students to exercise better self-control, while another 5.26% have expressed that it has heightened their excitement level towards studying.

Section Three: Self-Confidence

Q1: Are you a confident student?

Table 2.2: Students' SC.

Yes	No
47,36%	52,63%

It is imperative to note that SC is a fundamental personality trait that is not only required for academic success but also for various life experiences. Therefore, initiating a conversation with students by inquiring about their general level of confidence is a commendable approach. As illustrated in Table 2.2, a significant number of students (52.63%) suffer from low SC. However, the encouraging news is that 47.36% of the participants consider themselves as confident individuals.

Q2: How would you rate your level of self-confidence when you speak in front of an audience?

Table 2.3: Students' SC in public speaking.

High	4	21,05%
Average	11	57,89%
Low	4	21,05%

The researcher in this question has transitioned from a general inquiry into a specific one. Specifically, moving from exploring students' SC in their day-to-day lives to analyzing it when delivering speeches in front of an audience. As delineated in Table 2.3, a significant proportion of the respondents, approximately 57.89%, exhibit an average level of self-assurance when speaking publicly, while 21.05% of them possess a high degree of SC in such scenarios. The remaining 21.05% of participants, however, reported experiencing low SC when speaking in public due to a variety of factors, including shyness, anxiety, discomfort, poor pronunciation, fear of ridicule from peers, and inadequate information sharing abilities

Q3: How effective do you think positive self-talk is in increasing self-confidence?
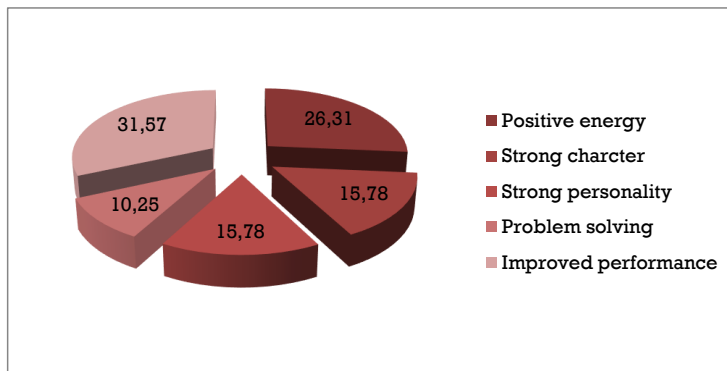
Pie-chart 2.5: PST and students' SC.

All participants unanimously agree on the effectiveness of PST in enhancing their SC. However, their perspectives on the matter vary to some extent. As revealed in pie-chart 2.5, 31.57% of the participants reported an improvement in their performance due to PST, leading to a significant increase in their confidence level. Furthermore, 26.31% of participants indicated that PST fuels them with positive energy, which boosts their SC. Additionally, 15.78% of respondents highlighted the positive character traits associated with PST, while the same percentage of participants highlighted the strong personality that they develop through it. Finally, 10.52% of participants noted that PST has helped them become better problem solvers, which has increased their confidence levels.

Section Four: Anxiety

Q2: How anxious do you feel when speaking in public?

Table 2.4: Students' anxiety in public speaking.

Not anxious	1	5,26%
Little bit anxious	13	52,63%
Very anxious	5	42,10%

It is worth noting that anxiety is not limited to public speaking but rather it is exacerbated in such circumstances. As Table 2.7 illustrates, over half of students, precisely 52.63%, experience mild anxiety when required to speak publicly. Further, 42.10% of them suffer from severe anxiety when placed in such situations, while only 5.26% remain unaffected by public speaking anxiety.

Q3: This question stands for students' order of the factors that contribute to anxiety. They are as follows:
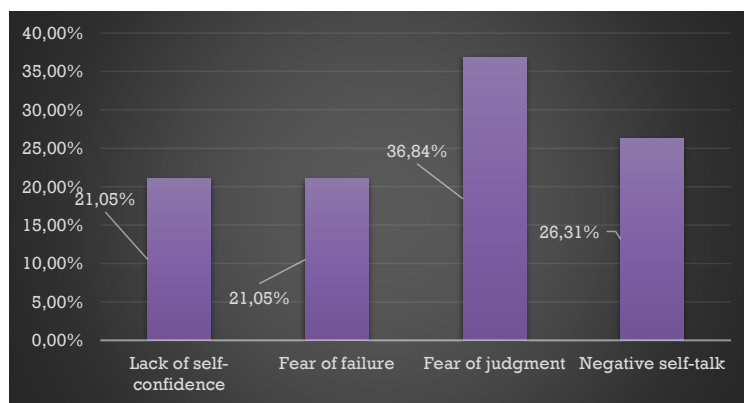
Bar-graph 2.1: Anxiety triggers.

Factors that drive anxiety among EFL students are distinct. The researcher asked the participants to rank the most prevalent factors in order of their perceived impact on anxiety, based on their personal experiences. The results, as illustrated in bar-graph 2.1, indicate that fear of judgment is the most pervasive factor that contributes to anxiety, with 36.84% of participants agreeing to it. NST was selected by 26.31% of respondents as the second most prevalent factor. Lack of SC was selected by 21.05% of participants as the third most prevalent factor, while fear of failure was identified by 21.05% of participants as the fourth and least pervasive factor.

Q4: How effective do you think positive self-talk is in reducing anxiety?

28
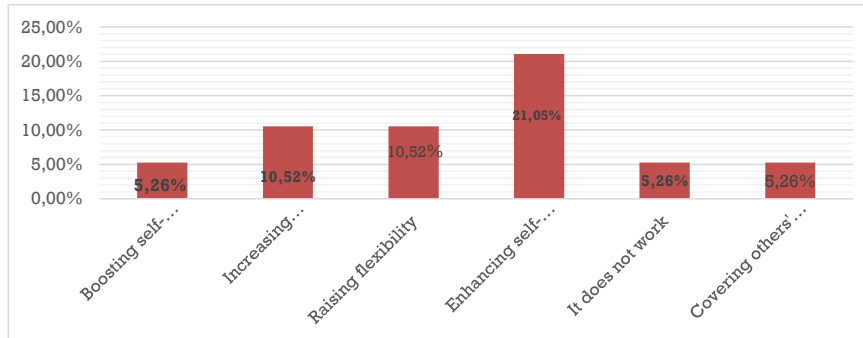
Bar-graph 2.2: PST and students' anxiety.

According to the results, most participants agreed on the effectiveness of PST in reducing anxiety, with various percentages attributing different benefits to it. Approximately 21.05% of students claimed that PST enhances their self-esteem and raises their level of calmness and relaxation, while 10.52% of them reported that it helps them to be more flexible primarily during oral presentations and classroom discussions. Additionally, 5.26% stressed its efficacy in boosting SC, which, in turn, reduces anxiety, and 10.52% of respondents believe that their PST makes them more motivated and positive. However, 5.26% of students do not believe that it is effective in reducing anxiety, believing that the opinions of surrounding people on them increase their anxiety even if they speak positively to themselves. Another 5.26% shared a different perspective, claiming that PST is the factor that helps them ignore the negative opinions of others.

Section Five: Overconfidence.

Q2: Excessive positive self-talk can lead to overconfidence, do you agree?
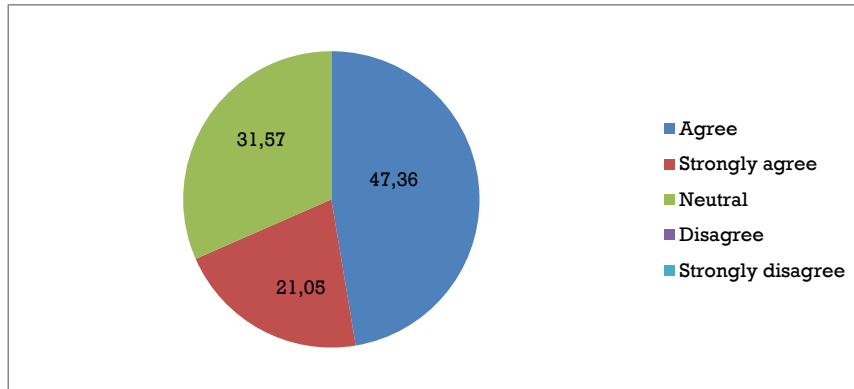
Pie-chart 2.6: Students' attitudes towards the contribution of excessive PST to overconfidence.

The researcher hypothesized that an abundance of PST could be one of the contributing factors leading students to overconfidence. As per the findings displayed in pie-chart 2.6, the majority of the informants seem to share a similar viewpoint as the researcher. Specifically, 47.36% of the respondents claimed to agree with the belief that excessive PST could lead to overconfidence. Furthermore, 21.05% of them strongly agreed with the researcher's hypothesis, while the remaining 31.57% appeared to be neutral to the idea.

Q3: Do you usually encourage yourself using statements like: I can do everything, I am the best, no one can do it the way I do, I do not care about others' opinions?

Table 2.5: Students' use of the encouraging statements.

Yes	No
73,68%	26,31%

The question above pertains to the use of some statements as a means of self-encouragement, Table 2.5 indicates that a majority of participants (73.68%) utilize self-affirming statements as a means of self-motivation, while a minority (26.31%) do not.

2.4.1.3 Results Interpretation

The collected data from the questionnaire administered to the participants indicate that certain hindrances impede their academic progress, although the nature of these obstacles varies from one participant to another. The majority of the respondents (84.21%) reported facing

psychological barriers, while more than a third (36.84%) indicated that they lacked SC. Interestingly, both challenges were selected together multiple times, the thing that highlights their close relationship and the significant impact they have on each other. It is worth noting that students who exhibit strong SC are less likely to experience anxiety, they get anxious in some situations but they possess the ability to manage it effectively.

Moving on to the main focus of the study, which is PST, the analysis reveals that this practice is familiar to all participants and is frequently used mainly to improve their speaking skills. About 57.89% of the participants reported using it to improve their public speaking skills, while 52.63% reported using it to increase their participation in classroom discussions. Moreover, 26.31% of the participants indicated that they find it helpful in both scenarios. This finding alone demonstrates the efficacy of PST in reducing speech anxiety and managing low SC without requiring additional interventions.

It is important to note that PST is not a one-size-fits-all approach, and participants reported using different strategies to encourage and motivate themselves. Specifically, 63.13% of the respondents reported challenging negative while 52.63% of them use affirmations. The fact that these two options were selected by most of the respondents uncovers that only positivity can put limits to negativity.

The academic achievement of EFL students is subject to a variety of factors, among which is the potential influence of PST. After asking the participants about the improvements they have noticed in their performance after making use of it, the study revealed that the latter is an effective strategy for enhancing students' classroom performance, boosting their SC and reducing anxiety levels. These findings support the hypothesis that PST can serve as a useful tool for mitigating anxiety and enhancing SC among EFL students.

The study further explored the issue of SC among EFL students and found that a significant number of them lacked self-assurance, particularly when speaking in front of an audience. The study revealed that PST could help students overcome this issue by providing them with positive energy, stronger personality, enhanced problem-solving skills, and better performance. The study concluded that there is a positive relationship between PST and SC levels among EFL students.

As far as the section on anxiety is concerned, the study revealed that a significant proportion of participants, i.e., 52.63%, experience a mild level of anxiety, while 42.10%

reported high anxiety levels when speaking in public. While this finding is not new, what is interesting is the choice of anxiety triggers that students made based on their personal experiences. Most of informants went for lack of SC and NST as the most prevalent anxiety triggers, this highlights the relationship between anxiety and SC, with students getting more anxious when they are less confident. NST has been shown to fuel anxiety, while PST has been found to reduce it. This was reflected in the study, with 21.05% of participants claiming that PST helps them reduce anxiety because it boosts their SC. This point highlights again the fact that only PST defeats the negative one.

Lastly, the study investigated one of the detrimental effects of excessive PST, which is overconfidence. A large number of participants agreed with this idea, with the researcher suggesting some statements that are called self-encouragement statements, asking informants whether they use them or not. These statements may seem motivating and positive, but they hold different meanings. Believing that one can do everything, one is the best, or no one can do it the way he does is not a sign of positivity, but rather it expresses how excessive PST leads students to be overconfident.

2.4.2 Classroom Observation

The significance of classroom observation as a data collection tool is widely acknowledged and requires no further discussion. This method provides unique and valuable insights as it allows the researcher to obtain not only direct but also detailed information about classroom dynamics and nuances that other methods may not offer.

2 4.2.1 Description of Classroom Observation

The researcher opted for a non-participant observation as a secondary research instrument, a technique that was implemented with the participation of M1 EFL students of Literature and Civilization. The researcher attended a total of eight sessions, five of which consisted of lectures while the remaining three were dedicated to oral presentations. Throughout these sessions, the researcher made sure to write down every noteworthy detail in a notebook, a practice that is considered to be the best technique that researchers ever make use of.

2.4.2.2 Purpose of Use

The observation of the classroom has not been utilized to present the observational findings; rather, the researcher has employed it as a tool to select certain members from the second group of participants on the basis of their active or passive participation. The researcher deemed it appropriate to examine the efficacy of PST in boosting SC and reducing anxiety when speaking,

this is because most of questionnaire's respondents affirmed so. The researcher contemplated that PST might have been the reason for their active participation, while NST could have contributed to the passive participation.

2.4.3 Interview

The interview is the last research tool utilized by the researcher to gain comprehensive insights into the students' perspectives on PST, low SC, and anxiety during public speaking and classroom participation.

2.4.3.1 Description of the Interview

The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview consisting of close-ended and open-ended questions that were prepared for active and passive students. The interview aimed to explore the active students' secret of active classroom participation, their experiences with anxiety and low SC during speaking, their use of PST to manage both, and the negative aspect of excessive PST. Additionally, passive students were asked about the reason behind their passive classroom participation, their feelings when asked to speak, their experiences with low SC and anxiety, and the impact of their NST on both barriers.

As stated earlier, the interview focused only on the impact of PST on SC and anxiety levels during public speaking, compared to the more general questionnaire.

2.4.3.2 Interview Analysis

Regarding the analysis of the results, it is important to note that the researcher has examined only the most crucial questions that are directly relevant to the investigation.

- **Active students:** once the topic of investigation was introduced, the active students were invited to share their answers to the following questions:

Q1: What motivates you to actively participate in the classroom?

It has been reported by the interviewees that various factors contribute to their active participation in the classroom. The first and second participants asserted that they participate actively due to their inclination towards sharing their knowledge. The other two respondents agreed that a supportive classroom environment provided by the teacher plays a vital role in fostering their PST and encouraging them to speak up at least once. The last respondent claimed

that participation helps him brainstorm and that he is further motivated to participate when his answers are correct.

Q2: Have you ever used positive self-talk to boost your confidence before you speak and present?

Participants have all claimed that they engage in PST as a means of boosting their SC while speaking and presenting. They have reported the use of various statements such as, *"I can do it", "I just need to do what I think is right", "You've got this",* and *"Even if I make mistakes, it's not going to be the end of the world".*

Q3: Have you noticed an increase in your self-confidence after using positive self-talk?

Four participants reported that PST increases their SC in a way that makes them realize that no one ever believes in them if they don't believe in themselves. On the other hand, the fifth participant claimed that practicing PST does not work with low SC as it tends to be outweighed by NST.

Q4: What about anxiety, do you think that positive self-talk has an impact on it?

PST has been proven to have a significant impact on reducing anxiety levels among all participants. While it does not completely eliminate anxiety, they claimed that it is a powerful tool that can remarkably reduce it.

Q5: Have you ever faced challenges related to the use of positive self-talk, like becoming overconfident?

Regarding the matter of overconfidence, three participants confidently stated that their PST does not lead to overconfidence. However, the fourth and fifth participants have claimed that they have experienced overconfidence as a result of misusing PST

- **Passive students:** the investigator first introduced the passive participants to the subject matter under investigation. Then, they were requested to provide responses to a set of questions.

Q1: Despite of being engaged, you seldom participate. What prevents you from doing so?

The interviewees reported various factors that hindered their classroom participation such as anxiety, shyness, fear of judgement, NST, limited vocabulary, poor pronunciation, the absence of a supportive learning atmosphere, and fear of making mistakes.

Q2: Are there any statements or internal thoughts that make you avoid speaking. If yes, what are they?

The reported statements and internal thoughts of the participants display a range of apprehensions towards their ability to speak in the classroom. These apprehensions include concerns over being criticized and laughed at by their teacher and peers, fear of not being able to impress the teacher, lack of confidence in their vocabulary to effectively communicate their ideas, apprehensions over being ridiculed for their pronunciation, and feelings of inadequacy with regard to their ideas.

Q3: Low self-confidence and anxiety are common hindrances that students suffer from when speaking and presenting, do you experience them?

All five participants have reported struggling with anxiety and low SC, particularly when they are required to speak within the classroom, whether be it through class participation or oral presentations.

Q4: Do you think that your internal thoughts influence your self-confidence and anxiety levels?

All the interviewees responded affirmatively to this particular question, stating that their internal negative thoughts tend to make them more anxious and less confident, thereby negatively impacting their self-esteem.

2.4.3.3 Results Interpretation

Based on the data collected from active students, it has been confirmed that PST significantly contributes to students' active participation, particularly when they are provided with a friendly learning atmosphere. The possession of effective speaking and presentation skills demands several traits, including SC and the ability to manage anxiety. The results

obtained from the study indicate that PST significantly influences both of these traits. Students reported that it increases SC and reduces anxiety, which helps them trust themselves and overcome their fear of making mistakes. It is also important to note that the excessive use of PST can lead to overconfidence, which is one of the negative outcomes. These results are consistent with the researcher's hypothesis regarding the effectiveness of PST in boosting SC, reducing anxiety, and its contribution to overconfidence.

The data collected from passive interviewees suggests that PST can encourage active classroom participation, whereas NST has the opposite effect, discouraging students from speaking up and making them feel that their ideas are not worth sharing. This is particularly problematic given that many students already struggle with SC and high levels of anxiety when speaking and presenting. NST only exacerbates these issues, further decreasing SC and increasing anxiety, ultimately leading to a fear of speaking and presenting even when one has valuable ideas to contribute. This cycle of NST can significantly affect a student's self-esteem, creating a serious obstacle to their academic success.

2.5 General Interpretation of Results

In order to investigate the efficacy of PST in enhancing the SC of EFL learners while reducing their anxiety levels. The researcher employed two primary research tools, namely, a questionnaire and an interview, to collect data from participants. (The purpose of using the observation has been already highlighted). The questionnaire was designed to ascertain the prevalence of low SC and anxiety among EFL students. The results demonstrated that both barriers are commonly experienced by EFL learners, with most students indicating that low SC fuels their anxiety, thereby validating Pasarlay's (2020) perspective on the negative correlation between anxiety and low SC.

Following the identification of the problem, the study proposed a solution in the form of PST. The hypothesis was tested by examining the participants' experiences with it. The results indicated that PST is effective in enhancing SC and reducing anxiety, which aligns with the findings of Morin (2024), Dimala et al. (2023), Paulise (2023), Better Health (2022), and Lasai (2022). The study found that PST empowers EFL learners to improve their overall performance, particularly when they use positive affirmations, which Styzek and Gibson (2023) identified as an effective way to practice it.

The research explored the negative effects of excessive PST, positing that it could lead to overconfidence. The participants agreed with this hypothesis and even provided a concrete

example when they reported their use of statements such as "I can do everything" and "I am the best," which aligns with Gosen's (2015) argument that overuse of PST can lead to arrogance. While the questionnaire covered a range of general aspects related to students' use of PST to combat low SC and anxiety, particular emphasis was placed on public speaking. The researcher hypothesized that learners experience such barriers primarily when speaking, and all participants confirmed this, aligning with Humairoh (2022) and Nadila et al. (2020). An interview was conducted to determine whether PST can help with speaking during participation and presentations. Interestingly, the responses of the interviewees were consistent with those of the questionnaire, as most active interviewees reported that they perceive speaking as a challenging aspect that significantly affects their SC and anxiety. They also agreed with the informants of the questionnaire regarding the efficacy of PST in managing low SC and anxiety while improving speaking skills. However, some respondents admitted to experiencing overconfidence due to excessive use of PST.

In contrast, passive interviewees identified several factors that adversely affect their SC and anxiety, leading to passive classroom participation and poor speaking skills. These factors include NST, poor pronunciation, limited vocabulary, fear of judgment, fear of making mistakes, and the lack of a supportive learning environment. The aforementioned findings are consistent with the research works of AL Younus (2018), Ayers (2006) in Hamad (2017), Nadila et al. (2020), Mulyono et al. (2019), and Fikni et al. (2022). It is noteworthy that active students attributed their active participation to PST, while passive students attributed their passive behaviour to NST. These attributions prove the power of ST and its influence on learners' academic performance.

2.6 Conclusion

The present chapter focused on the practical aspects of the study and was divided into two parts. The first part described the research methods, research instruments, and the target population. The second part dealt with the representation, analysis, and interpretation of data collected from the participants. This chapter contributed to a deeper understanding of the impact of PST on SC and anxiety. It has also confirmed the hypotheses that were formulated at the outset of the investigation.

Through the findings of this chapter, it has been concluded that M1 EFL students are aware of the potential benefits of PST and use it to enhance their SC and reduce their anxiety. However, they also acknowledge that excessive practice of PST can lead to overconfidence, which they experienced.

Chapter Three

Fostering Positive Self-Talk- Suggestions and Recommendations.

3.1 Introduction

Based on the research findings presented in both chapters, it has been established that the practice of positive self-talk (PST) can be highly effective. However, it is also worth noting that negative self-talk (NST) is prevalent among participants and has been reported to have a significant impact on their academic performance.

This chapter is therefore dedicated to providing some practical suggestions and recommendations for instructors and learners to help them put limits to NST and foster PST.

3.2 Teaching Practices to Counter NST

Anxiety and low SC can often escalate to a level that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' PST may not be sufficient to manage. In the instructional process, both teachers and learners are equally vital and complement each other to make the learning process more successful. Therefore, if students' ST is not effective in overcoming the psychological barriers they face, the teacher's intervention plays a pivotal role in enhancing their psychological state. Although PST is a personal matter for students, teachers can aid in fostering it by teaching their students about it as a learning strategy and providing them with insights on its benefits when it comes to handling psychological barriers and improving the quality of learning. In this regard, EFL teachers are invited to educate their learners on PST and emphasize its significance by using some strategies that encourage learners to practice constructive and healthy ST.

3.2.1 Raising Students' Awareness

Many students engage in ST without being aware of its meaning, types, influence on their academic performance, and how it should be practiced. Therefore, educators can play a crucial role in introducing this concept and educating their students about its various aspects. A good starting point for this would be to focus on NST and its detrimental effects, which not only impact academic performance but also one's overall well-being.

Commencing the process of promoting PST with a specific focus on NST is an effective approach that has been extensively highlighted in numerous studies.

A Peach for the Teach (2014) has proposed several strategies for educators who are keen to assist their students in recognizing their NST and understanding its impact. One such strategy is to allocate an entire session to NST. The instructor can initiate the lesson by offering students comprehensive insights into it, including its definition, examples, and its effects on both the psyche and quality of academic achievement.

After becoming familiar with NST, Hishon (n.d) recommends that the teacher encourages students to note down any negative thoughts they may have on a sheet of paper. The teacher can then write all the thoughts on the board without attributing them to any individual, thus enabling the students to realize that negative thoughts are common and that they are not alone in experiencing them.

Another effective strategy that educates students about NST is to encourage them to participate in classroom discussions where they can share their personal experiences this internal negative monologue, how they utilize it, and how it impacts them. This approach enables students to gain a better understanding of NST and learn how to establish boundaries against it by learning from the personal experiences of their peers.

3.2.2 Assisting Students to Challenge Their NST

When NST is identified among students, it is essential to assist them in challenging it. However, challenging NST is not an easy task that can be accomplished by teachers alone. Fortunately, with the implementation of appropriate strategies, teachers can help their students in doing so. In this respect, two strategies are suggested for challenging NST:

3.2.2.1 Positive Affirmations List: positive affirmations have been shown to have a remarkable contribution to the practice of PST. When trying to make students aware of their NST, teachers can encourage them to transition it into positive. One technique is to turn those negative thoughts into positive ones, jot them down on sheets of paper, and hand them to students. This approach helps students challenge negative thoughts using positive ones. Woerkom (2020) confirms the efficacy of integrating positive affirmations by inviting teachers not only to encourage students to use them but also to affirm students using those affirmations. It is suggested that teachers call students by their names, maintain eye contact with them, and tell them things like, "Amina, you can do it" and "Ahmed, you are smart."

3.2.2.2 Role-Plays: once students have the list of positive affirmations prepared by the teacher, they need to be encouraged to practice them. Among the best strategies that help teachers encourage their students to verbalize positive affirmations out loud is the integration of role-plays. This strategy has been emphasized by Hishon (n.d) who invited teachers to make students take part in role-playing scenarios in which they say their inner negative thoughts aloud and try to replace them with positive affirmations. Teachers can also provide students with scenarios that present challenging situations and encourage them to navigate through them using positive affirmations rather than exacerbating them with NST. This approach is

particularly beneficial in oral classes as it not only fosters the practice of PST but also provides opportunities for students to improve their speaking skills, an area in which many struggle.

3.2.3 Teaching PST

After ensuring that students are aware of the adverse effects of NST, it is crucial for the teacher to shift their focus to PST. According to Feeney's (2022) research, one effective approach to teaching PST to students involves providing them with a clear definition of the concept and presenting relevant examples. Additionally, allowing students to participate by sharing their own examples is a recommended strategy for verifying their comprehension of the topic. Moreover, the teacher should dig deeper into the profound impact of PST and its power in reducing stress and anxiety, fueling SC, and enhancing motivation.

To ensure that students recognize the importance and effectiveness of PST and are encouraged to use it as a learning strategy, the teacher can employ the following strategies:

3.2.3.1 Modeling PST

One of the most effective strategies for teachers to encourage their students to practice PST is modeling it themselves. This approach has been recommended by many authors including Feeney (2022) and Midles (2023). It involves using a positive tone when communicating with students in a classroom setting. To successfully model PST, according to Van Wyck (n.d) and Pathway 2 Success (2017), teachers can focus on several key actions, including:

- ➢ Speaking positively about themselves and others.
- ➢ Starting the day with an uplifting statement such as "Here is another great day that we have".
- ➢ Praising students for their achievements.
- ➢ Offering positive feedback when correcting mistakes.
- ➢ Helping students understand that making mistakes is a natural part of the learning process.
- ➢ Providing constructive feedback.
- ➢ Acknowledging students' strengths, rather than weaknesses.
- ➢ Monitoring students' progress in using PST and intervene when necessary to provide additional support.

3.2.3.2 Sharing Personal Experiences with PST

Providing students with a real-life example of PST can prove to be one of the most effective ways of encouraging them to adopt this practice. This approach allows teachers to transition from being mere instructors to becoming role models. When teachers share their stories of overcoming hardships and challenges through PST, students can relate to their experiences and come to perceive barriers such as anxiety and low SC as normal. It also fosters mutual trust as students are more likely to feel comfortable discussing their problems in the presence of a teacher who they believe can empathize with their situation, having overcome similar challenges themselves. PST is a skill that is not easily tangible; however, when teachers share their experiences, students can gain concrete examples of how PST can help them in various scenarios.

3.2.3.3 Telling Stories about PST

This strategy provides a practical demonstration of PST to learners through the use of concrete examples. By allocating a specific time for storytelling, teachers can engage their students and help them to remember stories about PST in an enjoyable manner. Storytelling also creates an opportunity for discussion, allowing both teachers and students to talk about NST and how it can be overcome through the use of PST. By telling stories of characters who have successfully dealt with problems using PST, students can see that this behaviour is universal and can be utilized by anyone, regardless of their background, which encourages them to believe in its effectiveness.

3.2.4 Creating a Supportive Learning Atmosphere

In order to ensure the effectiveness of the previous strategies, it is crucial for educators to establish a safe classroom environment. This entails acknowledging and respecting the perspectives of learners, cultivating a culture of appreciation for students' efforts, rather than solely expecting perfection, demonstrating kindness through simple actions such as using students' names and smiling.

Hawthorne (2022) has emphasized the significance of employing other various strategies that help in building a supportive learning atmosphere. This includes building a strong and healthy relationship with students based on mutual respect and trust, being flexible, establishing classroom rules, following routines and rituals, meeting the specific needs of each student, and considering their individual preferences when it comes to the learning environment. It is important to remember that educators are not only imparting knowledge, but

also humans who are serving as role models, and as such, are required to prioritize treating their students with the respect they need as humans before learners.

3.2.5 Collaboration with Parents

Parents, teachers, and friends have a significant impact on students' ST. As emphasized in the initial chapter, NST can stem from negative past experiences with family, friends, and teachers. Conversely, positive experiences with them can contribute to PST. While it is crucial for teachers to model PST and utilize positive language with their students, parents should do the same as well, and this is where teachers can play a vital role. Teachers should consider collaborating with parents to discuss students' situations, problems, and reasons for their NST. Both parties should work together to defeat these reasons and foster PST in students. The teachers' efforts to encourage PST may be futile if parents do not do the same.

In this context, it is important for teachers to collaborate with parents and discuss everything that is related to the student and work together to get a solution to all of his challenges.

3.2.6 Organizing Workshops on PST

This one is the final step in teaching PST, it is a recommended strategy for experienced educators who possess a thorough understanding of PST and its instructional methods. Even novice instructors can organize workshops on PST after effectively implementing the previously suggested strategies. If they observe that those strategies have been successful, they may share their experiences with colleagues. The teacher's responsibility is to emphasize the significance and benefits of teaching PST by sharing their personal experiences as an example. The teacher is invited to underscore the various strategies employed and discuss the differences in student performance before and after teaching PST as a learning strategy.

These workshops are not limited to teachers alone; even students may participate to exemplify the effects of learning PST on academic achievement. This approach encourages experienced educators to impart their knowledge to inexperienced instructors who have yet to teach PST. Furthermore, when different teachers share their diverse strategies for teaching PST, they can establish connections between strategies and come up with new ones that may be even more advantageous.

Encouraging students to adopt PST can be highly beneficial in helping them become more resilient and confident. It is important to educate students about the importance of this

skill, it is also crucial to make students realize that self-talk is never a sign of craziness. Instead, students should be made aware that PST is a valuable tool that may take time and effort to develop, but once mastered, can have lifelong benefits.

3.2.7 Adopting the MUSIC Model of Motivation

Motivation plays a pivotal role in shaping students' academic engagement and learning outcomes. Without motivation, students may lack the drive to participate in learning activities, including developing PST. Teachers, therefore, hold the key to instilling the motivation necessary for students to engage in learning and cultivate PST. Numerous research studies have underscored the significance of motivation, leading to the development of various motivational theories and principles. However, there is a growing need for an updated and concrete framework of motivation.

Addressing this need, Jones (2021) introduced the MUSIC model of motivation, comprising five interrelated components: empowerment, usefulness, success, interest, and caring. These components are instrumental in fostering motivation and should be carefully considered by instructors when designing educational courses.

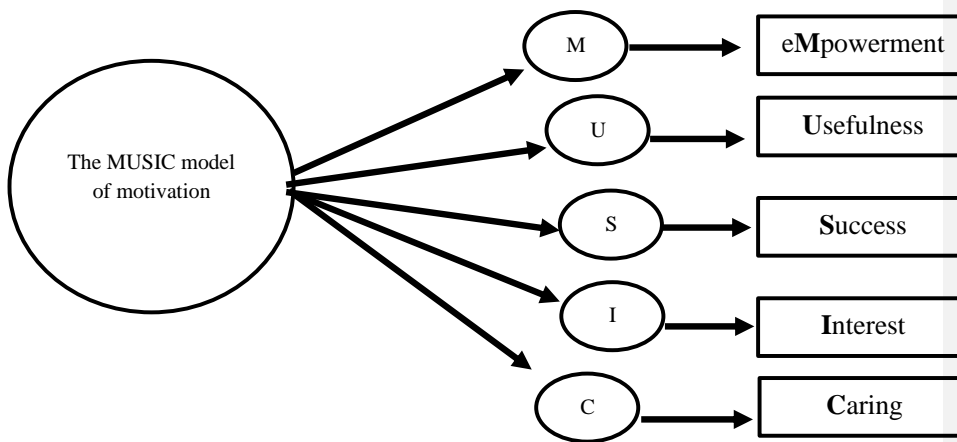*Figure 3.1 :* Components of the MUSIC model of motivation. Adapted from Jones (2021)

3.2.7.1 Empowerment: enables students to feel empowered by involving them in decision-making regarding their learning, thereby increasing their interest.

3.2.7.2 Usefulness: this component emphasizes the importance of students understanding the relevance of their learning to their short-term and long-term goals.

3.2.7.3 Success: conveying to students that with diligence and hard work, they can achieve success in various aspects of learning, including the adoption of positive self-talk.

3.2.7.4 Interest: tailoring instructional activities in accordance with students' interests is essential in maintaining their engagement in the learning process.

3.2.7.5 Caring: fostering a sense of care and support from both teachers and peers is vital in nurturing students' motivation and overall well-being.

The MUSIC model of motivation is significant as it consolidates insights from diverse research disciplines, offering an encompassing approach to motivation that integrates previously underemphasized aspects.

3.2.8 Considering Seating Arrangement

The significance of seating arrangements in the classroom, especially within the EFL learning context, cannot be overstated. Yet, it is often neglected by educators. Abu Nayeem (2015) emphasized the crucial role of seating arrangement in classroom management and its profound impact on student motivation. Various seating arrangements such as pairs, rows, grids, presentations, and groups are discussed, with particular emphasis placed on the u-shape configuration, which is highly recommended for oral classes.
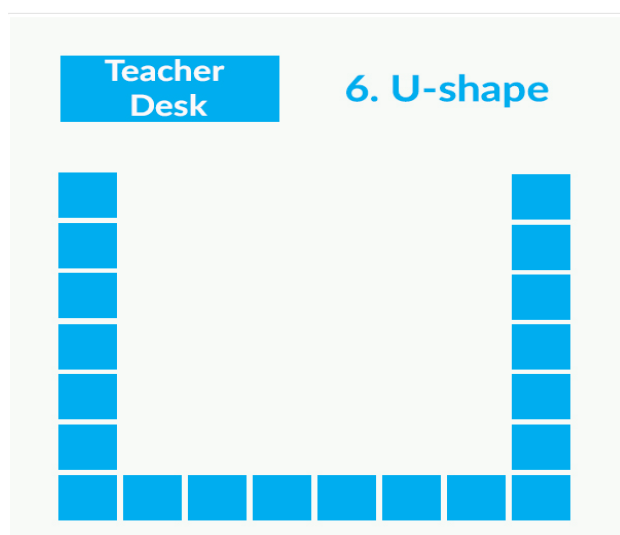

Figure 3.2: U-shape seating arrangement. Adopted from Renard (2020)

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The u-shape seating arrangement is lauded for its effectiveness in promoting student engagement, communication, and collaboration. Placing the teacher at the center enables better classroom control, increased student interaction, and improved eye contact, making it an invaluable tool for facilitating effective communication and creating an optimal learning environment. This type of seating is essential when teaching PST as it drives learners and makes them feel comfortable to share their thoughts and ideas whether positive or negative ones.

3.2.9 Classroom Decoration

The visual appeal of a classroom has a significant impact on students' motivation. A well-decorated classroom creates a welcoming atmosphere that can positively influence students. Teachers can enhance this effect by decorating the classroom with beautiful images and graphs combined with positive affirmations to encourage students. However, it's important for teachers to strike a balance, as an excessive amount of visual stimuli can distract students from the lesson at hand.
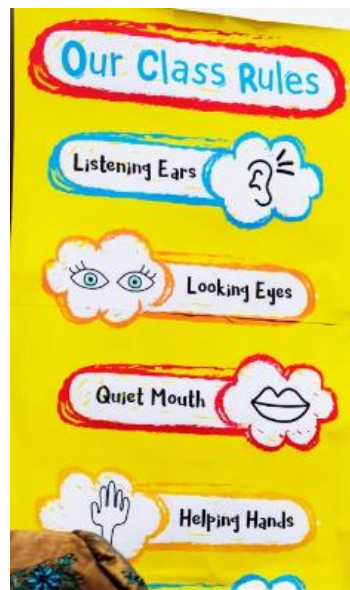

Figure 3.3: Graph for classroom decoration. Adapted from Hargrave (2023).

The chart displayed in the figure above serves as a prime example of an effective classroom decoration. Placing this chart prominently on a wall within the students' line of sight can serve as a powerful motivational tool. It communicates support, acknowledgment of their

thoughts, and the availability of assistance from both teachers and peers, all of which are crucial in transforming NST into positive self-affirmation.

3.3 Students' Strategies to Enhance PST

It may be pointless to teach students about the importance of PST in reducing anxiety and boosting SC if they continue to harbor negative thoughts and engage in NST. While it is essential to provide evidence of the benefits of PST, it is equally important to help students cultivate positivity and transform their negative thoughts into positive ones. Addressing NST and limiting it is crucial for its negative effects on EFL students' academic performance.

NST results in a number of academic discomforts that in turn lead students to perform poorly. Such detrimental effects call for students' intervention to put limits to their NST and replace it with a more encouraging one. This can be achieved through the application of the following strategies:

3.3.1 The Identification of Negative Thoughts

In order to effectively confront negative thoughts, it is crucial to first identify them. This approach is referred to as cognitive restructuring, as stressed by Mosunic (n.d). It requires being mindful of unfavorable thoughts that arise in challenging situations. Once negative thoughts such as "I am a failure" are detected, it is essential to question their validity. Posing questions like "Is this thought true?" or "Am I a failure really?" assists in acknowledging that most negative thoughts are mere fabrications of the mind. This method has also been recommended by Natural Talent (n.d), which asserts that questioning the validity of such thoughts reveals that they result from fear or stress.

3.3.2 The Transformation of Negativity to Neutrality

It is important to control negative thoughts once they have been identified. NST can be a difficult barrier to overcome, and it requires a kind and gentle approach to manage. Deering (2023) shares a similar perspective, suggesting that individuals interact with their negative thoughts in a kind and compassionate manner once they have been identified. For instance, in the case of the NST "I am a failure," individuals can reframe their thoughts by telling themselves, "Not really, I can change my situation if I work harder." This helps individuals transform their thoughts from negative to positive or at least neutral. Bradshaw (2021) confirms that the process of transitioning from negative ST to positive can be challenging, but seeking

neutrality is a helpful alternative. Rather than saying "I can never do this," saying "I may be able to do it if I use a different technique" can be significantly more beneficial.

3.3.3 The Use of Positive Affirmations

Research has shown that positive affirmations are an effective technique, as a significant number of respondents have reported using and benefiting from them. When students utilize positive affirmations, they are able to challenge negative thoughts and reinforce neutral ones. Thoughts, according to Hassan (2023), have a profound impact on humans' lives, and everything one says to themselves becomes an integral part of the subconscious mind. Incorporating positive affirmations into one's daily routine can be highly beneficial, even in challenging situations. Statements like "I am loved", "I am blessed", "I am capable", "I possess the ability to achieve what I desire", and "I am strong" have a powerful influence as they reduce stress, enhance confidence, foster positive energy, and promote self-love.

3.3.4 Practicing Gratitude

Expressing gratitude is a practice that can have many effects on mental health and emotional well-being. Often, individuals tend to focus on the negative aspects of their lives and forget about the many positive things they have. According to Hassan (2023), gratitude is one of the most effective ways to counter negative thoughts and promote positive thinking. While everyone faces challenges in their lives, it is important to recognize that these challenges do not define people. Everyone has much to be grateful for but sometimes they fail to acknowledge it. Practicing daily affirmations of gratitude, such as "I am grateful for this new day," "I am grateful for all that I have," "I am grateful for the love in my life," I am grateful to be learning" can help cultivate a more positive outlook and appreciation for the blessings in life. While striving for more and better things is not wrong, it is important to remain mindful of the things one already has and be grateful for them. By doing so, individuals and more precisely students can cultivate a more positive mindset and turn into more optimistic.

3.3.5 Setting Morning Routines

The morning period represents the most valuable moments of the day, demanding a focus on activities that will sustain people throughout the day. Developing routines is a fundamental task as it cultivates consistency, a crucial trait of successful individuals. Challenging days are inevitable, and every individual experiences them at some point. For students, these challenging days may be related to written or oral tasks, causing anxiety and a decline in confidence. Emily (2024) has highlighted the significance of morning routines and

their contribution to fostering optimism and positivity. She has even shared her personal routines that she employs on a daily basis to maintain her productivity emphasizing the techniques which are:

3.3.5.1 Meditation

It is suggested to allocate a minimum of 5 to 10 minutes daily to practice meditation as a mindfulness technique. Find an open and serene environment that allows taking deep breaths and inhaling fresh air. Meditation aids in the release of negative energy and facilitates a positive mindset. It is advisable to practice it in a green environment, especially for those who admire nature.

3.3.5.2 Reading

Making oneself used to read something of personal interest holds significant importance. Dedicate about ten minutes of your time to read a short novel or story that resonates with you, particularly those that convey tales of optimism and positivity. Such literature can encourage readers to adopt a similar mindset. Additionally, this strategy helps cultivate the valuable skill of reading, which is vital for learning. It even enriches vocabulary and improves pronunciation through consistent practice.

3.3.5.3 Writing

When it comes to receiving positivity through reading, it can be beneficial to take it one step further and begin producing it. To do so, consider keeping a small notebook and pen on hand to jot down any thoughts, plans, and things that one is excited about. Additionally, if there are any issues or concerns that cause discomfort, it would be beneficial to write them down as well to identify their source and work to resolve them. This mindful practice is often referred to as journaling and can take many forms, including both writing and speaking through the use of any recording device like phone. When prioritizing one's day, it is recommended to focus only on the most important tasks at hand, such as an upcoming presentation or exam, and set aside any distractions or worries that may arise. By engaging in this practice, both writing and speaking skills improve while also a more positive mindset gets cultivated.

According to a recent study conducted by Perry (2024), journaling has been shown to provide a range of benefits. Besides turning NST into positive, journaling is highly beneficial in terms of increasing productivity, reducing anxiety, promoting SC, and enhancing self-esteem.

3.3.5.4 Visualization

Positive affirmations are an effective way to improve one's mindset. However, the act of visualizing those affirmations is way more effective. Whenever a student affirms that they can succeed, they should try closing their eyes and picturing themselves as a successful individual. Imagining that one has accomplished great things in exams or presentations helps them strive to perform at their best and ultimately achieve success.

3.3.5.5 Exercise

Regular physical exercise is a valuable method to alleviate stress and release tension. A mere 30 minutes of daily workout, such as stretching, yoga, or jogging, can substantially enhance one's positivity and energy levels. Specifically, for students, it is recommended to commence the day by walking outdoors in the fresh air while listening to audiobooks, or podcasts, thereby stimulating the mind and body. Exercise contributes to physical well-being, and one's physical appearance is an essential component in self-esteem. Individuals who are not in shape may feel ashamed and experience heightened anxiety, as they may believe their peers will ridicule them. Conversely, individuals who are fit generally exhibit greater SC.

3.3.6 Getting around Positive People

Surroundings have a profound impact on one's personality. Even if they believe themselves to be strong and unyielding, the people around them can influence them in ways they may not even realize. Multiple studies conducted by researchers such as Sparks (2019) and Lother (2020) confirm that surrounding oneself with positive individuals can create a nurturing and supportive environment. Lother (2020) emphasizes that surroundings have a strong impact on thoughts and attitudes, and being surrounded by optimistic people can have a positive impact on the mindset. Forbes Coaches Council (2018) offers a vivid example of the importance of being surrounded with positive individuals, suggesting that if one wants to catch the flu, they should get around someone who already has it. Similarly, if students want to think positively, they should surround themselves with individuals who have a positive outlook. They should seek out people who motivate and uplift them, they should always keep close to those who provide them with energy rather than those who take it away from them.

3.3.7 Being Open to Laughter

Whenever one faces difficult and stressful situations, it is advisable to approach them with laughter. The latter has been identified as an effective means of promoting a positive

outlook, as it has been shown to reduce stress and distract individuals from negative thoughts, according to a report by the College of Health Care Professions (2022). Furthermore, Delaware Psychological Services (2021) has highlighted the benefits of laughter and encouraged individuals to seek out humorous content and to find humor in everyday situations. It is important to avoid taking everything too seriously and instead, embrace spontaneity and humor in order to maintain a positive outlook.

3.3.8 Asking about Good Qualities

Individuals tend to overlook their positive traits and focus solely on the negative ones. However, those around them are often aware of their strengths and good qualities. Seeking feedback from trusted friends and family members can be an effective strategy to recognize and appreciate one's positive attributes. This technique, as suggested by Natural Talent (n.d), involves asking for constructive feedback on one's qualities and areas of improvement from those around them. This approach can help individuals to build upon their strengths and make further improvements in areas that require development.

3.3.9 Seeking Professional Assistance

In case any student has tried all of the previously suggested strategies but none of them worked, it may be advisable to seek professional help and let therapists know about all the difficulties. According to Mosunic (n.d), therapists and psychologists are equipped to provide the most effective strategies to cope with NST, which may be so severe as to necessitate the intervention of mental health experts. Similarly, DPS Staff (2021) has emphasized the benefit of consulting with mental health professionals who can assist in identifying the sources of NST and recommending techniques to limit it.

Limiting negativity is a challenging task, but it is achievable with consistent practice of effective strategies. Again, consistency is crucial, as it is the key to enhancing the situation. Consistent efforts may not guarantee success, but inconsistent efforts are sure to lead to failure. It is important to keep in mind that the journey towards positivity is filled with challenges, but the destination is worth the effort. The transformation starts with an individual's own efforts, as no one can help more than oneself. Therefore, it is necessary to work on converting NST into PST, which can act as the best support.
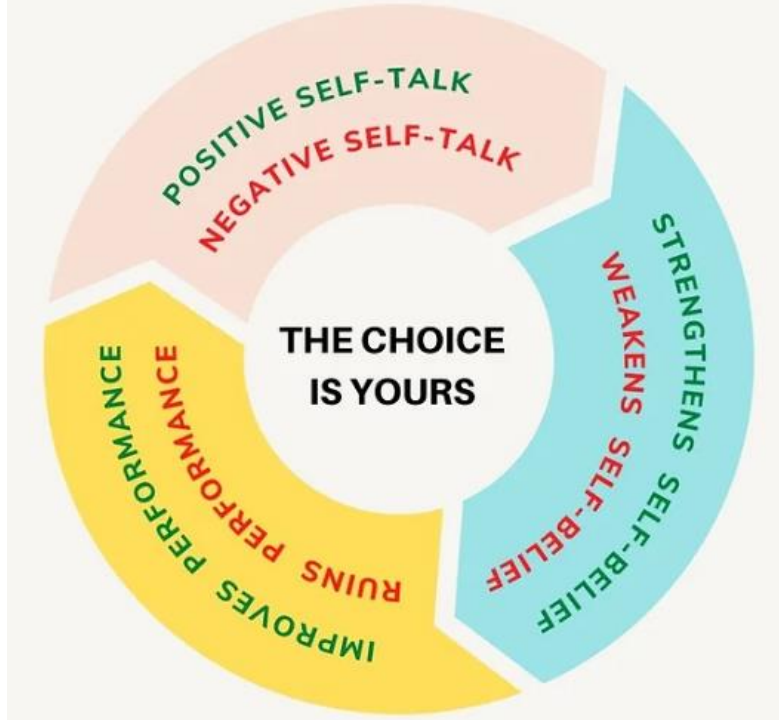
*Figure 3.4:*The power of self-talk. Adapted from Lavania (2021).

The graph above represents the impact of both NST and PST on performance, it is now clear that while PST improves performance, NST does the converse and makes it even worse. I should be acknowledged that putting limits to NST is a challenging task but with resistance and consistency, it can be made positive

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter highlights the significant impact of small actions. The suggestions and recommendations discussed in the chapter aimed at teachers and students are simple yet crucial. Students are advised to tackle their NST and then cultivate PST through various strategies like positive affirmations, practicing gratitude, and being open to humor. On the other hand, teachers are provided with techniques to foster and teach PST to their students. Some of these techniques include modeling PST, creating a supportive learning atmosphere, and collaborating with parents.

General conclusion

General Conclusion

Positive self-talk is an essential aspect of human life that is required not only in the educational context but also in real-life situations. University students, mainly EFL ones, need to work on the development of this skill as it provides them with the necessary traits they need to succeed in their studies. This study explored the efficacy of positive self-talk on Master One EFL students' self-confidence and anxiety. The research addressed two primary research questions which are:

➢ What kind of effects does self-talk have on learners' self-confidence and anxiety?

➢ Can positive self-talk result in overconfidence? How?

The main research results demonstrated that positive self-talk yields significant positive effects on students' self-confidence and anxiety management. The findings also unveiled that while positive self-talk can enhance self-assurance, its excessive use can lead to overconfidence.

The data collected from the first participant group, through a questionnaire, indicated that all participants utilize positive self-talk. They attribute this practice to bolstering their self-confidence and mitigating anxiety by fostering increased energy, improved problem-solving abilities, and enhanced self-esteem. Regarding overconfidence, a majority of the participants acknowledged that the unregulated use of positive self-talk can contribute to it. This was further substantiated by their admission to employing statements characteristic of overconfident individuals.

The interview phase, which was centered on the influence of positive self-talk on self-confidence and anxiety during classroom participation and public speaking, yielded data suggesting that positive self-talk promotes active participation among students. Conversely, negative self-talk emerged as a contributing factor to passive participation. The findings also demonstrated that positive self-talk empowers students by fostering self-belief, which consequently reduces anxiety and enhances confidence. In contrast, negative self-talk exacerbates students' struggles with low self-confidence and anxiety and further impacts their self-esteem negatively. The research also identified misconstrued positive self-talk as a potential cause of overconfidence among some students.

General Conclusion

A review of the related literature by the researcher revealed a dearth of prior studies investigating the combined effects of positive self-talk on both self-confidence and anxiety along with overconfidence issue, mainly within the EFL learning context. This research stands out for its contribution to the understanding of the influence of PST in the EFL learning environment. It paves the way for further exploration into how positive self-talk impacts students' overall academic performance and equips learners with valuable insights into this under-researched area.

Conducting a research paper is a challenging task, especially for those who lack experience in the research field. Despite the difficulties faced by the researcher in their journey, these challenges serve as a motivating factor to work harder and put in more effort to achieve desired goals. However, like many other research works, this study is not without limitations. Firstly, the lack of previous research on the topic under investigation posed a significant challenge for the researcher. The literature review is a crucial aspect of the thesis, and not having enough sources made it difficult for the researcher to accomplish this part of the paper. Although the researcher was willing to provide a comprehensive overview of the topic, the scarcity of previous studies, especially in the Algerian context, hindered this goal. This limitation, however, encouraged the researcher to pursue further investigation and provide future researchers with the necessary information on the relationship between positive self-talk, self-confidence and anxiety.

Another significant challenge that impacted the researcher's progress was the absence of the selected interviewees. Most of them were absent during Ramadan and did not return afterward since they reside in El Bayadh. As they spend most of their time in the university campus, the Ramadan and Al Eid period was an opportunity for them to spend time with their families.

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Appendix A: students' questionnaire

Dear students , you are kindly invited to share your significant answers on the suggested questions that tackle the effectiveness of positive self-talk in enhancing second year EFL students' self-confidence and reducing their anxiety levels . Your answers will be of a great value in providing assistance to achieve the objectives of the study. Additionally, all of your answers will be kept confidential and only used for academic purposes.

Thank you beforehand.

Section one: **Background information**.

1) What is your proficiency level ?

Good ☐   Average ☐   Excellent ☐

2) What do you think of the process of learning English as a foreign language ?

Easy ☐   Average ☐   Challenging ☐

3) How would you describe your degree of engagement in the classroom?

High ☐   Average ☐   Low ☐

4) The following are some challenges that the vast majority of EFL learners suffer from , which one(s) have you experienced?

Psychological barriers (anxiety , fear , depression , stress) ☐

Low self -confidence. ☐

Lack of motivation. ☐

Lack of interest. ☐

Others : ……………………………………………………………………

Section two : Positive self-talk .

1) Do you know what the concept positive self-talk is ?

Yes ▢   No ▢

2) If yes , do you use it ?

Yes ▢   No ▢

3) In which situations do you find positive self-talk more helpful ?

Public speaking . ▢

Exams . ▢

Classroom participation. ▢

Others :

……………………………………………………………………

4) These are some techniques of positive self talk , highlight the one (s) that you use the most :

Identifying your negative self talk . ▢

Challenging your negative thoughts . ▢

using positive affirmations . ▢

Limiting your exposure to negativity . ▢

Practicing gratitude . ▢

Others :

……………………………………………………………………

5) After making use of positive self-talk , have you noticed any improvements in your performance ? Explain please .

………………………………………………………………………………………………
……… .

Section three : Self-confidence .

Appendices

1) Are you a confident student ?

       Yes ☐   Not really ☐

2) How would you rate your level of self-confidence when you speak in front of an audience?

       High ☐   Average ☐   Low ☐

3) If it is low , explain why ?

………………………………………………………………………………….. .

4) How effective do you think positive self-talk is in enhancing self-confidence ?

………………………………………………………………………………….. .

Section four : Anxiety .

1) Do you have social anxiety ?

       Yes ☐   No ☐

2) How anxious do you feel when speaking in public ?

       Not anxious ☐   Little bit anxious ☐   Very anxious ☐

3) Order the following factors that can increase anxiety from the most pervasive to the least .

Lack of self confidence . ☐

Fear of failure . ☐

Fear of judgment . ☐

Negative self-talk (I can't do it , I'm not good , ……….) ☐

Others : …………………………………………………………………………… .

4) How effective do you think positive self-talk is in reducing anxiety ?

…………………………………………………………………………… .

Section five : **Overconfidence** .

1) Can you make a difference between confidence and overconfidence ?

       Yes ☐   No ☐

2) Excessive positive self-talk can lead students to be overconfident ?

Strongly disagree ☐   Disagree ☐   Neutral ☐   Agree ☐   Strongly agree ☐

3) Read these statements :

I can do everything!

I am the best!

No one can do it the way I do!

I don't care about others' opinions!

Do you usually encourage yourself using these statements?

      Yes ☐   No ☐

Appendix B: students' interview

Questions for active students

1) What motivates you to actively participate in the classroom?
2) Speaking and oral presentations are challenging aspects of EFL learning, do you think so?
3) Have you ever used positive self-talk to boost your confidence before you speak and present?
4) If yes, which strategies or statements you use the most?
5) Have you noticed an increase in you self-confidence after using positive self-talk?
6) What about anxiety, do you think that positive self-talk has an impact on it?
7) Have you ever faced challenges related to the use of positive self-talk, like becoming overconfident?

Questions for passive students

1) Despite of being engaged, you seldom participate. What prevents you from doing so?
2) How do you feel when asked to speak or deliver an oral presentation in class?
3) Are there any statements or internal thoughts that make you avoid speaking? If yes, what are they?
4) Low self-confidence and anxiety are common hindrances that students suffer from when speaking and presenting, do you experience them?
5) Do you think that you interns thoughts influence your self-confidence and anxiety levels?
6) Can you share any instances where your negative self-talk contributed to your passive participation?
7) Are there any other barriers that prevent you from being active in class? If so, what are they?