

Effects of english exposure and self-esteem on english communication skills among vocational high school students

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk (1) mengetahui pengaruh English exposure terhadap kemampuan komunikasi bahasa Inggris siswa, (2) mengetahui pengaruh self-esteem terhadap kemampuan komunikasi bahasa Inggris siswa, (3) mengetahui pengaruh English exposure dan self-esteem terhadap kemampuan komunikasi bahasa Inggris siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif dengan pendekatan asosiatif kausal. Populasi dan sampel dalam penelitian ini ditentukan dengan teknik pengambilan sampel jenuh berjumlah 71 siswa. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui penyebaran angket tertutup menggunakan modifikasi skala Likert yang telah diuji validitas dan reliabilitas. Analisis data menggunakan model regresi linear berganda dengan bantuan perangkat lunak IBM SPSS versi 27. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan (1) terdapat pengaruh positif signifikan English exposure terhadap kemampuan komunikasi bahasa Inggris dengan signifikansi 0.012 (< 0.05) serta nilai $t_{count} > t_{table}$ yaitu $2.584 > 1.668$. (2) Terdapat pengaruh positif signifikan self-esteem terhadap kemampuan komunikasi bahasa Inggris dengan signifikansi 0.004 (< 0.05) serta nilai $t_{count} > t_{table}$ yaitu $2.983 > 1.668$. (3) Terdapat pengaruh positif signifikan English exposure dan self-esteem secara simultan terhadap kemampuan komunikasi bahasa Inggris dengan signifikansi < 0.001 (< 0.05) serta nilai $F_{count} > F_{table}$ yaitu $9.949 > 3.132$. Nilai R-Square sebesar 0.226, artinya 22.6% variabel kemampuan komunikasi bahasa Inggris dipengaruhi oleh English exposure dan self-esteem.

Kata kunci: self-esteem, english exposure; pemerolehan bahasa; pembelajaran bahasa kedua; asosiatif kausal

Abstract

This study aimed to (1) examine the effect of English exposure on students' English communication skills, (2) determine the effect of self-esteem on students' English communication skills, and (3) investigate the simultaneous effect of English exposure and self-esteem on students' English communication skills. The research employed a quantitative method with a causal associative approach. The population and sample

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consisted of 71 students selected using total sampling technique. Data were collected through closed-ended questionnaires based on a modified Likert scale, which had been tested for validity and reliability. Data analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression with IBM SPSS version 27. The results indicated that (1) English exposure had a significant positive effect on English communication skills ($p = .012 < .05$, $t_{\text{count}} = 2.584 > t_{\text{table}} = 1.668$); (2) self-esteem had a significant positive effect on English communication skills ($p = .004 < .05$, $t_{\text{count}} = 2.983 > t_{\text{table}} = 1.668$); and (3) English exposure and self-esteem simultaneously had a significant positive effect on English communication skills ($p < .001$, $F_{\text{count}} = 9.949 > F_{\text{table}} = 3.132$). The R-Square value was .226, indicating that 22.6% of the variance in English communication skills was explained by English exposure and self-esteem.

Keywords: self-esteem; english exposure; language acquisition; second language learning; causal associative

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Introduction

English has emerged as the dominant international language, permeating virtually every professional domain worldwide, including the field of office administration. In this context, English proficiency is increasingly indispensable for graduates seeking to enhance their competitiveness in the labour market. As Albl-Mikasa (2022) observed, English functions as a *lingua franca* that is, a medium of communication among individuals whose native languages differ thereby enabling cross-cultural networking on a global scale. In Indonesia, minimum competency standards for English proficiency among professional administrative staff are codified in National Competency Standards (SKKNI) Number 27 of 2009, which encompasses tasks such as managing petty cash, organising meetings, and explaining office equipment.

Despite the recognised importance of English communication competence, empirical evidence suggests that many vocational high school students continue to struggle in this area. Hia and Laia (2024) found that Grade XI students at SMK Negeri 1 Siduaori experienced persistent difficulties in spoken English production. Similarly, Swarastuti et al. (2024) reported that Grade XI students at SMK Satu Nusa 2 Bandar Lampung demonstrated notably limited vocabulary. Istiqomah (2024) documented below-threshold academic achievement at SMK Tunas Harapan, where the average score was 60.00 against a minimum competency benchmark of 76. This problem is equally evident at SMK Negeri 1 Banyudono: preliminary data from the End-of-Semester Summative Assessment (PSAS) in English revealed that approximately 51% of the 71 Grade XI MPLB students obtained unsatisfactory scores, with a class average of 54.

A substantial body of research has examined the relationship between English exposure and English language proficiency, with the preponderance of studies reporting significant positive effects (De Wilde et al., 2021; Ibrahim, 2023; Niitemaa, 2020; Zoubi, 2018). These findings are generally attributed to the vocabulary and grammatical knowledge that learners accumulate through both formal and informal contact with the target language. In parallel, Gultom and Oktaviani (2022) and Utami and Wahyudin (2022) established that self-esteem correlates positively with English proficiency, albeit at a moderate level a relationship partly explained by the tendency of individuals with higher self-esteem to adopt a growth-oriented mindset and embrace novel challenges (Acosta-Gonzaga, 2023).

English communication competence, as the dependent construct in this study, integrates the concepts of ability and communication. Maier and Kikkert (2025) define ability as the capacity to perform a specific task repeatedly without reliance on chance, while Dyatmika (2021) characterises

communication as an interpersonal process involving the exchange of linguistic symbols both verbal and non-verbal for the purpose of achieving mutual understanding. Accordingly, English communication competence may be understood as an individual's capacity to exchange information effectively in English, encompassing appropriate verbal and non-verbal expression. Although English proficiency broadly subsumes all four language skills, English communication competence focuses more specifically on the productive dimension of speaking.

English exposure, as operationalised in this study, refers to comprehensible input that is, language at or slightly above the learner's current proficiency level encountered through contact with English (Krashen, 1981). De Wilde et al. (2021) further specify that such exposure encompasses a wide range of formal contacts (e.g., classroom instruction, extracurricular activities) and informal or extramural contexts (e.g., watching television, playing video games, browsing social media). Jahrani and Listia (2023) similarly characterise English exposure as encompassing all activities involving contact with the English language, regardless of setting. Synthesising these perspectives, English exposure in this study denotes all formal and informal activities that bring learners into contact with English and that can function as comprehensible input.

The theoretical origins of self-esteem can be traced to Rogers (1959), who proposed that self-esteem arises when there is congruence between an individual's actual self and their ideal self. Building on this foundation, Rosenberg (1965) defined self-esteem as a global evaluative orientation toward the self the degree to which an individual holds a positive or negative attitude toward themselves as a whole. Refnadi (2018) further elaborated this concept to encompass positive and negative self-assessments, understanding of one's own capabilities, reflection on past actions, goal-setting, and the capacity for self-trust. Integrating these perspectives, self-esteem in this study is defined as a self-evaluative judgment grounded in the individual's perception of their ideal self, encompassing confidence in one's abilities, clarity of life goals, and overall sense of self-worth.

Prior research has tended to examine English exposure and self-esteem in isolation as predictors of English communication competence. Integrated investigations that incorporate both variables within a single analytical model remain scarce, particularly in the context of vocational secondary education (Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan, SMK), which is characterised by practice-oriented curricula and direct alignment with industry demands. The present study addresses this gap by simultaneously examining the effects of English exposure and self-esteem on students' English communication skills within a unified analytical framework, thereby contributing original empirical evidence to this underexplored intersection.

The findings reported here indicate that English exposure and self-esteem operate in a complementary fashion to enhance English communication competence. English exposure enriches students' grammatical knowledge and vocabulary through both formal and informal learning pathways, while self-esteem provides the confidence and willingness to engage in communicative practice that activates the linguistic resources accumulated through exposure. This complementary dynamic, which has not been comprehensively tested in a single study to date, constitutes the principal novelty of the present investigation.

Research Methods

This study was conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Banyudono, located at Jl. Kuwiran No. 3 Kuwiran, Banyudono District, Boyolali Regency, Central Java Province, Indonesia. Data collection took place from September 2025 to February 2026 across four sequential phases: preparation, implementation, data compilation, and examination. The researchers declare no personal or financial interests that could compromise the objectivity of the findings.

The study adopted a quantitative approach with a causal associative design defined by Sugiyono (2019) as research that aims to determine cause-and-effect relationships among two or more variables. The independent variables were English exposure (X_1) and self-esteem (X_2), while the dependent variable was English communication competence (Y). Consistent with Renggo's (2022) recommendation that the entire population may serve as the sample when the population is sufficiently small to minimise sampling bias, a total sampling (saturated sampling) strategy was employed, yielding a sample of 71 Grade XI MPLB students.

Data were collected via questionnaire using a four-point modified Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree). The neutral midpoint was deliberately omitted to prevent respondents from using it as an expression of apathy or disengagement. As Chyung et al. (2017) demonstrated, the presence or absence of a neutral option does not significantly affect instrument validity or reliability. The modified Likert scale was applied to measure both independent variables, while the dependent variable English communication competence was operationalised using students' PSAS (End-of-Semester Summative Assessment) scores in English.

Instrument validity was established through pilot testing with students outside the main sample who shared similar characteristics specifically, Grade XI students in the AKL 1 and AKL 2 (Institutional Financial Accounting) classes. Validity was assessed using the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient, and reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = .777$). These procedures yielded 7 valid and reliable items (from an original pool of 10) for the English exposure scale. For the self-esteem variable, the validated 8-item Indonesian adaptation of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) developed by Maroqi (2019) was adopted.

Data analysis employed multiple linear regression using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27. The analytical sequence proceeded from data tabulation through classical assumption tests normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity to hypothesis testing via partial t-tests, simultaneous F-tests, and coefficient of determination (R^2) analysis. Effective and relative contribution values were subsequently calculated to quantify the proportional contribution of each independent variable to the dependent variable. This statistical procedure enabled rigorous examination and validation of the hypotheses, yielding results that are both measurable and statistically significant.

Results and Discussion

Research Results

Descriptive analyses were performed for all three study variables: English exposure (X_1), self-esteem (X_2), and English communication competence (Y). As shown in Table 1, the descriptive statistics for each variable are presented below.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

	English Exposure	Self-Esteem	English Communication Competence
N	71	71	71
Mean	17,72	22.93	68,27
Median	18	23,00	69,00
Mode	19	23	90
Standard Deviation	2,647	3,123	16,223
Variance	7,005	9,752	263,170
Range	13	16	58
Minimum	11	16	40
Maximum	24	32	98
Total	1258	1628	4847

The English communication competence variable (Y) exhibited scores ranging from 40 to 98 ($M = 68.27$, $SD = 16.22$), with a cumulative total of 4,847. The distribution appears negatively skewed, as evidenced by the discrepancy between the mode (90) and both the mean (68.27) and median (69.00), suggesting the presence of a subset of extremely low scores that depressed the mean substantially. This variable was measured using students' PSAS scores on the English subject. The English exposure variable (X_1) yielded scores ranging from 11 to 24 ($M = 17.72$, $SD = 2.647$), with

a cumulative total of 1,258. This variable was measured using 7 Likert-scale items adapted from a four-point modified Likert scale.

The self-esteem variable (X_2) produced scores ranging from 16 to 32 ($M = 22.93$, $SD = 3.12$), with a cumulative total of 1,628. This variable was measured using 8 Likert-scale items drawn from the validated RSES adaptation. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test yielded a significance value of .200 ($p > .05$), confirming that the data are normally distributed. Linearity testing indicated that the relationship between English exposure and English communication competence is linear (linearity significance = .001 < .05; deviation from linearity = .06 > .05). Similarly, the relationship between self-esteem and English communication competence was found to be linear (linearity significance = .001 < .05; deviation from linearity = .585 > .05).

Multicollinearity assessment revealed tolerance values of .952 and variance inflation factor (VIF) values of 1.050 for both English exposure and self-esteem, indicating that the independent variables do not exhibit collinearity (tolerance > .10; VIF < 10). Heteroscedasticity was examined using the Glesjer test, which produced significance values of .409 for English exposure and .569 for self-esteem (both $p > .05$), confirming that the regression model is free from heteroscedastic patterns. An autocorrelation test was not conducted, given that Ghazali (2018) noted autocorrelation is typically only relevant for time-series data, whereas the present study employs cross-sectional data. The multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to assess the direction and magnitude of the relationships between the independent variables and the criterion. The resulting coefficients are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Multiple Linear Regression Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
	B	Std. Error	Beta
(Constant)	-1,242	15,677	
English Exposure	1,731	0,670	0,282
Self-Esteem	1,694	0,568	0,326

Based on the coefficients in Table 2, the estimated regression equation is:

$$\hat{Y} = -1.242 + 1.731X_1 + 1.694X_2$$

where Y denotes English communication competence, X_1 denotes English exposure, and X_2 denotes self-esteem. Three interpretations follow from this equation. First, the constant of -1.242 indicates the predicted value of Y when both X_1 and X_2 equal zero; however, as Roustaei (2024) noted, negative constants lack substantive meaning when zero values are empirically impossible a condition that holds here, given that the modified Likert scale ranges from 1 to 4. Second, the regression coefficient for English exposure ($\beta = 1.731$) indicates that a one-unit increase in English exposure is associated with a 1.731-unit increase in English communication competence, holding self-esteem constant. Third, the regression coefficient for self-esteem ($\beta = 1.694$) indicates that a one-unit increase in self-esteem is associated with a 1.694-unit increase in English communication competence, holding English exposure constant. Partial hypothesis testing via t-tests was conducted to determine the individual significance of each predictor. The results are reported in Table 3.

Table 3
t-Test Results for Partial Hypothesis Testing

Model	t	Sig.
(Constant)	-0,079	0,937
English Exposure	2,584	0,012
Self-Esteem	2,983	0,004

Table 3 reveals that English exposure yielded a t-statistic of 2.584 ($p = .012$). Given that $t_{\text{count}} (2.584) > t_{\text{table}} (1.668; \alpha = .05, df = 68)$ and $p < .05$, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming a significant partial effect of English exposure on English communication competence (H_1 supported). Self-esteem produced a t-statistic of 2.983 ($p = .004$). Since $t_{\text{count}} (2.983) > t_{\text{table}} (1.668)$ and $p < .05$, the null hypothesis is likewise rejected, supporting a significant partial effect of self-esteem on English communication competence (H_2 supported). To determine whether English exposure and self-esteem jointly predict English communication competence, a simultaneous F-test was conducted. The ANOVA results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
ANOVA Results for Simultaneous Hypothesis Testing

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	4170,293	2	2085,146	9,949	< .001 ^b
Residual	14251,623	68	209,583		
Total	18421,915	70			

As shown in Table 4, the F-statistic was 9.949 ($p < .001$). Because $F_{\text{count}} (9.949) > F_{\text{table}} (3.132; \alpha = .05, df_1 = 2, df_2 = 68)$ and $p < .05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. English exposure and self-esteem, taken together, exert a significant simultaneous positive effect on English communication competence (H_3 supported). The coefficient of determination was computed to assess the proportional variance in English communication competence explained by the two predictors. The model summary is presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Model Summary: Coefficient of Determination

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.476 ^a	0,226	0,204	14,477

Table 5 indicates that $R^2 = .226$, meaning that English exposure and self-esteem together account for 22.6% of the variance in English communication competence. The remaining 77.4% is attributable to other variables not included in this model. To further quantify each predictor's individual contribution to the explained variance, effective and relative contribution analyses were conducted. Table 6 presents the regression and correlation coefficients required for these calculations.

Table 6
Regression and Correlation Coefficients for Contribution Analysis

Variable	Regression Coefficient (β)	Correlation Coefficient	R Square
English Exposure	0,282	0,354	22,6%
Self-Esteem	0,326	0,388	

Table 7
Effective Contribution of Each Predictor Variable

Variable	Calculation	Effective Contribution (%)
English Exposure	$0,282 \times 0,354 \times 100\%$	10%
Self-Esteem	$0,326 \times 0,388 \times 100\%$	12,6 %
Total		22,6 %

Using the regression and correlation coefficients presented in Table 6, the effective contributions of each predictor were calculated as displayed in Table 7. As shown in Table 7, English exposure contributed effectively 10.0% of the explained variance, while self-esteem contributed 12.6%. The combined effective contribution of 22.6% is consistent with the R^2 value reported in Table 5, confirming the accuracy of the calculation. The relative contributions of each predictor, expressed as a proportion of the total explained variance, are shown in Table 8.

Table 8
Relative Contribution of Each Predictor Variable

Variable	Calculation	Relative Contribution (%)
<i>English Exposure</i>	$10\% \div 22,6\%$	44%
<i>Self-Esteem</i>	$12,6\% \div 22,6\%$	56%
Total		100%

Table 8 demonstrates that English exposure accounts for 44% of the explained variance, while self-esteem accounts for 56%, jointly totalling 100% of the model-explained variance.

Discussion

The finding that English exposure exerts a significant positive effect on English communication competence is consistent with the broader literature. In general, English exposure enables students to acquire the target language in an implicit, incidental manner; because the activities through which exposure is gained tend to be self-selected and intrinsically motivated, learners are likely to engage with English input more deeply and more sustainably than they would through purely coercive instruction. This finding aligns with De Wilde et al. (2021), Ibrahim (2023), Niitemaa (2020), and Zoubi (2018), all of whom concluded that greater frequency and variety of English contact whether formal or informal is associated with higher communicative competence. The underlying mechanism involves the progressive accumulation of lexical and grammatical knowledge that serves as a foundational resource for spoken communication.

The significant positive effect of self-esteem on English communication competence is similarly consistent with prior research. According to Acosta-Gonzaga (2023), individuals with higher self-esteem tend to experience heightened motivation and interest, which in turn facilitate more productive learning outcomes. The present finding corroborates Gultom and Oktaviani (2022) and Utami and Wahyudin (2022), who reported that self-esteem is positively associated with English proficiency, manifested as greater confidence and willingness to engage in communicative practice. Theoretically, self-esteem may facilitate English communication competence through its influence on students' mindset and learning dispositions including willingness to memorise vocabulary, attempt grammatical structures, and take the interpersonal risks inherent in spoken interaction.

The complementary roles of English exposure and self-esteem deserve particular attention. English exposure enriches the linguistic repertoire vocabulary and grammar available for communication, while self-esteem provides the affective and motivational scaffolding that encourages learners to deploy that repertoire in practice. This dynamic is supported by Mahendra and Santosa's (2024) finding that the benefits of English exposure are most fully realised when students possess learning-oriented characteristics and motivational dispositions. The present results extend this insight by demonstrating empirically that self-esteem, as a proxy for such characteristics, contributes marginally more to English communication competence (effective contribution: 12.6%) than does exposure alone (10.0%), underscoring the importance of affective factors in vocational language learning. The practice-oriented nature of vocational education further amplifies the role of self-esteem: students must communicate in front of peers and instructors as part of regular instructional activities, and adequate self-esteem is particularly critical in such performance contexts.

Conclusion

This study examined the effects of English exposure and self-esteem on the English communication competence of Grade XI MPLB students at SMK Negeri 1 Banyudono. Three primary conclusions emerge from the data. First, English exposure exerts a significant positive effect on English communication competence ($t_{\text{count}} = 2.584 > t_{\text{table}} = 1.668$, $p = .012$). Second, self-esteem exerts a significant positive effect on English communication competence ($t_{\text{count}} = 2.983 > t_{\text{table}} = 1.668$, $p = .004$). Third, English exposure and self-esteem jointly exert a significant positive effect on English communication competence ($F_{\text{count}} = 9.949 > F_{\text{table}} = 3.132$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .226$). Moreover, self-esteem contributes a marginally greater effective contribution (12.6%) than English exposure (10.0%), highlighting the crucial role of affective variables in shaping communicative performance. These findings suggest that improvements in English communication competence may be optimised by increasing both the quantity and quality of English exposure through pedagogically enriched classroom instruction and engagement with English-language media outside school as well as by supporting students' self-esteem, which may be fostered through school-based counselling and positive teacher reinforcement. This study is subject to several limitations that future research should address. The sample was restricted to Grade XI MPLB students at a single institution, limiting the generalisability of the findings to other vocational or academic educational contexts. Additionally, only two predictors were examined, whereas English communication competence is likely influenced by a broader range of factors, including learning motivation, teacher competence, availability of learning facilities, family background, and access to authentic language resources. Future studies are encouraged to expand the variable set accordingly. Regarding measurement, the use of PSAS scores as a proxy for English communication competence introduces some construct validity concerns, given that summative assessments may not fully capture speaking proficiency. Researchers may wish to employ standardised language tests such as the TOEFL or IELTS which are aligned with international European competency standards or develop purpose-built speaking assessment instruments informed by the item formats of such tests.

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