



## The Correlation of Positive Reinforcement, Self-Confidence, and Speaking Performance of English Young Learners

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### Abstract

Most teachers may face challenges to teach the students without students' native language to teach a foreign language. The students may get bored easily and not motivated because they have to listen to more new strange words in every meeting that they do not directly understand the words means. Thus, it needs some strategies to get the better result. Students who like doing things happily need a more relaxing learning situation to join the English classes comfortably. The study aimed to investigate the correlation of verbal, gestural, token reinforcement, speaking performance, and self-confidence. The research method used was a quantitative study with multiple linear regressions. Students of the fifth grade of SD N 1 Wates Undaan Kudus as the population took part in the positive reinforcement, self-confidence, and speaking performance test in teaching English. The data were analyzed through a statistical program of SPSS 22. Thus, there was a correlation between positive reinforcement, speaking performance, and self-confidence. The conclusion is that all positive reinforcement correlates with speaking performance and self-confidence. It means that the positive reinforcement influenced their speaking performance and their self-confidence. It is suggested that the teacher should raise their awareness to motivate students' speaking skills for better achievement. Besides, teachers' performance in the classroom activity deals with classroom management, encourages the students to always joyful in learning English materials, provides exercise and group discussion according to their circumstance, and performs various teaching that involves the learner's role in the classroom activity.

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## INTRODUCTION

The basic level of schooling is elementary education. What is achieved in the elementary school will guide and become students' foundation for the following level and, later in their working environment (Harafa, 2000). For this reason, elementary education is crucial. This case equally applies to SD N 1 Wates Kudus, in which English is a local content subject. It is so that this school can offer a better quality of education. At this school, the first until third graders are introduced to English vocabularies, while the fourth grade to sixth-grade students have chances to dig into more intensive English materials to prepare them for junior high school level. However, some things still need to be improved. In fact, in classroom activities, some of the students cannot speak fluently and difficult to pronounce English words well. Students have to learn four English skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, but out of the four skills, speaking seems intuitively the most important to the elementary level (Al-Khawasawneh et al, 2016; Alyami et al, 2017; Amber, 2010; Arifin, 2018). Teachers complain about the speaking skill of their students.

Harmer (2007) states that speaking is a skill that, needs to be practiced and developed independently of the grammar curriculum. Hughes (2011) states that there are five speaking skills: speaking is not a discrete skill, teaching speaking is not easy, teaching speaking versus using speaking to teach, insight from speech corpora, and bringing the facets of speaking together (Bergil et al, 2017; Borrero et al, 2010; Byier et al, 2014; Canter, 2014; Cahlil, 2014). From the statement of Harmer (2007) and Hughes (2011), it can be concluded that speaking is a complicated skill to develop. According to Fitriati (2017, p. 413), "the teacher's ability to speak English for instructional purposes in teaching EFL must be obtained". So, the teacher needs a plan to make the student follow what the teacher wants them to. If the lesson does not run as the teachers' plan, they always find a problem.

Two problems in line with the unachieved learning target are found in students' speaking skills. There is students' difficulty to pronounce well and comprehend vocabulary quickly. It is shown by the students' inaccurate and incomplete answers to comprehension questions. In speaking, students face some obstacles such as the inability to pronounce English words well and mistakes in stress and intonation.

There were ten students stammering while answering the teacher's questions, although they can answer in the written forms. In the teaching-learning processes, the teacher sees students' lack of autonomy. They tend to depend on the teacher, and that makes them tend to be passive. It needs a long time for them to answer the questions. Moreover, they seem to be inferior. They are unconfident, inaccurate, and unenthusiastic.

According to Brown (2001, p. 7), "teaching means showing and helping someone learn how to do something". Giving instruction, guiding in the study of something with knowledge causes people to know or understand. Teaching is guiding and facilitating learning that enables them to improve skill and attitude (Damar et al, 2013; Ezaki et al, 2017; Ezai et al, 2016; Foti, 2018; Glascott & Belfiore, 2019). It means that teaching is about transferring the information to the students, but the teacher must also teach knowledge and a good attitude for students because the parents hope that the children can have good knowledge and attitude (Juhana, 2014; Juuso, 2011; Kelly & Pohl, 2018).

Most teachers may face more challenges to teach the students without students' native language to teach a foreign language. The students may get bored easily and not motivated because they have to listen to more new strange words in every meeting that they do not directly understand what the words mean. English is not the students' native language. That is why some strategies are needed in the learning process to get the result. Students who like doing things with happy

feelings need a more relaxing learning situation to join the English classes comfortably.

Related to the problem, it becomes the teacher's tasks to make the situation to be true. The teacher needs something to be involved in the English classes. One of them is reinforcement that could bring the comfortable situation and friendly situation of the English classes (Adibsereshkiet al, 2014; Narges et al, 2014). It may increase the students' self-confidence and motivation in English learning (Greenacre et al, 2014; Gudu, 2015; Habibi & Sofwan, 2015; Herbein et al, 2018; Imaniah, 2017; Ismaili & Bajrami, 2016).

It is believed that an ideal English teacher is the teacher who encourages their students to learn the language, trusts their students' abilities, cares about their students, positively reinforces their right answers, and accepts their mistakes, or even utilizes them for further learning. All these positive attitudes of the teacher toward her students are mostly expressed verbally in the classroom. Alternatively, teacher talk expresses negative attitudes toward students, like discouraging, mistrusting, neglecting, rejecting, with by negative reinforcement (Pertiwi, 2019)

Turney *et al.* (1983) present some examples of classroom English, especially verbal reinforcement as follows: Words: *Yes, That's right, Great, Good, Fine, Uh-huh, Correct, Nice Work, and Beautiful.* An example of reinforcement importance is inviting the students to come up to the class to answer a question. After he answers

correctly, the teacher says that it is correct without a loud voice and a smile. This situation becomes uninteresting, and the students do not have motivation. When the student answers correctly, the teacher says, "*You're great*"; it automatically can make the student happy, more confident, and excited to study more.

However, from the researcher's experience as an English teacher, it was found that implementing reinforcement in classes correlated with high students' interaction and performance. Moreover, the researcher realized

that it promoted students' positive attitudes toward their teacher. Through informal talks with students, it was found that they praised teachers who talk with them positively. They even believed that positive reinforcement influences their learning behaviour positively.

This research aims to describe the correlation of verbal reinforcement, gestural reinforcement, token reinforcement with speaking performance and self-confidence of fifth graders of SD N 1 Wates Undaan Kudus.

## METHODS

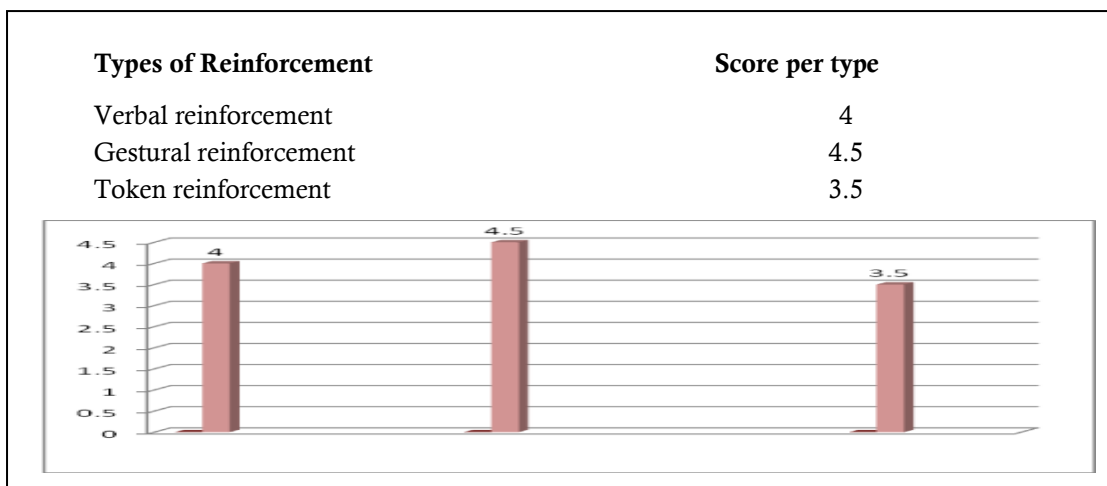
The research was conducted in multiple linear regression correlations to determine the correlation between variables. The research is mainly quantitative. It means that data were collected and subjected to methods of reducing such data to objective, hypothesis-driven analyses that culminated in a factual and replicable outcome.

This research is correlation research designed to investigate the nature and strength of the functional relationship of the variables of interest to the researcher. "An explanatory research design is a correlational design in which the researcher is interested in the extent to which two variables (or more) co-vary, that is, where changes in one variable are reflected in changes in the other" (Creswell, 2012, p. 340).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Observation on the use of positive reinforcement

An observation sheet was used in teaching and learning processes to find out the positive reinforcement. The observation result shows that gestural reinforcement is more dominant (with a score of 4.5), followed by verbal reinforcement (4) and then token reinforcement (3.5). Chart 1 shows the total results of the whole data gathered.



**Chart 1.** the use of positive reinforcement

Meanwhile, for the questionnaire of positive reinforcement results that gestural reinforcement is more dominant too (21 respondents), followed by verbal reinforcement

(15 respondents) and token reinforcement (12 respondents). Table 1 shows the total results of the whole data gathered.

**Table 1.** the questionnaire of positive reinforcement result

No	Statements	Answer		
		1	2	3
1	In general, is your work too hard for you?	6	12	4
2	In general, is your work too easy for you?	1	18	3
3	Do you think you get the points or rewards you deserve when you do good work?		1	21
4	Do you think you would do better in school if you received more rewards?		1	21
5	Are you happy if your teacher gives verbal reinforcement? Like as say ok, great, clever.		7	15
6	Are you happy if your teacher gives gestural reinforcement? Like as smiling, thumb up, clapping/applauding, rubs your back/shoulder.		1	21
7	Are you happy if your teacher gives token reinforcement? Like as gives star sticker and PIN.	6	4	12
8	Do you think work periods for English subjects are too long?	19	3	
9	Do you think work periods for English subjects are too short?		12	10
10	Is your work challenging enough?		7	15

**Speaking's score**

The Spearman-Brown formula ( $r_s$ ) was performed on the three sets of data to test the relationship. The result of the correlation was

0.444. The result indicates a correlation between verbal reinforcement with students' speaking performance achievement and their self-confidence.

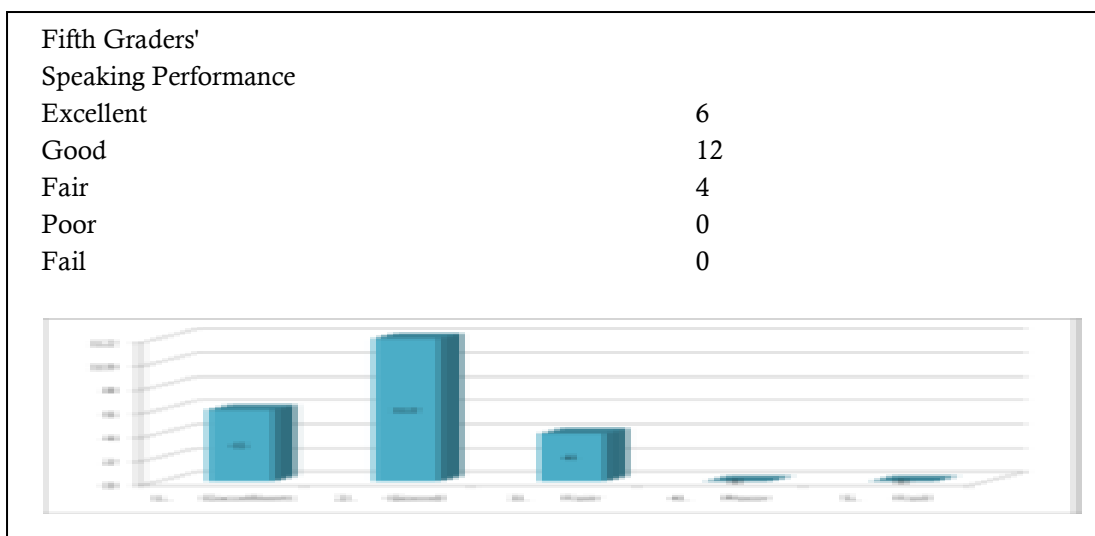
**Table 2.** Correlation of verbal reinforcement with students' speaking performance achievement and their self-confidence

	Verbal_reinforcement	Speaking_test_score	Self_confidence
Spearman's rho			
Verbal_reinforcement	.	.	.
Correlation Coefficient			
Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.
N	22	22	22
Speaking_test_score		1.000	.444*
Correlation Coefficient	.		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.038
N	22	22	22
Self_confidence		.444*	1.000
Correlation Coefficient	.		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.038	.
N	22	22	22

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

A speaking performance test was conducted to find out the students' achievement in speaking performance. The test materials were in the form of a passage of telling time and describing food and drink. It is related to the materials for fifth-grade students. Based

on the test result, it was found that most of the students achieved an excellent score of speaking performance, and some of them achieved good and fair category. No student achieved a poor score nor failed the test. The result of the data is shown in chart 2.

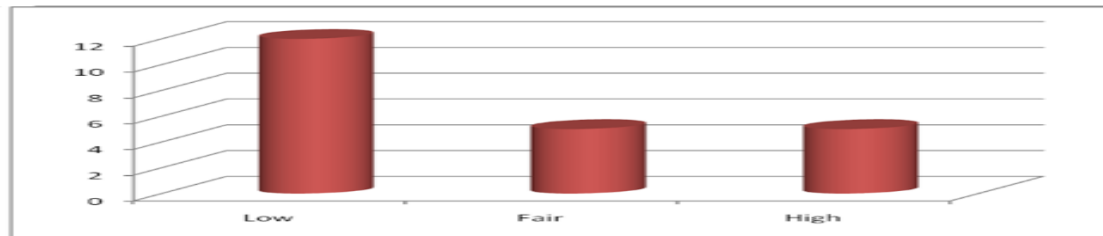


**Chart 2.** Fifth graders' speaking performance

**Self-confidence**

The data gathered from the questionnaire adequately answer the research

questions on how are the students' self-confidence. Chart 3 shows the percentage of the whole data gathered.



**Chart 3.** Students' self-confidence in speaking performance

From the descriptive statistics, it is clear that the study participants have low self-confidence (12), (5) participants have fair self-confidence, and also (5) participants have high self-confidence.

**The correlation of verbal reinforcement with speaking performance achievement and self-confidence**

The Spearman-Brown formula ( $r_s$ ) was performed on the three sets of data to test the relationship. The result of the correlation was 0.444. The result indicates a correlation of verbal reinforcement with students' speaking performance achievement and self-confidence.

The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level. The score of 0.444 indicates that 40 percent is influenced by the students' self-confidence, while another 60 percent is influenced by other factors from one point of speaking performance achievement score.

After the correlation coefficient was found, the next step was testing the hypothesis that has been proposed earlier. Here below is the calculation:

$$t = 0.444 \sqrt{\frac{22 - 3}{1 - (0.444)^2}}$$

$t = 2.410$ 
 $t_{table} = 2.093$

It was found that  $t_{result}$  is higher than  $t_{table}$ , which means that the null hypothesis **H0** for **H1** was rejected on the strength of correlation coefficient statistic: in this study, there is a significant relationship of verbal reinforcement

with students' speaking performance achievement and their self-confidence.

**The correlation of gestural reinforcement with speaking performance and self-confidence**

The Spearman-Brown formula ( $r_s$ ) was performed on the two sets of data to test the relationship. The result of the correlation was 0.459. The result indicates a correlation of gestural reinforcement with students' speaking performance achievement and self-confidence. The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level. The score of 0.459 indicates that 40 percent is influenced by the students' self-confidence, while another 60 percent is influenced by other factors from one point of speaking performance achievement score.

**Table 3.** The correlation of gestural reinforcement with students' speaking performance achievement and their self-confidence

	Gestural_reinforcement	Speaking_ Test_ Score	Self_ confidence
Spearman's rho			
Gestural_reinforcement	.	.	.
Correlation Coefficient			
Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.
N	22	22	22
Speaking_test_score		1.000	.459*
Correlation Coefficient	.		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.032
N	22	22	22
Self_confidence		.459*	1.000
Correlation Coefficient	.		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.032	.
N	22	22	22

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

After the correlation coefficient was found, the next step was testing the hypothesis that has been proposed earlier. Here below is the calculation:

$$t = 0.459 \sqrt{\frac{22 - 3}{1 - (0.459)^2}}$$

$$t = 2.535 \quad t_{table} = 2.093$$

It was found that  $t_{result}$  is higher than  $t_{table}$ , which means that the null hypothesis **H0** for **H2** was rejected on the strength of correlation coefficient statistic: in this study, there is a significant relationship of verbal reinforcement with students' speaking performance achievement and their self-confidence.

#### **The correlation of token reinforcement with speaking performance and self-confidence**

The Spearman-Brown formula ( $r_s$ ) was performed on the two sets of data to test the relationship. The result of the correlation was 0.564. The result indicates a correlation of token reinforcement with students' speaking performance achievement and self-confidence. The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. The score of 0.564 indicates that 50 percent is

influenced by the students' self-confidence, while another 50 percent is influenced by other factors from one point of speaking performance achievement score.

**Table 4.** The correlation of token reinforcement with students’ speaking performance achievement and their self-confidence

	Token_reinforcementscore	Speaking _test_	Self_ Confidence
Spearman’s rho			
Token_reinforcement	.	.	.
Correlation Coefficient			
Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.
N	22	22	22
Speaking_test_score			
Correlation Coefficient	.	1.000	.564**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.006
N	22	22	22
Self_confidence			
Correlation Coefficient	.	.564**	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.006	.
N	22	22	22

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. The score of 0.564 indicates that 50 percent is influenced by the students’ self-confidence, while another 50 percent is influenced by other factors from one point of speaking performance achievement score.

After the correlation coefficient was found, the next step was testing the hypothesis that has been proposed earlier. Here below is the calculation:

$$t = 0.564 \sqrt{\frac{22 - 3}{1 - (0.564)^2}}$$

$t = 3.605$ 
 $t_{table} = 2.093$

Based on the calculation, it was found that  $t_{result}$  is higher than  $t_{table}$ , which means that the null hypothesis **H0** for **H3** was rejected on the correlation coefficient statistic’s strength. In this study, there is a significant relationship between verbal reinforcement with students’ speaking performance achievement and self-confidence.

**The Correlation of Verbal Reinforcement, Gestural Reinforcement, Token Reinforcement with Speaking Performance and their Self-confidence**

**Table 5.** the Multiple Linear Regression Correlation Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.455 <sup>a</sup>	.207	.168	9.07461

- a. Predictors: (Constant), self\_confidence
- b. Dependent variable: speaking\_score

The Linear Regression Formula was performed on the five sets of data to test the

relationship. The result of the correlation was 0.455. The results indicate a correlation



between verbal reinforcement, gestural reinforcement, token reinforcement with speaking performance achievement, and self-confidence.

The same formula of hypothesis testing was applied to test the proposed hypothesis **H4**

$$t = 0.455 \sqrt{\frac{22-3}{1-(0.455)^2}}$$

t = 2.501                      t<sub>table</sub> = 2.093

Based on the calculation, it was found that t<sub>result</sub> is higher than t<sub>table</sub>, which means that the null hypothesis **H<sub>0</sub>** for **H4** was rejected on the strength of correlation coefficient statistic: in this study, there is a significant relationship between verbal reinforcement, gestural reinforcement, token reinforcement with speaking performance achievement and their self-confidence.

#### **Verbal reinforcement in speaking performance achievement with their self-confidence**

The researchers correlate verbal reinforcement with speaking performance and self-confidence. The value of correlation coefficient r is 0.444 or 44%. It is assumed that self-confidence influences their speaking performance achievement because of verbal reinforcement. In other words, verbal reinforcement can stimulate their self-confidence and then influences their speaking performance achievement. It is also found that the strength in a relationship of verbal reinforcement with speaking performance achievement and their self-confidence is fair enough (Apriliyanti, 2018).

From the data about the fair enough correlation of verbal reinforcement with speaking performance achievement and their self-confidence, it can be interpreted that verbal reinforcement is important to stimulate their self-confidence to achieve speaking performance better (Pintel, 2006, Diedrich, 2010).

Onyango et al. (2016) state that positive reinforcement has established good rapports between students and teachers and contributed to motivation and shift of behaviour and imitation of peers. Another expert, Hurt (1978, p.35), states “teachers can reward the students with verbal praise when they do well”. This form of reward tends to reinforce the student’s learning and increase the probability that the student will retain the knowledge, have a good feeling about the learning experience and the content of that experience, and repeat the behaviour that elicited the reward. It is similar to what is stated by Manzoor et al. (2015) when positive reinforcement is implemented in the classroom. Students gave a response by showing higher motivation and interest in learning English. Besides, most teachers believe that various motivational strategies in teaching should be implemented as a kind of positive reinforcement.

#### **Gestural reinforcement in speaking performance achievement with their self-confidence**

The researchers correlate gestural reinforcement with speaking performance and self-confidence. The value of correlation coefficient r is 0.456 or 46%. It is assumed that self-confidence influences their speaking performance achievement because of gestural reinforcement. In other words, gestural reinforcement can stimulate their self-confidence and then influences their speaking performance achievement. It is also found that the strength in a relationship of gestural reinforcement with speaking performance achievement and their self-confidence is fair enough.

From the data about the fair enough correlation of gestural reinforcement with speaking performance achievement and self-confidence, it can be interpreted that gestural reinforcement is important to stimulate their self-confidence to perform speaking performance than verbal reinforcement better.

When gestures are combined with speech, they can either be used as a compliment, supplement or substitute to spoken language, or together with an utterance to modify it. Since gesture and speech are so closely interlinked, it has been suggested that gestures can provide an understanding of the processes that are the foundation of language. Tarigan (1981, p. 27) added that “the students are thus susceptible to psychological tensions and also to constraints of style and register necessary in such a situation”. Morin (2017) points out that positive reinforcement integrated classrooms have a positive effect on students and the general education students and teachers. Students feel more supported in classroom settings and feel more closely with each other.

#### **Token reinforcement in speaking performance achievement with their self-confidence**

The researchers correlate token reinforcement with speaking performance and self-confidence. The value of correlation coefficient  $r$  is 0.564 or 56%. It is assumed that self-confidence influences their speaking performance achievement better than verbal reinforcement and gestural reinforcement. In other words, token reinforcement can stimulate their self-confidence and then influences their speaking performance achievement. It is also found that the strength in a relationship of token reinforcement with speaking performance achievement and their self-confidence is fair enough.

From the data about the fair enough correlation of token reinforcement with speaking performance achievement and self-confidence, it can be interpreted that token reinforcement is important to better self-confidence to speak performance than verbal reinforcement and gestural reinforcement.

As student non-compliance increases, more instructional time is now diverted to classroom management, resulting in less time on the academic task. One widely used evidence-based practice is token reinforcement.

Results of the lottery system intervention presented here showed group-wide effectiveness in decreasing noncompliant behaviour. The lottery system intervention presented demonstrates a potentially more cost-effective token reinforcement variation. This study showed noncompliant student behaviour decreased quickly and maintained at low levels throughout both interventions and return to intervention phases. Concerning Aziz's (2016) results of the study, this result indicates that the treatment in the form of token reinforcement of out-of-seat behaviour in students can be reduced. Although not all subjects were able to eliminate the out-of-seat behaviour in themselves, they could maintain the decline in out-of-seat behaviour until the withdrawal phase or A2 phase. It shows that token reinforcement techniques can be used to reduce the emergence of out-of-seat behaviour in students.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

This study concluded that positive reinforcement has a positive effect on the students' performance achievement and self-confidence. The study found a significant correlation of positive reinforcement with speaking performance achievement and self-confidence based on the findings. First, verbal reinforcement with speaking performance achievement and their self-confidence has a significant correlation. The value of the correlation coefficient  $R$  is 0.444 or 44%. It is assumed that positive reinforcement may influence their self-confidence and speaking performance achievement. Second, gestural reinforcement with speaking performance achievement and their self-confidence has a significant correlation. The value of correlation coefficient  $R$  is 0.459 or 46%. It is assumed that gestural reinforcement may influence their self-confidence and speaking performance achievement. Third, Token reinforcement with speaking performance achievement and their self-confidence has a significant correlation. The value of correlation coefficient  $R$  is 0.564

or 56%. It is assumed that token reinforcement may influence their self-confidence and speaking performance. In other words, all positive reinforcement may influence their self-confidence to improve speaking performance achievement.

This research focuses only on positive reinforcement, not exploring negative reinforcement. Therefore, further researchers can explore both positive and negative reinforcement in their research if necessary. Secondly, this study only examines self-confidence as a moderator variable, and future researchers can explore from the other side, for example, in terms of motivation, learning habits, etc. The only skill intended here is speaking. The next researcher can use this research as a reference to research other skills.

This research's weakness, especially in terms of research method, is in the instrument used and the researcher needed to adjust the observation sheet based on the current situation before it was used.

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