

Indonesian Learners' L2 Reticence in English for Specific Purposes Classes and Its Influence on L2 Confidence

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Abstract

The present article reports on a research study on Indonesian English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learners' level of L2 reticence and its influence on L2 confidence. 213 ESP learners from different departments participated in this study. Data was collected through a survey. By means of descriptive statistics, it was found that learners generally reported a low-moderate level of L2 reticence. Most participants seemed unafraid of being the centre of attention or making mistakes in English class. Through bivariate linear regression, this study also found that L2 reticence significantly influenced L2 confidence. It accounted for 23.80% of the total variance in L2 confidence. Informed by these findings, pedagogical implications include incorporating class activities that allow more learner talk and the creation of a psychologically safe environment for learners to engage in risk-taking behaviours in L2 learning. Future studies might investigate the possible relationship between L2 reticence and other L2 learning aspects.

Key words: Confidence, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), reticence, second/foreign language (L2)

Resumen

El presente artículo informa acerca de un estudio sobre el nivel de reticencia a la L2 de 213 estudiantes indonesios de inglés para propósitos específicos (ESP) y su influencia en la confianza en la L2. Los datos fueron recopilados mediante encuestas y analizados utilizando estadística descriptiva. Se registró un nivel bajo a moderado de reticencia a la L2. La mayoría de los participantes no manifestaron miedo a ser el centro de atención ni a cometer errores en la clase de inglés. Por medio de regresión lineal bivariada, se observó que la reticencia a L2 influyó significativamente en la confianza en L2. Las implicancias pedagógicas incluyen la necesidad de incorporar actividades de clase que generen espacios para que los alumnos hablen más y crear un entorno psicológicamente seguro para que tomen riesgos en la L2. Futuros estudios podrían investigar la relación entre reticencia y otros aspectos del aprendizaje de la L2.

Palabras claves: confianza, inglés para propósitos específicos, reticencia, lengua segunda o extranjera

Introduction

Learners' reticence is one of the problematic phenomena experienced in second/foreign language (L2) learning (Carter & Henrichsen, 2015). In an old yet relevant

publication, McCroskey (1977) defined L2 reticence as “an individual’s level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons” (p. 78). In comparison, Tsui (1996) defined L2 reticence as “learners’ inadequate ability in self-expression, a problem in verbal response to the learning situation” (p. 145). Though both definitions suggest L2 reticence as learners’ negative silence behaviours or silence phenomenon in L2 classes, McCroskey attributed L2 reticence to anxiety, whilst Tsui attributed it more to linguistic problems. In this study, both factors are taken into account.

L2 reticence occurs when learners avoid contributing to communication. Several studies identified possible factors making learners silent in L2 classes. As studies in Indonesia (Siagian & Adam, 2021; Umisara et al., 2021) reported, some of these factors included fear of making mistakes, fear of becoming the centre of attention, shyness, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation. For example, if learners did not want to be the centre of attention in class, they would decide to keep silent with minimum contribution in L2 classes. Likewise, when learners perceived their competence as insufficient, they would be afraid of making mistakes because these would put them through a feeling of embarrassment in front of their peers and teachers. In the case of L2 learners in Indonesia, this fear of making mistakes, and as a consequence feeling embarrassed, may be amplified since the Asian culture generally considers ‘face’ very important (Joe et al., 2017). Furthermore, classroom environment, learners’ competence, and teacher attitudes and behaviours were also reported to affect L2 reticence (Donald, 2010; Shan, 2020; Soo & Goh, 2013; Wu, 2019). Examples encompass classroom environments that do not support learners to express themselves, lessons perceived as too complex or unfamiliar to learners, learners’ lack of language competence, and teachers whose instructional practices provide inadequate avenues for learners to express themselves. A recent study involving 24 learners in ESP Poetry class by Wang and Liu (2024) found that unfamiliarity with English poems and poets led to reticence. “Since we have little knowledge about English poems, even if we want to say something, we cannot. That is, we cannot say what we have not thought of,” a participant in the study commented (Wang & Liu, 2024, p. 28). These findings were in line with those of an earlier study involving 100 L2 learners in China by Liu (2005), who reported that learners’ beliefs, experience, lack of proficiency, lack of practice, and perceived task difficulties contributed to L2 reticence. Sociocultural factors may also contribute to their reticence of Asian learners. Jun (2010) mentioned that in Asia it is a norm for learners to show respect to their teachers. However, this respect is often manifested by learners remaining silent and being ‘good listeners’ to their teachers. This seemed to be confirmed in a recent study involving 40 L2 learners in Sri Lanka (Nagodavithana & Premarathne, 2023). Some participants in the study reported that they did not express opinions due to respect for their teachers.

Studies suggested that, in the long run, L2 reticence could hamper L2 learning success. In learning an L2, learners face many challenges, such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. When they choose to be silent instead of practising such aspects, they will likely experience a lack of language output (Wu, 2019). Donald (2010) argued that learner participation is paramount for optimising language output in L2 learning. The author further mentioned that the primary function of language is communicating and building relationships with others. However, reticent learners have difficulty executing these functions as they cannot express their opinions to their friends or teachers. Hence, eventually, reticence behaviours become an impediment to L2 learning.

Though perhaps not as extensive as studies on other individual differences such as motivation and foreign language classroom anxiety, relatively recent studies on L2 reticence are available in various learning contexts, for example, in Iran (Doqaruni, 2015), Taiwan (Donald, 2010), China (Heng, 2018; Wu, 2019), Malaysia (Shing & Seng, 2016), and

Indonesia (Aripin & Umam, 2019), probably suggesting researchers' acknowledgement on the importance of the issue of reticence in L2 learners. A study by Shing and Seng (2016) in Malaysia found that learners' L2 reticence made it difficult for their teachers to assess their understanding and whether they had difficulty learning. Earlier, a qualitative study involving 16 learners in Iran by Doqaruni (2015) suggested the critical role of teachers in seeking ways to increase learners' collaboration in the classroom to help them lessen their reticence and increase participation. In line with that, in China, a study involving vocational college students by Heng (2018) reported that teachers' teaching style and teacher-student interactions in class affected learners' reticence. The study mentioned that a democratic teacher-student relationship where learners could freely express themselves in class is conducive to lessening L2 reticence. Earlier, a study investigating Taiwanese learners' reticence by Donald (2010) suggested that extended wait time, well-delivered error correction, and teachers' scaffolding could promote oral communication in L2 classes. The author, however, warned that teachers should know when and how to deliver error correction and scaffolding to avoid embarrassment. Furthermore, a classroom action research study involving 40 learners by Aripin and Umam (2019) in Indonesia pinpointed that, shy, lazy, anxious, and ignorant learners tended to be reticent in class. The authors suggested giving learners more talk time in L2 classes to alleviate reticence.

Besides L2 reticence, another individual factor often discussed in the plethora of L2 learning literature is L2 confidence. MacIntyre et al. (1998) defined L2 confidence as learners' overall beliefs in their ability to adaptably and efficiently communicate in L2. It combines two components: the cognitive component concerning learners' perceived competence and the affective component concerning anxiety learners experience when using the L2. This definition suggests that L2 confidence emphasises how comfortable learners are when using L2 rather than how good they think they are in the language. L2 self-confidence is crucial to learning a language because it impacts their willingness to communicate meaningfully (Ghonsooly et al., 2012). A systematic review study by Pasarlay (2018) identified learners' anxiety and teachers' attitudes as factors influencing L2 confidence found across different studies. When learners experience lower anxiety levels and receive more personalised attention from teachers, their confidence increases. Furthermore, a study in Saudi Arabia by Al-Hebaish (2012) also reported that L2 confidence significantly correlated with language achievement positively, suggesting that the more confident the participants were, the more likely they had a higher L2 achievement. In line with that, a relatively recent large-scale study involving 1275 participants in Afghanistan by Akbari and Sahibzada (2020) reported areas influenced by L2 confidence. These were participation, interest in lessons, and goal-oriented behaviours, suggesting the paramount role of L2 confidence in the success of L2 learning.

The present study

The present study sought to answer the following research questions: First, what is the level of Indonesian English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learners' L2 reticence in English classes? Second, to what extent does this reticence influence their L2 confidence in English classes?

Several rationales for conducting this study can be outlined. Indonesia is home to the third most considerable number of L2 learners of English worldwide. However, due to the position of English as a foreign language (EFL) in the country, the use of the language is primarily constrained to classroom use. As a result, learners have little to no opportunities to use the language as a day-to-day practice. This situation likely makes learners more reticent in L2 classes because they have little experience in using the language extensively. They may

also have low confidence due to limited experience of success in using the language. Such situations warrant a study on L2 reticence and confidence involving Indonesian participants. Next, it is realised that studies on L2 reticence (Aripin & Umam, 2019) and L2 confidence (Febriyani et al., 2020; Hamzah et al., 2020; Muin & Aswati, 2019) have been available in Indonesia, albeit not extensive. However, to the best of our knowledge, there have not been any studies contemplating the possible influence of L2 reticence on L2 confidence, at least in the Indonesian context. More specifically, this study intends to involve ESP learners, who are currently under-represented in L2 reticence and confidence literature. ESP classes typically necessitate learners to not only master their linguistic aspects but also the content-specific aspects of the target domain in L2 (Hyland, 2022). In such a situation, learners may be prone to reticence, preventing them from achieving optimal L2 learning. For this reason, it is essential to conduct a study contemplating the extent of the influence of L2 reticence on L2 confidence, which is necessary for meaningful L2 communication to occur.

Method

Design and Instruments

This study employed a survey method. To this end, we distributed paper-based questionnaires. Several rationales informed the selection of the method. The method matches the purpose of this study, which is to find the level of learners' L2 reticence and its possible influence on L2 confidence. Furthermore, ESP learners are relatively under-represented in the literature on L2 reticence and confidence, at least in the Indonesian context. For this reason, it is strategic to conduct a survey, which could be used to map a phenomenon in general (Creswell, 2022). The findings of this study could lay the ground for further studies on L2 reticence and confidence involving ESP learners both in Indonesia and abroad.

Instruments

The questionnaires used in this study consisted of a background questionnaire, a Likert-scale questionnaire on L2 reticence, and a Likert-scale questionnaire on L2 confidence. There were eleven questionnaire items on L2 reticence. Of these eleven items, items 1–7, 9, and 10 were adapted from the work of Van and Phuong (2021), whilst items 8, 11, and 12 were adapted from the work of Zhou and Chen (2020). Examples of the items are “I have never answered an English question asked by a lecturer voluntarily” and “I choose to remain silent during an English class if the class material is not familiar to me”. Furthermore, there were eleven questionnaire items on L2 confidence. Of these items, items 1–7 were adapted from the work of Gabejan and Medalia (2021), whilst items 8–11 were adapted from the work of Abdullah et al. (2021). Examples of the items are “I feel confident speaking English in front of many people” and “I feel confident speaking English even though my English may be bad”. In each of the items on L2 reticence and confidence, five possible responses were available: “Strongly Agree”, “Agree”, “Neither Agree nor Disagree”, “Disagree”, and “Strongly Disagree”.

The distributed questionnaires were the Indonesian translations of the English questionnaire. The Indonesian version of the questionnaires was used with the aim of allowing the target participants to respond to all the items seamlessly without any language barrier. That was decided considering that they were still in the stage of developing their English proficiency. Before being distributed, the Indonesian questionnaires were back-translated into English to ensure no change in meaning in the translation process.

The validity of the questionnaire items was measured using Pearson's correlation, whilst the reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's omega before the questionnaire data were analysed to answer the research questions. In terms of validity,

each of the items on L2 reticence was correlated with the whole construct of L2 reticence. All the individual items produced a statistically significant correlation with the entire construct, indicating validity. With the same procedure, each of the eleven items on L2 confidence was correlated with the overall construct of L2 confidence. They all produced statistically significant associations with the overall construct, suggesting validity. Regarding reliability, the eleven items on L2 reticence produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .87 and a McDonald's omega coefficient of .87, indicating reliability. Likewise, the eleven items on L2 confidence produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .86 and a McDonald's omega coefficient of .86, indicating reliability.

Participants

The participants of this study were 213 L2 learners of English taking mandatory English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses in their respective departments at a university in Java, Indonesia. These learners were from five different departments. 44 participants (21%) were from the Architecture department, 44 participants (21%) from the Accountancy department, 44 (21%) from the Theology department, 67 (31%) from the Management department, and 14 (6%) from the Information System department. They were aged 18–26. They had an intermediate level of English. Before taking ESP courses in their departments, these participants had to pass three levels of General English courses, which were non-credited compulsory English courses taken by all non-English department students at the university. General English courses were integrated courses facilitating learners to sharpen their English skills using various communicative and collaborative activities such as small-group discussions, project presentations, and role-plays. Hence, at the time of data collection, the participants had passed three levels of General English, each of which could be completed within a semester at the earliest. In other words, the participants had at least three semesters of English courses before taking the ESP courses.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical principles of autonomy, confidentiality, non-maleficence, and beneficence. An informed consent form was attached to the first page of the paper-based questionnaire. The form detailed the researchers' identities, the purposes of this study, and the participants' rights and responsibilities (Gray, 2022). Oral explanations regarding this study were also provided before the target participants decided to participate. Participation was voluntary without any coercion. Confidentiality of the participants was maintained; no identifying information was disclosed throughout the research process (Israel & Hay, 2006). The participants required only approximately eight to ten minutes to complete the questionnaire, indicating adherence to the principle of non-maleficence as the data collection process caused minimal inconvenience to the participants. They also received incentives for their participation, suggesting an implementation of the beneficence of optimising benefits.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection, through paper-based questionnaires, started from 6 February 2023 to 23 February 2023. The questionnaire data were then recorded into SPSS 25. The responses on the Likert-scale questionnaire items were recorded as follows: "Strongly Agree" as five points, "Agree" as four points, "Neither Agree nor Disagree" as three points, "Disagree" as two points, and "Strongly Disagree" as one point. Before the Likert scale questionnaire responses were analysed to answer the research questions, the questionnaire items were tested for validity and reliability, as previously mentioned. After that, the data analysis proceeded.

Descriptive statistics were used to assess the participants' level of L2 reticence for the first research question. The results are presented in means, percentages, and standard deviations. To answer the second research question on the influence of the participants' L2 reticence on their L2 confidence, a bivariate linear regression was performed where L2 confidence was regressed on L2 reticence.

Findings And Discussion

The participants' L2 reticence

This study employed descriptive statistics to find out the participants' level of L2 reticence. The average mean score of the eleven items on L2 reticence was 28.50, suggesting the average mean score of 2.59 from the possible range of 1 to 5. This indicated that the participants had a low level of L2 reticence. This finding contradicted findings reported by studies in Malaysia (Soo & Goh, 2013) and Vietnam (Van & Phuong, 2021). Both previous studies reported high levels of L2 reticence in English classes among their participants. These differences could be attributed to several possible causes, such as participant competencies, classroom environments, and teacher factors. For example, learners accustomed to communicative classroom activities may be more courageous in expressing their opinions. Learners' reticence may also be lower when teachers encourage more teacher-learner interactions and are seen as friendly rather than strict by learners.

Table 1 presents the detailed results of the participants' responses to the eleven items on the L2 reticence questionnaire.

Table 1. The Participants' Reticence

No	Question	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I felt scared and avoided seeing my lecturer's face in English class.	1.84	0.75	2 (.9%)	11 (5.2%)	0(0%)	137 (64.3%)	63 (29.6%)
2	I am afraid that the lecturer will call my name during the English class.	2.37	1.03	2 (.9%)	50 (23.5%)	1 (.45%)	130 (61%)	30 (14.1%)
3	I feel comfortable when I just stay still and listen during an English class.	3.13	1.19	17 (8%)	98 (46%)	2 (.9%)	84 (39.4%)	12 (5.6%)
4	I do not dare to answer the lecturer's question in English even though I have an opinion on it.	2.75	1.14	6 (2.8%)	81 (38%)	0(0%)	106 (49.8%)	20 (9.4%)
5	I do not dare to ask the lecturer a question in English during class.	2.99	1.17	8 (3.8%)	102 (47.9%)	1 (.45%)	85 (39.9%)	17 (8%)
6	I have never answered an English question asked by a lecturer voluntarily.	2.46	1.13	6 (2.8%)	57 (26.8%)	1 (.45%)	115 (54%)	34 (16%)
7	I always wish a lecturer had never called my name during an English	2.49	1.14	8 (3.8%)	56 (26.3%)	2 (.9%)	115 (54%)	32 (15%)

No	Question	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	class.							
8	I avoid communicating with lecturers and friends in the classroom using English because of the constraints of English language skills.	2.53	1.14	9 (4.2%)	57 (26.8%)	2 (.9%)	117 (55%)	28 (13.1%)
9	To avoid embarrassment, I kept quiet instead of speaking during the English class.	2.75	1.18	9 (4.2%)	78 (36.6%)	3 (6.4%)	100 (46.95%)	23 (10.8%)
10	In order not to have to participate in classroom activities, I try to avoid attention in English classes (For example, choosing to sit in the back).	2.31	1.03	7 (3.3%)	38 (17.8%)	2 (.9%)	135 (63.38%)	31 (14.6%)
11	I choose to remain silent during an English class if the class material is not familiar to me.	2.89	1.22	8 (3.8%)	97 (45.5%)	3 (6.4%)	77 (36.15%)	28 (13.1%)

In item 1, only 13 participants (6.10%) agreed they felt scared and avoided seeing their teachers' faces in English class. 200 (93.90%) participants disagreed with the statement. Negative feelings such as anxiety have been reported to impact language performance negatively. In Indonesia, at least three studies have reported similar findings on this adverse effect (Goram & Subekti, 2022; Ratnasari, 2020; Subekti, 2018b). It has been realised that the success of L2 learning depends on various factors, and the low level of anxiety is only one of them. Nonetheless, the low negative emotion reported in item 1 in the present study is promising, suggesting that learners were generally prepared for the class and teachers could leverage it for learning success.

Items 2, 7, and 10 address reticence due to the fear of being in the spotlight in L2 classes. Item 2 produced a mean score of 2.37. In this item, 52 participants (24.41%) agreed that they feared their teachers would call their names in class. In item 7, 64 participants (30.04%) reported they wished their teachers had never called their names during class. The item produced a mean score of 2.49. Slightly similar to that, item 10 produced a mean score of 2.31. In this item, 45 participants (21.13%) reported trying to avoid attention in the English class so they did not have to participate in class activities. Most participants either disagreed or strongly disagreed with these items. The findings suggested that most participants did not express fear of being in the spotlight of attention in class. This finding was different from those of several studies in Indonesia, reporting anxiety in most participants (Indrianty, 2018; Subekti, 2020). Learners may have something to say. However, their lips become closed when peers look at them, and they must say what they think in English. They go blank, not knowing how to put their ideas into English. In the case of the present study, at least 70% of the participants did not report it happening to themselves. This finding suggested that most participants were active and engaged in class activities. Teachers could alleviate the fear of the remaining 30% of the participants by providing a supportive environment for their

courage to grow. For instance, learners could be facilitated to do L2 performances in small groups rather than in front of the whole class. Teachers could also increase the intensity of pair discussions to allow them to practise their English with a limited audience. Assigning a reticent learner to do pair work with a more active and supportive learner could also be an alternative. That way, the active learner could help scaffold the reticent partner to participate more in class activities.

Furthermore, items 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 11 concern reticence due to fear of making mistakes. In item 4, 87 participants (40.84%) reported that they did not dare to answer their teachers' questions in English despite having an opinion. The item produced a mean score of 2.75. In item 5, 110 participants (51.64%) reported that they did not dare to ask their teachers questions during class. The item produced a mean score of 2.99. Item 6 produced a slightly lower mean score of 2.46. In this item, 63 participants (29.58%) reported that they had never voluntarily answered an English question a lecturer asked. It means that their teachers should point them out to answer their questions. Furthermore, item 8 produced a mean score of 2.53. In this item, 66 participants (30.99%) reported avoiding communicating with their teachers and friends in class using English because of the constraints of language skills. Likewise, as seen in item 9, 87 participants (40.84%) reported keeping quiet instead of speaking to avoid embarrassment. This item produced a mean score of 2.75. Slightly higher, item 11 produced a mean score of 2.89. In this item, 105 participants (49.30%) reported remaining silent during class if the materials were unfamiliar to them. Overall, the mean scores of items 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 11 concerning the fear of making mistakes ranged from 2.46 to 2.89, suggesting a low-moderate level of L2 reticence. Most participants did not report L2 reticence concerning fear of making mistakes. Despite that, as seen in item 11, almost half of the participants reported reticence when they were unfamiliar with the class materials. This finding suggested unfamiliarity with materials probably had a profound impact that could make learners silent in class.

Several aspects need to be commented on regarding these findings. In anxiety literature, fear of making mistakes has often been reported as a leading factor making learners withdraw from communicative behaviours (Akkakoson, 2016; Siagian & Adam, 2021; Subekti, 2018a; Tzoannopoulou, 2016; Umisara et al., 2021). Learners feared possible embarrassment in front of their peers and teachers if they made mistakes. Hence, this fear of making mistakes probably stemmed from low self-confidence and perceived low competence. Despite the prevalence of the fear of making mistakes in previous studies, most participants did not report it in this study. The participants' exposure to communicative English activities before taking the ESP classes could be a contributing factor. They may have built enough confidence to handle situations where they made mistakes in front of peers and teachers. The atmosphere in the ESP classes probably made these learners feel safe, engaging in risk-taking behaviours and practising their English. For example, classes incorporating more collaborative activities than individual tasks may lessen peer comparison and make learners feel more at ease. Furthermore, based on the findings almost half of the participants tended to be silent when dealing with unfamiliar materials. This finding was similar to others of several previous studies in different settings (Liu, 2005; Wang & Liu, 2024), suggesting the profound impact of perceived material unfamiliarity on reticence across learning contexts. To tackle this issue, teachers can mitigate it in at least one of two ways, or by combining both methods. First, teachers should provide learners with the new materials and assign a preparatory task on the materials before the class session. Such a task gives learners ample time to familiarise themselves with the materials or to identify parts they do not understand before the session. Second, at the beginning of the lesson, teachers should introduce materials by connecting them with what learners already know or understand. Harmer (2007), in his

canon work on how to teach English, explained that such a connection is meant for scaffolding, to improve learners' understanding. This scaffolding allows them to relate the new materials with their previous knowledge. Such facilitation likely helps learners lower their reticence. It encourages them to be more engaged as they feel they understand and are familiar with the new materials.

The impact of L2 reticence on L2 confidence

By means of descriptive statistics on eleven items on L2 confidence, this study found that the participants reported a low-moderate level of L2 confidence. The average composite mean score was 31.30 ($SD = 7.39$), indicating an average mean score of 2.84 from the range of 1 to 5.

To find the impact of L2 reticence on L2 confidence, L2 confidence, as the dependent variable, was regressed on L2 reticence, the independent variable. Tables 2 and 3, respectively, show the ANOVA results and the model summary.

Table 2. ANOVA Results with Learners' L2 Confidence as the Dependent Variable

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
1	Regression	2756.397	1	2756.397	65.861	.000 ^b
	Residual	8830.767	211	41.852		
	Total	11587.164	212			

a. Dependent Variable: L2 Confidence

b. Predictors: (Constant), L2 Reticence

Table 3. Model Summary of the Bivariate Linear Regression

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.488 ^a	.238	.234	6.46931	2.095

a. Predictors: (Constant), L2 Reticence

b. Dependent Variable: L2 Confidence

Table 2 shows that the participants' L2 reticence significantly influenced their L2 confidence, $F(2, 211) = 65.86$, $P < .001$. As seen in Table 3, the model could explain 23.80% of the total variance in L2 confidence. The beta coefficient of the regression was further examined. Table 4 shows the results.

Table 4. Coefficients with L2 Confidence as the Dependent Variable

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	44.022	1.628		27.033	.000
	Reticence	-.446	.055	-.488	-8.115	.000

a. Dependent Variable: L2 Confidence

As presented in Table 4, the participants' L2 reticence significantly influenced their L2 confidence, $B = -.45$, $t = -8.12$, $p < .001$. Seen from the negative beta coefficient, the direction of the interaction was negative. It indicated that as learners had a lower level of L2 reticence, they had a higher level of confidence.

Reticent learners tend to be uncommunicative. They do not volunteer anything more than necessary in class. This reticence behaviour would cause learners to lack language output, making it difficult for teachers to assess their competence (Wu, 2019). This could partly explain why learners' L2 reticence significantly impacted their L2 confidence. L2 confidence is likely shaped by various factors, including experience using the L2. Reticent learners likely had less experience in using the L2 as they remained silent in class, and thus, less experience of success in using the language. This lack of success experience could negatively impact their L2 confidence because they could not envision themselves as competent L2 users. Since L2 confidence is considered necessary as a contributing factor to L2 learning success, as far as the findings of this study are concerned, L2 reticence can be seen as an indirect barrier hampering L2 learning success.

Implications

The implications of the present study on L2 instruction can be outlined as follows. Teachers should design class activities to optimise learner talk in class. The activities can take various forms, such as pair or small group activities and collaborative tasks. Most teacher talk can be done whilst supervising learners working in small groups instead of whilst explaining materials in front of the whole class. It allows learners to talk more even when their teacher explains something to a group of learners. More learner talk time in a psychologically safe environment will enable learners to lower their reticence and gain more confidence in using L2. Teachers could also assign group projects that learners consider relevant for their future. For example, learners from ESP for Theology can be assigned to organise and take a part in English services. Some group members may be in charge of singing English religious songs, some read verses from the Bible, and some others deliver short sermons. Likewise, in ESP for Architecture, learners can be assigned in groups to create a video-blog where they describe a building of their choice based on their knowledge on architecture. Such a project not only requires learners to practise their English beyond class sessions but also provides an opportunity for them to practise it in a way they prefer. Furthermore, L2 reticence can be reduced by implementing flipped learning where learners are assigned a preparatory task before the class session to familiarise themselves with new materials. This potentially boosts learners' preparedness to the new materials, eventually improving their engagement during the class session. Teachers should also connect new materials with what learners already know or are capable of doing. Such practices potentially allow learners to experience a sense of achievement, lowering their L2 reticence and eventually boosting their confidence.

Conclusion

The present study intended to investigate the level of L2 reticence of Indonesian learners studying ESP in their respective departments —Architecture, Accounting, Management, Theology and Information System— and its influence on L2 confidence. This study found that learners generally had a low-moderate level of L2 reticence. It further found that learners' L2 reticence significantly influenced their L2 confidence, accounting for 23.80% of the total variance in L2 confidence.

This study contributes to understanding the interaction between L2 reticence and L2 confidence in an ESP context in Indonesia. Despite that, limitations should be acknowledged. Due to the limited scope of this study within a university, it is perhaps unpersuasive to claim the generalisability of the present study's findings. Nonetheless, similar findings may be expected in studies involving participants sharing characteristics similar to those in this study.

The quantitative nature of this study inherently brings a limitation in that in-depth data explaining the results of the questionnaires could not be obtained.

Future relevant studies could be suggested as follows. It is strategic to see whether L2 reticence impacts L2 learning success, for example, as measured in L2 achievement in class. Reticence can also be thoroughly investigated using observations and interviews. These methods may allow researchers to see, both visually and through learners' accounts, the possible influences of various aspects, such as class activities and teachers' instruction on L2 reticence.

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