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## SPECIALTY SECTION

This article was submitted to  
Language, Culture and Diversity,  
a section of the journal  
Frontiers in Education

RECEIVED 24 April 2022

ACCEPTED 08 November 2022

PUBLISHED 15 December 2022

## CITATION

Nugraheni AS and Abroto (2022) Teachers' efforts to increase students' confidence in speaking Indonesian in Sarolangun through language habituation.  
*Front. Educ.* 7:927429.  
doi: 10.3389/feduc.2022.927429

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# Teachers' efforts to increase students' confidence in speaking Indonesian in Sarolangun through language habituation

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This research is aimed at investigating teachers' habituation pattern as an effort to enhance students' confidence in speaking Indonesian language in Sarolangun. It implements qualitative phenomenology approach to understand why and how an incident takes place. The data are collected through observation, interview, and documentation. The subjects of the research are Indonesian students and teachers from three different senior high schools in Sarolangun, Indonesia. The results reveal that students are low skilled in using Indonesian language, and they have low confidence in speaking in Indonesian due to bullying. The senior high school teachers in Sarolangun try to improve the students' confidence in speaking Indonesian through encouragement, punishment for the bullies, and compulsory program to use Indonesian at school. These are considered as a proper policy in boosting students' confidence. This research concludes that in the teaching of Indonesian, the language should not be used by a certain group of people but rather it could be used by all people regardless of their social class. Furthermore, Indonesian is the language used in academic and official context. Indonesia, indeed, constitutes of various tribes and languages. The aim of Indonesian language usage is to ease people from many different ethnicities and regions to communicate to each other.

## KEYWORDS

senior high school, boosting confidence, Indonesian language, teachers' efforts, habituation

## Introduction

Confidence is among the requirements for succeeding in education, as, without it, a student will not be able to perform well. Students possessing strong confidence can express and actualize their potential and abilities in their lives (Tannir and Al-Hroub, 2013). Further, Lauster defines confidence as an attitude or a belief in one's own abilities so that one will not be too anxious, will not doubt what they want to do, will be responsible for their actions, will be polite in interacting with others, will have a motivational boost, and will be able to recognize their strengths and weaknesses (Arifin et al., 2017). In addition, Lauster describes how someone possessing confidence will not put themselves first.

In English, “self-confidence” means believing in one’s abilities, strengths, and assessments. It can be concluded that such self-assessment is positive (Yan and Coklat, 2017). This positive evaluation will encourage an individual to respect themselves (Umrani et al., 2019). Simply put, one’s belief in their strengths will motivate them to achieve their life goals (Artino, 2012). In addition, Adler states that humans’ most significant need is confidence and a sense of superiority (Moheghi et al., 2020). Confidence can also be defined as a self-belief many have in their lives and the way they see themselves in relation to their self-perception (Francis et al., 2017).

Moreover, Maslow mentions that self-confidence is preceded by self-concept (Ching, 2014). This is consistent with Centi, who states that self-concept is one’s idea of themselves, which provides someone with a description of themselves (Sampthirao, 2016). In addition, Sullivan in the writings of eldes and ilyas determined that there are two types of self-concept, namely positive and negative. A positive self-concept is developed when a person receives positive feedback in the form of praise and appreciation for a long period of time. (Eldes and Ilyas, 2019). Meanwhile, the negative one is tied to adverse feedback such as ridicule and scoffs. Relevant literature reviews by many different experts and prior research findings reveal a similar focus on confidence, which greatly affects the way people treat bullied individuals. This might cause one’s confidence to improve or deteriorate depending on the received treatment. Individuals with a supportive background will have a high sense of confidence and therefore will be able to socialize well (Ainin et al., 2015). Further, confidence is an important aspect of one’s personality (Garaika and Margahana, 2018). Without confidence, many will have problems. It is indeed an important attribute one can have in their social lives, since with confidence, one can achieve their full potential. This nature is influenced by the skills and abilities someone has (Tariq and Durrani, 2012).

Students with high confidence will be able to easily interact with other students, express their opinions without any doubts, respect others’ opinions, and think and act positively while making decisions (Valtonen et al., 2020). In contrast, students with low confidence will find it hard to communicate and debate, and therefore will not be able to compete against other students (Carlgren, 2013). Further, confidence is a dominant factor contributing to speaking activities (Tridinanti, 2018). High confidence will also be a positive contribution to one’s life (Chuang et al., 2013). As a non-linguistic internal factor, confidence acts as a success determinant of one’s performance in speaking. Yet, in reality, students speaking in the Indonesian language are bullied by their peers (Teimouri et al., 2020).

Most students are unaware of the impact of bullying due to the lack of socialization and understanding of the effects of this type of harassment (Priestley et al., 2012). Such constant unawareness will cause the victims to lose their confidence (Young-Jones et al., 2015). As a result, a low level of confidence will cause the failure of the teaching goals because during class activities, students need to be confident to bravely perform a positive act and contribute to discussions in the Indonesian language (Dahling and Ruppel,

2016). In particular, low confidence in speaking the Indonesian language is due to the students’ inability to use the language correctly and properly and to the bullying they receive by other students.

Bullying is experienced often by senior high school students (Smalley et al., 2017). It commonly takes the form of insults and inappropriate words. Bullies mock, threaten, criticize, and deprive one or more people in their lives (Fareo, 2015). Craig and Pepler in Murie define bullying as verbal or physical negative actions performed by bullies against their victims through displays of hostility (Yuliana et al., 2021). Moreover, bullying is a form of aggression perpetrated to demean others (Situmorang et al., 2020). Such intimidation is a major hindrance for a child when trying to reach their potential. It causes them to lose their sense of safety and comfort, frightens and intimidates them, and causes them to feel inferior and unworthy. They also find it difficult to concentrate on their studies. Therefore, they tend to be insecure, and it is hard for them to communicate. Victims of bullying will lose trust in their surroundings (D’Cruz, 2015).

All students have a sense of confidence, although the level might vary; many have high confidence while many others do not (Alfin et al., 2019). Here lies the difference: one who is low in confidence will act differently from common people, whereas those with low confidence will not be able to do much, will always be in doubt, will not be brave enough to speak without any support, and so forth (García, 2013). On the other hand, confident people will believe in their abilities so that they will have higher courage, social relationships, responsibility, and pride (Safta, 2015). Meanwhile, those with low confidence are easy prey for bullying at school.

Katarina Dutkova studied a similar issue on bullying behavior levels in 2017. That study intended to explore the relationship between spiritual prosperity and bullying among teenagers in Slovakia. The data were obtained from a study on the healthy behavior of school-age children in 2014 in Slovakia. They were collected from 9,250 teenagers with an average age of 13.48 years. The final sample consisted of 762 adolescents aged 15 years old (52.2% boys). In the study, a logistic regression model and Sobel test were used. Teenagers with a high level of spiritual well-being showed a low risk of intimidating others or being intimidated. That connection was mediated by norms on school bullying. In short, spiritual well-being is negatively correlated with bullying (Dutkova et al., 2017).

A few teachers committed to boosting their students’ confidence in speaking Indonesian during school hours by encouraging them to use the language and by creating a compulsory program on the use of Indonesian during class hours. In addition, other teachers have also been encouraged to motivate their students. Based on the prior discussion, this research is meant to investigate the impacts of students’ low confidence due to school bullying when speaking in the Indonesian language. It is expected that the findings of this study will contribute to the Indonesian education system and function as a reference for researchers on the same issue in different countries.

## Research methods

In line with the research problem, the method implemented in this study is of a qualitative type, defined by Bogdan and Taylor as a procedure applied to reveal descriptive data written or spoken through observed people and behavior in the research field. A qualitative research method is also described as one based on post-positivism philosophy and employed to study the condition of natural things in which the researcher is the key instrument and the data sampling is done either purposefully or through a snowball sampling technique. The data collection is done through triangulation (combined), the data analysis is done inductively or qualitatively, and the research findings place more emphasis on meaning than generalization (Sugiyono, 2014). The sample used in such research is selected using a descriptive approach. This approach serves as a problem-solving procedure by summarizing the subject of the research based on the gathered data (Siswono et al., 2016).

The respondents for this study include students and teachers at SMAN (state senior high school) 26, 12, and 8 in Sarolangun. We implemented a purposive sampling technique, which is based on the nature of the population. Marshall et al. (2019) argue that the purposive sampling method is used in choosing research samples that are not based on a certain level of uncertainty but are based on a specific goal. The exact number of respondents was 6 teachers Indonesian. With the description of 2 teachers Indonesian SMA N 26. Two Teachers Indonesian SMA N 12 and Two Teachers Indonesian SMA N 8 Sarolangun. To select a good sample, the researchers have made sure that the subjects participated actively, had a good understanding of the study, were interested in learning activities, and had sufficient time to share necessary information.

To collect the data, three techniques are repeatedly employed to ensure their validity. The first technique is observation, which is defined as a systematic examination of the symptoms appearing on research subjects. In this study, researchers have implemented an unstructured type of observation. This is performed on the examined subjects, revealing that there is a similar problem in all three senior high schools (SMAN 26, 12, and 8 in Sarolangun), i.e., students' low confidence in speaking in the Indonesian language, mainly caused by the high number of cases of bullying among students. The data needed by the researchers is represented by the students' low confidence, caused by the impact of bullying. The second technique is the interview, which can be defined as a conversation with a specific intention. Amankwaa (2016) defines an interview as a data collection activity to achieve the research goal. It is done by two parties, i.e., the interviewer who asks questions and the interviewee who provides the answers. Interviews were conducted one-on-one through the WhatsApp application. The researchers then combined the data and draw a conclusion (Rowley, 2012). The third technique is documentation. In this study, the researchers collected notes on their findings. Documentation is a data collection method that uses documentary data in the form of notes, books, newspapers,

magazines, diaries, or journals that can provide information on the research object (Fletcher et al., 2016).

The data analysis in this study has been done since the beginning of data collection. The data were then rechecked several times, and to match the obtained data, they are systematized and interpreted through logic to make sure that they are valid and credible. The data analysis method in this study consists of three main components, namely: (1) Data reduction: it is done by collecting as much data as possible in line with the research and goal, then the researchers select which includes primary data and whether it is a live event in the field or other relevant events, as well as the skunk data. (2) Data display: the presentation of data consisting of a collection of arranged information to make it possible to draw a conclusion and perform an action. (3) Conclusion drawing: it involves drawing a conclusion and verifying data. Figure 1 sums up the research flow.

## Findings and discussion

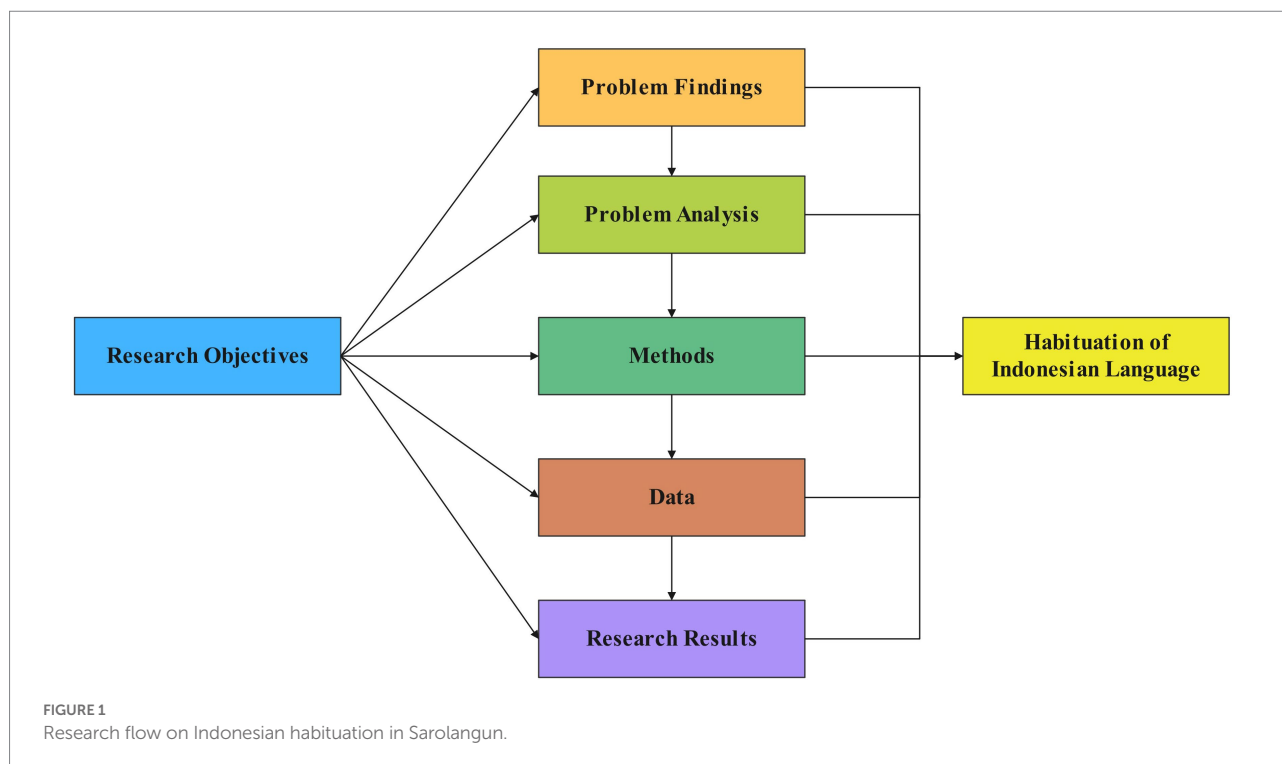
The data analysis performed by the researchers is divided into two categories. One is on the confidence of the students from SMA Negeri 26, SMA Negeri 12, and SMA Negeri 8 in Sarolangun in speaking Indonesian and the impact of school bullying on the victims, and the other is on the teachers' efforts in solving the problem and boosting their students' confidence. The results of the data analysis are presented in the following paragraphs.

### The lack of senior high school students' skills in using Indonesian is caused by school bullying

The respondents of this study, i.e., six Indonesian teachers at SMA Negeri 26, 12, and 8 in Sarolangun share the same opinions and views on the problems faced by senior high school students, i.e., their low ability in using Indonesian properly and correctly. In line with the finding, Indonesian vocabulary is poorly mastered by many students, which makes them hesitant to speak the language. The teachers add that this is because students rarely talk Indonesian. Additionally, everyone mostly speaks in the local language, which makes it hard for them to speak in Indonesian.

Here is a statement of an Indonesian teacher at SMA Negeri 26 in Sarolangun:

*"Based on my experience, during class hours, I ask students to speak in Indonesian during discussion and question and answer session, yet they use many improper words which might be highly affected by the local language. It sounds funny and overwhelms other students. It is perhaps due to the fact that the students rarely use Indonesian when interacting in their communities as many prefer to use their indigenous language. This improper use of Indonesian words prompts other students to commit bullying which further discourage the victims to speak in Indonesian". [sic]*



The previous statement of an Indonesian language teacher at SMA Negeri 12 in Sarolangun indicates that many students are not fluent in Indonesian. It is shown that 70% of students have difficulties using Indonesian correctly. One of the reasons is that people rarely use Indonesian in their daily lives. They mainly use their regional language, which causes them to rarely speak Indonesian. Such a habit inhibits the students from sufficiently practicing their Indonesian.

Furthermore, the students' lack of mastery of Indonesian prompts bullying when they make mistakes in using the language. This type of harassment happens often, which eventually triggers low confidence in students. This becomes the main factor causing students' loss of confidence in speaking Indonesian. This issue is in line with a study conducted by Sinkkonen et al. (2014). The findings of the research show that the victims of bullying tend to have low self-capacity, low motivation, low confidence and even depression. The situation is worsened by the community speaking in a local language. In the end, it becomes a burden for the students to master Indonesian as they get used to interacting in their indigenous language. Here is a statement from two Indonesian language teachers at SMA Negeri 12 in Sarolangun:

*"I personally think that the problems the students face are a common thing among school students living in rural areas. I simply not blame the students' low ability in speaking in Indonesian as it is also due to the fact that they interact in their local language in their communities. In fact, they mainly use the local language at school. During class activities, many students speak in their local language which often prompts me to remind*

*them to use Indonesian instead. I also motivate them "There you go, kids. You have to build the habit of speaking, interact, discuss things, ask and answer questions in Indonesian so that at least later when you take an undergraduate program in a different city, you will be able to discuss, interact, and use Indonesian so that you can hang out with your peers". [sic]*

The previous statements shared by two Indonesian teachers at SMA Negeri 12 in Sarolangun show that students' lack of fluency in Indonesian is caused by their community's habit of only using their indigenous language in social interactions. Therefore, the students tend to use the local language in their daily lives as well as at school. It is relevant to a study conducted by Kartikawangi (2017), where it was found that collected values and group habits revealed the community's strong grip on their habit. Indonesian is a strange language to their ears. Furthermore, two Indonesian teachers at SMA Negeri 8 in Sarolangun mention that:

*"In my view as well as personal experience, I see that not all students have difficulties in using Indonesian. Some are quite excellent, and yet, they still need proper guidance in practicing speaking in Indonesian. I myself as the Indonesian teacher have made some efforts to help students master the language. It has become my responsibility in assisting the students at school. However, they spend most of their time out of school, i.e., in their community. There, they mostly use their local language as it is the one mainly used. In addition, students making mistakes in using Indonesian are often bullied by their peers". [sic]*

The statements of two Indonesian teachers at SMA Negeri 8 in Sarolangun reveal that habituation is the main cause of the problem faced by the students. It is difficult for the students to have a proper conversation, let alone interact in Indonesian. SMA Negeri 8 in Sarolangun is located far away from the cities, and the nearby communities speak mostly in the local language. Additionally, mistakes in the use of Indonesian often prompt bullying against the victims, which eventually lowers their confidence. It is in accordance with research by Subandiyah (2015), where it was observed that the students' language ability, particularly reading and speaking Indonesian, significantly affected their success in mastering other school subjects. This is also in line with the elaboration of the 2013 curriculum, in which the Indonesian language stands as a tool for transmitting sciences (Admin, 2020). To provide a clear analysis of interviews done with teachers of SMA Negeri 26, 12, and 8 in Sarolangun, see Figure 2.

Therefore, the data collected through interviews with six teachers of SMA Indonesia Negeri 26, 12, and 8 in Sarolangun are considered fitting to represent the general opinions of senior high school Indonesian language teachers on the students' low mastery of Indonesian. The interviews show that the main cause of the low mastery is due to, first, environmental factors because the students use the local language in their communities, which becomes the reason why they are unable to practice sufficiently using Indonesian. Second, bullying is often perpetrated in these senior high schools.

These two factors have caused low confidence in students, as when they are asked to speak Indonesian, they tend to feel uneasy and afraid. Apart from students' and teachers' efforts in building the habit of speaking Indonesian, the surrounding communities hold a significant role in supporting the students' success in mastering the language. The problem with students' low confidence in SMA Negeri 26 Sarolangun is depicted in Figure 3.

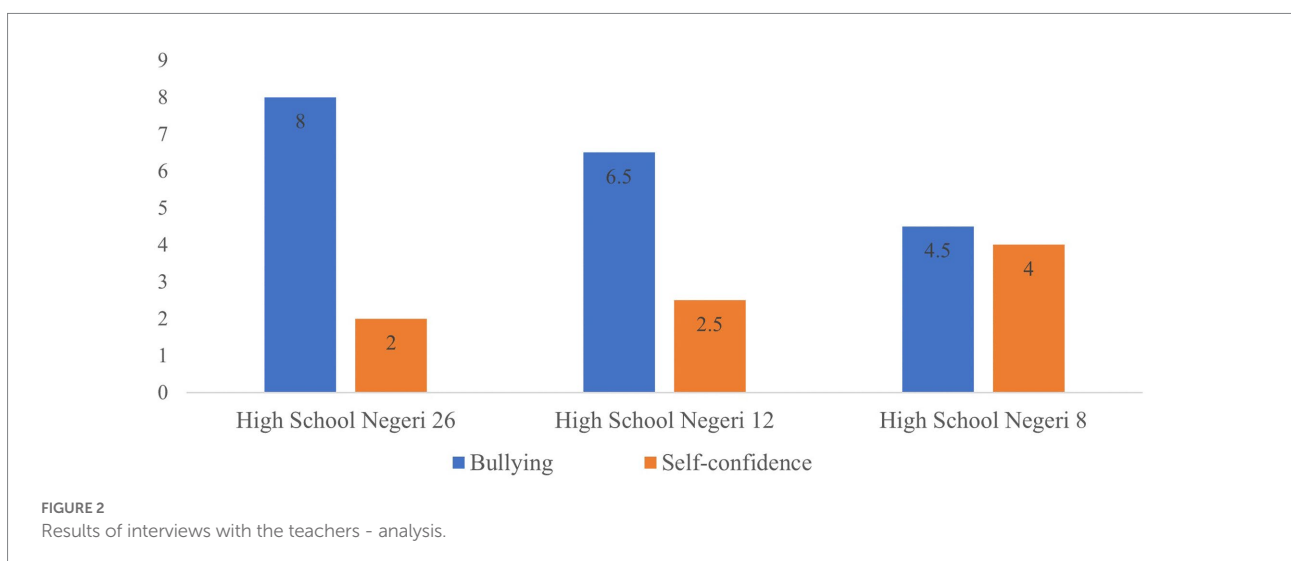
## The Indonesian language teachers have put some effort into enhancing their students' confidence in speaking Indonesian

Low confidence in using Indonesian by senior high school students is caused by their low mastery of the language as well as bullying committed by their peers, which has been observed for some time at senior high schools in Sarolangun. It has happened from generation to generation in these institutions. Research findings revealed that low confidence exposed students' failure or inability to meet their personal aspirations (Nicholson et al., 2013). Therefore, the teachers must be professional in assisting the students to help them minimize their mistakes. However, teachers tend to focus only on students' learning results rather than their learning process (Fatah et al., 2016).

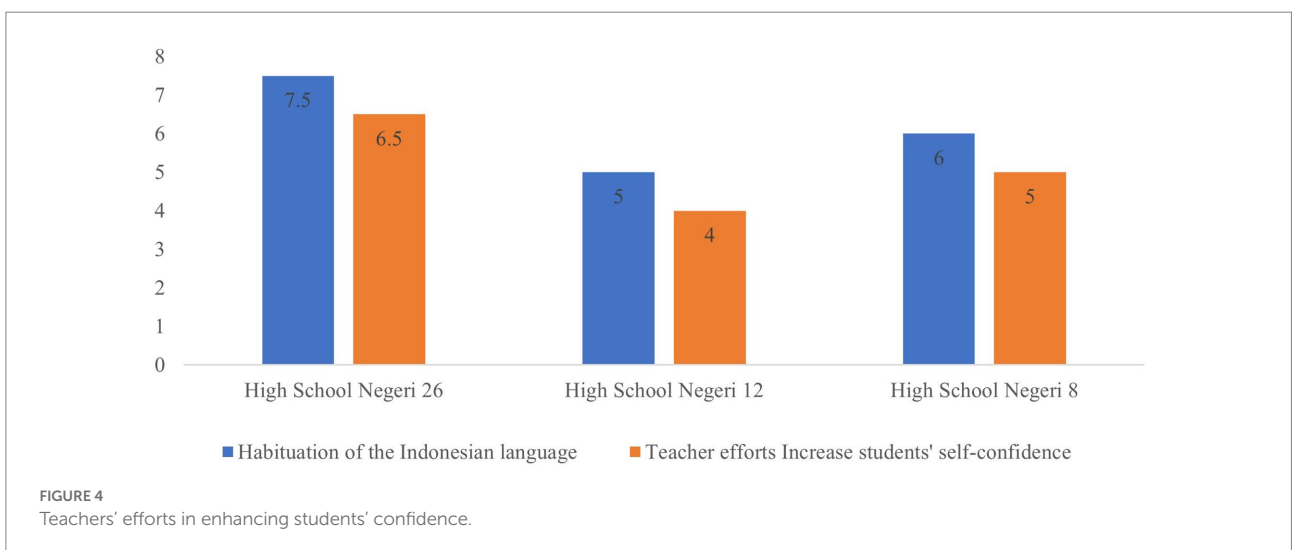
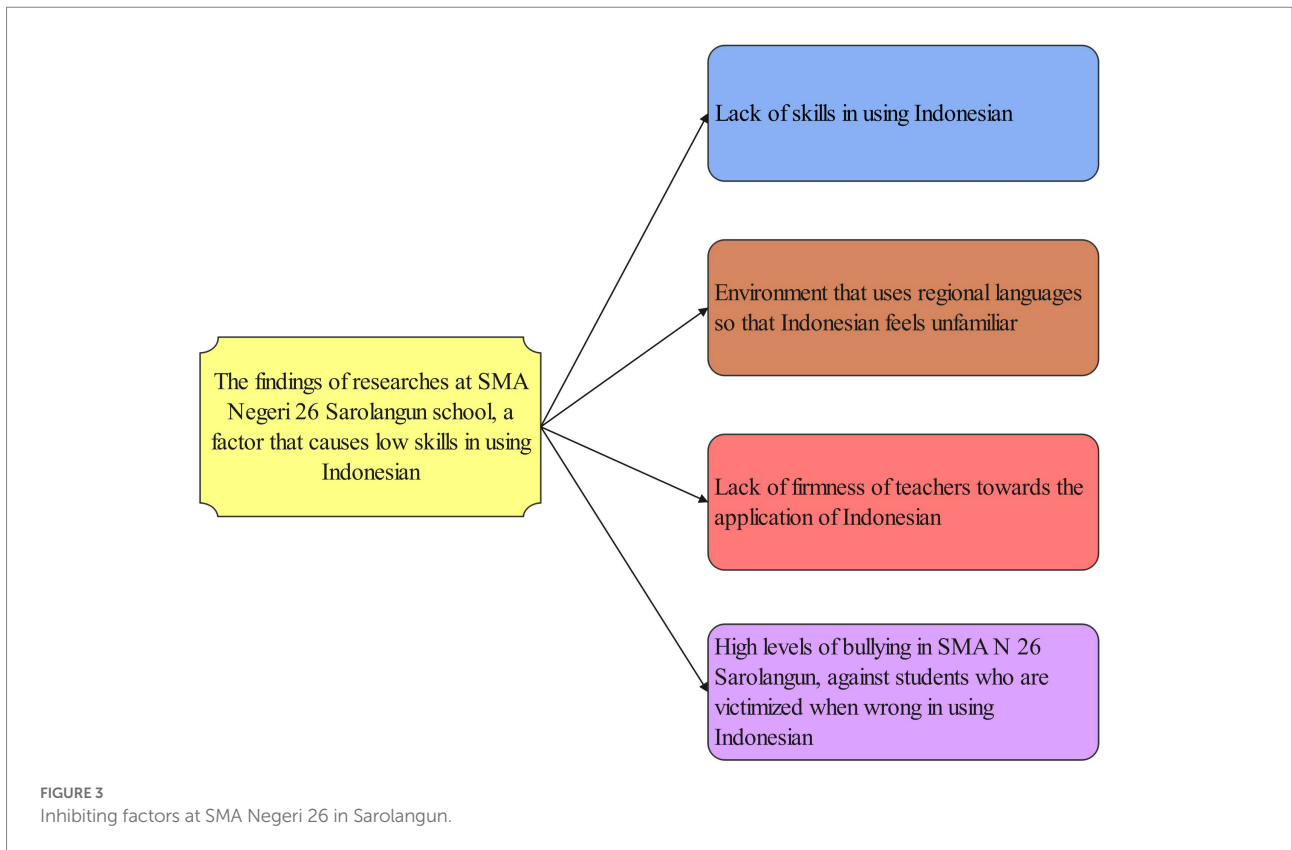
The analysis of senior high school Indonesian teachers' efforts at SMA Indonesia Negeri 26, 12, and 8 in Sarolangun is displayed in Figure 4.

Figure 4 depicts the maximum efforts made by the Indonesian language teachers at SMA Negeri 26, 12, and 8 by motivating the students, punishing them when they fail to use Indonesian, and creating programs that require the students to use Indonesian at school. Those have proven to be effective in boosting students' confidence, as shown in Figure 4. To make it clearer, below is an elaboration of Indonesian teachers' interviews at SMA Negeri 26, 12, and 8 in Sarolangun. The teachers have not only motivated the students but also put in extra efforts to enhance their confidence. Here are the statements of two Indonesian language teachers at SMA Negeri 26 in Sarolangun:

*"In my opinion, students are unconfident in speaking in Indonesian as they often make mistakes in pronouncing words which cause their peers to bully them. It often happens when I teach. I try to build their confidence by prohibiting others to*







*mock. If the bullies themselves cannot use Indonesian properly, they will be punished through score reduction. This helps as it stops them from committing bullying. I also let them aware that if they are unable to speak in Indonesian, they will be ashamed to participate in any discussions later when they take a higher education at the campus. I hope that one of them will have the chance to enroll on an undergraduate's degree in which it is important for them to speak in Indonesian. Therefore, they have to start the habit of using the language now". [sic]*

The opinions of both Indonesian language teachers at SMA Negeri 26 Sarolangun reveal that students' lack of mastery of Indonesian is mainly caused by their habit of using their local language in daily life. Another significant factor is bullying. The above is pertinent to a study done by [Sinkkonen et al. \(2014\)](#). In the research, it was found that bullying occurs passively, in which the student victims comply, and they become less motivated, less confident, and even depressed. Bullied students are afraid to have discussions in Indonesian as they have already lost their confidence.

As a result, the efforts made by the Indonesian language teachers at SMA Negeri Sarolangun are not only in the form of banning bullying but also punishing the bullies. Lowering grades is one of the punishments if the bullying occurs more than once. It is aimed at preventing students from bullying others. This is consistent with research conducted by Najam and Kashif (2018). Its findings revealed that bullying is a social phenomenon at schools, higher education institutions, and offices all over the world, perpetrated aggressively even though it is not wanted by anyone. It involves uncomfortable and dangerous behavior committed by someone on their targets. It is an aggressive behavior which is harmful for the victims. In addition, here is the opinion of two teachers at SMA Indonesia Negeri 12 in Sarolangun:

*"I find that bullying often happens when a student makes a mistake in using Indonesian. I guess it will continue to happen even outside of school. The bullies might feel that it is hilarious and entertaining. Yet, the victims might have a different opinion. As an Indonesian teacher at this school, I forbid students from mocking those trying to speak in Indonesian". [sic]*

This statement from a teacher of Indonesian at SMA Negeri 12 in Sarolangun reveals that there are similar problems in SMA Negeri 26 and SMA Negeri 12, i.e., bullying has become a source of anxiety among senior high school students in Sarolangun. The long-term effect of bullying is in the form of trauma and loss of confidence in speaking Indonesian. This is in line with research done by Gabiana (2017). It was revealed there that the impact of bullying, especially on fragile children, should not be ignored. Both the students being bullied and the bullies suffer from a low quality of life. This research also found the types of bullying experienced by rural students and the impacts observed by the teachers and parents of 55 bullying victims. Bullying cases in rural areas are similar to those in cities.

Most of what the victims experience is verbal bullying; there are only a few cases of physical bullying. A relational type is also observed. However, little has been done to manage or minimize the impact of bullying. Further, here is a statement from an Indonesian language teacher at SMA Negeri 8 in Sarolangun:

*"I often make reports on bullies to the headmaster as it significantly affects other students' confidence in which it can discourage them from using Indonesian if the school administration does nothing. I always act firmly if such oppression occurs by directly punish the bullies or cut their score. In addition, the headmaster agrees to encourage students to use Indonesian. So far, it is quite successful". [sic]*

The statements of these two Indonesian language teachers at SMA Indonesia Negeri 8 in Sarolangun show that there has been a problem at school that has caused students to lose their confidence in speaking Indonesian when interacting with others. After the cause of the problem was found, an Indonesian language teacher at SMA 8 filed a report to the headmaster, who later decided that all students had to use Indonesian at school. Based on the review, the

teachers consider this significant in motivating the students to speak Indonesian. It supports the research findings of Gaol and Siburian (2018). They found that some headmasters tried to improve their teachers' performance by focusing on the improvement of their competences, providing teachers with professional supervision and guidance, creating innovations and progress at school, and awarding teachers' achievements. In short, teachers and headmasters must work together to solve any problems and successfully educate their students. It was suggested that school headmasters can be more active and creative in collaborating with the teachers and other educational stakeholders for the betterment of teachers' performance. To have a clear understanding of the similar issue found at SMA Negeri 12 and 8 in Sarolangun, see Figure 5.

Interviews with the Indonesian language teachers at SMA Negeri 26, 12, and 8 in Sarolangun are considered sufficient in representing the general views at these schools. First, there is a lack of habituation when it comes to using Indonesian. This is solved by making the students speak Indonesian. Some students start to show some confidence in using the language at school, which can be observed in class discussions. Interviews also show that the Indonesian teachers and the headmasters have put some effort into enhancing their students' confidence through encouragement and an understanding of the future benefits deriving from mastering Indonesian at a university level. Additionally, here is a statement from one of the bullied victims at SMA Negeri 26, 12, and 8:

*"I am one among the bullying victims since I often make mistakes in using Indonesian. I stay in the classroom until it is time to go home. Even when I meet the bullies outside of school hours, they still insult me. It makes me ashamed and mad at them. I also lose my confidence in speaking in Indonesian". [sic]*

The interview with a student of a senior high school in Sarolangun functions as data support on the occurrence of bullying at these institutes. Bullying has caused the victim to have a difficult experience. The Indonesian language teachers at these schools have managed to motivate the victims to help rebuild their confidence. In addition, the teachers have assigned extra grades to those students willing to use Indonesian often. This is also supported by the program requiring students to speak Indonesian at school. These efforts have proven successful in improving senior high school students' confidence and quality in Sarolangun. Many students are now confident enough to participate in class discussions, and they are now also used to speak in Indonesian.

## Conclusion

The loss of confidence in students at Sarolangun SMA (senior high schools) is caused, first, by the students' low fluency in the Indonesian language and, secondly, by the rampant bullying in Sarolangun. It makes the students

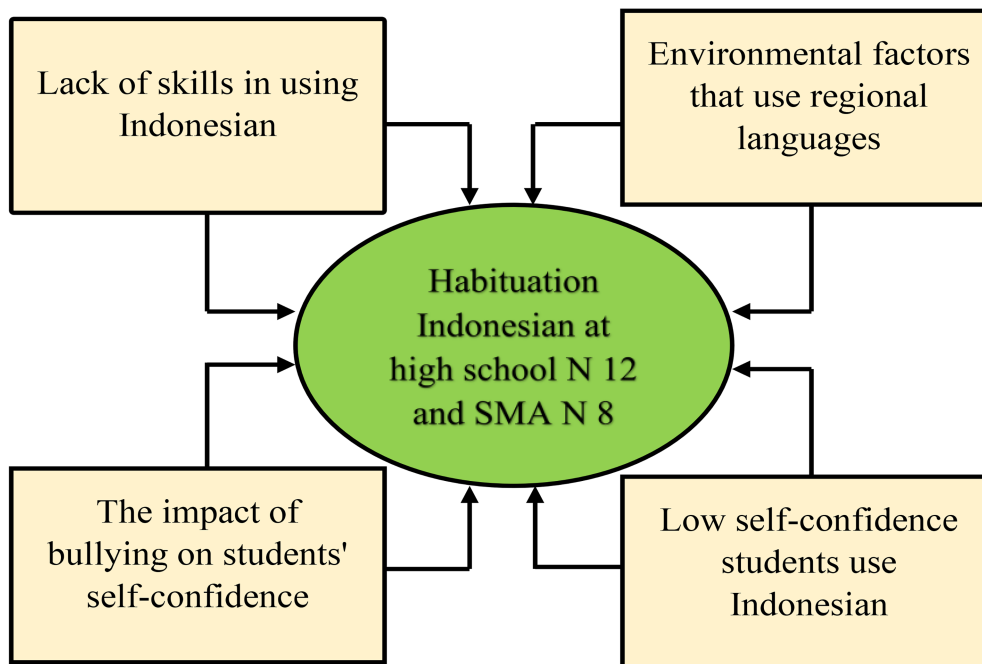


FIGURE 5  
Similar issues found at SMA Negeri 12 and 8 in Sarolangun.

anxious and afraid to speak in Indonesian. They are afraid of making mistakes in using the language. Those two are the main reasons why students lose their confidence or are not brave enough to speak Indonesian. Indonesian SMA teachers in Sarolangun have put some effort into solving these problems. First, they have created Indonesian language habituation by providing materials in the Indonesian language to help improve students' skills in mastering the language. The second effort is performed by creating a compulsory program in which the students are required to speak the Indonesian language at school. Furthermore, teachers give higher grades to students who use the language frequently. It does help motivate the students to speak Indonesian. In addition, this study implies that the Indonesian language is not identical to social status. It is a proper language one can use in academic and official settings. To conclude, in general, Indonesia is a prosperous nation with different ethnic groups and languages. In such a context, the Indonesian language helps facilitate communication among diverse groups.

## Limitations

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the study was limited in time. Moreover, the long-distance observations caused the research to be conducted online. We therefore humbly acknowledge the many shortcomings of this study. We welcome any feedback, criticism, and suggestions for the improvement of this article.

## Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

## Ethics statement

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. Written informed consent to participate in this study was provided by the participants' legal guardian/next of kin.

## Author contributions

AN contributed to the preparation of the research design, drafting the manuscript, and finalizing the manuscript. Abroto contributed to data collection, data analysis, and manuscript revision. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude to the respondents of this study, namely six Indonesian teachers and three students of



SMA in Sarolangun who were willing to participate in this study by taking the time to fill out our questionnaire and joining the interview. In addition, we would also like to express our sincere appreciation to the lecturers of the *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* teacher education graduate program of Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University for their moral and material guidance and assistance.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships

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