



ENGLISH WITH A TAIWANESE ACCENT: SOCIOLINGUISTIC ATTITUDES, MOTIVATION, AND SPEAKING CONFIDENCE AMONG GRADE 5 EFL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

Attitudes toward English accents have emerged as an important factor influencing learners' motivation, speaking confidence, and participation in English communication. This study examined the sociolinguistic attitudes, motivation, and speaking confidence of Grade 5 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners toward English accents. Using a quantitative descriptive design, data were collected from 121 Grade 5 learners and 21 English teachers at Sing An Elementary School in Taiwan through a researcher-developed questionnaire. The findings revealed that learners demonstrated positive sociolinguistic attitudes toward English accent diversity, positive motivation to learn and speak English, and developing speaking confidence. Learners viewed English as valuable for communication, intercultural interaction, and future opportunities, while remaining willing to participate in English communication despite occasional speaking anxiety. The results highlight the importance of supportive learning environments, meaningful communication opportunities, and exposure to diverse English varieties in promoting positive language attitudes and communication development among young EFL learners.

KEYWORDS: Sociolinguistic Attitudes, English Accents, Motivation, Speaking Confidence

1. INTRODUCTION

English is widely used as a global language, exposing learners to diverse English accents and language varieties. Learners' sociolinguistic attitudes toward these accents may influence their language-learning experiences and perceptions of English communication.

Motivation and speaking confidence are important factors that support learners' participation and engagement in English language learning. Understanding these variables may provide valuable insights into the experiences of young EFL learners.

This study examined the profile of Grade 5 EFL learners and teachers and investigated learners' sociolinguistic attitudes toward English accents, motivation to learn and speak English, and speaking confidence in English communication.

2. OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to examine the sociolinguistic attitudes, motivation, and speaking confidence of Grade 5 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners toward English accents. Specifically, it sought to describe the profile of the student and teacher respondents, determine learners' sociolinguistic attitudes toward English accents, assess their motivation to learn and speak English, and evaluate their level of speaking confidence in English communication.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative descriptive research design to examine the sociolinguistic attitudes, motivation, and speaking confidence of Grade 5 English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

learners toward English accents. The design was appropriate for describing the profile of the respondents and assessing learners' attitudes toward English accents, motivation to learn and speak English, and speaking confidence in English communication (Saro et al., 2023). Data were collected through a researcher-developed questionnaire and analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations to provide a comprehensive description of the variables under investigation.

4. SAMPLING DESIGN

The study involved 121 Grade 5 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners and 21 English teachers. Simple random sampling was employed to select the student respondents from a population of 173 Grade 5 learners enrolled at Sing An Elementary School in Chiayi City, Taiwan. Meanwhile, purposive sampling was used to select the teacher respondents based on their experience teaching English and their willingness to participate in the study.

5. STATISTICAL DESIGN

Data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages to describe the profile of the student and teacher respondents, while mean scores were used to determine the levels of learners' sociolinguistic attitudes toward English accents, motivation to learn and speak English, and speaking confidence in English communication.

6. GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

The study was conducted at Sing An Elementary School in Chiayi City, Taiwan. The school serves a diverse population



of elementary learners and provides English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction as part of its curriculum. As a public elementary school, it offers an appropriate setting for examining learners' sociolinguistic attitudes toward English accents, motivation to learn and speak English, and speaking confidence in English communication.

7. RESULTS

The tables present the profile of the respondents and the levels of Grade 5 EFL learners' sociolinguistic attitudes toward English accents, motivation, and speaking confidence. Data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores to describe the respondents and the variables under study. The findings provide insights into learners' perceptions, motivation, and confidence in English communication and may serve as a basis for fostering positive language-learning experiences in EFL classrooms.

Table 1.

Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Dominant Category	Percentage
Student Age	11 years old	60.5%
Student Gender	Male	52.1%
Frequency of English Use	Sometimes	35.3%
Exposure to English Media	A few times a week	28.6%
Perceived English Ability	Fair	40.3%
Teacher Age	21–30 years old	61.9%
Teacher Gender	Female	81.0%
Teaching Experience	2–5 years	57.1%
Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree	76.2%
Trainings Attended	Yes	85.7%

The findings indicate that the learners were within the expected developmental stage for elementary EFL education and were still developing their communicative competence in English. Their language-learning experiences appeared to be shaped by classroom instruction, moderate exposure to English media, and opportunities for language use. Previous studies have shown that communicative practice, language exposure, and positive self-perceptions contribute to learners' willingness to communicate and speaking confidence (Badrasawi et al., 2021; Rotjanawongchai, 2024).

The teacher respondents were generally characterized by active engagement in professional development and instructional practice. Such characteristics are important because teacher competence and continuous professional learning contribute to supportive learning environments that encourage participation, motivation, and language use among EFL learners. Previous research similarly emphasizes that ongoing professional development enhances teachers' ability to facilitate meaningful classroom interaction and learner engagement (Cheng & Zhang, 2024; Zhang, 2024).

Table 2

Sociolinguistic Attitudes Toward English Accents

Dimension	Mean	Interpretation
Accent Preference (Native-like vs. Local)	2.81	Agree
Perceived Social Value of Accents	2.64	Agree
Cultural Pride or Stigma Toward Local Accent	2.79	Agree
Influence of Media, Peers, and Teachers	2.61	Agree
Overall Mean	2.71	Agree

The findings indicate that learners generally demonstrated positive attitudes toward English accent diversity. Students appeared accepting of different English varieties and recognized that successful communication can occur despite differences in pronunciation. These findings suggest an emerging awareness of English as a global language used by speakers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

The findings further suggest that learners did not strongly associate native-like pronunciation with intelligence or superiority. Instead, students appeared increasingly open to the idea that different accents can coexist within effective

communication. This observation supports Global Englishes perspectives, which emphasize intelligibility and communicative effectiveness rather than conformity to native-speaker norms (Rose et al., 2021). Teacher support also emerged as an important influence on learners' perceptions, highlighting the role of classroom environments in promoting respect for linguistic diversity. Similar findings were reported by Cheng and Zhang (2024) and Zhang (2024), who emphasized that supportive learning environments, meaningful classroom engagement, and positive instructional practices contribute to positive language attitudes, learner participation, and communicative development.



Table 3.

Level of Motivation Among Grade 5 EFL Learners

Variable	Mean	Interpretation
Integrative Orientation	3.04	Agree
Instrumental Orientation	3.09	Agree
Classroom Language Choice	3.05	Agree
Self-Reported Language Use	2.73	Agree
Perceived Status of English	3.17	Agree
Overall Mean	3.02	Agree

The findings indicate that learners generally possessed positive motivation toward learning and speaking English. Students appeared to view English as an important means of communication, intercultural interaction, and future opportunity. This suggests that learners recognized both the social and practical value of English beyond classroom requirements.

The findings reflect the presence of both integrative and instrumental orientations toward language learning. Learners appeared interested in communicating with people from

different cultural backgrounds while also recognizing the educational and professional benefits associated with English proficiency. These findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that EFL learners are motivated by both interpersonal communication goals and future-oriented aspirations (Yang & Lin, 2024). The findings further highlight the importance of providing meaningful communication opportunities that sustain learner engagement and encourage active participation in English language learning (Kaewmak, 2025; Peng & Wang, 2024).

Table 4.

Speaking Confidence Among Grade 5 EFL Learners

Variable	Mean	Interpretation
Willingness to Initiate and Sustain Conversation	2.87	Agree
Physical Indicators and Internal Comfort	2.47	Disagree
Error Recovery	2.89	Agree
Peer Language Mediation	2.71	Agree
Volume and Clarity of Delivery	2.51	Agree
Overall Mean	2.69	Agree

The findings indicate that learners generally demonstrated developing confidence in using English for communication. Supportive classroom interactions, collaborative activities, and peer assistance appeared to strengthen learners' confidence and participation, consistent with previous studies (Leeming et al., 2024; Huang, 2024). However, some learners continued to experience discomfort during public speaking and fear of making mistakes, reflecting the influence of speaking anxiety on oral communication (Badrasawi et al., 2021; Özalp & Merç, 2022).

8. SUGGESTIONS

Schools and teachers are encouraged to adopt accent-inclusive and communicative teaching approaches that foster meaningful language use and respect for linguistic diversity. Collaborative and interactive speaking activities may be incorporated to promote learner participation, peer support, and confidence in English communication. Schools may also increase learners' exposure to diverse English accents through instructional materials and authentic language resources while supporting professional development opportunities that strengthen inclusive English language teaching practices. Future studies may examine sociolinguistic attitudes, motivation, and speaking confidence across different grade

levels and educational settings to broaden understanding of EFL learners' language-learning experiences.

9. CONCLUSION

The study showed that Grade 5 EFL learners generally demonstrated positive sociolinguistic attitudes toward English accent diversity, positive motivation to learn and speak English, and developing speaking confidence. The findings further indicated that learners viewed English as valuable for communication, intercultural interaction, and future opportunities, while remaining willing to participate in English communication despite experiencing occasional speaking anxiety and discomfort in public speaking situations.

10. AREA FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Future studies may explore the development of sociolinguistic attitudes, motivation, and speaking confidence across different grade levels and educational settings, as well as examine these variables among learners from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Comparative studies involving other schools and EFL contexts may also be conducted to provide broader insights into learners' attitudes toward English accents and their experiences in English language learning.



11. FIGURES, TABLES, AND REFERENCES

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