

The Role of Beauty Pageants in Developing English Speaking Skills and Self-Confidence Among Beauty Pageant Participants

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Abstract: The ability to communicate effectively in English and to demonstrate strong self-confidence is essential for beauty pageant participants, particularly in activities involving public interaction. Beauty pageants have evolved beyond competitions focused solely on physical appearance by emphasizing communication skills, leadership, public speaking, and social advocacy. These characteristics position beauty pageants as meaningful environments for developing English-speaking competence and self-confidence. This study investigates the contribution of beauty pageants to the development of English-speaking skills and self-confidence among beauty pageant participants. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was employed. Quantitative data were collected via questionnaires administered to 100 participants who had participated in beauty pageants or pageant auditions between 2022 and 2026. Qualitative data were subsequently obtained through semi-structured interviews with six participants representing high, medium, and low questionnaire score categories. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data, while thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. The findings indicate that beauty pageants contribute positively to the development of English speaking skills by providing authentic opportunities for public speaking, interviews, advocacy presentations, and interpersonal communication. The study also reveals that repeated participation, continuous practice, and constructive feedback help participants develop greater self-confidence when communicating in English. These findings highlight the potential of beauty pageants as experiential learning environments that support both communication competence and personal development.

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1. Introduction

In today's increasingly competitive global environment, organizations and institutions require individuals who possess not only technical knowledge but also strong communication competence, self-confidence, and interpersonal skills. These competencies have become strategic human capital because they influence individual performance, leadership potential, career development, and professional adaptability. Among various communication competencies, English speaking ability has emerged as an essential skill due to the growing integration of international education, business, tourism, and digital communication. Individuals with effective English communication skills generally demonstrate greater

confidence in professional interactions and have broader opportunities to participate in global networks (Rose et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2022).

Communication competence, however, is not developed solely through formal education. Contemporary human resource development literature emphasizes that experiential learning, social interaction, and authentic communication practices significantly contribute to competency development. Activities that expose individuals to public interaction, presentations, interviews, and leadership experiences provide opportunities to strengthen both communication skills and personal confidence. Such experiences encourage individuals to apply language knowledge in meaningful contexts while simultaneously improving their interpersonal effectiveness and public speaking performance (Darasawang et al., 2021; Rotjanawongchai, 2024).

Among various extracurricular activities, beauty pageants have evolved beyond competitions that emphasize physical appearance. Modern beauty pageants increasingly function as platforms for leadership development, advocacy, personal branding, and communication training. Contestants are expected to demonstrate critical thinking, public speaking ability, emotional intelligence, interpersonal communication, and social responsibility while representing their organizations or communities. Through interviews, advocacy campaigns, media engagement, and public presentations, participants continuously develop competencies that are highly valued in professional environments (Hermawan et al., 2023). Consequently, beauty pageants can be regarded as informal competency development programs that foster communication effectiveness and individual self-development.

One important psychological factor influencing communication performance is self-confidence. Self-confidence encourages individuals to participate actively in communication, express ideas more effectively, and respond to challenging situations with greater composure. Previous studies consistently indicate that confident individuals demonstrate stronger willingness to communicate, greater engagement in learning activities, and improved speaking performance (Huynh & Nguyen, 2021; Tra, 2025; Mbau et al., 2024). Within competency development frameworks, self-confidence is recognized as a valuable personal resource that supports communication effectiveness, leadership behavior, and career readiness.

Beauty pageants provide repeated exposure to situations requiring contestants to communicate before audiences, respond to spontaneous questions, participate in interviews, and deliver advocacy messages. These communication-intensive activities enable participants to practice English in authentic settings while simultaneously strengthening their confidence through continuous performance experiences. Repeated interaction with judges, audiences, media representatives, and community members reduces communication anxiety and encourages greater willingness to communicate in English. From a human resource development perspective, these experiences contribute to the formation of communication competence and personal effectiveness through experiential learning processes.

Despite growing scholarly attention to communication competence and self-confidence, previous studies have primarily examined these variables in formal educational settings, language classrooms, debate clubs, or public speaking programs. Studies discussing beauty pageants have largely focused on cultural representation, gender issues, media discourse, personal branding, or empowerment, while only limited attention has been given to their educational value as environments for developing communication competencies (Abboud, 2023; Hermawan et al., 2023; Sy et al., 2021). Furthermore, existing studies generally investigate either English-speaking skills or self-confidence separately and predominantly employ single-method approaches. As a result, limited empirical evidence explains how participation in beauty pageants simultaneously contributes to the development of English speaking skills and self-confidence or how participants' lived experiences support the quantitative patterns observed. This lack of integrated evidence represents an important gap in the literature.

To address this gap, the present study employs an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design that combines quantitative and qualitative evidence to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the contribution of beauty pageants to competency development. Unlike previous studies, this research simultaneously examines English speaking skills and self-

confidence within the same analytical framework and interprets participants' experiences through the perspective of experiential learning. By positioning beauty pageants as informal learning environments rather than merely competitive events, this study offers a novel perspective on how authentic communication experiences contribute to communication competence and psychological development. The findings contribute to the literature on human resource and competency development while also providing practical insights for educational institutions, training providers, and organizations seeking alternative approaches to strengthening communication skills and employability competencies among young adults.

2. Literature Review

Beauty Pageants as a Platform for Competency Development

Beauty pageants have undergone significant transformation over the past decades. While traditionally associated with physical appearance and beauty standards, contemporary beauty pageants increasingly function as platforms for competency development, leadership training, communication enhancement, and social advocacy (Abboud, 2023). Contestants are expected not only to demonstrate confidence and professionalism but also to possess critical thinking, interpersonal communication skills, and the ability to represent social values through advocacy programs and public engagement (Hermawan et al., 2023). This transformation reflects a broader shift toward recognizing beauty pageants as experiential learning environments that foster personal growth and professional competencies. Through activities such as interviews, public speaking, media interaction, community service, and advocacy presentations, participants continuously develop communication competence, leadership capacity, emotional intelligence, and personal branding skills that are increasingly valued in educational and professional settings (Cruz, 2021; Sy et al., 2021; Abboud, 2023).

Recent international studies on competency development further support the educational value of authentic performance-based activities. Experiential learning environments encourage participants to strengthen communication competence through repeated practice, reflection, and real-world interaction, enabling them to transfer these competencies into professional contexts (Kolb, 2015). Furthermore, research on communicative competence emphasizes that meaningful communication develops more effectively through authentic interaction than through classroom instruction alone (Mootoosamy & Aryadoust, 2024; Richards, 2021). Similarly, studies on English communication have shown that participation in authentic speaking activities increases learners' willingness to communicate, communicative confidence, and overall speaking proficiency (Rotjanawongchai, 2024; Wang et al., 2022; Wulandari & Assapari, 2024). Within this perspective, beauty pageants provide an authentic setting in which participants regularly practice public speaking, respond to spontaneous questions, interact with diverse audiences, and receive constructive feedback, all of which contribute to the development of communication competence beyond formal educational environments.

English Speaking Skills

English speaking skill is recognized as one of the most essential competencies in language learning because it enables individuals to communicate ideas, opinions, and information effectively in both academic and professional settings (Akhter, 2021). Speaking proficiency involves the integration of several linguistic components, including pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and comprehension, which collectively determine the effectiveness of oral communication (Brown, 2004). However, successful speaking performance is influenced not only by language knowledge but also by learners' confidence, motivation, and opportunities to engage in authentic communication (Wang et al., 2022). Previous studies have emphasized that meaningful speaking experiences, such as presentations, interviews, discussions, and public speaking activities, contribute significantly to the development of communicative competence (Richards, 2021; Rotjanawongchai, 2024). Consequently, communication-rich environments outside formal classrooms, including beauty pageants, provide valuable opportunities for participants to practice English in authentic situations and improve their overall speaking ability (Rose et al., 2021).

Self-Confidence

Self-confidence is a fundamental psychological factor that influences an individual's willingness to communicate, participate in learning activities, and perform effectively in various situations. According to Bandura (1997), individuals' beliefs in their own capabilities determine how they approach challenges and perform specific tasks. In English language learning, self-confidence encourages learners to express their ideas, interact with others, and overcome anxiety associated with speaking a foreign language (Huynh & Nguyen, 2021). Individuals with higher levels of confidence tend to demonstrate greater persistence, stronger motivation, and a higher willingness to engage in communication despite making occasional mistakes (Pajares, 2002). Conversely, learners with low self-confidence often avoid speaking opportunities and experience communication apprehension, which may limit the development of their speaking proficiency (Mbau, 2024). Since confidence can be strengthened through continuous exposure to authentic communication experiences, activities requiring public interaction, such as interviews, presentations, advocacy campaigns, and public speaking, are considered effective in fostering communicative confidence (Darasawang et al., 2021). Therefore, self-confidence is regarded as one of the key factors supporting the improvement of English speaking skills among beauty pageant participants.

State of the Art and Research Gap

Previous studies have widely examined the relationship between English speaking skills, communication competence, self-confidence, and participation in various educational and extracurricular activities. Lee (2020) reported that learners with higher confidence demonstrated greater willingness to communicate in English, while Derakhshan et al. (2021) found that supportive learning environments positively influence students' communication performance. In addition, Saito et al. (2020) emphasized that authentic speaking experiences improve both oral communication skills and confidence. Research focusing on beauty pageants has also shown that pageant participation contributes to leadership development, communication competence, and personal growth (Sy et al., 2021; Hermawan et al., 2023). Likewise, Wulandari and Assapari (2024) found that active participation in communicative activities significantly enhances English proficiency and communication confidence.

Despite these findings, existing studies have primarily focused on classroom-based English learning, language programs, or the general developmental aspects of beauty pageants. Limited attention has been given to examining beauty pageants as authentic learning environments that simultaneously foster English speaking skills and self-confidence. Therefore, this study seeks to address this research gap by exploring how participation in beauty pageants contributes to the improvement of English speaking skills and the development of self-confidence among beauty pageant participants.

3. Research Method

This study employed a mixed-methods research design using an explanatory sequential approach. The study consisted of two consecutive phases. The first phase involved collecting quantitative data through a questionnaire to obtain an overview of beauty pageant participants' perceptions regarding the contribution of beauty pageants to the development of English speaking skills and self-confidence. The second phase involved qualitative data collection through semi-structured interviews to explain, elaborate, and enrich the quantitative findings. The explanatory sequential design was selected because it enables researchers to obtain both broad statistical information and in-depth explanations of participants' experiences, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

The population of this study consisted of beauty pageant participants who had participated in beauty pageants or beauty pageant auditions between 2022 and 2026. Participants were selected because they had direct experience with communication-intensive activities, including interviews, advocacy presentations, public speaking, talent performances, and question-and-answer sessions, which are relevant to the development of English speaking

skills and self-confidence. Purposive sampling was employed to recruit participants who met the predetermined inclusion criteria. A total of 100 participants completed the questionnaire during the quantitative phase. Subsequently, six participants were selected for the qualitative phase using maximum variation sampling based on questionnaire scores and gender representation. This sampling strategy was intended to capture diverse perspectives and experiences regarding the contribution of beauty pageants to English-speaking development and self-confidence.

Data were collected using two research instruments. The quantitative instrument was a structured questionnaire consisting of 12 items adapted from Griffie's *Confidence in Speaking English Questionnaire* as presented by Emy (2024). The questionnaire measured two constructs, namely English speaking self-confidence and English speaking ability, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The qualitative instrument consisted of semi-structured interview questions developed based on the research objectives and the theoretical concepts of English speaking skills and self-confidence. Interviews were conducted individually, lasted approximately 20–30 minutes, and were audio-recorded with participants' consent before being transcribed verbatim for analysis.

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics in IBM SPSS Statistics. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated to summarize participants' responses and describe their perceptions of English speaking skills and self-confidence.

The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), which includes familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and reporting the findings. The interview results were used to provide detailed explanations of the quantitative findings and to explore participants' experiences regarding how beauty pageants contributed to the development of their English speaking skills and self-confidence. Finally, the quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated during the interpretation stage to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and to answer the research questions more effectively.

To ensure the quality of the research instruments, the questionnaire underwent a content validation process before data collection. The instrument was adapted from Griffie's Confidence in Speaking English Questionnaire presented by Emy (2024) and then reviewed by two experts in English language education to evaluate the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of each item in relation to the research objectives. Based on the experts' suggestions, several statements were revised to improve wording clarity and avoid ambiguity. A pilot test involving 100 beauty pageant participants with characteristics similar to the target population was subsequently conducted. The reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha indicated that the questionnaire demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.89$), exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019). For the qualitative phase, the interview guide was also examined by the same experts to ensure that the questions adequately explored participants' experiences related to English speaking skills and self-confidence. During data analysis, member checking was conducted by asking interview participants to review the interview summaries, thereby enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the qualitative findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

4. Results and Discussion

Quantitative Findings

The quantitative findings present participants' perceptions regarding the contribution of beauty pageants to the development of English speaking skills and self-confidence. Data were collected from 100 beauty pageant participants through a questionnaire consisting of twelve statements measured using a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire assessed two major constructs: English speaking self-confidence and English speaking ability. Table 1

summarizes the descriptive statistics, including the percentage distribution of responses, mean scores, and standard deviations for each questionnaire item.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of English Speaking Self-Confidence and Speaking Ability.

No	Statement	Percentages (%)					Mean	S.D.
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree		
1	I feel happy when speaking English	0	1	10	53	36	4.24	0.66
2	I am relaxed when speaking English	0	1	28	51	20	3.9	0.71
3	I like to speak English in competition	0	1	26	48	25	3.9	0.74
4	I enjoy speaking English in my daily life	0	5	27	45	23	3.8	0.82
5	I look for chances to speak English	0	1	6	45	48	4.4	0.82
6	I can give my opinion in English when speaking in public	0	5	34	43	18	3.7	0.81
7	I will speak English in front of a group of people	1	2	29	42	26	3.9	0.84
8	I would like to study English so I can improve my next performance	0	1	4	20	75	4.6	0.59
9	I can speak English easily	0	8	38	39	15	3.6	0.83
10	I am able to do an English interview	0	7	30	44	19	3.7	0.84
11	I will speak English with the judges during an interview	1	5	28	48	18	3.7	0.83
12	I can speak English with other participants.	0	2	22	55	21	3.9	0.71

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of participants' responses regarding English speaking skills and self-confidence in the context of beauty pageants. Overall, the results indicate positive perceptions across the four measured indicators, namely positive feelings toward speaking English, motivation and willingness to communicate, speaking confidence, and perceived English-speaking ability. Most respondents selected either *agree* or *strongly agree* for the majority of questionnaire items, suggesting that participation in beauty pageants is associated with favorable attitudes toward using English in various communication contexts.

Regarding positive feelings toward speaking English, the findings show that participants generally experienced positive emotions when using English. For the statement "*I feel happy when speaking English*," 89% of respondents expressed agreement, consisting of 53% who selected *agree* and 36% who selected *strongly agree*. Only 10% remained neutral, while 1% disagreed with the statement. Similarly, 71% of respondents reported feeling relaxed when speaking English, with 51% selecting *agree* and 20% selecting *strongly agree*. However, a relatively larger proportion of respondents (28%) chose the neutral response for this item, indicating that although participants generally enjoyed communicating in English, some still experienced uncertainty or occasional anxiety when using the language.

The second indicator examined participants' motivation and willingness to use and improve their English. The responses demonstrate consistently high levels of motivation across all related statements. A total of 73% of respondents stated that they enjoyed speaking English during beauty pageant competitions, while 68% reported enjoying speaking English in their daily activities. Furthermore, 93% indicated that they actively looked for opportunities to practice English, reflecting a strong willingness to use the language beyond competition settings. The highest level of agreement was found in the statement concerning future learning intentions, where 95% of respondents expressed their willingness to continue studying English to improve their performance in future beauty pageants. These findings suggest that

participants possess strong intrinsic motivation to continuously develop their English-speaking competence.

The findings related to speaking confidence also reveal generally positive perceptions. Approximately 61% of respondents agreed that they were able to express their opinions in English during public speaking activities, while 68% stated that they were willing to speak English in front of a group of people. Although the majority of participants expressed confidence in public communication, a considerable proportion selected neutral responses, particularly for expressing opinions in English (34%) and speaking before an audience (29%). These responses indicate that some participants still experienced hesitation when communicating in more formal or challenging speaking situations, despite demonstrating generally positive levels of confidence.

The final indicator assessed participants' perceived English-speaking ability in several communication contexts commonly encountered in beauty pageants. More than half of the respondents (54%) believed that they could speak English easily, although 38% remained neutral on this statement. Likewise, 63% agreed that they were capable of participating in interviews conducted in English, while 66% reported feeling able to communicate with judges using English during interview sessions. The highest level of confidence within this indicator was observed in communication with fellow contestants, where 76% believed they could communicate effectively in English. Nevertheless, the relatively high percentage of neutral responses across several items suggests that participants still perceived room for improvement, particularly in formal communication situations requiring spontaneous responses and greater language accuracy.

Overall, the quantitative findings demonstrate that beauty pageant participants generally possess positive attitudes toward speaking English, strong motivation to improve their language proficiency, and relatively high levels of confidence when communicating in English. At the same time, the distribution of neutral responses across several items indicates that challenges related to confidence and perceived speaking ability remain, especially in formal communication contexts such as interviews and public speaking. These findings provide an initial overview of participants' perceptions and serve as the basis for the qualitative analysis, which further explores the experiences underlying these response patterns.

Qualitative Findings

The qualitative findings were derived from semi-structured interviews conducted with six beauty pageant participants representing three different score groups (high, medium, and low) based on the quantitative results. The interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, resulting in four major themes that explain how beauty pageant participation contributes to the development of English speaking skills and self-confidence. These themes include confidence transformation through competition experience, preparation and practice as a driver of confidence, linguistic and psychological barriers, and judges' interview sessions as a means of self-development.

Table 2. Resulting Theme.

Theme	Definition
Theme 1: Confidence Transformation through Competition Experience	Initial nervousness gradually decreases and turns into comfort or enthusiasm in speaking English as participants gain more experience in beauty pageants.
Theme 2: Preparation and Practice as a Driver of Confidence	Participants who regularly practice public speaking and are consistently exposed to English report higher levels of confidence.
Theme 3: Linguistic and Psychological Barriers	Limited vocabulary, fear of mispronunciation, and worry about grammatical mistakes remain the main barriers, particularly among medium- and low-score participants.

Theme 4: Judges' Interview Session as a Means of Self-Development	The Q&A session with judges is consistently perceived as an experience that trains critical thinking, helps structure answers, and gradually builds confidence.
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Table 2 summarizes the four themes that emerged from the interview data. Collectively, these themes illustrate participants' experiences throughout their beauty pageant journey, beginning with changes in self-confidence, followed by the role of preparation and practice, the challenges encountered during English communication, and the contribution of judges' interview sessions to participants' personal and communicative development. Together, these themes explain how beauty pageants provide authentic learning experiences that support the development of both English speaking skills and self-confidence.

The first theme, Confidence Transformation through Competition Experience, describes the gradual change in participants' emotional responses when speaking English. Most participants explained that they initially experienced nervousness, anxiety, and fear of making mistakes, particularly during interviews and public speaking sessions. However, these feelings gradually diminished as they gained more experience through repeated participation in beauty pageants. Participants who had joined several competitions reported feeling more comfortable expressing their ideas in English and became increasingly enthusiastic about communicating in public. This finding suggests that confidence develops progressively through continuous exposure to authentic communication situations.

The second theme, Preparation and Practice as a Driver of Confidence, emphasizes the importance of consistent practice before participating in beauty pageants. Participants frequently mentioned practicing interview questions, public speaking, pronunciation, and vocabulary as part of their competition preparation. They perceived these activities as essential for improving both their English-speaking ability and confidence. Participants who practiced English more regularly generally demonstrated greater confidence during competitions, whereas those with limited opportunities to practice tended to feel less confident when communicating in English. This finding highlights the significant role of preparation in supporting communication performance.

The third theme, Linguistic and Psychological Barriers, reveals that participants continued to encounter several challenges despite their positive experiences in beauty pageants. The most common barriers included limited vocabulary, fear of mispronunciation, concerns about grammatical mistakes, and difficulty responding spontaneously to unexpected questions. These challenges were reported across all participant groups but were particularly evident among those with medium and low questionnaire scores. Although these barriers occasionally reduced participants' confidence, they were generally viewed as part of the learning process and motivated participants to continue improving their English proficiency.

The fourth theme, Judges' Interview Session as a Means of Self-Development, highlights the educational value of interview sessions during beauty pageants. Participants consistently described interviews as opportunities to develop critical thinking, organize ideas logically, and communicate effectively under time pressure. In addition to assessing contestants' performance, judges' questions and feedback encouraged participants to reflect on their

communication abilities, identify areas requiring improvement, and strengthen their confidence for future competitions. Consequently, interview sessions functioned not only as evaluation activities but also as meaningful learning experiences that supported participants' personal and communicative development.

Overall, the qualitative findings complement the quantitative results by explaining the experiences underlying participants' perceptions of English speaking skills and self-confidence. While the questionnaire demonstrated generally positive responses, the interview findings reveal that these positive perceptions were shaped through repeated communication experiences, continuous practice, challenges encountered during language use, and constructive feedback received throughout the beauty pageant process.

Discussion

Beauty Pageants and English Speaking Skills

The findings of this study indicate that beauty pageants contribute positively to the improvement of participants' English-speaking skills by providing authentic opportunities to practice English in various communicative contexts. The quantitative findings revealed that most respondents perceived themselves as capable of using English during beauty pageant activities. Specifically, 54% of respondents agreed that they could speak English easily, 63% believed they were able to participate in an English interview, 66% expressed their willingness to communicate with judges in English, and 76% reported that they could communicate with other participants in English. Although a considerable proportion of respondents selected neutral responses, particularly in Statements 9 to 11, the overall findings suggest that participants generally perceived beauty pageants as environments that support the development of English-speaking ability through repeated communication experiences. These results are consistent with the communicative language learning perspective, which emphasizes that meaningful interaction in authentic contexts plays a crucial role in improving speaking competence (Richards, 2021; Wang et al., 2022).

The qualitative findings provide a deeper explanation of how these improvements occurred throughout participants' experiences in beauty pageants. Participants consistently reported that continuous preparation and regular speaking practice before competitions helped them improve their speaking performance. High-score participants particularly emphasized the importance of practice. Rohman stated that *"good preparation also makes me feel more confident,"* while Vanessa explained that she *"practices speaking regularly and often uses English during pageant training sessions."* These responses indicate that beauty pageants encourage participants to engage in continuous speaking practice rather than relying solely on classroom learning. In contrast, Wilbert, who belonged to the low-score group, admitted that *"My vocabulary is still limited, and I rarely use English in daily life,"* suggesting that limited exposure to English reduced opportunities to develop speaking ability. This finding supports previous studies indicating that frequent exposure to authentic communication and regular speaking practice significantly contribute to the development of English-speaking proficiency (Darasawang, 2021; Rotjanawongchai, 2024; Wulandari & Assapari, 2024).

Another important contribution of beauty pageants lies in the interview session with judges. The interview requires contestants to respond to spontaneous questions, organize their ideas, and communicate effectively within a limited time. Participants from all score groups perceived this activity as beneficial for improving their speaking ability. Rohman explained that judges' interviews *"train me to think critically and communicate confidently,"* while Vanessa stated that the interviews helped her *"organize my ideas and deliver convincing answers."* Even participants with lower questionnaire scores acknowledged the educational value of this activity. Azwa stated that the interview session *"helps me recognize my weaknesses and motivates me to continue learning English,"* whereas Wilbert believed that the experience made him realize *"how important it is to keep practicing English."* These findings indicate that judges' interviews function not only as assessment activities but also as meaningful learning experiences that stimulate critical thinking, spontaneous communication, and language development. Such findings align with studies highlighting that public speaking activities and authentic communication tasks promote communicative competence and improve speaking performance (Taridi et al., 2022; Haris et al., 2023; Darma Yanti, 2023).

Nevertheless, the qualitative findings also revealed that the development of English-speaking skills is influenced by several linguistic challenges. Participants across different score groups mentioned limited vocabulary, fear of grammatical mistakes, mispronunciation, and difficulty responding spontaneously as the main barriers to speaking English. For example, Azwa explained that she was *"afraid of mispronouncing words and worried that people will not understand my answers,"* while Wilbert described spontaneous sentence formation as one of his greatest difficulties. Even Rohman, despite belonging to the high-score group, acknowledged the need to continue improving his vocabulary. These findings help explain why several respondents selected neutral responses in the questionnaire regarding their English-speaking ability, indicating that language development remains an ongoing process despite the positive contribution of beauty pageants. Similar challenges have been widely reported in previous studies, which identify pronunciation, vocabulary mastery, grammar anxiety, and psychological factors as common obstacles affecting EFL learners' speaking performance (Bakhtiar & Suwandi, 2022; Annisa & Wariyati, 2023; Azizi & Yusuf, 2024).

The findings further indicate that beauty pageants improve English-speaking skills through several interconnected learning processes. Contestants prepare speeches, interviews, and advocacy presentations before competitions, repeatedly practice these activities during training sessions, and apply their language skills in authentic communication with judges, fellow contestants, and audiences. Constructive feedback from mentors and judges also enables participants to evaluate their performance and refine their communication strategies. These experiences illustrate that beauty pageants facilitate language development through experiential and practice-based learning rather than through formal instruction alone.

The present findings support Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, which argues that meaningful learning occurs through direct experience, reflection, and active participation (Kolb, 2015). Beauty pageants provide authentic communicative situations, including interviews, advocacy presentations, public speaking, and interpersonal interactions, allowing participants to develop speaking skills through repeated practice rather than theoretical instruction alone. This interpretation is also consistent with Richards (2021), who emphasized

that communicative competence develops through meaningful language use in authentic contexts. Furthermore, the findings reinforce previous research by Lee and Lee (2020), Darasawang (2021), Rotjanawongchai (2024), and Wulandari and Assapari (2024), all of whom concluded that frequent participation in authentic communication activities enhances English-speaking proficiency, communicative competence, and willingness to communicate.

Beauty Pageants and Self-Confidence

The findings of this study demonstrate that beauty pageants contribute positively to the development of participants' self-confidence in speaking English. The quantitative findings revealed that the majority of respondents showed positive perceptions across all self-confidence indicators. Specifically, 89% of respondents reported feeling happy when speaking English, 71% felt relaxed while communicating in English, 73% enjoyed speaking English during beauty pageant competitions, and 68% stated that they enjoyed speaking English in their daily lives. Furthermore, 61% of respondents believed that they could express their opinions in English during public speaking activities, 68% were willing to speak English in front of a group of people, and 95% expressed a strong willingness to continue learning English to improve their future beauty pageant performance. These findings indicate that participation in beauty pageants is associated with positive emotions, increased confidence, and strong motivation to communicate in English. This result is in line with previous studies suggesting that self-confidence is closely associated with learners' willingness to communicate and active participation in language learning (Huynh & Nguyen, 2021; Mbau et al., 2024; Orth & Robins, 2022).

The qualitative findings further explain how beauty pageants contribute to the development of self-confidence. Participants consistently described confidence as something that developed gradually through repeated participation in pageant activities rather than appearing instantly. Rohman explained that he initially felt nervous when speaking English, but after participating in several beauty pageants he became more confident because he had become accustomed to communicating in front of judges and audiences. Likewise, Vanessa stated that speaking English during competitions made her feel excited rather than anxious, indicating that repeated exposure transformed nervousness into confidence. These experiences suggest that continuous participation in beauty pageants enables contestants to become more comfortable using English in public communication. Similar findings have been reported by Cruz (2021), who found that participation in beauty pageants contributes to higher self-esteem and achievement motivation, while Abboud (2023) argued that modern beauty pageants increasingly function as platforms for personal empowerment and self-development.

Participants with medium and low questionnaire scores described a similar process, although their confidence developed more gradually. Yolanda explained that she still felt nervous during English communication but believed that beauty pageants encouraged her to become braver in expressing her ideas. Rahmaddiones also admitted that fear of making grammatical mistakes occasionally reduced his confidence; however, repeated practice during pageant preparation helped him communicate more effectively. In contrast, Azwa reported that she remained worried about mispronouncing words and feared that other people would

not understand her responses. Nevertheless, she acknowledged that participating in beauty pageants gradually encouraged her to overcome these fears and become more willing to speak English. These findings indicate that self-confidence develops progressively as participants gain greater experience and repeated exposure to English-speaking situations. This gradual development supports previous research emphasizing that communicative confidence grows through authentic language use and sustained interaction rather than through isolated classroom activities (Darasawang, 2021; Rotjanawongchai, 2024).

Another important finding concerns the role of preparation and repeated practice in strengthening participants' confidence. Participants explained that practicing interviews, improving pronunciation, expanding vocabulary, and participating in simulation sessions before competitions helped reduce anxiety during performances. Rather than relying solely on natural ability, participants emphasized that confidence increased through continuous practice and repeated exposure to authentic communication situations. Consequently, beauty pageants function as environments where contestants repeatedly apply their English skills in meaningful contexts, allowing them to become increasingly confident over time. This finding reinforces previous studies highlighting that regular public speaking practice and authentic communicative experiences play an important role in enhancing confidence and communication competence (Haris et al., 2023; Darma Yanti, 2023).

The present findings are well explained by Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, which proposes that successful performance experiences constitute the strongest source of self-confidence (Bandura, 1997). According to Bandura, individuals strengthen their beliefs in their own abilities after completing challenging tasks. In the context of beauty pageants, participants repeatedly engage in interviews, public speaking sessions, advocacy presentations, and spontaneous question-and-answer activities, enabling them to accumulate mastery experiences. These repeated experiences gradually strengthen their confidence in speaking English while simultaneously reducing communication anxiety. Pajares (2002) further emphasized that repeated successful experiences reinforce self-efficacy beliefs, which subsequently influence individuals' motivation, persistence, and communication performance.

The findings also corroborate previous studies highlighting the relationship between authentic communication experiences and self-confidence. Earlier research has consistently demonstrated that meaningful speaking opportunities encourage learners to communicate more actively and increase their willingness to use English in various contexts (Lee & Lee, 2020; Huynh & Nguyen, 2021; Mbau et al., 2024). Likewise, this study demonstrates that beauty pageants provide authentic communicative environments where participants gradually develop self-confidence through repeated interaction with judges, fellow contestants, mentors, and audiences. Therefore, the present study extends existing literature by identifying beauty pageants as an alternative experiential learning context that supports English language development beyond formal classroom instruction.

Beyond the improvement of linguistic competence, the findings suggest that beauty pageants also contribute to the development of broader communicative competencies required in today's global environment. Through repeated engagement in interviews,

advocacy presentations, and public speaking activities, participants learn to organize ideas, adapt their messages to different audiences, and respond appropriately in spontaneous interactions. These experiences reflect the concept of communicative competence, which encompasses not only grammatical knowledge but also sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies that are essential for effective communication (Celce-Murcia, 2007). In this regard, beauty pageants provide authentic communicative situations that enable participants to integrate language knowledge with interpersonal communication skills, thereby supporting more holistic English language development.

From a practical perspective, the findings imply that experiential activities outside formal classrooms can complement conventional English language instruction. Educational institutions may consider incorporating experiential learning approaches such as public speaking competitions, debate programs, leadership training, or pageant-inspired communication activities into language learning programs. Such activities expose learners to real communication demands while encouraging collaboration, critical thinking, and self-reflection. Previous research has demonstrated that experiential and performance-based learning environments improve learners' communication competence, motivation, and engagement because students actively construct knowledge through meaningful experiences rather than passive classroom instruction (Yardley et al., 2012; Kolb & Kolb, 2017). Therefore, integrating authentic communication activities into English education may provide additional opportunities for learners to strengthen both their speaking proficiency and self-confidence.

Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative findings indicate that beauty pageants make a meaningful contribution to the development of self-confidence in speaking English by providing repeated opportunities for authentic communication, continuous practice, constructive feedback, and real-life interaction. Although participants demonstrated different levels of confidence depending on their previous experience and language proficiency, most reported gradual improvement throughout their participation in beauty pageant activities. Accordingly, beauty pageants should not be viewed solely as competitive events but also as experiential learning environments that foster confidence, communication competence, and personal growth through sustained engagement in authentic English-speaking situations.

5. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that beauty pageants contribute positively to the development of English-speaking skills and self-confidence among beauty pageant participants. The quantitative findings indicate that most participants showed positive perceptions of their English communication ability, motivation, and confidence, while the qualitative findings reveal that repeated participation in pageant activities provides authentic opportunities to practice English through interviews, public speaking, advocacy presentations, and interactions with judges and fellow contestants. These experiences gradually improve participants' speaking ability, communicative confidence, and willingness to use English despite challenges related to vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammatical accuracy.

The integration of the quantitative and qualitative findings suggests that beauty pageants function not only as competitive events but also as experiential learning environments that promote language development through authentic communication, continuous practice, and constructive feedback. Therefore, beauty pageants can be recognized as an alternative setting

that supports the development of English-speaking skills and self-confidence beyond formal classroom instruction.

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