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"I Believe I Can Speak": English-Speaking Self-Efficacy and Its Sources among Indonesian High School Students

[1]Christina Helen Indarto, *[1]Adaninggar Septi Subekti

[1]Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana, Indonesia

Abstract: English-speaking self-efficacy (E-SSE) plays a crucial role in EFL learning because students' willingness to speak is shaped not only by linguistic knowledge but also by their belief in their ability to communicate successfully. This study examined Indonesian senior high school students' level of E-SSE and identified the factors contributing to its development. Using a mixed-methods design, data were collected from 160 students at a private senior high school in Java, Indonesia, through a paper-based E-SSE questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Six students were purposively selected for interviews based on their self-efficacy levels, representing low, moderate, and high categories. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis. The findings showed that students generally reported a moderate level of English-speaking self-efficacy, indicating that their confidence in speaking English was present but not yet stable across speaking situations. Students felt relatively more capable of speaking with emotion and using appropriate language, but less confident when speaking fluently, speaking under nervous conditions, or responding to unfamiliar topics. Three contributing factors emerged from the qualitative data. Encouragement from family and friends strengthened students' confidence; observing others' success was both inspiring and intimidating; and positive self-talk helped students manage self-doubt and sustain belief in their speaking ability. These findings suggest that E-SSE is shaped by social support, interpretation of peer models, and learners' internal regulation. Pedagogically, teachers should provide low-anxiety speaking tasks, constructive peer encouragement, guided reflection, and positive self-talk activities to strengthen students' speaking confidence.

Keywords: English-speaking self-efficacy (E-SSE), EFL speaking, senior high school students, social persuasion, vicarious experience, positive self-talk.

1. Introduction

Speaking is widely regarded as one of the most demanding skills in English as a foreign language (EFL) learning because learners must retrieve language rapidly, organize ideas in real time, and sustain oral production under immediate communicative pressure (Abrar, 2017). Speaking gives learners very little room for planning or revision, so hesitation, fear of making mistakes, anxiety, and self-doubt can easily emerge during performance (Subekti, 2018). This challenge becomes even more pronounced in EFL contexts where English is rarely used for everyday communication, since limited exposure beyond formal instruction reduces opportunities for spontaneous and meaningful speaking practice. In such settings, speaking is not merely a linguistic task but also a psychological one, because students must manage their language resources

***Correspondence:** adaninggar@staff.ukdw.ac.id

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together with confidence, anxiety, and willingness to communicate. For that reason, speaking deserves particular attention in Indonesian senior high schools, where learners are still developing communicative competence and confidence in their ability to speak English successfully.

Given that speaking performance is shaped not only by linguistic competence but also by learners' beliefs about their own capability, self-efficacy becomes a particularly relevant construct for understanding success in oral English use. Self-efficacy is an important psychological construct in language learning because it shapes learners' perceptions of their ability to perform specific tasks and influences their approach to achievement in English learning (Nguyen et al., 2022). Derived from Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997), self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs in their capability to organize and execute the actions required to achieve particular goals, an understanding that has also been reinforced in recent language-learning and speaking research (Kutuk et al., 2022; Pramerta, 2021). In the context of English learning, this belief is especially significant because success depends not only on linguistic knowledge but also on learners' confidence in applying that knowledge in real communicative situations in both classroom and out-of-class settings (Asakereh & Dehghannezhad, 2015; Lee & Lee, 2020). More specifically, Leeming (2017) treats E-SSE as a task- and context-sensitive belief about one's ability to perform spoken English successfully, a view consistent with research on public-speaking and classroom-speaking self-efficacy in EFL contexts (Zhang et al., 2019).

As a task-specific form of self-efficacy, it concerns students' perceived ability to express ideas, respond to others, sustain communication, and cope with the demands of speaking in real time, rather than serving as a direct equivalent of actual speaking proficiency alone (Zhang et al., 2020; Ningias & Indriani, 2021). In this sense, E-SSE should be distinguished from actual speaking proficiency, because learners with adequate vocabulary and grammar may still hesitate when they doubt their ability under pressure, unfamiliar topics, or public performance, whereas learners with more limited proficiency may still attempt to speak when they believe they can manage the communicative demands of the task (Cong & Li, 2022; Hermagustiana et al., 2021; Lee & Hsieh, 2019). Fan (2022) further highlights that, because speaking often requires immediate responses, risk-taking, and persistence despite errors or hesitation, E-SSE is best understood as learners' judgments about what they believe they can do with the language. These judgments shape not only oral performance but also willingness to participate, persistence through difficulty, and engagement in the learning experiences necessary for improvement (Dong et al., 2022).

To explain how such beliefs are formed, this study draws on Bandura's view that self-efficacy develops through four main sources: mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological or affective states. This framework has been widely reiterated in recent work on language learning and English public-speaking self-efficacy. Graham (2022) clarifies this structure in relation to language learning, and it is also reflected in empirical studies of English public speaking and classroom-based speaking confidence (Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019). Among these sources, mastery experience is often considered especially powerful because learners tend to strengthen their efficacy beliefs when they complete speaking tasks; in EFL settings, successful speaking practice, stronger speaking achievement, and intensive language-training experiences have all been associated with higher self-efficacy. Xu et al. (2022) show that gains in speaking-related language performance can coincide with improved self-efficacy, a pattern echoed in studies linking speaking self-efficacy with speaking achievement and oral performance (Asakereh & Dehghannezhad, 2015). Vicarious experience refers to learners' observation of others' performance, and this source becomes particularly meaningful when students watch peers with similar backgrounds or ability levels succeed in spoken English tasks, because such observation can make success appear more attainable. Leeming (2017) found that E-SSE develops over time in relation to learners' classroom experiences, while other studies on speaking have likewise highlighted the role of peer comparison, modelling, and perceived attainability in shaping confidence for spoken tasks (Darmawan et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2020).

Furthermore, social persuasion involves encouragement, evaluative feedback, and supportive responses from teachers or peers, which can help learners interpret speaking challenges as manageable and

improvement as possible. This mechanism is visible in research showing that oral feedback can affect speaking self-efficacy, that learners often connect support and reassurance with confidence in speaking, and that instructional environments can foster self-efficacy alongside other motivational variables (Ningias & Indriani, 2021; Dong et al., 2022). Meanwhile, physiological and affective states encompass emotional and bodily reactions, such as anxiety, nervousness, tension, or calmness, all of which may shape how learners judge their ability to speak English successfully in the moment. Recent research has consistently linked self-efficacy in EFL contexts with affective conditions such as communication apprehension, willingness to communicate, and English-use anxiety, suggesting that students' confidence in speaking is partly filtered through how they feel during communicative performance (Cong & Li, 2022; Lee & Hsieh, 2019; Wu et al., 2022). Taken together, these four sources provide a useful conceptual framework for explaining how E-SSE develops and why learners may differ in their confidence when performing spoken English tasks across contexts. This broader interpretation is consistent with meta-analytic evidence on the importance of self-efficacy in language proficiency, with multidimensional assessment work in English public speaking, and with findings that speaking self-efficacy is meaningfully associated with speaking performance (Wang & Sun, 2020; Zhang et al., 2019).

Previous studies have consistently shown that E-SSE is a meaningful and context-sensitive construct in EFL learning. Leeming (2017), through a longitudinal mixed-methods study in Japan, found that students' speaking self-efficacy developed over time and was shaped by their classroom experiences and adjustment to the learning context, suggesting that self-efficacy is not fixed but can grow differently among individuals. In the domain of English public speaking, Zhang and Ardasheva (2018) reported that enactive mastery experience, vicarious experience, and verbal persuasion significantly predicted learners' self-efficacy, whereas physiological and affective states contributed less consistently. Similar patterns were found in classroom-based studies. Darmawan et al. (2021) showed that pre-service EFL students generally reported high speaking self-efficacy, which was associated with successful task accomplishment, role models, verbal encouragement, effort, resilience, and emotional states, while Agustin et al. (2022) further confirmed that students' public speaking self-efficacy could be understood through Bandura's four sources of efficacy beliefs. At a broader level, Wang and Sun (2020), in their meta-analysis, demonstrated that self-efficacy had a significant small-to-medium relationship with language proficiency, reinforcing its importance as a predictor of language performance. More specifically, Zhang et al. (2020) found that students' English public-speaking self-efficacy and speaking performance both improved over the course of instruction, highlighting the pedagogical relevance of self-efficacy for speaking development. However, affective conditions remain important, as Fauzi and Asi (2023) showed that speaking anxiety continues to be a major challenge for Indonesian EFL learners, particularly in relation to evaluation and classroom pressure.

Although previous studies have established that self-efficacy is an important predictor of language learning and speaking performance, research on E-SSE has been conducted predominantly in university and adult learning contexts, with relatively little attention to Indonesian senior high school students. Existing studies have also tended to focus either on measuring self-efficacy levels or on examining its theoretical sources. At the same time, fewer have integrated both by investigating students' perceived level of E-SSE together with the factors that shape it in a specific school-based EFL setting. This leaves a gap in understanding of how Indonesian senior high school students view their speaking ability and which social, experiential, and psychological conditions contribute to the development of that belief. Addressing this gap, the present study offers novelty by focusing on an underrepresented population, combining quantitative and qualitative data to provide a more comprehensive account of English-speaking self-efficacy, and generating context-specific evidence from the Indonesian senior high school setting. Accordingly, this study aims to investigate the level of E-SSE among Indonesian senior high school students and identify the factors that contribute to its development.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods design to investigate Indonesian senior high school students' E-SSE and the factors contributing to its development. The quantitative strand was used to assess students' overall level of E-SSE. In contrast, the qualitative strand was used to explore the social, experiential, and psychological factors shaping students' beliefs about their speaking ability. This design was appropriate because self-efficacy involves both measurable belief patterns and subjective interpretations of personal experience. Combining questionnaire and interview data enabled the study to obtain a broader statistical description of students' E-SSE and a deeper explanation of how students interpreted encouragement, others' success, and their own internal self-talk. Mixed-methods research is useful when quantitative and qualitative evidence are combined to provide a more comprehensive understanding of a complex educational phenomenon (Harris & Brown, 2010; Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017).

2.2 Research Context and Participants

The study was conducted at a private senior high school in Java, Indonesia. The participants were recruited using convenience sampling because the school was accessible to the researchers and the students were available during the data collection period. Although convenience sampling is practical in school-based research, it is a non-probability sampling technique; therefore, the findings should be interpreted with caution regarding broader generalization (Etikan et al., 2016; Scholtz, 2021). Most of the self-efficacy studies involved university students and even adult learners as their research participants (Cubukcu, 2008; Ningias & Indriani, 2021; Paradewari, 2017; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008; Sinaga & Subekti, 2024). Considering this gap, this study attempted to contribute more insight by focusing on high school students, who are fairly underrepresented in E-SSE literature.

Initially, 175 students from six classes participated in the questionnaire phase, consisting of two classes from Grade 10, two from Grade 11, and two from Grade 12. However, 15 incomplete questionnaires were excluded from the analysis. The final quantitative sample consisted of 160 students aged between 15 and 19 years old ($M = 16.34$, $SD = 1.03$). Of these participants, 106 students were female, and 54 were male. For the qualitative phase, six students were purposively selected from the questionnaire respondents based on their E-SSE levels: two students with low E-SSE, two with moderate E-SSE, and two with high E-SSE. This selection allowed the study to capture contrasting experiences across different levels of speaking self-efficacy.

2.3 Research Instruments

Two instruments were used in this study: an E-SSE questionnaire and a semi-structured interview checklist. The questionnaire was used to answer the first research question concerning students' level of E-SSE. It consisted of three parts: a consent form, a background information form, and a nine-item E-SSE scale. The scale was adapted from the English Public Speaking Self-Efficacy Scale. Still, three items from the original instrument were excluded because they focused specifically on public speaking, whereas the present study examined more general English-speaking situations.

The questionnaire used a four-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The neutral option was removed from the original five-point format to encourage participants to provide more definite responses. The items measured students' perceived ability to speak accurately, fluently, and effectively on unfamiliar topics; express emotion; speak in public while nervous; speak with confidence; organize ideas logically; use appropriate language; and make central ideas clear to the audience. The questionnaire was translated into Indonesian to ensure that participants could understand the items clearly. A back-translation procedure was then conducted to check the equivalence of meaning between the English and Indonesian versions. Questionnaire translation and back-translation are important in cross-language research because they help improve semantic accuracy. However, back-translation should be treated as a checking procedure rather than a perfect guarantee of equivalence (Behr, 2018).

Before the main data collection, the questionnaire was pilot-tested with 24 high school students from other schools. The pilot study was conducted to evaluate item clarity, wording neutrality, and suitability for the target respondents. Pilot testing is an important step in instrument development because it helps identify potential problems before the main administration and improves the quality of the research procedure (Malmqvist et al., 2019; Tate et al., 2023). Based on the main data from 160 participants, the instrument showed acceptable item discrimination, with item-total correlations ranging from .66 to .72. The scale also demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha = .85 and McDonald's omega = .81. These reliability coefficients indicate that the scale was sufficiently reliable for measuring students' E-SSE (Kalkbrenner, 2024).

The second instrument was a semi-structured interview checklist used to answer the second research question concerning the factors contributing to students' E-SSE. The checklist consisted of eight main questions developed from Bandura's self-efficacy framework and relevant studies on speaking self-efficacy. The questions explored students' experiences of speaking English, encouragement from others, observation of peers or family members, emotional reactions, confidence, self-perception, and internal strategies for maintaining belief in their speaking ability. Semi-structured interviews were appropriate because they allowed the researcher to maintain alignment with the research questions while also giving participants space to explain their experiences in depth (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Naz et al., 2022).

2.4 Data Collection Procedures

The questionnaire was administered from February 5 to February 7, 2024. With permission from the school principal and English teacher, paper-based questionnaires were distributed at the beginning of English classes. Students were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the confidentiality of their responses before completing the questionnaire.

After the questionnaire data had been collected and categorized, six students were invited to participate in follow-up interviews based on their E-SSE levels. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian via Zoom from February 21 to March 8, 2024, with each interview lasting approximately 30 minutes. Indonesian was used to help participants express their experiences more comfortably and accurately. With participants' consent, the interviews were recorded, transcribed, and translated into English for analysis.

The present study practiced research ethics throughout its process. Gatekeeper consent from the school principal and the English teacher was obtained. The English teacher scheduled the survey data collection during class sessions at a time that minimized inconvenience to students, ensuring adherence to the principle of non-maleficence (Israel & Hay, 2006). Next, the autonomy principle was also adhered to in this study. Before completing the questionnaire, the participants were orally informed of the study's details and of their rights and responsibilities if they decided to participate. The rights included the freedom to participate. A consent form detailing the information orally presented by the researchers was also provided on the first page of the questionnaire. The interview participants were also recruited based on their E-SSE levels and their willingness to be invited for possible interviews. The confidentiality principle, in which studies conceal identifying information, was practiced by using pseudonyms to conceal the interviewees' real names.

2.5 Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS 25. Questionnaire responses were coded on a four-point scale: strongly agree = 4, agree = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and percentages, were used to determine students' level of English-speaking self-efficacy. Based on the nine-item scale, students' E-SSE was categorized into three levels. Mean scores of 1.00–2.24 indicated low E-SSE, 2.25–2.75 indicated moderate E-SSE, and 2.76–4.00 indicated high E-SSE. In terms of total scores, 9–20 represented low E-SSE, 21–25 represented moderate E-SSE, and 26–36 represented high E-SSE.

The qualitative interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis involved repeated reading of the transcripts, coding relevant excerpts, identifying recurring patterns, and grouping codes into broader themes related to factors influencing students' English-speaking self-efficacy. Thematic analysis was suitable because it provides a flexible yet systematic approach to identifying patterns of meaning in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Through this process, three major themes were identified: encouragement from family and friends, others' success as a double-edged vicarious experience, and positive self-talk as an internal source of confidence. These themes were then interpreted in relation to Bandura's self-efficacy framework, particularly social persuasion, vicarious experience, and learners' internal regulation of belief.

3. Results

The findings are organized based on the two research questions. The first section presents the quantitative results on students' level of English-speaking self-efficacy, while the second section presents the qualitative themes that explain the factors contributing to it. The quantitative data were obtained from 160 students through the E-SSE questionnaire. In contrast, the qualitative data were drawn from semi-structured interviews with six students representing low, moderate, and high levels of speaking self-efficacy.

3.1 Level of Students' English-Speaking Self-Efficacy

The questionnaire results indicate that students generally reported a moderate level of English-speaking self-efficacy. Across the nine items, mean scores ranged from 2.14 to 2.58, with an average of approximately 2.38. This suggests that students had developed some belief in their ability to speak English, but this belief was not yet strong or stable across different speaking situations. As shown in Table 1, students felt relatively more capable of speaking with emotion and using appropriate language, but less confident when speaking fluently, speaking while nervous, or responding to unfamiliar and difficult topics.

Table 1. Students' Responses to the English-Speaking Self-Efficacy Scale

No.	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
1	When speaking English, I can speak accurately, with no or few mistakes.	5 (3.1%)	59 (36.9%)	87 (54.4%)	9 (5.6%)	2.38	.642
2	When speaking English, I can speak fluently.	6 (3.8%)	42 (26.3%)	105 (65.6%)	7 (4.4%)	2.29	.610
3	When speaking English on an unfamiliar or difficult topic, I can always speak effectively.	2 (1.3%)	35 (21.9%)	106 (66.3%)	17 (10.6%)	2.14	.589
4	When speaking English, I can speak with emotion.	12 (7.5%)	71 (44.4%)	74 (46.3%)	3 (1.9%)	2.58	.659
5	I can give an English speech in public when I am very nervous.	10 (6.3%)	41 (25.6%)	88 (55.0%)	21 (13.1%)	2.25	.761
6	When speaking English, I can speak with confidence.	8 (5.0%)	48 (30.0%)	93 (58.1%)	11 (6.9%)	2.33	.680
7	When speaking English, I can organize my speech so that the conclusion flows logically from what was previously said.	4 (2.5%)	70 (43.8%)	82 (51.2%)	4 (2.5%)	2.46	.592
8	When speaking English, I can use appropriate language, such as vocabulary and grammatical structures, to address a range of topics.	6 (3.8%)	75 (46.9%)	75 (46.9%)	4 (2.5%)	2.52	.614
9	When speaking English, I can make my central idea clear to the audience.	7 (4.4%)	66 (41.3%)	81 (50.6%)	6 (3.8%)	2.46	.643

The highest mean score was found in students' belief that they could speak English with emotion (M = 2.58, SD = .659), followed by their perceived ability to use appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures across topics (M = 2.52, SD = .614). These results suggest that students felt relatively more confident in expressive and language-resource-related aspects of speaking. Their confidence in organizing speech logically and making central ideas clear was also moderate, with both items obtaining a mean score of 2.46. By contrast, the lowest mean score appeared in students' perceived ability to speak effectively on unfamiliar or difficult topics (M = 2.14, SD = .589). Relatively low scores were also found for speaking in public while nervous (M = 2.25, SD = .761), speaking fluently (M = 2.29, SD = .610), and speaking with confidence (M = 2.33, SD = .680). These results indicate that students' self-efficacy weakened when speaking required spontaneity, fluency, emotional control, and immediate responses to demanding topics.

The quantitative findings, therefore, show that students' E-SSE was moderate and task-sensitive. Students demonstrated some confidence in manageable aspects of speaking, such as expressing emotion, using appropriate language, organizing ideas, and communicating central messages. Their confidence became more fragile when speaking involved unfamiliar topics, nervousness, fluency demands, and public performance.

3.2 Factors Contributing to Students' English-Speaking Self-Efficacy

The thematic analysis of the interview data identified three factors that contributed to students' English-speaking self-efficacy: encouragement from family and friends, observing others' success, and positive self-talk. These factors show that both external support and internal interpretation of speaking experiences shaped students' self-efficacy. Table 2 summarizes the themes, sources of self-efficacy, selected evidence, and interpretation.

Table 2. Thematic Summary of Factors Contributing to Students' English-Speaking Self-Efficacy

Theme	Source of self-efficacy	Selected direct quote	Interpretation
Encouragement from family and friends	Social persuasion	"I am pretty confident with my English ability, and we have been using English at home." — Josephine, High E-SSE	Family exposure and encouragement strengthened confidence in speaking English.
Encouragement from family and friends	Social persuasion	"They believe, like, when there is a task, they depend on me. Because they said so, so I believe I can speak English." — Juliana, High E-SSE	Peer trust reinforced the student's belief that she was capable of speaking English.
Encouragement from family and friends	Social persuasion	"It is okay, you can do this, try again, try again." — Veira, Moderate E-SSE	Peer encouragement helped reduce the fear of mistakes and supported repeated attempts.
Observing others' success	Vicarious experience	"They can speak, I can speak too, even if it is not now, but later I am sure I can." — Veira, Moderate E-SSE	Others' success inspired confidence when it was interpreted as attainable.
Observing others' success	Vicarious experience	"Because my friend is better. It makes me insecure; this person makes me feel like I'm the only person who cannot speak." — Arietta, Moderate E-SSE	Peer comparison weakened self-efficacy when others' success was interpreted as personal inadequacy.
Positive self-talk	Internal belief regulation	"I have faith in myself, so like, convincing myself." — Josephine, High E-SSE	Positive self-talk helped the student maintain confidence.
Positive self-talk	Internal belief regulation	"No other people can do it, but from myself. So, I am the one who must improve how to pronounce and the dialect." — Veira, Moderate E-SSE	Self-directed responsibility supported persistence and improvement.

The first theme shows that encouragement from family and friends strengthened students' English-speaking self-efficacy. For some students, family became a supportive environment for speaking English. Josephine, who represented the high self-efficacy category, explained, **"***I am pretty confident with my English ability, and we have been using English at home.***"** This response indicates that regular exposure and support in the family environment helped strengthen her belief that she could speak English. Peer encouragement was also influential. Juliana stated, **"***They believe, like, when there is a task, they depend on me. Because they said so, so I believe I can speak English***."** Her statement suggests that being trusted by peers reinforced her confidence in speaking. Veira's account also shows how peer support helped students manage difficulty: **"***It is okay, you can do this, try again, try again.***"** Such encouragement helped students interpret mistakes as part of learning rather than as signs of failure.

The second theme reveals that observing others' success worked in two different ways. For some students, others' success became an inspiring model. Veira explained, **"***They can speak, I can speak too, even if it is not now, but later I am sure I can***."** This indicates that observing others succeed can strengthen self-efficacy when students perceive the success as attainable. Juliette similarly connected her confidence to her father's English ability, stating, **"***I believe because my father is good at English, that makes me believe that I can be good at English too.***"** However, successful models did not always produce positive effects. Arietta described a different response: **"***Because my friend is better. It makes me insecure; this person makes me feel like I'm the only person who cannot speak***."** Her account shows that observing others' success can weaken self-efficacy when comparison leads to feelings of inferiority. Thus, vicarious experience functioned as a double-edged factor: it strengthened confidence when interpreted as achievable, but reduced confidence when interpreted as evidence of one's own inadequacy.

The third theme indicates that positive self-talk helped students manage self-doubt and maintain confidence in their speaking ability. Josephine described this process simply as **"***convincing myself***."** Juliana also referred to an internal drive to improve, explaining that she needed to be confident to enhance her language ability. Veira emphasized that improvement ultimately depended on herself: **"***No other people can do it, but from myself. So, I am the one who must improve how to pronounce and the dialect.***"** These responses show that self-efficacy was not shaped only by external encouragement or comparison with others. Students also actively shaped their own beliefs by persuading themselves, taking responsibility for improvement, and reinterpreting weaknesses as areas for growth.

The qualitative findings indicate that E-SSE developed through the interaction of social support, vicarious experience, and internal belief regulation. Encouragement from family and peers provided emotional reassurance and practical assistance; observing others' success could either inspire or intimidate, depending on students' interpretation; and positive self-talk helped students manage insecurity and sustain confidence. This pattern suggests that students' speaking self-efficacy was determined not only by their speaking ability but also by how they interpreted the social and psychological conditions surrounding their speaking experiences.

4. Discussion

The present study shows that Indonesian senior high school students reported a moderate level of English-speaking self-efficacy. This finding suggests that students had begun to develop confidence in their ability to speak English, yet their belief was not sufficiently strong across all speaking situations. Their self-efficacy was relatively higher in speaking with emotion, using appropriate language, organizing ideas logically, and making central ideas clear. However, it weakened when students had to speak fluently, speak while nervous, or respond to unfamiliar, difficult topics. This pattern indicates that E-SSE among these students was not a fixed or uniform belief but a task-sensitive perception shaped by the cognitive and emotional demands of speaking. Speaking on familiar topics or using prepared language may feel manageable, whereas speaking spontaneously under pressure requires stronger fluency, emotional control, and confidence. This finding is consistent with the view that speaking in EFL contexts is not only a linguistic

task but also a psychological performance, because learners must retrieve language quickly, manage anxiety, and maintain communicative flow in real time (Abrar, 2017; Hanifa, 2018; Ma, 2022; Subekti, 2018).

The moderate level of self-efficacy found in this study is also understandable within the Indonesian EFL context. Since English is not commonly used for daily communication, students often have limited opportunities to practice speaking outside formal classroom instruction. As a result, they may know some vocabulary and grammar but still feel uncertain when required to use English orally. Previous studies have shown that Indonesian learners often need more out-of-class speaking experiences to build confidence and fluency, and that limited exposure can reduce learners' willingness to communicate in English (Nugroho, 2021; Nur & Jamilah, 2022). The present finding, therefore, suggests that students' moderate E-SSE should not be interpreted simply as a lack of individual confidence. Rather, it reflects the broader learning ecology in which students are expected to perform spoken English despite limited authentic practice, restricted exposure, and high affective pressure.

The students' lower confidence in speaking on unfamiliar or difficult topics deserve particular attention. This item received the lowest mean score, suggesting that topic difficulty strongly affected students' belief in their speaking ability. In EFL speaking, unfamiliar topics require learners to generate ideas, select vocabulary, organize their responses, and monitor accuracy simultaneously. When students lack background knowledge or lexical resources, their confidence may decrease even before they begin speaking. This finding supports the idea that self-efficacy is task-specific rather than general. A student may feel capable of expressing simple opinions or using familiar expressions, but less capable of producing extended speech on topics that require spontaneous reasoning or specialized vocabulary. In pedagogical terms, this implies that teachers should not assume that students who can speak in simple classroom exchanges will automatically feel confident in more demanding speaking tasks. Speaking self-efficacy needs to be developed gradually through scaffolded activities that progress from familiar, low-pressure topics to more complex, spontaneous communication.

The qualitative findings provide a deeper explanation of how students' speaking self-efficacy was shaped. The first contributing factor was encouragement from family and friends. Students who received support from their social environment tended to interpret speaking English as more achievable. Josephine's experience of using English at home illustrates how family support can provide both exposure and confidence. Peer encouragement was also important because students often relied on friends for reassurance, pronunciation practice, grammar support, and emotional comfort before speaking tasks. This finding reflects Bandura's concept of social persuasion, in which encouragement and supportive feedback can strengthen learners' belief that they are capable of performing a task. It is also consistent with previous EFL studies showing that feedback, reassurance, and supportive interaction can contribute to students' speaking self-efficacy (Agustin et al., 2022; Kobayashi, 2021; Lisnawati et al., 2019). In this study, encouragement did not merely make students feel better emotionally; it also helped them persist, try again, and interpret mistakes as part of learning rather than as evidence of failure.

The role of peer support is especially significant for senior high school learners because adolescents are often sensitive to peer evaluation. Friends can either become a source of confidence or a source of anxiety, depending on the classroom climate. In the present study, peer support strengthened self-efficacy among students who felt accepted, trusted, and supported by their friends. Juliana's statement that her friends depended on her shows how peer trust can reinforce a learner's belief in her own ability. Veira's experience also shows that simple encouragement, such as "try again," can reduce the fear of making mistakes and support repeated attempts. These findings suggest that classroom speaking activities should be designed to promote constructive peer interaction. Small-group speaking practice, peer rehearsal, supportive feedback routines, and collaborative preparation before oral performance may help students experience social persuasion in positive ways. Without such support, speaking tasks may become evaluative and threatening rather than developmental.

The second factor, observing others' success, produced a more complex effect. For some students, seeing others speak English successfully strengthened their belief that they could also improve. This reflects vicarious experience, another major source of self-efficacy. When students see a peer or family member succeed, especially someone they perceive as relatable, success can appear attainable. Veira's statement that "they can speak, I can speak too" shows how observation can generate possibility and hope. Juliette's reference to her father's English proficiency also indicates that family members can serve as powerful language models. However, the findings also show that vicarious experience may weaken self-efficacy when students interpret others' success as evidence of their own inadequacy. Arietta's insecurity after comparing herself to a better-spoken friend illustrates this risk. This finding adds nuance to the self-efficacy literature by showing that the impact of role models depends heavily on students' interpretation of comparison. Others' success is beneficial when it is perceived as reachable, but discouraging when it widens the perceived gap between the learner and the model.

This double-edged nature of vicarious experience has important classroom implications. Teachers often use high-performing students as examples, but this practice may not always motivate lower-confidence learners. If successful peers are presented without scaffolding, some students may feel inspired, while others may feel inferior. To make vicarious experience more constructive, teachers should provide attainable models, show gradual progress rather than only final performance, and highlight strategies used by successful speakers. For example, instead of only asking the best students to perform, teachers can show different levels of speaking improvement, invite students to reflect on what strategies helped their peers, and emphasize that speaking ability develops through practice. Peer modeling becomes more supportive when students see not only that others can speak English, but also how they reached that level and how similar progress is possible for them.

The third factor was positive self-talk, which served as an internal mechanism to regulate self-doubt. Students who used positive self-talk tried to convince themselves, push themselves to improve, and reinterpret weaknesses as areas for growth. Josephine's statement about "convincing myself" and Veira's belief that improvement must come from within show that self-efficacy was shaped not only by external support but also by students' internal dialogue. This finding is consistent with research linking self-efficacy to self-regulation, persistence, and willingness to communicate (Anam & Stracke, 2020; Fan, 2022; Pramerta, 2021; Zorlu & Ünver, 2022). Positive self-talk may help students manage negative thoughts before or during speaking tasks, especially when they experience nervousness, hesitation, or fear of mistakes. It allows learners to shift from "I cannot speak" to "I can try and improve," which is crucial for maintaining effort in speaking practice.

The emergence of positive self-talk as a contributing factor also extends the interpretation of Bandura's sources of self-efficacy in this context. While the study clearly identified social persuasion and vicarious experience, students' self-talk suggests that learners actively mediate their own self-efficacy beliefs. They do not simply receive encouragement or passively observe others; they interpret these experiences through internal dialogue. This is important because two students may experience the same speaking challenge but respond differently depending on how they talk to themselves about their ability. One may interpret difficulty as failure, while another may interpret it as part of progress. Therefore, speaking self-efficacy development requires not only supportive social conditions but also reflective activities that help learners become aware of their own thoughts, emotions, and self-judgments.

The findings also suggest that the interaction of external and internal factors shapes English-speaking self-efficacy. Encouragement from family and peers provides social support; observing others' success offers points of comparison and modeling; positive self-talk helps students regulate their interpretations of those experiences. These factors are interconnected rather than separate. For instance, peer encouragement may help students view others' success more positively, while positive self-talk may help students transform comparisons into motivation rather than insecurity. This interaction explains why self-efficacy can be fragile in demanding speaking situations but still develops when students receive support and learn to regulate

their beliefs. The study therefore supports a socially and psychologically situated understanding of speaking self-efficacy: students' confidence emerges from what they experience, who supports them, whom they observe, and how they interpret themselves as English speakers.

Pedagogically, the findings indicate that English teachers should design speaking instruction that develops both speaking competence and speaking self-belief. First, teachers should create low-anxiety speaking opportunities through pair work, small-group discussions, rehearsal-based tasks, and a gradual shift from controlled to spontaneous speaking. Such activities can help students accumulate mastery experiences before facing more demanding public performances. Second, teachers should cultivate positive peer encouragement by training students to give supportive feedback, normalize mistakes, and help one another prepare for speaking tasks. Third, teachers should use peer modeling carefully by presenting relatable models and highlighting improvement processes rather than only showcasing high achievers. Fourth, teachers can integrate guided reflection and positive self-talk activities, such as pre-speaking confidence statements, post-speaking reflection logs, and prompts that help students identify progress. These strategies can help students build stronger beliefs in their speaking ability while also improving their willingness to participate.

The study also has several limitations. First, the quantitative data were collected from students in one private senior high school in Java using convenience sampling, which limits the generalizability of the findings to broader Indonesian EFL contexts. Second, the study measured students' perceived E-SSE but did not directly assess their actual speaking performance. As a result, the relationship between students' self-beliefs and their oral proficiency could not be examined. Third, the qualitative data were based on interviews with six students, which provided depth but may not capture the full range of experiences among all participants. Fourth, although the study identified encouragement, others' success, and positive self-talk as contributing factors, it did not examine how these factors change over time. Future research should involve larger, more diverse samples, include direct measures of speaking performance, and employ longitudinal designs to examine how E-SSE develops across repeated speaking experiences. Experimental or classroom-based intervention studies would also be useful to test whether structured peer encouragement, guided modeling, reflective self-talk, and low-anxiety speaking tasks can strengthen students' speaking self-efficacy and oral performance.

The key contribution of this study is to show that E-SSE among Indonesian senior high school students is moderate, task-sensitive, and shaped by both social and internal processes. Students' confidence becomes fragile when speaking tasks involve unfamiliar topics, nervousness, fluency demands, and public performance, yet it can be strengthened through supportive encouragement, constructive interpretation of others' success, and positive self-talk. This insight reinforces the need for speaking instruction that not only focuses on linguistic practice but also deliberately builds students' belief that they can speak, improve, and participate more confidently in English.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated Indonesian senior high school students' E-SSE and the factors that contributed to its development. The findings show that students generally had a moderate and task-sensitive level of English-speaking self-efficacy. They felt relatively more capable when speaking involved expressive delivery, appropriate language use, logical organization, and clear communication of central ideas. However, their confidence weakened when they had to speak fluently, perform while nervous, or respond to unfamiliar and difficult topics. This indicates that students' belief in their English-speaking ability was present but not yet stable across cognitively and emotionally demanding speaking situations.

The qualitative findings further revealed that students' E-SSE was shaped by three interrelated factors: encouragement from family and friends, observation of others' success, and positive self-talk. Social encouragement strengthened students' confidence by making speaking tasks feel more manageable, while observing others' success could either inspire or intimidate, depending on how students interpreted the

comparison. Positive self-talk helped students regulate self-doubt and view speaking difficulties as opportunities for improvement rather than fixed limitations. These findings imply that EFL speaking instruction should not focus solely on language practice, but also on building students' confidence through low-anxiety speaking tasks, constructive peer support, relatable role models, guided reflection, and positive self-talk activities. Since this study was limited to one private senior high school and relied on self-efficacy reports with a small interview sample, future research should involve broader contexts, include direct speaking performance measures, and examine how speaking self-efficacy develops over time through classroom-based interventions.

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7. Declaration of AI Use

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used *Grammarly* to support the editing process. Grammarly was used to check grammar, punctuation, and sentence clarity. The authors used it only as writing support. All ideas, research design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and conclusions were developed and finalized by the authors. The manuscript was carefully reviewed and revised by the authors to ensure that the final version accurately represents the study and maintains academic integrity.

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