



Classmate Support and English-Speaking Development in Vocational EFL Classrooms: Students' Perceptions and Experiences

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates vocational high school students' perceptions of classmate support during English-speaking activities and its role in developing students' confidence, fluency, and accuracy in speaking English. This qualitative research involved 98 eleventh-grade vocational students in East Java, with nine representative students in in-depth interviews. Data were collected through classroom observations, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews, and were analysed using the interactive model. The findings show a positive perception of the support provided by classmates. Cognitively, students view the support of their classmates as positive encouragement that helps them continue to develop. Affectively, students feel more comfortable and confident speaking because of emotional encouragement such as applause, praise, and attention from classmates. Conatively, students demonstrate active behaviour such as practicing together, giving positive feedback, and imitating the behaviour of friends who are more confident in speaking English. Moreover, the study reveals that classmate support contributes significantly to the improvement of students' English-speaking skills. Supportive classmates enhance students' confidence, promote greater fluency through regular practice, and improve accuracy through constructive peer correction. Overall, classmate support plays an essential role in fostering a collaborative learning environment that supports the development of vocational high school students' English-speaking skills.

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INTRODUCTION

English plays a crucial role as an international language in the current era of globalisation and digitalisation. As a medium of global communication, English is essential for accessing information and technology and for facilitating interaction across countries (Rosilah & Ulfa, 2024). For vocational secondary school students, English language proficiency is very important because they are prepared to enter the workforce immediately after graduation. Vocational high school's English language learning requires a different approach from English language learning in senior high school. This difference is due to vocational students' need to learn English components that are directly relevant to their areas of expertise or majors. According to Mulyah and Aminatun (2020), vocational high school students learn English components that are closely related to their majors. Therefore, each major requires different materials and strategies to develop students' English-speaking skills.

Vocational school graduates are expected to possess practical skills that meet industry demands, and English language proficiency is often considered a key requirement by many companies,

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particularly in the professional and service sectors (Alviaderi Novianti et al., 2022). In addition, it is also noted that many companies consider English language skills an important prerequisite for employment. Moreover, (Muliyah & Aminatun, 2020) stated that the ability to speak fluently is crucial in job interviews, workplace discussions, and field-specific conversations. Hence, mastery of English must be maximized since school.

Despite its importance, English language skills remain one of the most challenging skills for vocational high school students in Indonesia. Many students experience anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and lack of confidence when speaking English in front of others (Milania et al., 2022). These psychological barriers often limit student participation and reduce their opportunities to practise speaking (Abdullah et al., 2023). Previous studies have shown that fear of negative judgement and an unsupportive classroom environment can significantly inhibit students' willingness to speak and negatively impact their speaking performance (Grieve et al., 2021; Solhi, 2024).

In the context of language learning, environmental support plays an important role in shaping students' learning experiences. Teacher support has been widely recognised as an important factor in creating a safe and motivating learning environment through constructive feedback, enthusiasm, and student-centred activities (Ilmi, 2023). However, learning does not occur solely through interactions between teachers and students. Peer support also plays a vital role in helping students understand learning materials and feel emotionally secure during classroom activities. Peer support refers to the encouragement, assistance, emotional reassurance, and constructive feedback that students receive from their peers during the learning process (An & Guo, 2024).

Supportive peer interactions can create a comfortable and non-threatening classroom atmosphere, where students feel free to make mistakes. This kind of environment is very important in reducing student anxiety and encouraging them to participate more actively in speaking activities (Puyod et al., 2020). According to Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, a supportive and low-anxiety learning environment allows learners to process language input more effectively and facilitates the development of speaking skills (Krashen, 1985). Furthermore, Self-Determination Theory emphasises that feelings of connectedness and social support can increase learners' motivation and engagement in learning activities, which in turn leads to better learning outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2004).

Several studies have reported that peer support and collaborative learning positively influence students' speaking confidence, fluency, and accuracy. Cooperative learning activities enable students to practice together, provide peer correction, and encourage one another, which in turn reduces anxiety and improves speaking performance (Abdullah et al., 2023; Ilmi, 2023). Interaction with peers also provides a safe space for students to experiment with language use and gradually refine their speaking skills through feedback and shared learning experiences, as explained in Constructive Developmental Theory (Blum & Kegan, 1984).

Although previous studies have demonstrated the positive effects of peer support on students' speaking performance, fewer studies have specifically explored how vocational high school students perceive the support they receive from their classmates and how these perceptions influence their speaking development. Students' perceptions are crucial because they involve cognitive, affective, and conative components that shape how students understand support, feel about it, and act in response to it (Walgito, 2004). Positive perceptions of peer support may lead to increased motivation, reduced anxiety, and more active engagement in speaking activities, whereas negative perceptions may discourage participation.

Although previous studies have examined peer support, speaking anxiety, and collaborative learning in EFL contexts, limited attention has been given to how vocational high school students themselves perceive classmate support during English-speaking activities. In particular, few studies have examined classmate support through cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions while linking these perceptions to confidence, fluency, and accuracy. This gap is important because vocational students are expected to develop English-speaking skills not only for academic purposes but also for future workplace communication.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate vocational high school students' perceptions of classmate support during English speaking activities and to discover the role of classmate support in developing students' confidence, fluency, and accuracy in speaking English. By focusing on students' perspectives, this study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how peer support functions in the speaking classroom and how it contributes to the creation of a collaborative and supportive learning environment. The findings of this study are expected to offer pedagogical insights for English teachers, especially in vocational high school contexts, to design learning activities that maximize positive peer interaction and support students' English-speaking development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Students' Perception in the Learning Process

Perception is the process through which individuals receive information from their surroundings and give meaning to it based on their experiences and understanding. (Kenyon, 2025) stated that an individual's perceptions are shaped by internal factors such as past learning experiences, attitudes, motivation, and expectations. As a result, each person may respond differently to the same teaching methods or classroom situations.

In educational research, students' perceptions are often analysed using the components of attitude, as perception involves knowledge, feelings, and behavioural tendencies toward a particular object or experience. According to Walgito (2004), individuals receive external stimuli that trigger responses and shape their psychological states. These stimuli consist of three main components, namely cognitive, affective, and conative. The cognitive component reflects how students perceive classroom situations, learning activities, and interactions with others. Meanwhile, the affective component refers to students' feelings or emotional responses toward an object or experience. Moreover, the conative component refers to students' tendency or intention to act based on their perceptions.

Classmate Support in the Learning Process

Classmate support is give-and-take activities that come from interactions between students. It can take forms of demonstrating support through the use of speech or manner, such as explaining a material in class or maybe giving applause after students answer a question. Classmate support also can be in the form of emotional support, like encouraging a nervous friend before a presentation. It can be in the form of informational support, such as giving feedback on pronunciation or word choice in a more enjoyable and relaxed atmosphere, (Abdullah et al., 2023). Abdullah also stated that interaction between students is also a vital component to build self-confidence and collaboration among peers. Moreover, study conducted by (Ilmi, 2023) shows that interaction with peers creates a safe zone where students feel free to experiment with the target language, taking risks, and making mistakes without fear of judgment. This is also in line with study conducted by (Grieve et al., 2021; Qutob, 2018) a classroom environment where students actively support each other and learn together can change the dynamic from individual competition to team collaboration. Hence, significantly lowering the affective filter and encouraging active participation of all class members in speaking activities.

In conclusion, classmates can become a very supportive point in helping students in the effort of understanding what they are learning as it can create a safe and collaborative environment. When students support one another, they feel more confident to participate without fear of judgment and intimidation. This not only enhances their understanding of the material but also builds important social skills, especially communication skills. Thus, positive interactions among classmates ultimately lead to improvements in their academic performance.

Students' Speaking Skills

Confidence in speaking English is an essential factor that influences students' willingness to communicate and overall performance in language acquisition. According to (Waluyo & Bakoko,

2022), willingness to communicate is crucial in overcoming hesitation, and confidence plays a key role in fostering it. In the Indonesian EFL school context, speaking performance can also be strengthened when students are encouraged to evaluate their own speaking ability, as self-assessment helps learners become more aware of their strengths, weaknesses, and progress in speaking (Sulaiman & Sueb, 2026). When students feel confident, they can overcome challenges such as fear of making mistakes, being judged, and misunderstanding. Environmental support, especially from classmates, is vital in building this confidence, as encouragement and a non-judgmental atmosphere motivate students to take risks (Qutob, 2018). This is supported by (Mega & Sugiarto, 2020; Rachmawati et al., 2024), which show that peer support increases motivation and confidence, improving speaking skills. For vocational high school students, speaking confidence is not only an academic goal but also a professional necessity, as effective communication supports workplace readiness (Alviaderi Novianti et al., 2022; Datu & Sulindra, 2024). Additionally, positive peer interaction and constructive feedback encourage students to step out of their comfort zones and participate actively in speaking activities (Puyod et al., 2020).

Fluency in speaking refers to the ability to communicate easily, naturally, and without excessive pauses that disrupt the flow of conversation. According to (Sukmana et al., 2023) fluent speakers can connect varied sentence patterns and adjust sentence elements during speech. Fluency also involves intelligible speech to ensure mutual understanding, making it essential for daily communication (Agustina & Setiawan, 2020). In vocational high school contexts, fluency reflects not only academic performance but also readiness for professional communication, such as job interviews and workplace discussions (Muliyah & Aminatun, 2020). One key factor influencing fluency is classmate support, as peer interaction provides authentic opportunities for meaningful language use (Puyod et al., 2020). When students engage in conversations, role-plays, or collaborative tasks with supportive peers, they are more likely to practice without fear of judgment, reducing anxiety and hesitation (Mustamir, 2024). These experiences contribute to smoother communication and more coherent expression, ultimately enhancing students' motivation and willingness to speak (Abdullah et al., 2023).

Accuracy relates to the correct use of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation according to English language rules. According to (Cendra & Sulindra, 2022), accuracy refers to students' ability to handle interlanguage (L2) complexity effectively so that grammatical structures can be used spontaneously and appropriately, which helps improve speaking quality and reduce errors. To minimize misunderstandings, accuracy must be maintained throughout the learning process (Sukmana et al., 2023). Classmate support also plays a significant role in developing accuracy, as students are more likely to use grammar and vocabulary correctly when peers provide a supportive environment, pronunciation tips, and simple corrections (Puyod et al., 2020). This aligns with (Cendra & Sulindra, 2022), who found that peer assistance helps minimize L1 interference and improve pronunciation accuracy.

Relevant Previous Studies

Research by Ilmi (2023) entitled "Improving Students' Speaking Skills through Cooperative Learning in Vocational School Context" in one vocational high school in Yogyakarta examined the impact of peer support on students' speaking motivation and anxiety. The study adopted an action research design, consisting of planning sessions, implementations, observations, and stage of reflections. The data were collected through observation, interview, questionnaire, and assessment with 36 10th grade students at a vocational high school majoring in tourism. found that students showed significant improvement in their speaking fluency, confidence, and interactional skills when engaged in cooperative learning activities, which involved pair work and small group discussions. These activities allowed students to actively support one another through peer correction, encouragement, and shared language practice.

Study by Abdullah et al. (2023) entitled “Social-Psychological Issues in EFL Speaking Class based on Collaborative Learning” This study used a qualitative exploratory case study. The participants of this study were five female students with the age range of 21-22 years old. Interview data was collected online using WhatsApp phone calls. Then, the *Atlas.ti* application is used to evaluate all the collected data. The research revealed that when students are engaged in collaborative tasks, social-psychological barriers such as anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and low self-confidence are significantly reduced. In addition, the presence of peer interaction, mutual support, and a sense of shared responsibility helped learners feel more comfortable and willing to speak in English. It shows that having supportive classmates and working together in class can help students feel less anxious and more confident when speaking English.

Research conducted by Grieve et al. (2021) entitled “Student fears of oral presentations and public speaking in higher education: a qualitative survey”. In their qualitative study, Grieve explored the types of fears students face when speaking in public and the strategies they use to manage those fears. A total of 46 undergraduate and postgraduate students from the University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol, who experienced public speaking anxiety, took part in this qualitative survey consisting of four open-ended questions: (1) What are your main issues/fears in public speaking (including presentations)? (2) What strategies have you used to reduce your fear of public speaking (including presentations)? (3) Does your fear of public speaking affect your student experience of higher education? (4) How could the university support you and other students with a fear of public speaking? Their findings revealed that public speaking anxiety is a common issue among students, often caused by fear of negative judgment, low self-confidence, and lack of supportive learning environments. These fears can hinder students’ willingness to speak and negatively affect their performance, especially in verbal communication tasks.

Study conducted by Trianah & Sahertian (2020) in Malang, Indonesia, highlighted the significant influence of various environments on student learning outcomes. This included the family environment, social environment, and peer association. This study used quantitative research design with a survey method on 69 students using proportional random sampling in 7 public elementary schools in Malang. The study found that interaction with peers plays an important role in shaping students’ learning attitudes, motivations, and overall academic achievements, which lead to the increase of students’ willingness to speak in English.

Taken together, these studies indicate that peer interaction, classroom support, and collaborative learning can reduce speaking anxiety and enhance students’ confidence. However, most previous studies have focused on general EFL or higher education contexts, while limited attention has been given to vocational high school students’ own perceptions of classmate support. Therefore, the present study addresses this gap by examining classmate support through cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions in vocational English-speaking activities.

METHODS

Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research is an approach for exploring the understanding of how people make sense of a social issue or human experience. Creswell explained that researchers collect data directly at the location where participants are located, paying close attention to their behaviour, views, and feelings. According to Yin (2009), a case study is an empirical investigation that examines phenomena occurring in the real world. This approach relies on various sources of evidence such as interviews, observations, document archives, field notes, and audio records that enable researchers to preserve the meaningful characteristics of current events. The collected information is then analysed by identifying patterns and themes that emerge from these details. Finally, the findings are presented in a descriptive report tailored to the topic of discussion.

Participants

The participants of this present study were 98 students of 11th grade majoring Computer and Network Engineering in one of State Vocational High School in Mojokerto, East Java, Indonesia, which were then coded as S1 – S98 to answer the first research question. The reason for this present study to choose one of the State Vocational High Schools in Mojokerto, East Java, Indonesia was based on the result of preliminary activities conducted during teaching practice at that school. Based on these preliminary activities, the researcher was interested in investigating the significant differences between the three classes related to their behaviour regarding classmate support when learning English-speaking skills. The researcher also adopted purposive sampling as a guideline for determining participants. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique where the researcher selects participants based on their knowledge, expertise, or other characteristics relevant to the research questions, (W.Creswell & N.Poth, 2018).

In this present research, purposive sampling is utilized to select representative students for in-depth interviews. The representatives involved 9 students from the overall participants, with the following categories: three students with low English scores (L1, L2, and L3), three students with average English scores (A1, A2, A3), and three students with high English scores (H1, H2, H3). The scores for this category were taken from the English teacher's assessment records. The purpose of the interviews with nine representatives was to address the second research question, which is to find out the differences in opinions and experiences between each category regarding peer support for their English-speaking proficiency.

Instruments

The researcher used observation checklists to understand the conditions, contexts, and behaviours of participants that might not have been revealed through interviews. This data allowed the researcher to observe how participants acted in real situations, not just what they claimed in interviews. In addition, observation helped the researcher understand how individuals interacted with each other in a group or community. Then, open-ended questionnaires were used to obtain initial narrative data regarding the opinions, perceptions, and early experiences of participants before conducting in-depth interviews. Lastly, in-depth interviews with the researcher gained a deeper and more detailed understanding of individuals' experiences, perspectives, feelings, and motivations. This data consisted of detailed descriptions of specific events, such as how participants experienced them and what they meant to them.

Data Collection

The researcher provided observation checklists, distributed open-ended questionnaires to 98 students, and conducted in-depth interviews with the 9 representative students selected through purposive sampling. The researcher developed a list observation checklist that included specific indicators of classmate support during English speaking activities. The researcher coordinated with the teachers to schedule observation sessions during English speaking activities in the selected classes. During the observation sessions, the researcher attended the classes to take notes on student interaction, behaviour, and overall classroom atmosphere based on a checklist prepared earlier. Next, for the questionnaire sessions, the researcher distributed questionnaires to all participating students in selected classes using Google form. This was done during specified class hours with teacher approval to ensure maximum participation. The researcher clearly explained how to complete the questionnaire and highlighted the importance of providing honest and thoughtful answers. After the students completed the questionnaire, the researcher checked that all responses had been recorded. Follow-up interviews were then conducted when deeper insights were needed. After the interviews, the researcher transcribed the audio recordings verbatim to create written records of the conversations for analysis.

Data Analysis

To analyse the data of both research questions in the present study, the researcher used descriptive analysis following the Interactive Model proposed by (Miles et al., 2014). This model involved three flows of activities that had to run together, namely data condensation, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions. The data used mainly consisted of interview transcripts, open-ended questionnaire responses, and observation notes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Students' Perceptions of Classmate Support during English Speaking Activities

Based on the analysis of questionnaires answered by 98 students, the findings indicate that vocational high school students generally perceive classmate support positively during English speaking activities. These perceptions are reflected through three interrelated components: cognitive, affective, and conative perceptions, as proposed in Walgito's trichotomic perception framework (Walgito, 2004).

Cognitive Aspect

Findings related to the first question about what peer support means to students are described in this section. In the cognitive component, Students describe peer support as encouragement given by classmates to achieve something important in the teaching and learning process that help them achieve learning goals, as expressed by S64:

"The support of classmates is like encouragement. When we don't have the courage to move forward, the support of friends can give us the courage to move forward." –S87. Another student similarly expressed "Support from classmates means encouraging each other and always being there when we need it, so we don't feel alone in class." –S64.

This shows that strong support from friends can give students encouragement to keep moving forward and learn together throughout the learning process. This is in line with (Qutob, 2018), which states that a classroom environment that is conducive to interacting and speaking in the target language provides significant encouragement for students. Qutob explicitly states that the main influence of such appropriate interaction lay in the teacher's role in managing the classroom; however, it could not be denied that classmates were also part of the classroom ecosystem that contribute to its conducive atmosphere.

Secondly, students also see the support of their classmates as a form of solidarity that can help motivate them to learn, as expressed by S86, "Peer support is a sense of solidarity and mutual help in learning activities." –S86. This strengthened (Triannah & Sahertian, 2020) findings, which states that positive peer interactions can build closeness, foster a sense of togetherness, and strengthen friendships, which can motivate students to achieve better learning outcomes.

Moreover, students also describe peer support as a positive boost to help them to achieve something better, as S74 said "The support of my classmates boosts my English studies because they sometimes helped me when I was learning to speak English." –S74. This is indicated that students consider criticism, advice, and assistance received from classmates as beneficial forms of support in their learning process. This is also supported by (Triannah & Sahertian, 2020). They stated that the quality of students' social interactions, in this case with their classmates, strongly influenced students' academic achievement. These interactions help significantly boost motivation to achieve optimal learning outcomes.

Affective Aspect

Findings related to how students feel after receiving positive support from their classmates are described in this section. Affectively, students report positive emotional responses when receiving support from their classmates. Emotional support in the form of praise, applause, attentive listening, and non-judgmental environment creates a comfortable and safe classroom atmosphere, as expressed by S76 "My friends often encourage me after my presentations, saying things like "cool" or "great."

When I receive that support, I feel happy, more confident, and less afraid to give presentations again.” –S76. This is in line with (Zhao & Qin, 2021) study, which stated that students are able to enhance their self-efficacy (confidence) when their environment fulfils their emotional support needs.

Moreover, emotional support from classmates has been proven to create a comfortable and non-judgmental environment. Students feel more comfortable trying to speak English without fear of being laughed at, as S77 said:

“I feel more comfortable speaking English because I know my friends won’t laugh at me. That makes me more confident to try, even though I still make mistakes often.” –S34. Another student also noted *“I feel more encouraged. When friends support me, the learning atmosphere feels lighter and less stressful. It feels like someone appreciates our efforts, so our motivation to learn increases and we dare to try.”* –S77.

These findings are also consistent with (Vanalestari & Setyarini, 2025), who found that social support increases intrinsic motivation and comfort in speaking English. These findings support Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis, which states that a supportive and low-anxiety learning environment lowers learners’ affective filters and allows them to process language input more effectively (Krashen, 1985).

Interestingly, although most students express positive emotional responses to peer support, a small number of students report feeling indifferent or unaffected by classmates’ reactions, as expressed by S8, S31, and S61 below.

“I am embarrassed because I misread it. That makes me lose my confidence.” –S8

“I feel just fine because that’s the risk I take when learning something. So, every time I do something I can’t do and get teased for it, I’m just fine and let it go.” –S31

“I will try harder so that I can be better than the one who teased me, so that they will also be motivated.” –S61

This variation suggests that students’ emotional responses to peer support were subjective and influenced by individual learning preferences and self-regulation, as also indicated by (Azhari et al., 2023). This is also discussed in (Qutob, 2018) study, which states that external influences affect students’ willingness to speak, but this study does not explicitly include the ‘indifferent’ reaction experienced by students.

Conative Aspect

In the conative aspect, the findings revealed how students acted after recognising and receiving support from classmates. that students respond positively and showed positive attitudes after receiving support. The conative component reflects the tendency to act that arises after students understood (cognitively) and felt (affectively) support from their classmates, which is shown through positive interactions and give-and-take behaviour. These behaviours indicate that peer support encourages students to take action and engage more deeply in speaking activities.

The first findings related to how students react after knowing and receiving positive support from their classmates revealed that students respond positively and show positive attitudes after receiving support. They respond with positive interaction, as S7 said “I have become brave enough to continue talking without being too afraid of making mistakes. Sometimes I also smile or say thank you because that little bit of support really helps reduce my nervousness.” –S7. This finding is supported by (An & Guo, 2024), who emphasize that positive peer interactions accelerate the understanding and mastery of language concepts.

Students also realize their mistakes more quickly and deliver presentations without hesitation when they perceive and feel supported. The support from their peers creates a comfortable learning environment, as expressed by S33 “If my classmates correct me in a nice way, I feel very helped. Polite corrections make it easier for me to understand my mistakes without feeling embarrassed, so I can learn and improve my speaking skills more comfortably.” –S33. This is in line with (Waluyo &

Bakoko, 2022) who state that positive perceptions of social support in the classroom encourage active actions in second language learning.

Moreover, friends who help set an example first as a form of action support are proven to foster student's confidence, so they are brave enough to speak and dare to speak in front of the class confidently, as expressed by S34 "When my friends speak English first, I feel more confident to try too. Seeing them try makes me more confident and less afraid of making mistakes." –S34. Another student also expressed "I become motivated and more enthusiastic to try speaking English." –S96. This strengthened by (Abdullah et al., 2023). They report that students demonstrate a greater tendency to actively participate in speaking activities and to support their peers through positive feedback when the surrounding environment provides positive support.

Therefore, peer support is not only a social factor but also a pedagogical resource that may support English-speaking development through cognitive insight, emotional reinforcement, and mutual interaction through cognitive insight, emotional reinforcement, and mutual interaction.

Role of Classmate Support in Confidence, Fluency, and Accuracy

This section shows how classmate support affects 11th grade vocational high school students' confidence, fluency, or accuracy in speaking English. Data was collected from semi-structured interviews with 9 representatives with a low, average, and high English score. The results show that classmate support has an important role in the three main aspects of students' English-speaking skills: confidence, fluency, and accuracy.

Students' Confidence

Environmental support such as corrections from peers and classmates creates a safe and positive environment, where mistakes are no longer considered humiliating, which leads them to be more confident in the learning process. This is expressed by H1:

"I like it when people listen to me and pay attention, and tell me what I'm doing wrong. Because it has a direct impact on my self-confidence" –H2. H1 also stated "When my friend corrects me, I learn what I did wrong. Instead of feeling down, I become more confident." –H1.

This is in line with (Puyod et al., 2020), who said that students tend to have high levels of self-confidence if they receive positive support from teachers and classmates.

Moreover, verbal support like "great job!" or "you nailed it!" or when their friends simply listened enthusiastically as they spoke in front of the class, they felt more confident speaking. This is expressed by A2 "Verbal support such as "you can do it" and "good job" really boosts my confidence" –A2. This finding was strengthened by (Abdullah et al., 2023) who said that when students develop social interactions and give praise while speaking can greatly increase their confidence and self-esteem.

Furthermore, students are more willing to express their thoughts during presentations and feel less afraid of being judged by the surroundings as they know that their friends are supportive and listen genuinely, as H3 said "The non-intimidating classroom atmosphere greatly influenced my confidence during the presentation. My friends were enthusiastic when I gave my presentation, so I wasn't nervous." –H3. This is supported by (Grieve et al., 2021) who states that "fear of being judged" limits students' ability to speak and interact, such as asking questions, interacting with classmates, and accessing other learning opportunities.

Students' Fluency

In the fluency aspect, students explain that practicing speaking regularly with friends who are supportive made them more fluent in expressing their ideas. They also state that they can speak more smoothly without too many pauses or hesitations, as expressed by L1 "Being listened to during group practice had a huge impact on my fluency during the presentation. Because I had been listened to, I knew where my mistakes were, so the presentation went smoothly without too many mistakes." – L1.

This is in line with (Solhi, 2024), who stated that collaborative peer or group activities and supportive interactions not only help build learners' speaking motivation intrinsically but also increase their willingness to communicate in the target language.

Furthermore, friendly interactions and emotional support from classmates, such as paying attention and giving positive responses also make students feel less nervous and able to speak more fluently, as H2 and A2 said "When I feel confident, I automatically speak fluently. So, if my friends listen and pay attention, I usually feel confident and speak fluently." –H2 and A2. This reinforces (Waluyo & Bakoko, 2022) findings that students' anxiety levels need to be kept low throughout the foreign language (L2) learning process, so that they can focus better and work harder in learning speaking in English.

Students' Accuracy

When it comes to accuracy, classmates act as listeners and correctors of pronunciation, grammar, or word choice errors. This activity makes students more aware of their mistakes and encourages them to correct them next time. Students do not feel criticized, but rather help to improve themselves. This creates a mutually beneficial learning environment that is conducive to improve speaking accuracy and boost the courage to use more complex sentence structures. This is illustrated by the responses of H1 and H2 below.

"If I mispronounced something during the previous presentation, my friends corrected me so I knew where I went wrong. So, I was more careful during the next presentation to avoid making the same mistake again." – H1

"Having my friends correct my work really helped improve my English-speaking accuracy. My sentence structure is also much more complex than it was in 10th grade after receiving a lot of corrections and feedback from friends who are good in English." –H2

This is in line with (Ilmi, 2023) research, which states that providing regular constructive feedback through cooperative learning methods has been proven to increase students' awareness of their English-speaking mistakes, which in turn leads to improved English-speaking performance.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, this study concludes that classmate support positively contributed to vocational high school students' English-speaking development. Cognitively, students perceive classmate support as an encouragement, solidarity, and positive encouragement that helped them perform better in class, especially speaking English. Affectively, encouragement, applause, and appreciation from classmate's increase students' relief and happiness, also fosters a sense of comfort and reduces anxiety.

Conatively, these positive perceptions encourage students to engage in active learning behaviours, such as practicing speaking together and giving positive feedback. In addition, the findings reveal that classmate support contributes significantly to the development of students' speaking confidence, fluency, and accuracy. A supportive classroom environment creates a safe and positive environment that directly influences self-confidence when speaking English. Moreover, students become more fluent in exposing their ideas through joint practice and supportive interactions. Finally, in terms of accuracy, classmates who act as listeners and correctors help improve pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary choices.

Overall, peer support plays a role in strengthening the English learning process, in terms of understanding, feelings, and concrete actions. A supportive classroom environment has been proven to develop students to be more confident, fluent, and accurate in speaking English, as required by the global competencies needed in the world of work. Despite this study provides insight into the perspectives of vocational high school students, future research should involve a larger number of participants from various majors and combine quantitative and qualitative approaches to strengthen

the validity of the research results and to identify students' speaking improvement based on statistical analysis. Future research can also Investigate the long-term impact of social support on motivation and English-speaking performance outside the classroom to determine whether the positive impact of support within the classroom can also be effectively implemented outside the classroom.

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