Edu Cendikia: Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan
Volume: 6 | Nomor 01 | April 2026 |
DOI: 10.47709/educendikia.v6i01.7939

Self-Efficacy and Speaking Proficiency Development through Communicative Language Teaching: A Case Study of College Students

Author:
Arum Putri Rahayu[1]
Hendra Sudarso[2]
Ahmad Fathir Imran[3]
Azhariah Rachman[4]
Himaya Praptani Adys[5]

Afiliation:
STAI Ma'arif Magetan[1]
Akademi Penerbang Indonesia Banyuwangi[2]
Universitas Tomakaka[3]
Haluoleo[4]
Universitas Negeri Makassar[5]

Corresponding email
hayurahayu9284@gmail.com

Histori Naskah:
Submit: 2026-01-31
Accepted: 2026-04-01
Published: 2026-04-06

Abstrac:
This study examined how speaking self-efficacy and speaking proficiency developed through Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in an undergraduate EFL classroom at STAI Ma'arif Magetan, Indonesia. A qualitative case study design was employed. Data were collected from repeated classroom observations across an eight-session CLT unit, semi-structured interviews with twelve students, instructional documents, and students' speaking task recordings rated descriptively with an analytic speaking rubric. Observation evidence showed increasing student talk time, frequent pair and group interaction, and growing negotiation of meaning as tasks progressed from information-gap exchanges to problem-solving discussions and short presentations with Q&A. Thematic analysis revealed five pathways of self-efficacy growth: mastery experiences from successful task completion, peer support, supportive feedback, systematic scaffolding, and emerging self-regulation strategies. Performance evidence from recordings indicated noticeable improvement in fluency and interactive communication, alongside gradual gains in intelligibility and vocabulary range, while grammatical accuracy improved more modestly. Triangulation across interviews, observations, and performance samples suggested a positive cycle in which higher self-efficacy increased willingness to speak and persistence, thereby expanding practice opportunities and strengthening proficiency. The study concludes that CLT, when implemented as a coherent system of progressive tasks, scaffolding, and constructive feedback, can effectively support confidence building and speaking development in higher education EFL settings. Pedagogically, instructors are encouraged to sequence tasks from low-stakes interaction to higher-stakes performance, provide language support, and use feedback that prioritizes intelligibility and next steps. Limitations include a single-site case and a short observation window; future studies may compare multiple classes and track longer-term retention of gains.

Kata Kunci: Case Study; Communicative Language Teaching; EFL College Students; Speaking Self-Efficacy; Speaking Proficiency

Introduction

Speaking proficiency is one of the most challenging outcomes in EFL higher education because it requires students to activate linguistic knowledge, manage interactional pressure, and take communicative risks in real time. In practice, many students understand grammar and vocabulary yet remain reluctant to speak,

avoid extended turns, or struggle to maintain fluency when they must express ideas spontaneously. This problem matters because speaking develops primarily through repeated participation and sustained communicative practice; when students hold back from speaking, opportunities for practice diminish, and performance gains tend to be slow and unstable.

This situation indicates that speaking development is not merely a matter of linguistic competence, but also a psychological–behavioral issue that shapes students' engagement in practice. One key construct for explaining such engagement is self-efficacy, defined as individuals' beliefs about their capability to meet specific task demands. Theoretically, self-efficacy determines levels of effort, persistence, and resilience when facing difficulty; individuals who believe they can succeed are more willing to try, more resilient after setbacks, and more proactive in seeking improvement strategies (Bandura, 1997). In speaking learning contexts, such beliefs may influence how often students are willing to take turns, persist when breakdowns occur, and continue communicating despite errors. In line with this view, speaking development can be understood as the outcome of an interaction between language ability and confidence in demonstrating that ability in communicative situations (Y. Wang & Sun, 2024). Synthesized evidence across contexts also suggests that self-efficacy is meaningfully correlated with language proficiency, indicating that capability beliefs can foster more productive engagement and lead to better outcomes (Wang & Sun, 2020).

In the domain of EFL public speaking at the university level, research provides detailed evidence of how speaking self-efficacy is formed and why it matters. Students' self-efficacy is shaped by mastery experiences, observing peers' performance, and evaluative feedback; these sources collectively contribute to confidence in handling speaking demands (Zhang et al., 2020). However, speaking performance in university classrooms is not determined by a single factor, but by interactions among variables such as anxiety, cognitive processing, and situational conditions during performance. Recent evidence underscores that speaking self-efficacy is associated with oral task production alongside variables such as anxiety and language thinking, suggesting that capability beliefs may shape how effectively students manage pressure and perform in real-time speaking tasks (Leeming, 2024).

From an instructional perspective, speaking development also depends on learning supports and media that determine how frequently students practice and how safely they can rehearse before performing in front of broader audiences. Audiovisual support and multimodal input can enrich models, contexts, and discourse cues, thereby reducing barriers to initiating speech and increasing engagement in practice (Rahman & Ismail, 2020). In a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) environment, such media can be aligned with communicative tasks to clarify performance expectations, provide realistic discourse models, and stimulate meaningful discussion. When tasks are perceived as more manageable because students understand what is expected and can draw on concrete models, the likelihood of increased confidence to participate becomes greater—which in turn may facilitate growth in self-efficacy and speaking performance simultaneously.

Nevertheless, effective CLT implementation requires more than simply "assigning discussion activities." Strong speaking instruction requires coherent task sequencing, scaffolding, feedback, and explicit attention to speaking processes so that development occurs gradually rather than relying on exposure alone (Goh & Burns, 2020). This is where practical problems often arise: CLT is sometimes interpreted narrowly as "more conversation," without systematic support that helps students build confidence, manage anxiety, and reflect on performance. Although a number of studies examine speaking outcomes, anxiety, classroom media, and self-efficacy, these strands are often treated separately, leaving limited integrative evidence tracing how self-efficacy and speaking proficiency develop together within a single instructional approach. Research on

audiovisual aids also suggests potential improvements in speaking, yet the pathways through which such improvements occur—including shifts in confidence and perceived capability—are not always tested or explained in depth (Huang & Johnson, 2021). Therefore, there is a need to map developmental processes (not only end results) that connect CLT practices, students' learning experiences, changes in self-efficacy, and changes in speaking performance over an authentic instructional period.

Based on this gap, the present study adopts a case-study approach with university students experiencing CLT-based speaking instruction to examine development over time by combining attention to instructional practices, learners' beliefs, and performance change. Specifically, the study is guided by the following questions: (1) How does students' speaking self-efficacy change during CLT-based instruction? (2) How does speaking proficiency develop across the same period? and (3) How do students describe the instructional experiences that most influence their confidence and speaking performance?

Literature Study

Speaking Proficiency in EFL Higher Education: Dimensions and Performance Challenges

Speaking proficiency in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning in higher education can be understood as a form of communicative performance that occurs in real time rather than merely the reproduction of linguistic knowledge. Speaking performance requires the simultaneous integration of multiple components, including grammatical accuracy, lexical appropriateness, fluency, discourse organization, and interactional management such as turn-taking and responding to interlocutors. Because these components must be managed simultaneously under time pressure, many learners experience a gap between their linguistic knowledge and their ability to use that knowledge spontaneously in communicative situations.

From the perspective of second language acquisition, speaking performance is also strongly influenced by task design and the conditions under which communicative activities are carried out. Task-based research suggests that oral production is determined not only by linguistic competence but also by how communicative activities are designed and organized in the classroom (Ellis, 2008). For instance, speaking fluency is associated with the level of cognitive automatization that enables learners to produce utterances with minimal pauses even under conditions of high cognitive load. Therefore, speaking proficiency should be understood as the outcome of interactions among linguistic ability, instructional design, and affective factors that influence learners' participation in communicative activities.

Self-Efficacy as a Psychological Mechanism in Speaking Performance

Self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs in their capability to organize and execute the actions required to accomplish specific tasks. This concept is a central construct in Social Cognitive Theory, which explains how beliefs about capability influence activity choices, the amount of effort exerted, persistence when encountering difficulties, and resilience in the face of failure (Bandura, 1997). in the context of language learning, self-efficacy plays a particularly important role in speaking because speaking activities involve social risk, spontaneous responses, and the possibility of making errors that are immediately visible to others.

Within this framework, the development of speaking ability depends not only on improvements in linguistic competence but also on learners' confidence in their ability to demonstrate that competence in real communicative situations (Wang & Sun, 2020). Several studies have also shown that self-efficacy is

positively correlated with language proficiency, suggesting that stronger beliefs in one's ability can encourage more active engagement in learning and lead to better learning outcomes.

According to Social Cognitive Theory, self-efficacy develops through four primary sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences through observing social models, social persuasion such as feedback and encouragement from others, and individuals' interpretations of physiological or affective states such as nervousness or anxiety. In classroom learning contexts, these four sources are closely connected to the instructional practices implemented by teachers.

Speaking Self-Efficacy, Anxiety, and Willingness to Communicate

Although self-efficacy is an important predictor of learning behavior, speaking performance in EFL contexts is also influenced by other psychological factors. One widely studied factor is foreign language anxiety, which can hinder communication when learners fear being evaluated or making mistakes in front of others (Horwitz et al., 1986). High levels of anxiety may lead learners to avoid speaking, reduce the length of their utterances, or refrain from participating in communicative activities altogether.

In addition, research in second language communication highlights the concept of willingness to communicate (WTC) as a behavioral mechanism explaining why learners who possess adequate linguistic competence may still hesitate to speak. The situational model of WTC suggests that the willingness to engage in communication is influenced by changing contextual conditions, including learners' confidence in using the language and the level of social support in the interactional environment (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Within this framework, self-efficacy contributes to learners' confidence in communication, while anxiety functions as a potential inhibiting factor.

Recent studies further indicate that speaking self-efficacy interacts with other cognitive and affective factors during the execution of speaking tasks, influencing how learners manage pressure, sustain communicative flow, and regulate their speaking performance(Leeming, 2024). Thus, the development of speaking proficiency can be understood as the result of a dynamic process involving learning conditions, psychological factors, and the level of communicative participation among learners.

Communicative Language Teaching and the Design of Speaking Instruction

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a language teaching approach that emphasizes meaningful language use through communicative interaction, authentic tasks, and a focus on language functions within real communication. However, the effectiveness of CLT depends not only on increasing students' opportunities to speak but also on the quality of task design, the provision of scaffolding, and feedback strategies that support learners' communicative engagement.

Effective speaking instruction requires a holistic approach that integrates linguistic resources, discourse strategies, and reflective practices so that learners can gradually develop communicative competence through repeated interaction (Goh & Burns, 2020). The CLT literature also emphasizes that communicative activities must be systematically designed to enable learners to participate effectively in the learning process (Richards, 2006).

From a self-efficacy perspective, classrooms implementing CLT have the potential to provide multiple sources for the development of learners' confidence. Successfully completing communicative tasks can create mastery experiences, peer interaction provides opportunities for vicarious learning, and constructive feedback functions as social persuasion. Conversely, poorly structured communicative activities may

increase anxiety and reduce participation if learners perceive tasks as overly difficult or excessively evaluative.

Audiovisual and Multimodal Support in Communicative Learning

The use of audiovisual and multimodal media can enrich speaking instruction by providing clearer discourse models, more authentic communicative contexts, and more engaging learning stimuli for learners. According to Multimedia Learning Theory, learning becomes more effective when information is presented through integrated verbal and visual channels that align with the mechanisms of human cognitive processing (Mayer, 2009).

In the context of CLT, audiovisual media can function as models of communicative performance, prompts for discussion through authentic situations, and tools for clarifying task expectations so that learners are better prepared to participate in speaking activities (Rahman & Ismail, 2020). By providing observable examples of communication, audiovisual materials help learners understand how interaction unfolds in real contexts.

Several empirical studies indicate that the use of audiovisual media can contribute to improvements in EFL learners' speaking ability. However, the mechanisms explaining this improvement have not always been examined in depth (Huang & Johnson, 2021). Beyond providing language exposure, audiovisual media may also influence psychological factors such as self-efficacy because learners can observe communication models and gain experiences that strengthen their confidence in speaking.

Synthesis: An Analytical Model of Speaking Development in CLT Contexts

Overall, the literature suggests that the development of speaking proficiency in EFL contexts is influenced by the interaction between instructional practices, learners' psychological mechanisms, and their level of communicative participation in classroom activities. CLT provides opportunities for learners to engage in meaningful communicative practice, but such engagement is strongly influenced by affective and cognitive factors such as self-efficacy and anxiety.

Self-efficacy plays a central role because learners with stronger beliefs in their speaking ability tend to be more willing to communicate, more persistent when facing communication difficulties, and more active in taking advantage of opportunities to practice speaking. Well-designed instructional practices can strengthen this process by providing mastery experiences, social support, and constructive feedback. In addition, the use of audiovisual media can clarify performance expectations and provide communicative models that learners can observe and emulate.

Based on this synthesis, the development of speaking proficiency in CLT classrooms can be understood as a process mediated by learners' psychological factors. Instructional practices influence learners' psychological readiness to communicate, which in turn determines their level of participation in speaking activities. Increased participation ultimately expands opportunities for communicative practice and supports the development of speaking proficiency.

Thus, the analytical framework of this study conceptualizes the development of speaking ability as the outcome of the following process:

CLT instructional practices (task design, scaffolding, feedback, and audiovisual support) → changes in learners' self-efficacy and affective conditions → increased communicative participation → development of speaking proficiency.

This framework serves as the conceptual foundation for examining how speaking self-efficacy and speaking proficiency develop simultaneously during the implementation of CLT and how university students interpret learning experiences that shape their communicative confidence and performance.

Research Methods

This study employed a qualitative case study design to examine how university students' speaking self-efficacy and speaking proficiency developed during Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in a real classroom context. A qualitative case study was selected because the study aims not only to identify end outcomes but also to explain the process of change over time, including teaching practices, classroom interaction patterns, and students' learning experiences that shape and reshape confidence in speaking. This design enables rich, contextual description of how CLT is enacted, how students participate, and how the classroom environment supports or constrains the development of self-efficacy and speaking performance.

In this study, the "case" was defined as one speaking-oriented English class taught using CLT principles and treated as a bounded system over a clearly defined instructional period. The boundaries of the case included one intact class group as the main unit of analysis, one course/learning activity requiring oral communication practice (e.g., discussion, role-play, and short speaking performances), one institutional context, and one instructional time span that allowed change to be traced from early to later stages. Within these boundaries, the study focused on three closely related aspects: changes in speaking self-efficacy, development of speaking proficiency, and the instructional experiences students perceived as most influential for both self-efficacy and performance during CLT learning.

The study was conducted at STAI Ma'arif Magetan, East Java, Indonesia, in an EFL context where speaking competence is developed primarily through classroom-based instruction. Participants were 30 undergraduate students enrolled in the selected class and constituted an intact group representing the focal case. The class was selected through purposive sampling because it directly matched the research focus (CLT implementation for speaking development) and was feasible for sustained observation. All students were included in classroom observation and learning artifact documentation, while a smaller subset was invited for interviews to capture varied experiences and perspectives. Interview participants were purposively selected to represent variation in participation patterns and perceived speaking confidence, including students who were highly active, moderately engaged, and relatively quiet.

To maintain instructional consistency, each meeting followed a relatively stable CLT-oriented lesson pattern. Sessions typically began with a short warm-up to activate topic knowledge and reduce speaking anxiety through low-stakes interaction. Students then received task preparation in the form of prompts, relevant functional expressions, and clear performance expectations so that tasks were perceived as achievable. The main communicative task was implemented in pairs or small groups to maximize speaking turns and promote peer support. Lessons concluded with feedback and reflection, where the instructor highlighted effective communication, addressed common breakdowns, and encouraged students to identify strategies for improvement in the next task. Documenting this cycle provided an analytic context for explaining how mastery experiences and supportive feedback may contribute to self-efficacy change and speaking development across the instructional period.

Data were collected from three primary sources: classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and document/artifact analysis. Observations were conducted to capture the actual implementation of CLT, including task types, scaffolding, teacher strategies, interactional dynamics, and students' participation patterns. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected students to explore perceptions of self-efficacy change from initial to later stages, experiences that increased or decreased confidence, speaking

challenges, and how students interpreted teacher feedback and peer support. When feasible, an additional interview with the course instructor was conducted to document instructional intentions, teaching strategies, and perceptions of student development. All interviews were conducted with informed consent, audio-recorded when permitted, and transcribed for analysis. Artifact analysis complemented observation and interview findings by providing concrete evidence of classroom practices and students' speaking outputs over time.

To document speaking proficiency development consistently, the study employed an analytic speaking rubric on a 1–4 scale (see Table 4), covering fluency, pronunciation/intelligibility, vocabulary range and appropriacy, grammar control, and interactive communication. The rubric was used as a descriptive documentation tool to interpret speaking outputs at different points during the instructional period. This approach enabled transparent tracking of performance change without requiring complex statistical testing, aligning with the qualitative case study orientation that prioritizes contextualized understanding of performance within CLT tasks.

Data analysis followed thematic analysis procedures to identify recurring patterns and explanatory themes across data sources. The researcher began with familiarization through repeated reading of observation notes, interview transcripts, and artifacts. Initial codes were then generated to capture meaningful units related to self-efficacy experiences, participation shifts, anxiety management, task engagement, perceptions of social support and feedback, and indicators of speaking improvement. Codes were subsequently clustered into broader themes and examined for consistency through cross-source comparison (triangulation), ensuring that interpretations were not dependent on a single data type. To strengthen the credibility of the findings, the study maintained an audit trail documenting data collection processes, coding decisions, and theme development, and conducted limited member checking of interview summaries when feasible.

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Profile (n = 30)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	12	40.0
	Female	18	60.0
Age Range	18–19	8	26.7
	20–21	17	56.7
	22–23	5	16.6
Semester	2nd	9	30.0
	4th	21	70.0
Program	Islamic Education (PAI)	14	46.7
	Sharia Economics (ES)	10	33.3
	Islamic Communication (KPI)	6	20.0

Prior English Learning Exposure	Mostly school-based (no course)	19	63.3
	Has taken external course	11	36.7

Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the participants in this case study. The class consisted of 30 undergraduate students with a higher proportion of female than male students, and most participants were within the 20–21 age range. The participants came from several study programs within STAI Ma'arif Magetan, with Islamic Education and Sharia Economics forming the largest groups. In terms of prior English exposure, most students reported learning English primarily through formal schooling rather than through external language courses, indicating that the speaking classroom represented a key structured environment for developing oral communication confidence and proficiency.

Table 4. Speaking Proficiency Rubric (Analytic, 1–4 Scale)

Criteria	Level 1 (Beginning)	Level 2 (Developing)	Level 3 (Proficient)	Level 4 (Advanced)
Fluency	Frequent long pauses; fragmented speech	Some pauses; limited ability to sustain turns	Generally smooth with manageable pauses	Smooth, sustained turns with minimal hesitation
Pronunciation / Intelligibility	Often hard to understand; many breakdowns	Understandable with repeated clarification	Mostly clear; occasional mispronunciation	Clear and easy to understand; rare breakdowns
Vocabulary Range & Appropriacy	Very limited vocabulary; frequent word searching	Basic vocabulary; repetition common	Adequate range for topics; occasional searching	Wide range; appropriate word choice and expressions
Grammar Control	Frequent errors that hinder meaning	Errors present but meaning usually recoverable	Generally accurate with minor errors	Strong control; errors rare and do not affect meaning
Interactive Communication	Minimal responses; weak turn-taking	Responds but limited expansion; uneven turn-taking	Responds and expands; manages turn-taking	Actively engages; initiates, responds, and sustains interaction

Table 4 presents the analytic speaking rubric used to document speaking development through consistent criteria across the instructional period. The rubric focuses on core components of speaking performance

commonly emphasized in EFL speaking assessment, including fluency, intelligibility, lexical resources, grammatical control, and interactive communication. Using a four-level scale allows performance evidence to be interpreted descriptively without requiring complex statistical testing, which aligns with the qualitative case study approach. The rubric also supports transparency and replicability because it clarifies how speaking outputs were judged across early and later performance artifacts while maintaining an emphasis on communicative effectiveness within CLT tasks.

Results

A. CLT Implementation as the Contextual Condition for Change

Classroom observation indicates that the CLT unit at STAI Ma'arif Magetan was not only implemented procedurally, but also improved in quality across sessions. Analytically, observation data are treated as an instructional condition that helps explain why changes in speaking self-efficacy and speaking proficiency could plausibly occur. The stable instructional pattern—low-stakes warm-up, pre-task scaffolding (models/useful expressions/task goals), pair/group-based communicative tasks, and closing feedback plus reflection—created repeated exposure to meaning-focused communication. In other words, speaking was positioned not as incidental practice but as the core learning activity that produced observable communicative output in every session and provided a context for mastery experiences and social support to emerge.

From a quantitative-descriptive standpoint (supporting the qualitative analysis), the CLT Fidelity Index increased from 56.3 (Session 1) to 91.8 (Session 8), in parallel with increases in student talk time (55% → 76%), negotiation of meaning (6 → 14), and the quality of feedback/reflection (2 → 4). Analytically, this trend matters because improvements in learner outcomes did not occur in a static classroom environment, but in one that increasingly encouraged participation. A minor fluctuation occurred in Session 7, when pair/group work decreased (70%) due to an individual public speaking focus; however, communicative engagement remained high because negotiation of meaning (11) and feedback/reflection (4) stayed strong. Overall, these results confirm that CLT was implemented with sufficient consistency and intensity to interpret RQ1–RQ2 as developments occurring within a stable and strengthening CLT environment.

Table 5. Observation Summary of CLT Implementation Across Sessions

Session	Student Talk Time (%)	Pair/Group Work (%)	Negotiation of Meaning (count)	Task Authenticity (1–4)	Scaffolding Quality (1–4)	Feedback & Reflection (1–4)	CLT Fidelity Index (0–100)
1	55	65	6	2	3	2	56.3
2	60	70	8	3	3	3	68.7
3	62	75	9	3	3	3	71.0
4	66	78	10	3	4	3	77.6
5	70	80	12	4	4	3	85.1
6	72	82	13	4	4	4	91.1

7	74	70	11	3	4	4	82.9
8	76	75	14	4	4	4	91.8

B. How Did Speaking Self-Efficacy Change During CLT?

Observation, interview, and artifact data indicate that speaking self-efficacy did not improve "all at once," but developed through cumulative experiences that made speaking tasks feel (1) more manageable, (2) more meaningful, and (3) less threatening. Analytically, self-efficacy change is evident at two levels: (a) reported perception shifts in interviews (e.g., feeling "more capable"), and (b) observable participation shifts in the classroom (e.g., longer turns, more initiation, fewer withdrawals). Thus, self-efficacy in this study is not treated merely as verbal claims, but as a construct supported by converging evidence across data sources.

The strongest theme was mastery experiences (successful task completion). Analytically, success in low-stakes tasks (pair work, information-gap activities) functioned as "psychological capital" that students carried into more demanding tasks. S3's quote ("After I could finish the pair task, I felt I can do it again.") illustrates the strengthening mechanism: confidence increased not because grammar was perfect, but because communication was completed without getting stuck. This pattern aligns with observation findings showing fewer breakdowns in later sessions and more persistence through difficulty using fillers or rephrasing rather than stopping. In other words, self-efficacy grew as students accumulated experiences of "I can complete the task" within repeated CLT cycles.

The second theme, peer support and collaboration, explains why quieter students became more willing to speak. Analytically, pair/group work created a "safe zone" that reduced public evaluation risk and provided immediate help (vocabulary, ideas, prompts). S8's quote ("In group work, I am not alone… my friend helps and I continue.") suggests that peer support is not only socio-emotional comfort but a mechanism that prevents withdrawal when difficulty arises. Observations also documented peer prompting moves ("What do you mean?", "Try again") that sustained communication, indicating an interactional climate that normalized imperfect speech and supported continued participation.

The third theme, supportive feedback and a low-threat evaluation climate, shows that feedback type shaped whether evaluation was perceived as threat or growth. Analytically, when feedback emphasized intelligibility and communicative strategies (rather than embarrassment over errors), students shifted attention from "fear of mistakes" to "improvable performance." S5's quote ("The correction was not embarrassing… I felt confident.") indicates that non-threatening correction helped maintain participation and strengthened confidence.

The fourth theme, scaffolding and rehearsal, reveals a cognitive pathway: tasks became more structured so students were less likely to feel "blank." S10's quote ("When we had sentence starters, I knew how to begin…") highlights how scaffolding opened the door to initial participation. Observation confirmed higher initiation rates when phrase banks/models were provided. Artifacts also showed that outputs became more organized over time. Analytically, scaffolding did not reduce CLT authenticity; it lowered entry barriers so students could focus on meaning exchange.

The fifth theme, autonomy and self-regulation, contributed to sustaining change. Analytically, as students developed personal coping strategies (keyword planning, repair moves during breakdowns), they relied less

on external support. S2's quote ("I prepare keywords and just start…") reflects a transition from dependence to self-regulation, strengthening the stability of self-efficacy across more challenging tasks.

Table 6. Self-Efficacy Development Themes and Triangulated Evidence

Theme	What Changed (Core Meaning)	Interview Evidence (Sample Quotes)	Observation Evidence (Field Notes)	Artifact Evidence (Tasks/Records)
Mastery experiences (task success)	Confidence increased after completing tasks successfully	S3: "After I could finish the pair task, I felt I can do it again."	More students produced longer turns; fewer task breakdowns in later sessions	Later recordings showed fewer long pauses and smoother message flow
Peer support & collaboration	Students felt safer and spoke more in pairs/groups	S8: "In group work, I am not alone… my friend helps and I continue."	Peer prompting and co-construction increased; quieter students spoke more	Group outputs became more coherent and evenly distributed
Supportive feedback (teacher/peers)	Feedback reduced fear of mistakes and built confidence	S5: "The correction was not embarrassing… I felt confident."	Feedback focused on intelligibility/strategy; peer feedback became more constructive	Reflection notes showed clearer action points for improvement
Scaffolding & rehearsal	Task support made speaking feel achievable	S10: "Sentence starters helped me begin, so I was not blank."	Higher initiation rates when phrase banks/models were provided	Performance outputs showed improved organization and clarity
Autonomy & self-regulation	Students adopted coping strategies to sustain speaking	S2: "I prepare keywords and just start… I continue."	More repair moves; fewer avoidance behaviors over time	Evidence of planning (keyword notes) and strategy use in tasks

Edu Cendikia: Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan
Volume: 6 | Nomor 01 | April 2026 |
DOI: 10.47709/educendikia.v6i01.7939

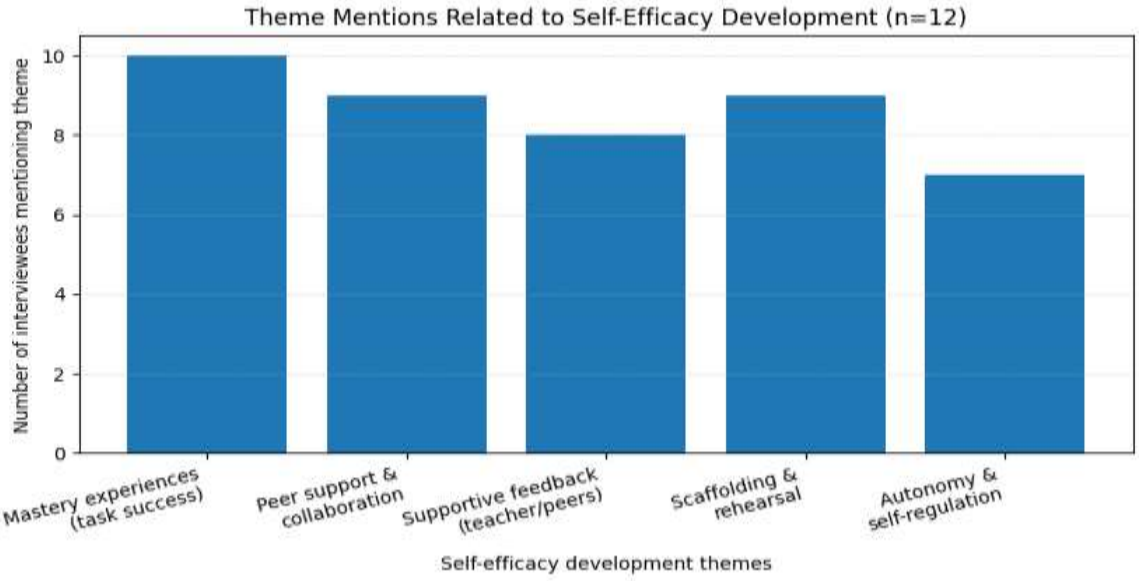

Figure 2. Theme Mentions Related to Self-Efficacy Development (n = 12)

C. How Did Speaking Proficiency Develop Over the Same Period?

Analysis of early versus late speaking task recordings showed improvement across all rubric dimensions, with the largest gains in interactive communication and fluency. To avoid purely descriptive reporting, rubric data are interpreted as performance evidence consistent with both CLT mechanisms and the self-efficacy themes identified in RQ1. In other words, the rubric is used not only to report scores but also to explain what changed and why that change is theoretically plausible in this CLT context.

For fluency, the increase from 1.9 to 2.7 (Δ +0.8) reflects a shift from fragmented speech with frequent hesitation toward more sustained turns. Analytically, this aligns with increased student talk time and negotiation of meaning (Table 5), which expanded opportunities for practice and pushed students to keep delivering messages despite difficulty. Observation notes about fewer breakdown moments and greater use of fillers and paraphrasing support the interpretation that students became more capable of maintaining flow under pressure.

For interactive communication, the increase from 1.9 to 2.8 (Δ +0.9) was the strongest change. Analytically, this pattern fits a CLT environment that centers meaning-making interaction (high pair/group work and rising negotiation of meaning). It also parallels the RQ1 themes—especially mastery experiences and peer collaboration—suggesting that stronger interactional behavior was both an outcome of CLT practice and a mechanism that reinforced confidence (a positive cycle: interaction attempts → successful exchanges → increased self-efficacy).

For pronunciation/intelligibility and vocabulary range, moderate increases (Δ +0.5 each) indicate that students became more understandable and slightly more varied in expression. Analytically, these moderate gains are plausible in CLT units that prioritize communication; learners may increasingly rely on paraphrasing and compensation strategies to sustain meaning rather than focusing primarily on form accuracy.

Edu Cendikia: Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan
Volume: 6 | Nomor 01 | April 2026 |
DOI: 10.47709/educendikia.v6i01.7939

For grammar control, the increase was also moderate (1.8 → 2.3; Δ +0.5) and remained the most constrained area. Analytically, this supports a communicative-functional interpretation: students became better at sustaining communication even with persistent errors, and meaning became more recoverable. This aligns with interview evidence emphasizing successful task completion despite imperfect grammar, indicating that communicative effectiveness—not grammatical perfection—was the primary driver of progress during CLT tasks.

Table 7. Rubric-Based Summary from Students' Speaking Task Recordings (Early vs Late)

Rubric Aspect	Early Recording (Mean 1–4)	Late Recording (Mean 1–4)	Change (Δ)	Descriptive Interpretation (Qualitative)
Fluency	1.9	2.7	+0.8	From frequent hesitations to more sustained turns
Pronunciation/Intelligibility	2.1	2.6	+0.5	From repeated clarification to mostly understandable speech
Vocabulary Range	2.0	2.5	+0.5	From high repetition to broader expressions and paraphrasing attempts
Grammar Control	1.8	2.3	+0.5	Errors remained but communication became more stable and recoverable
Interactive Communication	1.9	2.8	+0.9	From minimal responses to active turn-taking and follow-up moves

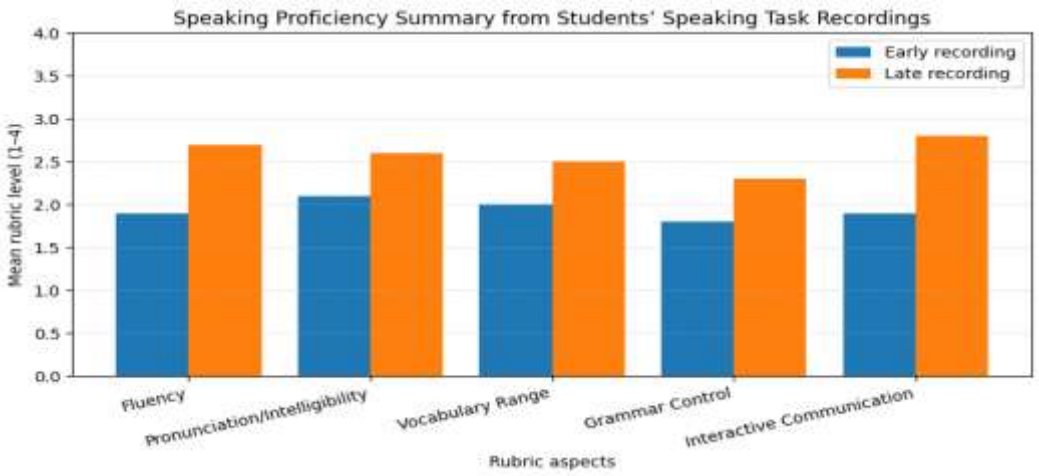

Figure 3. Speaking Proficiency Summary from Students' Speaking Task Recordings

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) functions as an effective instructional framework for strengthening students' speaking self-efficacy because it consistently positions learners in speaking activities that are meaningful, structured, and pedagogically supported. In the present context, CLT should not be understood merely as an increase in discussion intensity, but rather as a learning system that integrates low-stakes warm-ups, pre-task phases with explicit scaffolding, interaction-based communicative task implementation, and feedback with reflection. This configuration is conceptually aligned with the argument that self-efficacy develops when learners face achievable challenges, receive adequate support, and can identify concrete progress in accomplishing target tasks (Wang & Sun, 2020). Thus, CLT's contribution lies not only in increasing the quantity of speaking practice, but also in enhancing the quality of learning experiences that enable students to interpret communicative success as evidence of replicable capability.

Theoretically, the predominance of the mastery experiences theme reinforces that successful task completion constitutes the primary mechanism explaining self-efficacy growth within the CLT unit. Students reported increased confidence after successfully completing tasks such as information-gap activities, role-plays, and problem-solving discussions, even though grammatical accuracy was not yet optimal. These findings can be interpreted as evidence that "functional" communicative success (i.e., conveying meaning and sustaining interaction) can serve as a powerful source of confidence because learners evaluate their performance based on the attainment of communicative goals rather than on formal perfection alone. This interpretation is consistent with empirical evidence showing that speaking self-efficacy is shaped by experiences embedded in oral task demands and becomes meaningful when learners construe them as evidence of capability rather than as incidental performances (Zhang et al., 2020). Conceptually, this study enriches the discourse by emphasizing that, in higher education EFL contexts, "imperfect communicative success" can provide a psychological foundation for increased speaking engagement in subsequent tasks.

Beyond mastery experiences, feedback practices emerged as a key factor clarifying how CLT conditions self-efficacy change. Students responded positively to feedback emphasizing intelligibility, communicative effectiveness, and one or two specific improvement targets, rather than feedback framing errors as failure. Academically, this finding suggests that feedback operates as a mediating mechanism shaping learners' performance attributions: when correction is understood as a controllable improvement strategy, learners are more likely to interpret mistakes as part of the learning process and sustain their willingness to try. This aligns with self-regulation scholarship in speaking, which highlights the importance of task management, feedback interpretation, and strategy use in maintaining confidence during EFL speaking development (Sun, 2022). Therefore, CLT appears effective not only because it facilitates interaction, but also because it provides an evaluative climate that supports adaptive learning attributions.

However, self-efficacy in this study also appeared dynamic and not always linear, particularly in sessions involving higher performance pressure, such as individual speaking tasks. These findings suggest that increased confidence does not automatically eliminate affective responses such as anxiety, yet interactional routines, scaffolding, and a constructive evaluation climate can stabilize engagement and prevent sharp performance declines. This interpretation is consistent with evidence that anxiety may still arise in speaking contexts even as competence increases, and that supportive instructional conditions can preserve participation and protect confidence, especially when evaluation is perceived as non-threatening (Demirdöken & Okur, 2023). Accordingly, CLT can be conceptualized as an environment that manages

learners' psychological risk: rather than removing pressure entirely, it facilitates coping strategies and participatory resilience.

Regarding speaking proficiency development, task recording evidence indicated the most pronounced gains in dimensions that are sensitive to repeated interaction, particularly fluency and interactive communication. This pattern aligns with the CLT premise that language competence develops through meaningful use and negotiation of meaning rather than through isolated form practice. Conceptually, it should be emphasized that such gains are not merely "effects of CLT," but rather consequences of increased output density, repair opportunities, and strengthened interactional competence through tasks that require responding, clarifying, and managing turns—components widely recognized as essential in holistic speaking instruction (Goh & Burns, 2020). In other words, CLT provides performative conditions that encourage learners to sustain communication despite linguistic limitations, which helps explain why the most rapid development occurs in aspects dependent on repeated practice and social interaction.

More gradual improvements in pronunciation/intelligibility can be understood as a realistic developmental trajectory within communicative learning. In CLT contexts, pronunciation tends to improve through increased intelligibility and strategies for maintaining meaning clarity when breakdowns occur, rather than through rapid error elimination. This is consistent with evidence that repeated performance opportunities accompanied by formative reflection (e.g., video-based practice) can reduce anxiety and improve speaking outcomes, including intelligibility, because learners receive more concrete feedback that can be used for improvement (Zheng et al., 2023). Likewise, increases in vocabulary range accompanied by more frequent paraphrasing attempts indicate growth in strategic competence, namely the ability to sustain meaning when lexical resources are limited—an important marker of communication-oriented speaking proficiency.

Meanwhile, the relatively more modest gains in grammar control compared with fluency and interaction require careful interpretation. In CLT, meaning exchange is prioritized during performance, so attention to form may decrease as processing demands rise. Nevertheless, the finding that communication became more stable and meaning increasingly recoverable despite persistent errors suggests that development was communicative-functional in nature. This implies that within limited instructional time, CLT may yield more measurable progress in performance dimensions (fluency and interaction), whereas more substantial grammatical accuracy gains may require reinforcement through selective focus-on-form at the post-task stage, especially for recurring errors that undermine clarity. Thus, the study clarifies both the limits and the potential of CLT: it effectively advances communicative competence, yet benefits from strategic supplementation if accuracy is a stronger instructional target.

Integratively, the findings suggest a mutually reinforcing relationship between self-efficacy development and speaking proficiency gains. Increased confidence encourages students to take speaking turns more readily, persist through breakdowns, and employ repair strategies; increased participation then enriches practice opportunities and mastery experiences, further strengthening self-efficacy. This mechanism is consistent with cross-context evidence linking self-efficacy to language proficiency and with speaking-specific findings indicating that capability beliefs and perceived communicative competence predict spoken task production . The conceptual contribution of this study lies in mapping concrete classroom mechanisms—scaffolding, peer collaboration, and supportive feedback—as levers that connect CLT with both psychological and performance change within an authentic instructional timeline.

The pedagogical implications of these findings emphasize that CLT should be implemented as a coherent system rather than a partial strategy. Scaffolding (e.g., sentence starters, modeled functional expressions, role prompts, and rehearsal time) should be positioned as an essential component in contexts where

learners' initial self-efficacy is low, because it reduces cognitive load and prevents blank moments, making success more attainable. This argument aligns with longitudinal evidence suggesting that task-specific self-efficacy strengthens when learners repeatedly succeed under supportive task conditions (Chang et al., 2024). In addition, feedback should be designed to protect learners' sense of capability while providing clear pathways for improvement; feedback routines that begin with strengths, prioritize one key target, and end with a strategic suggestion can help learners attribute progress to controllable actions (Sun, 2022). Peer collaboration should also be guided with simple criteria so that social support not only increases talk time but also improves interaction quality and feedback quality, particularly for learners who avoid speaking due to fear of negative evaluation (Demirdöken & Okur, 2023). Finally, instructors should anticipate anxiety spikes during tasks resembling public speaking and design mitigation strategies such as staged rehearsal, small-group pre-presentations, and classroom norms that emphasize supportive evaluation to maintain communicative authenticity without escalating perceived evaluative threat.

The limitations of this study include the focus on a single class and institution, which constrains generalizability; a relatively short instructional duration that may limit observable development in specific areas—particularly grammatical accuracy; potential subjectivity in rubric-based assessment without inter-rater agreement; and the possibility of social desirability bias in interview data despite triangulation with observations and artifacts. Therefore, future research is recommended to employ multi-case and longitudinal designs, examine selective focus-on-form as a complement to CLT to improve grammar control without compromising fluency, and strengthen assessment procedures through multiple raters and more standardized recordings.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) should not be reduced to "more discussion" but understood as an interaction-oriented instructional system which—through progressive task sequencing, explicit scaffolding, structured peer collaboration, and constructive feedback—can simultaneously strengthen EFL college students' speaking self-efficacy and enhance their speaking proficiency. Conceptually, the findings point to a mutually reinforcing developmental mechanism: repeated, manageable success in communicative tasks (e.g., information-gap activities, role-plays, and problem-solving discussions) consolidates learners' capability beliefs; strengthened efficacy, in turn, increases willingness to speak and persistence during breakdowns; and heightened participation expands practice density and opportunities for meaning negotiation, thereby accelerating performance growth, particularly in fluency and interactional competence. Evidence from speaking-task recordings further suggests that interaction-sensitive dimensions (fluency and interactive communication) improved more rapidly, whereas pronunciation/intelligibility and vocabulary range developed more gradually, and grammar control showed only modest gains, implying that accuracy may require longer-term instructional support and selective post-task focus-on-form without undermining communicative momentum. On the basis of this synthesis, an evidence-based pedagogical recommendation for higher-education EFL instructors is to implement CLT as a coherent system: design achievable yet progressively demanding tasks, provide models, phrase banks, and rehearsal time, guide pair/group work with simple criteria, and enact feedback routines that prioritize intelligibility, communicative effectiveness, and specific next-step targets so that classroom design reliably produces a sustainable cycle of confidence and performance development. Future research should strengthen the transferability of these conclusions through multi-case and longitudinal designs and should explicitly test the integration of post-task focus-on-form to clarify how gains in self-efficacy and speaking performance are sustained and transferred to higher-stakes communicative demands over time.

Reference

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W. H. Freeman.

Demirdöken, G., & Okur, A. (2023). Psychometric properties of speaking anxiety scale and an interdisciplinary investigation with serial mediation. *The Language Learning Journal*. https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2022.2123920

Ellis, R. (2008). *The study of second language acquisition* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Goh, C. C. M., & Burns, A. (2020). Teaching speaking: A holistic approach. *Language Teaching*, *53*(3), 299–321. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444819000238

Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, *70*(2), 125–132.

Huang, L., & Johnson, S. (2021). The effects of audiovisual aids on EFL learners' speaking proficiency. *Language Teaching Research*, *25*(4), 512–530. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820943535

Leeming, P. (2024). The effects of L2 and L3 language thinking, state anxiety and speaking self-efficacy on second language spoken task production. *Language Learning*, *74*(4), 1059–1092. https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12640

MacIntyre, P. D., Dörnyei, Z., Clément, R., & Noels, K. A. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a second language: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *The Modern Language Journal*, *82*(4), 545–562.

Mayer, R. E. (2009). *Multimedia Learning: Prinsip-Prinsip dan Aplikasi*. ITS Press.

Rahman, M., & Ismail, N. (2020). Effectiveness of audiovisual media on ESL learners' oral communication skills: A meta-analysis. *TESOL Quarterly*, *54*(4), 893–912. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.512

Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative language teaching today*. Cambridge University Press.

Sun, P. P. (2022). Strategic self-regulation for speaking English as a foreign language: Scale development and validation. *TESOL Quarterly*, *56*(4), 1369–1383. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3132

Wang, C., & Sun, T. (2020). Relationship between self-efficacy and language proficiency: A meta-analysis. *System*, *95*, 102366. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102366

Zhang, L. J., Ardasheva, Y., & Austin, B. W. (2020). A mixed-method approach to investigating the relationship between L2 public speaking self-efficacy and performance. *English for Specific Purposes*, *59*, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2020.03.003

Zheng, C., Li, Y., Wang, C., & Zhou, Y. (2023). Self-assessment first or peer-assessment first: Effects of video-based formative practice on learners' English public speaking anxiety and performance. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2021.1946562