

The Relationship between Classmate Support and English Speaking Confidence of Eighth Grade Students

Mella Disa^{1*}, Qonaah Nuryan Arif², Prih Febtiningsih³, Wandu Syahfutra⁴

¹⁻⁴Universitas Muhammadiyah Riau, Indonesia

Corresponding Author's e-mail : melladisagirl@gmail.com



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Abstract : Speaking confidence is an important psychological factor that influences students' participation and performance in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. One factor assumed to contribute to speaking confidence is peer support through emotional encouragement, academic assistance, and feedback during the learning process. This study aims to analyse the relationship between peer support and speaking confidence among eighth-grade students enrolled in an EFL programme at Jareeyatam Islam Foundation School, Satun, Thailand. The study employed a quantitative correlational design involving all 25 eighth-grade students through total sampling. Data were collected using two five-point Likert-scale questionnaires and analysed using descriptive statistics, the Shapiro-Wilk normality test, and Spearman's Rank Correlation. The results showed that peer support ($M = 76.92$) and speaking confidence ($M = 90.16$) were at high levels. The analysis revealed a positive but weak relationship between peer support and speaking confidence ($\rho = 0.299$; $p = 0.147 > 0.05$), indicating that the relationship was not statistically significant. These findings suggest that speaking confidence is influenced by multiple factors, including motivation, speaking anxiety, instructional practices, and classroom environment.

Keywords : Classmate Support, Correlation Study, EFL Students, Peer Support, Speaking Confidence

Abstrak : Kepercayaan diri berbicara merupakan faktor psikologis penting yang memengaruhi partisipasi dan kinerja siswa dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL). Salah satu faktor yang diduga berkontribusi terhadap kepercayaan diri berbicara adalah dukungan teman sekelas melalui dorongan emosional, bantuan akademik, dan umpan balik selama proses pembelajaran. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis hubungan antara dukungan teman sekelas dan kepercayaan diri berbicara pada siswa kelas delapan program EFL di Sekolah Yayasan Islam Jareeyatam, Satun, Thailand. Penelitian menggunakan desain korelasional kuantitatif dengan melibatkan seluruh 25 siswa melalui teknik *total sampling*. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan dua kuesioner skala Likert lima poin dan dianalisis melalui statistik deskriptif, uji normalitas Shapiro-Wilk, serta Korelasi Peringkat Spearman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dukungan teman sekelas ($M = 76,92$) dan kepercayaan diri berbicara ($M = 90,16$) berada pada kategori tinggi. Analisis menunjukkan hubungan positif tetapi lemah

antara dukungan teman sekelas dan kepercayaan diri berbicara ($\rho = 0,299$; $p = 0,147 > 0,05$), sehingga hubungan tersebut tidak signifikan secara statistik. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa kepercayaan diri berbicara dipengaruhi oleh berbagai faktor, seperti motivasi, kecemasan berbicara, praktik pembelajaran, dan lingkungan kelas.

Kata Kunci : Dukungan Teman Sekelas, Studi Korelasi, Siswa EFL, Dukungan Teman Sebaya, Kepercayaan Diri Berbicara

INTRODUCTION

Speaking plays as an essential part in EFL learning because it allows students to express their thoughts and ideas effectively across a variety of communicative situations. According to Saptiany & Prabowo (2024), speaking competence makes an important contribution in students' academic success and communication development. Furthermore, English speaking skills are increasingly important for communication across different cultures and global contexts (Akhter, 2021). Speaking also represents learners' overall language proficiency, as successful oral communication requires the effective use of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency simultaneously. For this reason, strong speaking competence equips learners to communicate confidently and effectively in both academic settings and daily life.

Despite the importance of speaking competence, many EFL students continue to experience difficulties in developing their English speaking ability. Students often face linguistic limitations that prevent them from expressing their ideas clearly and confidently (Elisathusilawanti, 2023). In addition to language-related difficulties, psychological factors also hinder students' oral performance. Speaking anxiety has been recognized as one of the main barriers that negatively influences students' willingness to use English for communication (Aulia et al., 2023). Furthermore, fear of committing errors and receiving negative evaluation frequently discourages students from participating in classroom speaking activities (Abrar et al., 2020). These linguistic and psychological challenges indicate that successful speaking performance requires not only adequate language proficiency but also sufficient psychological readiness, particularly self-confidence.

Self-confidence is often acknowledged as a vital aspect of individual psychology that influences students' speaking performance because it shapes learners' willingness to communicate, share their ideas, and demonstrate a higher level of engagement in classroom activities. Students with greater self-confidence are more likely to engage in speaking tasks and are less likely to avoid communication due to concern about producing incorrect language. As a result, they tend to achieve better speaking performance and show a higher level of engagement in classroom discussions (Sumanto & Saharani, 2023). Speaking confidence is affected by a combination of internal factors, including motivation, self-perception, and beliefs about language ability, as well as external factors, including teacher support, classmate support, and the overall learning environment (Asnaini et al., 2025). Furthermore, a supportive classroom environment motivates students to engage in speaking activities more frequently and gradually strengthen their confidence in communicating in English (Astuti et al., 2026). Therefore, creating a positive learning environment is essential for fostering students' speaking confidence.

One important component of a positive learning environment is classmate support. Classmate support can be defined as the emotional encouragement, academic help, and constructive feedback that students receive from their peers throughout the learning process. Such support helps create a comfortable classroom setting in which students feel valued and encouraged to engage in speaking activities. Through supportive peer interactions, learners have opportunities to exchange ideas, collaborate, and practice speaking without excessive fear of making mistakes. These interactions encourage students' sense of belonging, emotional security, and confidence in using English (Gong, 2023; Wu & Kang, 2023). In addition, emotional readiness and positive learning experiences contribute significantly to students' speaking

confidence (Wang et al., 2024). Therefore, classmate support is considered an important factor in developing students' speaking confidence.

The importance of classmate support has been widely highlighted in collaborative language learning. Peer-assisted learning has been shown to improve students' classroom participation and communication skills by encouraging learners to work together, exchange ideas, and actively engage in speaking activities (Gong, 2023). Through collaborative learning, students are given greater opportunities to use English in meaningful contexts, which helps them become more familiar with using the language for communication. In addition, constructive feedback helps students recognize what they do well while identifying the aspects that require further development, evaluate their speaking performance, and continuously develop their language skills (Isnani, 2026). Receiving feedback from classmates in a positive classroom atmosphere may help students feel more comfortable using English, making them less afraid of making mistakes and more confident when speaking. Furthermore, positive peer interaction has been found to enhance students' academic self-concept, language achievement, and speaking confidence because learners feel accepted, respected, and motivated by their classmates (Wu & Kang, 2023; Ulpa et al., 2025). These supportive relationships create a collaborative learning atmosphere that helps students become more confident in communicating their ideas, asking questions, and practicing English with greater confidence and reduced anxiety. Collectively, these findings suggest that classmate support makes a contribution to students' speaking confidence by providing emotional support, constructive feedback, and meaningful opportunities for continuous speaking practice and interaction in the EFL classroom.

Besides peer interaction, instructional strategies and technological innovations also contribute to students' speaking confidence. Technology-assisted learning gives learners more opportunities to practice speaking, obtain immediate feedback, and gradually become more comfortable using English in different communication contexts (Karim et al., 2023). Likewise, student-centered learning and supportive classroom environments encourage active participation and reduce speaking anxiety (Ayu et al., 2026; Wu & Kang, 2023; Tauchid, 2025). These learning experiences enable students to develop greater familiarity with speaking tasks while increasing their confidence to communicate. Taken together, these findings indicate that speaking confidence emerges from the interaction between effective instructional practices, supportive classroom experiences, and meaningful opportunities to use English, rather than being determined by a single influence alone.

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated the positive contribution of peer support to students' speaking development. Peer support has been found to improve students' speaking proficiency and confidence by encouraging greater participation in speaking activities and increasing learners' willingness to communicate (Ayu et al., 2026; Jabu et al., 2026). Similarly, collaborative learning experiences enhance communication skills and create meaningful opportunities for students to develop their speaking skills while receiving constructive support from their classmates (Gong, 2023). Positive peer relationships also contribute to students' academic self-concept and confidence in using English because learners feel accepted, supported, and encouraged during classroom interaction (Wu & Kang, 2023; Ulpa et al., 2025). Collectively, these findings indicate that peer support plays an important role in fostering students' speaking development and confidence in EFL learning.

Although previous studies have discussed the importance of speaking skills, self-confidence, and peer support in EFL learning, research gaps remain. Most studies have examined these variables separately or focused on higher education settings. Research investigating the relationship between classmate support and speaking confidence among secondary school EFL students remains limited, particularly studies using a correlational approach. Bridging this research gap is expected to provide greater insight into the contribution of peer support to students' confidence in English speaking activities.

Addressing the identified research gap, this study investigates the association between classmate support and English-speaking confidence among eighth-grade students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at Jareeyatam Islamic Foundation School, Satun, Thailand.

Since English is learned as a foreign language in this educational setting, the research examines the extent to which supportive peer interactions influence students' confidence when communicating in English. The findings are expected to generate empirical evidence and offer further insights into how classmate support contributes to the development of speaking confidence among EFL learners. The present study is expected to offer meaningful contributions to both theoretically and practically to English language teaching. Theoretically, the study enriches the literature on classmate support and speaking confidence in EFL learning. Practically, it provides insights to help teachers establish a positive and supportive classroom atmosphere that encourage students' confidence in speaking English and serves as a reference for future research on related topics.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational research design to examine the relationship between classmate support and speaking confidence among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. This design was selected because the study aimed to determine the degree of association between two variables: classmate support as the independent variable and speaking confidence as the dependent variable. As a non-experimental study, no treatment or intervention was administered, and the data were collected based on students' existing learning experiences. The study was conducted at Jareeyatam Islamic Foundation School, Satun, Thailand, during the academic year. The research participants were eighth-grade students who actively participated in English learning activities, including classroom discussions, group activities, and speaking practices. The population consisted of all 25 eighth-grade students enrolled at the school. Due to the limited population size, the study applied a total sampling technique, in which all members of the population participated as respondents.

Data were collected using a questionnaire consisting of two sections measuring classmate support and speaking confidence. Each item was assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Before distribution, the instrument was reviewed by an English language education expert to ensure the relevance and clarity of the statements. The reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha produced a coefficient of 0.721 for 25 items, indicating that the instrument had acceptable internal consistency for data collection.

The collected data were analysed using quantitative statistical procedures. Descriptive statistics were applied to identify the levels of classmate support and speaking confidence among students. Before conducting the correlation analysis, the normality of the data distribution was examined using the Shapiro–Wilk test because the number of participants was below 50. The results indicated that the classmate support variable met the normality assumption, while the speaking confidence variable did not. Therefore, Spearman's Rank Correlation was applied as a non-parametric statistical technique to examine the relationship between the two variables. The interpretation focused on the correlation coefficient to determine the direction and strength of the relationship and the significance value with an alpha level of 0.05 to determine whether the relationship was statistically significant.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

To provide an overview of the research data, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted for the two variables, namely classmate support and speaking confidence. The analysis included the number of participants (N), the lowest and highest scores, the average score, and the standard deviation, were calculated for each variable. A summary of these results is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics of the Variables*

Variabel	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Classmate Support	25	57	92	76.92	8.737
Speaking Confidence	25	72	144	90.16	13.996

The descriptive results reveal that students generally perceived strong support from their classmates. As presented in Table 1, classmate support scores ranged from 57 to 92, with an average of 76.92. The relatively small standard deviation (8.737) indicates that students' responses were fairly similar, suggesting a shared perception of peer support within the classroom. A similar pattern was observed for speaking confidence. Students obtained scores between 72 and 144, with a mean of 90.16. Although the average score reflects a generally high level of speaking confidence, the larger standard deviation (13.996) suggests that students differed more noticeably in their confidence when communicating in English. Before examining the relationship between classmate support and speaking confidence, the distribution of the data was first evaluated to determine whether the assumptions for parametric analysis were fulfilled. before applying parametric statistical procedures. Since the sample size consisted of 25 participants ($n < 50$), the distribution of each variable was subsequently examined using the Shapiro–Wilk test to verify the normality assumption before proceeding with the correlation analysis. The findings from this preliminary assessment are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Normality Test

Variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Classmate Support (x)	0.122	25	0.2	0.967	25	0.571
Speaking Confidence (Y)		25	0	0.769	25	.000

Before selecting the appropriate correlation technique, the distribution of each variable was assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test. The analysis indicated that the classmate support scores met the normality criterion since the obtained significance value (0.571) was higher than the established alpha level of 0.05. In contrast, the speaking confidence scores yielded a significance value of 0.000, which fell below the same threshold, indicating that the data were not normally distributed. As only one variable fulfilled the normality assumption, the requirements for applying Pearson's Product Moment Correlation were not fully satisfied. Consequently, Spearman's Rank Correlation was selected because this non-parametric method is appropriate for analyzing relationships when the assumption of normality is violated.

The selection of the correlation technique was based on the results of the normality test. Since one of the study variables did not satisfy the normality assumption, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was considered unsuitable for this study. Instead, Spearman's Rank Correlation was used to examine the relationship between classmate support and students' speaking confidence. This non-parametric method was selected because it can be applied to data that do not fully meet the assumptions required for parametric analysis while still providing a reliable measure of the direction and strength of the relationship between variables. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Correlations Nonparametric of Variable X and Y

			X	Y
Spearman's rho	Classmate Support (x)	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.299
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.147
		N	25	25
	Speaking Confidence (Y)	Correlation Coefficient	.229	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.147	.
		N	25	25

Table 3 summarizes the outcome of the Spearman's Rank Correlation analysis. A correlation coefficient (ρ) of 0.299 was obtained, suggesting that students who experienced greater support

from their classmates also tended to report higher speaking confidence. This finding indicates that both variables changed in the same direction, meaning that students who perceived stronger classmate support were generally more confident when expressing their ideas in English. Even so, the magnitude of this association remained relatively small, indicating that differences in classmate support were linked to only slight variations in students' speaking confidence. Therefore, although a positive pattern was observed, the relationship between the two variables was not particularly strong.

Although the data showed a positive tendency, the relationship was not sufficiently strong to indicate that classmate support was closely associated with students' speaking confidence. Therefore, while classmate support appeared to have a favorable association with speaking confidence, its contribution was relatively modest based on the correlation coefficient obtained. Furthermore, the analysis yielded a Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.147, exceeding the predetermined alpha level of 0.05 ($0.147 > 0.05$). Accordingly, the association between classmate support and speaking confidence was not considered statistically significant. Although the correlation coefficient showed a positive direction, the relationship was not sufficiently strong to confirm a significant association between the two variables.

The findings also indicate that, although the correlation coefficient showed a positive direction, the statistical analysis did not provide sufficient evidence to support a significant relationship between the two variables. Consequently, the relationship identified in this study cannot be considered statistically meaningful based on the established significance criterion. The statistical analysis did not support the alternative hypothesis (H_a), which proposed a significant association between classmate support and students' speaking confidence. Instead, the findings supported the null hypothesis (H_o), indicating that classmate support was not significantly associated with students' speaking confidence. Accordingly, the results suggest that no statistically significant association exists between these two variables among eighth-grade EFL students at Jareeyatam Islamic Foundation School, Satun, Thailand.

Discussion

The present study sought to explore the relationship between classmate support and speaking confidence among eighth-grade English students at Jareeyatam Islamic Foundation School, Satun, Thailand. The findings revealed a positive but weak correlation between classmate support and speaking confidence ($p = 0.299$). However, the significance value ($p = 0.147$) exceeded the 0.05 significance level, suggesting that the relationship was not statistically significant. These findings suggest that although students who perceived greater support from their classmates tended to report higher speaking confidence, classmate support alone was insufficient to establish a statistically significant relationship. Therefore, the findings indicate that speaking confidence may be influenced by a combination of other psychological, instructional, and contextual factors.

The positive direction of the correlation is consistent with the theoretical assumption that supportive peer relationships contribute to students' willingness to communicate in English. Classmates can provide emotional encouragement, constructive feedback, and opportunities for collaborative learning, all of which may help students feel more comfortable expressing their ideas during speaking activities. When students perceive that their classmates are supportive rather than judgmental, they are generally more inclined to be actively involved in classroom interactions and speaking activities. discussions and speaking tasks because positive interpersonal relationships foster students' engagement, emotional security, and willingness to communicate (Wang & Derakhshan, 2023; Derakhshan & Zare, 2023). Although the relationship identified in this study was not statistically significant, the positive coefficient suggests that classmate support may still contribute to students' speaking confidence, even if its influence is relatively limited.

The findings obtained in this study are different from several previous studies that reported a positive association between peer support and outcomes related to speaking performance Ayu et al. (2026) found that peer support significantly improved students' speaking proficiency and speaking confidence by encouraging active participation in classroom communication. Similarly, Jabu et al. (2026) reported that supportive peer interaction motivated students to practice

speaking more frequently and confidently. Wu & Kang (2023) also demonstrated that positive peer interaction enhanced students' academic self-concept and confidence during language learning, while Ulpa et al. (2025) confirmed that collaborative classroom environments significantly increased students' speaking confidence. Furthermore Gong (2023) explained that peer-assisted learning promotes students' communication skills through collaborative learning experiences and active classroom participation. Compared with these previous studies, the results of this study did not indicate a statistically significant relationship between classmate support and speaking confidence. As Lee (2022) pointed out, positive classroom experiences play an important role in encouraging learners to communicate more confidently. This difference suggests that the contribution of peer support may vary across educational settings, learner characteristics, and classroom contexts.

One possible explanation for the insignificant result is that speaking confidence is a complex psychological construct that is influenced by multiple factors rather than by classmate support alone. Asnaini et al. (2025) explained that development of self-confidence is shaped by a combination of personal and environmental influences. Personal influences include learners' motivation, self-perception, previous learning experiences, and beliefs regarding their language competence. Environmental influences, on the other hand, encompass the classroom atmosphere, teacher encouragement, and peer relationships. Consequently, although students receive encouragement from their classmates, they may still experience low speaking confidence if they lack intrinsic motivation or possess negative self-perceptions regarding their English ability. This explanation supports the present findings that classmate support alone cannot fully account for variations in students' speaking confidence.

In addition, speaking anxiety may have influenced students' confidence during English speaking activities. Several studies have reported that students who experience afraid of making mistakes and error, fear of negative judgments, and communication anxiety are less willing to take part in speaking activities. Abrar et al. (2020) explained that many students tend to refrain from speaking because they are concerned about making mistakes in grammar or pronunciation and fear negative evaluation from others. Similarly, Aulia et al. (2023) reported that speaking anxiety continues to pose a major challenge to students' oral performance in EFL classroom settings. Therefore, even when students receive positive support from their classmates, feelings of anxiety may still prevent them from speaking confidently. This may explain why the relationship between classmate support and speaking confidence in the present study was positive but not statistically significant.

Another explanation relates to the classroom learning environment. Wang et al. (2024) emphasized that emotional readiness, supportive classroom conditions, and positive learning experiences significantly influence students' speaking performance. Likewise, Astuti et al. (2026) argued that supportive learning environments encourage students to become more confident speakers. a classroom environment that promotes positive peer and teacher support can encourage learners to communicate more confidently in English (Lee, 2022). These findings imply that speaking confidence is not determined solely by classmates' support but also by the overall classroom atmosphere, teaching strategies, and opportunities provided by teachers to practice speaking. Therefore, classmate support may become more effective when combined with interactive teaching methods, constructive teacher feedback, and regular speaking practice.

In addition, the relatively weak correlation found in this study suggests that classmate support should not be viewed as an independent factor influencing speaking confidence. Rather, speaking confidence appears to develop through the interaction of multiple psychological and environmental factors that work simultaneously during the language learning process. This interpretation is consistent with social cognitive perspectives, which emphasize that learners' confidence is shaped through continuous interactions between personal characteristics, social experiences, and learning environments (Wang et al., 2024). Therefore, although supportive classmates may contribute to a positive classroom atmosphere, their influence is likely to be strengthened when accompanied by effective teaching practices, regular speaking opportunities, and students' own motivation to communicate in English

The characteristics of the participants may also have influenced the outcomes of this study. The research involved only 25 eighth-grade students from a single Islamic secondary school in Satun, Thailand. Although total sampling was applied because the population was relatively limited, several participants may have reduced the ability of the statistical analysis to identify subtle relationships between the variables. As a result, a weak association may not have been detected with sufficient statistical certainty. In addition, the findings reflect the experiences of students from only one educational setting. Differences in school culture, classroom practices, and student backgrounds in other institutions may produce different patterns of results. Therefore, caution should be exercised when interpreting or generalizing these findings to other EFL contexts. Future investigations could include participants from a wider range of schools and educational backgrounds while also examining additional variables, such as speaking anxiety, learning motivation, or teacher support. Expanding both the sample size and the research context would offer deeper insights into the factors associated with students' speaking confidence.

Despite the absence of a statistically significant relationship, the findings still provide meaningful implications for English language teaching. Interactions with classmates may still enrich students' learning experiences by encouraging them to communicate, reflect on feedback, and participate more actively during English lessons. Collaborative learning activities, pair work, and group discussions can help reduce students' hesitation and encourage greater participation in classroom communication (Ayu et al., 2026; Isnani & Hapsari, 2026). However, the findings also suggest that teachers should not rely solely on peer support to improve students' speaking confidence. Instead, teachers should adopt comprehensive instructional approaches that simultaneously strengthen students' motivation, reduce speaking anxiety, provide continuous speaking practice, and create an emotionally supportive classroom environment (Wang & Derakhshan, 2023). By integrating psychological support with effective instructional strategies, teachers may better promote students' confidence in speaking English.

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In addition, speaking anxiety may have influenced students' confidence during English speaking activities. Several studies have reported that students who experience afraid of making mistakes and error, fear of negative judgments, and communication anxiety are less willing to take part in speaking activities. Abrar *et al.* (2020) explained that many students tend to refrain from speaking because they are concerned about making mistakes in grammar or pronunciation and fear negative evaluation from others. Similarly, Aulia *et al.* (2023) reported that speaking anxiety continues to pose a major challenge to students' oral performance in EFL classroom settings. Therefore, even when students receive positive support from their classmates, feelings of anxiety may still prevent them from speaking confidently. This may explain why the relationship between classmate support and speaking confidence in the present study was positive but not statistically significant.

Another explanation relates to the classroom learning environment. Wang *et al.* (2024) emphasized that emotional readiness, supportive classroom conditions, and positive learning experiences significantly influence students' speaking performance. Likewise, Astuti *et al.* (2026) argued that supportive learning environments encourage students to become more confident speakers. a classroom environment that promotes positive peer and teacher support can encourage learners to communicate more confidently in English (Lee, 2022). These findings imply that speaking confidence is not determined solely by classmates' support but also by the overall classroom atmosphere, teaching strategies, and opportunities provided by teachers to practice speaking. Therefore, classmate support may become more effective when combined with interactive teaching methods, constructive teacher feedback, and regular speaking practice.

In addition, the relatively weak correlation found in this study suggests that classmate support should not be viewed as an independent factor influencing speaking confidence. Rather, speaking confidence appears to develop through the interaction of multiple psychological and environmental factors that work simultaneously during the language learning process. This interpretation is consistent with social cognitive perspectives, which emphasize that learners' confidence is shaped through continuous interactions between personal characteristics, social experiences, and learning environments (Wang *et al.*, 2024). Therefore, although supportive classmates may contribute to a positive classroom atmosphere, their influence is likely to be strengthened when accompanied by effective teaching practices, regular speaking opportunities, and students' own motivation to communicate in English

The characteristics of the participants may also have influenced the outcomes of this study. The research involved only 25 eighth-grade students from a single Islamic secondary school in Satun, Thailand. Although total sampling was applied because the population was relatively limited, several participants may have reduced the ability of the statistical analysis to identify subtle relationships between the variables. As a result, a weak association may not have been detected with sufficient statistical certainty. In addition, the findings reflect the experiences of students from only one educational setting. Differences in school culture, classroom practices, and student backgrounds in other institutions may produce different patterns of results. Therefore, caution should be exercised when interpreting or generalizing these findings to other EFL contexts. Future investigations could include participants from a wider range of schools and educational backgrounds while also examining additional variables, such as speaking anxiety, learning motivation, or teacher support. Expanding both the sample size and the research context would offer deeper insights into the factors associated with students' speaking confidence.

Despite the absence of a statistically significant relationship, the findings still provide meaningful implications for English language teaching. interactions with classmates may still enrich students' learning experiences by encouraging them to communicate, reflect on feedback, and participate more actively during English lessons. Collaborative learning activities, pair work,

and group discussions can help reduce students' hesitation and encourage greater participation in classroom communication (Ayu et al., 2026; Isnani & Hapsari, 2026). However, the findings also suggest that teachers should not rely solely on peer support to improve students' speaking confidence. Instead, teachers should adopt comprehensive instructional approaches that simultaneously strengthen students' motivation, reduce speaking anxiety, provide continuous speaking practice, and create an emotionally supportive classroom environment (Wang & Derakhshan, 2023). By integrating psychological support with effective instructional strategies, teachers may better promote students' confidence in speaking English.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated the relationship between classmate support and speaking confidence among eighth-grade EFL students at Jareeyatam Islamic Foundation School, Satun, Thailand. A weak positive association was observed between students' perceived classmate support and their speaking confidence ($p = 0.299$). However, the significance value ($p = 0.147$) indicated that the relationship was not statistically significant. Accordingly, the alternative hypothesis was rejected, while the null hypothesis was accepted. These findings indicate that although students who perceived greater classmate support tended to report higher speaking confidence, classmate support alone was not a significant predictor of students' speaking confidence. These results imply that students' speaking confidence cannot be explained by one aspect or attributed solely to peer support. Instead, it is influenced by various factors, including motivation, self-perception, speaking anxiety, classroom environment, and instructional practices. Therefore, improving students' speaking confidence requires comprehensive support that addresses both psychological and instructional aspects of language learning while providing learners with consistent opportunities to practice speaking confidently.

Theoretically, this study provides a meaningful insight into existing body of knowledge on peer support and speaking confidence in EFL contexts, particularly at the secondary school level. Practically, the findings encourage English teachers to create supportive classroom environments, promote collaborative learning, provide regular speaking opportunities, and address students' psychological needs to enhance their confidence in speaking English. Expanding the participant pool and investigating other potential variables would help identify additional factors, such as speaking anxiety, motivation, self-efficacy, and teacher support, to gain deeper insights into the factors that shape students' speaking confidence.

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