

Exploring the Sources of Self-Efficacy Perceived by High-Achieving Students in Speaking Performance

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Abstract

This study explores the sources of self-efficacy in English-speaking performance among high-achieving EFL students. A qualitative case study design was employed involving five eleventh-grade students from a public senior high school in Surabaya, Indonesia. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews to obtain in-depth insights into students' lived experiences in speaking English. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns related to four sources of self-efficacy: enactive mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological and affective states. The findings show that all four sources contribute to the development of self-efficacy, but social persuasion emerges as the most dominant factor. Teacher feedback and parental support significantly strengthen students' confidence in speaking English. Vicarious experience functions in two ways, as it can increase motivation when observing successful peers, but also trigger self-doubt in competitive environments. Enactive mastery experience is strongly shaped by preparation habits and perfectionist tendencies, which may weaken confidence despite high academic achievement. Physiological and affective states such as anxiety and nervousness are commonly experienced but managed through coping strategies and cognitive regulation. The study concludes that self-efficacy among high-achieving students is not only determined by personal achievement but is strongly influenced by social and environmental factors that shape confidence in speaking performance.

Keywords: self-efficacy, speaking performance, EFL, high-achieving students

A. Introduction

In the context of foreign language (L2) acquisition, mastering speaking is widely regarded as a must objective for many learners (Derakhshan & Fathi, 2024). As mastering speaking skills allowing learners to communicate effectively, conveying their thoughts and feelings with others (Benlaghrissi & Ouahidi, 2024). Effective communication is often considered as the focus of language instruction and assessment, making it crucial skills to learn (Zou et al., 2024). Those statements show how important it is to actually learn and master these skills. Despite all of the importance that have been mention before, learners frequently face challenges in order to achieve proficiency in speaking. It is a demanding task for the learners, as they have to face fear of making mistake, nervousness, and lack of vocabulary in the process of developing their skills (Nasution & Nissa, 2024). Considered as one of the highly complexed skills, mastering speaking skills require knowledge of language and discourse (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and discourse) (Wang & Sun, 2024). Even though mastering speaking skills is crucial as it allows learners to communicate effectively; There are obstacles hindering them in the process of achieving speaking proficiency.

To know and fully understand about the difficulties that learners face during the process of mastering speaking skills, it is crucial to know the core components of speaking itself. In the formal assessments frameworks that are usually used, such as in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), usually evaluate speaking skills in four primary dimensions: fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (Hwang et al., 2024). Fluency refers to the ability to speak in a normal speaking rate and articulation rate (Jossinger et al., 2024). Vocabulary relates to the learners' knowledge and understanding on various words in a particular language (Tong et al., 2022). Having a good grammar means that learners' have the capacity to speak with accurate structures and minimal errors (Zou et al., 2024). Finally, pronunciation is a crucial component, as it shows on how well learners can create a sound that convey meaning clearly and correctly (Hoque et al., 2024). This means that to achieve a speaking proficiency, learners should be able to successfully integrate and master all of these related components.

However, possessing these linguistic elements does not automatically mean learners will have a good speaking performance. There are other factors that can hinder learners to achieve speaking proficiency. One of the crucial factors is the learners' self-efficacy (Santoso et al., 2024). Self-efficacy is a psychological concept that has been introduced by Bandura (Leeming et al., 2024). Bandura (1986) defines self-efficacy as a person's judgments of their own capabilities to complete or execute a certain task successfully (Wang & Pan, 2023). Not just the skill that the person's possess, but more about the confident of their own ability to complete the task well (Maheshwari & Kha, 2022). For example, learners with high self-efficacy are more willing to engage in a more difficult activities, putting more effort, and often lead to better outcomes; Whereas in low self-efficacy learners, they will tend to do the opposite things and having self-doubt (Guo et al., 2023). Similarly, high self-efficacy learners tend to continue learning well, completing courses, and have higher learning engagement; where the low self-efficacy learners may lack the confidence in their course, tend to anticipate failure, and leading to make them experience more negative emotions (Wang et al., 2022). This show that self-efficacy serves as an individual belief that significantly influences their motivation, persistence, and their actual performance.

In speaking, self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief on how well their ability to communicate effectively which also contribute as a crucial factor affecting individual's language performance, especially in the context of English as Foreign Language (EFL) (Wang & Sun, 2024). Research has shown that self-efficacy has a positive correlation with speaking achievement (Santoso et al., 2024). Learners with high speaking self-efficacy also tend to contribute more in the learning process, becoming more active rather than passive (Hartono et al., 2023). This relationship between self-efficacy and speaking shows that a learner who believe they can succeed is more likely to perform well, volunteer to answers, engage in teamwork, creating a positive environment around them which can also turn to boost their self-efficacy even more. Furthermore, self-efficacy is closely related to their anxiety and oral communication; As low self-efficacy can negatively impact learners' speaking performance and may lead to hesitation and unwillingness to communicate (Ma, 2022). Therefore, understanding speaking self-efficacy is crucial as it functions as a way to activate learners' participation, skill development, and can directly influence learners' process in achieving speaking proficiency.

Based on its impact in learners' speaking performance, it becomes crucial to understand on how self-efficacy is formed. According to Albert Bandura (1997), self-efficacy belief is constructed through four primary sources: enactive mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasions, and physiological and affective state. Starting from the most influential among all of the sources, enactive mastery experience relates to learners' direct experience of success throughout their life (Özcan & Kültür, 2021). For example, EFL students succeed in delivering short presentation or having a smooth conversation using foreign language can provide real evidence of their ability, which is the strongest way to boost their self-efficacy. The second source is vicarious experience, which involves learners' observation on other learners that they think on the same level as them (Gale et al., 2021). When learners saw others succeed, they are more likely to perform as they feel like they can also do it. Third, social persuasion from others can improve learners' belief in their abilities (Wang & Sun, 2024). Encouragement and positive feedback can significantly strengthen learners' self-efficacy. Last, physiological and affective involve learners' emotional and mood during engaging a task (Febrian et al., 2025). The interplay between all of those sources significantly influences learners' confidence in their speaking performance.

Research on speaking self-efficacy has primarily focused on higher-level learners, such as university or graduate learners, making it irrelevant for lower-level learners like high school and junior high school learners (Nasution & Nissa, 2024; Wang & Sun, 2024; Setiawan et al., 2025). Methodically, there are a significant amount of research uses quantitative method in their research. Correlational des often used to know the relationship between self-efficacy and speaking performance (Derakhshan & Fathi, 2024; Leeming et al., 2024; Santoso et al., 2024; Wang & Sun, 2024). These research shows that there is direct influence between self-efficacy and speaking performance. However, quantitative approach often missed an in-depth learners' perspective on self-efficacy. Many studies have also developed a way to get an in-depth insight about speaking self-efficacy (Hao & Chen, 2024; Nasution & Nissa, 2024; Paradewari, 2017; Tokarz et al., 2022). However, those research uses high level learners as their participant. From those researches, there are still quite a big gap to explore in the area of speaking self-efficacy. That's why this research use case study design to gain an in-depth perspective on the sources of self-efficacy in learners speaking performance and using high school learners as the participant.

The selection of high-achieving students as the primary focus of this study is due to the necessity to identify successful patterns of psychological development in language acquisition. High achievers are often viewed as the "ideal" model of language acquisition due to their ability to self-regulate and sustain motivation (Teng & Zhang, 2016); however, the specific sources that construct their good self-efficacy are often overlooked. By investigating high achievers, this study aims to discover the specific reasons, such as how they interpret mastery experiences or how they internalize feedback that allow them to maintain high performance (Usher & Pajares, 2008). Understanding the sources of self-efficacy in high-achievers can provides a "blueprint" of confidence-building that can be adapted to assist lower-performing students.

The participant of this study was five high achieving eleventh grade students from one public senior high school in Surabaya. The specific selection of the school is due to the quality that the school possessed; by included in the top 10 rank on the best high school in Surabaya for many years. Proving that the quality of the selected school itself is among one of the best in Surabaya. A top-tier school generally produces a great environment that is suitable to create high-achieving students. The five participant of this study also selected by using purposive sampling with the help of the English teacher to determining which EFL high-achieving students is relevant to this topic.

Based on the background of the study, the researcher uses case study design to explore more about speaking self-efficacy in this research. By using case study design, we are able to get an in-depth perspective from learners on their speaking self-efficacy (Zahidi & Ong, 2023). Knowing the sources of self-efficacy that contributing to the speaking performance of high achiever can be make as the benchmark for future teachers to include the sources perceived by the students in the learning process.

B. Methodology

Research Design

This study did comprehensive research in investigating the perception of self-efficacy sources among five high-achieving eleventh-grade EFL students during speaking performances. To thoroughly investigate this phenomenon, the researcher employs a case study design qualitative research. A qualitative approach is most suitable as this research aims to gain a deep and rich understanding of a complex human phenomenon—in this case, the sources of self-efficacy in speaking performance from the students' perspective (Creswell & Guetterman, 2018).

The case study design was specifically chosen because it allows for an in-depth, multifaceted exploration of the central issue within a real-life context (Yin, 2018). As the goal of this research is to explore the primary sources of self-efficacy (enactive mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasions, and physiological and affective states) that contribute to learners' speaking performance, a case study provides the ideal framework to investigate this "case" holistically. This design enables the researcher to gather detailed, narrative data that can illuminate how and why certain experiences shape students' beliefs about their speaking abilities, which a quantitative approach might not fully capture.

Research Setting

This research was conducted in one public senior high school in Surabaya, Indonesia. The school was selected due to its established English language program and its reputation for academic achievement, which ensures access to a pool of high-achieving students who have

substantial experience in English speaking activities. The researcher has also established access to the school, which facilitates the smooth administration of research procedures, including participant recruitment and data collection. This research has been conducted for two weeks at the end of November 2025.

Research Participants

The participants for this study were five eleventh-grade students from the selected senior high school. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, by involving the selection of participants based on their specific characteristics and qualities that are relevant and vital to the study's aims (Cohen et al, 2017). In this study, the participant is selected through a specific category of being high-achievers in English. This was determined through recommendations from the English teacher, based on students who consistently demonstrate strong academic performance, active participation in speaking activities, and high grades in English subjects.

Focusing on high-achieving students allows the research to investigate the nuanced factors that build and sustain self-efficacy among successful learners. Understanding what contributes to their confidence can provide a valuable benchmark for pedagogical strategies aimed at helping all students. To ensure confidentiality and protect the identity of the participants, pseudonyms was used throughout the research report. Participants will be referred to as Student A, Student B, Student C, and so on.

Research Instruments

To ensure the data consistency of this study, a semi-structured interview guideline was used as the main instrument for data collection of this study. Semi-structured interviews guideline is ideal for qualitative studies because they allow the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldviews from the respondents, and new ideas about the topic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The interview guideline concept on how to make an interview guideline for self-efficacy topic in a qualitative case study design were adapted from Usher (2009) and the English self-efficacy related questionnaire in the interview guideline were adapted from Questionnaire of English Self-Efficacy (QESE; Wang, 2004, as cited in Montaña & Cancino, 2020) that have been organized based on Bandura's (1997) four sources of self-efficacy:

1. Enactive Mastery Experience (10 questions): Questions about past successes/failures and preparation.
2. Vicarious Experience (6 questions): Questions about peer observation.
3. Social Persuasion (5 questions): Questions about feedback from teachers/peers/significant other.
4. Physiological State (5 questions): Questions about anxiety and emotional feelings while speaking.

Data Collection Technique

The data was collected through a semi-structured interview. This method was chosen because it provides a balance between structure and flexibility. The semi-structured interview allows the researcher to ask follow-up questions to gain a deeper understanding from the participant response. The interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' explicit verbal consent to ensure accurate transcription and analysis. The interview questions are designed to align directly with the research objective of identifying the source of self-efficacy.

Each interview was conducted individually in a quiet and private room at the school to ensure comfort and minimize distractions. Each session takes approximately 15-25 minutes. Before starting, the researcher restated the purpose of the interview and verbally ask for permission to use an audio recorder. The interviews conducted the interview in Bahasa Indonesia to allow participants to express their thoughts and feelings as clearly and comfortably as possible.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the interviews was analysed using thematic analysis. This method is highly suitable for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It allowed the researcher to systematically organize the interview transcripts and interpret the data in relation to the research question. The analysis was following the six-phase process proposed by Braun and Clarke:

1. Familiarizing with the data: This phase involves transcribing all audio-recorded interviews into text, reading the transcripts multiple times, and making initial notes to become deeply immersed in the data.
2. Generating initial codes: The researcher systematically code interesting features across the entire data, identifying segments of text that are relevant to the sources of self-efficacy.

Table Initial Codes

Code	Meaning
S	"S" stands for "Student" (Participant) and the number is the subject's count in order (e.g., S1, S2, S3)
SSE	Sources of Self-Efficacy
MSS	Most Significant Source

3. Searching for themes: This stage involves collating the various codes into potential overarching themes. The analysis was guided by Bandura's (1997) theoretical framework, with initial themes expected to align with the four sources of self-efficacy.

Table Theme Codes

Themes	Sub-theme	Code	Meaning
Sources of Self-Efficacy	Enactive Mastery Experience	SSE/EME/PRE	Preparation & understanding the material
		SSE/EME/PRA	Practice routine
		SSE/EME/EXP	Past performance experience
		SSE/VE/POS	Positive impact
	Vicarious Experience	SSE/VE/NEG	Negative impact
		SSE/SP/TEA	Feedback from teachers
		SSE/SP/PER	Feedback from peers
		SSE/SP/FAM	Feedback from family
	Physiological & Affective State	SSE/PAS/ANX	Anxiety/nervousness
		SSE/PAS/COP	Coping strategies
Conclusion	-	MSS	Most significant source

4. Reviewing themes: The researcher reviewed the potential themes against the coded extracts and the full data set to ensure they are coherent, consistent, and accurately represent the participants' experiences.
5. Defining and naming themes: Once the themes are finalized, the researcher refined the specifics of each theme, identifying the "story" that each one tells. Final names for each theme were decided at this stage.
6. Producing the report: The final phase involves writing the narrative of the analysis. This include presenting the extracts from the interviews to support the themes and interpreting the findings in the context of the research question and existing literature on self-efficacy.

Trustworthiness

Ensuring the accuracy of the findings of this research is crucial. To establish the quality of this study, the researcher adopts the criteria of trustworthiness and employs specific validation strategies by Creswell (2013) and Merriam (2009)

1. Credibility

Credibility refers to how the research findings accurately represents the participants' reality. As this study explores the internal psychological state of self-efficacy in high-achieving students, ensuring that the researcher's interpretation of the data aligns with the students' actual experiences is crucial.

To achieve credibility, the researcher used Member Checking. This is the most critical strategy for establishing internal validity in qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). After analysing the interview data and identifying the themes, the researcher shared these interpretations with the participants. All of the participants were asked to confirm whether the findings accurately reflect their personal experiences. This ensures that the conclusions of this research are drawn directly from the participants' perspective rather than just the researcher assumption.

2. Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability ensures that the research process is consistent, while confirmability ensures that the findings are based on the data rather than researcher opinion. To address both criteria,

the researcher maintains a detailed Audit Trail (Merriam, 2009). This involves in documenting the research process, including raw data, data reduction, and process notes.

This transparent documentation allows an external observer to trace the researcher's logic from the raw interview data to the final conclusions, ensuring the study's findings are both dependable and confirmable.

C. Findings And Discussion

Findings

The research participants were five eleventh-grade students (S1–S5) identified as high achievers in English at one public senior high school in Surabaya. The data analysis reveals that while all four sources of self-efficacy are operative, their manifestation is uniquely shaped by the students' high-achieving status and the cultural context. The findings are detailed in the following subsections. The findings are categorized based on Albert Bandura's (1997) four sources of self-efficacy: Enactive Mastery Experience, Vicarious Experience, Social Persuasion, and Physiological and Affective States.

Enactive Mastery Experience

Enactive Mastery Experience is theoretically placed as the most influential source of self-efficacy, derived from personal experiences of success or failure. For the participants in this study, mastery experience was not a static historical record but a dynamic process involving preparation and understanding the material, practice routines, and the interpretation of past performance.

Preparation & Understanding the Material:

The findings indicate that for high-achieving students, "preparation" serves as an agent for mastery. The confidence to speak is often constructed before the speaking event through distinct preparatory behaviours. The participants exhibited two contrasting approaches to preparation: understanding the concepts and organizing the phases.

S1 and S4 demonstrated a preference for understanding the concepts. They prioritized understanding the core message over memorizing scripts, suggesting a high level of communicative competence where "mastery" is defined by ownership of the content rather than textual reliance.

"Jujur untuk presentasi itu saya langsung bicara... Paham intinya. Saya tidak terlalu suka membaca teks panjang."

"To be honest, for presentations, I just speak directly... I understand the core point. I don't really like reading long texts." (S1/SSE/EME/PRE)

S1 statement, "I just speak directly," reflects a self-efficacy built on linguistic adaptability. S1 mastery experience is derived from the successful retrieval of internalized knowledge ("*paham intinya*") during real-time performance. Similarly, S4 relies on a "mental outline," rejecting physical aids in favor of cognitive mapping.

"Aku tuh langsung paham gitu loh urutan materiku sendiri... tapi enggak aku coba tulis secara fisik. Aku di dalam ini aja, dalam kepala aja."

"I immediately understand the sequence of my own material... but I don't try to write it down physically. I just keep it in here, just in my head." (S4/SSE/EME/PRE)

S4 reliance on his "head" rather than physical notes indicates a strong belief in S4 cognitive processing speed and organizational skills. For S4, the mastery experience is the act of successfully navigating his own mental map under pressure.

In contrast, S5 employs organizing the phases as a mechanism for mastery. S5 efficacy is built upon highly organized phases for the speaking task.

"Jadi untuk menyusun outline-nya, itu yang pertama dibagi dulu jadi tiga fase. Yang pertama fase awal, yang kedua fase inti, dan yang ketiga fase akhir."

"So to arrange the outline, first it is divided into three phases. The first is the initial phase, the second is the core phase, and the third is the final phase." (S5/SSE/EME/PRE)

S5 approach transforms the abstract threat of "speaking" into manageable, conquerable units ("phases"). By mastering each phase sequentially, S5 constructs a sense of efficacy. This finding suggests that for some high achievers, mastery is architectural; confidence is built through the thorough structuring of the performance.

However, the findings also highlight the fragility of efficacy based on preparation. S3 and S2 indicated that incomplete preparation is interpreted as a direct failure of mastery.

"Tergolong buruk karena persiapannya kurang matang... Karena tidak bekerja sama dengan tim saya, saya tidak berlatih bersama."

"Classified as bad because the preparation was not mature... Because I didn't work together with my team, I didn't practice together." (S3/SSE/EME/PRE)

"Soalnya kan topiknya itu kalau kita mau presentasi itu kan kita harus benar-benar memahami 100%."

"Because the topic is, if we want to present, we have to really understand it 100%." (S2/SSE/EME/PRE)

S2 insistence on "100%" understanding reflects the perfectionist tendencies often observed in high achievers. This perfectionism acts as a gatekeeper for self-efficacy; if mastery is not absolute, efficacy remains dormant.

These findings demonstrate that for high-achieving students, preparation functions as the essential foundation for mastery and self-efficacy. These students generally use two different strategies (understanding the concepts and organizing the phases). Some rely on a mental outline to speak naturally without any physical notes, while the others rely to break the speech down into smaller phases that are manageable. However, because high-achieving students tend to be perfectionists, their efficacy is shown to be quite fragile. Where if their preparation is less than "100%" complete, they might see it as a total failure.

Practice Routines:

The participants engaged in self-practice routines. These routines allowed them to simulate mastery in a safe and low-pressure environment, building the efficacy required for the actual public performance.

S1 practice routines utilized self-talk and practicing conversation against a wall to simulate interaction.

"Jadi saya ngobrol seperti ke diri saya sendiri, terhadap tembok, kayak ya... terus mulai ngobrol Inggris."

"So I talk to myself, against the wall, like yeah... then start chatting in English." (S1/SSE/EME/PRA)

This "wall talk" strategy removes the social variable, allowing S1 to focus entirely on linguistic accuracy and fluency. It provides a private arena where S1 can experience the "mastery" of speaking without the threat of judgment.

S4 incorporated visual feedback into practice, using a mirror to monitor the non-verbal delivery.

"Salah satu caranya tuh di depan cermin, biar ya aku tahulah gimana cara aku terlihat ketika presentasi."

"One way is in front of a mirror, so I know how I look when presenting." (S4/SSE/EME/PRA)

S4 concern with "how I look" suggests that for high achievers, speaking competence is multimodal, encompassing both verbal and non-verbal mastery. S4 efficacy is supported by verifying that the visual performance matches the internal standards.

S3 focused the practice on vocabulary, treating its acquisition as a micro-mastery experience.

"Saya coba cari tahu kata-kata yang saya enggak familiar, lalu saya perdalam, dan saya coba praktikkan cara penggunaan katanya."

"I try to find out words I'm not familiar with, then I deepen [my understanding], and I try to practice how to use the word." (S3/SSE/EME/PRA)

S3 strategy is remedial. By identifying and conquering unfamiliar words, S3 converts potential linguistic threats into mastered assets.

The findings show that students use self-practice routines to build confidence in a safe, low-pressure environment before their actual performance. This solitary preparation allows them to simulate success without the fear of an actual audience. Different students focus on different needs: S1 talks to a wall to focus purely on fluency without judgment, S4 uses a mirror to perfect body language and visual presentation, and S3 focuses on mastering difficult vocabulary to turn potential weaknesses into strengths. Ultimately, these self-practice routines help them verify their skills and ensure they feel fully ready for the actual presentation.

Past Performance Experience:

The analysis reveals a diversity in how past experiences translate into current self-efficacy. While some students viewed past performance as a foundation of "habit," others experienced a disconnect where past success did not guarantee current confidence.

S2 described past experience as a process of habituation.

"Soalnya karena semakin sering kita latihan presentasi... jadi kebiasa. Jadi kayak pas di masa depannya tuh udah nggak grogi-groggi lagi."

"Because the more often we practice presentations... It has become a habit. So like in the future, we aren't nervous anymore." (S2/SSE/EME/EXP)

For S2, the sheer volume of past mastery experiences reduces the physiological stress response (*"nggak grogi-grogi lagi"*).

S5 and S4 traced their mastery back to early childhood experiences in public speaking contests and religious sermons.

"Saya sudah melakukan presentasi itu sejak waktu SD... karena saya dulu disuruh untuk menceritakan sebuah dongeng, jadi saya sudah terbiasa untuk maju ke depan."

"I have been doing presentations since elementary school... because I used to be told to tell a fairy tale, so I am used to coming to the front." (S5/SSE/EME/EXP)

"SD itu enggak bisalah ngomong depan banyak orang... tapi sekarang tuh alhamdulillah bisa... karena apa... aku mengikuti lomba-lomba... seringkali ngisi khutbah juga."

"In elementary school, I couldn't speak in front of many people... but now, Alhamdulillah, I can... because of what... I participated in competitions... often gave sermons too." (S4/SSE/EME/EXP)

These accounts suggest that "Enactive Mastery" for high achievers often extends beyond the classroom. Extracurricular achievements (competitions & sermons) building a strong efficacy that supports their academic performance.

However, S1 presented a contradictory finding. Despite being a high achiever, S1 reported that past experience did not eliminate insecurity.

"Sebaliknya sih. Soalnya saya untuk presentasi selalu gimana ya... nggak PD gitu."

"Actually the opposite. Because for presentations I always... how to say it... I am not confident." (S1/SSE/EME/EXP)

S1 case illustrates that mastery experience is subjectively interpreted. Objective success (high grades) does not automatically translate to high self-efficacy (*"nggak PD"*) if the student has a high level of perfectionism or they feel like they aren't actually good enough.

The findings reveal a contradiction in how past experiences shape a students' efficacy. For most of the participants, frequent practice and early exposure such as childhood storytelling competitions or giving sermons turned public speaking into a comfortable habit, proving that success outside the classroom builds a strong foundation for academic performance. However, this is not true for everyone; as seen with S1, having a history of high achievement does not guarantee confidence. If a student is a perfectionist or feels they aren't good enough, they may still feel insecure despite their good grades, showing that true confidence comes from how a student feels internally, not just from the results they see on paper.

Table Enactive Mastery Experience

Participant	Key Finding	Translated Supporting Quote
S1	S1 relies on fluency and understanding of the materials rather than physical scripts. S1 has a practice routine of self-talk or against the wall to improve S1's fluency. S1 also fails to convert past success into confidence.	<i>"To be honest, for presentations, I just speak directly... I understand the core point. I don't really like reading long texts."</i> <i>"So I talk to myself, against the wall, like yeah... then start chatting in English."</i> <i>"Actually the opposite. Because for presentations I always... how to say it... I am not confident."</i>
S2	S2 has an extreme perfectionism regarding preparation, demanding absolute mastery towards the materials. S2 also views accumulated experience as the primary mechanism in neutralizing anxiety.	<i>"Because the topic is, if we want to present, we have to really understand it 100%."</i> <i>"Because the more often we practice presentations... It has become a habit. So like in the future, we aren't nervous anymore."</i>
S3	S3 stated that incomplete team preparation directly leads to failure. S3 also utilize vocabulary practice, especially towards hard words that S3 doesn't understand yet.	<i>"Classified as bad because the preparation was not mature... Because I didn't work together with my team, I didn't practice together."</i> <i>"I try to find out words I'm not familiar with, then I deepen [my understanding], and I try to practice how to use the word."</i>
S4	S4 has an advance cognitive mapping to understand the	<i>"I immediately understand the sequence of my own material... but I don't try to write it</i>

Participant	Key Finding	Translated Supporting Quote
	materials. Beside that, S4 also practicing in front of a mirror to confirm both linguistic and physical performance are correct. S4 gain high efficacy from past experience, such as competitions and sermons.	<i>down physically. I just keep it in here, just in my head.</i> <i>"One way is in front of a mirror, so I know how I look when presenting."</i> <i>"In elementary school, I couldn't speak in front of many people... but now, Alhamdulillah, I can... because of what... I participated in competitions... often gave sermons too."</i>
S5	S5 constructs self-efficacy by breaking the task into manageable sequential phases. S5 also draws confidence from childhood storytelling presentations.	<i>"So to arrange the outline, first it is divided into three phases. The first is the initial phase, the second is the core phase, and the third is the final phase."</i> <i>"I have been doing presentations since elementary school... because I used to be told to tell a fairy tale, so I am used to coming to the front."</i>

Vicarious Experience

Setelah dataset disimpan dalam tipe RIS (*Riset Information Systems*) menggunakan metadata *Publish or Perish*, selanjutnya dataset dianalisis menggunakan aplikasi Vosviewer dengan memilih opsi data 'create a map based on text data', dengan tujuan untuk membuat jaringan atau hubungan term (

Vicarious Experience, the observation of others, emerged as a complex source of efficacy. For high-achieving students, peers served simultaneously as sources of competitive motivation, instructional models, and comparison anxiety.

Positive Impact:

Several participants reframed social comparison as a motivational tool rather than a source of discouragement. This "Competitive Motivation" is characteristic of students who view ability as malleable (growth mindset).

S2 explicitly stated that peer success gives motivation to improve.

"Jadi menurutku nggak bikin kepercayaan diriku down, jadi tuh lebih kayak memotivasi aku sendiri buat jadi lebih bagus dari dia."

"So I think it doesn't make my confidence go down, so it's more like motivating myself to be better than them." (S2/SSE/VE/POS)

S2 use of the phrase "better than them" acknowledges the competitive context but positions it as a driver for self-improvement. Similarly, S1 adopts an instructional lens.

"Kalau misal dia katanya bagus banget saya bisa terinspirasi dari kata-katanya, terus untuk meng-improve presentasiku nantinya."

"If for example what they say is really good, I can be inspired by their words, then improve my presentation later." (S1/SSE/VE/POS)

S1 extracts specific linguistic features ("kata-katanya") from successful models, using vicarious experience to scaffold S1's technical mastery.

S5 employs logical affirmation to bolster efficacy when observing peers.

"Jika orang lain bisa kenapa saya tidak bisa. Karena itulah prinsip percaya diri saya, itu mengalahkan rasa insecure."

"If others can, why can't I? Because that is my principle of confidence, it defeats the feeling of insecurity." (S5/SSE/VE/POS)

S5 effectively uses the similarity attribute of vicarious experience—reasoning that since peers share S5's background and constraints, their success proves that success is accessible to S5 as well.

Participants also derived efficacy from analyzing the mistakes of others. This "learning from failure" allowed them to refine their own strategies.

S4 engaged in internal correction of peer errors.

"Aku dalam hati tuh bilang... 'wah seharusnya salah ini. Harusnya tuh ngomongnya tuh kayak gini gini'."

"I say in my heart... 'wow this should be wrong. It should be spoken like this and this'." (S4/SSE/VE/POS)

This process validates S4's own knowledge base; by identifying an error, S4 confirms S4 own competence. Similarly, S3 used peer mistakes as a "checklist" for avoidance.

"Saya mencoba mencatat poin-poin apa yang mereka miss tadi... agar kelompok saya tidak mengulangi kesalahan yang sama."

"I try to note down what points they missed earlier... so that my group does not repeat the same mistakes." (S3/SSE/VE/POS)

S3 trying to take notes on the other peer mistakes. By learning from peer mistakes, S3 will make sure that S3 won't make the same mistakes as the other.

The findings show that students use the success of others as motivation instead of letting it discourage them. Rather than feeling intimidated, they view their classmates' achievements as a push to do better. For example, S2 uses competition to try to outperform others, while S1 treats it as a study opportunity, listening to good speakers to learn new words. S5 uses a simple logic to beat insecurity: "If they can do it, why can't I?" Interestingly, seeing others make mistakes also helps; S4 feels more competent by knowing how to fix those errors in their head, while S3 uses those mistakes as a checklist of what *not* to do, turning observation into a practical strategy for improvement. Ultimately, these students see the success of others not as a threat, but as proof that they can succeed too.

Negative Impact:

Conversely, the high-pressure environment led some participants to interpret peer success as a threat.

S4 candidly admitted to feelings of inferiority (*minder*) and rivalry.

"Jujur iya sih... Kayak mungkin kita agak apa ya... agak ngerasa... minder dan tersaingi gitu loh."

"Honestly yes... Like maybe we feel a bit... feel... inferior (minder) and rivaled." (S4/SSE/VE/NEG)

The term "*tersaingi*" (rivaled) highlights that in a cohort of high achievers, the success of one can be interpreted as the relative failure of another, diminishing self-efficacy.

S3 experienced vicarious experience as a trigger for self-doubt.

"Saya tipe orang yang nervous karena merasa bahwa 'saya bisa enggak ya?' kayak gitu."

"I am the type of person who is nervous because I feel that 'can I do it?' like that." (S3/SSE/VE/NEG)

S3 found that watching other students actually triggered self-doubt. S3 became nervous and started questioning their own abilities, asking, "Can I really do that?"

These findings show that the high-pressure environment caused some students to see their classmates' success as a threat rather than a motivation. S4 admitted to feeling "inferior" and viewed peers as rivals, suggesting that for high achievers, another person's success can feel like a personal failure. Similarly, S3 found that watching others triggered anxiety rather than confidence, causing them to question their own ability to perform.

Table Vicarious Experience

Participant	Key Findings	Translated Supporting Quote
S1	S1 treats peer excellence not as a psychological threat, but as a direct resource to understand new vocabulary.	<i>"If for example what they say is really good, I can be inspired by their words, then improve my presentation later."</i>
S2	S2 directs the stress of social comparison into competitive motivation, using high standards of other high-achieving students as a benchmark to elevate S2 own performance.	<i>"So I think it doesn't make my confidence go down, so it's more like motivating myself to be better than them."</i>
S3	S3 uses visible failures of peers as a checklist to prevent S3's group from making the same errors. However, S3 immediately experiencing self-doubt when viewing peer success.	<i>"I try to note down what points they missed earlier... so that my group does not repeat the same mistakes."</i> <i>"I am the type of person who is nervous because I feel that 'can I do it?' like that."</i>
S4	S4 manages to validate internal competence by actively criticizing and correcting peers' failure in S4's head. However, S4 feels threatened by peer	<i>"I say in my heart... 'wow this should be wrong. It should be spoken like this and this'."</i> <i>"I am the type of person who is</i>

Participant	Key Findings	Translated Supporting Quote
	success in a competitive ecosystem.	<i>nervous because I feel that 'can I do it?' like that."</i>
S5	S5 feels confident when viewing peers excellence, driving an internal competitive motivation to perform.	<i>"If others can, why can't I? Because that is my principle of confidence, it defeats the feeling of insecurity."</i>

Social Persuasion

Social Persuasion—feedback, encouragement, and validation—was identified as a profoundly influential source. The findings suggest that for these students, efficacy is socially mediated; external validation is required to activate internal confidence.

Feedback from Teachers:

Teacher feedback was universally perceived as the most potent form of persuasion. Positive feedback provided emotional relief and confirmed the student's status as a high achiever.

S1 described the physical relief brought by teacher praise.

"Very good, it is good. Yeah very good, very good."... "Apresiasi dari guru... Lega."

"Very good, it is good. Yeah very good, very good."... Appreciation from the teacher... Relieved." (S1/SSE/SP/TEA)

The word *"Lega"* (Relieved) indicates that the performance was accompanied by significant tension, which only dissipated upon external validation.

S4 emphasized the importance of public validation.

"Mereka bilang 'luar biasa, berikan tepuk tangan'... perasaanku tuh terasa nyaman aja gitu kayak 'hhuuh alhamdulillah lega'."

"They said 'extraordinary, give a round of applause'... my feeling was just comfortable like 'hhuuh alhamdulillah relieved'." (S4/SSE/SP/TEA)

S4 showed that getting praise in front of others is very important. Hearing applause and words like "extraordinary" gave S4 a deep sense of relief and comfort, acting as immediate proof that the presentation went well.

S2 and S5 viewed teacher feedback as constructive affirmation, helping them calibrate their self-assessment.

"Aku udah dapat kayak pencerahan, kayak 'kamu ini udah bagus, tapi mungkin bisa ditingkatin lagi.'"

"I got like an enlightenment, like 'you are already good, but maybe it can be improved again.'" (S2/SSE/SP/TEA)

S2 and viewed teacher feedback as positive and helpful guidance. For S2, it was an "enlightenment" that confirmed that S2 was already doing a good job, while also showing them exactly where S2 could improve.

"Feedback positif itu memberikan afirmasi kepada saya... bahwasanya memang saya sudah berada di titik yang di atas rata-rata."

"Positive feedback gives affirmation to me... that indeed I am already at a point that is above average." (S5/SSE/SP/TEA)

S5 explicitly uses feedback to confirm his "above average" status, linking social persuasion directly to S5 identity as a high achiever.

These findings show that teacher feedback was seen as the most powerful way to build confidence. For students like S1 and S4, praise when given in front of the class provided immediate emotional relief, washing away their stress and making them feel safe and "comfortable." For others, like S2 and S5, the feedback served a more practical purpose: it acted as an "enlightenment" that guided them on how to improve while confirming their identity as "above average" students. Ultimately, teacher approval didn't just encourage them; it validated their status as high achievers.

Feedback from peers:

Peer persuasion functioned both as a booster and a source of anxiety. S2 experienced a significant boost when peers placed her in the role of a teacher.

"Wow kamu bahasa Inggrisnya bagus ya, mau minta ajarin aku dong."

"Wow your English is good, can you teach me please." (S2/SSE/SP/PER)

Being asked to teach is a definitive social proof of mastery. However, S4 identified a negative form of peer persuasion: the "Grammar Police."

"Soalnya aku punya temanku yang apa ya... istilahnya tuh police verb gitulah... setiap aku coba ngomong English mereka tuh selalu benerin gitu."

"Because I have a friend who is what... the term is grammar police... every time I try to speak English they always correct it." (S4/SSE/SP/PER)

This hyper-correction creates an environment of surveillance, where the fear of making a mistake in front of peers ("grammar police") inhibits spontaneity and efficacy.

The findings show that feedback from classmates acts as a double-edged sword. It can be a powerful confidence booster, as seen with S2, who felt validated when peers asked to be taught, serving as social proof of her expertise. However, it can also be a source of anxiety, as S4 described the "Grammar Police" friends who constantly correct mistakes which creates a pressure-filled environment that makes students afraid to speak naturally.

Feedback from family:

Family support provided a foundational layer of persuasion. S4 mentioned the encouragement from mother.

"Ibuku selalu menekankan untuk always try to speaking English."

"My mother always emphasizes to always try to speak English." (S4/SSE/SP/FAM)

The findings also highlight the role of family as a crucial foundation for confidence. S4 specifically mentioned his mother's constant encouragement to "always try to speak English." This suggests that a supportive home offers a safe space where students can take risks without fear, providing a necessary balance to the often critical and high-pressure environment of the school.

Table Social Persuasion

Participant	Key Findings	Translated Supporting Quote
S1	S1 requires explicit praise from teacher to release the stress and tension from performing speaking task.	<i>"Very good, it is good. Yeah very good, very good.'... Appreciation from the teacher... Relieved."</i>
S2	S2 interprets teacher feedbacks as a constructive tool that boost self-efficacy. Besides that, S2 also gain self-efficacy from becoming a tutor figure by struggling peers.	<i>"I got like an enlightenment, like 'you are already good, but maybe it can be improved again.'"</i> <i>"Wow your English is good, can you teach me please."</i>
S3	S3 views teacher feedback through a cold, objective instruction that to refining content depth and accuracy, rather than seeking validation.	<i>"Just asked to add materials that haven't been mentioned... and deepen the material."</i> <i>"I just use it as an evaluation if I need to deepen the material with my group"</i>
S4	S4 views teacher praise as an emotional safety that can give immediate comfort. S4 also get supports from S4's mother that emphasize to use English. However, the appearance of peer "grammar police" create a toxic environment that directly suffocates S4's spontaneous speaking.	<i>"They said 'extraordinary, give a round of applause'... my feeling was just comfortable like 'hhuuh alhamdulillah relieved'."</i> <i>"Because I have a friend who is what... the term is grammar police... every time I try to speak English they always correct it."</i> <i>"My mother always emphasizes to always try to speak English."</i>
S5	S5 relies on teacher validation to explicitly confirm and protect S5's identity and ego as an "above average" top tier student.	<i>"Positive feedback gives affirmation to me... that indeed I am already at a point that is above average."</i>

Vicarious Experience, the observation of others, emerged as a complex source of efficacy. For high-achieving students, peers served simultaneously as sources of competitive motivation, instructional models, and comparison anxiety.

Positive Impact:

Several participants reframed social comparison as a motivational tool rather than a source of discouragement. This "Competitive Motivation" is characteristic of students who view ability as malleable (growth mindset).

S2 explicitly stated that peer success gives motivation to improve.

"Jadi menurutku nggak bikin kepercayaan diriku down, jadi tuh lebih kayak memotivasi aku sendiri buat jadi lebih bagus dari dia."

"So I think it doesn't make my confidence go down, so it's more like motivating myself to be better than them." (S2/SSE/VE/POS)

S2 use of the phrase "better than them" acknowledges the competitive context but positions it as a driver for self-improvement. Similarly, S1 adopts an instructional lens.

"Kalau misal dia katanya bagus banget saya bisa terinspirasi dari kata-katanya, terus untuk meng-improve presentasiku nantinya."

"If for example what they say is really good, I can be inspired by their words, then improve my presentation later." (S1/SSE/VE/POS)

S1 extracts specific linguistic features ("kata-katanya") from successful models, using vicarious experience to scaffold S1's technical mastery.

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This process validates S4's own knowledge base; by identifying an error, S4 confirms S4 own competence. Similarly, S3 used peer mistakes as a "checklist" for avoidance.

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The findings show that students use the success of others as motivation instead of letting it discourage them. Rather than feeling intimidated, they view their classmates' achievements as a push to do better. For example, S2 uses competition to try to outperform others, while S1 treats it as a study opportunity, listening to good speakers to learn new words. S5 uses a simple logic to beat insecurity: "If they can do it, why can't I?" Interestingly, seeing others make mistakes also helps; S4 feels more competent by knowing how to fix those errors in their head, while S3 uses those mistakes as a checklist of what *not* to do, turning observation into a practical strategy for improvement. Ultimately, these students see the success of others not as a threat, but as proof that they can succeed too.

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Feedback from family:

Family support provided a foundational layer of persuasion. S4 mentioned the encouragement from mother.

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"My mother always emphasizes to always try to speak English." (S4/SSE/SP/FAM)

The findings also highlight the role of family as a crucial foundation for confidence. S4 specifically mentioned his mother's constant encouragement to "always try to speak English." This suggests that a supportive home offers a safe space where students can take risks without fear, providing a necessary balance to the often critical and high-pressure environment of the school.

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S4	S4 views teacher praise as an emotional safety that can give immediate comfort. S4 also get supports from S4's mother that	<i>"They said 'extraordinary, give a round of applause'... my feeling was just comfortable like 'hhuuh alhamdulillah relieved'."</i>

Participant	Key Findings	Translated Supporting Quote
	emphasize to use English. However, the appearance of peer "grammar police" create a toxic environment that directly suffocates S4's spontaneous speaking.	<i>"Because I have a friend who is what... the term is grammar police... every time I try to speak English they always correct it."</i> <i>"My mother always emphasizes to always try to speak English."</i>
S5	S5 relies on teacher validation to explicitly confirm and protect S5's identity and ego as an "above average" top tier student.	<i>"Positive feedback gives affirmation to me... that indeed I am already at a point that is above average."</i>

Physiological and Affective States

Participants reported significant physiological reactions to speaking tasks, including anxiety, tremors, and nausea. However, a key finding is their ability to reframe or regulate these states, preventing them from debilitating performance.

Anxiety/Nervousness:

S5 and S1 reported intense somatic symptoms.

"Setiap hendak mempresentasikan... jantung mendadak berdegup dengan kencang gitu. Jadi ada rasa cemas."

"Every time I'm about to present... the heart suddenly beats fast. So there is a feeling of anxiety." (S5/SSE/PAS/ANX)

S5 describes experiencing sudden physical symptoms of anxiety right before a presentation "jantung berdegup kencang", which immediately triggers a sense of nervousness.

"Cemas, mual, pusing... Biasany kalau cemas, rasa cemas gitu akhirannya lancar sih."

"Anxious, nauseous, dizzy... Usually if I'm anxious, that anxious feeling ends up smooth though." (S1/SSE/PAS/ANX)

S1's observation that anxiety usually precedes a "smooth" performance indicates a cognitive reframing of the symptom. S1 interprets the nausea not as a sign of impending failure, but as a routine precursor to success (facilitative anxiety).

S2 linked anxiety to environmental triggers like noise.

"Sering tiba-tiba nervous gitu kalau sekelilingnya lagi berisik."

"Often suddenly nervous if the surroundings are noisy." (S2/SSE/PAS/ANX)

S2 identified noise as a specific environmental trigger for anxiety. S2 noted that a loud or chaotic environment "sekelilingnya lagi berisik" can suddenly cause feelings of nervousness, showing that external distractions can directly disrupt their internal sense of calm and focus.

The findings show that anxiety affects students physically in different ways. S5 feels a racing heart right before speaking, while S1 experiences severe symptoms like nausea and dizziness. However, S1 interestingly views this sickness as a positive signal, believing that feeling anxious usually means the actual performance will go smoothly. In contrast, S2's nervousness comes from the environment; loud noises or chaos break their focus and suddenly make them feel anxious.

Coping Strategies:

High achievers employed specific strategies to manage physiological arousal. S5 used breathing techniques.

"Yang pertama saya merilekskan diri terlebih dahulu. Tarik napas, terus buang napas."

"First I relax myself. Inhale, then exhale." (S5/SSE/PAS/COP)

S5 relied on simple deep breathing inhaling and exhaling to relax his body, handling these physical nerves before speaking.

S4 used objective self-monitoring (recording) to desensitize himself to his own voice.

"Aku coba seringkali ngomong di depan cermin... terus juga selain itu aku coba merekam suaraku sendiri."

"I often try to speak in front of a mirror... then besides that I try to record my own voice." (S4/SSE/PAS/COP)

S4 managed his nerves by recording his own voice and practicing in front of a mirror. By listening to the recordings and watching himself speak, he got used to how he sounded and looked, making the actual performance feel less strange and scary.

S3 linked her physiological state directly to content mastery.

"Saya merasa nervous dan gugup. Namun untuk materi yang saya merasa saya sudah belajar lama, saya percaya diri."

"I feel nervous. However, for material that I feel I have studied for a long time, I am confident."
(S3/SSE/PAS/ANX)

S3 connected her nervousness directly to how well she prepared. She admitted that she usually feels nervous, but if she has studied the material for a long time, that fear disappears and is replaced by confidence.

The findings show that to handle physical nerves, high-achieving students use specific strategies to stay calm. S5 relies on deep breathing to relax his body before speaking. S4 takes a different approach by recording his voice and practicing in front of a mirror; this helps him get used to how he sounds and looks so the real presentation feels less scary. Meanwhile, S3 manages anxiety through preparation, finding that her nervousness disappears as long as she has studied the material thoroughly.

To accurately identify the hierarchy of influence, participants were asked to name the most significant source of their self-efficacy. The results, summarized in Table 4.1, show a clear dominance of Social Persuasion.

Table Physiological and Affective States

Participant	Key Findings	Translated Supporting Quote
S1	S1 has severe somatic symptoms (nausea, dizziness). However, S1 reframes those symptoms to interpret physical illness as an indicator of impending success.	<i>"Anxious, nauseous, dizzy... Usually if I'm anxious, that anxious feeling ends up smooth though."</i>
S2	S2 demonstrates environmental sensitivity, whereas external noise or classroom chaos instantly disrupts focus and directly triggers nervousness.	<i>"Often suddenly nervous if the surroundings are noisy."</i>
S3	S3 feels nervous before performing speaking task, however S3 uses content mastery and preparation as mechanism to get rid of anxiety.	<i>"I feel nervous. However, for material that I feel I have studied for a long time, I am confident."</i>
S4	S4 employs audiovisual recording practices to become familiar with future speaking performance, thereby reducing anxiety when performing the speaking task.	<i>"I often try to speak in front of a mirror... then besides that I try to record my own voice."</i>
S5	S5 suddenly feels intense beating in S5's chest before doing the speaking task. However, S5 successfully mitigates the physical response through deliberate, controlled respiratory regulation.	<i>"Every time I'm about to present... the heart suddenly beats fast. So there is a feeling of anxiety." "First I relax myself. Inhale, then exhale."</i>

Table Most Significant Source of Self-Efficacy Identified by Participants

Participant	Most Significant Source (MSS)	Supporting Quote (Translation)
S1	Social Persuasion	<i>"Appreciation from the teacher... Relieved."</i>
S2	Social Persuasion	<i>"The feedback part from others... we can get a view of ourselves."</i>
S3	Enactive Mastery Experience	<i>"Preparation... and experience. Because we can't present fluently if we ourselves don't understand what we want to convey."</i>
S4	Social Persuasion	<i>"Response from teachers and parents... Because they give criticism not without reason, but because they want me to develop."</i>
S5	Social Persuasion	<i>"I think the feedback factor is the biggest... it makes our self-confidence increase. And because confidence"</i>

Participant	Most Significant Source (MSS)	Supporting Quote (Translation)
		<i>increases, it also causes learning motivation to increase."</i>
		Four out of five participants identified Social Persuasion as the primary driver of their confidence. S5 explicitly outlined the causal mechanism: feedback increases confidence, which in turn increases motivation. Only S3 prioritized Mastery Experience (Preparation).
		This preference for Social Persuasion challenges the common belief that personal experience is always the most important source of confidence. For these high-achieving students, confidence often relies on external validation. They view their teachers and parents as the "judges" of their success. Even if they prepare well, they do not feel fully confident until an authority figure confirms that they are "good enough."
		In this context, feedback serves two roles: it provides emotional relief (as seen with S1 and S4) and acts as a guide for self-improvement (as seen with S2 and S5). S3 remains the only exception, holding the belief that true confidence comes from the inside. For S3, no amount of praise can replace the security of deeply understanding the material through hard work.

Discussion

This section interprets and contextualizes the findings presented in section 4.1 with the existing theoretical frameworks and the literature review in chapter 2. This study aimed to explore the sources of self-efficacy perceived by high-achieving EFL students and to identify the most significant source that affecting their speaking performance. Self-efficacy is constructed through four primary sources: Enactive Mastery Experience, Vicarious Experience, Social Persuasions, And Physiological and Affective States (Bandura, 1997). However, the findings of this study reveals that self-efficacy is uniquely shaped by the students' high-achieving status.

Social Persuasion

The most astonishing findings of this research is how dominant the identification of Social Persuasion as the most significant source of self-efficacy by four out of five participants. While Bandura's theory often places Enactive Mastery Experience as the most influential source, the reliance on external feedback is directly align with Wang & Sun (2024), who noted that encouragement and positive feedback from credible figured like teachers can significantly strengthen learners' self-efficacy. For these high-achieving students, praise from teacher provide an immediate emotional relief and gives them a validation about their capabilities.

This finding also gives a crucial qualitative depth to previous correlational studies. While research consistently demonstrate a significant positive relationship between students' speaking self-efficacy and their speaking performance (Leeming et al., 2024; Santoso et al., 2024), quantitative often miss the underlying structure. This finding also explains how self-efficacy can sustained through constant social validation. Furthermore, it highlights that peer persuasion can also become a double-edged sword; while positive recognition from peer can boost students' confidence, negative comments from peers can easily damage self-efficacy.

Enactive Mastery Experience

Derived from past experience, Enactive Mastery Experience is theoretically considered the most influential source of self-efficacy because it comes from their own evidence of capabilities. As successful experiences strengthen one's belief in their own abilities (Özcan & Kültür, 2021). However, the findings reveal that high achievers surprisingly possess a fragile sense of self-efficacy driven by their own perfectionism.

This finding directly supporting the assertion by Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) that high performance does not always guarantee high self-efficacy, as some high achievers may suffer from anxiety or perfectionism that threatens their own confidence. For students who insisted on total understanding about the material, objective achievement did not automatically translate into internal self-efficacy. If their mastery was not total, they felt that their success is discounted, demonstrating that past performance alone was insufficient to sustain their confidence without the external validation.

Vicarious Experience

Vicarious Experience involves observing others when performing a task, which raises individuals' beliefs that they also possess the same capabilities to success in comparable activities. For some participants, observing peers served as a powerful tool for social modelling, which also noted on another research by Gale et al. (2021) that seeing similar peer succeed makes learners believe "if they can do it, so can I".

However, high pressure environment in a top-tier school also led some students to see other peer success as a threat that can trigger self-doubt. This shows that for high-achieving learners, observing peers can sometimes destroy their own self-efficacy if the observer engages in negative social comparisons.

Physiological and Affective States

The findings shows that all participants reportedly have experiencing a significant Physiological and Affective States during their speaking performance, such as racing heart or nausea. Individual often see their physical reactions to stress as indicators of their ability (Febrian et al., 2025). When a student experiencing a racing heart, they might interpret it as incompetence, which can lower their self-efficacy. Furthermore, Ma (2022) observed that learners with low self-efficacy are more prone to speaking anxiety.

Yet, high-achieving students in this study demonstrated the ability demonstrated the ability to employ coping strategies to convert their anxiety. By successfully converting some symptoms into facilitative anxiety, they managed to maintain their high speaking performance. This aligns with Zimmerman (2000) characterization of high achievers as students who demonstrate a superior ability to self-regulate their learning processes.

By focusing on the qualitative experiences of high achieving senior high school students, this study successfully addresses the methodological gaps identified in Chapter 2. As previous qualitative and mixed-method studies primarily concentrated on university or graduate-level learners (Nasution & Nissa, 2024; Setiawan et al., 2025). This study provides a blueprint of building confidence for younger high-achievers, especially those in the secondary school, proving that social persuasion frequently seen as the foundation of speaking confidence.

D. Conclusion

This study concluded that even though the four main sources of self-efficacy actively contributing to the high achieving students in the context of EFL speaking performance, the respond to sources are very complex. Enactive Mastery Experience relies on preparation routine and prone to their own perfectionism, which shows when they have incomplete preparation, they will assume it as an immediate failure. Vicarious Experience appear as a double-edge sword that trigger motivation to grow and anxiousness at once. Meanwhile, Physiological and Affective State like nervousness, racing heart, and nausea can be handled by cognitive reframing and specific coping strategies so it won't bother their actual speaking performance.

The most crucial finding in this research is challenging the hierarchy of the main theory by Albert Bandura, proving that Social Persuasion—especially feedbacks, praises, and external validation from teachers and parents are the most dominant source of self-efficacy for high achievers. They need validation from authority figure to neutralize their own doubt and confirms that they really have better ability than average. Without any affirmation from others, their past success failed to be converted into confidence due to the high standard that they set by themselves, resulting in a low self-efficacy.

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