

CONFIDENCE AND SPONTANEITY IN AN INTENSIVE EFL SPEAKING PROGRAM: AN OUTCOME-FOCUSED LOGIC EVALUATION

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ABSTRACT

Confidence and spontaneity are often treated as expected outcomes of EFL speaking programs, yet program evaluations rarely explain how these outcomes are produced, sustained, or limited by classroom processes. Addressing this gap, this study evaluated a Basic Speaking Class through an outcome-focused logic evaluation framework to examine how program inputs, communicative activities, classroom conditions, and immediate outcomes shaped students' oral development. This qualitative evaluative case study involved 12 participants: 10 students, one speaking lecturer, and one program coordinator. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observation with field notes, and program documents, and were analyzed thematically using the logic framework as an analytical lens. The findings show that communicative tasks such as games, role plays, discussions, and problem-solving activities, when supported by peer interaction and responsive feedback, created a less threatening space for students to take risks, speak more willingly, and rely less on memorized scripts. However, these gains were context-dependent. Students' confidence and spontaneity were strongest in low-stakes classroom interaction but weakened in formal academic speaking situations, particularly when vocabulary recycling, task progression, and tutor scaffolding were insufficient. The study contributes to EFL speaking program evaluation by showing that confidence and spontaneity are not automatic indicators of program success, but developmental and fragile outcomes shaped by the alignment between task design, classroom support, and transfer-oriented speaking practice.

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking is often regarded as the most visible indicator of success in learning English, yet it remains one of the most psychologically demanding areas for many EFL learners. Students may understand grammar, complete written assignments, and perform well in

receptive tasks, but still hesitate, pause excessively, or rely on memorized responses when required to speak in real time. For this reason, the quality of an EFL speaking program should not be judged only by whether students speak more frequently at the end of a course. It should also be examined through more meaningful oral outcomes, particularly whether students become more confident in taking communicative risks and more spontaneous in responding to real classroom interaction.

In this study, speaking confidence refers to learners' perceived ability and emotional readiness to express ideas orally despite possible mistakes, limited vocabulary, or audience pressure. It is closely related to speaking self-efficacy, willingness to communicate, and learners' capacity to manage anxiety during oral performance. Speaking spontaneity, meanwhile, refers to learners' ability to respond orally with less dependence on memorized scripts, excessive rehearsal, or mental translation. It does not mean perfect fluency, but rather a learner's growing ability to participate in real-time interaction more naturally, flexibly, and meaningfully. These two constructs are important because EFL speaking development is not only a linguistic matter; it is also shaped by emotional security, interactional opportunity, and classroom conditions.

Recent research on willingness to communicate supports this view by showing that oral participation is not a fixed learner trait, but a dynamic outcome shaped by classroom ecology, interactional opportunities, and learners' affective experiences. Several studies suggest that confidence and spontaneous oral participation can be strengthened when learners are supported through meaningful interaction and psychologically safer speaking opportunities. Liu et al. (2025) for example, found that classroom interaction positively affects willingness to communicate both directly and indirectly through speaking self-efficacy and foreign language enjoyment. Similarly, Hao & Chen (2024) showed that co-regulation strategies in collaborative oral presentations, including co-evaluation, co-monitoring, effort regulation, and help-seeking, can positively shape learners' public speaking self-efficacy. Alhourani et al. (2025) also reported that strategically mediated speaking support can reduce fear of negative evaluation and make learners more comfortable participating in English-speaking activities. Taken together, these studies indicate that confidence and spontaneity are not merely individual traits brought by students into the classroom; they can be pedagogically developed when classroom interaction is carefully structured and emotionally supportive.

However, the development of speaking confidence and spontaneity is not always linear or guaranteed. A more cautious strand of literature shows that active participation does not automatically mean deeper communicative readiness. Kirkpatrick et al. (2024) note that research on willingness to communicate still faces conceptual and methodological tensions, particularly the overreliance on self-report and the tendency to simplify a phenomenon that is highly dynamic and context-sensitive. In the Indonesian university context, Tridinanti (2018) found that speaking confidence and foreign language speaking anxiety are closely connected affective factors. Students with stronger self-confidence may demonstrate better control over anxiety during speaking performance, yet anxiety may still emerge in classroom communication. In a similar vein, Alami (2025) found that embarrassment in English-speaking classes may come from fear of speaking in front of others, mispronunciation, lexical difficulty, and negative comments from teachers or peers. These studies suggest that a speaking class may appear active on the surface while still leaving students hesitant, self-conscious, dependent on rehearsal, or unable to respond naturally in less predictable communication.

This tension creates an important problem for EFL speaking program evaluation. Many evaluations of intensive English programs have focused on general effectiveness, such as whether students' performance improves, whether teaching materials are appropriate, or whether the program runs according to plan. For example, Ningrum & Toyyibah (2022) found that an intensive English course improved students' performance and that its materials,

teaching methods, and assessment were generally appropriate. While such findings are valuable, they do not fully explain how the internal elements of a program work together to shape specific speaking outcomes. In other words, existing evaluations often answer whether a program appears effective, but they provide less explanation of why, how, and under what classroom conditions confidence and spontaneity are actually supported, constrained, or left underdeveloped.

This is the gap addressed in the present study. Rather than treating speaking program effectiveness as a broad final result, this study focuses on the internal logic through which a Basic Speaking Class is expected to support two short-term oral outcomes, namely speaking confidence and speaking spontaneity. The central argument is that more exposure, more tasks, or more classroom talk do not automatically lead to meaningful oral development. What matters is whether program inputs, learning activities, classroom processes, and immediate outputs are coherently connected to the desired outcomes. A program may provide many speaking opportunities, but if those opportunities do not reduce fear, build vocabulary resources, support real-time interaction, and gradually move students beyond scripted performance, the development of confidence and spontaneity may remain partial.

To examine this issue, the study adopts an outcome-focused logic evaluation perspective. A logic model is useful because it makes visible the relationship among program inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes. It allows evaluation to move beyond a simple judgment of whether a program works and toward a clearer explanation of how program elements contribute to particular outcomes. Fuller et al. (2025) show that program logic can function as a practical framework for making these links explicit and for supporting evaluation and research more systematically. At the same time, this study recognizes that logic models are not without limitations. Banks (2025) cautions that program logics can oversimplify complex interventions, underplay external influences, and fail to capture unintended outcomes. This criticism is especially relevant in classroom-based research, where learning is shaped by human interaction, emotion, institutional context, and unexpected classroom dynamics.

Nevertheless, logic evaluation remains appropriate for this study precisely because it helps make program assumptions visible. The framework is not used here to reduce classroom complexity into a rigid linear model. Instead, it is used as an analytical lens to examine whether the design and implementation of the Basic Speaking Class are logically aligned with the expected outcomes of confidence and spontaneity. In this study, the focus is not on evaluating all components of the logic model equally. The main attention is placed on short-term outcomes, while inputs, activities, and outputs are examined only insofar as they help explain how these outcomes emerged, failed to emerge, or developed unevenly. This outcome-focused use of logic evaluation directly responds to the gap in previous studies, which often report program effectiveness without sufficiently explaining the internal conditions that make specific speaking outcomes possible.

Based on this rationale, the study is guided by the following objectives: first, to examine how the Basic Speaking Class is designed and implemented to support students' speaking confidence and spontaneity; second, to analyze how program inputs, communicative activities, classroom processes, and immediate outputs contribute to or constrain these outcomes; and third, to explain why students' confidence and spontaneity may develop unevenly across different speaking conditions. Through these objectives, the study does not aim to generalize broadly to all EFL speaking programs or to measure long-term language development across all skills. Instead, it offers an in-depth evaluation of one intensive EFL speaking program by focusing on two outcomes that are central to real communication.

The contribution of this study is threefold. Empirically, it provides evidence on how an intensive EFL speaking program may create, limit, or unevenly support the conditions for learners to speak more confidently and more spontaneously. Methodologically, it brings an

outcome-focused logic evaluation perspective into EFL speaking research, where program effectiveness is still often treated as a final result rather than as a process shaped by interconnected program elements. Pedagogically, it offers a clearer basis for improving speaking programs by showing that successful oral development depends not only on giving students opportunities to speak, but also on building a coherent program structure that supports communicative risk-taking, reduces dependence on memorization, and encourages more natural participation in real-time interaction.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative evaluative case study design informed by a logic evaluation framework. The case was bound to one Basic Speaking Class as an intensive EFL speaking program, including its selected program inputs, classroom activities, learning conditions, and immediate speaking-related outcomes. It did not evaluate the whole institutional language program, compare the class with other speaking programs, or measure long-term impact beyond the course context. This boundary was important because the study aimed to understand how a particular speaking class worked within its own instructional setting rather than to generalize its effectiveness across all EFL programs. A case study design was therefore appropriate because it allows a holistic understanding of a complex and context-dependent educational phenomenon (Younas & Inayat, 2025). Within this design, the logic evaluation framework functioned as an analytical guide rather than as a full program-evaluation model. It was used to organize and interpret the relationship between selected program elements and the main outcome constructs, namely students' speaking confidence and spontaneity. Thus, the study should be understood as an outcome-focused logic evaluation that traces how program inputs, communicative activities, classroom processes, and support mechanisms contributed to, or constrained, students' short-term oral development. This use of the logic model is consistent with recent program-evaluation research showing that logic models help make explicit the links between program design, activities, and intended outcomes (Fuller et al., 2025).

Participants

The participants were selected through purposive sampling because this qualitative evaluative case study required information-rich participants who had direct experience with the Basic Speaking Class. Participants were considered information-rich if they were directly involved in the program, had experienced its speaking activities and feedback process, and were able to reflect on students' speaking confidence and spontaneity. This study involved 12 participants: 10 students enrolled in the intensive EFL speaking program, 1 speaking lecturer, and 1 program coordinator. The student participants were selected because they had actively participated in the Basic Speaking Class and could provide relevant accounts of their speaking practice, anxiety, vocabulary use, memorization, and spontaneous participation. To support the transferability of the findings, the students represented varied profiles in terms of gender, cohort, speaking proficiency, and prior speaking exposure. They consisted of 3 male and 7 female students from the 2023 and 2024 academic cohorts, with generally intermediate speaking proficiency based on classroom performance and lecturer assessment. In addition, five students had prior experience in English-speaking activities such as English clubs, informal speaking practice, or public speaking activities, while the other five had limited formal speaking experience before joining the program.

The speaking lecturer was included because he directly facilitated the speaking activities, provided feedback, and observed students' classroom participation. The program coordinator was included to provide information about the program's objectives, structure, implementation,

and intended outcomes. Thus, the participants represented three complementary perspectives: student experience, classroom implementation, and program-level planning. The number of participants was considered sufficient for the bounded focus of the study. Although qualitative case studies often involve small but focused samples and may reach theme saturation with around nine interviews in focused inquiries (Bouncken et al., 2025), saturation in this study was assessed through ongoing comparison across interviews, classroom observation, and program documents. Saturation was reached when recurring patterns related to confidence, spontaneity, fear of mistakes, vocabulary limitations, mental translation, and dependence on memorized scripts repeatedly appeared, and the final interviews mainly confirmed rather than generated new themes. Therefore, the 12 participants were considered adequate to provide rich and contextually grounded accounts of the program's short-term outcomes (Wutich et al., 2024).

Instruments

This study used three instruments: a semi-structured interview guide, a classroom observation sheet supported by field notes, and a document analysis checklist. The semi-structured interview guide functioned as the main instrument because it allowed the researcher to explore students' and teachers' views in depth, especially regarding how the intensive EFL speaking program shaped speaking confidence and spontaneity. The observation sheet was used to record how those outcomes appeared in actual classroom interaction, such as students' willingness to respond, their dependence on memorized scripts, hesitation, and participation during speaking tasks. Meanwhile, the document analysis checklist was used to review the syllabus, lesson plans, speaking tasks, and assessment materials in order to see how the intended outcomes of the program were formally represented. This combination was considered appropriate because recent qualitative-methods literature identifies interviews, observations, and documents as core sources for understanding participants' experiences and behaviors, while current evaluation guidance recommends using multiple data sources that are directly aligned with the evaluation questions to strengthen the credibility of the findings (Neupane et al., 2026).

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a qualitative method for identifying, interpreting, and reporting patterns of meaning across a dataset. This method was appropriate because the study examined how the Basic Speaking Class shaped students' speaking confidence and emerging spontaneity through student interviews, teacher and coordinator interviews, classroom observation, and program documentation. Thematic analysis enabled systematic yet flexible interpretation of recurring meanings across these qualitative sources (Nowell et al., 2017).

The analysis started with repeated reading of transcripts, observation notes, and documents to develop a close understanding of the case. Initial coding was conducted inductively by the main researcher, allowing meanings to emerge from the data rather than imposing fixed categories from the beginning. Early codes included "mistake-friendly feedback," "peer support," "speaking without script," "mental translation," "vocabulary limitation," "formal speaking anxiety," and "trainer competence." These codes were then compared, refined, and grouped into broader themes. To strengthen dependability and confirmability, the preliminary coding scheme and emerging themes were reviewed through peer checking with a qualitative research colleague/supervisor. This process was not intended to calculate statistical inter-coder reliability, but to clarify code boundaries, reduce possible researcher bias, and make theme development more transparent, as recommended in thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

The analysis was inductive but also informed by the outcome-focused logic evaluation lens. After initial codes and themes were developed, the logic framework was used to examine how the emerging patterns related to program inputs, activities, outputs, and short-term outcomes. Trainer-made materials, teacher facilitation, tutor competence, and institutional support were interpreted as inputs. Games, role plays, discussions, feedback, and peer interaction were treated as activities and classroom processes. Participation, interaction, speaking attempts, and real-time responses were viewed as immediate outputs, while speaking confidence and spontaneity were examined as short-term outcomes. Thus, the logic framework did not predetermine the themes; rather, it helped explain how program elements supported, constrained, or left underdeveloped the intended outcomes. This was relevant because logic models help evaluators examine whether program resources and activities are coherently connected to intended outputs and outcomes (Frye & Hemmer, 2012).

Trustworthiness was strengthened through triangulation across student interviews, teacher and coordinator interviews, classroom observation, and program documentation. Triangulation was used not to prove the findings statistically, but to compare, confirm, and problematize patterns across sources, consistent with qualitative research principles (Carter et al., 2014; Stahl & King, 2020). For example, students' claims about a supportive classroom climate were compared with the teacher's explanation of mistake-friendly feedback, observation notes on encouragement and non-threatening correction, and documents showing the program's communicative orientation. Similarly, students' claims of improved spontaneity were checked against observed real-time responses as well as contradictory evidence, such as mental translation, vocabulary limitations, and anxiety in formal speaking situations.

The final analysis produced five interconnected themes concerning the program's CLT-based logic, supportive classroom climate, low-stakes spontaneous speaking opportunities, uneven confidence and spontaneity outcomes, and persistent barriers to outcome transfer. The findings were reported cautiously because the study did not use pre-test and post-test speaking scores, a standardized speaking assessment, or longitudinal measurement. Therefore, the analysis does not claim a statistically significant improvement in speaking proficiency. Instead, it presents contextually grounded evidence of self-reported improvement, observed indicators of increased confidence, and emerging but context-bound spontaneity, in line with the interpretive purpose of qualitative research (Busetto et al., 2020).

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

The findings are presented through five themes. To strengthen analytical transparency, each theme is linked to the outcome-focused logic evaluation components: inputs, activities, outputs, and immediate outcomes. In this study, inputs refer to program resources and support systems, activities refer to classroom tasks and instructional practices, outputs refer to students' participation and speaking practice during the program, and outcomes refer to students' emerging confidence and spontaneity. The interpretation in each theme is presented after the evidence from documents, interviews, and classroom observation.

Theme 1. A Coherent CLT-Oriented Program Design with Limited Progression to Formal Speaking

This theme corresponds mainly to the input–activity–outcome link in the logic model. Program documents showed that the Basic Speaking Class was designed with a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) orientation. The documented activities included role plays, discussions, problem-solving tasks, interactive games, and participation-based speaking practice. The program also emphasized fluency, vocabulary use, pronunciation, responsiveness, and confidence. The absence of a prescribed textbook and the use of trainer-

made communicative materials indicated that the class was not organized around grammar memorization, but around meaningful oral interaction. The main inputs identified in the program were teacher facilitation, trainer-made materials, classroom interaction, institutional support, and tutor involvement. These inputs were connected to communicative activities such as games, discussions, role plays, and problem-solving tasks. The expected outputs were student participation, peer interaction, and oral performance practice, while the intended immediate outcomes were speaking confidence and spontaneity.

Interview data supported this documentary evidence. The teacher explained that the early part of the program used games to reduce students' anxiety before they moved into more structured speaking activities:

“At the beginning of the program, the design of activities primarily consisted of games. This was intended to create a comfortable environment where students felt at ease and confident expressing themselves in English.” (Teacher Interview)

This evidence suggests that the communicative orientation of the program was intentional. The program had a visible logic for encouraging students to participate in relaxed classroom interaction. However, the documents and interview data provided less explicit evidence of a staged pathway from informal speaking activities to more formal academic speaking tasks, such as presentations, whole-class speaking, or academic discussion. Therefore, the program logic appeared coherent at the level of CLT-based classroom participation, but less fully developed at the level of outcome transfer to formal academic speaking.

Theme 2. Supportive Classroom Climate as a Foundation for Speaking Confidence

This theme corresponds mainly to the input and classroom condition level of the logic model. Across the interview and observation data, a supportive classroom climate appeared as an important condition that helped students participate more confidently. Students described the class as relaxed, enjoyable, supportive, and non-judgmental. This perception was consistent with the teacher's mistake-friendly approach, in which errors were treated as part of learning rather than as signs of failure.

The teacher used short positive responses such as “good job,” “nice argument,” and “what an amazing performance” when students attempted to speak. Observation data also supported this pattern. During the observed Simon Says session, the teacher provided support without interrupting the flow of the activity:

“The teacher provided scaffolding by using hand gestures at the start to help students understand the words. To avoid over-control, the teacher slowly stopped gesturing as the game went on, forcing students to listen carefully and act independently. Corrections were made through fun demonstrations rather than stopping the flow of the game.” (Observation Field Notes)

The evidence shows that feedback was not only positive, but also carefully sequenced. Student 4 and Student 10 reported that they felt safer when the teacher first appreciated their message and corrected their language later. Peer interaction also contributed to this climate. Observation notes recorded laughter, peer support, and peer modeling during the game. Some students became less afraid of making mistakes after seeing their classmates make errors and continue speaking. At the output level, this supportive climate was reflected in students' willingness to participate, continue speaking after mistakes, and respond to classroom activities with less fear. However, the evidence also shows that classroom climate alone did not remove all speaking barriers. Students still reported limited vocabulary, mental translation, and anxiety in more formal speaking situations. Thus, supportive classroom climate functioned as an

important input condition for confidence, but its effect was strongest when students spoke in familiar and low-stakes classroom interactions.

Theme 3. Communicative Activities Promoted Speaking Participation in Low-Stakes Contexts

This theme corresponds mainly to the activity–output–outcome link in the logic model. The main communicative activities in the program included games, pair work, small-group discussions, role plays, and problem-solving tasks. These activities required students to listen, respond quickly, negotiate meaning, and use available vocabulary without depending fully on prepared scripts. The observed Simon Says session illustrated how classroom activities created immediate speaking opportunities. Students had to listen to commands, process them quickly, and respond physically. During the activity, one student asked, “Teacher, what is this part called?” This moment showed that the student used English to solve an immediate communicative problem. The observation also recorded creative expressions such as “left pinky finger,” indicating that the activity gave students space to experiment with language in a meaningful but low-pressure situation.

Interview data supported this observation. Student 1 explained that problem-solving tasks required group argument without scripts. Student 10, who also acted as a peer trainer, explained that leading Simon Says required instant instruction because she could not fully predict classmates’ responses. Student 4 described the pressure to respond immediately in the following way:

“I didn’t have much time to think or translate in my head, so I had to respond quickly. This ‘forced’ me to use whatever vocabulary I had and helped me become much more spontaneous.” (Student Interview, Student 4)

At the output level, these activities produced visible participation, quick responses, peer interaction, and oral practice. At the outcome level, they supported emerging spontaneity because students were required to respond in real time. However, the evidence of spontaneity was strongest in familiar and low-stakes activities, especially games, pair discussion, small-group interaction, and familiar topics. Formal speaking situations, including presentations, whole-class speaking, and academic talk, remained anxiety-provoking for several participants. Therefore, the program supported spontaneous speaking in classroom interaction, but this spontaneity was still context-bound.

Theme 4. Emerging Confidence and Context-Bound Spontaneity

This theme corresponds to the immediate outcome level of the logic model. Most students reported that they became more confident and more willing to speak English after participating in the Basic Speaking Class. However, because the study did not use standardized speaking scores, pre-test and post-test data, or repeated performance assessment, this outcome evidence should be understood as self-reported improvement supported by observation, not as measured proficiency gain. Before joining the program, students described nervousness, fear of grammar mistakes, pronunciation problems, limited vocabulary, and fear of being judged. Student 1 avoided eye contact when called on. Student 3 reported feeling nervous and lacking confidence. Student 4 understood what others said but struggled to respond. Student 5 feared making mistakes. These accounts show that students’ speaking difficulties were not only linguistic, but also affective and social.

After participating in the program, students reported being more willing to try, less afraid of mistakes, and more accustomed to using English in familiar classroom interaction. The teacher also observed signs of growing confidence, including enthusiasm, initiative, engagement, eye contact, and stronger speaking volume. Observation data provided limited behavioral support for these reports. Students spoke audibly, continued participating after

mistakes, and showed reduced hesitation as the observed session progressed. One field-note moment showed a student making a mistake, laughing, and immediately correcting themselves.

The evidence also showed variation among students. Some students could answer sudden questions or respond in games without preparation. Student 10 described a spontaneous video call with a friend from Brazil as an example of speaking more freely outside the class. However, other students could not recall clear moments of spontaneous speaking or still depended on notes when the topic was difficult. Therefore, the outcome of the program is best described as emerging confidence and context-bound spontaneity, rather than fully developed communicative competence.

Theme 5. Persistent Barriers Limited Outcome Transfer

This theme identifies factors that constrained the movement from classroom outputs to broader speaking outcomes. In the logic model, these barriers show where students' participation and speaking practice did not fully develop into transferable confidence and spontaneity.

The first barrier was mental translation. Several students still translated ideas from Indonesian into English before speaking. Student 4 described translation as the biggest difficulty preventing immediate response, while Student 10 explained that she often stopped herself because she wanted to arrange grammatically correct sentences before speaking. This evidence shows that real-time speaking remained difficult for students who were still processing ideas through Indonesian before producing English.

The second barrier was vocabulary limitation. Students often knew what they wanted to say but could not retrieve the English words quickly. This was visible during the Simon Says session when some students were confused by less familiar body-part vocabulary, such as "ankles." This observation indicates that communicative tasks helped students activate available vocabulary, but they did not fully address the limited lexical range. Without more structured vocabulary activation and recycling, spontaneous speaking remained easier in familiar topics than in unfamiliar or more academic contexts.

The third barrier was the informal-formal confidence gap. Most students felt more confident in games, pair work, small groups, and relaxed activities, but still felt anxious when speaking in front of the whole class or in formal academic situations. Student 10 stated that formal situations made her anxious because grammar mistakes felt less acceptable. This gap is important because the teacher expected the program to help students prepare for formal presentations and thesis examinations. The evidence therefore suggests that the program provided strong support for low-stakes confidence, but less visible support for formal academic speaking readiness.

The fourth barrier was trainer competence. Both the teacher and the coordinator identified tutor competence as a factor affecting program quality. The teacher noted difficulties when the supporting team lacked teaching competence, while the coordinator emphasized that students may have good English skills but may not know how to teach. This distinction is important at the input level of the logic model because tutor support depends not only on English proficiency, but also on the ability to scaffold, encourage, correct sensitively, and manage classroom interaction.

Together, these barriers show that the program logic was promising but uneven. The program provided communicative activities and a supportive classroom atmosphere, but the evidence also showed weak links in vocabulary support, formal speaking progression, tutor preparation, and transfer from informal classroom interaction to academic speaking situations. Thus, the program did not fail to support speaking development; rather, some parts of the logic model were stronger than others.

Analytical Synthesis of the Findings

Across the five themes, the strongest evidence appeared in the relationship between inputs, activities, and immediate classroom outputs. Teacher facilitation, trainer-made materials, tutor involvement, supportive feedback, and peer interaction helped create a less threatening classroom environment. Communicative activities such as games, role plays, discussions, and problem-solving tasks then produced visible outputs, including participation, peer interaction, oral practice, risk-taking, and real-time responses.

At the immediate outcome level, students reported greater willingness to speak, reduced fear of mistakes, and emerging spontaneity in familiar classroom tasks. Observation data supported these reports in limited ways, particularly through students' audible participation, continued involvement after mistakes, and reduced hesitation during the observed session. However, the evidence also showed that these outcomes were uneven and context-dependent. Students' confidence and spontaneity were stronger in low-stakes classroom interaction than in formal academic speaking situations.

From an outcome-focused logic evaluation perspective, the Basic Speaking Class can therefore be described as partially effective. Its strongest logic pathway was from supportive classroom conditions and communicative activities to students' participation and perceived speaking confidence. Its weaker pathway was from low-stakes classroom speaking to transferable academic speaking. The main constraints were mental translation, limited vocabulary, the informal-formal confidence gap, and uneven tutor competence. The central finding is that confidence and spontaneity emerged when speaking opportunities were supported by emotional safety, responsive feedback, peer acceptance, and real-time interaction, but these outcomes remained fragile when vocabulary support, task progression, and tutor preparation were insufficient.

Discussion

CLT Coherence and the Limits of Communicative Activity as Program Logic

The program's strongest feature was the alignment between its Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) orientation and classroom implementation. CLT emphasizes meaningful communication, fluency, interaction, and the use of language for real purposes rather than isolated grammatical mastery (Barnard, 2002). In the Basic Speaking Class, this orientation was reflected in role plays, problem-solving tasks, discussions, games, peer interaction, and supportive feedback. These activities allowed students to experience English as a medium of communication rather than merely as a subject to be studied. In this sense, the findings support the view that CLT remains relevant in EFL contexts when it is translated into concrete classroom routines rather than treated as a general pedagogical slogan (Savignon, 2017).

However, the findings also show that communicative activity alone does not guarantee the full achievement of speaking outcomes. From a logic evaluation perspective, the program had strong communicative inputs and activities, but the connection between these activities and higher-level outcomes was uneven. Games, pair work, and relaxed interaction supported participation and willingness to speak, but they were less sufficient for preparing students for formal academic speaking. This indicates a gap between activity logic and outcome logic: the activities were communicative, but they were not yet sequenced strongly enough toward academic speaking readiness. Therefore, the issue is not whether the program adopted communicative principles, but whether its communicative design sufficiently supported learners' progression toward more demanding speaking outcomes. A CLT-based program may increase enjoyment and participation while still leaving learners insufficiently prepared for larger audiences, higher accuracy expectations, and more evaluative speaking situations.

Supportive Climate, WTC, and the Affective Pathway to Confidence

The relationship between classroom climate, confidence, and emerging spontaneity can be interpreted through the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) framework. WTC suggests that learners are more likely to initiate communication when they experience higher perceived communicative competence and lower situational anxiety (MacIntyre et al., 1998). In this study, students appeared more willing to speak when the classroom was mistake-friendly, peers were supportive, and the teacher gave encouragement before correction. This is consistent with recent WTC research emphasizing classroom-based instructional practices, emotional support, collaborative interaction, personalized feedback, and foreign language enjoyment as important conditions for English communication (Gao et al., 2024; Khan et al., 2026).

The key point is that students did not become more confident simply because they were required to speak. They became more willing to speak because speaking opportunities were embedded in a relatively safe affective environment. If students are pushed to speak without emotional support, speaking tasks may increase anxiety rather than build confidence. By contrast, when communicative pressure is combined with games, peer support, teacher encouragement, and constructive feedback, it becomes more productive. This interpretation is consistent with studies showing that foreign language anxiety can reduce readiness to participate, while enjoyment and supportive classroom interaction can strengthen communicative engagement (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Zhang et al., 2024). Zhang et al. (2024) in their study on AI-supported EFL speaking, also show that environments that increase enjoyment and reduce anxiety can strengthen learners' willingness to communicate. Although the present study does not involve AI, the affective mechanism is similar: low-threatening interaction can open the door to spontaneous communication. Still, it should be treated as an entry point, not as the final stage of speaking development.

The Informal–Formal Confidence Gap: Transfer, Task Complexity, and Audience Effect

The most critical finding is the gap between informal speaking confidence and formal academic speaking readiness. Students became more comfortable in games, pair work, small-group interaction, and familiar topics, but many still felt anxious in whole-class speaking, presentations, or academic contexts. This gap prevents an overly positive interpretation of the program. The program worked, but mainly under conditions where the task was familiar, the audience was less threatening, and the communicative stakes were low. This gap can be explained through task complexity, audience effect, and performance pressure. Low-stakes tasks reduce cognitive and emotional burden because students can rely on familiar vocabulary, peer support, and immediate context. Formal academic speaking, however, requires students to organize ideas, maintain coherence, monitor grammar, manage vocabulary, and speak before a more evaluative audience. In such contexts, speaking is no longer experienced only as communication; it becomes public performance. This explains why informal confidence did not automatically transfer to formal speaking.

This interpretation aligns with studies showing that EFL speaking performance is often constrained by fear of negative evaluation, linguistic insecurity, low communicative self-efficacy, and pressure in public or evaluative situations (Cahya & Churnia, 2026). Supportive classroom climates may increase willingness to communicate, but strict correction, competitive environments, and evaluative pressure can intensify anxiety and disrupt fluency, lexical access, coherence, and spontaneous speech production (Zhao et al., 2024). From the logic evaluation perspective, this means that the program's output pathway remained incomplete. It generated participation and emerging spontaneity in low-stakes tasks, but it did not yet provide enough staged progression toward formal academic speaking. The implication is clear: games and informal interaction should not be removed, but positioned as the first stage of a broader speaking-development sequence. A stronger design would begin with pair work and games,

move to small-group presentations, continue to whole-class mini-presentations, and finally include simulated academic presentations or thesis-defense role plays. Such progression is important because WTC is shaped not only by low-anxiety interaction, but also by task design, scaffolding, feedback, repeated performance opportunities, and gradual exposure to more demanding communicative situations (Lin et al., 2025; Teng et al., 2025; Urena-Rodriguez et al., 2025).

Mental Translation, Vocabulary Limitation, and the Psycholinguistic Bottleneck of Spontaneity

Mental translation and vocabulary limitation should not be treated only as practical classroom problems. They reflect a deeper psycholinguistic bottleneck related to fluency, automaticity, and lexical retrieval. Students may become more willing to speak, but if they still need to formulate ideas in Indonesian and convert them into English, their responses become slower and less spontaneous. Thus, the program improved the affective conditions for speaking, but did not fully resolve the cognitive demands of real-time L2 production. Recent research suggests that L1 and translation can be useful pedagogical resources in EFL learning, but excessive dependence on L1 mediation may slow direct L2 oral production, particularly when learners have not developed automatic access to vocabulary and expressions (Panjaitan & Seinsiani, 2017; Smagul, 2024). This explains why some students felt more confident but still struggled to respond quickly. Confidence may reduce fear, but fluency requires more than courage. It also requires automatized vocabulary, formulaic expressions, and repeated retrieval under communicative pressure. Studies on L2 speech fluency and formulaic sequence use show that fluency is strongly related to automatic retrieval, reduced pausing, and access to ready-made language chunks during real-time speech production (Tavakoli & Wright, 2020; Yu, 2022).

Vocabulary limitation intensified this bottleneck. Students often knew what they wanted to say but could not retrieve the English words quickly enough to sustain spontaneous communication. The observed difficulty with less familiar vocabulary during the *Simon Says* activity illustrates this problem. Even an engaging communicative task becomes limited when learners lack sufficient lexical resources. This does not mean the program should return to traditional vocabulary drilling. Rather, vocabulary support should be embedded communicatively through pre-task vocabulary activation, lexical chunks, post-task vocabulary debriefing, and spaced retrieval. This recommendation is supported by studies showing that formulaic sequences can increase speed, reduce pausing, and help learners retrieve language more holistically (Nergis, 2021). Task-preparation research also indicates that repeated task engagement supports L2 speech production when learners retrieve and reuse language under meaningful communicative conditions (Lambert et al., 2021). Without systematic lexical recycling, spontaneity may remain limited to familiar topics and low-stakes interaction.

Trainer Competence as a Program Fidelity Issue

Trainer competence emerged as a key limitation in the program logic. This issue is not merely administrative; it is a matter of program fidelity. The Basic Speaking Class depends on a mistake-friendly climate, sensitive correction, scaffolding, interaction management, and effective activity facilitation. These conditions do not automatically occur simply because a tutor can speak English. The coordinator's distinction between English proficiency and teaching ability is therefore important because it reflects the difference between content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, namely the ability to transform subject knowledge into teachable and learnable classroom practice (Shulman, 1987). This point also resonates with peer-assisted learning research, which shows that peer learning is effective only when peer tutors are prepared to provide useful support rather than merely display higher

competence (Topping, 2015). In this program, peer trainers may strengthen the learning environment, but only if they can scaffold learners, give feedback sensitively, manage interaction, and maintain emotional safety. Research on oral peer feedback similarly shows that peer feedback can build confidence and engagement, but it is most useful when students receive clear guidance and teacher support; without scaffolding, feedback may become vague, overly critical, or emotionally unsafe (Syafitri & Tiarina, 2025).

From a logic evaluation perspective, trainer competence is an input that directly affects the quality of activities, classroom processes, and outcomes. If tutors are not prepared, the intended communicative logic may not be implemented consistently. Therefore, the proposed Teacher Training Skills (TTS) module should be treated as a core requirement, not an optional addition. Strengthening tutor preparation would help protect feedback quality, maintain a supportive classroom climate, and ensure that communicative tasks genuinely support confidence and spontaneity.

Methodological Caution, Alternative Interpretations, and Contribution

This study contributes an outcome-focused account of how selected elements of a student-led EFL speaking program were experienced as supporting confidence and emerging spontaneity. The use of student interviews, teacher and coordinator perspectives, documentation, and classroom observation strengthened credibility by allowing patterns to be examined across sources. In qualitative research, such convergence supports trustworthiness, especially credibility and confirmability, rather than statistical generalization (Nowell et al., 2017; Stahl & King, 2020).

However, the interpretation must remain cautious. The observation covered only one session, the outcome evidence was largely self-reported, and the study did not include pre-test and post-test speaking scores or longitudinal follow-up. These limitations do not remove the value of the study, but they define the boundaries of its claims. The strongest defensible conclusion is not that the program statistically improved speaking proficiency, but that it created conditions associated with perceived and observed short-term development in confidence and spontaneous participation, especially in informal communicative contexts. This cautious wording is consistent with the view that qualitative findings should be reported as transparent, context-sensitive, and interpretive claims rather than as statistical proof of effectiveness (Busetto et al., 2020). Alternative interpretations should also be considered. Students' reported confidence may partly reflect enjoyment, novelty, or temporary comfort in a supportive class rather than stable speaking competence. Similarly, observed spontaneity in games may indicate task-specific responsiveness rather than broader communicative spontaneity. These possibilities do not invalidate the findings; they clarify the claim. The program appears to support emerging confidence and context-bound spontaneity, but further evidence is needed to determine whether these outcomes are sustained over time or transferable to formal academic communication.

Therefore, the main contribution of this study lies not in proving causal effectiveness, but in explaining why and how specific program conditions mattered. Confidence and spontaneity emerged when communicative tasks were combined with emotional safety, peer acceptance, supportive feedback, and opportunities for real-time response. Yet these outcomes remained limited when the program lacked systematic vocabulary recycling, staged progression to formal academic speaking, and consistent tutor preparation. This is the central insight of the outcome-focused logic evaluation: successful speaking programs require not only more speaking opportunities, but a coherent developmental pathway that connects low-stakes participation to more demanding, unscripted academic communication.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Basic Speaking Class had a promising but partially achieved outcome-focused logic for supporting EFL learners' confidence and emerging spontaneity. Through CLT-based planning, communicative activities, peer interaction, and supportive feedback, the program created low-anxiety speaking opportunities that helped students become more willing to speak English, especially in informal and low-stakes classroom contexts.

However, the program had not yet fully transferred students' confidence and spontaneity to formal academic speaking situations. Mental translation, limited vocabulary, and uneven tutor competence remained key barriers. Therefore, the program should be understood not as proof of complete speaking proficiency improvement, but as evidence that a supportive communicative environment can create important conditions for confidence and emerging spontaneous speaking.

Future program cycles should strengthen the alignment between activities and intended outcomes by adding systematic vocabulary recycling, gradual progression toward formal speaking tasks, simulated academic presentations, and compulsory tutor preparation. Future evaluation should also include repeated observations, pre-post speaking evidence, and follow-up data to examine whether confidence and spontaneity transfer beyond informal classroom interaction.

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INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Participation in this study was voluntary. Prior to participation, all participants were provided with clear information regarding the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks, and anticipated benefits. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their personal information and informed that all data collected would be used solely for research purposes. They were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data generated and analyzed in this study are not publicly available because they contain information that could compromise participant privacy and confidentiality. Restricting public access ensures compliance with ethical research principles and applicable data protection regulations. Nevertheless, the dataset may be made available to qualified researchers upon reasonable request for verification or further analysis. Any such request will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and will require prior approval from the appropriate institutional ethics authority.

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