

Exploring Experienced EFL Teachers' Beliefs about Speaking Tasks to Foster Speaking Skills

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Abstract

This study explored the beliefs of experienced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers regarding speaking tasks, revealing a lack of focus in existing research on such beliefs. Conducted in an Indonesian senior high school, the research involved two purposively selected teachers and utilized semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations for data collection. Six key beliefs were identified: speaking tasks should encourage participation, highlight the importance of speaking instruction, create communicative contexts, support performance-based classrooms, use authentic materials, and promote cooperative learning. Affective conditions were found to be prioritized over linguistic demands. Observations confirmed all beliefs except the endorsement of competition, which was stated during interviews but not reflected in practice. The findings suggest that teacher education should incorporate affective reasoning in task selection and indicate a need for further research on the impact of deferring accuracy in EFL instruction.

Keywords: teacher beliefs; speaking tasks; EFL speaking instruction; belief–practice relationship; senior high school

Introduction

Speaking is widely regarded as the most visible indicator of language competence and a decisive factor in learners' academic and professional trajectories. It allows individuals to articulate ideas, negotiate meaning, and express emotion in both social and instructional settings, and Masuram and Sripada (2020) accordingly characterise oral proficiency in English as a gateway to subsequent academic and career

attainment. In Indonesian senior high schools, however, this centrality is not matched by learner performance. Despite years of formal instruction, many students remain unable to sustain even routine exchanges in English, and speaking continues to be reported as the skill in which they feel least competent. The persistence of this problem suggests that the difficulty lies less in the amount of instruction students receive than in the quality and frequency of the opportunities they are given to

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use the language for genuine communicative purposes.

Classroom evidence points to several interlocking sources of this difficulty. Students are often afforded few occasions to speak during a lesson, and the resulting scarcity of practice reinforces low participation. Wahyuningsih and Afandi (2020) observe that learners frequently hesitate to speak English because of limited vocabulary, unfamiliarity with the language, and an acute fear of making mistakes, a combination that produces anxiety and withdrawal rather than experimentation. A preliminary inquiry conducted with teachers at a senior high school confirmed this pattern: participants identified speaking as the most challenging of the four skills for their students and attributed the difficulty to apprehension about error and insufficient opportunity to rehearse. Compounding these learner-related factors is variation in instructional practice, since not all teachers consistently employ activities capable of eliciting sustained oral production. Maryanti et al. (2021) therefore argue that fostering active participation requires teachers to remain conversant with creative and effective strategies for teaching speaking. Taken together, these conditions indicate that the development of speaking skills depends substantially on how teachers conceptualise and enact the oral tasks they bring into the classroom.

Speaking tasks have been widely advocated as a principled response to this problem, precisely because they create structured occasions for learners to use the target language actively and purposefully. Willis (2021) defines tasks as goal-oriented classroom activities that oblige learners to interact and to use the target language meaningfully, and subsequent work

has confirmed their dual function as instruments of both language development and assessment (Sabah, 2018; Rashidova, 2023). Rao (2019) similarly maintains that the classroom, when appropriately organised, constitutes a suitable environment for cultivating communicative competence. What distinguishes productive from unproductive practice, however, is structure: Akhter et al. (2020) demonstrate that speaking tasks accompanied by explicit objectives and clear guidelines yield greater gains in fluency and accuracy than loosely framed activities. Whether devised by teachers themselves or adapted from prescribed textbooks, such tasks appear central to building learners' confidence alongside their linguistic competence.

The design of these tasks is most commonly grounded in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which advocates the use of real-world tasks as the organising unit of instruction. On this view, classroom speaking tasks should reflect and represent the communicative contexts learners are likely to encounter beyond the classroom (Wijetunge, 2016), and textbook materials are themselves frequently informed by TBLT principles in order to support the mastery of oral tasks (Adiantika & Purnomo, 2018). Amrullah et al. (2021) specify the constitutive components of effective task design as clearly stated goals, appropriate input, defined procedures, and well-understood roles for both teacher and learner. Beyond these structural requirements, the literature converges on the importance of meaningfulness and engagement (Setyono, 2020; Huang & Hu, 2016), with student-centred communicative tasks such as discussions, role plays, and presentations proving particularly effective in

promoting participation and fluency (Toro et al., 2018). Empirical studies report that presentation tasks in particular strengthen confidence, fluency, collaboration, and critical thinking (Ati & Parmawati, 2022; Christie & Listyani, 2018). Complementary frameworks refine this picture further. Shevelova-Harkusha (2023) classifies communicative tasks as reproductive, responsive, or productive, while Negewo et al. (2023) show that performance-based tasks such as storytelling, presentations, and dialogue practice enable learners to deploy language under conditions approximating real use. Because these tasks are typically organised around pair work and peer tutoring, they also generate the collaborative conditions associated with gains in speaking confidence and skill (Chantaraphat & Jaturapitakkul, 2023; Rao, 2019).

Yet task design and task typology alone do not determine what actually occurs in a lesson. Teachers' beliefs function as a filter through which curricular materials and methodological principles are interpreted, adapted, and enacted. Negewo et al. (2023) report a direct relationship between what teachers believe about speaking and how they implement speaking tasks, while Kim (2021) demonstrates that such beliefs shape instructional decision-making at multiple levels, informing the selection of activities, the design of learning sequences, and the adjustments teachers make in response to learners' needs, with measurable consequences for learning outcomes. Beliefs, in other words, mediate the relationship between task potential and task effect, and it is for this reason that they warrant examination in their own right.

Existing research has attended extensively to strategies and task types, including communicative language teaching (Toro et al., 2018), task-based materials (Masuram & Sripada, 2020), task-based instruction (Nget et al., 2020), student-centred learning (Maryanti et al., 2021), and communicative activities (Shevelova-Harkusha, 2023). Comparatively little of this work, however, has examined the belief systems of experienced EFL teachers or the extent to which those beliefs correspond to their enacted classroom practice, particularly within Indonesian senior high schools, where the constraints described above are especially pronounced. The present study addresses this gap. It aims to explore the beliefs that experienced EFL teachers hold regarding speaking tasks and to examine how those beliefs inform the development of students' speaking skills. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the beliefs these teachers articulate about the purpose, design, and implementation of speaking tasks, and to explain how such beliefs shape the oral practice opportunities made available to senior high school learners.

Method

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive qualitative design to explore the beliefs held by experienced EFL teachers about speaking tasks and the ways in which those beliefs inform classroom practice. A qualitative approach was appropriate because the study sought to understand meaning as it is constructed by participants in their own terms, rather than to measure the frequency or distribution of predefined variables (Creswell, 2013). Teachers' beliefs are not directly observable and cannot be captured through

instrumentation that presupposes what they contain; they must instead be inferred from what teachers say about their work and from what they are seen to do in the classroom. The design therefore relied on the two forms of data best suited to that purpose, namely participants' own accounts and naturally occurring instructional practice, and on the researcher's interpretive engagement with both.

The study was conducted in a natural setting, in the classrooms and workplace of the participating teachers, without manipulation of the instructional conditions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Investigation proceeded in two related phases. The first phase elicited what the participating teachers believed about speaking tasks capable of developing learners' oral competence. The second phase examined the extent to which those stated beliefs were discernible in their instructional decisions, specifically in how they designed, sequenced, and implemented speaking tasks. This two-phase structure was chosen deliberately, as it permits the comparison of professed and enacted belief rather than treating teachers' accounts of their practice as equivalent to the practice itself. The scope of the study was correspondingly bounded: it was confined to a single senior high school and to the two teachers whose beliefs and practice form its focus, and the findings are presented as an interpretive account of that setting rather than as generalisable claims.

Research Instruments

This study employed two research instruments, namely semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation, each corresponding to one of the two phases of the inquiry. Semi-structured interviews (Gay et al.,

2012) served as the primary instrument for eliciting the teachers' beliefs about speaking tasks. The interviews were guided by open-ended items addressing the teachers' conceptions of the purpose of speaking instruction, their criteria for selecting or adapting tasks, their rationale for favouring particular task types, and their expectations regarding student participation. This format was selected because it maintains thematic consistency across participants while leaving room for the researcher to pursue unanticipated lines of response through probing questions, thereby permitting the depth of exploration that the study of belief requires.

Non-participant observation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) constituted the second instrument and was used to document the teachers' enacted practice. Observation was recorded through field notes directed at three dimensions: the types of speaking task implemented during the lesson, the manner in which the teacher introduced and managed each task, and the nature of student engagement in response. Because the researcher took no part in the instructional interaction, the lessons proceeded under conditions as close as possible to those of ordinary classroom practice, and attending to the same predetermined dimensions in every lesson ensured that the resulting notes were systematically comparable across classes and across teachers.

The two instruments were designed to address the same constructs from different vantage points, so that what teachers articulated about speaking tasks could be examined alongside what they were observed to do with them. Their combined use allowed

interview and observational data to be triangulated, thereby strengthening the credibility of the findings (Ary et al., 2012). Discrepancies between what teachers reported and what was observed were treated not as error but as analytically significant, and were pursued in follow-up questioning.

Research Participants

Guided by Creswell's (2013) assertion that qualitative research prioritizes data richness over sample size, this study employed a purposeful sampling method to select participants capable of serving as information-rich cases. Out of a total pool of six English teachers at the target senior high school, two experienced teachers were recruited to provide in-depth insights into the design and implementation of speaking task strategies. To ensure in-depth data and credibility, the selected teachers were required to meet four specific criteria: holding professional teaching certification, possessing five to ten years of instructional experience, having served as mentors or judges in English competitions, and demonstrating proven proficiency in teaching spoken English. Both participants met all criteria and provided written informed consent before data collection commenced.

Data Collection

Data were collected in three sequential stages between February and March 2025. The first stage secured institutional permission from the school and obtained informed consent from the participating teachers. The second stage comprised the principal data collection activities, with interviews preceding observation so that teachers' stated beliefs could be established before their practice was observed. The third stage consisted of follow-up interviews conducted for the purpose of clarification.

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews of approximately ninety minutes were conducted with each teacher on 5 and 18 February 2025. Interviews were carried out in Indonesian to ensure that participants could articulate their views precisely and without the constraint of expressing complex professional reasoning in a second language, and were audio-recorded with prior permission.

Non-participant observation was subsequently conducted in the English classes of both teachers, with each teacher observed in two different classes on 11–12 and 25–26 February 2025. The researcher remained outside the instructional interaction throughout, recording field notes against the observation protocol without intervening in the lesson.

Where observed practice diverged from the account given in the interview, follow-up interviews were conducted via WhatsApp to allow participants to explain the discrepancy. All recordings were subsequently transcribed verbatim and, together with the field notes, organised for analysis. Participant identities were replaced with codes at the point of transcription, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the study.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed thematically following the six-phase framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarisation with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Analysis was conducted deductively, drawing on a predetermined thematic framework adapted from Negewo et al. (2023). This framework specifies six categories of teacher belief

concerning speaking tasks: that such tasks invite student participation, that they reflect the perceived importance of teaching speaking, that they create communicative situations, that they establish performance-based classrooms, that they present learners with authentic activities, and that they foster cooperative learning.

Interview transcripts and observational field notes were coded manually against these six categories. Codes from both data sources were entered into a matrix organised by theme and by participant, which enabled the systematic comparison of stated belief with observed practice and made points of convergence and divergence visible during categorisation. Themes were then reviewed against the coded extracts to confirm that each was adequately supported by the data and internally coherent, and were defined and named accordingly. Data segments that did not correspond to the predetermined framework were retained and examined separately, so that beliefs falling outside the adapted categories would not be excluded from the analysis. The findings are reported thematically, with each theme substantiated by interview and observational evidence and discussed in relation to the research objective and the existing literature.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

This study set out to explore the beliefs that two experienced EFL teachers hold about speaking tasks and the ways in which those beliefs are enacted in their classrooms. The two participants are referred to throughout as T1 and T2. Following the convention set out in the Methods section, each extract is identified by participant and source, with Int denoting

interview data and Obs denoting observational data followed by the number of the observation. All interview extracts are translations from Indonesian.

Thematic analysis of the combined data set yielded six themes. The teachers believed that effective speaking tasks invite student participation, that they reflect the importance they attach to the teaching of speaking, that they create communicative situations, that they establish performance-based classrooms, that they present learners with authentic material, and that they foster cooperative learning. These themes are not discrete categories so much as overlapping commitments: participation, for instance, is pursued through the same pair-based arrangements that support cooperative learning, and authenticity is realised largely through the performance tasks described under the fourth theme. Each theme is presented below with the interview and observational evidence on which it rests.

Beliefs about Speaking Tasks that Invite Student Participation

Both teachers held that a speaking task succeeds only to the extent that it draws students into speaking at all, and both judged tasks primarily by their accessibility. Storytelling and question-and-answer activities were the forms they returned to most often, chosen not for their linguistic complexity but for the low threshold they present to learners who are reluctant to speak. T1 attributed this preference to the accessibility of the two formats, explaining that storytelling and question and answer were selected "because they are easy to understand and liked by the students" (T1, Int).

Two considerations are compressed in this account: comprehensibility and appeal. T1 treats them as jointly necessary, implying that a task students find difficult to grasp will not be attempted regardless of its pedagogical merit, and that one they find uncongenial will be attempted only minimally. Task selection, on this view, is a judgement about willingness before it is a judgement about linguistic demand.

Alongside task design, both teachers worked to secure participation by framing English as a resource with value beyond the classroom. T1 described appealing directly to students' aspirations, observing that "the most important English skill people need is speaking" for those intending to travel, and encouraging "students who want to study or have other interests abroad to have good English communication skills" (T1, Int). T2 articulated a comparable rationale, but expressed it as a sequence in which interest precedes engagement and engagement precedes learning:

From my speaking tasks, I hope to increase students' interest. When students are interested, they will like it, and finally, they want to learn English. In addition, I encouraged students to learn English because we can communicate with the international community abroad. Indeed, I have implemented this promotion. I promote learning English to study abroad. (T2, Int)

What both accounts share is a belief that participation cannot be commanded but must be motivated, and that the teacher's role includes making the purpose of speaking visible to students. Both teachers accordingly built their tasks around content connected to students' existing interests, most conspicuously popular

songs, so that the material itself would carry part of the motivational burden.

Beliefs about Speaking Tasks that Reflect the Importance of Teaching Speaking

The teachers' sense of what speaking instruction is for centred on three concerns: the development of self-confidence, the use of competition as a motivating condition, and the attainment of communicative goals. Of these, confidence was clearly primary, and both teachers positioned it ahead of grammatical accuracy in their hierarchy of instructional priorities. T1 set out this ordering directly:

The first thing I emphasize is the importance of students having the courage to speak. In my view, the second is to build students' confidence, speaking fluency, good pronunciation, and willingness to learn, to increase vocabulary. Yes, especially to develop self-confidence. (T1, Int)

The sequence T1 describes is instructive. Courage is named first and confidence second, with fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary following as consequences rather than prerequisites. Accuracy is not dismissed, but it is deferred: the teacher's immediate task is to bring the student to the point of speaking, on the assumption that linguistic refinement follows from sustained practice.

T2 expressed the same conviction in stronger terms, formulating it as the criterion by which teaching success or failure should be measured:

In my view, the students are successful if they have the confidence to speak, even if there are small errors sometimes, it is okay. Suppose they can speak but do not say it, showing confidence. That is not

speaking. That means I failed. I can succeed if the students feel confident and want to convey it. The most crucial thing that students have to do is to develop self-confidence and believe in themselves. (T2, Int)

This extract is significant because T2 does not simply prioritise confidence but redefines speaking in terms of it. A student who possesses the linguistic means to speak yet does not use them is described as not speaking at all, and the outcome is attributed to the teacher rather than the learner. Silence, in this formulation, constitutes instructional failure.

Competition featured as a secondary concern and was regarded as harder to sustain, since learners who are reluctant to speak at all are unlikely to volunteer for comparison with their peers. The teachers nonetheless made use of the competitive opportunities available to them, T1 noting that competition was pursued "because there is usually a speech competition at school" (T1, Int). The remark suggests that competition operated at the margins of ordinary classroom practice, drawing on institutional events rather than being built into routine lessons. No competitive element was observed in any of the four lessons recorded.

Beliefs about Speaking Tasks that Create Communicative Situations

Both teachers believed that speaking tasks should approximate genuine communication, and both identified interaction among students, rather than between student and teacher, as the condition under which such communication becomes possible. Their reasoning was grounded in a difference they had observed in how students behave with different interlocutors. T1 described students as "afraid of

being wrong when speaking English with the teacher" but "more expressive, relaxed, and brave" in the company of their friends (T1, Int).

The contrast T1 draws is not linguistic but affective. The same student who hesitates before a teacher speaks readily to a peer, which suggests that the constraint on classroom talk lies in the evaluative weight of the teacher's presence rather than in the student's command of the language. Pair and peer arrangements were therefore adopted less as a variation in grouping than as a means of removing that constraint.

T2 approached the same objective from a different direction, treating the obligation to communicate as something the task should impose:

Then, to encourage students to speak with others. Like it or not, they have to talk to other people. Force them to talk to me. In conclusion, speaking is expressing what they want to express, then the other person also understands, that is the point. (T2, Int)

T2's definition of speaking, offered at the close of the extract, is essentially a definition of successful message transmission: the speaker conveys an intended meaning and the listener understands it. This conception explains the insistence that students speak with a range of interlocutors, since a message directed at no one cannot be tested against comprehension.

Beliefs about Speaking Tasks that Establish Performance-Based Classrooms

Both teachers organised their lessons around tasks requiring an observable oral product, and four such tasks recurred across the

observations: storytelling, question and answer, dialogue practice, and oral presentation.

Storytelling was implemented in two variants. T1 structured it around assigned topics delivered on prompt cards, reporting the use of "storytelling tasks about certain topics in Q-card because students dare to speak" (T1, Int). The observational record confirms this account, showing students preparing their Q-card topics and then delivering them before the class (T1, Obs 1). T2 anchored storytelling in students' own experience instead, using accessible language and everyday content, and described the use of "fun and easy language for their speaking tasks, like daily activities" (T2, Int). The two variants differ in their source of content but converge in purpose, each supplying students with something to say before requiring them to say it.

Question and answer served a dual function, operating both as a discrete task and as the medium of classroom management. T2 described enforcing its use in ordinary exchanges, insisting that students "speak and answer in English when they ask or I ask questions" (T2, Int). T1 reported an equivalent rule governing classroom routines, requiring that students "ask for permission to go to the toilet using correct English" (T1, Int). Observation supports both accounts. Students were seen responding in simple English to teachers and peers alike (T1, Obs 1), responding actively to the teacher's questions and instructions (T2, Obs 3), and questioning classmates during the idiom presentation session (T2, Obs 4). The effect of these arrangements is to extend English use beyond designated speaking activities into the procedural talk of the lesson, so that

opportunities to speak are not confined to the task itself.

Dialogue practice provided a more controlled performance context, in which students rehearsed conversational exchanges in pairs. During one lesson T1 framed the activity as concerning "analytical exposition text, which involves students in pairs to improve their speaking skills through dialogue practice tasks" (T1, Obs 2). Notably, the speaking objective is here attached to a text type from the written curriculum, indicating that oral practice was integrated into existing content rather than treated as a separate strand of instruction.

Oral presentation was the most demanding of the four, requiring students to prepare content independently and deliver it publicly. T2 assigned it around self-selected material, instructing the class to "find idioms in your favorite song and present them in front of your friends" and to prepare the material in advance of the presentation (T2, Obs 4). Taken together, the four task types form a graduated sequence, moving from short prompted turns to extended independent delivery.

Beliefs about Authentic Speaking Tasks

Authenticity, for these teachers, meant drawing content from material students already engage with outside school rather than from the prescribed textbook. T2 was the more explicit exponent of this belief, regularly supplementing the textbook and worksheet with general knowledge drawn from beyond the syllabus (T2, Int). The clearest instance was the idiom task built around popular songs, which unfolded across two lessons: T2 first explained the idioms contained in a song chosen for the class (T2, Obs 3), then required students to locate idioms in

songs of their own choosing and present them the following day (T2, Obs 4).

The design of this task merits attention, because it locates authenticity in the source of the content rather than in the setting of the performance. The presentation itself remains a conventional classroom event, but the language examined within it is language students encounter voluntarily. Because each student selected a different song, moreover, the content of every presentation was unique, which removed the possibility of rehearsed uniformity and required genuinely spontaneous responses during the question-and-answer exchanges that followed.

Beliefs about Speaking Tasks that Foster Cooperative Learning

The final theme concerns the social organisation of speaking practice. Both teachers deliberately paired students of differing proficiency, and both explained the practice in terms of mutual support rather than efficiency. T1 described the arrangement and its intended effect:

One of the ways is to work together with their friends in pairs so that those who are less able to speak can be assisted by their friends who have better speaking skills. I do not limit them to speaking. After all, if they speak with their friends, they will be faster and more courageous. (T1, Int)

T2 reported an identical strategy in briefer terms, pairing "students with low speaking skills with good speaking skills" so that they might help one another (T2, Int). The consistency between the two accounts indicates a shared assumption that proficiency differences within a class are a resource to be exploited rather than a problem to be managed. Observation confirms

that the strategy was applied across task types: students discussed and rehearsed with peers before delivering their Q-card stories (T1, Obs 1), worked in pairs on textbook dialogue (T1, Obs 2), and were invited to consult one another while preparing their idiom presentations, T2 telling them that they could "also discuss with your peer" (T2, Obs 4).

Peer tutoring emerged as a distinct extension of this belief, in which more proficient students assumed an instructional role. T1 connected it to the affective argument advanced under the third theme, suggesting that students' engagement with English can be cultivated through their relationships with classmates, since "to build up their liking, they can start from their friends" (T1, Int). T2 described peer tutoring as something students initiate themselves, which the teacher then formalises:

I also implemented peer tutors. If they do not ask me, they will ask their smarter friends. So, the smarter friend acts as a tutor. For example, if the students cannot speak English, they will automatically ask their friends for permission to leave the class. I modify it using peer tutors. (T2, Int)

The word "automatically" is telling, since it indicates that T2 regards peer consultation as the students' spontaneous recourse and the pedagogical structure as a means of harnessing an existing tendency rather than creating a new one. Observational data corroborate the pattern: students directed questions to both the teacher and their peers during dialogue practice (T1, Obs 2), and more capable students were seen assisting classmates who encountered difficulty (T2, Obs 4).

Discussion

This study explored the beliefs that two experienced EFL teachers hold about speaking tasks intended to foster students' speaking skills in an Indonesian senior high school. Six themes emerged: beliefs that speaking tasks should invite participation, reflect the importance of teaching speaking, create communicative situations, establish performance-based classrooms, present authentic material, and foster cooperative learning. At the level of these categories, the findings correspond to the framework adapted from Negewo et al. (2023), which is unsurprising given that the framework guided the analysis. What merits closer examination is the content the teachers gave to each category, since in several respects their reasoning departs from the accounts offered in the existing literature. The discussion below concentrates on those departures.

The clearest divergence concerns the criteria by which speaking tasks were selected. The task design literature specifies structural properties as the determinants of task quality, with Amrullah et al. (2021) identifying clear goals, appropriate input, defined procedures, and well-understood participant roles, and Willis (2021) characterising tasks in terms of their goal orientation and meaningful language use. The teachers in this study invoked none of these properties. Their stated criterion was the threshold a task presents to a reluctant learner, expressed as comprehensibility and appeal, and their preferred formats were chosen on that basis rather than for their structural design. Shirafkan et al. (2022) likewise report gains in participation from storytelling within task-based instruction, but attribute the effect to the task-based framework itself; the present findings

suggest an alternative attribution, in which participation follows from the low demand a task places on learners before they begin. This does not contradict the design literature so much as reveal what precedes it in practice: for these teachers, structural adequacy was a secondary consideration applied to tasks that had already passed an affective test. The pattern extends Wahyuningsih and Afandi (2020), who identify fear of error and limited vocabulary as barriers to speaking, by showing that experienced teachers may treat those barriers not as obstacles to be overcome but as the primary parameter around which instruction is designed.

A second and more consequential departure concerns the status of confidence. Masuram and Sripada (2020) and Christie and Listyani (2018) treat confidence as a facilitating condition for oral performance, that is, as something that enables speaking and can itself be developed through appropriate strategies. T2 advanced a stronger claim, defining speaking in terms of confidence rather than merely relating the two: a student who possesses the linguistic means to speak but does not use them was described as not speaking at all. The evaluative consequence is equally distinctive, since the resulting silence was attributed to the teacher rather than the learner. This inversion of responsibility does not appear in the studies reviewed here, and it represents a substantive addition to what is known about how experienced teachers construe success in speaking instruction. The position aligns with Rashidova (2023) in locating communicative competence in the willingness and capacity to express ideas rather than in accuracy, but it goes considerably further in making that willingness constitutive of the skill

itself. It also stands in direct tension with Shen and Chiu (2019), who caution that confidence without contextual language understanding is insufficient for effective communication. The teachers in this study were aware of the trade-off and accepted it deliberately, deferring accuracy on the assumption that it would develop through sustained practice. Whether that assumption holds is not a question the present data can answer, and it constitutes the most significant unresolved issue arising from these findings.

A third difference emerged between belief and practice in the treatment of competition. Negewo et al. (2023) include the creation of competitive conditions among the belief categories associated with effective speaking instruction, and both teachers here endorsed it when asked. Yet competition was described as difficult to sustain in a class of reluctant speakers, was linked exclusively to school-level speech contests, and was absent from all four lessons observed. This is the single point at which professed belief and enacted practice diverged in the data. The divergence is analytically informative rather than merely inconsistent: it suggests that competition functioned for these teachers as an endorsed principle rather than an operative one, and that the affective conditions they prioritised elsewhere may be incompatible with competitive arrangements in the same classroom. Studies asserting a general correspondence between teachers' beliefs and their practices (Kim, 2021; Negewo et al., 2023) may therefore benefit from attending to which beliefs are enacted and which are held without enactment.

The rationale the teachers gave for peer interaction also differs from the justification prevailing in the literature. Lam et al. (2021), Toro et al. (2018), and Shevelova-Harkusha (2023) advocate collaborative and communicative arrangements primarily on interactional grounds, that is, because they multiply opportunities for meaningful language use. The teachers observed here arrived at the same practice by a different route. Their justification was affective: students were described as more expressive with peers than with the teacher, and pair work was adopted to remove the evaluative weight of the teacher's presence rather than to increase interactional opportunity. The practical recommendation is identical, but the underlying mechanism is not, and this distinction matters for implementation, since a teacher who understands pair work as anxiety reduction will configure and monitor it differently from one who understands it as interaction maximisation.

Within the performance-based tasks, one practice extends the existing literature in a specific way. Lambani and Nephawe (2022) document question-and-answer activity as a means of enhancing responsiveness, treating it as a discrete instructional task. In this study, both teachers additionally deployed question and answer as the medium of classroom management, requiring English for procedural exchanges such as requesting permission to leave the room. Oral practice was thereby relocated from designated activities into the routine talk of the lesson, an application not described in the studies reviewed. The remaining performance tasks accord with prior work on storytelling (Rao, 2019), textbook-based dialogue (Nget et al., 2020), and oral

presentation (Ati & Parmawati, 2022), though it is notable that the four tasks together formed a graduated progression from short prompted turns to extended independent delivery, approximating the reproductive-to-productive sequence proposed by Shevelova-Harkusha (2023) without the teachers making reference to any such framework.

The conception of authenticity evidenced here also differs from the one dominant in the literature. Wijetunge (2016) and Negewo et al. (2023) locate authenticity in the correspondence between classroom tasks and real-world communicative situations, that is, in the setting and purpose of language use. The idiom-and-song task documented in this study locates it elsewhere. The performance remained a conventional classroom presentation, unlike any situation students would encounter outside school, while the language examined was material students engage with voluntarily. Authenticity, on this construal, is a property of the content rather than of the situation. The distinction is worth preserving analytically, because the two forms are independently variable and appear to serve different purposes: situational authenticity rehearses future use, whereas material authenticity of the kind observed here recruits existing engagement. A related departure appears in the treatment of peer tutoring. Chantaraphat and Jaturapitakkul (2023) and Rao (2019) present peer-based learning as a designed intervention introduced by the teacher; T2 instead described formalising a behaviour students already exhibited spontaneously, converting an existing tendency into a pedagogical structure. The direction of origin is reversed, and with it the teacher's role,

which becomes one of recognition rather than introduction.

Several limitations qualify these findings. The study involved two teachers in a single school, observed across four lessons within one month, which restricts the range of practice represented and precludes any claim about how the beliefs documented here might develop over time. Interview data were generated in Indonesian and translated by the researcher, and although the translation was confined to idiomatic rendering, single-translator procedures carry an interpretive risk. The study also captured only the teachers' perspective: students' experience of the tasks was inferred from observed engagement rather than elicited directly, and no measure of speaking attainment was taken, so the effectiveness of the beliefs described cannot be assessed.

These limitations indicate the directions that subsequent research might most usefully take. The central empirical question raised here is whether the deferral of accuracy in favour of confidence yields the linguistic development these teachers assume, and longitudinal designs tracking fluency and accuracy under affect-first task regimes would test the assumption directly, adjudicating between the position advanced by the participants and the caution registered by Shen and Chiu (2019). Second, the belief–practice gap identified in relation to competition warrants targeted investigation, since it suggests that belief inventories may capture endorsed principles that classroom observation would not corroborate; studies combining both data sources across larger samples could establish how widespread such gaps are and which categories of belief are most susceptible to them. Third, the distinction between material

and situational authenticity should be examined as a variable in its own right, comparing tasks that recruit students' existing engagement with those that rehearse future situations of use. Fourth, comparative work contrasting experienced with novice teachers would clarify whether the close belief–practice correspondence observed here is a function of professional experience, as the selection criteria of this study make plausible but cannot demonstrate. Finally, incorporating students' perspectives alongside teachers' would allow the affective rationale documented in these findings to be examined from the side of those it is intended to serve, since the claim that peer configurations reduce anxiety rests here entirely on teachers' interpretation of student behaviour. For practitioners, the findings suggest that speaking tasks be selected first for the threshold they present to reluctant learners, that peer configurations be understood as instruments of anxiety reduction, and that content drawn from students' own cultural engagement be treated as a legitimate source of authenticity.

Conclusion

This study set out to explore the beliefs that experienced EFL teachers hold about speaking tasks and the ways in which those beliefs inform their classroom practice in an Indonesian senior high school. Six beliefs were identified. The teachers held that speaking tasks should invite student participation, that they should reflect the importance attached to teaching speaking, that they should create communicative situations, that they should establish performance-based classrooms, that they should present learners with authentic material,

and that they should foster cooperative learning. Underlying these six commitments was a single orientation: the teachers treated the affective conditions of speaking, rather than its linguistic demands, as the principal object of their instructional attention. Tasks were selected for the low threshold they presented to reluctant learners, framed by appeals to students' future purposes, delivered through peer configurations intended to reduce the evaluative pressure of the teacher's presence, and built around content students had chosen for themselves. Linguistic accuracy was not disregarded, but it was consistently deferred in favour of the prior requirement that students speak at all.

Three features of these beliefs distinguish them from the accounts available in the existing literature. First, confidence functioned not as a condition that facilitates speaking but as a criterion that defines it, such that a student capable of speaking who nonetheless remained silent was regarded as not speaking, with the outcome attributed to the teacher rather than the learner. Second, peer interaction was justified on affective rather than interactional grounds, adopted to remove the constraint imposed by the teacher's presence rather than to multiply opportunities for language use, which means that a familiar practice was reached through an unfamiliar rationale. Third, authenticity was located in the source of the content rather than in the situation of its use, since students examined language they encountered voluntarily while performing within an otherwise conventional classroom setting. Comparison of interview and observational data further indicated a close correspondence between what the teachers

professed and what they enacted, with one exception: competition was endorsed in principle but appeared in none of the lessons observed, suggesting that belief inventories may capture endorsed commitments that classroom practice does not corroborate.

These findings indicate several directions for subsequent research. The most pressing concerns the assumption on which the teachers' practice rests, namely that accuracy develops through sustained practice once confidence is secured; longitudinal designs tracking fluency and accuracy under affect-first task regimes would test this assumption directly and establish whether the deferral of accuracy carries a cost. The belief–practice gap observed in relation to competition merits targeted investigation across larger samples, in order to determine which categories of belief are most likely to remain unenacted. The distinction between material and situational authenticity also warrants examination as a variable in its own right, comparing tasks that recruit students' existing engagement with those that rehearse anticipated situations of use. Comparative work contrasting experienced with novice teachers would clarify whether the close belief–practice correspondence documented here is a function of professional experience, while the incorporation of students' perspectives would allow the affective rationale central to these findings to be examined from the side of those it is intended to serve, since the claim that peer configurations reduce anxiety rests at present on teachers' interpretation of student behaviour alone. Pursuing these lines of inquiry would extend a small-scale, context-bound account into a more comprehensive understanding of

how teachers' beliefs shape the oral practice opportunities available to learners.

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