

EXPLORING STUDENT SILENCE IN EFL SPEAKING CLASSROOMS: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

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APPROVAL SHEET

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STATEMENT OF WORK'S ORIGINALITY

This undergraduate thesis is originally complete by myself. I declare who heartedly that it does not contain any other people's work or references quotation.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL SHEET	ii
RATIFICATION SHEET	iii
STATEMENT OF WORK'S ORIGINALITY	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
ABSTRACT	824
1. INTRODUCTION	825
2. METHOD	826
3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	829
3.1 Silence in High-Pressure Speaking Situation	829
3.2 Silence as a Common Phenomenon in Lower Grades	831
3.3 Limited Language Ability and Low Confidence as Causes of Silence	832
3.4 Giving Practice Before Speaking as a Key Strategy	833
3.5 Teacher Support and Emotional Safety in the Classroom	834
3.6 The Gradual Reduction of the Silence	835
4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION	836
REFERENCES	837



Exploring Student Silence in EFL Speaking Classrooms: Teachers' Perceptions and Classroom Strategies

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-03-02 Revised: 2026-03-22 Accepted: 2026-04-03 Keywords: student silence, EFL speaking classroom, teacher perceptions, classroom strategies, student participation DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.9823 Corresponding Author: Annisa Siti Aulia Muzdalifah annisamuzda993@gmail.com English Language Education Department, Universitas Islam Indonesia	<i>Student silence is often perceived as a barrier to participation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) speaking classes, where verbal interaction is commonly viewed as an indicator of engagement and learning. However, silence may also reflect linguistic difficulties, emotional factors, and classroom dynamics rather than simple disengagement. This study explores the teacher's perception of student silence, the factors contributing to it, and the strategies used to support the students during speaking activities. A qualitative descriptive design was employed, involving a semi-structured interview with one experienced English teacher at a public junior high school in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The interview data were analyzed thematically to identify patterns related to silent behavior in classroom interaction. The findings indicate that silence is mainly associated with limited language proficiency, low confidence, fear of negative evaluation, and unfamiliarity with English, particularly among lower-grade students. Peer reactions and classroom expectations also influence the students' willingness to speak. To address these challenges, the teacher implemented strategies such as structured preparation, prompting techniques, first-language support, and creating an emotionally safe classroom environment. This study highlights teachers' perspectives on silence in Indonesian junior high school EFL classrooms and suggests that silence can be understood as part of the language learning process rather than merely a learning obstacle.</i>

1. Introduction

In educational settings, silence is often perceived as problematic because students are generally expected to communicate and participate actively in classroom interaction (Harumi, 2011; King, 2013). Verbal responses are commonly treated as indicators of engagement and understanding; therefore, students who remain silent are frequently viewed as passive, unmotivated, or lacking interest in learning. Educational research has similarly associated silence with limited participation in classroom activities such as responding to questions, asking for clarification, expressing understanding, or contributing to discussion (Choi, 2015).

However, silence should not be merely interpreted as the absence of speech. Scholars have argued that silence may also reflect students' internal cognitive activity, including reflection and meaning-making processes (Maher, 2021). From a communication perspective, silence carries social and pragmatic meanings and functions alongside spoken language in interaction (Jaworski, 1993; Saville-Troike, 1985). Depending on the context, silence may signal reflection, politeness, emotional regulation, resistance, or cognitive processing (Jaworski, 1997). These perspectives suggest that silence may serve as meaningful communicative and cognitive functions rather than merely indicating disengagement.

The role of silence becomes particularly significant in English language learning contexts, in which students must process unfamiliar linguistic input while simultaneously managing emotional pressure and classroom expectations. For many beginner students, speaking in a foreign language like English requires not only linguistic competence but also confidence and emotional readiness. Consequently, silence may emerge as a natural response to linguistic difficulty and psychological tension rather than a lack of participation (Bao, 2014). While silence has often been interpreted as a barrier to participation in speaking classrooms, emerging research suggests that it may also represent an important stage in the language learning process, allowing students to reflect, process input, and prepare for future verbal participation. From this perspective, silence should not be viewed solely as a learning obstacle but as a complex classroom behavior that may support cognitive processing and language development.

Several studies in Asian and Southeast Asian EFL contexts nevertheless report that students' silence is still frequently interpreted as a lack of participation rather than as a meaningful learning strategy (Nguyen, 2024; Zafarina, 2022; Pratolo, Anggraini, & Bao, 2024). Psychological factors such as fear of making mistakes or negative evaluation may further contribute to students' reluctance to speak (Tsui, 1996). At the same time, classroom interaction and pedagogical practices can also shape silence. Limited wait time, ineffective questioning strategies, and strong expectations for immediate responses may unintentionally discourage students from participating verbally (Bao, 2014). Such findings indicate that silence is a multidimensional classroom phenomenon shaped by linguistic, psychological, and interactional factors rather than by students' deficiencies alone.

In the Indonesian EFL context, silence is frequently observed in junior high school speaking classrooms, where students first encounter formal English instruction despite having limited exposure to English outside the classroom. Teachers commonly encounter quiet classrooms and students who hesitate to speak during speaking activities. Silence is often perceived as a classroom problem that hinders interaction, and relatively limited research has examined how Indonesian EFL teachers interpret and respond to this phenomenon, especially at the junior high school level.

Previous studies in Indonesian EFL classrooms have linked student silence to factors such as anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, limited vocabulary, and classroom power dynamics (Juniati, Jabu, & Salija, 2018; Rizki et al., 2025). However, most of these studies focus primarily on students' experiences, and teachers' interpretations of silence and the pedagogical strategies they employ to address it remain underexplored. Understanding teachers' perspectives is important because their beliefs and interpretations influence how silence is managed in classroom practice and how learning environments are shaped.

This study therefore addresses this gap by examining the teacher's perspectives on student silence in Indonesian junior high school EFL speaking classrooms. By focusing on how the teacher interprets silence and how these interpretations inform her classroom strategies, the study offers a context-specific and pedagogically grounded understanding of silence as part of the language learning process rather than merely a barrier to participation.

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. How does the teacher perceive students' silence in EFL speaking classes?
2. What are the perceived causes of students' silence in EFL speaking classes?
3. What strategies does the teacher use to support students during speaking activities?

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore the teacher's perceptions of students' silence in EFL speaking classes and the strategies used to address this phenomenon in an Indonesian public junior high school. This design allows researchers to examine classroom experiences and pedagogical practices in a natural context while providing detailed descriptions of participants' perspectives (Hirose & Creswell, 2023).

The participant in this study was one English teacher from a public junior high school in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The teacher was selected through purposive sampling because of her extensive experience of teaching English speaking classes and her familiarity with students' participation patterns in the classroom. With more than ten years of teaching experience, the participant was considered a key

informant capable of providing in-depth insights into classroom interaction and students' silence. Focusing on a single participant enabled the researchers to obtain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon rather than aiming for broad generalization.

Ethical considerations were addressed prior to data collection. The participant was informed about the purpose of the study and her voluntary participation, and written consent was obtained before the interview was conducted. To maintain confidentiality, the participant's identity and the school name were anonymized in the research report.

Data Collection

The data were collected through a semi-structured interview consisting of 11 open-ended questions adapted from Bao (2014). The original instrument explored students' experiences of silence; therefore, the questions were modified to examine the teacher's perspectives, experiences, and strategies related to students' silence in EFL speaking classes while maintaining the core themes of silence, participation, and classroom interaction.

The interview lasted approximately 65 minutes and was conducted at the participant's school in a quiet setting. With the participant's consent, the interview was audio-recorded to ensure accurate data capture. The semi-structured format allowed flexibility for follow-up questions and enabled the teacher to elaborate on her classroom experiences.

Data Analysis

The interview data were analysed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2023). The recorded interview was first transcribed verbatim. The researchers then repeatedly read the transcript to become familiar with the data and gain an overall understanding of the participant's responses.

The analysis began with open coding, in which meaningful segments of the data were identified and labelled. Similar codes were then grouped into categories and further developed into broader themes that represented recurring patterns in the data. These themes were reviewed and refined to ensure that they accurately reflected the participant's perspectives and addressed the research objectives. An audit trail was maintained to document the research procedures and ensure transparency throughout the research process.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, member checking was conducted by sharing the interview transcript and preliminary interpretations with the participant to confirm the accuracy of the data. Peer debriefing was also carried out through discussions with a senior lecturer who was not involved in the research to review the coding and interpretation process and minimize bias.

Table 1. Example of Coding Process in Thematic Analysis

<i>Interview Excerpt</i>	<i>Initial Code</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Theme</i>
"When they have to speak in front of the class, they look very nervous. Their voices are very soft, and some of them ask me to stand next to them."	Nervousness when speaking; soft voice; need teacher proximity	Anxiety during public speaking	Silence in High-Pressure Speaking Situations
"In group discussions, there are usually one or two students who talk a lot. The others just stay quiet and listen."	Passive participation; dominant students	Unequal participation in group discussion	Silence in High-Pressure Speaking Situations
"Most of the Grade 7 students really start from zero. They have never learned English before, so at the beginning they are very silent."	No prior English exposure; beginner students	Early-stage language learning	Silent Period as a Common Phenomenon in Lower Grades
"Their vocabulary is very limited, so at the beginning the classroom feels very quiet."	Limited vocabulary; difficulty producing language	Linguistic limitation	Limited Language Ability and Low Confidence as Causes of Silence

"Sometimes when students make mistakes, their classmates laugh."	Fear of peer reaction; embarrassment	Fear of negative evaluation	Limited Language Ability and Low Confidence as Causes of Silence
"I never ask them to speak directly. I always start with something very simple."	Practice before speaking; simple speaking tasks	Guided speaking preparation	Giving Practice Before Speaking as a Key Strategy
"Some students need more time. I repeat the question and sometimes explain it in Indonesian."	Question repetition; L1 support; teacher guidance	Instructional scaffolding	Teacher Support and Emotional Safety in the Classroom
"Changes are visible, but they do not happen instantly. Some students only became confident after almost one year."	Gradual confidence development; time needed	Progressive participation development	The Gradual Reduction of the Silent Period

3. Result

The findings are organized into six interrelated themes that collectively explain how the teacher perceived silence in her classroom. The first to third themes represent the perceived situations and conditions in which silence occurred. The fourth and fifth themes explain the teacher's strategy to deal with silence. The sixth theme is about the teacher's perception of silence as part of the learning process rather than a hindrance in EFL speaking classrooms.

Silence in High-Pressure Speaking Situations

The first theme indicated that students' silence most frequently occurred during English speaking activities and group discussion activities, particularly

when they were required to speak in front of the class. Based on the interview data, the teacher explained that many of the students felt uncomfortable and nervous when performing oral tasks in front of their peers. This condition was reflected in the students' very soft voices and their hesitant behavior during speaking activities.

"When they have to speak in front of the class, they look very nervous. Their voices are very soft, and some of them even ask me to stand next to them so they feel more confident," (NS, SV, TP).

This quotation showed that speaking in front of classmates was perceived as a stressful situation for students. The silence that appeared in this context was not caused by a lack of understanding of the material, but rather by students' fear and low confidence when they were expected to speak English publicly.

The students' silence was also observed during group discussion activities. Although group work was generally designed to encourage interaction, not all of the students participated equally. According to the teacher, some of the students tended to dominate the discussion, while others remained silent and only followed the conversation without contributing verbally.

"In group discussions, there are usually one or two students who talk a lot. The others just stay quiet and listen, even though they actually understand," (PP, DS).

In addition, when the teacher invited the students to ask questions by saying, *"Do you have any questions?"* Most of the students did not respond. Silence often continued even when students were directly called by name.

"Sometimes I already call their names, but they still cannot answer. They just smile, look down, and stay silent," (PP).

These patterns indicated that silence occurred not only in individual speaking tasks but also in collaborative learning situations. Silence became a recurring interactional pattern in speaking activities rather than an occasional response.

The teacher also highlighted the role of the classroom social environment in shaping students' willingness to speak. She explained that peer reactions sometimes discouraged students from participating in speaking activities:

"Sometimes when students try to speak English and make mistakes, their classmates laugh. It makes them embarrassed, so they prefer to stay silent rather than take the risk." (FR, EM)

This excerpt suggested that negative peer responses might create emotional discomfort for students. As a result, some students chose silence as a protective strategy to avoid embarrassment during speaking activities.

Silence as a Common Phenomenon in Lower Grades

The second theme showed that the silence was most noticeable among Grade 7 students, especially at the beginning of the school year. According to the teacher, many students entered junior high school without any prior experience in learning English. When they were first introduced to English, they felt afraid, confused, and unsure of themselves. This condition made the classroom atmosphere noticeably quiet during the early stages of instruction.

“Most of the Grade 7 students really start from zero. They have never learned English before, so at the beginning they are very silent and afraid to speak,” (NE, BL).

The teacher explained that this silence was not a sign of laziness or lack of interest, but rather a response to unfamiliarity with the language. The students needed time to listen, observe, and adjust before they felt ready to participate orally. As a result, silence became a dominant feature in Grade 7 speaking classes, particularly in the first months of learning. In contrast, the students in higher grades were described as showing noticeable changes in their participation. Grade 8 students were generally more active and confident in speaking. The teacher observed that the students who had been extremely silent in Grade 7 began to show improvement in Grade 8.

“There are two students who are twins. In Grade 7, their voices were almost not heard at all. But in Grade 8, they became much braver and started to speak more,” (SV, GD).

This improvement suggested that increased exposure to English and repeated classroom interaction helped the students gradually overcome their silence. By the time students reached Grade 9, most of them were able to participate actively in speaking activities. However, the teacher noted that participation at this level did not always occur in English.

“Grade 9 students are usually very active, but sometimes they talk too much and forget to use English”.

The teacher also pointed out that peer relationships influenced the students' participation across grade levels. Some of the students were less willing to participate when they were not grouped with their close friends, which affected their engagement in speaking activities.

"If they are not grouped with their close friends, some students refuse to talk or do not want to join the activity," (PP, FR).

The dominance of silence among Grade 7 students strongly reflected what has been widely described as the silent period in second language acquisition. Hu (2021) emphasized that silence during early stages of language learning could function as a facilitative element, allowing learners to internalize vocabulary and grammar before producing speech. Likewise, Siegllová (2011), in her micro-analysis of child second language interaction, found that silence might represent intense cognitive processing rather than communicative absence.

In Indonesian classrooms, Zafarina (2022) also reported that silent learners often demonstrate comprehension through non-verbal engagement, suggesting that silence may coexist with active learning. The gradual transition observed in this study from extreme silence in Grade 7 to increased participation in higher grades supports Bao's (2014) view that silence can function as a preparatory stage.

Moreover, Pratolo, Anggraini, and Bao (2024) found in Yogyakarta EFL classrooms that student silence tends to decrease when learners gain familiarity with classroom routines and linguistic patterns. This reinforces the present finding that time, exposure, and repeated interaction contribute significantly to the reduction of silence.

Limited Language Ability and Low Confidence as Causes of Silence

The third theme indicated that limited language ability was a major factor contributing to the students' silence, particularly among Grade 7 students. Learners with very limited vocabulary and minimal prior exposure to English often struggled to formulate ideas and express themselves orally. As a result, silence became a common response when the students were unable to produce language during speaking activities. Previous studies have similarly reported that insufficient linguistic resources can prevent learners from participating verbally, even when they are cognitively engaged in the lesson (Tsui, 1996; Bao, 2014).

In addition to linguistic limitations, psychological factors also played a significant role in shaping the students' silence. Low self-confidence and fear of making mistakes reduced the students' willingness to speak, especially in front of peers. Research on EFL speaking anxiety suggested that learners who felt insecure about their language ability are more likely to withdraw from oral participation and choose silence as a coping strategy (Liu & Jackson, 2008; King, 2011).

Gender-related differences were also observed, with male students tending to show lower confidence and less verbal participation compared to female students. This finding aligned with previous research indicating that emotional expression, confidence, and classroom participation may vary across genders in language learning contexts (Harumi, 2011). Furthermore, the students with emotional vulnerability or learning difficulties may experience higher levels of anxiety, which further intensified their silence in speaking activities.

Such conditions highlighted that the students' silence is not merely a linguistic issue but is closely related to emotional readiness and psychological well-being. Overall, these findings suggested that the students' silence emerged from an interaction between limited language proficiency and psychological factors. Understanding silence as a response to both linguistic and emotional challenges allowed teachers to better address students' needs and create more supportive speaking environments.

The interaction between limited proficiency and psychological readiness further strengthened the interpretation of silence as a multidimensional phenomenon. Juniati, Jabu, and Salija (2018) found that the students' silence in speaking classes is frequently rooted in limited vocabulary mastery combined with fear of negative evaluation. Similarly, Kandilla et al. (2021) reported that teachers often interpret silence as a competence issue, while students themselves describe it as anxiety-driven hesitation. Ehsan Rassaei (2015) also demonstrated that corrective feedback and anxiety levels significantly influence learners' oral participation. When feedback is perceived as threatening, students may respond with withdrawal or silence. This perspective complemented King's (2011) argument that silence is often linked to learners' self-protection in interactional contexts.

Thus, silence in this study emerged not as a single-cause behavior but as the intersection of linguistic limitation, affective factors, and classroom power dynamics.

Giving Practice Before Speaking as a Key Strategy

The fourth theme highlighted the importance of providing practice before asking students to speak. The teacher believed that students are not ready to speak when they are asked to do so immediately without sufficient preparation. For this reason, she always began speaking lessons with very simple and familiar activities to help students feel more comfortable.

"I never ask them to speak directly. If they are asked to speak suddenly, they will be silent. So I always start with something very simple," (PS, ST).

One of the strategies commonly used by the teacher was daily greeting activities. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher greeted the students and asked questions such as *"How are you?"* or *"How's your day?"*. Instead of limiting students to the common response *"I'm fine,"* the teacher introduced various alternative responses, such as *"so-so," "sleepy,"* and *"hungry."* This approach allowed the students to choose responses that feel easier and more natural for them.

"I teach them different answers, not only 'I'm fine'. When they have more choices, they feel more relaxed and not afraid to answer," (PS, TG).

The teacher also recognized that students responded at different speeds. While some students are able to answer automatically, others required more time to think. For the students who struggled to respond, the teacher repeated the question, provided clues, and occasionally explained the meaning in Indonesian before guiding them to answer.

"Some students need more time. I repeat the question, sometimes explain it in Indonesian, and then help them answer step by step," (QR, L1, TG).

This gradual approach helped reduce the students' anxiety and built their confidence over time. By allowing students to practice speaking in a low-pressure context, the teacher created a supportive environment where students felt safer to use English. As a result, students became more willing to participate in speaking activities without feeling forced or overwhelmed.

Teacher Support and Emotional Safety in the Classroom

The fifth theme highlighted the importance of teacher support in reducing students' silence. The teacher stated that she does not force the students to speak but instead provided opportunities based on their readiness and abilities. She understood that each student learned at a different pace and that some learners required more time before feeling confident enough to participate in speaking activities. The teacher often used prompts, repetition, and first-language support to help students respond. By creating a comfortable classroom atmosphere and avoiding judgment toward the students' mistakes, she helps learners feel psychologically safe when attempting to speak. Her presence beside students during speaking tasks also provided emotional reassurance, which appears to encourage participation.

This finding suggested that emotional safety played a crucial role in shaping the students' willingness to communicate. When learners perceived the classroom as a supportive environment, their anxiety tended to decrease, allowing them to engage more comfortably in oral activities. Previous research has similarly shown that students are more likely to participate when teachers foster a non-threatening

atmosphere and respond to errors with encouragement rather than criticism (Harumi, 2011; Hu, 2021).

The teacher's approach reflected a facilitative teaching orientation in which silence is not immediately interpreted as a learning failure but as an indication that students may need additional scaffolding. Providing wait time, linguistic guidance, and gradual support allowed learners to process language internally before producing speech. Such practices align with studies suggesting that supportive teacher behavior can reduce speaking anxiety and gradually strengthen learners' confidence in EFL classrooms (Wei & Cao, 2021; Huynh & Adams, 2022).

Importantly, this finding indicates that teachers' interpretations of silence significantly influence classroom participation patterns. When silence is viewed as part of the learning process, teachers are more likely to adopt patient and responsive instructional strategies. In contrast, perceiving silence solely as disengagement may unintentionally create pressure that discourages students from speaking. Nguyen (2024) emphasizes that redefining silence as a legitimate form of participation enables teachers to build more inclusive speaking environments.

Similar patterns have been observed across EFL contexts, where teacher immediacy, emotional support, and constructive feedback contribute to students' willingness to communicate. Rather than demanding immediate verbal responses, teachers who provide structured support help learners transition from silence to active participation more naturally (Hanh, 2020; Kandilla et al., 2021). Therefore, teacher support should not be understood merely as a strategy to eliminate silence, but as an essential component in establishing psychologically safe classrooms where learners can gradually develop readiness to speak.

The Gradual Reduction of the Silence

The final theme highlighted that students' silence did not disappear immediately but gradually decreased as learners gained confidence and familiarity with the language. According to the teacher, visible changes in students' participation required time, consistent support, and repeated speaking opportunities.

"Yes, changes are visible, but they do not happen instantly. The process takes time. The twin students I mentioned earlier only started to speak confidently at the end of Grade 7, which means it took almost one year. Now, they are brave enough to speak in front of a journalist's camera, even though the recording had to be repeated several times. However, their voices are much clearer compared to the beginning. This shows that students really need time, opportunities, and consistency from the teacher." (GD, TN, SV)

This excerpt suggested that the silent period should be understood as part of a developmental learning process rather than a fixed obstacle to participation. Students may initially rely on silence while processing linguistic input and adjusting to classroom expectations, but sustained exposure and supportive teaching can encourage gradual verbal engagement.

This finding supported Bao's (2014) argument that silence can function as a preparatory stage in which learners mentally rehearse language before producing speech. Similarly, Krashen (1982) emphasized that language acquisition requires sufficient comprehensible input before learners feel ready to speak. The gradual reduction of silence observed in this study therefore indicates that participation develops progressively when students are provided with adequate time, opportunities, and a supportive learning environment.

Furthermore, this finding resonates with Harumi (2011), who notes that quiet learners are not necessarily disengaged but may be actively processing language internally. As students become more comfortable, their willingness to speak tends to increase. Therefore, silence should not always be interpreted as a sign of failure but rather as a transitional phase in language development.

The gradual reduction of silence observed in this study confirms that participation develops along a continuum rather than appearing instantly. Nguyen (2024) argues that redefining participation requires recognizing silent engagement as part of communicative growth. Similarly, Rizki et al. (2025) emphasize that silence in Indonesian EFL classrooms often evolves into verbal participation when learners feel psychologically secure. Wei and Cao (2021) further note that silence can shift from forced participation to willing engagement when classroom expectations become less threatening. The twin students' case in this study illustrates this developmental trajectory: silence did not signal incapacity, but rather the need for sustained exposure and consistent encouragement.

4. Discussions

This study has revealed that students' silence in EFL speaking classrooms cannot be understood simply as a lack of participation. Instead, it emerges as a complex phenomenon shaped by the interaction of linguistic limitations, emotional factors, and classroom social dynamics. While previous research has highlighted the multidimensional nature of silence (Yashima et al., 2016; Wei & Cao, 2021), the present findings show that in the Indonesian context, peer evaluation and the pressure of public speaking play a particularly significant role in reinforcing silence as a protective strategy.

A key contribution of this study lies in its examination of teacher belief systems about silence. From the findings, the teacher believed that silence was part of the learning process rather than a hindrance, and such belief served as a starting point for her to conduct necessary instructional strategies to support her students with their silence. Consistent with Bao (2014) and King (2011), silence may have a

functional role as a self-regulatory and preparatory process, allowing students to manage anxiety and internally process language before speaking. This finding breaks the common assumption in EFL pedagogy that verbal participation equates with successful learning (Harumi, 2011; Tsui, 1996). Instead, silence itself may also be part of a successful learning process.

When silence is treated solely as a deficit, classroom practices may unintentionally increase pressure on learners, particularly those with limited proficiency and low confidence. In contrast, when silence is understood as part of a developmental learning process, teachers are more likely to adopt supportive and responsive strategies. Previous studies have shown that teacher beliefs strongly influence how silence is managed in classroom interaction (Kandilla et al., 2021; Nguyen, 2024). Therefore, shifting from a deficit-oriented perspective toward a process-oriented understanding of silence may lead to more inclusive and effective speaking instruction.

From a pedagogical perspective, this study suggests that silence should not be eliminated entirely but managed constructively. Teachers can support students by providing preparation time, allowing sufficient wait time, offering linguistic scaffolding, and creating emotionally safe classroom environments. These practices help reduce anxiety and encourage gradual participation. In this sense, silence should be viewed as a transitional phase in language development rather than a failure to participate.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrated that the students' silence in Indonesian EFL speaking classrooms should not be interpreted merely as disengagement but as a complex and developmental phenomenon shaped by linguistic, emotional, and contextual factors. While the teachers often perceive silence as a barrier, the findings suggested that it can also function as a protective and preparatory stage in language learning.

Pedagogically, recognizing silence as part of the learning process allowed teachers to adopt more supportive strategies, such as providing preparation time, scaffolding responses, and creating emotionally safe classroom environments. However, this study is limited to a single teacher's perspective. Future research should involve multiple participants and classroom observations to provide a more comprehensive understanding of silence in Indonesian EFL contexts.

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