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Research Article

An Investigation of Sociometric Status on Students' Achievement in Indonesian EFL Speaking Class

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the correlation between sociometric status and students' achievements in an Indonesian EFL speaking classroom. Employing a mixed-method approach, the research categorizes students into five sociometric statuses: popular, controversial, rejected, neglected, and average, based on peer evaluations and sociometric assessment. The study further examines the academic performance of these students, particularly in speaking tests, to ascertain the impact of their sociometric status on their language acquisition proficiency. Findings reveal a distinct variance in speaking test scores across different sociometric statuses, with students classified as having high sociometric status (popular) significantly outperforming their peers in lower status categories (controversial, rejected, neglected). Statistical analysis, including ANOVA tests, underscores a compelling correlation between sociometric status and academic achievement in the EFL speaking classroom, suggesting that students who are more positively perceived by their peers tend to exhibit higher proficiency in speaking tests. The study contributes to the broader discourse on the influence of peer relationships on educational outcomes, particularly within the context of language learning. This study's insights are pivotal for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers aiming to enhance both the social and academic dimensions of language learning in diverse educational settings.

Keywords: *Sociometric status, students' achievement, speaking class, EFL classroom*

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INTRODUCTION

In the world of education, we as prospective teachers are required to have extensive knowledge, creativity and insight for their students which contains the knowledge, abilities, weaknesses, and strengths provided by students (Stronge, 2018; Adnot et al., 2017; Biesta, 2015). To know the ability and development of participants, can be done through tests and non-tests.

The types of tests used vary which can be adjusted to the needs of the users themselves. The test is used to measure how high students learn in testing and understanding the subjects that have been delivered by the teacher (Deslauriers et al., 2019). While for individual assessment patterns of students can be done with sociometric techniques. Sociometry is an appropriate tool to collect data about social relationships and social behavior of students, because through sociometry we obtain data about the arrangement of relationships between individuals, the structure of relationships between individuals and the direction of social relations (Avramidis et al., 2017). Sociometry has a very important position in guidance and counseling.

“Students' sociometric status emerges as a key determinant in demonstrating significantly superior performance in speaking tests”

The emergence of sociometric status among students is related to students' peer relationships in the classroom and outside the classroom which creates a variety of context interactions. Oberle et.al (2010) stated that the most important thing in education is understanding the role of peer acceptance and peer rejection that indirectly contribute to the social and emotional development of children and adolescents has become a growing concern of parents, educators and researchers who share an interest in promoting positive development and prevention of psychological problems. In this regard, peer relationships are very important for the social and emotional development of adolescents and have been linked to student academic success. According to Bahar (2010), sociometric status is one of the assessments in determining the position of students among peers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sociometric status is useful for programs that can help create a better social environment and at the same time help to overcome problems in the social environment at school (Engels et al., 2016). Sociometric status also helps students in solving problems. In every environment or social group there is always an isolated party. Either that was because he resigned from the group or he was exiled by the participants. For this reason, with sociometry, the teacher can see students who are isolated in certain classes. this technique is usually applied by a counseling teacher. Moreover, Rimkiene, V.J & Kardelis (2005)

revealed that it is important in analyzing the sociometric status in the social environment of adolescents that occur in class.

Speaking ability is measured by the ability of students to have a conversation in an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves generating, receiving and processing information. Likewise, [Brown \(2004\)](#) believes that language proficiency is ensured when students get the opportunity to work with the target language in different contexts. Also, this study explores whether current classroom assessment practices at selected preparation schools can be effective in assessing speaking skills. Thus, investigating the assessment of students' speaking skills is the main concern of this study.

As can be understood from the previous discussion, the teaching of speaking skills and assessment is highly interrelated. Information obtained from speaking skills assessment can be used by teachers to improve the teaching of their speaking skills. In addition, students can use the results of speaking assessments to improve their speaking abilities. That is, assessment of speaking skills can improve students' speaking skills by showing areas and components that must be improved by students. Therefore, assessment plays an important role in teaching and learning speaking skills. That is why scholars believe that teaching and speaking evaluation are seen as two sides of the same coin.

Despite this fact, speaking skill has not been properly and adequately assessed by English language teachers. From the experiences of teaching English at secondary and preparatory schools for the last eight years, the researchers have observed that teachers do not give due attention to the assessment of students' speaking skill. Such practice hinders students from getting important and necessary feedback and comments from their teachers. In other words, students do not get the needed feedback and comments from their English language teachers that may enable them to improve or enhance their speaking skill.

Besides, the extent to which English language teachers assess the speaking skill of their students is not clearly known. The assessment techniques used by English language teachers to assess the speaking skill of their students and the components of students' speaking skill assessed by English language teachers are not studied at the selected school. In addition, English language teachers usually encounter different challenges while assessing the speaking skill of their students. These problems have initiated the researcher to conduct a study on the present study. Accordingly, it is imperative to describe the practices and challenges of assessing the speaking skill of the students.

The other important rationale for the present study is that the research gap is observed in the area. That is, the review of local studies revealed that limited local studies were undertaken in relation to the present study. For instance, [Fasil \(1992\)](#) studied how oral skills are taught. [Tsegaye \(1995\)](#) conducted research on speaking strategies employed by college students respectively. [Jennew \(2006\)](#) studied how oral skills are taught and also

made a survey on teachers' and students' respective roles for implementation in EFL speaking classrooms. [Tefaye \(2007\)](#) researched communication strategies utilized by Omo TTI teachers in oral production of English. [Taye \(2008\)](#) made a comparative study of televised and non-televised speaking skills teaching techniques.

The purpose of this study is to investigate sociometric status on students' achievement especially in the speaking skill. Twenty Five students at the twelfth grade of social science class are study consists of observation checklist, rating-scale measurement, and students speaking score. To investigate the sociometric status the following research question was proposed:

1. How is students' behavior toward peer relationship based on the categorization of sociometric status in the EFL speaking classroom?
2. How is the influence of sociometric status on students' achievement in Indonesian EFL Speaking Class?

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research methods to explore the influence of sociometric status on students' achievement in an Indonesian EFL speaking class. The quantitative component involved the collection and analysis of numerical data regarding students' sociometric status and their speaking test scores. In contrast, the qualitative aspect focused on observing and interpreting students' behaviors and interactions within the EFL speaking classroom to understand the dynamics of peer relationships. The participants of this study were thirty students from a twelfth-grade social science class at IMMIM boarding school in Makassar, Indonesia. The selection of participants was based on convenience sampling, as the class was readily accessible to the researcher. The students' ages ranged from 17 to 18 years old, comprising both male and female students.

Research Instruments

There are four main instruments used in this study, they are described as follows:

Sociometric Survey

Sociometric status was assessed using the procedure described by [Asher & Dodge \(as cited in Bgin, 1986\)](#). A sociometric questionnaire was administered to determine the sociometric status of each student within the classroom. This survey asked students to nominate their peers based on various criteria such as likability, cooperation in group work, and social interaction preferences.

Observation Checklist

To supplement the quantitative data, an observational checklist was used to record students' behaviors and interactions during class activities. This tool helped in identifying patterns related to sociometric status, such as participation in group work, leadership roles, and social dynamics as well as in order to obtain data on students positive and negative behaviors among peers especially toward their peer relationship in a learning and teaching process.

Field Notes

The use of notes in the classroom assisted the researcher to think and write about what is going on in the students interaction. Students positive and negative behavior were explicitly observed through notes. [Cowie N \(as cited in Heigham, J & Croker R.A, 2010. p. 173\)](#) reveals that these notes might be very brief for a small-scale 'quick and dirty' project where the main purpose is to quickly find out information about an issue or situation. Then, the researcher was able to focus on how student behavior in speaking class in order to how the nomination of sociometric status.

Speaking Assessment

In conducting phonetic transcription from the speaking record, we used three testers to calculate the students' score. They are; one researcher and two other English teachers of IMMIM Boarding School. In making transcription of the students' speaking performance, we used video camera for documentation. To calculate the students' score, we used the scoring criteria level introduced by [Heaton \(1988:100\)](#) and finalize the overall score which are as follows:

Data Analysis

Accuracy

Students' scores on accuracy were classified based on the criteria in the following tables:

Table 1.
The Score Criteria of Speaking Accuracy

Classification	Score	Criteria
Excellent	6	Pronunciation is only slightly influenced by the mother tongue. Two or three minor grammatical and lexical errors
Very Good	5	Pronunciation is only slightly influenced by the mother tongue. A few minor grammatical and lexical errors but most utterances are correct.
Good	4	Pronunciation is still moderately influenced by mother tongue but not serious phonological errors. A few grammatical and lexical errors but not only one or two major errors causing confusion.
Average	3	Pronunciation is influenced by mother tongue only a few phonological errors. Several grammatical and lexical errors some of which cause confusion.
Poor	2	Pronunciation is seriously influenced by mother tongue with errors causing a breakdown in a communication. Many grammatical and lexical errors.

Very Poor	1	Serious pronunciation errors as many basic grammatical and lexical errors. No evidence of having mastered any of the language skill and areas practiced in the course.
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Fluency

Table 2.

The Score Criteria of Speaking Fluency

Classification	Score	Criteria
Excellent	6	Speaks without too great an effort with fairly wide range of expression. Searches for words occasionally by only one or two unnatural pauses.
Very Good	5	Has to make an effort at time to search for words. Nevertheless, smooth delivery on the whole and only a few unnatural pauses.
Good	4	Although he has to make an effort and search for words, there are not too many unnatural pauses. Fairly smooth delivery. Occasionally fragmentary but succeed in conveying the general meaning. Fair range of expression.
Average	3	Has to make an effort for much of the time. Often has to search for the desired meaning. Rather halting delivery and fragmentary. Range of expression often limited.
Poor	2	Long pauses while he searches for the desired meaning. Frequently fragmentary and halting delivery. Almost give up making the effort at times limited range of expression.
Very Poor	1	Full of long unnatural pauses. Very halting and fragmentary delivery. At times gives up making the effort, very limited range of expression.

Comprehensibility

Table 3

The Score Criteria of Speaking Comprehensibility

Classification	Score	Criteria
Excellent	6	Easy for the listener to understand the speaker's intention and general meaning. Very few interruptions or clarification required.
Very Good	5	The speaker's intention and general meaning are fairly clear. A few interruptions by the listener for the sake of clarification are necessary.
Good	4	Most of what the speaker says is easy to follow. His intention is always clear but several interruptions are necessary to help him to convey the message or to seek clarification.
Average	3	The listener can understand a lot of what is said, but he must constantly seek classification. He cannot understand many of the speaker's more complex or longer sentences.
Poor	2	Only small bits (usually short sentence and phrases) can be understood and then with considerable effort by someone who is listening to the speaker
Very Poor	1	Hardly anything of what is said can be understood. Even when the listener makes great effort or interrupts, the speaker is unable to clarify anything he seems to have said.

Heaton (1991:26)

Quantitative data from the sociometric survey and speaking test scores were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify trends and differences among sociometric status groups. An ANOVA test was conducted to examine the statistical significance of differences in speaking test scores across the sociometric categories. For the qualitative data, thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2017) was used to interpret observations of student behavior and interaction. This involved coding the data into themes related to sociometric status, such as leadership, cooperation, and social engagement. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings provided a comprehensive understanding of how sociometric status influences students' achievement in the EFL speaking class.

FINDINGS

This research paper delves into the intricate dynamics of sociometric status and its consequential impact on student achievement within an Indonesian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) speaking class. The investigation is propelled by the hypothesis that sociometric status—students' perceived popularity and acceptance among their peers—plays a pivotal role in influencing their engagement, participation, and ultimately, their success in acquiring English speaking skills. Drawing on a mixed-methods approach, the study meticulously combines quantitative data from speaking tests with qualitative insights from observations and sociometric assessments.

Students' behavior toward peer relationship based on the categorization of sociometric status in the EFL speaking classroom

The initial part of the investigation focused on the categorization of sociometric status among students in the EFL speaking classroom. Sociometric status, a metric gauging the peer-perceived popularity or acceptance of individuals within a social setting, is pivotal in educational contexts as it influences various facets of student interaction and learning. In the context of the EFL speaking classroom, this status is particularly salient due to the interactive nature of language learning, where peer feedback, collaboration, and communication play crucial roles.

After conducting observation, rating-scale measure was distributed to the students in order to know about how much every student interested to learn and talk to his or her peers. The findings revealed that there were five types of sociometric status in the EFL speaking classroom and it consists of popular, controversial, neglected, rejected, and average. Those types of sociometric status frequently occur among peers. Finch (1998) asserted that the rating-scale measure is used to rate how much they like each child in their class on a scale of 1 to 5 and this method allows researchers to label children as of low, high, and average acceptance.

Figure 1.
Distribution Chart of Sociometric Status

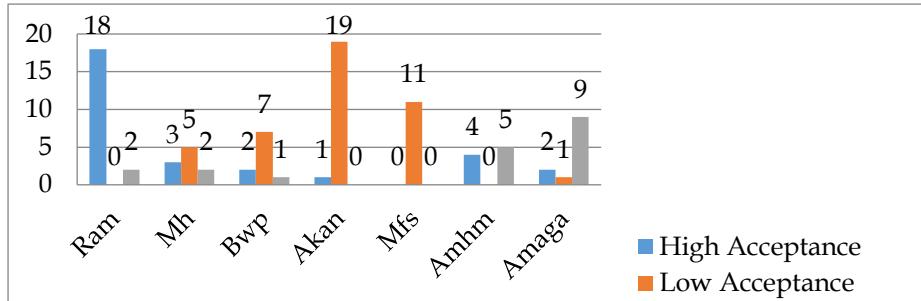


Table 4.
Five Categorization of Sociometric Status

No	Nama	Categorization				
		Popular	Controversial	Rejected	Neglected	Average
1	MFS				√	
2	MRA					
3	SFR					
4	NI					
5	MH		√			
6	AMHM					√
7	AMAGA					√
8	LMIJ					
9	AMS					
10	RAM	√				
11	ANA					
12	MFAA					
13	MNK					
14	BWP			√		
15	AMFH					
16	MS					
17	WI					
18	AA					
19	RS					
20	ZMS					
21	MHFN					
22	AFB					
23	MNR					
24	AKAN			√		
25	FM					
26	AMU					
27	MFH					
28	MU					

29	SH
30	AAG

Table 4 displays that there were five categorizations of sociometric status involve popular, controversial, rejected, neglected, and average. As can be seen on the result above, popular student was **RAM** in which he was known as friendly and smart student. He has a higher level of cognitive ability especially on English subject. Moreover, he has good relationship with his peers in which he was never disapproval on teacher's choice in deciding his group work.

The findings indicate that popular children are cooperative, sociable, friendly, and sensitive to others. [Zakriski & Prinstein \(2001\)](#) concluded that popular children rate high in sociability and cognitive abilities, were good problem solvers, and had positive social traits and friendship relations. The result of rating scale proved that there were 18 students chose 'strongly like' scale and it is categorized on a high acceptance. Then, it has been clear that popular student is actively liked by other peers. The second type of sociometric was controversial. The table above showed that **MH** was a controversial student. In this case, after distributing rating-scale measure, there were five rate 'dislike' to his and there were two students' rate 'like' to his. It is indicated that she was disliked by some and liked by some students.

This controversial student tended to show aggressive behavior to his peers, but he also showed his greater sociability. Moreover, after investigating the result of observation, he was over talkative student in which he frequently talked more in a class and he often showed his rejection on teacher's choice in determining a group. But he was also displayed his friendly to his peers when work and talk in a group. The third categorization of sociometric status was rejected student. It is believed that rejected student was actively disliked by peers in which the result of stating-scale measure displayed that there were 19 students' rate 'strongly dislike' to student **AKAN** and they were only one student rate 'like' to him.

Rejected children, who are frequently disliked and not well-liked ([Gifford-Smith & Brownell, 2003](#)). It showed that majority students did not like with him because of his behaviors in the classroom. Regarding on the result of observation, he frequently displayed aggressive behavior to his peers especially to female students. A study found that aggressive-rejected children (children who are actively disliked by their peers and who are highly aggressive) were fewer independent learners, less interested in schoolwork, and more disruptive in the classroom ([Wentzel & Asher, 2005](#); [Arham & Ariani, 2020](#)). Then, it has been clear that **AKAN** is classified as rejected student who frequently did disruptive

behavior such as less interested in schoolwork, reporting his friend mistakes, and coming to classroom habitually late.

Those types of behaviors are classified as disruptive behavior. Moreover, the result of the rating-scale measure showed that **BWP** was disliked by other peers in which there were 11 students rate 'dislike' scale to him and it is categorized as low acceptance. Meanwhile, there was no students rate 'like or strongly like' to him. It is indicated he was also categorized as rejected student. It was proved through observation that he frequently did some inappropriate behavior in a verbal or nonverbal behavior. He was commonly shouting angry in the classroom and it was disruptive behavior. Moreover, He has ever hit her friend when teacher was explaining the material.

It was equal with **BWP** behavior in which both students have ever showed less interested in schoolwork. Another categorization of sociometric was called by neglected status. As can be seen on the table above, **MFS** was neglected in which there were 7 students rate 'dislike' to him and there were 2 students' rate 'like' to her. It was revealed that he was disliked by peers and he was liked by few students. As shown during the observation, he was not interacting to the other peers and he has low sociability. He seldom be quiet during the learning process. The last classification of sociometric status was average student. It has been calculated that both students **AMHM** and **AMAGA** were categorized as averagee students. They were rated as average by their peers in which there were 7 students rated **AMAGA** as 'average' and there were 5 students rated **MH** as 'average'.

It is believed that every student has different behavior in interacting with their peers. In general, every student has different behavior, cognitive ability, motivation, and personality. That makes them different to each other. But, the diversity among student did not disturb the way students learn and the way teacher teach. In the teaching and learning process during two months, the researcher found that most students in the classroom have a good relationship with their peers. However, some students show positive behavior and some students show negative behavior to their peers especially during the learning process.

In the twelfth-grade class of social science, most students are friendly to the teacher. But, when the learning process is begun, some students started to show their personality or character. To know students' behavior among peers, the researcher observed students' interaction in the classroom during two months. During the learning process, the researcher used observation sheet as an assistance to prove students' behavior among peers. It is found that every student has different behavior in which variety of behavior are shown by them.

After observing the social interaction among peers, it is indicated that there were five categorizations of sociometric status occur in the eleventh grade of social science class. Moreover, after distributing sociometric assessment, it is found that there was a

categorization of status or peer relationship in that classroom. Then, demographic information about the sixth participants will be described below:

Table 5.
Demographic Information of the Six Participants

No	Participants	Description
1	RAM	He is a smart student. He is friendly to his peers. He pays more attention to the teacher's explanation and actively involve during the learning process. Sometimes, he provided guidance to her peers. He was liked by her peers in the classroom.
2	MH	He is overtalkative student. He speaks too much in the class and he can actively answer teacher's question. Moreover, he likes to communicate with the other students. But he often showed impolite behavior. For instance, he has ever jumped on the table. He frequently showed his rejection to his group.
3	BWP	He has disruptive behavior. He often goes outside of the class when the teacher is explaining the material. He frequently talks to his friends when teacher is talking in front of the class. he showed less interested when worked in a group. sometimes, he only played at his handphone. He has ever angry to some female students in the class. he only talked with few students in the class especially his close friend.
4	AKAN	He frequently shouting angry to his peers because of noising class. He was impolite enough to his teacher. Sometimes, he sleeps in the class while other students were doing task. He was also tended to focus on his handphone.
5	MFS	He was not interacting to the other peers and he has low sociability. He seldom be quiet during the learning process.
6	AMHM	He was quiet student. He has never made mistake in a class. He was liked by his peers. He obeys teacher's instruction and never showed her disagreement.
7	AMAGA	He was quiet student. She has never made mistake in a class. He was liked by her peers. He obeys teacher's instruction and never showed her disagreement.

The findings, derived from qualitative observations and quantitative assessments, reveal a nuanced spectrum of sociometric classifications ranging from high, medium, to low. Students with high sociometric status were observed to be more engaged, proactive, and often took on leadership roles during group activities or discussions. They were perceived positively by their peers, often sought after for collaboration, and played pivotal roles in facilitating a conducive learning environment. Conversely, students classified with low sociometric status exhibited a marked contrast in their engagement and interaction patterns. These students were less likely to participate voluntarily and showed signs of reticence during speaking tasks. Peer interactions with these individuals were limited, and at times, they were even marginalized from group activities, reflecting a palpable divide in peer acceptance and integration.

The medium sociometric status group represented a diverse mix of behaviors and peer perceptions. These students occasionally participated in activities and were variably accepted by their peers, indicating a fluidity in their sociometric positioning that could be influenced by specific interactions or achievements. The sociometric assessment revealed a diverse range of statuses among the students, including categories such as popular, rejected,

neglected, controversial, and average. This distribution underscores the complexity of social relationships and their potential effects on learning outcomes.

The influence of sociometric status on students' achievement in Indonesian EFL Speaking Class

The second facet of this investigation delves into the correlation between sociometric status and academic achievement, specifically in speaking proficiency within the EFL classroom. Leveraging the data on students' names, their sociometric status (High, Medium, Low), and their speaking test scores, we conducted a comprehensive statistical analysis to elucidate the impact of sociometric status on language acquisition and proficiency.

The empirical investigation into the correlation between sociometric status and achievement within an Indonesian EFL speaking class yielded insightful revelations. This analysis, grounded in data from thirty twelfth-grade social science students, meticulously explores the intersection of peer perception and classroom social dynamics with English speaking proficiency. The quantitative aspect of our study is grounded in the speaking test scores of students, which are classified into five achievement categories based on their performance: Very Good (91-100), Good (76-90), Fair (61-75), Poor (51-60), and Very Poor (<50). This categorization facilitates a nuanced understanding of students' speaking abilities in relation to their sociometric standing within the class.

Table 6.

Students' Overall Speaking Score

Name	Speaking Test Score	Achievement Category
MFS	85	Good
MRA	60	Poor
SFR	75	Fair
NI	88	Good
MH	70	Fair
AMHM	65	Fair
AMAGA	90	Good
LMIJ	55	Poor
AMS	78	Good
RAM	92	Very Good
ANA	72	Fair
MFAA	58	Poor
MNK	89	Good
BWP	63	Fair
AMFH	91	Very Good
MS	76	Good
WI	59	Poor
AA	74	Fair
RS	87	Good
ZMS	62	Fair
MHFN	77	Good
AFB	94	Very Good

MNR	56	Poor
AKAN	79	Good
FM	60	Poor
AMU	95	Very Good
MFH	80	Good
MU	54	Poor
SH	96	Very Good
AAG	81	Good

Tabel 7.
Students' Sociometric Status and Speaking Test Score

Name	Sociometric Status	Speaking Test Score
MFS	High	85
MRA	Low	60
SFR	Medium	75
NI	High	88
MH	Medium	70
AMHM	Low	65
AMAGA	High	90
LMIJ	Low	55
AMS	Medium	78
RAM	High	92
ANA	Medium	72
MFAA	Low	58
MNK	High	89
BWP	Low	63
AMFH	High	91
MS	Medium	76
WI	Low	59
AA	Medium	74
RS	High	87
ZMS	Low	62
MHFN	Medium	77
AFB	High	94
MNR	Low	56
AKAN	Medium	79
FM	Low	60
AMU	High	95
MFH	Medium	80
MU	Low	54
SH	High	96
AAG	Medium	81

Our analysis unveiled a stark disparity in speaking test scores across the sociometric categories. Students with high sociometric status boasted an average speaking test score of 90.7, markedly higher than their medium and low-status counterparts, who averaged scores of 76.2 and 59.2, respectively. This gradient in speaking proficiency underscores the

significant role of sociometric status in educational attainment, particularly in skills as interactive and socially contingent as language speaking.

To further substantiate these findings, we employed an ANOVA test to assess the statistical significance of the observed differences. The test yielded a p-value of approximately $8.04e-17$, affirming the hypothesis that sociometric status significantly influences speaking test scores among EFL learners. This significant disparity highlights the integral role of social dynamics and peer perception in the educational landscape, particularly in contexts demanding high levels of interaction and communication.

The findings suggest that students with higher sociometric status benefit from a more enriching and interactive learning environment, facilitated by positive peer relationships and higher levels of engagement and participation. This environment, in turn, fosters better speaking proficiency, indicating a reciprocal relationship between sociometric status and language learning success.

DISCUSSION

The findings from this research illuminate the intricate dynamics of sociometric status within the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) speaking classroom and its significant influence on students' achievement. This section delves into the theoretical and practical implications of these findings, linking them to established theories and previous research while also considering their implications for teaching practices and future studies.

Students with high sociometric status, identified as being popular, friendly, and sociable, tend to create and benefit from a positive learning environment. This is directly linked to the speaking score, where these students achieved higher speaking test scores. The supportive network fostered by positive peer relationships likely offers these students more opportunities for practice, feedback, and encouragement, crucial elements for language acquisition. On the other hand, the analysis of controversial students, who exhibit a mix of positive and negative behaviors leading to varied peer acceptance, provides a nuanced understanding of their academic performance. These students' active engagement in classroom discussions, despite their mixed sociometric status, suggests that even with fluctuating peer perceptions, active participation in language learning activities can sustain or improve academic performance. This aligns with the results in their overall speaking score, indicating that sociability and engagement can mediate the effects of sociometric status on achievement.

While the exploration of rejected and neglected students highlights the difficulties these individuals face in integrating into the learning community. This isolation or marginalization directly correlates with the lower speaking test scores. The lack of peer interaction and support for these students not only diminishes their opportunities for language practice but also affects their motivation and confidence, critical factors in

language learning. Additionally, students identified with an average sociometric status, who neither stand out in positive nor negative peer perceptions, demonstrate moderate achievement levels in speaking tests, as shown in the overall speaking score. This suggests that while these students may not experience the full benefits of high sociometric status, they are also not as adversely affected by the challenges faced by those with low status. It indicates a baseline of peer support and interaction that is sufficient for maintaining average academic performance.

Theoretical Implications

The study's results, which highlight the positive correlation between high sociometric status and superior speaking test scores, resonate with the social constructivist perspective of [Vygotsky \(1978\)](#), emphasizing the pivotal role of social interactions in the cognitive development and learning processes. Vygotsky's theory suggests that learning occurs within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) through social interactions, where peers play a critical role in facilitating learning ([Vygotsky, 1978](#)). High sociometric status students are likely to have more opportunities for meaningful interactions, thereby accessing a wider range of ZPDs, which enhances their language acquisition capabilities.

Moreover, the findings align with the social competence model proposed by [Wentzel \(1991\)](#), which posits that students who are well-regarded by their peers (i.e., those with high sociometric status) are more likely to exhibit behaviors that are conducive to academic success. These students often demonstrate higher levels of classroom engagement, motivation, and positive attitudes towards learning, which are critical factors in achieving proficiency in language learning tasks ([Wentzel, 1991](#)).

Practical Implications

The connection between the sociometric status categorization and its influence on academic achievement underlines the critical role of educators in shaping classroom dynamics. Educators are tasked not only with facilitating language learning but also with fostering an environment that promotes positive social interactions and mitigates the adverse effects of social exclusion.

Interventions designed to improve the sociometric status of students, particularly those identified as rejected or neglected, could have a significant impact on language learning outcomes. Strategies such as cooperative learning activities, peer tutoring programs, and social skills training can encourage more inclusive peer interactions, thereby enhancing the learning experience for all students.

Implications for Future Research



This study opens avenues for future research to explore the mechanisms through which sociometric status influences language learning outcomes. Longitudinal studies could examine how changes in sociometric status over time affect language achievement, providing insights into the stability and fluidity of peer relationships and their long-term impact on learning. Additionally, qualitative research methods, such as interviews and observations, could shed light on the subjective experiences of students with different sociometric statuses, offering a deeper understanding of the social dynamics within EFL classrooms.

Investigations into the effectiveness of specific pedagogical interventions aimed at improving the sociometric status of students and, consequently, their language outcomes would also be valuable. Such studies could help educators and policymakers design targeted strategies to enhance the learning experiences and outcomes of all students, regardless of their social standing within the classroom.

CONCLUSION

After observing students' behaviors toward peer relationship based on the categorization of sociometric status, the result displayed that majority students at the eleventh grade of social science class have a positive and few students have negative behaviors during the learning process especially in the EFL speaking classroom. Highly-positive behaviors displayed by majority students consist of providing guidance, providing joking, giving direction, and showing affection. Meanwhile, highly-negative behaviors displayed by few students of social science class involve inappropriate behavior, hitting, and threats and medium-negative behaviors such as disapproval behavior, noncompliance, and yelling. However, among those four negative behaviors, inappropriate behavior frequently transpired toward peer relationship during the learning process. Hence, it can be concluded that all five sociometric status were reflected positive and negative behaviors during the process of learning in EFL classroom. The findings from this research contribute to a nuanced understanding of the role of sociometric status in language learning within the EFL speaking classroom context. By highlighting the significant impact of peer relationships on academic achievement, this study underscores the need for educators to consider the social dimensions of learning environments. Through targeted interventions and supportive teaching practices, educators can mitigate the effects of sociometric status, fostering an inclusive and equitable learning environment that enables all students to thrive.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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