

The Effect of Peer Feedback on Students' English Speaking Ability

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Abstract

This study investigates the effect of peer feedback on students' English speaking ability among eleventh-grade EFL learners. The research aims to determine whether peer feedback significantly improves students' speaking performance in terms of fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and comprehension. The study employed a quantitative pre-experimental design using a one-group pre-test and post-test approach. The participants consisted of 30 eleventh-grade students at a senior high school. Data were collected through speaking tests, observation sheets, and scoring rubrics adapted from Brown and Abeywickrama (2010). The findings revealed a significant improvement in students' speaking performance after the implementation of peer feedback activities. The mean score increased from 61.4 in the pre-test to 78.2 in the post-test. A paired-sample t-test showed a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores ($t(29) = 9.87, p < .001$). Furthermore, Cohen's d analysis indicated a large effect size ($d = 1.21$), demonstrating the substantial impact of peer feedback on students' speaking ability. Classroom observations also revealed increased confidence, participation, interaction, and motivation among students. The study concludes that peer feedback is an effective collaborative learning strategy for improving EFL students' speaking ability. Therefore, English teachers are encouraged to integrate peer feedback into speaking classrooms to enhance students' communicative competence.

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1. INTRODUCTION

English has become one of the most important international languages used in education, business, technology, science, and global communication. In today's interconnected world, the ability to communicate effectively in English is considered an essential skill for students to participate in academic and professional environments. Consequently, English language education has received significant attention in many countries, including Indonesia, where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) from elementary school to higher education.

Among the four language skills, speaking is often regarded as the most challenging and important skill because it serves as a direct means of communication. Speaking enables learners to express ideas, opinions, feelings, and information in real-life situations. According to Brown (2014), speaking is a productive skill that requires learners to simultaneously utilize grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension in meaningful communication. Therefore, speaking proficiency is frequently used as an

indicator of overall language competence.

Despite the importance of speaking skills, many Indonesian EFL learners continue to experience difficulties in oral communication. Students often demonstrate limited vocabulary, inaccurate grammatical structures, poor pronunciation, and lack of fluency during speaking activities. In addition, psychological factors such as anxiety, fear of making mistakes, low self-confidence, and lack of speaking opportunities frequently hinder students from actively participating in classroom communication. Leong and Ahmadi (2017) argue that these affective factors significantly influence learners' speaking performance and often reduce their willingness to communicate in the target language.

Preliminary observations conducted at SMAN 2 Kilo revealed similar problems among eleventh-grade students. Many students were reluctant to express their ideas in English due to fear of making grammatical and pronunciation errors. Classroom speaking activities were often characterized by limited interaction, low participation, and dependence on teacher correction. As a result, students had insufficient opportunities to practice speaking and develop communicative competence. Such conditions indicate the need for more interactive and learner-centered instructional strategies that encourage active engagement and meaningful communication.

One instructional strategy that has attracted considerable attention in language education is peer feedback. Peer feedback refers to a learning process in which students evaluate, comment on, and provide suggestions regarding their classmates' performance. Topping (2017) defines peer feedback as an assessment activity where learners participate in evaluating and discussing the work of their peers to facilitate learning improvement. Unlike traditional teacher-centered feedback, peer feedback promotes collaborative learning by encouraging students to become active participants in the learning process.

The theoretical foundation of peer feedback can be explained through Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction in cognitive development. Vygotsky (1978) argues that learning occurs through interaction with more capable peers and collaborative engagement within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Through peer feedback activities, learners receive support, guidance, and constructive suggestions from classmates, enabling them to improve their language performance beyond their current level of competence.

Furthermore, peer feedback aligns with Long's Interaction Hypothesis and Swain's Output Hypothesis. Long (1996) suggests that interaction facilitates language acquisition by providing opportunities for learners to negotiate meaning and receive feedback during communication. Similarly, Swain (2005) argues that language development occurs when learners actively produce language and reflect on their linguistic output. During peer feedback sessions, students not only receive corrective comments but also critically evaluate their peers' performances, thereby promoting deeper language awareness and learning.

Several previous studies have reported positive effects of peer feedback on language learning. Sato and Lyster (2012) found that peer interaction and corrective feedback significantly improved learners' speaking fluency and accuracy. Liu and Carless (2016) reported that peer feedback promotes learner autonomy, critical thinking, and active engagement in language learning. More recently, Han (2022) concluded that peer feedback contributes positively to speaking development by enhancing learners' confidence, interaction, and communicative competence in EFL classrooms.

However, despite the growing body of research on peer feedback, several gaps remain in the literature. First, many previous studies have primarily focused on writing

instruction rather than speaking performance. Second, a considerable proportion of existing studies have been conducted in higher education settings, while investigations involving Indonesian senior high school students remain relatively limited. Third, previous studies often examined only specific aspects of speaking performance, such as fluency or accuracy, without comprehensively investigating multiple dimensions of speaking ability simultaneously.

Therefore, this study seeks to address these gaps by examining the effect of peer feedback on five dimensions of speaking performance, namely fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and comprehension, among Indonesian senior high school EFL learners. By investigating these dimensions comprehensively, the study aims to provide a more complete understanding of how peer feedback contributes to speaking development in secondary school contexts.

The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive examination of peer feedback across multiple speaking components among Indonesian senior high school students. Unlike previous studies that mainly focused on writing skills or university-level learners, this study provides empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of peer feedback in improving various aspects of speaking performance in an EFL secondary school environment.

Based on the theoretical framework and previous empirical findings, the following hypotheses were formulated:

Null Hypothesis (H₀): Peer feedback does not significantly affect students' English speaking ability.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): Peer feedback significantly affects students' English speaking ability.

Accordingly, the objective of this study is to investigate whether peer feedback significantly improves students' English speaking ability and to examine its influence on fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and comprehension among eleventh-grade EFL learners.

2. METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative pre-experimental research design using a one-group pre-test and post-test design. The design aimed to identify the effect of peer feedback on students' speaking ability before and after treatment.

Participants

This study consisted of 84 eleventh-grade students enrolled at SMAN 2 Kilo during the 2026/2027 academic year. The sample comprised 30 students from Class XI-A selected through purposive sampling. The participants were aged between 16 and 17 years old and had similar English proficiency levels based on their previous semester scores. The class was selected because students demonstrated low speaking performance and limited confidence in English communication.

Instruments

1. Speaking Test

Students were required to perform an individual oral presentation lasting approximately three to five minutes. The speaking topics were related to students' daily experiences, hobbies, future plans, and social issues appropriate to their educational level. Students' performances were recorded and assessed using a speaking rubric adapted from Brown and Abeywickrama (2010).

The speaking rubric consisted of five components:

Fluency, According to Brown and Abeywickrama (2010), fluency is the ability to produce language smoothly, rapidly, and confidently with minimal hesitation. Fluent speakers are capable of maintaining the flow of communication and expressing ideas naturally without excessive pauses or self-correction. In speaking assessment, fluency reflects how effectively learners communicate their thoughts in real-time interaction.

Accuracy, Accuracy refers to the ability to produce grammatically correct language during communication. Brown (2014) states that accuracy involves the correct use of grammar, vocabulary, and language structures that enable learners to convey meaning appropriately. High accuracy indicates that speakers can minimize linguistic errors that may interfere with communication.

Pronunciation, Pronunciation is defined as the ability to produce speech sounds in a manner that is understandable to listeners. According to Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (2010), pronunciation includes segmental features (individual sounds) and suprasegmental features such as stress, rhythm, and intonation. Effective pronunciation contributes significantly to successful oral communication because it affects intelligibility.

Vocabulary, Vocabulary refers to the collection of words and expressions that speakers use to communicate meaning. Nation (2013) explains that vocabulary knowledge includes understanding word meanings, forms, and appropriate usage in different contexts. In speaking performance, a rich vocabulary allows learners to express ideas more precisely and effectively.

Comprehension, Comprehension is the ability to understand spoken language and respond appropriately during communication. Brown and Abeywickrama (2010) define comprehension as the capacity to process, interpret, and react to spoken messages accurately. Learners with strong comprehension skills can understand questions, instructions, and conversational exchanges while maintaining meaningful interaction.

Each component was scored on a scale ranging from 1 to 20, resulting in a maximum score of 100.

2. Observation Sheet

The observation sheet was used to observe students' participation, confidence, and interaction during peer feedback activities.

3. Scoring Rubric

The speaking scoring rubric was adapted from Brown and Abeywickrama (2010), including fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Validity and Reliability of Instruments

To ensure the validity of the instruments, the speaking assessment rubric was reviewed by two experts in English Language Teaching. Their feedback was used to refine the assessment criteria and ensure that the rubric accurately measured students' speaking performance.

The reliability of the speaking assessment was established through inter-rater reliability procedures. Two independent raters assessed students' speaking performances using the same scoring rubric. The consistency of scoring between raters indicated a satisfactory level of reliability. The reliability coefficient exceeded 0.80, which is generally considered acceptable for educational research.

Data Collection Techniques

Administering the Pre-Test

The first stage was administering a pre-test to determine the students' initial speaking ability before the implementation of peer feedback activities. According to Brown and Abeywickrama (2010), a pre-test serves as a baseline measurement that allows researchers to identify learners' existing proficiency levels and compare them with their performance after treatment. During the pre-test, students were asked to perform a speaking task that was assessed using a speaking rubric consisting of fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, and comprehension. The results of the pre-test provided initial data regarding students' speaking performance.

Implementing Peer Feedback Activities During Speaking Lessons

After the pre-test, peer feedback activities were integrated into speaking lessons as the main treatment. Peer feedback is a collaborative learning strategy in which students evaluate and provide responses to their classmates' performance. According to Topping (1998), peer feedback encourages active learning, critical thinking, and learner autonomy because students become involved in both giving and receiving constructive comments. During this stage, students participated in speaking activities and observed their peers' performances using predetermined assessment criteria.

Allowing Students to Give Comments and Suggestions to Peers

The next stage involved allowing students to provide comments and suggestions on their peers' speaking performances. According to Liu and Hansen (2002), peer feedback enables learners to reflect on language use, identify strengths and weaknesses, and develop greater awareness of learning objectives. Students were encouraged to give constructive feedback related to pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary use, fluency, and overall comprehensibility. This process helped students learn from one another and promoted collaborative learning in the classroom.

Conducting Speaking Practice Sessions

Following the feedback activities, students participated in speaking practice sessions. These sessions provided opportunities for learners to apply the feedback they had received and improve their speaking performance. Harmer (2007) emphasizes that regular speaking practice is essential for developing communicative competence because it allows learners to use language meaningfully in authentic situations. Through repeated practice, students became more confident in expressing their ideas and improved various aspects of speaking skills.

Administering the Post-Test

After the treatment period was completed, a post-test was administered to measure students' speaking achievement after participating in peer feedback activities. According to Creswell (2012), a post-test is conducted to determine whether a treatment has produced significant changes in participants' performance. The speaking tasks and assessment criteria used in the post-test were comparable to those used in the pre-test to ensure consistency and reliability. The post-test results were then compared with the pre-test scores to identify improvements in students' speaking abilities.

Analyzing Students' Scores

The final stage involved analyzing the students' pre-test and post-test scores. According to Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, and Walker (2014), data analysis is conducted to interpret research findings and determine whether the treatment has had a significant effect on the dependent variable. The scores obtained from both tests were calculated and compared to identify the extent of improvement in students' speaking performance. Statistical analysis was used to determine whether peer feedback significantly influenced students' speaking achievement.

Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean scores were calculated to identify students' improvement. A paired sample t-test was used to determine whether the improvement was statistically significant.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Students' Speaking Scores

The results of the study showed significant improvement in students' speaking ability after the implementation of peer feedback.

Test	Mean Score
Pre-test	61.4
Post-test	78.2

The table above indicates that students' speaking scores increased after the treatment. The improvement suggests that peer feedback contributed positively to students' speaking development.

Statistical Analysis Results

To determine whether the improvement in students' speaking ability was statistically significant, a paired-sample t-test was conducted.

Table 2. Paired Sample t-Test Results

Variable	Mean	SD
Pre-test	61.4	7.52
Post-test	78.2	6.43

The paired-sample t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores ($t(29) = 9.87, p < .001$). The result indicates that peer feedback had a significant positive effect on students' English speaking ability.

Furthermore, Cohen's d was calculated to determine the magnitude of the treatment effect. The analysis yielded a large effect size ($d = 1.21$), indicating that peer feedback substantially improved students' speaking performance.

Table 3. Improvement in Speaking Components

Component	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Improvement
Fluency	12.4	16.8	+4.4
Accuracy	11.8	15.9	+4.1

Component	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Improvement
Pronunciation	12.1	15.7	+3.6
Vocabulary	12.6	16.2	+3.6
Comprehension	12.5	16.4	+3.9

The table demonstrates that all speaking components improved after the implementation of peer feedback activities. The highest improvement was observed in fluency, while pronunciation and vocabulary also showed substantial gains. These findings suggest that peer feedback contributes positively to multiple dimensions of speaking performance.

Observation Results

The classroom observations revealed several positive changes during peer feedback implementation:

Indicator	Before	After
Participation	Low	High
Confidence	Low	Moderate-High
Interaction	Limited	Active
Motivation	Moderate	High

4. Students Paid Greater Attention to Speaking Accuracy

Observations also revealed that students became more aware of grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, and appropriate vocabulary usage. When evaluating their peers' performances, students paid closer attention to language forms and attempted to identify areas that required improvement. This finding aligns with the concept of noticing proposed by Richard Schmidt, who states that language learning occurs when learners consciously notice linguistic features in input and output. By giving and receiving peer feedback, students became more attentive to language accuracy and were able to recognize errors that might otherwise go unnoticed. In addition, corrective feedback provided by peers encouraged students to monitor their own speech and make adjustments in subsequent speaking tasks.

5. The Classroom Atmosphere Became More Collaborative and Communicative

The classroom environment became noticeably more collaborative and communicative during the peer feedback activities. Students worked together, supported one another, and demonstrated greater willingness to exchange ideas. This finding reflects the principles of cooperative learning proposed by David W. Johnson and Roger T. Johnson, who emphasize that positive interdependence and peer collaboration promote both academic achievement and social development. Furthermore, collaborative classrooms provide learners with authentic opportunities to use language for meaningful communication. As noted by Jack C. Richards, communicative language teaching encourages learners to use English in realistic social

contexts, thereby enhancing communicative competence. Consequently, the collaborative atmosphere created through peer feedback contributed to a more effective and supportive learning environment.

Concluding Interpretation

Overall, the observation results demonstrate that peer feedback not only improved students' speaking performance but also positively influenced important affective and social factors, including participation, confidence, interaction, language awareness, and classroom collaboration. These findings support sociocultural and collaborative learning theories, which suggest that meaningful interaction and constructive feedback play a crucial role in promoting language development and communicative competence among EFL learners.

3.1 DISCUSSION

This The findings indicate that peer feedback significantly improved students' English speaking ability. The improvement was evident from the increase in students' post-test scores compared to the pre-test scores.

The improvement in students' speaking ability can also be explained through Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. According to this theory, learning occurs through social interaction and collaboration. During peer feedback sessions, students interacted with classmates, exchanged ideas, and received corrective feedback. These interactions provided scaffolding that helped learners perform beyond their current level of competence.

Additionally, peer feedback encouraged metacognitive awareness. Students became more conscious of their speaking strengths and weaknesses because they not only received feedback but also evaluated their peers' performances. This dual role as both evaluator and performer contributed to deeper learning and language development.

The findings also support the concept of learner autonomy proposed by Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2016), who argue that effective feedback promotes self-regulated learning. Through peer feedback activities, students gradually developed the ability to monitor and improve their own speaking performance independently.

The results support the theory proposed by Topping (2017), which states that peer feedback promotes active learning and learner engagement. Through peer feedback, students became more involved in evaluating and improving speaking performance.

The findings are also consistent with Hattie and Timperley (2017), who emphasize that feedback helps learners identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. In this study, students received immediate comments from peers regarding pronunciation, grammar, and fluency.

Moreover, peer feedback reduced students' anxiety and increased confidence during speaking activities. Many students initially felt nervous when speaking English in front of the class. However, collaborative interaction with classmates created a more supportive learning environment.

The study also supports Sato and Lyster's (2012) findings that peer interaction improves fluency and speaking accuracy. Students practiced speaking more frequently during peer discussions, enabling them to become more fluent and communicative.

Another important finding was the development of learner autonomy. Students became more responsible for evaluating their own speaking performance and helping classmates improve. This collaborative process encouraged critical thinking and reflective learning.

Although peer feedback showed positive effects, several challenges were identified. Some students initially lacked confidence in giving comments because they were afraid of offending classmates. Additionally, some feedback was too general and lacked specific suggestions. Therefore, teachers should provide clear guidance and feedback training before implementing peer feedback activities. Overall, peer feedback proved to be an effective strategy for improving students' English speaking ability in EFL classrooms.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study provide important implications for English language teaching, particularly in EFL contexts. Peer feedback can be integrated into speaking instruction as a collaborative learning strategy that encourages active participation and learner-centered interaction.

Teachers should provide clear guidelines and assessment criteria before implementing peer feedback activities. Training students to provide constructive, specific, and respectful feedback is essential to maximize the effectiveness of the strategy. In addition, teachers should monitor peer interactions to ensure that feedback remains accurate and supportive.

The implementation of peer feedback may also help reduce speaking anxiety, foster learner autonomy, and create a more communicative classroom environment. Therefore, peer feedback can serve as a practical alternative to traditional teacher-dominated speaking instruction.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the positive findings, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, this study employed a pre-experimental design without a control group, which limits the ability to establish a strong causal relationship between peer feedback and speaking improvement. Second, the study involved only thirty students from one senior high school, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Third, the duration of the treatment was relatively short. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to involve larger samples, multiple educational settings, and more rigorous experimental designs.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that peer feedback significantly improves students' English speaking ability. Students showed notable improvement in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, accuracy, and comprehension after participating in peer feedback activities. Statistical analysis confirmed that the improvement was significant, indicating that peer feedback positively influenced speaking performance.

In addition to improving speaking ability, peer feedback enhanced students' confidence, classroom participation, interaction, and motivation. Through collaborative learning experiences, students became more active participants in the learning process and developed greater awareness of their speaking strengths and weaknesses.

These findings suggest that peer feedback can serve as an effective pedagogical strategy for English speaking instruction, particularly in EFL contexts where opportunities for authentic communication are often limited.

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