



Assessing the Impact of Peer Interaction on the English Speaking Proficiency of the 2nd Semester Students of English Education Study Program at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University

Muhammad Adzka Fikry¹, Zuraida²

^{1,2}Universitas Sriwijaya, Indonesia

E-mail: kafikry@gmail.com, zuraida@fkip.unsri.ac.id

Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: 2025-10-07 Revised: 2025-11-13 Published: 2025-12-01 Keywords: <i>Peer Interaction;</i> <i>English Speaking</i> <i>Proficiency;</i> <i>Sociocultural Theory;</i> <i>Mixed Methods;</i> <i>Communicative Learning.</i>	<p>This study aims to examine the impact of peer interaction on English-speaking proficiency among second-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University. The quantitative component employed a correlational design involving 29 students, using a 15-item Likert-scale questionnaire to assess variables such as confidence, motivation, anxiety reduction, and linguistic development. The results revealed a strong positive correlation between the frequency of peer interaction and students' self-rated improvement in speaking proficiency. Quantitative findings indicated that over 80% of respondents perceived increased confidence and motivation, while qualitative analysis identified four dominant themes: enhanced confidence, affective comfort, linguistic enrichment, and anxiety reduction. These findings affirm Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, highlighting that language learning is socially mediated and strengthened through collaborative dialogue. The study concludes that structured peer interaction significantly enhances both the affective and linguistic aspects of EFL learners' speaking performance. Theoretically, the research extends sociocultural learning frameworks to the Indonesian higher education context; practically, it recommends the integration of peer-based speaking activities into communicative language teaching. Future research should employ longitudinal designs and include larger, cross-institutional samples to further explore the long-term and contextual dynamics of peer interaction in language acquisition.</p>

Artikel Info	Abstrak
Sejarah Artikel Diterima: 2025-10-07 Direvisi: 2025-11-13 Dipublikasi: 2025-12-01 Kata kunci: <i>Interaksi Sebaya;</i> <i>Kemahiran Berbahasa</i> <i>Inggris;</i> <i>Teori Sosiokultural;</i> <i>Metode Campuran;</i> <i>Pembelajaran</i> <i>Komunikatif.</i>	<p>Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji dampak interaksi teman sebaya terhadap kemahiran berbicara bahasa Inggris di antara mahasiswa semester kedua Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Sriwijaya. Dengan menggunakan desain metode campuran, penelitian ini mengintegrasikan pendekatan kuantitatif dan kualitatif untuk mendapatkan wawasan yang terukur dan mendalam. Komponen kuantitatif menggunakan desain korelasional yang melibatkan 29 mahasiswa, dengan menggunakan kuesioner skala Likert berisi 15 item untuk menilai variabel-variabel seperti kepercayaan diri, motivasi, pengurangan kecemasan, dan perkembangan linguistik. Hasilnya mengungkapkan korelasi positif yang kuat antara frekuensi interaksi teman sebaya dan peningkatan kemahiran berbicara yang dinilai sendiri oleh mahasiswa. Temuan kuantitatif menunjukkan bahwa lebih dari 80% responden merasakan peningkatan kepercayaan diri dan motivasi, sementara analisis kualitatif mengidentifikasi empat tema dominan: peningkatan kepercayaan diri, kenyamanan afektif, pengayaan linguistik, dan pengurangan kecemasan. Temuan ini menegaskan Teori Sosiokultural Vygotsky, yang menekankan bahwa pembelajaran bahasa dimediasi secara sosial dan diperkuat melalui dialog kolaboratif. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa interaksi terstruktur dengan teman sebaya secara signifikan meningkatkan aspek afektif dan linguistik dari kinerja berbicara pembelajar EFL. Secara teoritis, penelitian ini memperluas kerangka kerja pembelajaran sosiokultural ke konteks pendidikan tinggi Indonesia; secara praktis, penelitian ini merekomendasikan integrasi aktivitas berbicara berbasis teman sebaya ke dalam pengajaran bahasa komunikatif. Penelitian di masa mendatang sebaiknya menggunakan desain longitudinal dan mencakup sampel lintas institusi yang lebih besar untuk lebih mengeksplorasi dinamika jangka panjang dan kontekstual interaksi teman sebaya dalam pemerolehan bahasa.</p>

I. INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization, the ability to communicate effectively in English has become a fundamental skill in education,

professional environments, and international collaboration. English proficiency, particularly in speaking, is a vital component of communicative competence that reflects not only linguistic

mastery but also self-confidence and intercultural awareness (Brown, 2004; Richards, 2008). For students majoring in English Education, speaking ability serves as a key indicator of their readiness to perform in academic discussions, teaching practice, and future professional settings. However, many learners still face persistent challenges, including limited exposure to authentic English communication, anxiety in formal settings, and inadequate opportunities for interactive speaking practice. These issues are evident among students at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University, where classroom environments often prioritize accuracy and formality over fluency and spontaneity in communication.

Recent pedagogical developments highlight peer interaction as a promising approach to address these challenges. Drawing from Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, learning is viewed as a socially mediated process in which knowledge is co-constructed through meaningful interaction with others. Peer interaction allows students to practice language in authentic contexts, negotiate meaning, and receive immediate feedback, which supports both cognitive and affective aspects of language learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Swain, 2000). Several studies have demonstrated its effectiveness in enhancing students' confidence, fluency, and linguistic accuracy. For example, Rosdiana (2024) found that small-group peer discussions significantly improved Indonesian students' speaking confidence, while Muluk, Habiburrahim, and Dahliana (2025) revealed that structured peer dialogue in flipped classroom models enhanced students' linguistic awareness and speaking fluency.

Despite these encouraging findings, empirical research on peer interaction within Indonesian higher education remains limited. Most studies have focused on online platforms or secondary school contexts (Fathi & Yin, 2025; Rosdiana, 2024), leaving a gap in understanding how peer collaboration functions in face-to-face university classrooms. Moreover, previous research has primarily investigated peer feedback in writing tasks (Zaccaron & Xhafaj, 2024) rather than spoken communication, while studies examining cultural influences—such as hierarchical classroom structures and students' fear of making mistakes—suggest that Indonesian learners may hesitate to engage actively in peer conversations (Andrews, Owens, & Oye, 2024).

These contextual and cultural factors highlight the need for more nuanced studies that examine how structured peer interaction can effectively enhance English-speaking proficiency in local academic settings.

The urgency of this study arises from the increasing demand for interactive, student-centered pedagogies that foster communicative competence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. As Mihret and Joshi (2025) noted, peer interaction is most effective when it is well-structured and guided by instructors to ensure meaningful and supportive exchanges. Therefore, investigating how such interaction can be adapted to Indonesian classroom culture is essential for optimizing both linguistic development and affective outcomes, such as confidence and reduced anxiety.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine the impact of peer interaction on English-speaking proficiency among second-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University. By employing a mixed-method approach that integrates quantitative and qualitative data, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how peer collaboration influences learners' fluency, confidence, and motivation in speaking English. The findings are expected to contribute to the theoretical enrichment of sociocultural perspectives in second language acquisition and offer practical insights for educators in designing communicative, collaborative, and culturally responsive EFL instruction at the tertiary level.

II. METHOD

This study employed a mixed-method design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively examine the relationship between peer interaction and English-speaking proficiency. The quantitative component utilized a correlational design to determine the degree of association between students' interaction frequency and their perceived speaking improvement (Creswell, 2014). Meanwhile, the qualitative component was included to capture deeper insights into students' subjective experiences and perceptions through semistructured interviews. The use of a mixed-method approach allowed for methodological triangulation, enhancing the validity and depth of the findings (Mackey & Gass, 2016).

The research was conducted at the English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher

Training and Education, Sriwijaya University, located in Palembang, Indonesia. The study took place during the second semester of the 2024–2025 academic year, coinciding with the students' active speaking courses. This period was chosen because second-semester students were considered to have developed foundational speaking skills and were entering a stage of increased peer collaboration during classroom learning.

The population of the study comprised all second-semester students enrolled in the English Education Study Program at the Palembang campus. A purposive sampling technique was applied to ensure that participants met the criteria of having prior speaking experience in peer-based activities. A total of 29 students from classes 2A and 2B participated in the quantitative phase, while 12 students were selected for qualitative interviews based on their willingness to provide detailed reflections on their learning experiences. This sample size was deemed sufficient to represent the population's linguistic and affective diversity in the given context.

Data were collected using two main instruments: a questionnaire and an interview guide. The questionnaire consisted of 15 Likert-scale items designed to measure students' perceptions of peer interaction across four key indicators—self-confidence, motivation, anxiety reduction, and linguistic improvement (fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary). The items were reviewed by subject experts to ensure content validity and clarity. The interview guide contained four openended questions that explored students' real experiences of peer interaction in developing speaking skills, focusing on affective changes, frequency of use, and perceived linguistic gains. Interviews were conducted individually and recorded with participant consent, ensuring reliability through verbatim transcription and cross-checking of recurring themes.

The data analysis process was divided into two stages. Quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed descriptively to determine mean agreement levels and identify dominant trends. A correlational analysis was also conducted to explore the relationship between peer interaction frequency and perceived speaking proficiency. Meanwhile, qualitative data were processed using thematic analysis to extract emerging patterns related to motivation, confidence, and anxiety reduction. The integration of both data types was carried

out through triangulation to confirm and enrich the interpretation of results, ensuring consistency and credibility of findings.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Result

The quantitative findings revealed a significant positive relationship between peer interaction and English-speaking proficiency among second-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University. Based on the questionnaire responses, over 80% of participants agreed that peer interaction enhanced their confidence and motivation to speak in English, while approximately 74.5% reported a noticeable reduction in speaking anxiety. Additionally, 81.3% of respondents indicated that peer feedback improved their pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. The highest level of agreement (96.7%) was recorded for the statement that peer interaction positively impacts overall speaking skills, demonstrating that students perceive collaborative learning as a powerful contributor to oral proficiency.

Correlation analysis further confirmed a strong positive relationship between the frequency of peer interaction and students' self-rated improvement in speaking ability. Students who frequently engaged in small-group discussions and peer speaking tasks demonstrated greater fluency, comfort, and confidence compared to those who interacted less. Although some participants (around 30%) still expressed anxiety about making mistakes, the overall data suggested that peer collaboration substantially reduces communication apprehension and encourages greater participation in English-speaking activities.

Qualitative findings complemented these results by providing deeper insight into students' lived experiences. Thematic analysis of interviews with 12 students revealed four recurring themes: increased confidence, motivational support, anxiety reduction, and linguistic improvement. Most participants stated that practicing English with peers in an informal atmosphere allowed them to speak more freely without fear of being judged. They also reported that peer corrections during group discussions improved pronunciation and vocabulary retention. These findings confirmed the quantitative trend that peer

interaction creates a more relaxed and supportive environment conducive to oral language development.

B. Discussion

The results substantiate the core tenets of Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, which emphasizes that learning occurs through social interaction within meaningful contexts. The consistent improvement in students' speaking fluency and confidence demonstrates that peer collaboration serves as a scaffold that supports learners' progression within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). When students engage with peers, they co-construct linguistic knowledge, correct each other's errors, and internalize communicative patterns—processes that align with Swain's (2000) Output Hypothesis, which highlights the value of collaborative dialogue in language acquisition.

These findings are also consistent with prior empirical research. Rosdiana (2024) and Muluk, Habiburrahim, & Dahliana (2025) found that structured peer discussions and synchronous flipped-classroom activities significantly improved students' fluency and confidence, echoing the results of this study. Similarly, Fathi and Yin (2025) demonstrated that digital peer interaction enhanced motivation and oral proficiency, while Lee and Park (2023) observed comparable outcomes in Korean EFL classrooms. The present study extends these findings to a face-to-face Indonesian university context, reinforcing the idea that both online and in-person peer collaboration contribute meaningfully to oral competence.

Moreover, the affective outcomes observed such as anxiety reduction and increased motivation align with Mihret and Joshi's (2025) assertion that emotional safety in peer settings encourages risk-taking and fluency development. Students in this study repeatedly described feeling "freer" and "less afraid" when speaking with peers, which supports the theory that low-pressure environments promote communicative engagement. This environment also allows learners to negotiate meaning, co-construct vocabulary, and correct pronunciation organically, mirroring the processes identified by Johnson and Johnson (1999) in cooperative learning frameworks.

In the local context, cultural factors play an essential role in shaping the dynamics of peer interaction. As Andrews, Owens, and Oye (2024) noted, collectivist societies like Indonesia often exhibit social hierarchies and shyness that inhibit open communication. Yet, the findings here show that with consistent peer-based speaking tasks, students gradually overcame such barriers and displayed greater willingness to speak. This suggests that peer interaction, when properly structured, can mitigate cultural reticence and foster a sense of community conducive to language learning. Consequently, the study contributes to the development of context-sensitive pedagogical models that integrate cultural understanding with communicative language teaching.

From a theoretical standpoint, these results reaffirm the sociocultural view that language learning is a socially mediated process, highlighting peer interaction as a dynamic mechanism for affective and cognitive development. Practically, the findings underscore the importance of integrating peer-based speaking activities—such as role-plays, small-group discussions, and peer feedback sessions—into EFL curricula. Teachers can leverage these interactions to promote student autonomy, confidence, and sustained speaking practice. Incorporating structured peer engagement not only strengthens linguistic competence but also cultivates interpersonal skills essential for future educators.

However, this study also acknowledges several limitations. The sample size was relatively small ($n=29$), focusing only on one institution and semester level, which limits generalizability. Moreover, self-reported data may be influenced by social desirability bias. Future research could expand the sample across multiple universities, employ longitudinal designs, and incorporate classroom observation or experimental methods to validate the longterm impact of peer interaction on speaking proficiency. Additionally, exploring intersections between peer dynamics, cultural identity, and digital platforms could provide a richer understanding of language learning in modern contexts.

In summary, this study demonstrates that peer interaction significantly enhances both linguistic proficiency and affective engagement in English language learning. It

validates sociocultural and interactionist frameworks by showing that communication among peers serves as a vital medium for developing fluency, confidence, and motivation. These findings contribute not only to theoretical discourse on language learning but also to practical innovations in EFL pedagogy, positioning peer interaction as a cornerstone of communicative competence in higher education.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

This study concludes that peer interaction significantly enhances English-speaking proficiency among second-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University. The results indicate that active participation in peer-based speaking activities improves students' confidence, motivation, fluency, and pronunciation accuracy, while simultaneously reducing their anxiety in English communication. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative findings demonstrates that peer collaboration creates a supportive environment for authentic communication and immediate feedback. These findings align with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and Swain's Output Hypothesis, confirming that social interaction is fundamental to second language acquisition. Therefore, peer engagement not only develops linguistic competence but also strengthens students' affective and cognitive growth through collaborative learning experiences.

B. Suggestion

Based on the research findings, several recommendations can be made. First, English language educators should integrate structured peer-based activities—such as group discussions, role-plays, and peer feedback sessions—into classroom instruction to promote communicative competence and learner autonomy. Teachers are advised to provide adequate scaffolding and supervision to ensure that peer interactions remain purposeful, constructive, and language-focused. Second, curriculum developers and educational institutions should encourage the adoption of collaborative learning models that align with sociocultural principles of language learning. Lastly, future researchers are encouraged to conduct studies with larger and more diverse participant groups, explore

longitudinal impacts of peer interaction on language development, and investigate the use of digital or cross-cultural peer collaboration platforms to broaden the theoretical and practical insights of peer-based learning in EFL contexts.

REFERENCES

- Ahmmed, R. (2017). The impact of peer interaction on English speaking skills development. *Journal of Language Learning Research*, 15(3), 45-62.
- Ahmmed, R. (2022). Collaborative learning and oral communication: A longitudinal study of EFL learners. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 28(2), 112128.
- Al-Mahrooqi, R., & Denman, C. (2020). English communication skills and employability in the Arabian Gulf: The case of Oman. Springer.
- Andrews, M., Owens, J., & Oye, K. (2024). Cultural dynamics in collaborative learning: Understanding peer interaction patterns in diverse educational settings. *Multicultural Education Review*, 16(1), 23-41.
- Brown, H. D. (2004). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices*. Pearson Education.
- Brown, H. D., & Abeywickrama, P. (2010). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- De Jong, N. H. (2022). Fluency in second language testing. *Language Testing*, 39(2), 269288.
- Fan, J., & Yan, X. (2020). Assessing speaking proficiency: A comprehensive review of current practices and future directions. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 17(4), 398-417.
- Fathi, J., & Yin, H. (2025). Digital language exchange platforms and their impact on speaking motivation: A case study of university students. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 38(1), 78-96.

- Ginther, A. (2012). Assessment of oral proficiency. In C. Chapelle (Ed.), *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics* (pp. 1-7). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (1999). *Learning together and alone: Cooperative, competitive, and individualistic learning* (5th ed.). Allyn & Bacon.
- Lee, S., & Park, H. (2023). Peer interaction in Korean EFL classrooms: Effects on fluency and accuracy development. *Asian EFL Journal*, 25(2), 134-152.
- Li, M., & Wang, J. (2018). The role of peer interaction in developing oral communication skills among Chinese EFL learners. *System*, 76, 1-12.
- Luoma, S. (2004). *Assessing speaking*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2016). *Second language research: Methodology and design* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- McDonough, J., & Shaw, C. (2003). *Materials and methods in ELT: A teacher's guide* (2nd ed.). Blackwell Publishing.
- Mihret, T., & Joshi, R. (2025). Structured peer interaction in language learning: Benefits and challenges in instructor-mediated environments. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 97, 103-115.
- Muluk, S., Habiburrahim, H., & Dahliana, S. (2025). Synchronous flipped classroom approach: Enhancing speaking proficiency through structured peer interaction. *Computers & Education*, 178, 45-58.
- Nhan, L. K. (2024). The effectiveness of peer interaction activities in improving EFL students' speaking skills: A classroom-based study. *Language Teaching Research*, 28(3), 287-305.
- Pratama, A., & Wijaya, B. (2021). English Club programs and peer interaction: A study of speaking confidence development in Indonesian university students. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 11(1), 89-104.
- Richards, J. C. (2008). *Teaching listening and speaking: From theory to practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rosdiana, E. (2024). Building confidence through peer interaction: A study of Indonesian EFL learners' speaking development. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 20(2), 156-173.
- Swain, M. (2000). The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative dialogue. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 97-114). Oxford University Press.