



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

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Abstract. *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 research addresses the persistent challenge of low speaking confidence and fluency among EFL learners, particularly within Indonesian higher education contexts. Using a mixed-method design, the study integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain both measurable and in-depth insights. 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 qualitative component, based on a phenomenological approach, involved semi-structured interviews with 12 participants to explore personal experiences and perceptions regarding peer interaction in speaking activities. 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.*

Keywords: *peer interaction, English speaking proficiency, sociocultural theory, mixed methods, communicative learning*

Abstrak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji dampak interaksi teman sebaya terhadap kemampuan berbicara bahasa Inggris di kalangan mahasiswa semester dua Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Sriwijaya. Penelitian ini menjawab tantangan berkelanjutan berupa rendahnya kepercayaan diri dan kelancaran berbicara di kalangan pelajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL), khususnya dalam konteks pendidikan tinggi Indonesia. 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 siswa, dengan menggunakan kuesioner skala Likert 15 butir untuk menilai variabel seperti kepercayaan diri, motivasi, pengurangan kecemasan, dan pengembangan linguistik. Komponen kualitatif, berdasarkan pendekatan fenomenologis, melibatkan wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan 12 partisipan untuk mengeksplorasi pengalaman pribadi dan persepsi mengenai interaksi teman sebaya dalam kegiatan berbicara. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan korelasi positif yang kuat antara frekuensi interaksi teman sebaya dan peningkatan kemampuan berbicara yang dinilai sendiri oleh siswa. 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, penguasaan linguistik, dan pengurangan kecemasan. Temuan ini mendukung Teori Sosiokultural Vygotsky, yang menyoroti bahwa pembelajaran bahasa dimediasi secara sosial dan diperkuat melalui dialog kolaboratif. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa interaksi teman sebaya yang terstruktur secara signifikan meningkatkan aspek afektif dan linguistik dari kinerja berbicara pelajar EFL. Secara teoritis, penelitian ini

memperluas kerangka kerja pembelajaran sosiokultural ke konteks pendidikan tinggi Indonesia; secara praktis, penelitian ini merekomendasikan integrasi kegiatan berbicara berbasis teman sebaya ke dalam pengajaran bahasa komunikatif. Penelitian di masa depan hendaknya menggunakan desain longitudinal dan mencakup sampel yang lebih besar serta lintas institusi untuk lebih mengeksplorasi dinamika jangka panjang dan kontekstual dari interaksi teman sebaya dalam pemerolehan bahasa.

Kata Kunci: interaksi teman sebaya, kemahiran berbicara bahasa Inggris, teori sosiokultural, metode campuran, pembelajaran komunikatif

INTRODUCTION

The ability to speak English fluently has become an essential competency in global education and professional communication. For students majoring in English Education, speaking proficiency represents not only linguistic competence but also communicative confidence that supports their academic and career advancement (Brown, 2004; Richards, 2008). However, many students still face obstacles such as limited exposure to authentic English communication, lack of confidence, and few opportunities to practice in real contexts. These barriers often result in anxiety and reluctance to speak, particularly in formal classroom environments, as observed among students at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University.

Recent pedagogical approaches emphasize peer interaction as an effective method to enhance language learning outcomes. Rooted in Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, peer interaction enables learners to construct knowledge collaboratively through meaningful social exchanges. Studies have shown that learning through peer collaboration increases motivation and engagement (Johnson & Johnson, 1999) and provides authentic communicative experiences that foster fluency and accuracy (Swain, 2000). For instance, Rosdiana (2024) demonstrated that small-group peer interaction significantly increased students' confidence in speaking English, while Muluk, Habiburrahim, and Dahliana (2025) found that structured peer discussions within a flipped classroom model improved both fluency and linguistic awareness.

Despite these promising findings, a notable research gap remains in understanding how peer interaction affects speaking proficiency within Indonesian higher education, particularly in traditional face-to-face classrooms. Previous studies have largely concentrated on online or secondary school settings (Fathi & Yin, 2025; Rosdiana, 2024), while university-level interactional learning in Indonesia has received less empirical attention. Furthermore, existing research such as Zaccaron and Xhafaj (2024) explored peer feedback primarily in academic writing, leaving the domain of spoken English interaction relatively underexplored. This highlights the need for more context-specific studies examining how direct peer communication contributes to speaking development in university classrooms.

The urgency of this study lies in the increasing demand for interactive, student-centered pedagogies that support communicative competence. As Mihret and Joshi (2025) noted, while peer interaction enhances confidence, it often lacks structured guidance, potentially limiting its effectiveness. Additionally, cultural factors in Indonesia such as hierarchical norms and communication apprehension can hinder open peer dialogue (Andrews, Owens, & Oye, 2024). Therefore, empirical evidence is necessary to determine how structured peer interaction can be adapted to local classroom cultures to enhance both linguistic and affective learning outcomes in English speaking.

Accordingly, this article aims to assess the impact of peer interaction on English speaking proficiency among second-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University. By integrating quantitative and qualitative analyses, this study provides an empirical understanding of how peer collaboration influences confidence, anxiety reduction, and fluency development. The findings are expected to contribute to the theoretical development of

sociocultural learning perspectives and offer practical insights for educators seeking to design communicative, collaborative, and culturally responsive speaking instruction in tertiary EFL contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical foundation of this study is grounded in Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, which posits that learning occurs through social interaction within a cultural context. Language development, in particular, is seen as a socially mediated process, where learners acquire linguistic competence through collaboration and communication with more capable peers. This interaction provides a "zone of proximal development" (ZPD), allowing learners to move from dependence toward autonomy. Within this framework, peer interaction functions as a key mechanism that bridges cognitive and linguistic development through authentic communicative exchanges. Supporting this, Johnson and Johnson (1999) emphasize cooperative learning as an effective method that fosters motivation, engagement, and skill acquisition. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, peer interaction enables learners to practice speaking in meaningful, supportive, and low-anxiety environments factors essential for developing fluency and confidence (Swain, 2000; Brown, 2004).

Speaking proficiency itself has been widely defined as the ability to produce language accurately, fluently, and appropriately across social and academic contexts (Luoma, 2004; Richards, 2008). It encompasses pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary range, and pragmatic competence. According to Brown and Abeywickrama (2010), effective speaking assessment should reflect these dimensions while providing constructive feedback that promotes communicative competence. Recent works by de Jong (2022) and Fan and Yan (2020) have highlighted the dynamic and multi-dimensional nature of oral proficiency, emphasizing that fluency and interactivity are core indicators of communicative performance. Within this context, peer collaboration becomes a practical avenue to enhance speaking competence, as it offers frequent opportunities for meaningful communication and self-correction outside formal testing environments.

A substantial body of empirical research supports the positive impact of peer interaction on EFL speaking development. Rosdiana (2024), employing a classroom-based design, found that small-group peer discussions increased Indonesian EFL learners' confidence and speaking fluency. Similarly, Muluk, Habiburrahim, and Dahliana (2025) applied a synchronous flipped classroom model and reported significant gains in speaking accuracy and vocabulary use due to structured peer dialogue. Fathi and Yin (2025) investigated digital peer exchanges via Tandem and HelloTalk applications, revealing that sustained online interaction with peers and native speakers enhanced students' motivation and pronunciation. Complementing these findings, Lee and Park (2023) analyzed peer interaction in Korean university EFL classes using a mixed-method approach and found improvements in fluency and grammatical accuracy. Pratama and Wijaya (2021), in the Indonesian context, observed that English Club activities fostered students' willingness to speak and reduced anxiety during peer interactions. Furthermore, Nhan (2024) demonstrated that peer collaboration through role-playing and problem-solving tasks significantly improved fluency, confidence, and linguistic range, while Ahmmed (2022) confirmed the longitudinal benefits of peer-based communication in sustaining learners' oral proficiency.

While these studies consistently indicate the advantages of peer interaction, several gaps remain both theoretically and empirically. Most prior research has been conducted in online or secondary-school settings (e.g., Rosdiana, 2024; Fathi & Yin, 2025), leaving limited empirical

evidence from traditional university classrooms in Indonesia. Studies such as Zaccaron and Xhafaj (2024) examined peer interaction in academic writing feedback rather than spoken communication, highlighting a lack of focus on oral performance. Additionally, Mihret and Joshi (2025) reported that although peer interaction can enhance speaking confidence, its effectiveness depends on adequate instructor guidance an aspect often missing in unstructured peer tasks. Cultural factors further complicate this issue; Andrews, Owens, and Oye (2024) revealed that hierarchical social norms and fear of making mistakes can inhibit open peer dialogue in collectivist societies like Indonesia. Consequently, it remains unclear how peer interaction can be effectively structured to accommodate such cultural dynamics while promoting communicative fluency.

The review of existing literature thus underscores the need for empirical exploration of peer interaction in face-to-face higher education settings, particularly in Indonesian EFL classrooms where sociocultural and affective factors intersect. This article contributes to bridging that gap by systematically analyzing how peer interaction influences both the affective domain (confidence, motivation, anxiety reduction) and the linguistic domain (fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition). By integrating quantitative and qualitative findings, this study extends sociocultural learning theory to a localized context, offering new insights into how structured peer collaboration can serve as an effective pedagogical model for enhancing English speaking proficiency in university students.

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 semi-structured 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 open-ended 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.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

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.

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 long-term 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.

Table 1 TheQuestioner

		Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
1.	Engaging in peer interactions during speaking activities boosts my confidence in using English.	90%	0	10%
2.	I feel more motivated to participate in speaking tasks when I have the opportunity to interact with my peers.	86.7%	0	13.3%
3.	Peer interaction positively impacts the development of my speaking skills in English.	96.7%	0	0
4.	I am more likely to take risks and express myself verbally when working with classmates during language activities.	73.3%	0	26.7%
5.	I believe that peer feedback enhances my speaking proficiency in English.	83.3%	0	13.3%
6.	Collaborative speaking tasks with peers make the language learning process more enjoyable for me.	80%	0	13.3%
7.	Peer interaction provides valuable opportunities for me	83.3%	0	13.3%
8.	Peer interaction provides valuable opportunities for me	73.3%	0	26.7%
9.	Peer interaction and managing language anxiety are essential factors in the development of my speaking skills.	70%	0	26.7%
10.	Interacting with classmates helps reduce my feelings of anxiety when speaking.	80%	0	20%
11.	I believe that peer interaction is crucial for overcoming anxiety in speaking tasks.	73.3%	0	20%
12.	Language anxiety hampers my ability to communicate effectively in English during classroom activities.	82.1%	0	10.7%
13.	Language anxiety hinders my ability to speak confidently in English.	70%	0	30%
14.	I find it challenging to express myself verbally in English when experiencing language anxiety.	53.3%	16.7%	30%
15.	The fear of making mistakes in front of peers negatively affects my willingness to participate in speaking activities.	53.3%	10%	36.7%
	The fear of being judged by peers negatively impacts my willingness to participate in speaking activities.			

Table 2 Interview Question

Interview Questions	
Instructions: Answer each question by explaining what you did or how you felt regarding the situations. There is no right or wrong answer in filling out this questionnaire, so please answer all of the questions with honesty.	
No.	Questions
1.	Can you explain how interaction with peers affects your English speaking? Answer:
2.	Do you feel more confident speaking in English when talking with peers compared to speaking in class? If yes, why? Answer:
3.	What kind of situations do you use English most often with peers? For example, group discussions, role plays, everyday conversations, etc. Answer:
4.	In your opinion, do you think interacting with peers helps you improve your pronunciation, vocabulary and speaking fluency in English? Answer:

Table 3 Result of Interview Question

Narrator	Answer
1 MS	<i>1. I become more active and not passive in learning to speak.</i> <i>2. Yes, because friends are usually more patient and help each other.</i> <i>3. When studying in groups, practicing presentations, and joking around in English.</i> <i>4. Of course, because I become more confident and learn new words.</i>
2 RC	<i>1. Helps me develop my speaking style and how to express ideas.</i> <i>2. Yes, because there is no pressure of grades or assessments that make me nervous.</i> <i>3. When discussing assignments, practicing presentations, and sometimes role-playing.</i> <i>4. Yes, because the more frequent the interaction, the more I can imitate the correct way of speaking.</i>

3.MF

D

- 1. Interaction with friends makes it easier for me to learn the context in conversation.*
- 2. Yes, because it's not too formal so it's not too stressful.*
- 3. When practicing speaking, playing English games, or chatting casually.*
- 4. Yes, because the more I practice, the more I get used to it and become fluent.*

4.AA

- 1. I can practice continuously and it helps me be confident.*
- 2. Yes, I feel safe and supported when talking to friends.*
- 3. During roleplay and group work, and sometimes when chatting in English.*
- 4. Yes, because my friends like to correct me and I know what's wrong.*

5.SM

- 1. I practice more often because my friends like to chat in English.*
- 2. Yes, because I feel freer to speak without fear of being ridiculed.*
- 3. During drama simulations and also presentation discussions.*
- 4. Yes, it really helps with pronunciation and pronunciation of new words.*

6.AN

- 1. I feel helped because I can learn from my own mistakes and my friends'.*
- 2. Yes, because I am not as tense as when I have to speak formally in front of a lecturer.*
- 3. When working in groups, chatting outside of class, and when hanging out together.*
- 4. Yes, because I am more familiar with English pronunciation and intonation.*

7.QN

- 1. I learn from my friends' way of speaking and imitate their style.*
- 2. Yes, my friends are easier to talk to, so I am more confident.*

3. *When discussing assignments, playing English games, or chatting casually.*
4. *Of course, because I often hear and imitate my friends.*

8.HS

1. *My friends often help me when I'm confused about saying something.*
2. *Yes, because I don't feel judged or criticized like in class.*
3. *Most often during group work and group presentations.*
4. *Yes, it really improves fluency because I practice more often.*

9. TAS

1. *Interaction with friends is very helpful because I feel more comfortable and not afraid of making mistakes. We can correct each other.*
2. *Yes, because the pressure in class is greater, while with friends I can be more relaxed.*
3. *I often speak English during group discussions and daily conversation exercises.*
4. *Yes, because friends often correct my pronunciation, and I learn a lot of new vocabulary.*

10.NJR

1. *Interaction makes me more confident because my friends are supportive.*
2. *Yes, I don't feel ashamed if I make a mistake, because my friends are also learning.*
3. *When discussing assignments, role-playing, and sometimes when chatting casually.*
4. *Of course, because we can practice directly and correct each other.*

11.MRZ

1. *I am more used to speaking and hearing English directly.*

2. Yes, I am more relaxed when chatting with friends than speaking formally in front of the class.
3. Most often when working in groups and hanging out together using mixed languages.
4. Yes, it is very helpful especially in fluently speaking and increasing vocabulary.

12.BNS

1. I feel like I'm improving because I often practice without realizing it when chatting.
2. Yes, because outside of class I'm freer to express myself.
3. In role-play assignments and group discussions.
4. Yes, because by practicing together, I learn new pronunciations and phrases

Table 4 Summary of Questionnaire Results

Variable	Average Agreement	Key Findings
Confidence (Items 1, 2, 4)	83.3%	Most students (over 80%) agreed that peer interaction increases confidence and motivation to speak in English.
Motivation (Items 2, 6)	83.3%	Students reported greater willingness and enjoyment when engaging in collaborative speaking tasks.
Anxiety Reduction (Items 8–14)	74.5%	Peer interaction reduced nervousness and fear of being judged, though some students (around 30%) still expressed anxiety when making mistakes.
Linguistic Development (Items 3, 5, 7, 10, 15)	81.3%	Peer feedback and practice improved pronunciation, vocabulary, and overall fluency.



CONCLUSION

This study concludes that peer interaction plays a crucial role in enhancing English-speaking proficiency among second-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings demonstrated that students who engaged actively in peer-based speaking activities experienced higher levels of confidence, motivation, fluency, and pronunciation accuracy, while also reporting lower anxiety when communicating in English. These outcomes confirm that peer collaboration provides a supportive and interactive learning environment where learners can practice authentic communication and receive immediate feedback from their peers.

The findings strongly support Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory and Swain's (2000) Output Hypothesis, affirming that social interaction is fundamental to second language acquisition. Peer engagement fosters both cognitive and affective development by encouraging learners to negotiate meaning, construct linguistic knowledge, and build self-efficacy through collaborative dialogue. Practically, the results imply that English language teaching should incorporate structured peer-based activities, such as group discussions, role-plays, and peer feedback sessions, to promote communicative competence and learner autonomy in EFL contexts. Educators are encouraged to provide systematic guidance and scaffolding to ensure that peer interaction remains focused, supportive, and linguistically enriching.

From an academic standpoint, this research contributes to the expansion of sociocultural perspectives in language learning, particularly within the context of Indonesian higher education. It provides empirical evidence that face-to-face peer interaction can effectively enhance both the linguistic and affective dimensions of English learning, an area that has been underexplored compared to online and secondary-level contexts. This contribution highlights the need to view peer interaction not only as a pedagogical strategy but also as a transformative learning process that empowers students to develop communicative competence through collaboration.

Future research should expand upon these findings by involving larger and more diverse samples across different institutions and academic levels to improve generalizability. Longitudinal studies could further explore the sustained effects of peer interaction on language development over time. Additionally, future scholars may investigate the integration of digital peer platforms and cross-cultural dynamics to understand how virtual collaboration and cultural sensitivity influence the effectiveness of peer-based speaking activities. Such explorations would enrich the theoretical understanding and pedagogical application of peer interaction in modern EFL learning environments.

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