EXPLORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PEER FEEDBACK IN IMPROVING SPEAKING ACCURACY

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Abstract

Speaking accuracy remains a central component in English language learning, particularly for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners who often struggle with correct grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary use in oral communication. This study aims to explore how peer feedback contributes to the improvement of speaking accuracy among EFL learners at the tertiary level. Peer feedback is considered a valuable pedagogical strategy that promotes collaborative learning, increases learner autonomy, and fosters critical thinking. Through the process of giving and receiving constructive comments, students are expected to become more aware of their linguistic errors and develop motivation to improve their speaking performance. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through interviews. Thematic analysis will be used to identify recurring patterns and insights into students' perceptions of peer feedback and its role in developing speaking accuracy. Preliminary expectations suggest that peer feedback may positively influence learners' speaking skills by offering immediate, relatable, and learner-friendly suggestions. Additionally, participating in peer assessment activities may help reduce speaking anxiety, increase confidence, and foster a more interactive and supportive learning environment. The findings are expected to enrich the current literature in English language teaching by providing practical insights for implementing peer feedback in speaking instruction within EFL contexts.

Keywords: *Peer Feedback, Speaking Accuracy, EFL Learners*

INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning at the college level plays an important role in preparing students to face the demands of global communication. One of the main skills in mastering English is speaking, which reflects the ability of students to use language spontaneously and communicatively. However, speaking ability does not only depend on fluency in communication, but is also greatly determined by accuracy in language use, which includes grammar, pronunciation, and proper vocabulary. Although EFL students have been undergoing formal learning for years, various studies and observations in the field show that they still often have difficulty in speaking accurately. Mistakes such as the use of inappropriate verb forms, inappropriate sentence structures, and incorrect pronunciation are still commonly found in their speaking practice. This is an indicator that speaking instruction has not been fully effective in forming accurate linguistic abilities.

This condition can be explained by several factors. One of them is the learning approach which is still dominated by the role of the teacher as the main source of correction. In many English classes, feedback on speaking errors is generally only provided by the teacher, who has limited time and attention to deal with each individual thoroughly.

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As a result, many student errors are missed without adequate correction. On the other hand, learners tend to be passive in evaluating their own mistakes and those of their peers. The learning process becomes non-interactive, and learners do not get the opportunity to be actively involved in improving their own language.

In this context, the importance of alternative learning strategies that are more participatory and student-centered arises. One approach that is starting to be widely discussed in language teaching is peer feedback. Peer feedback refers to the process by which learners provide feedback on the language performance of their peers, usually through constructive comments. This concept is rooted in the theory of social constructivism put forward by Vygotsky (1978), who stated that social interaction is an important means for cognitive and language development. Through peer feedback, learners not only become recipients of knowledge, but also play an active role as observers and evaluators of the language performance of others, which indirectly increases their awareness of language structure.

Peer feedback is believed to encourage learners to become more aware of their own mistakes through the process of reflection. In providing feedback to friends, they will be more critical in analyzing language use, which ultimately also helps them in identifying and correcting their own mistakes. In addition, peer feedback activities have the potential to create a more inclusive and collaborative learning atmosphere, where learners learn from each other in a relatively pressure-free atmosphere. Compared to corrections from teachers that can sometimes cause fear or embarrassment, corrections from peers are often more acceptable because they are more personal and equal.

Previous studies have revealed the benefits of peer feedback in the context of language learning, especially in writing skills. Min (2005) and Hyland & Hyland (2006) showed that peer feedback can improve the quality of students' writing and encourage them to think more critically about language structures. Meanwhile, in the context of speaking skills, research from Sato and Lyster (2012) and Topping (2009) indicated that peer feedback can help increase students' self-confidence, improve oral performance, and increase their linguistic awareness. However, these studies are still limited in number, especially in the context of learning English as a foreign language in higher education in Indonesia. Most studies focus on formative assessment in general without delving deeper into how peer feedback specifically affects speaking accuracy.

Thus, more in-depth research is needed to explore the effectiveness of peer feedback in improving students' speaking accuracy, especially at the higher education level. This research is important because it can offer a practical and inexpensive approach in language learning, which not only lightens the burden of teachers in providing feedback but also forming students' independence and involvement in the learning process. In addition, the results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of more contextual, active, and reflective teaching methods for English language learning in Indonesia.

This study aims to explore how peer feedback can contribute to improving the accuracy of EFL students' speaking. The researcher will analyze how interactions between learners in feedback activities can help them realize linguistic errors and motivate them to make improvements. With a qualitative classroom-based approach, this study is expected to provide new insights for English language teachers to design more effective,

collaborative speaking learning strategies that empower students as active agents in the language learning process.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to explore how peer feedback contributes to improving speaking accuracy among EFL learners. This approach was chosen to gain in-depth insights into students' experiences, perceptions, and responses during peer feedback activities in speaking tasks.

The participants in this study were students majoring in English. Participants were selected purposively based on their active participation in class discussions and speaking activities, as well as their willingness to engage in peer feedback sessions.

To collect the data, the researcher used semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted to explore students' perceptions and experiences related to peer feedback and its influence on their speaking accuracy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the semi-structured interviews and provides an in-depth discussion of how peer feedback contributes to improving speaking accuracy among EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. The data were analyzed thematically and are organized into key themes emerging from the participants' responses. Each theme is discussed and compared with relevant previous studies, theories, and pedagogical implications.

Increased Awareness of Linguistic Errors

One of the most consistent findings across participants is the positive impact of peer feedback on students' awareness of their speaking errors. All participants acknowledged that receiving feedback from their peers helped them recognize specific issues in their grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary usage. For example, Silfa Yunita recalled*, "teman saya pernah bilang saya salah mengucapkan kata 'comfortable'. Sejak itu saya latihan lagi dan sekarang bisa ucapkan dengan benar."* Similarly, Nayla admitted that peer feedback helped her realize recurring mistakes that she had previously overlooked.

This finding is aligned with Sato and Lyster (2012), who argue that peer interaction serves as a platform for learners to monitor and notice linguistic gaps in their production. Error awareness is a crucial first step in developing accuracy, especially in speaking where feedback must be processed in real time.

Interestingly, many students mentioned that their awareness increased not only when they received feedback but also when they gave it. As Nuzul noted, observing a peer with strong pronunciation and grammar skills made him reflect on his own weaknesses: *"teman saya membahas sesuatu dan pronunciation dan grammar-nya sangat bagus, dari situ saya menyadari bahwa selama ini pengetahuan saya masih kurang."*

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Peer Feedback as a Tool for Self-Reflection

Giving peer feedback was reported as a reflective process. Several participants explained that providing feedback made them more conscious of language structures. Atifah stated, *"dengan memberi feedback kepada orang lain sama dengan membagikan ilmu secara skala kecil,"* suggesting a reciprocal learning process.

This aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction in cognitive development. In the context of speaking, this interaction encourages learners to actively process linguistic input and compare it with their own output, fostering metacognitive awareness.

However, this process was not without its challenges. Participants like Nayla and Kurniawan expressed concerns about the accuracy of the feedback they provided. They feared giving incorrect feedback due to their limited linguistic competence, which sometimes affected their confidence.

Comfort and Confidence in Peer Interaction

Another significant finding was the preference for receiving feedback from peers rather than teachers. Most participants described peer feedback as more comfortable and less intimidating. Silfa explained, *"lebih nyaman dari teman karena terasa lebih santai dan tidak terlalu tegang,"* while Nayla added that being corrected by a peer felt less stressful as it did not directly impact her grade.

This finding is supported by Topping (2009), who highlights that peer assessment fosters a more egalitarian and supportive learning environment. The sense of shared experience among peers can reduce anxiety and encourage risk-taking in speaking.

Nevertheless, while most participants enjoyed the supportive nature of peer feedback, there were concerns about the potential for misunderstandings. Kurniawan mentioned that unclear pronunciation from the peer giving feedback could lead to frustration: "jika tidak maka saya agak kesal dikit."

Improvement in Speaking Accuracy

All participants agreed that peer feedback contributed to their progress in speaking accuracy, particularly in pronunciation and grammar. Over time, students reported being more cautious and intentional in their speech. Nuzul, for instance, observed progress in sentence construction, while Atifah emphasized the benefit of peer feedback in improving her fluency.

The role of peer feedback in promoting linguistic accuracy has also been noted in previous literature. Hyland and Hyland (2006) argue that peer feedback encourages learners to engage with their own errors more critically than when feedback is passively received from instructors.

Furthermore, the immediacy of feedback was seen as beneficial. Participants such as Silfa and Nayla highlighted that verbal feedback delivered immediately after speaking was most effective, as the content was still fresh in their minds.

Challenges in Peer Feedback Implementation

Despite the positive impact, students also noted several challenges in peer feedback activities. A common concern was the fear of offending others. Silfa and Nuzul expressed

discomfort in pointing out friends' mistakes, while Kurniawan struggled with understanding feedback when it was not clearly expressed.

Another challenge was the inconsistency in feedback quality. Some students doubted their own ability to evaluate peers accurately, raising concerns about the validity of the corrections provided. Nayla pointed out that she felt more confident giving feedback on pronunciation than on grammar, indicating a need for differentiated support.

These challenges suggest that while peer feedback has pedagogical value, it requires proper structuring and training. Teachers should provide clear rubrics, model effective feedback, and foster a classroom culture of respectful communication.

Suggestions for Improving Peer Feedback Activities

Participants offered constructive suggestions to improve peer feedback practices. Among them were conducting peer feedback more frequently, giving feedback in small group discussions to reduce pressure, encouraging respectful, non-judgmental communication, and providing training on how to give effective and accurate feedback.

These suggestions align with the recommendations from Min (2005), who emphasized the importance of scaffolding peer feedback through guided practice and teacher modeling.

Table 1. Summary of Peer Feedback Effects on Speaking Accuracy

No	Key Theme	Description	Illustrative Quote
1.	Error Awareness	Students became more aware of grammar and pronunciation errors.	*"Teman saya pernah bilang saya salah mengucapkan kata 'comfortable'…"* (Silfa)
2.	Self-Reflection through Giving Feedback	Giving feedback helped students reflect on their own mistakes.	*"Saya jadi berpikir 'apakah saya juga pernah salah begitu?'"* (Silfa)
3.	Comfort in Receiving Feedback	Feedback from peers felt less intimidating than from teachers.	*"Lebih nyaman dari teman karena terasa lebih santai…"* (Silfa)
4.	Improved Accuracy	Students reported improvement in grammar, pronunciation, and fluency.	*"Dalam aspek pengucapan dan grammar yang tepat…"* (Silfa, Nuzul)
5.	Challenges	Students faced fear of offending peers or lack of confidence.	*"Takut membuat teman tersinggung…"* (Silfa), *"Kurang percaya diri…"* (Nayla)

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6.	Suggestions for Improvement	Feedback should be respectful, more frequent, and well-structured.	"*Dilakukan dalam bentuk diskusi kelompok kecil agar lebih nyaman.*" (Silfa)

The findings confirm that peer feedback plays a positive role in enhancing EFL students' speaking accuracy. Participants not only became more aware of their linguistic errors but also developed more control over their grammar, pronunciation, and sentence structure. This supports the claims of Sato and Lyster (2012), who emphasized the reflective value of peer interaction in improving oral performance.

These results also align with Vygotsky's social constructivist theory (1978), which highlights the importance of interaction in cognitive development. By engaging in peer-to-peer evaluation, students actively construct knowledge, both when receiving and providing feedback.

Furthermore, the psychological comfort provided by peer feedback—often perceived as less judgmental than teacher feedback—can reduce speaking anxiety. This echoes Topping's (2009) view that peer feedback promotes a sense of equality and safety in language learning environments.

Nevertheless, some participants' lack of confidence in delivering accurate feedback points to the need for guidance and training. Teachers should scaffold peer feedback activities with clear rubrics, supportive language models, and reflection sessions. This ensures both linguistic quality and social-emotional safety are maintained.

Finally, the suggestion to conduct peer feedback more frequently aligns with the idea that consistency builds language awareness and speaking fluency. If implemented thoughtfully, peer feedback can serve as both an instructional and motivational tool in the language classroom.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that peer feedback contributes positively to improving speaking accuracy among EFL students. The students became more aware of their linguistic errors—particularly in grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary—after receiving feedback from peers. This awareness not only emerged from being corrected but also through the process of giving feedback to others, which encouraged critical thinking and self-reflection. Peer feedback helped foster a sense of responsibility and attentiveness in speaking performance.

Furthermore, the students generally felt more comfortable and confident receiving feedback from peers compared to teachers. The informal and non-threatening atmosphere of peer correction reduced anxiety and created a more supportive environment for speaking practice. However, several challenges were also identified, including fear of offending others, limited confidence in giving accurate feedback, and occasional misunderstandings.

In essence, peer feedback is not only an effective tool for improving speaking accuracy but also a strategy that promotes collaborative learning, autonomy, and metacognitive awareness. Its effectiveness, however, depends on how well it is structured and supported within the learning process.

SUGGESTION

Based on the findings, it is suggested that English language educators integrate peer feedback into speaking activities in a more structured and guided way. Teachers should provide clear instructions, language support, and appropriate models to help students deliver accurate and constructive feedback. Peer feedback sessions should also be conducted in a respectful, non-judgmental manner, preferably in small group settings to reduce pressure.

Additionally, it is recommended that peer feedback be implemented regularly so that it becomes a habit and part of the learning culture. Future researchers are encouraged to investigate peer feedback across different language skills and learning contexts, including its long-term effects on learner autonomy and confidence.

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