

ANALYSIS OF PEER INTERACTION ON SPEAKING SKILLS IN CLASS 10 MAN 2 BUKITTINGGI

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ABSTRACT

Speaking is one of the most essential skills in learning a foreign language, yet it often becomes the most challenging for students to master. Many learners struggle with confidence, vocabulary limitations, and anxiety when speaking English. This study explores the role of peer interaction in improving students' speaking skills in Class 10 at MAN 2 Bukittinggi. The research was motivated by preliminary findings that showed varied student preferences some felt more comfortable interacting with peers, while others preferred teacher-led activities. Using a qualitative approach, the researcher collected data through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with one English teacher and six students from Class 10 E.2. The findings revealed that peer interaction significantly supports the development of speaking skills by creating a more relaxed and supportive learning environment. Students were observed actively participating in discussions, giving feedback, correcting one another, and engaging in various types of peer interaction such as collaboration, tutoring, and modeling. While some students remained dependent on teacher presence, the majority benefited from the freedom and encouragement peer learning provided. Interviews confirmed that students felt more confident and motivated when speaking with friends rather than the teacher. The study concludes that peer interaction is an effective strategy in enhancing speaking skills. It not only improves students' fluency but also builds their confidence, independence, and social support in the learning process. This approach, when properly designed, can serve as a meaningful component of communicative language teaching.

Keywords: *peer interaction, speaking skills, qualitative research*

A. Introduction

Speaking is one of the most essential skills that every student needs to master, especially in the context of learning English as a foreign language. Unlike reading or writing, speaking involves

spontaneous communication, where students must organize their thoughts, choose the right vocabulary, and pronounce words correctly in real time. As stated by Rao (2019), among the four language skills listening, reading, writing, and speaking

speaking is considered the most influential in mastering a second language. It is through speaking that learners can demonstrate their language proficiency, interact meaningfully, and gain confidence in using English in real-world contexts.

Speaking, however, is not just about pronouncing words. It is a complex process of delivering ideas clearly and engagingly, adapted to the listener's expectations and the social context. According to Jack C. Richards (2021), conversation involves more than transferring information; it includes creating a comfortable atmosphere through small talk, storytelling, and personal engagement. Thus, the ability to speak fluently in English plays a crucial role in enhancing students' communication skills and shaping their academic and social experiences.

Despite its importance, many students still face challenges in developing their speaking skills. These challenges may come from internal factors such as anxiety, lack of vocabulary, or self-confidence, and external ones like insufficient speaking opportunities or lack of peer support. To address this, one promising

approach is peer interaction. By communicating with their classmates, students can practice speaking in a more relaxed and supportive setting. Peer interaction not only reduces pressure but also fosters mutual learning and helps students improve their speaking fluency naturally and gradually.

Peer interaction is more than just group work; it is a collaborative learning strategy where students share ideas, give feedback, and learn from each other through discussion, debate, and joint reflection. In the high school context, this interaction becomes even more meaningful because students are at a developmental stage where peer relationships significantly influence their learning motivation, confidence, and communication patterns. Research by Zhang (2024) has shown that peer interaction positively affects speaking skills among students who are not majoring in English, indicating its broad applicability.

In senior high school, peer interaction often happens during group assignments, classroom discussions, or informal conversations. These interactions contribute not only to language

improvement but also to students' personal and academic growth. As Perkins (2021) highlighted, peer exchanges whether verbal or non-verbal play a central role in learning and social adjustment. Furthermore, peer interaction can either encourage or hinder learning outcomes depending on how it is managed and the dynamics within the classroom environment.

Motivated by the growing interest in student-centered learning and collaborative techniques, this research seeks to explore the role of peer interaction in enhancing speaking skills. As a final-year student pursuing my thesis, I am particularly interested in investigating this topic because it reflects both current trends in English language education and real challenges faced by students in Indonesian classrooms. My motivation stems not only from academic requirements but also from a desire to contribute practically to classroom improvement, especially in public Islamic high schools like MAN 2 Bukittinggi.

To begin this exploration, I conducted preliminary research on February 4, 2024, by interviewing one English teacher and six tenth-grade

students at MAN 2 Bukittinggi. The interviews revealed differing student preferences: while two students preferred speaking directly with the teacher, four others felt more confident and expressive when interacting with their peers. This variety in preference became a key reason for selecting peer interaction as the focus of this research. It highlighted the importance of understanding how classroom dynamics and peer relationships shape students' speaking experiences.

Therefore, this research is not only intended to fulfill academic requirements as part of my undergraduate thesis, but also to provide useful insights for teachers, school administrators, and fellow researchers. By analyzing the types of peer interactions used in English speaking activities and understanding why such interactions are encouraged in class, this study aims to present practical recommendations for improving speaking instruction. Ultimately, I hope that this research will support more inclusive and effective strategies for teaching speaking, especially in schools where

English is taught as a foreign language.

B. Method

This research employed a qualitative approach because it seeks to explore and understand the natural dynamics of peer interaction and students' speaking abilities in real classroom settings. Qualitative research is considered suitable for examining the depth of human experience, behavior, and perspective especially in educational environments where interaction plays a central role. According to Cresswell (2018), qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive frameworks that aim to understand the meaning individuals or groups assign to a social or human problem. In line with this view, this study focuses on peer interaction, a social activity involving communication, collaboration, and mutual understanding among students. Therefore, the qualitative method is the most appropriate to capture the authenticity and complexity of how peer interaction influences speaking skills in class 10 students at MAN 2 Bukittinggi. Rather than relying on numbers, this

approach emphasizes meaningful insights, based on students' attitudes, expressions, and engagement in real learning situations.

This study was conducted at MAN 2 Bukittinggi, located on Jalan Panorama Baru, Puhun Tembok Village, Mandiangin Koto Selayan District, Bukittinggi City, West Sumatra. The researcher chose this school not only because of its accessibility but also due to the relevance of the observed phenomena in Class X. The presence of a speaking-based learning model that incorporates peer interaction makes this school an appropriate and meaningful context for the research.

In qualitative research, informants are individuals or groups selected purposefully because they can provide rich, relevant, and insightful data regarding the focus of the study. According to the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research (2023), key informants are individuals with first-hand knowledge and experience of the subject being studied. In this research, the informants consist of 10th grade students who actively participate in peer interaction during English speaking activities, and one English

teacher who designs and facilitates these peer-based learning strategies in the classroom. Their involvement in daily learning activities provides the researcher with authentic insights into the role and impact of peer interaction on speaking performance.

This study used a purposive sampling technique, which is common in qualitative research to select participants who are most knowledgeable and experienced about the topic under investigation. Cresswell (2018) defines purposive sampling as the deliberate selection of individuals or sites based on their ability to provide rich information about the central phenomenon. The researcher selected students who were observed to be active in speaking activities, communicative with their peers, and willing to participate in in-depth interviews and observations. The sample was taken from Class 10 E.2, identified as one of the more active and communicative classes at MAN 2 Bukittinggi. Additionally, the English teacher in this class had specifically designed and implemented peer interaction strategies to support speaking activities, making this class a valuable

case for studying peer interaction in language learning.

To collect the data, the researcher used two main instruments:

1. Observation

Classroom observation was conducted to directly witness how peer interaction takes place during speaking activities. This technique helped the researcher understand classroom dynamics, students' communication behavior, and how peer collaboration is structured and practiced in real-time. Field notes were taken to record student interactions, participation levels, and observable changes in speaking confidence.

2. Interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both students and the English teacher. For students, the interviews explored their feelings, preferences, and perceptions regarding peer interaction in speaking activities. For the teacher, the questions focused on the rationale behind designing peer-based learning and the observed effects on student performance. The combination of both perspectives enriched the data and allowed for a more

holistic understanding of the phenomenon.

C. Finding and Discussion

Finding

This study explored how peer interaction affects students' speaking skills in Class 10 E.2 of MAN 2 Bukittinggi. Data were gathered through two qualitative instruments: classroom observation and semi-structured interviews with one English teacher and six students. The findings reveal meaningful insights into the nature, benefits, and challenges of peer interaction in English speaking activities.

To strengthen the analysis, this study was guided by several theoretical frameworks of peer interaction. The types of peer interaction identified in the classroom were analyzed based on the theory proposed by Rebecca Adams (2019), which includes cooperative learning, collaborative learning, peer tutoring, and peer modeling. In addition, the framework from To Hoai An Nguyen Thu Hien (2016) was also used, which highlights peer feedback, group work, and collaborative projects as essential forms of peer interaction. These theoretical perspectives provided a

comprehensive lens for understanding how students interact and support each other during speaking activities.

Based on classroom observations, peer interaction occurred actively during speaking lessons. Students were seen giving and receiving feedback, asking questions, correcting mistakes, and working together in small groups or pairs. Most students showed balanced participation and appeared comfortable speaking with peers. This environment encouraged them to take more risks in using English without fear of making mistakes. One key strength observed was the variety of interaction types, including collaborative learning, peer tutoring, peer modeling, and cooperative tasks, all of which reflect Adams' (2019) framework and helped students engage with the material more meaningfully. In addition, elements such as peer feedback, group work, and collaborative projects, as proposed by Nguyen Thu Hien (2016), were also clearly visible in classroom practices.

However, the observations also revealed areas that need improvement. For example, although peer interaction was visible, students

still depended somewhat on teacher guidance, especially at the beginning of the speaking tasks. This shows that while peer interaction is developing well, students have yet to fully transition into independent, self-managed communication without teacher scaffolding. Moreover, not all students contributed equally some were more dominant while others remained quiet suggesting the need for more structured support to engage less confident students. This finding indicates that while the forms of peer interaction have been implemented, their effectiveness still depends on classroom management and scaffolding strategies.

From interviews with the teacher, it was confirmed that peer interaction was intentionally designed into the learning process. The teacher emphasized equal participation, allowing students to engage freely while still providing initial instructions and distant supervision. According to the teacher, this approach helps create a low-pressure, student-centered environment where learners feel safe to express themselves. She also noticed that peer interaction increased student motivation, especially during group discussions,

and improved students' confidence and fluency over time. This aligns with both Adams (2019) and Nguyen Thu Hien (2016), who highlight the importance of structured yet flexible peer interaction in promoting active learning.

Students' responses aligned with the teacher's observations. Most of them stated that learning with peers helped them become more active and confident in speaking English. They felt that talking to friends was less intimidating than speaking to the teacher. Some also mentioned learning from more proficient classmates by mimicking their pronunciation or receiving direct corrections, indicating the presence of natural peer tutoring and peer modeling as described by Adams (2019). At the same time, their experiences in giving and receiving corrections reflect the practice of peer feedback as emphasized by Nguyen Thu Hien (2016). While a few students preferred to interact with the teacher or felt unsure when paired with peers of equal or lower ability, the overall response was positive. Peer interaction made learning more enjoyable and gave students more

opportunities to speak, experiment, and improve.

In addition, the findings indicate that peer interaction has a significant positive impact on the development of speaking skills in Class 10 E.2 at MAN 2 Bukittinggi. The learning environment fostered by peer collaboration supports fluency, vocabulary growth, and speaking confidence. While teacher guidance remains important in the early stages, the gradual shift toward student-led speaking practice contributes to more active and independent learning. Overall, when viewed through the theoretical perspectives of Adams (2019) and Nguyen Thu Hien (2016), peer interaction can be seen as a comprehensive and powerful strategy that supports students not only linguistically, but also socially and emotionally in their language learning process.

Discussion

1. What Types of Peer Interaction in Speaking Activities at Class 10 E.2 MAN 2 Bukittinggi

a. Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is one of the most dominant forms of peer interaction in speaking activities in

Class 10 E.2 of MAN 2 Bukittinggi. In this type of interaction, students work in small structured groups to achieve shared goals, such as creating biodata in meetings 1–2 and completing vocabulary tasks in meeting 3. Each student has a specific role, creating positive interdependence among group members. This is in line with Adams (2019), who states that cooperative learning encourages collaboration, mutual support, and the development of communication and problem-solving skills.

In practice, students exchange ideas, negotiate meaning, and actively participate in completing tasks. Activities such as information gap tasks further strengthen cooperation, as students must share different pieces of information to reach a common goal. This finding is supported by Kamal et al. (2023), who highlight that cooperative learning enhances student engagement. Moreover, such interaction reduces students' anxiety and encourages them to take risks in speaking English (Melani & Meldia, 2022).

b. Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning is another prominent type of peer interaction

observed in the classroom. In this approach, students work intensively together to produce shared outputs, such as dialogues, presentations, and vocabulary reconstructions. Adams (2019) describes collaborative learning as a more intensive form of cooperation that requires active involvement from all group members.

In Class 10 E.2, collaborative learning occurs when students jointly construct biodata, discuss vocabulary meanings, and reconstruct spoken information. These activities require students to listen carefully, negotiate meaning, and combine their ideas into a unified output (Nguyen Thu Hien, 2016).

Additionally, collaborative learning helps students overcome the challenges of speaking, as they are given time to plan and refine their ideas before performing. This is particularly important since speaking is a real-time process that does not allow revision (Thornbury, 2005; Melani & Meldia, 2022). As a result, collaborative learning significantly improves students' fluency, accuracy, and critical thinking skills.

c. Peer Tutoring

Peer tutoring occurs when more proficient students assist their peers in understanding language concepts, especially pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence construction. According to Adams (2019), peer tutoring benefits both tutors and learners by enhancing understanding, confidence, and communication skills.

In classroom practice, students often guide their peers by correcting pronunciation, suggesting vocabulary, and helping structure sentences. This interaction creates a supportive and non-threatening learning environment, making students more willing to participate and accept feedback.

d. Peer Modeling

Peer modeling is evident when students observe and imitate their peers' speaking performance, including pronunciation, intonation, and language use. Adams (2019) emphasizes that students learn more effectively through observing real examples from their peers.

In Class 10 E.2, students frequently imitate their classmates' speaking styles during activities such as biodata presentations and vocabulary practice. This process

allows students to internalize language naturally. In addition, peer modeling increases motivation, as students are inspired by their peers' performance.

e. Peer Feedback

Peer feedback is another important component of peer interaction. In this process, students provide comments, suggestions, and corrections on their peers' speaking performance, particularly in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency.

Nguyen Thu Hien (2016) states that peer feedback enhances students' learning awareness and encourages active participation. In Class 10 E.2, feedback is generally delivered in a supportive and respectful manner, which helps reduce anxiety and build confidence.

f. Group Work

Group work is the most frequently implemented form of peer interaction in the classroom. Students work in small groups to share ideas, discuss tasks, and complete speaking activities collaboratively. This type of interaction supports the development of communication and teamwork skills (Syafitri et al., 2022).

In practice, students actively participate by exchanging opinions, negotiating meaning, and supporting each other. Although some students are less active, overall participation is relatively balanced. The collaborative environment helps improve both speaking skills and interpersonal relationships.

Thus, group work serves as the foundation for meaningful interaction in speaking activities.

g. Collaborative Project

Collaborative projects involve more complex tasks where students plan, organize, and produce a final output together, such as presentations or structured speaking tasks. These activities require students to divide roles, integrate ideas, and make decisions collaboratively.

According to Nguyen Thu Hien (2016), collaborative projects promote higher-order thinking skills and meaningful communication. In Class 10 E.2, students demonstrate their ability to organize tasks and combine different perspectives into a cohesive presentation.

As a result, collaborative projects not only improve speaking ability but

also develop teamwork, responsibility, and problem-solving skills.

h. Role-Plays and Simulations

Role-plays and simulations provide students with opportunities to practice speaking in real-life contexts. These activities encourage spontaneous and creative language use, allowing students to move beyond memorized expressions.

Adams (2019) highlights that role-play creates a safe environment for students to express themselves. In Class 10 E.2, students engage in simulated conversations, such as introducing themselves or using vocabulary in specific situations. This helps increase confidence and fluency.

Additionally, role-play activities develop empathy and perspective-taking, showing that speaking involves not only language use but also social understanding.

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that peer interaction plays a crucial role in enhancing students' speaking skills in Class 10 E.2 of MAN 2 Bukittinggi. Speaking is widely recognized as one of the most challenging language skills because it requires spontaneous language

production without revision (Melani & Meldia, 2022). It also serves as a primary tool for communication, enabling students to express ideas and build social relationships (Safitri et al., 2022; Thornbury, 2005).

Through these interactions, students become more confident, actively engaged, and capable of communicating effectively. Therefore, peer interaction can be considered an essential and powerful strategy for improving students' speaking skills, as it integrates both linguistic and social aspects of learning (Reflinda et al., 2022; Thornbury, 2005).

D. Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that peer interaction played a central role in the speaking activities of Class 10 E.2 MAN 2 Bukittinggi. Across three observation sessions, students consistently engaged in practices such as observing and imitating pronunciation, adopting peers' vocabulary, providing feedback, and collaborating on role-play performances. These behaviors reflected a dynamic learning environment where students actively supported one another's development. The consistent

presence of peer modeling, peer tutoring, and collaborative learning demonstrated that learners not only relied on teacher input but also depended on each other to refine their speaking skills. This pattern confirms that peer interaction is not an additional classroom feature but an essential component of language learning.

The study also highlighted that collaborative learning was dominant in the classroom, as students consistently worked together to produce joint products such as role-plays, mini-presentations, and reconstructed dialogues. The act of creating shared outcomes required negotiation of meaning, pooling of linguistic resources, and repeated practice, which in turn built students' confidence and fluency. Alongside collaboration, peer modeling was particularly visible, as learners frequently imitated pronunciation, intonation, and sentence patterns used by their classmates. By adopting language directly from peers, students expanded their repertoire in authentic and interactive ways. These patterns align with Philp (2014), who emphasized that peer interaction thrives when learners manage the flow

of language themselves, with minimal teacher involvement.

Finally, the integration of peer feedback, group work, collaborative projects, and role-play simulations enriched the speaking activities by creating opportunities for creativity, empathy, and real-life application of English. Through these varied forms of interaction, students developed not only linguistic accuracy but also interpersonal skills such as cooperation, negotiation, and perspective-taking. The overall evidence suggests that the classroom fostered a balanced and dynamic environment in which peer tutoring complemented collaborative learning, while peer modeling and feedback strengthened the quality of spoken output. In conclusion, the interactional patterns observed demonstrate that peer-based strategies especially peer tutoring are powerful tools for promoting speaking competence, building learner autonomy, and cultivating a supportive classroom community where language learning becomes both meaningful and socially engaging.

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