

Implementing Peer Tutoring Method in Developing Students' Speaking Skills

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APA Citation: Nurfitria, F., Faridah, D., Rachmawati, E., (2025). Implementing peer tutoring method in developing students' speaking skills. *Journal of English Education Program (JEEP)*, 9(2), 1-10. doi: -xx.xxxxx/jeep.xxx.xxxx.

Received: 05-08-2025

Accepted: 26-08-2025

Published: 26-01-2026

Abstract: This study investigates the implementation of the Peer Tutoring method in developing students' speaking skills within one of the English communities in Tasikmalaya. This research applied a qualitative case study approach which involved questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to explore two main questions: (1) how Peer Tutoring enhances students' speaking skills, and (2) how it influences their confidence in speaking English. The findings reveal that Peer Tutoring significantly improves students' speaking abilities, particularly in vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and confidence. Most participants reported feeling more comfortable and motivated in peer-led sessions compared to traditional classroom settings. Moreover, peer tutors benefited from improved public speaking and leadership skills, while peer learners gained confidence and practical speaking experience in a supportive environment. Despite some challenges, such as nervousness and initial communication barriers, both tutors and tutees adapted and showed progress over time. The study concludes that Peer Tutoring is an effective, collaborative strategy that supports both linguistic and personal development in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. The future research are recommended to conduct the broaden research. Further research is recommended to conduct broader research from various aspects, such as different methodological approaches to gain deeper insights.

Keywords: Peer Tutoring Method; Speaking Skills; Qualitative Case Study.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is widely recognized as one of the most challenging language skills for students to master, particularly in foreign language learning contexts. In many educational settings, speaking is not only viewed as an indicator of linguistic proficiency but also as a core component of learners' communicative competence and self-confidence (Nation & Newton, 2020). Numerous studies have reported that EFL learners experience persistent difficulties in speaking activities, including limited vocabulary, grammatical inaccuracy, poor pronunciation, lack of fluency, and high levels

of anxiety (Ratnawati & Faridah, 2017; Al-Sobhi & Preece, 2018; Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). These challenges are particularly prominent in EFL contexts, where learners have restricted exposure to authentic communicative situations beyond the classroom (Sato, 2023). Despite these challenges, speaking remains a crucial productive skill that significantly contributes to learners' communicative development in both academic and non-academic domains.

The ability to express ideas clearly, participate in discussions, and negotiate meaning is essential for academic achievement, future professional engagement, and personal development (Burns & Seidlhofer, 2020; Richards, 2008). Consequently, addressing difficulties in speaking instruction is imperative to ensure that learners acquire effective oral communication skills. In response to this need, educators and researchers have increasingly explored innovative pedagogical approaches to enhance learners' speaking proficiency (Nation & Newton, 2020; Sato & Ballinger, 2016). One instructional approach that has gained increasing attention is peer tutoring, a collaborative learning model in which students support each other's learning through structured interaction.

Peer tutoring is grounded in sociocultural theory and social constructivism, emphasizing the role of social interaction in cognitive and language development (Vygotsky, 1978; Topping, 2005). Recent empirical studies suggest that speaking difficulties often negatively affect learners' self-confidence and willingness to communicate, leading to limited classroom participation (MacIntyre et al., 2020). These findings highlight the importance of instructional strategies that address not only linguistic competence but also affective factors such as anxiety and motivation (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Krashen, 1985). The theoretical foundation of peer tutoring can be traced to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, particularly the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which explains how learners progress through assisted interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). Recent interpretations of ZPD emphasize that learning is maximized when learners engage in collaborative tasks supported by more capable peers or structured scaffolding. Within the ZPD, peer assistance functions as a catalyst for internalization, enabling learners to gradually move from guided performance to independent speaking competence.

Within this context, peer tutoring has been identified as an effective approach for creating supportive learning environments that reduce affective barriers and promote meaningful interaction. Research indicates that peer-based interaction enhances learners' motivation, engagement, and willingness to communicate by fostering a sense of psychological safety and shared responsibility (Gillies, 2016; Sato & Ballinger, 2016; Dao & McDonough, 2019). Moreover, the development of speaking skills requires ample opportunities for practice, feedback, and interaction, which peer tutoring naturally provides by positioning learners as active agents in the learning process (Goh & Burns, 2012; Topping, 2017). In addition, cooperative peer interaction aligns closely with communicative language teaching principles by promoting social interaction, mutual understanding, and collaborative problem-solving (Richards, 2008; Johnson & Johnson, 2019).

In line with this perspective, Johnson and Johnson (2015) argue that peer tutoring and cooperative learning strategies have been widely adopted due to their effectiveness in enhancing student engagement, conceptual understanding, and learning outcomes. In EFL speaking instruction, peer tutoring offers dual benefits by improving linguistic performance while fostering a positive and supportive classroom climate (Sunggingwati, 2018; Dao & McDonough, 2019). Furthermore, peer tutoring encourages learners to adopt active roles as both tutors and tutees. When learners explain concepts, provide corrective feedback, and negotiate meaning with peers, they strengthen their own understanding and develop metacognitive awareness of language use (Topping, 2017; Sato, 2023). This process supports learner autonomy and aligns with

contemporary learner-centered pedagogical paradigms. Nevertheless, effective peer tutoring requires careful instructional design.

Studies on peer-assisted learning further demonstrate that learners often feel more comfortable interacting with peers than with teachers, which helps lower anxiety and encourages risk-taking in oral language use (McDonough & Mackey, 2013; Sato, 2023). Empirical evidence shows that peer tutoring facilitates speaking development by increasing learners' exposure to communicative tasks, expanding opportunities for output, and enabling immediate, non-threatening feedback (Storch, 2002; Sato & Ballinger, 2016). Empirical studies further confirm that peer tutoring promotes deeper engagement with learning materials, sustained interaction, and improved fluency development (Abdelkarim & Abuiyada, 2016; Chi, 2021). Recent studies also emphasize the importance of clear role allocation, structured tasks, curriculum alignment, and continuous teacher monitoring to ensure productive peer interaction (Gal & Fallik, 2022; Gillies, 2016). Overall, the literature consistently demonstrates that peer tutoring is a promising pedagogical strategy for enhancing speaking skills in EFL contexts. Supported by sociocultural theory and robust empirical evidence, peer tutoring increases communicative opportunities, reduces speaking anxiety, and promotes collaborative learning. Therefore, the present study tries to fill this gap by integrating peer tutoring into speaking instruction which offers a comprehensive approach to improving oral proficiency, learner autonomy, and communicative competence.

METHOD

The present study employed qualitative approach with the type of case study. The data were collected primarily through semi-structured interviews because it enables investigators to maintain a clear direction in accordance with the research objectives; yet they also allow room for follow-up questions that deepen the discussion when new ideas or concerns arise (Mashuri et al., 2022, p. 29). This flexibility distinguishes semi-structured interviews from unstructured formats, where the conversation may be too open-ended, potentially leading to the loss of focus on key research areas. In this study, once the research problem, context, and guiding questions had been fully conceptualized, the researcher designed an interview guide that outlined the main topics to be addressed. However, adjustments to the phrasing, order, and focus of the questions were made as necessary during the interview sessions to ensure that participants' responses were thoroughly explored and accurately represented.

Following transcription and translation, the researcher conducted a thematic analysis to interpret the data. Thematic analysis was selected because it provides a systematic yet flexible approach for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns that emerge from qualitative datasets. The analysis began with a thorough reading and familiarization with the interview transcripts. During this stage, initial notes and potential codes were documented. The coding process involved identifying words, phrases, or statements that were relevant to the research objectives. These codes were then grouped to form broader themes that reflected participants' shared experiences and perceptions. Thematic compilation involved synthesizing these themes into coherent narrative descriptions that represented participants' views on the implementation of peer tutoring, its effectiveness in improving speaking skills, and the challenges encountered throughout the learning process. The emerging themes were used to construct a comprehensive interpretation of the phenomenon under study.

To enhance the credibility, dependability, and overall trustworthiness of the research, data triangulation was employed. Triangulation is a methodological strategy used to strengthen qualitative studies by examining data from multiple perspectives. As noted by Santos et al. (2020), triangulation not only enhances credibility by incorporating more than one method, theory, or data source, but also deepens the researcher's understanding of complex social phenomena by allowing

the examination of events from different angles. In this study, triangulation was achieved by comparing and cross-checking data obtained from interviews with other available documents related to the teaching and learning process. This enabled the researcher to confirm the consistency of participants' statements and identify potential discrepancies, thereby improving the reliability of the overall interpretation.

In addition to interviews, this study also employed a questionnaire as a supplementary method to collect standardized information from a defined group of participants. The questionnaire consisted of Likert-scale items, a commonly used instrument in social sciences to measure participants' attitudes, perceptions, or behaviours along a graded continuum ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The use of Likert-scale items enabled the researcher to convert subjective opinions into quantifiable data that could be analysed descriptively to identify patterns and trends. The development and validation of the questionnaire followed guidelines recommended by Creswell (2014), who emphasized the importance of clarity, neutrality, and alignment between items and research questions. Prior to widespread distribution, the questionnaire underwent expert judgment to ensure content validity. It was then pilot tested with a small number of respondents to identify and revise ambiguous or confusing items.

For analytical purposes, the Likert-scale responses were treated as ordinal data but analysed using interval-based descriptive statistics, a practice supported by Boone and Boone (2012) for aggregate group data. Each response option was assigned a numerical value—ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)—and statistical measures such as frequency and percentage distribution were calculated to provide an overview of participant responses. These statistical description were then used to complement the qualitative findings, offering quantitative evidence to support the thematic interpretation. Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to during the questionnaire process, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring voluntary participation, and maintaining participant confidentiality, all of which align with the American Psychological Association's (APA, 2017) Ethical Principles. Upon completing the data collection, data underwent the systematic analysis procedures described earlier. As summarized by Miles (2014), the stages of data condensation, display, and conclusion verification were applied consistently.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data collected through interviews and questionnaires, the results are presented according to the two main focuses of the study. Each focus highlights the key findings and is followed by a discussion that interprets their significance and compares them with findings from previous research. Those will be elaborated in the following discussion:

An Investigation on how Peer Tutoring Method enhanced student speaking skill.

In this research, a structured questionnaire comprising 5 items was administered to the students via Google Forms. Students were asked to respond to each item by indicating whether they agreed or disagreed, thus allowing for the collection of data regarding their opinions and attitudes toward the subject matter. The researcher collected the data using a concise questionnaire from Van Schuur (2003, p. 146) when respondent can provide a simple "Yes" or "No" response. The data from the questionnaire could be seen in Table 1, Table 2, Table 3, Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 1 Students' responses on the first questionnaire question

No	Statement	Percentage/Frequency	RESPONSES		
			YES	NO	Total
1		Percentage	75.8	24.2	100%

Peer tutoring improves my vocabularies building so that I can speak more often	Frequency	25	5	30
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Table 1 presents students' responses to the statement: "*Peer tutoring improves my vocabulary building so that I can speak more often.*" The quantitative data reveal that a substantial majority of the respondents (25 out of 30 students, or 75.8%) agreed that peer tutoring had a positive effect on their vocabulary development. This indicates that peer-based learning activities contribute meaningfully to the enhancement of students' lexical mastery, which is vital for oral communication. The results offer empirical support for the notion that vocabulary learning becomes more meaningful when students engage in contextualized exchanges with peers. Meanwhile, the remaining (24.2% or 5 students) who responded "No" may represent learners who require additional scaffolding or who may not have fully engaged in the peer tutoring process.

Table 2 Students' responses on the second questionnaire question

No	Statement	Percentage/Frequency	RESPONSES		
			YES	NO	Total
2	I feel comfortable during Peer tutoring sessions	Percentage	87.9	12.1	100%
		Frequency	26	4	30

The responses in Table 2 shows that 87.9% of students (26 out of 30) reported feeling comfortable during peer tutoring sessions. Comfort and emotional safety are critical components of effective language learning, particularly in speaking activities that often induce anxiety. The overwhelmingly positive responses suggest that peer tutoring creates a low-pressure environment compared to teacher-led instruction. Students may feel less judged, more supported, and more willing to take risks linguistically when interacting with peers.

Furthermore, the supportive environment fostered through peer partnership may contribute to reduced communication apprehension. Only a small number of students (12.1%) expressed discomfort, which could be linked to personal factors such as shyness, social anxiety, or prior negative experiences in collaborative tasks. Overall, the data emphasize that peer tutoring is perceived as emotionally supportive and conducive to learning.

Table 3 Students' responses on the third questionnaire question

No	Statement	Percentage/ Frequency	RESPONSES		
			YES	NO	Total
3	I receive helpful feedback from my Tutor	Percentage	78.8	21.2	100%
		Frequency	23	7	30

Table 3 reveals that 78.8% of respondents agreed that they received helpful feedback from their peer tutors. Feedback is a central component of the learning process, especially in the development of oral communication skills. These results imply that students perceive their peers as capable of providing constructive input that enhances their learning progress. The positive responses suggest that peer tutors likely provided guidance on pronunciation, vocabulary usage, sentence structure, and fluency—elements essential for speaking proficiency. The 21.2% of students who reported not receiving helpful feedback may have encountered issues such as peers' limited linguistic proficiency, unclear explanations, or insufficient feedback mechanisms. Nonetheless, the majority perception highlights the instructional value of peer-to-peer feedback within collaborative learning frameworks.

Referring to the third questionnaire response, which asked students whether they received helpful feedback from their tutor, the data revealed that the majority of participants responded

positively. As shown in Table 3, 23 out of 30 students, or 78.8%, indicated that they received constructive and helpful feedback during the peer tutoring sessions. On the other hand, 7 students, representing 21.2%, reported that they did not feel the feedback they received was helpful. These findings suggested that most students perceived the peer tutors as supportive and capable of providing feedback that contributed to their learning progress. The high percentage of positive responses reflected the effectiveness of peer tutoring in fostering a collaborative learning environment where students could identify their mistakes and improve their skills based on feedback. Overall, this response illustrated that effective feedback was a crucial element of the peer tutoring process, and when delivered appropriately, it significantly enhanced the students' academic experience and confidence.

Table 4 Students' responses on the fourth questionnaire question

No	Statement	Percentage/Frequency	RESPONSES		
			YES	NO	Total
4	I notice some improvements on my pronunciation skill	Percentage	93.9%	6.1%	100%
		Frequency	28	2	30

Table 4 presents one of the strongest findings in the questionnaire, with 93.9% of respondents (28 students) acknowledging improvements in their pronunciation skills as a result of peer tutoring. Pronunciation is a highly challenging aspect of language learning, requiring consistent practice and feedback. The high percentage indicates that peer tutoring provided frequent opportunities for oral practice, corrective feedback, and model imitation—three essential components of pronunciation development.

This result also reflects the strength of collaborative learning, where students may feel more comfortable correcting or being corrected by peers compared to teachers. The small minority (6.1%) who did not perceive improvement could be influenced by personal learning styles, limited participation, or existing pronunciation challenges that require professional instruction. Overall, this dataset underscores the considerable impact of peer tutoring on spoken accuracy and oral performance.

Table 5 Students' responses on the fifth questionnaire question

No	Statement	Percentage/Frequency	RESPONSES		
			YES	NO	Total
5	I feel more confident speaking English after Peer Tutoring	Percentage	84.8%	15.2%	100%
		Frequency	25	5	30

Confidence is a crucial predictor of successful speaking performance in a second language. As shown in Table 5, 84.8% of respondents reported increased confidence in speaking English following peer tutoring. This finding highlights the psychological benefits of collaborative learning structures. Students often experience reduced anxiety when interacting with peers, as the dynamic tends to be less hierarchical and more supportive than traditional teacher-student interactions. Moreover, increased confidence can result from several factors reinforced through peer tutoring: 1) frequent speaking opportunities; 2) positive peer reinforcement; 3) shared learning goals; 4) reduced fear of making mistakes; and 5) collaborative problem-solving in language use. The 15.2% who reported no improvement might still struggle with language anxiety or self-esteem issues, or perhaps require more structured support. Nonetheless, the strong majority indicates that peer tutoring significantly contributes to students' willingness to speak and participate actively in English communication.

This finding demonstrated that peer tutoring had a beneficial role in reducing learners' anxiety and encouraging them to speak more often in English. The supportive and interactive nature of peer tutoring sessions may have provided a safe space for students to express themselves without the fear of being judged or corrected harshly, thus increasing their self-assurance in using

the language. Additionally, the opportunity to learn from and with their peers appeared to create a collaborative learning atmosphere that promoted mutual encouragement and motivation. Even though a minority of the participants did not report greater confidence, the overwhelming response from the majority supported the conclusion that peer tutoring contributed significantly to boosting students' speaking confidence. Therefore, it can be inferred that peer tutoring was an effective strategy to help learners become more confident and willing to speak English in academic or social contexts.

Discussion

Across all five questionnaire items, the data reveal consistently positive student perceptions of peer tutoring in relation to vocabulary development, emotional comfort, feedback quality, pronunciation enhancement, and confidence building. Each of these variables plays a critical role in the acquisition of speaking skills, suggesting that peer tutoring offers a holistic benefit to learners in an EFL context.

Vocabulary is foundational for oral communication which indicates that peer tutoring meaningfully supports lexical growth. This means that students acquire new words, practice them contextually, and reinforce them through repetition—strategies widely recognized in second language acquisition research. As a catalyst for participation, peer tutoring fosters an emotionally supportive environment. This refers to comfort that reduces affective barriers, enabling students to speak more freely. Constructive feedback as a driver of improvement contributes to learner autonomy and metacognitive development. Meanwhile pronunciation gains through repetitive peer interaction reflects the frequency and naturalness of peer-led oral exchanges. Students can imitate, repeat, and adjust pronunciation based on immediate peer feedback, reinforcing phonological awareness. Meanwhile, increased confidence as an outcome of collaborative learning refers to peer tutoring that enhances not only linguistic competence but also affective and psychological readiness to speak. This is essential for long-term communicative competence. Each of these variables plays a critical role in the acquisition of speaking skills, suggesting that peer tutoring offers a holistic benefit to learners in an EFL context.

When students receive actionable input from peers, they are more likely to notice their errors and make progress. This aligns with previous studies indicating that peer feedback promotes metacognitive awareness and encourages learners to reflect on their errors and make improvements (Abdelkarim & Abuiyada, 2016; Chi, 2021; McDonough & Mackey, 2013; Sato, 2023; Topping, 2017; Sato, 2023). The students also benefit from repeated exposure to new vocabulary during peer interactions, including through collaborative discussions, peer explanations, and shared practice sessions. This aligns with Vygotskian perspectives on learning, where social interaction provides scaffolding that facilitates linguistic development. In particular, these findings align with the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory proposed by Vygotsky Cited by Gowrie NSW. (2020), which posits that learners are able to perform tasks more effectively when they receive guidance and support from more knowledgeable peers. The gradual improvement in students' performance and participation throughout the peer tutoring sessions reflects this theoretical framework. The peer interaction served as scaffolding, allowing students to extend their linguistic abilities beyond their current level of competence.

Furthermore, according to Bandura cited by Firmansyah (2018), Social Learning Theory also supports this observation. Accordingly, individuals learn not only through direct instruction but also by observing and modelling the behaviours of others. In the context of this study, students learned to speak more confidently and fluently by observing their peer tutors, imitating their

expressions, and receiving constructive feedback. The research findings are also consistent with the work of Rosewal (as cited by Ali et al., 2015), who argued that Peer Tutoring not only enhances students' language skills but also plays a crucial role in increasing their self-esteem. The reciprocal nature of Peer Tutoring sessions allowed students to feel valued and capable, which subsequently contributed to their willingness to take risks in using spoken English

CONCLUSION

This research has revealed that although Peer Tutoring can significantly improve students' speaking skills, the implementation process is not without its challenges. Based on the interviews and questionnaire data, a number of students initially experienced hesitation in participating actively. This hesitation was primarily attributed to their limited vocabulary, lack of grammatical mastery, and fear of making pronunciation errors. For some students, the transition from being a passive learner to an active participant in a peer-led session was a daunting process. These difficulties, however, were not persistent throughout the entire program.

The peer tutors, on the other hand, faced challenges in guiding their fellow students. Despite receiving prior training, some tutors found it difficult to manage time effectively during the sessions, provide clear instructions, and maintain the engagement of all participants. The responsibility of delivering material and offering feedback, especially in a peer-to-peer context, demanded a level of leadership and communication skills that they were still developing. Nevertheless, as the sessions progressed, both tutors and tutees adapted to their roles more effectively.

In summary, the positive perceptions expressed by students underscore the importance of designing learning environments that empower learners. By creating a peer-led platform where students are both the agents and recipients of instruction, Peer Tutoring nurtures autonomy, collaboration, and confidence, three elements that are essential for developing speaking proficiency in a second language. One of the most important conclusions that can be drawn is that the Peer Tutoring method helped reduce the psychological barriers commonly associated with speaking English in front of others. Many students initially experienced anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and a lack of confidence. However, the peer-led sessions allowed for a more relaxed and comfortable atmosphere where students could take risks without fear of criticism. This emotional safety net encouraged them to speak more freely and confidently, a finding that is consistent with the concept of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), in which learners progress more effectively with the guidance of a more capable peer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researcher would like to convey profound gratitude to all individuals and institutions whose invaluable contributions, support, and guidance have made the completion of this study possible. Without their generosity, encouragement, and assistance, this research could not have reached its final form. First and foremost, the researcher is deeply indebted to Mrs. Didih Faridah, M.Pd., as the first advisor, for her unwavering commitment, insightful guidance, and constructive feedback throughout the entire research process. Her scholarly expertise and dedication were pivotal in shaping and refining this study. Equal appreciation is sincerely extended to Mrs. Etika Rachmawati, M.Pd., as the second advisor, whose thoughtful suggestions, encouragement, and invaluable direction significantly enhanced the quality and depth of this research. The researcher also expresses sincere appreciation to the principal, teachers, and students of SMK Igasar Pindad Tasikmalaya for their generous cooperation, warm welcome, and participation, which greatly contributed to the successful completion of this study.

Acknowledgment is also due to Universitas Galuh, which provided an enabling academic environment, adequate facilities, and access to scholarly resources that facilitated the smooth and

effective conduct of this research. Furthermore, the researcher extends heartfelt gratitude to family, friends, and colleagues for their unwavering moral support, encouragement, and technical assistance during the writing process. Special thanks are offered to those who assisted with proofreading and formatting the manuscript with great care and dedication. Above all, the researcher humbly and wholeheartedly expresses the deepest gratitude to Allah SWT for bestowing strength, patience, and perseverance throughout this academic journey. Without His divine guidance and blessing, this research would not have been accomplished.

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