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Strategies to Use Peer Collaboration Effectively in Speaking

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Abstract. Peer collaboration is widely recognized as an effective pedagogical strategy for improving speaking skills in language learning contexts. This article examines evidence-based strategies that enhance the effectiveness of peer collaboration in speaking activities. Drawing on recent research, it highlights structured interaction, peer feedback, task design, and supportive learning environments as key components. The findings suggest that well-organized peer collaboration reduces anxiety, increases confidence, and improves communicative competence, making it a valuable approach for developing speaking proficiency in diverse educational settings (Tajuddin & Shafie, 2025).

Keywords: Peer collaboration; speaking skills; EFL; communication; interaction; feedback; fluency; confidence; cooperative learning; pedagogy

Speaking is a fundamental component of language acquisition and plays a crucial role in developing communicative competence. However, learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) often face significant challenges in mastering speaking skills, including anxiety, limited vocabulary, lack of confidence, and insufficient opportunities for authentic interaction (Tajuddin & Shafie, 2025). Traditional teacher-centered approaches frequently restrict students' speaking time and limit opportunities for meaningful communication. Consequently, modern language pedagogy increasingly emphasizes learner-centered approaches, among which peer collaboration has gained considerable attention.

Peer collaboration refers to a learning process in which students work together to achieve shared learning goals through interaction, discussion, and mutual support. It is grounded in sociocultural theory, particularly the idea that learning occurs through social interaction and the co-construction of knowledge (Mercer et al., 2023). Research indicates that peer collaboration provides learners with more opportunities to practice speaking, negotiate meaning, and receive immediate feedback from peers (An & Hien, 2024). These interactions not only improve linguistic competence but also foster critical thinking and interpersonal skills.

Empirical studies demonstrate that peer collaboration significantly enhances speaking proficiency. For example, structured peer activities such as role-plays, group discussions, and collaborative projects have been shown to improve fluency, accuracy, and confidence among learners (Beylieva, 2025). Additionally, peer interaction creates a less intimidating learning environment, reducing anxiety and encouraging active participation (Tajuddin & Shafie, 2025). This is particularly important in speaking tasks, where emotional factors can strongly influence performance.

Despite its benefits, peer collaboration is not automatically effective.





Without proper guidance, it may lead to unequal participation, off-task behavior, or ineffective communication. Therefore, implementing appropriate strategies is essential to maximize its impact on speaking development. This article explores key strategies for using peer collaboration effectively in speaking instruction, supported by empirical research and pedagogical theory.

Structured Task Design. Effective peer collaboration begins with well-designed speaking tasks. Tasks should have clear objectives, instructions, and expected outcomes to guide learners' interaction. Research shows that activities such as role-playing, group discussions, and problem-solving tasks provide meaningful contexts for language use and promote communicative competence (An & Hien, 2024). When tasks are purposeful, students are more likely to engage actively and use the target language productively.

Additionally, tasks should be appropriately challenging. Overly difficult tasks may discourage participation, while overly simple tasks may fail to stimulate meaningful interaction. Teachers should consider learners' proficiency levels and design tasks that encourage negotiation of meaning and collaborative problem-solving (Saeid, 2024).

Structured Interaction and Role Assignment. Simply grouping students together does not guarantee effective collaboration. Structured interaction is necessary to ensure equal participation and meaningful communication. Assigning roles such as facilitator, speaker, listener, or note-taker helps distribute responsibility and encourages accountability within groups.

Studies indicate that structured peer interaction enhances engagement and improves the quality of communication (Mercer et al., 2023). Teaching students how to interact effectively—through turn-taking, questioning, and active listening—can significantly improve speaking outcomes. This structured approach ensures that all learners contribute and benefit from the activity.

Peer Feedback and Assessment. Peer feedback is a critical component of effective collaboration. It allows learners to reflect on their performance and receive constructive input from their peers. Research highlights that peer feedback improves various aspects of speaking, including pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and grammatical accuracy (Isnani & Hapsari, 2026).

However, students often require training to provide effective feedback. Teachers should introduce simple frameworks, such as giving one positive comment and one suggestion for improvement. This not only enhances the quality of feedback but also fosters a supportive learning environment (Egamberganova, 2024).

Moreover, peer assessment can complement teacher assessment by providing additional perspectives on learners' performance. It encourages self-awareness and responsibility for learning, which are essential for language development.

Creating a Supportive Learning Environment. A supportive and non-threatening environment is essential for successful peer collaboration. Speaking





in a foreign language can be intimidating, and learners may fear making mistakes. Peer collaboration helps reduce this anxiety by shifting the focus from teacher evaluation to mutual support among students.

Research indicates that collaborative learning environments increase students' confidence and motivation to participate in speaking activities (Ayu et al., 2026). When learners feel comfortable, they are more willing to take risks and experiment with language, which is crucial for developing speaking skills.

Teachers play a vital role in fostering this environment by encouraging positive attitudes, promoting respect among peers, and emphasizing that mistakes are part of the learning process.

Use of Collaborative Techniques. Various collaborative techniques can be employed to enhance speaking skills. Common methods include think-pair-share, information gap activities, debates, and group discussions. These techniques ensure that all students have opportunities to speak and interact.

For instance, information gap activities require learners to exchange information to complete a task, naturally encouraging communication. Similarly, role-plays simulate real-life situations, allowing students to practice language in meaningful contexts (An & Hien, 2024).

Research demonstrates that such activities not only improve speaking proficiency but also promote cultural understanding and social interaction among learners (Beylieva, 2025).

Teacher's Role as Facilitator. In peer collaboration, the teacher's role shifts from being a knowledge provider to a facilitator. Teachers should monitor group interactions, provide guidance when necessary, and ensure that activities remain focused and productive.

Observation during collaborative tasks allows teachers to identify common errors and provide targeted feedback (Saeid, 2024). Additionally, teachers can intervene when groups face difficulties or when participation is uneven.

Effective facilitation also involves providing clear instructions, modeling expected behaviors, and setting time limits for activities.

Reflection and Metacognitive Development. Reflection is an important aspect of peer collaboration. After completing speaking tasks, students should reflect on their performance and group interaction through self-assessment or discussion.

Reflection helps learners identify their strengths and areas for improvement, enhancing their metacognitive awareness. It also encourages students to take responsibility for their learning (Mercer et al., 2023).

In conclusion, Peer collaboration is a powerful and effective strategy for enhancing speaking skills in language learning contexts. By providing learners with opportunities to interact, exchange ideas, and receive feedback, it addresses many challenges such as anxiety, limited practice, and lack of confidence (Tajuddin & Shafie, 2025). The evidence shows that peer collaboration improves both linguistic competence and interpersonal skills.

However, its success depends on proper implementation. Strategies such as





clear task design, structured interaction, peer feedback, and collaborative techniques are essential (An & Hien, 2024). Teachers must also create a supportive environment and guide students throughout the process.

Ultimately, peer collaboration promotes active learning, autonomy, and communication skills. It represents an important shift toward student-centered education and remains a valuable approach for developing speaking proficiency in modern classrooms.

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