

## Analyzing the Impact of Peer Interaction on Academic Speech

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### ABSTRACT

*Peer interaction is frequently used in learning foreign languages to stimulate progress in students' language learning. This research article aims to summarize the data from the survey related to the effects of peer interaction on the development of learners' speaking skills and identify whether this method is beneficial. It is based on the responses of 10 interviewees from 17 to 20 years old. The analysis of the data related to the issue suggests that working in pairs as a part of language learning is an effective approach that can be practiced in learning a second language.*

### Introduction

Speaking is considered to be an important productive skill in language learning. However, it is one of the hardest skills to master. To illustrate, the section in the IELTS exam in which students usually receive the lowest score, compared to other exam sections, is speaking, which clearly shows a need for certain approaches to facilitate learners' language production. One of the most widely used practices in modern teaching methods is peer interaction. Peer interaction is a process where individuals are engaged in various activities. "Interaction refers to the social exchange." (Rubin, Bukowski, Parker & Bowker, 2008, p. 142). This process is used in different educational institutions among students of divergent age categories. Moreover, peer interaction is known for its benefits in terms of cognitive development. "Research has shown that, under certain conditions, interaction with peers helps children's learning and development." (Howe & Mercer, 2007, p. 18). Therefore, this research has been conducted to consider the effectiveness of one of the approaches that is used these days to improve students' speaking.

### Literature review

The latest bodies of research from the last six years outline the importance of peer interaction as well as the previous pieces of research. In 2019, Muhammad Mukhtar Aliya, Shehu Muhammad Korau, and Aminu Basiru published an article about the effect of peer interaction on anxiety among students. "The results revealed a significant difference between the mean scores of the questionnaire before and after the class interaction in all the components of speaking anxiety. This shows that the interactions and class presentations help to significantly reduce the students' speaking anxiety." (Aliyu, Korau & Basiru, 2019, p. 40). In the same year, Vander Tavares published a review of peer interaction and second language learning, where he clearly admits the need for social interaction between students. "Early research on foreign language acquisition has shown that the learning environment must provide opportunities for meaningful social interaction between learners and users of the additional language in order for linguistic and socio-linguistic rules to be properly acquired (Krashen, 1982; Long, 1983, 1996; Swain, 2000)." (as cited in Tavares, 2019, p. 114). One more study led by Hatice Okyar and Gonca Eksi suggests that peer interaction through

providing feedback is beneficial for a better understanding of a language. "These findings indicate that training learners as feedback providers was useful in raising the learners' awareness about the target grammatical errors." (Okyar & Eksi, 2019, p. 82). In 2024 another research conducted by Le Vu Ngan Ha informed about the potential advantages of interaction between students. "Group English speaking practice also contributes to the development of generic and lifelong learning skills. These skills include receiving useful and helpful feedback, getting fresh insights, and fostering the exchange of knowledge, information, and experience. In the survey, more than half of respondents strongly agreed that the practice provided useful and helpful feedback, while over eighty percent agreed that it offered fresh insights. Moreover, 65% strongly agreed that it fostered the exchange of knowledge, information, and experience." (Ngan, 2024, p. 201).

### **Methods**

For conducting this research the survey was chosen as the method. This method was used because the data can be easily collected from interviewees as it is a less time-consuming approach and it clarifies informants' answers. In order to summarize data, the responses of repliers were collected in Google Forms, as information can be conveyed in percentages, and the number of responses per question, along with the charts, are provided. Therefore, a survey was chosen as the method of collecting data for this particular research due to the convenience of this approach in analyzing and gathering data.

### **Participants and Sampling**

The analysis of data is based on responses from 10 interviewees. The survey responses were received from female students. Participants in the research were selected according to the particular age category and field of study. Another factor taken into consideration was the repliers' proficiency in English, which was equal to a B2 level or higher. Therefore, students studying English as a foreign language for professional use in the academic field from 17 to 20 years old were chosen as the eligible sources of information. All of the participants learn English on a permanent basis and use it consistently by producing and receiving the language.

### **Questionnaire**

The main aim of the survey was to identify to what extent student's speaking skills in English are being developed as a result of practicing peer interaction. Therefore, the questionnaire consisted of 12 questions related to the impact of peer interaction on the development of English in students' academic performance including questions of how comfortable students are while using the foreign language in their speech. The survey included multiple-choice and open-ended questions giving a chance to participants to share their experiences and opinions on using peer interaction.

The following questions were part of the questionnaire:

1. How often do you engage in peer interactions to discuss academic topics and assignments?
  - Rarely
  - Occasionally
  - Frequently
  - Always
2. Do you feel that discussing academic topics with peers helps improve your understanding and articulation of the subject matter?
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
3. Have you noticed any improvement in your academic speech and communication skills as a result of peer interactions?
  - Yes

- No

4. In what ways do you think peer interactions have contributed to improving your academic speech? (Open-ended question)

5. On a scale of 1 to 10, how comfortable are you in expressing your thoughts and ideas in front of your peers during academic discussions?

6. Do you believe that peer interactions have helped you become more confident in participating in classroom discussions and presentations?

- Yes

- No

7. Have you ever received constructive feedback from peers regarding your academic speech and communication skills? If yes, how has it helped you improve?

8. Do you think peer interactions have a positive impact on your overall academic performance?

- Yes

- No

9. What specific challenges do you face when engaging in peer interactions to improve academic speech? (Open-ended question)

10. How important do you think it is for students to engage in peer interactions to enhance their academic speech and communication skills?

- Very important

- Important

- Somewhat important

- Not important

11. Would you recommend incorporating more peer interaction activities into the curriculum to improve academic speech and communication skills?

- Yes

- No

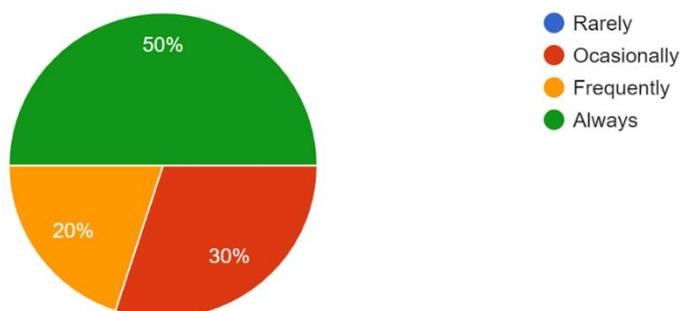
12. Any additional comments or suggestions regarding the role of peer interactions in improving academic speech? (Open-ended question)

### Analysis

The initial graph illustrates the frequency of interactions among students within an academic context. It indicates that 50% of students consistently engage in conversations with their peers, while an additional 20% report frequent communication. This suggests that a significant majority of students are expected to maintain a certain level of interaction within their classroom environment.

How often do you engage in peer interactions to discuss academic topics and assignments?

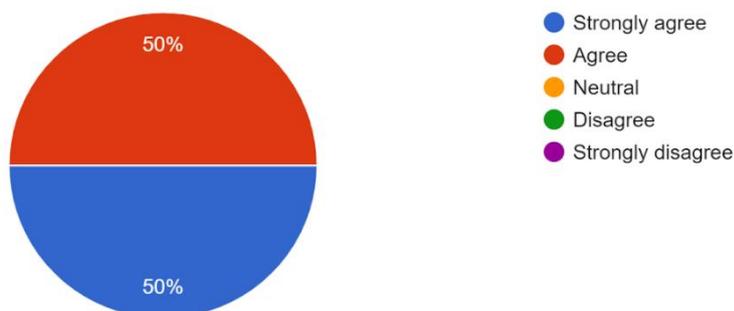
10 responses



The examination of the second graph reveals that students recognize the significance of dialogue in the classroom. They all have indicated that these verbal interactions facilitate a clearer understanding of the material.

Do you agree that discussing academic topics with peers helps improve your understanding and explanation of the topic?

10 responses



When students were asked about their perceptions of improvement in their academic speech and whether they would recommend interactive methods to others, all participants reported a positive impact on their communication skills. The majority indicated that peer interaction significantly contributed to building their confidence by alleviating feelings of shyness. One student noted that their vocabulary had improved as a result of these interactions. Additionally, one participant mentioned that the extent of improvement was contingent upon shared interests; specifically, if they were engaged with a peer who shared similar interests, they observed some enhancement in their communication skills. Conversely, if there was a lack of common interests, engagement tended to be less effective.

When students were queried about the reasons for their favorable perceptions of speaking interactions, most indicated that presenting in front of others helped to mitigate their shyness and anxiety. They emphasized that the opportunity to share knowledge with peers allowed them to expand their understanding and perspectives. Several students remarked that listening to others articulate responses using more sophisticated vocabulary facilitated their own learning. One student specifically noted that these interactions provided increased exposure to the English language and enhanced their speaking abilities.

An interesting observation is that none of the students expressed discomfort in sharing their ideas during academic discussions. When asked to rate their discomfort on a scale from one to ten, only two students rated their discomfort as a five, while the remaining students reported a comfort level ranging from seven to ten.

All students reported that peer interactions have contributed to their confidence in participating in classroom discussions and delivering presentations.

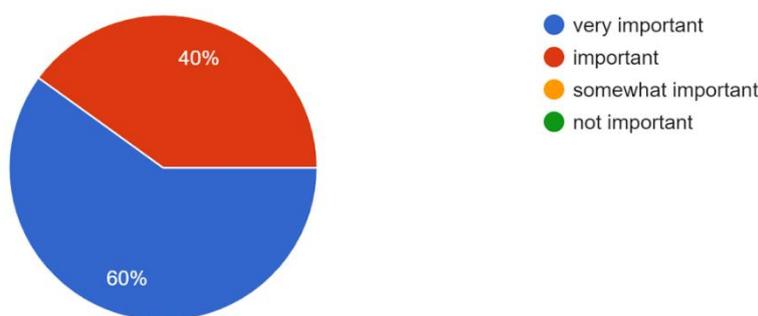
The analysis of peer feedback indicates that students were able to learn information more quickly when they engaged in communication with one another. Participants reported receiving valuable advice in areas where they faced difficulties. Several students noted that they generated new ideas and found their speech becoming more structured. While only a few students mentioned that their sentences became shorter yet remained meaningful, one

student observed that his use of jargon or colloquial language diminished following discussions with peers, resulting in a more academic style of speech.

When students were asked about the challenges they encounter during peer interactions, most reported that they do not face significant difficulties. However, some students indicated that they struggle with fluency and effectively delivering their messages. Additionally, several participants noted that when their peers lack knowledge in a specific area, it becomes challenging to maintain the conversation. Some students attributed their own fluency issues to a deficiency in knowledge within the particular field, which hampers their ability to contribute meaningfully to discussions.

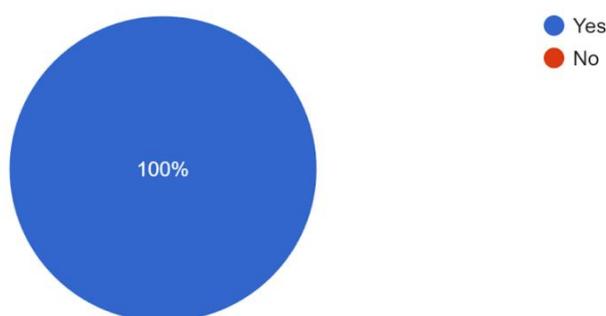
How important do you think it is for students to engage in peer interactions to enhance their academic speech and communication skills?

10 responses



Would you recommend incorporating more peer interaction activities into the curriculum to improve academic speech and communication skills?

10 responses



When students were asked for suggestions regarding peer interactions, many expressed the desire for certain topics to be covered in greater depth. They indicated that when discussions with peers occurred, they often felt ill-equipped due to a lack of knowledge in the relevant field. Consequently, several students proposed that it would be more beneficial to first thoroughly cover a specific topic before engaging in peer interactions. This approach would enable students to participate more meaningfully in discussions and enhance their overall learning experience.

## Conclusion

Summarizing the analysis conducted based on participants' responses, the positive effects of the peer interaction can be outlined. The review of the responses indicates several pros of using peer interaction in terms of learning English such as developing fluency, dealing with speaking anxiety, expanding vocabulary, and Learning the language more effectively in general. Therefore, after evaluation of all the factors mentioned below, it can be stated that peer interaction should be considered as a part of the studying curriculum due to its effectiveness in the teaching field and learning. By conducting further research about peer interaction practice, educators and researchers may find more benefits of using approaches such as interaction with peers, and by analyzing more statistics the effects of peer interaction might be maximized.

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