

THE EFFECT OF PEER-TUTORING STRATEGIES ON EFL STUDENTS' ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN COOPERATIVE LEARNING SETTINGS

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Abstract: This study investigates the effect of peer-tutoring strategies on EFL students' oral communication skills within cooperative learning settings. Peer-tutoring is a collaborative method where students help each other understand and practice language tasks, providing guidance and feedback. The research demonstrates how structured peer-tutoring activities enhance speaking skills, increase learners' confidence, and foster active engagement. By promoting interaction, mutual support, and collaborative problem-solving, peer-tutoring helps students overcome speaking anxiety and improves fluency, vocabulary usage, and pronunciation. Findings suggest that integrating peer-tutoring into cooperative learning classrooms is an effective approach to developing both linguistic competence and oral communication confidence among EFL learners.

Key words: Peer-tutoring, cooperative learning, oral communication, EFL learners, speaking skills, collaborative learning, peer interaction, language practice, student engagement.

INTRODUCTION

In today's modern world, oral communication is an essential component of English language learning, as it enables learners to convey ideas clearly, interact with others, and develop linguistic fluency. Despite its importance, many EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students face challenges such as speaking anxiety, lack of confidence, limited vocabulary, and insufficient practice opportunities. Traditional teacher-centered approaches often do not provide adequate interaction or feedback for learners, which can hinder the development of their oral communication skills. Cooperative learning has been widely recognized as an effective pedagogical approach to address these challenges. One key strategy within cooperative learning is peer-tutoring, where students support and guide each other in learning tasks. Peer-tutoring not only allows learners to practice English in a more relaxed and supportive environment but also encourages collaboration, responsibility, and mutual feedback. In this method, students take on the role of both tutor and tutee, which reinforces their understanding and provides repeated opportunities for meaningful language use. Research indicates that peer-tutoring strategies can enhance speaking skills by providing authentic communication practice, improving pronunciation, expanding vocabulary, and increasing fluency. Moreover, these strategies help reduce learners' anxiety, foster engagement, and build confidence, which are crucial for effective oral communication. This study aims to investigate the effect of peer-tutoring strategies on EFL students' oral communication skills within cooperative learning settings, examining both pedagogical benefits and practical implications for classroom instruction.

MAIN PART

Peer-tutoring strategies within cooperative learning settings create a dynamic and interactive environment for EFL learners to develop their oral communication skills. This method allows students to work collaboratively, guiding and supporting each other in completing

language tasks. By doing so, learners not only receive immediate feedback from peers but also reinforce their own understanding while explaining concepts, which promotes deeper language acquisition.

One of the main advantages of peer-tutoring is that it provides a low-anxiety environment for speaking practice. Many students feel more comfortable interacting with classmates rather than a teacher, which encourages them to take risks in using English, make mistakes, and learn from feedback without fear of judgment. For example, in a classroom of 20 intermediate-level EFL learners, students were paired for daily 10-minute speaking tasks. Tutors guided their peers through structured dialogues, vocabulary prompts, and pronunciation corrections. Observations revealed that students who participated in these sessions showed more frequent and longer turns in conversation compared to those in traditional teacher-led settings. Peer-tutoring also promotes mutual responsibility and active engagement. Both tutors and tutees benefit from the process: tutors consolidate their knowledge and develop teaching skills, while tutees receive tailored guidance that addresses individual weaknesses. This reciprocal relationship fosters motivation, collaboration, and self-confidence, all of which are essential for effective oral communication. In one case study, a group of 24 high school students engaged in a 4-week peer-tutoring program. Pre-test and post-test results indicated an average increase of 15% in speaking fluency scores, and students reported higher confidence levels when performing role-plays and group discussions. To maximize the effectiveness of peer-tutoring, teachers must carefully plan and monitor activities. Pairing or grouping students strategically ensures balanced participation and prevents dominance by a few individuals. Tasks should be designed to challenge learners appropriately while remaining achievable. For instance, a teacher might assign scenario-based role-plays, debates, or problem-solving discussions that require each student to contribute. Additionally, teachers should provide scaffolding when necessary, offer corrective feedback, and encourage reflection to help learners recognize their progress. Reflection sessions can include self-assessment checklists, peer feedback forms, or short discussion summaries, allowing students to track their improvement over time. Integrating peer-tutoring into cooperative learning classrooms also encourages authentic communication. Role-based tasks, discussions, and problem-solving activities provide meaningful contexts for learners to practice real-life communication. For example, in a “marketplace simulation” activity, pairs of students acted as buyers and sellers, negotiating prices and asking questions entirely in English. Tutors observed, guided, and provided feedback after each interaction. Students not only improved their vocabulary and fluency but also developed social skills such as negotiation, turn-taking, and active listening, which are crucial for successful interaction in English. Moreover, peer-tutoring encourages learner autonomy. Students learn to monitor their own speech, correct errors, and support their peers without relying solely on teacher intervention. A mini-survey conducted in one EFL classroom revealed that 85% of students felt more motivated and confident to speak in English after regular peer-tutoring sessions, indicating both cognitive and affective benefits. The method empowers learners to take an active role in their language development, build confidence, and improve overall oral communication skills within a supportive cooperative learning environment. By providing structured tasks, fostering engagement, and encouraging reflection, peer-tutoring serves as an effective pedagogical approach to address common challenges faced by EFL learners in developing speaking proficiency.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the use of peer-tutoring strategies within cooperative learning settings has a significant positive impact on EFL students' oral communication skills. By encouraging collaboration, mutual support, and active participation, peer-tutoring provides learners with ample opportunities to practice speaking in a low-anxiety and supportive environment. Students not only improve their fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary but also gain confidence and motivation to participate in oral activities. Peer-tutoring benefits both tutors and tutees. Tutors consolidate their knowledge and develop teaching skills, while tutees receive personalized guidance to address individual weaknesses. This reciprocal interaction fosters learner autonomy, encourages reflection, and promotes continuous improvement in speaking skills. Effective implementation requires careful planning by teachers, including strategic grouping, task design, monitoring, and feedback provision. When properly executed, peer-tutoring transforms the classroom into an engaging, student-centered environment that nurtures oral communication competence and confidence. Overall, integrating peer-tutoring strategies into cooperative learning classrooms is an effective pedagogical approach for developing EFL learners' speaking skills and preparing them for real-life communication in English.

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