



## Exploring EFL Secondary Students Practice Peer Feedback in Speaking Anxiety Classrooms

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### Abstract

*Learning English in EFL classes is still challenging. One of the difficulties experienced was in speaking practice class. Several factors affect students' difficulties in speaking in class, one of which is the anxiety factor. Several studies have shown peer feedback to help students reduce anxiety in speaking classes. This study explores the practice of implementing peer feedback on students' anxiety in speaking classes. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 3 Klari using a qualitative approach and narrative inquiry method. The research was conducted using instructional procedures. Observations and interviews were used to collect data, which were then analyzed using thematic analysis. Research shows that there were still many students who show symptoms of anxiety in speaking classes which are shown by several different symptoms, one of which is nervousness. Peer feedback was carried out by identifying the problems, explaining, and giving suggestions. In practice, peer feedback shows that peer feedback activities are a helpful first experience and interesting. In addition, peer feedback can help reduce EFL students' anxiety in speaking classes because activities are carried out in groups.*

**Keywords:** Anxiety, Peer Feedback, Speaking Classroom, EFL Secondary Students

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## INTRODUCTION

Learning English in the EFL class is a challenging task. When learning English, many EFL students experienced difficulties speaking in class (Suban, 2021). This is, of course, influenced by several factors, including anxiety. Ferreira and Murray (1983), cited in Marlia (2018), define anxiety as a subjective feeling originating from a mixture of feelings such as depression, fear, nervousness, and stress which in turn is connected to and stimulates the autonomic sensory system. Anxiety happens because students have to practice speaking according to the target language. In addition, this is not easy because students must have high self-confidence. Apart from that, in the speaking class, students must have good proficiency and demonstrate fluency. This phenomenon is a factor that causes high anxiety among EFL students in speaking classes. Therefore, speaking anxiety in students influences their ability and self-confidence.

Based on the experience of anxiety in students in the speaking class, the teacher must find solutions to overcome the problem of anxiety in students in the speaking class. Instead of providing recommendations to improve student skills, teachers may be able to hold discussions with students related to anxiety problems in students and find solutions (Asyfyfa et al., 2019). Recognizing the importance of speaking skills, one effort that can help students reduce anxiety in speaking class is the application of feedback. Feedback is a form of response given to the results of the performance. Knowing the purpose of feedback in education as a technique that can help the learning process can be a teacher's consideration in its application so that it is appropriate and effective for the learning



purpose. Besides that, feedback must be able to provide input and motivation to help develop the learning process. Moreover, the purpose of the feedback itself must be able to help students (Al-Bashir et al., 2016; Shute, 2008). Peer feedback is one technique for applying feedback to reduce anxiety in students. According to Lv in Furyanto (2016), peer feedback has improved students' speaking skills, and assessments given to other peers can be in the form of feedback or suggestions. Moreover, peer assessment positively impacts students' development in public speaking classes.

Previous research has shown that peer feedback can reduce anxiety in students in speaking classes, help them think critically, and build motivation (Chien et al., 2020). Other research also shows that peer feedback as a technique reduces students' anxiety about their speaking ability (Motallebzadeh et al., 2020). In applying peer feedback, it shows that there is a significant increase in grammar, fluency, and vocabulary in aspects of speaking (Chekol, 2020). According to Lam (2010), peer feedback serves the procedures in discussion sessions; clarifying, identifying, explaining, and giving suggestions. Thus, this study aims to explore the practice of using peer feedback as a treatment for the anxiety of EFL students in speaking classes.

## **METHODS**

This study used a qualitative approach with the narrative inquiry method to find out more deeply based on the information told. Savin-Baden and Niekerk (2007) argue that narrative inquiry focuses on analyzing a person's story about the experiences they have gone through; in classrooms, by telling stories, the researcher will better understand the participants.

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 3 Klari with 4 of 39 EFL students as participants. The participants were selected based on non-probability with purposive sampling type. This sampling is used to select samples based on specific considerations and objectives following the research (Gill, 2020). Therefore, the participants were selected by their dialogue performance and peer feedback experience in EFL speaking classes by using observation and interviews to collect data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face with open-ended questions.

In applying peer feedback to treat EFL Secondary students' anxiety in speaking classes, activities were carried out in groups twice a meeting. The meetings took 70 minutes for each meeting. The topic used was superlative-comparative degree materials. This study used learning procedures pre-activities, while-activities, and post-activities to support research in the learning process.

First and second meeting (Discussion):

### **Pre-activities (10 Minutes)**

As a start in learning, the teacher will check students' attendance, convey research objectives and provide triggering questions related to research.

### **While-Activities (50 Minutes)**

In this section, the teacher will start the learning process according to the stages in learning speaking adapted from (Siregar & Murni, 2013):

- 1) The teacher introduces and gives the example of superlative-comparative degree material.
- 2) The teacher explains how to apply peer feedback and gives examples. Ensure students understand instructions from peer feedback activities. This stage is the pre-peer feedback (Jiang in Mualifah, 2021)
- 3) Divide students into five groups. Students have a role as:

- a) Leader: Ensures each member participates in group activities. Moreover, it discusses and presents the result of the discussion.
- b) Writer: Write down the discussion results that the group has discussed
- 4) Each group collects the members' names and determines the roles of leader and writer.
- 5) The teacher gives different dialogues of superlative comparative degree material for each group
- 6) The teacher interacts from group to group to ensure that every student participates in group activities.
- 7) Each group member makes notes and prepares the dialogue performance of the superlative-comparative degree that has been given. This stage can reduce anxiety in students when they have to practice speaking in front of the class and can build a sense of responsibility as a form of practice for performance.
- 8) Distribute the rubrics needed for peer feedback; fluency, pronunciation, advice, comments, and suggestions. Guiding the students on how to give a feedback
- 9) The teacher chooses a pair of students randomly from each group to be a representative who will appear to present the dialogue of superlative-comparative degree dialogue in front of the class. This stage can cause anxiety because it calls students to practice in front of the class.
- 10) Other students listen and pay attention to other group members' performance and discuss to provide feedback based on the results of other group members' performances. The writer of the group writes the results of the discussion. This stage is while implementing peer feedback (Jiang in Mualifah, 2021). Moreover, in this discussion stage, students can think critically, build social relationships, and solve problems together
- 11) The leader of the group members spoke to convey the results of their discussion regarding the feedback given based on the results of the performance of other group members. At this stage, students can improve communication skills, create a sense of responsibility, and fight anxiety to speak

#### **Post-Activities (10 Minutes)**

At the end of the lesson, the teacher will provide an evaluation related to the learning process that has been passed. The evaluation is related to the material and the application of peer feedback as a teaching technique in speaking classes.

The data that has been collected were analyzed using thematic analysis from Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis was used as a method for analyzing data or collecting data to gain an in-depth understanding. The thematic analysis includes; familiarizing data, data coding, generating the themes, reviewing the themes, defining the themes, and writing the report.

## **RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

### ***Results***

Based on the results of research conducted at SMP Negeri 3 Klari to find out the practice of using peer feedback on students' speaking anxiety. There are general pattern findings of this study. Students' practice peer feedback in speaking anxiety classrooms consists of Identifying problems in discussion sessions; explaining and giving suggestions in presentation sessions. The detailed findings are presented as follows:

Based on the results of interviews conducted at SMP Negeri 3 Klari, students generally feel anxiety, especially in foreign language classes. Anxiety can happen to

anyone as a form of pressure felt by someone, especially in foreign language classes where students are required to speak according to the target language. The general symptom that almost all students feel is nervousness, followed by symptoms such as a heart beating and handshaking as a form of anxiety. Even though anyone can feel the symptoms of anxiety as a form of pressure, some students choose not to feel that anxiety and let the anxiety go so that the anxiety does not last long in the speaking class. In addition, another experience that students feel the first time they practice speaking is feeling confused and insecure because the student feels unable to speak according to the target language.

The statement above is supported by observational data, which states that students' anxiety in speaking foreign language classes can occur because many did not learn English in elementary school, so when they entered high school, it was their first experience teaching English. In addition, the lack of preparation when getting assignments for presentations is one of the factors that can trigger anxiety in students; where students tend to underestimate the tasks given and consider them easy, but it turns out that there are still many students who have deficiencies in both intonation and fluency.

### **Students' practice peer feedback in speaking anxiety classrooms**

In using peer feedback in speaking classes, students apply procedures in providing feedback from Lam (2010), including procedures for identifying problems, explaining, and providing suggestions to support more explicit and helpful peer feedback. Based on the results of observations, it is known that these procedures are carried out in different sessions, including discussion sessions and presentations, where both sessions are at the core of the activity, which is explained as follows:

#### **Identifying problems in discussion sessions;**

Based on the observations, students use problem identification procedures to find a problem based on their peers' speaking performance results. In identifying problems, students can discover their peers' shortcomings and how they should be overcome. The procedure for the feedback activity is a discussion session where other groups can pay attention to the speaking performance of their peers, who then discuss it together to identify problems in speaking, such as fluency, pronunciation, and intonation, additionally to find solutions to these problems. Identifying problems helps discover deficiencies in speaking practice based on peer perceptions through the discussion process.

#### **Explaining and giving suggestions in presentation sessions;**

After identifying problems in the discussion session, the following procedure in giving peer feedback is explaining and providing suggestions. Explanation is done to describe the problems that have been identified previously. Furthermore, supported by the process of advising, the main form of giving feedback and suggestions must be conveyed reasonably and help develop skills in speaking English. Both of these procedures are in the presentation session, where the leader as the group representative will present the results of the discussion where the leader will explain the problem based on the results of the peer's speaking performance, which is then supported by explanations and giving suggestions to be able to help students overcome problems or deficiencies in speaking practice. Supported by the results of student interviews as follows:

“What I like is when we give feedback, we are not only commented, but we are also told what to do, what is lacking, then we are told what we should do.”

(C.P.A, interviewed on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023)

“I know what was lacking because when I gave feedback, it was also explained what was lacking, what had to be improved.”

(M.T.A, interviewed on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023)

Additionally, based on the interview session, the first experience of using peer feedback in speaking class activities gave students a positive and exciting impression. Peer feedback creates a new experience for them to create a more dynamic and exciting classroom atmosphere; group discussions in the application of peer feedback can improve relationships between students, share thoughts and suggestions, practice problem-solving, and improve communication skills. Moreover, peer feedback is beneficial for evaluating performance results, which may be a motivation to perform even better. Even though peer feedback has many benefits in learning activities, the observations show that using peer feedback as a student's first experience requires quite a long time. The reason why students take a long time is that students often need clarification about the next steps in giving feedback. Therefore, the teacher must always remind and direct instructions to students through peer feedback.

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## ***DISCUSSION***

The data collected through interviews and observation show that applying peer feedback in learning activities is the first experience for students in SMP Negeri 3 Klari. The interview results in the previous section supported the students' experiences using peer feedback, which stated that it was the first-time students had implemented peer feedback. It is also indicated by confusion when first implementing peer feedback; therefore, it must be followed by several stages before starting the core of the activity. According to Jiang (2011) in Mualifah (2021) which states three stages must be carried out in implementing peer feedback, namely pre-peer feedback to provide explanations and activity guidelines to students, while-peer feedback, where students begin to practice activities giving peer feedback based on the results of peer performance. Peers while the teacher monitors and continues to direct and post-peer feedback as the final step to review the feedback given and provide an evaluation at the end of the activity.

In practical activities using peer feedback, EFL students follow the procedure from Lam (2010), where the procedures for problem identification, explanation, and giving suggestions are used in the core of the activity of giving feedback or found in while-activities. This procedure is carried out as a support for providing feedback so that it can provide helpful feedback in speaking classes based on the results of peer performance. The peer feedback procedure carried out is in the discussion session and presentation of the discussion results. The peer feedback procedures are proven to be very helpful for students to find out their mistakes and shortcomings based on the results of their speaking performance. Additionally, in practicing peer feedback activities, providing clear guidelines and explanations can help students to be able to provide feedback adequately and appropriately. This is because giving assignments with specific criteria will help students to think critically, be responsible, and be confident (Bijami et

al., 2013; Ferris, 2003). Peer feedback is carried out in groups, which has shown many benefits for students'-self and the group. Group activities have impacted students' ability to think critically, build relationships with friends, solve problems, and give students a sense of responsibility. The benefits of grouped peer feedback follow Tanuadji (2017) and Nguyen Tan et al. (2021) Tan and Pham (2021), which state that group peer feedback has strengths such as sharing thoughts, correcting each other, and solving problems. Besides that, not only improving students' learning abilities, peer feedback in groups can also improve students' communication skills.

Moreover, students rate the peer feedback activities in the speaking class as interesting, helpful, and valuable. As Turner (2003) stated, peer feedback activities must be fair, appropriate, identifiable, and helpful. In the activity of providing feedback, students not only provide a comment to correct errors in the performance of speaking peers that have been carried out, but the feedback that has been carried out has also gone through procedures such as identifying problems, clarifying, and providing constructive suggestions so that students can find out their shortcomings and develop them. The procedure for giving feedback that has been carried out follows Lam (2010), which shows procedures in discussion sessions in group peer feedback activities, including clarification, identification, explanation, and suggestions.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results and discussions, some conclusions that can be drawn are that EFL students at SMP Negeri 3 Klari show that the practice of speaking English still has an anxiety effect on students, which is generally characterized by nervous symptoms and the fear factor of making mistakes when practicing speaking, especially deficiencies in pronunciation that are included in linguistic factors. Then, the peer feedback activity became a new experience for students at SMP Negeri 3 Klari. It was considered very helpful and useful for identifying the problem; it became an interesting activity because it was carried out in groups and could motivate students to develop skills in speaking practice.

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