

Oral Peer Feedback in EFL Speaking Classrooms: Exploring Its Implementation and Perceived Influence on Students' Speaking Confidence and Anxiety

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ABSTRACT

Speaking is widely recognized as one of the most challenging skills for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners due to affective factors such as speaking anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and low self-confidence. Oral peer feedback has been proposed as a pedagogical approach to address these challenges by fostering learner interaction and reflection. This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to explore the implementation of oral peer feedback and students' perceived influence of this practice on speaking performance, confidence, and anxiety. The study was conducted at a boarding school, Pondok Pesantren BUMI BOS, involving 38 eighth- and ninth-grade EFL students. Data were collected through classroom observations using an observation checklist and semi-structured interviews with selected students. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman framework, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, with triangulation applied to enhance credibility. The findings showed that oral peer feedback was implemented in a generally supportive and structured manner, characterized by recognition of strengths, balanced positive and constructive comments, and respectful communication. Students perceived oral peer feedback as helpful in increasing awareness of their speaking strengths and weaknesses, enhancing motivation, and building speaking confidence. However, students experienced difficulty providing actionable suggestions, often requiring teacher scaffolding. While many students reported reduced speaking anxiety, some continued to feel nervous when feedback was perceived as overly critical. Ninth-grade students demonstrated higher engagement and confidence than eighth-grade students. The study suggests that oral peer feedback has a positive perceived influence on students' speaking engagement and confidence, particularly when supported by clear guidelines and teacher guidance, highlighting the importance of structured peer feedback training in EFL speaking classrooms.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking, as a productive skill in language learning, is widely recognized as one of the most challenging aspects for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Unlike receptive skills such as reading and listening, productive skills like speaking demand learners to generate language output, often in real-time, which requires cognitive and communicative competence. Teaching and learning productive skills necessitate significant effort and structured processes due to the complexity involved in producing tangible outcomes (Rijal and Arifah, 2017). Speaking is identified as a fundamental skill in mastering English as a second or foreign language (Nunan et al., 2003). The importance of speaking proficiency for effective communication makes it a priority in language education curricula (Blake, 2016). However, it is noted that speaking remains the most difficult skill for many EFL learners due to psychological barriers such as fear of negative evaluation, low self-confidence, and anxiety (Zhang, 2009). Speaking is known as an interactive process where speakers create meaning by giving, receiving, and processing information (Bailey & Nunan, 2019).

Speaking performance refers to the ability of learners to effectively express their thoughts and ideas in spoken English. It encompasses fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and coherence. Effective speaking performance is critical for EFL learners as it directly impacts their ability to communicate in academic, professional, and social contexts. However, achieving proficiency in speaking performance is hindered by various challenges. Psychological factors such as speaking anxiety play a significant role in limiting students' ability to perform well. Anxiety often stems from fear of making mistakes or being judged negatively by peers or teachers. This fear can result in hesitation, reduced participation, and avoidance of speaking activities altogether. It was found that those psychological factors consist of anxiety, low self-esteem, fear of making mistakes, and others (Aryanty, 2016). Meanwhile, other factors that can cause students difficulty in speaking are related to low mastery of speaking aspects, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, etc. (Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2020). Both psychological factors and speaking-related aspects contributed to students' difficulties in speaking English, including a lack of vocabulary, anxiety, and problems with grammar (Pratiwi, 2018). It can be seen that there are several factors that come from some sources that make it difficult to speak in English fluently.

Speaking anxiety is a common phenomenon among EFL learners that negatively affects their speaking performance. It is characterized by feelings of nervousness, apprehension, or fear during speaking activities. Foreign language anxiety can be defined as a distinct type of anxiety specific to language learning situations (Horwitz et al., 1986). Speaking anxiety refers to an individual's fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or people (Wrench, 2012). Speaking anxiety can lead to avoidance behaviors, reduced self-confidence, and impaired communication skills. The impact of speaking anxiety is particularly pronounced in classroom settings where students are required to speak in front of peers or teachers. This environment often exacerbates feelings of vulnerability and fear of negative evaluation. As a result, students may struggle to express themselves fluently and confidently.

Feedback is information provided by a representative regarding an individual's performance or comprehension (Wisniewski et al., 2020). Another opinion that feedback refers to any comments or information from a particular action (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). Feedback is also crucial to the development of students' language skills since it provides information about their work, which students may use to evaluate their own speaking and make the necessary revisions (Huisman et al., 2018). Feedback is information related to an individual's performance or actions, often provided by others. It plays an essential role in language learning, as it helps students understand their strengths and weaknesses, allowing them to evaluate and improve their speaking skills through necessary revisions.

Peer feedback is a process that involves interaction and enables students to establish expectations for one other's performance (Triassanti et al., 2023). Meanwhile, peer evaluation or sometimes referred to as peer feedback, offers students a structured learning process so they can assess and comment on each other's work (Rollinson, 2005). Peer feedback also involves students working together in pairs to provide

and receive respectful, constructive criticism on each other's writing (Core and Enriched, 2015). It provides the students with the knowledge and skill necessary to evaluate other people and themselves. Peer feedback is an interactive teaching strategy that involves students providing constructive evaluations of each other's performances. In the context of EFL speaking classes, peer feedback allows learners to assess their peers' spoken output and offer suggestions for improvement. This technique fosters collaboration and mutual support among students while promoting active engagement in the learning process. Peer feedback serves multiple purposes: it encourages critical thinking, enhances communication skills, and provides opportunities for self-reflection (Liu and Carless, 2006). By participating in peer feedback activities, students gain valuable insights into their own strengths and weaknesses while developing their evaluative skills. The implementation of peer feedback has been shown to reduce speaking anxiety among EFL learners. By creating a supportive environment where students feel comfortable receiving feedback from their peers rather than solely from teachers, this technique helps alleviate fear of judgment and builds self-confidence. Additionally, peer feedback promotes active participation and collaboration, which are essential for improving speaking performance.

Previous studies have explored peer feedback in various contexts. It found that both peer and teacher feedback effectively enhance EFL learners' speaking skills and self-confidence (Au & Bardakçı, 2020). The other research revealed that oral peer feedback in online speaking classes improves speaking skills and supports a collaborative learning environment (Anjarani & Alvianingrum, 2024). Students view it positively but tend to prefer encouraging feedback and avoid criticism to maintain social harmony. Another research found that students tended to produce more motivational peer feedback than the corrective one and preferred online peer feedback in terms of attractive application and time flexibility (Priyantini et al., 2020). They also favored written over oral feedback due to a lack of confidence in giving oral peer feedback and difficulty in identifying oral comments. While oral peer feedback was seen as useful to increase their confidence and speaking skill, it did not significantly improve their ability to argue. Peer feedback in writing is an effective strategy that promotes collaboration, helps students give constructive feedback, and improves their writing by reducing errors (Sholihah, 2015). It also highlighted that peer feedback is more effective for students with high creativity, while teacher feedback works better for those with low creativity (Andianto, 2014). Teachers used oral peer feedback in speaking classes through suggestions, criticism, praise, and comments to enhance participation and reflection (Hidayat et al., 2023). It helped students identify strengths and weaknesses, particularly in pronunciation and expression, though challenges such as inaccurate or biased feedback and students feeling uncomfortable or mocked were noted.

Despite these findings, research still lacks focus on oral peer feedback implementation in physical speaking classrooms. Most studies emphasize writing, teacher perspectives, or online settings. Therefore, this study investigates the implementation and perceived influence of oral peer feedback in reducing speaking anxiety and enhancing speaking performance in EFL students within a boarding school context.

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore the implementation of oral peer feedback and students' perceived influence of this technique on their speaking performance and speaking anxiety in an EFL classroom context. A qualitative approach was chosen because the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of students' experiences, perceptions, and classroom interactions during oral peer feedback activities in a natural instructional setting, rather than to measure causal effects or statistical improvement.

2.2 Research Context and Participants

The research was conducted at Pondok Pesantren BUMI BOS, a boarding school where students live and study in a close-knit educational environment. The participants consisted of 38 EFL students,

including 21 eighth-grade students and 17 ninth-grade students. Total sampling was applied, involving all students from the selected classes to obtain a comprehensive picture of oral peer feedback implementation across different grade levels.

The inclusion of two grade levels allowed for comparison of participation patterns, confidence levels, and feedback practices based on students' maturity and learning experience.

2.3 Research Instruments

Two main instruments were used to collect data:

1. Observation Checklist

The observation checklist was designed to document the classroom implementation of oral peer feedback during speaking activities. The checklist focused on:

- a. Teacher's instructional role
- b. Student engagement and interaction
- c. Types of peer feedback provided (e.g., recognition of strengths, encouraging phrases, balanced feedback, respectful communication)
- d. Classroom atmosphere and students' visible signs of confidence or anxiety

The indicators were developed based on relevant literature on feedback practices and oral peer interaction and were reviewed by expert lecturers in English education to ensure content validity.

2. Semi-Structured Interview Guide

A semi-structured interview guide was used to explore students' perceptions of oral peer feedback, particularly its influence on:

- a. Self-confidence in speaking
- b. Speaking anxiety
- c. Awareness of strengths and weaknesses
- d. Motivation to improve speaking performance

The semi-structured format allowed consistency across interviews while providing flexibility to probe students' individual experiences more deeply.

2.4 Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected through classroom observations and individual interviews.

1. Observation

Classroom observations were conducted in two eighth-grade meetings and two ninth-grade meetings during speaking lessons. The researcher acted as a non-participant observer, documenting classroom activities using the observation checklist and field notes. Observations focused on how oral peer feedback was implemented during students' speaking performances and how students responded to feedback from their peers and the teacher.

2. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 28 students (14 from each grade level), selected based on their level of participation during classroom activities to capture varied perspectives. Each interview lasted approximately 5–10 minutes and was conducted in a quiet setting at the school. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and later transcribed verbatim for analysis.

2.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman qualitative analysis framework, consisting of:

1. Data Reduction

Observation notes and interview transcripts were carefully read and coded. Relevant data related to peer feedback practices, speaking confidence, anxiety, and perceived improvement were selected and organized.

2. Data Display

The reduced data were organized into tables and thematic categories to illustrate patterns in peer feedback implementation and students' perceptions across grade levels.

3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification

Themes were interpreted by comparing findings from observations and interviews to identify recurring patterns and contrasts. Triangulation between data sources was used to enhance the credibility of the findings.

2.6 Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative data:

- a. Data triangulation was applied by comparing observation findings with interview responses.
- b. Peer debriefing was conducted through discussion with academic supervisors to validate emerging interpretations.
- c. Thick description was provided to allow readers to assess the transferability of findings to similar EFL contexts.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were addressed throughout the research process. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the school authorities. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their participation was voluntary. Verbal consent was obtained prior to data collection. Students' identities were anonymized using participant codes to ensure confidentiality, and all data were used solely for academic research purposes.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Implementation of Oral Peer Feedback

The researcher conducted classroom observations in two classes — one ninth-grade and one eighth-grade—each observed over two meetings. The focus was on how the peer feedback technique was implemented and how students engaged in speaking activities. The observations aimed to identify key indicators of successful peer feedback implementation, such as the overall classroom atmosphere, the teacher's role, student engagement, and any challenges faced during the process. The data collected were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's framework, which involves data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions.

3.1.1. Ninth-grade class

In the ninth-grade class, the researcher observed sessions on January 23rd and 30th, 2025. During the first session, students performed a dialogue task using the simple past tense. They were given a text by the teacher a week in advance to memorize and present in pairs. There were seven groups of 14 students actively participating. In the second meeting, students were instructed to write and present their own dialogue based on a personal holiday story, encouraging more creativity and autonomy. Observations in both sessions included the opening activities, the process of giving and receiving teacher and peer feedback, levels of student interaction, the teacher's facilitative role, and the closing activities. These observations provided rich insights into the practical use of peer feedback in speaking classes.

Table 1. Opening Activities

	Aspects	Class IX	
		Meeting	Meeting
		1	2
Opening Activities	The teacher greets students	√	√
	The teacher introduces the lesson topic and objectives	√	√
	The teacher activates prior knowledge	√	√
	The teacher outlines the peer feedback structure	√	√

In the first section, which opening activities, both meetings the teacher started with a greeting and checked student's attendance. Then the teacher explained that the topic would be simple past tense as what they have learnt in the previous meeting. The teacher recalled the lesson and remained them to the task that they would present today. Peer feedback would be implemented during their speaking performance. The teacher explained how the speaking performance would run by implementing peer feedback.

Table 2. Teaching and Peer Feedback Activities

	Aspects	Class IX	
		Meeting	Meeting
		1	2
Teaching and Peer Feedback Activities	The teacher provides clear instructions on how the speaking activity will proceed.	√	√
	Students understand the task and are ready to participate.	√	√
	The teacher models the task	√	√

This section consisted of two stages. First, the teacher introduced the speaking task and provided clear instructions by dividing the students into pairs to perform a dialogue using the simple past tense. In the first meeting, the dialogue text was prepared by the teacher, while in the second meeting, students were required to create their own dialogue based on a holiday experience. Overall, the students demonstrated a clear understanding of the task and prepared themselves adequately for the activity.

Table 3. Indicators of Peer Feedback Observed

No	Indicators	Class IX		Notes
		Meeting	Meeting	
		1	2	
1.	Recognition of Strength (I-RS)	Yes	Yes	-Could not speak fluently -Incorrect pronunciation -Incorrect vocabulary usage
2.	Encouraging Phrases (I-EP)	No	Yes	-Good memorized -Well prepared -Brave
3.	Praise of Improvement (I-PI)	Yes	Yes	-Good expression -Clear voice

				-Good intonation
				Positive :
				- Good memorized
				- Well prepared
				-Brave
				-Good expression
				-Clear voice
				-Good intonation
				Constructive :
				-Nervous
4.	Balanced Feedback (I-BF)	Yes	Yes	-Not serious
				-Not memorized
				-Not fluent
				-Too fast
				-Not expressive
				-Incorrect pronunciation
				-Incorrect vocabulary usage
				-Unclear voice
				-Not well prepared
				-Appearance
5.	Respectful Communication (I-RC)	Yes	Yes	Feedback given in a polite way
6.	Actionable Suggestion (I-AS)	No	No	Nothing from the peers, but the teacher added

During the implementation of peer feedback in speaking activities, the researcher observed several types of feedback that aligned with the predetermined indicators. In addition to these, feedback related to students’ appearance, such as comments on an untidy veil, also emerged. Although this type of feedback was not included in the initial indicators, it was identified as a new contextual finding.

Most of the feedback indicators were evident in both meetings, with the exception of encouraging phrases and actionable suggestions. In the first meeting, students provided positive feedback; however, these comments were limited to acknowledgment rather than explicit motivation. In the second meeting, encouraging feedback was more apparent, as students made greater efforts to motivate their peers through supportive comments, showing improvement compared to the previous session. In contrast, actionable suggestions were absent in both meetings, as students tended to focus on delivering positive and constructive comments without offering specific guidance for improvement. This absence appeared to stem from students’ limited knowledge and experience in formulating improvement-oriented feedback. To address this limitation, the teacher supplemented peer feedback by providing actionable suggestions after the speaking performances to guide students toward better future performance.

Table 4. Student Engagement and Interaction

	Aspects	Class IX	
		Meeting	Meeting
		1	2
Student Engagement and Interaction	Students are actively participating in the speaking activity.	√	√
	Students are respectful and attentive when peers are speaking.	√	√
	Students are actively listening and giving constructive feedback.	√	√

Students show signs of anxiety or discomfort during the activity.	√	x
Students are confident and demonstrate improved speaking performance after feedback.	x	√

In this section, the students in this class were very active and excited to participate. During their friends performed in front of the class, they were respectful and attentive because the teacher asked them to write the feedback in their book first before giving the oral feedback to their friends. But in the first meeting, some students gave signs of anxiety while performing in front of the class, and they got constructive feedback from their peers about it. Related to the improvement, the second meeting was better than the first because the students more confident, more excited, and improved more than the previous.

Table 5. Teacher's Roles during the Lesson

	Aspects	Class IX	
		Meeting 1	Meeting 2
Teacher's Roles during the Lesson	The teacher monitors the students' speaking performance and feedback exchange.	√	√
	The teacher encourages quieter students to participate and ensures equal participation.	√	√
	The teacher provides individual support when students struggle with feedback or speaking.	√	√
	The teacher creates a positive, supportive learning environment.	√	√

The teacher's role during the lesson was very important. The teacher monitored the speaking performance since the beginning until the end. The teacher tried to engage all the students to give their feedback, reached the quiet students to participate. The teacher helped students who struggle in giving feedback to provide more understandable feedback. The classroom atmosphere that the teacher built was very positive, creative, supportive, and fun for the learning activities.

Table 6. Closing Activities

	Aspects	Class IX	
		Meeting 1	Meeting 2
Closing Activities	The teacher summarizes key points from the lesson or activity.	√	√
	The teacher invites reflections from students on their performance or peer feedback experience.	√	√
	The teacher provides final feedback or advice for improvement based on students' speaking and feedback interactions.	√	√
	Teacher ends the lesson with a closing activity or parting words (e.g., review questions, encouragement).	√	√

The last section was closing activities. Both meetings were the same. The teacher summarized their lesson about the simple past tense, showing her pride, and gave some suggestions, compliments about

their improvement during the speaking performance on that day. The teacher hoped for better performance in the next meeting.

3.1.2. Eighth-grade Class

The observation in the eighth-grade class was conducted on February 3rd and 4th, 2025. Similar to the ninth-grade class, students were assigned a speaking task involving dialogue practice, this time focusing on the present continuous tense. The teacher divided the class into seven groups consisting of 16 students, while some students were absent due to various reasons. Each group was instructed to create a dialogue that included at least five sentences using the present continuous tense. They were given a week to prepare before performing in front of the class.

During the first observation, three groups presented their dialogues, and due to time constraints, the remaining four groups continued their presentations in the following session. This observation helped the researcher gain further insight into how peer feedback was implemented in different class levels, including how students prepared for speaking tasks, interacted during peer evaluation, and responded to teacher guidance. The overall process reflected the students' level of engagement and the classroom dynamics during the peer feedback activities.

Table 7. Opening Activities

		Class VIII	
		Meeting 1	Meeting 2
Opening Activities	Aspects		
	The teacher greets students	√	√
	The teacher introduces the lesson topic and objectives	√	√
	The teacher activates prior knowledge	√	√
	The teacher outlines the peer feedback structure	√	√

The teacher opened the class by greeting the students and also checked their attendance. For class VIII, the teacher explained that the topic would be about the present continuous. The teacher reminded them about the task that was given in the previous meeting and peer feedback would be implemented during the lesson.

Table 8. Teaching and Peer Feedback Activities

		Class VIII	
		Meeting 1	Meeting 2
Teaching and Peer Feedback Activities	Aspects		
	The teacher provides clear instructions on how the speaking activity will proceed.	√	√
	Students understand the task and are ready to participate.	√	√
	The teacher models the task	√	√

Since the students were still in Grade VIII, the teacher provided more detailed instructions on implementing peer feedback during speaking performances compared to Grade IX. The teacher modeled the speaking task and clearly explained the rules for giving peer feedback until the students demonstrated understanding. Afterward, the students prepared for their performances. Due to time constraints, the groups were divided into two sessions: three groups performed during the first meeting, while the remaining four groups presented in the second meeting.

Table 9. Indicators of Peer Feedback Observed

No	Indicators	Class VIII		Notes
		Meeting 1	Meeting 2	
1.	Recognition of Strength (I-RoF)	Yes	Yes	-Could not speak fluently -Incorrect pronunciation -Incorrect vocabulary usage
2.	Encouraging Phrases (I-EP)	No	Yes	-Good memorized -Well prepared -Brave
3.	Praise of Improvement (I-PfI)	No	No	Nothing
				Positive : - Good memorized - Well prepared -Brave -Good expression -Clear voice -Good intonation
4.	Balanced Feedback (I-BF)	Yes	Yes	Constructive : -Not confident -Nervous -Not serious -Not memorized -Not fluent -Too fast -Not expressive -Incorrect pronunciation -Incorrect vocabulary usage -Unclear voice -Not well prepared -Bring book
5.	Respectful Communication (I-RC)	Yes	Yes	Feedback given in a polite way
6.	Actionable Suggestion (I-AS)	No	No	Nothing from the peers, but the teacher added

Similar to the ninth-grade class, peer feedback was implemented in the eighth-grade class; however, student participation was noticeably more passive. Students were generally hesitant to volunteer feedback and were reluctant to raise their hands. To encourage participation, the teacher established a rule requiring each group member to provide feedback. Although the types of feedback given were largely similar to those observed in the ninth-grade class, the primary challenge in this class was students' lack of confidence. As a result, the teacher frequently had to designate specific students to deliver feedback.

Two feedback indicators were not observed in this class. First, praise for improvement did not emerge because students performed only once, making observable improvement difficult to identify. Second, actionable suggestions were also absent, as students lacked the knowledge and skills needed to formulate specific improvement-oriented feedback. To compensate for this limitation, the teacher

assumed a more active role by providing actionable suggestions to guide students' performance in subsequent speaking activities.

Table 10. Student Engagement and Interaction

	Aspects	Class VIII	
		1	2
Student Engagement and Interaction	Students are actively participating in the speaking activity.	x	x
	Students are respectful and attentive when peers are speaking.	x	√
	Students are actively listening and giving constructive feedback.	x	√
	Students show signs of anxiety or discomfort during the activity.	√	√
	Students are confident and demonstrate improved speaking performance after feedback.	x	x

This aspect significantly influenced the classroom atmosphere. Overall, student engagement and interaction in this class were relatively low, as students tended not to participate actively unless prompted by the teacher. During the first meeting, only some students paid attention to their peers' performances, while others focused on preparing their own presentations. In the second meeting, engagement improved slightly, as students who had already performed were more attentive to their peers while preparing to provide feedback.

Signs of speaking anxiety were clearly observed in this class. Several students brought their written texts to the front of the class, indicating a lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes. Although some improvement in speaking performance was noted over time, many students remained hesitant and lacked confidence when performing in front of the class.

Table 11. Teacher's Roles during the Lesson

	Aspects	Class VIII	
		Meeting 1	Meeting 2
Teacher's Roles during the Lesson	The teacher monitors the students' speaking performance and feedback exchange.	√	√
	The teacher encourages quieter students to participate and ensures equal participation.	√	√
	The teacher provides individual support when students struggle with feedback or speaking.	√	√
	The teacher creates a positive, supportive learning environment.	√	√

For this section, in this class, the teacher put extra effort into creating a more active classroom environment because the students tended to be quiet. The teacher tried to find a way to engage them in the learning process. The teacher created the rules that made them actively participate in giving feedback. Both classrooms were positive, supportive, and felt very close, maybe because they live in a boarding school so they had a different closeness.

Table 12. Closing Activities

	Aspects	Class VIII	
		Meeting 1	Meeting 2
Closing Activities	The teacher summarizes key points from the lesson or activity.	√	√
	The teacher invites reflections from students on their performance or peer feedback experience.	√	√
	The teacher provides final feedback or advice for improvement based on students' speaking and feedback interactions.	√	√
	Teacher ends the lesson with a closing activity or parting words (e.g., review questions, encouragement).	√	√

Similar to the previous class, the teacher provided comments related to the implementation of peer feedback and expressed expectations for improved performance in subsequent sessions. The teacher also conveyed appreciation and offered compliments to acknowledge the students' efforts and achievements during the lesson.

3.2. The Influence of Peer Feedback on Speaking Performance

To gain a deeper understanding of students' perspectives regarding the influence of peer feedback on their speaking performance, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with 28 students from classes VIII and IX at Pondok Pesantren BUMI BOS—14 students from each class. The interviews were carried out individually, with class IX interviewed on January 31st, 2025, and class VIII on February 4th, 2025. Each session lasted around 5 to 10 minutes and was held in a private setting at the school. All interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accurate transcription and analysis, with field notes taken to capture contextual insights and first impressions.

A semi-structured interview guide was used to maintain consistency while still allowing flexibility to explore students' individual experiences and emerging themes. The interview began with a brief introduction where the researcher explained the purpose of the study, ensured the confidentiality of participants' responses, and obtained verbal consent. To build rapport, warm-up questions were asked about students' general experiences in speaking classes and their comfort levels when using English.

The core questions focused on students' perceptions of peer feedback in several key areas: recognition of strengths, encouraging phrases, praise for improvement, balanced feedback, respectful communication, and actionable suggestions. Additionally, two questions were included to explore how peer feedback influenced students' self-confidence and helped them overcome anxiety or fear of speaking. These additional questions aimed to gather more specific and meaningful data related to the psychological and emotional impact of peer feedback.

This interview process provided rich qualitative insights into how students perceived the implementation of peer feedback, not only in terms of technical improvement in speaking performance but also in terms of emotional support and confidence building. The findings contributed significantly to understanding the broader impact of peer feedback in EFL speaking classrooms.

3.2.1 Recognition of Strengths

The questions examined whether students perceived their peers as capable of identifying and acknowledging specific strengths in their speaking performance. All 28 participants reported that the feedback provided by their peers contributed to the improvement of their speaking performance. By

highlighting key speaking aspects such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and fluency, peer feedback helped students become more aware of the areas that required further improvement.

S3 : ...It can improve my speaking performance because I can learn from the mistakes in the previous meeting.

S4 : ...It can motivate me to have better performance for next meeting.

S7 : ...It can improve my speaking performance because my friends acknowledge me what mistakes I did and i can fix it for the next performance.

S8 : ...It can improve my speaking skill because i get positive and negative comments from my peers. It can motivate me for better performance.

3.2.2 Encouraging Phrases

Questions investigated the role of positive and encouraging language in motivating students and improving their speaking performance. All participants felt that the feedback from their peers could encourage and motivate them.

S1 : ...The feedback that is given by my peers can increase my spirit.

S18 : ...Yes it can motivate me because from their feedback, i feel more spirit to be better.

S8 : ...Yes, it can because the feedback follows by constructive criticism that can be fixed on the next performance.

3.2.3 Praise for Improvement

This section examines how peer feedback highlighted students' progress in speaking skills and whether it contributed to increased confidence. Of the 28 students, 25 reported that feedback from their peers effectively highlighted their speaking development and helped boost their confidence. However, the remaining three students expressed a neutral response, indicating that the feedback had little to no impact on their confidence.

S16 : ... It can not help me be confident in speaking because I'm embarrassed when I get feedback.

S8 : ...I'm still not confidence eventhough I get the feedback, because i can not pronounce the word in English well. It is so hard.

S19 : ...so so (to boost the confidence), depend on the comment they given.

3.2.4 Balanced Feedback

Questions addressed whether students received a mix of positive and constructive criticism, and how they felt about this approach. All participants got balanced positive and constructive criticism. But they had different feelings of it.

S15 : ... *For the positive feedback i'm happy, but i'm little offended when i get the negative comment.*

S21 and S22 : ... *I'm happy when I get positive comment, but I'm sad if I get a negative comment*

S1 : ... *I'm happy to get feedback from my friends, I accept it with whole my heart and try to be better for the next performance.*

S10 : ...*i'm happy to get positive comment, and for the negative one it can motivate me to give better performance.*

3.2.5 Respectful Communication

The importance of polite and respectful delivery of feedback was explored. 22 from 28 students felt that their peers gave feedback in polite way, but the other 6 felt so so. For the importance of politeness in giving feedback, all participants agreed that polite or respectful communication is very important.

S1 : ...*the way they give feedback is a little bit polite, but there some friends mocking us when making mistakes in front of the class.*

S7 : ...*they use polite language but sometimes they give feedback with a loud voice.*

S13 : ...*respectful communication and polite language use when giving feedback is very important because if we give comment in impolite language to the listener, they can get offended.*

S16 : ...*polite language is very important because impolite language is not comfortable to be heard.*

3.2.6 Actionable Suggestion

Questions examined whether peer feedback included specific and practical suggestions for improvement. Most of the participants said that the feedback given was specific to the area which needed improvement. But there was only 1 participant who did not get the specific feedback.

S5 : ...*the feedback given is not too specific.*

S9 : ... *I got spesific feedback to fix improve my self in memorizing the text before perform in front of the class.*

S12 : ...the feedback is spesific to what needs to be improved, i must improve my pronunciation for a better performance.

3.2.7 Confidence Building

Questions are used to determine whether peer feedback can boost their confidence in speaking English in front of the class. Most of the students felt that peer feedback can increase their level of confidence in speaking in front of the class, while a few students felt otherwise.

S8 : ...I feel worried to speak in front of the class because i am not ready for receivng offensive feedback for my performance.

S13 : ... I feel so so, I'm just afraid of being commented on by my friends

S2 : ...my feeling depends on my mood; sometimes I feel confident, but other times I feel afraid to speak in front of the class.

S5 : ... I feel more confident after getting feedback from my friends because it is followed by some constructive criticism that can be a guideline for next performance.

3.2.8 Overcome Anxiety

This aspect was linked to the other to see whether receiving peer feedback made them feel more or less anxious in their speaking performance. 16 students said that peer feedback could overcome their anxiety in speaking performance. But there were some students with another opinion.

S14 : ... I feel more nerveous, a little bit anxious to speak because my friends will comment about my performance.

S11 : ...it can decrease the feeling of anixety but i am still nerveous.

The interview conducted in these two classes a little bit different. The students in class IX tended to be more active, more communicative and more detailed in explaining their feelings and opinions. Meanwhile, the students in class VIII tended to be quieter and less communicative, answering the interview questions briefly.

Discussion

Oral Peer Feedback through the Lens of Feedback Literacy

The findings of this study can be interpreted through the framework of feedback literacy, which refers to learners' ability to understand, interpret, and use feedback effectively to improve their learning (Carless & Boud, 2018). Feedback literacy consists of four interconnected dimensions: appreciating feedback, making judgments, managing affect, and taking action.

In this study, students demonstrated an emerging capacity to appreciate feedback, as most participants perceived oral peer feedback as helpful for identifying their speaking strengths and weaknesses. Recognition of strengths and balanced positive–constructive feedback were frequently

observed, indicating that students began to view feedback as a learning resource rather than as judgment. This finding aligns with previous research suggesting that peer feedback can foster learner engagement and reflective learning when conducted in a supportive classroom environment (Liu & Carless, 2006; Huisman et al., 2018).

Students also showed partial development in making judgments, particularly in identifying pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency issues in their peers' speaking performances. However, these judgments were often descriptive rather than diagnostic. Similar findings have been reported in earlier studies, which indicate that students are generally capable of noticing surface-level errors but struggle to explain underlying causes or provide improvement strategies (Hyland & Hyland, 2001; Rollinson, 2005).

A major limitation identified in this study was students' difficulty in providing actionable suggestions, which reflects underdevelopment in the taking action dimension of feedback literacy. Although students offered general comments and encouragement, they rarely proposed specific, forward-looking strategies for improvement. This finding supports Carless and Boud's (2018) argument that feedback literacy does not develop naturally and requires explicit instruction and guided practice. Previous studies in EFL contexts similarly report that students need teacher scaffolding to translate evaluative feedback into actionable learning steps (Priyantini et al., 2020; Anjarani & Alvianingrum, 2024).

An additional contextual finding was the emergence of feedback related to students' appearance. While not commonly emphasized in feedback taxonomies, this finding suggests that students' evaluative criteria were influenced by social and cultural norms within the boarding school environment. This observation resonates with sociocultural perspectives on feedback, which emphasize that feedback practices are shaped by contextual expectations and interpersonal relationships (Hyland & Hyland, 2001).

Oral Peer Feedback and Speaking Anxiety

The findings also provide insight into the relationship between oral peer feedback and speaking anxiety, a major affective barrier in EFL learning. Speaking anxiety is often associated with fear of negative evaluation, embarrassment, and lack of confidence when speaking in front of others (Horwitz et al., 1986; Zhang, 2009).

Many participants reported that oral peer feedback helped reduce speaking anxiety by creating a sense of shared responsibility and normalizing mistakes. When feedback was delivered respectfully and accompanied by encouragement, students felt more comfortable participating in speaking activities. This finding supports earlier research indicating that peer-based interaction can lower affective filters and promote a less threatening speaking environment (Au & Bardakçı, 2020; Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2020).

However, some students experienced increased anxiety when feedback was perceived as overly critical or delivered in an inappropriate tone. This finding is consistent with affective theories suggesting that feedback can negatively impact learners when it threatens their self-image or is not communicated empathetically (Horwitz et al., 1986; Wrench, 2012). The presence of mockery or loud feedback further intensified anxiety for some learners, highlighting the importance of establishing clear norms for respectful communication.

Differences between grade levels further illustrate the role of experience and emotional maturity in managing speaking anxiety. Ninth-grade students demonstrated higher confidence and engagement than eighth-grade students, suggesting more developed coping strategies and familiarity with speaking tasks. Similar patterns have been observed in previous studies, which report that learners' confidence and willingness to communicate tend to increase with experience and exposure to speaking activities (Zhang, 2009; Blake, 2016).

From a feedback literacy perspective, these findings relate closely to the dimension of managing affect, which involves learners' ability to regulate emotional responses to feedback (Carless & Boud,

2018). The results indicate that students' affective feedback literacy was still developing, reinforcing the need for explicit instruction on how to give and receive feedback constructively.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings suggest that oral peer feedback has a positive perceived influence on students' speaking confidence and engagement when implemented with a clear structure and teacher support. However, its effectiveness depends on students' feedback, literacy, and emotional readiness. Teachers therefore play a crucial role in modeling effective feedback language, providing clear criteria, and scaffolding students' ability to offer actionable suggestions (Liu & Carless, 2006; Carless & Boud, 2018).

To optimize oral peer feedback in EFL speaking classrooms, teachers are encouraged to explicitly teach feedback strategies, provide linguistic scaffolds for constructive comments, and establish norms for respectful communication. These practices can help reduce speaking anxiety while enhancing students' confidence and engagement in speaking activities.

4. CONCLUSION

This study explored the implementation of oral peer feedback and its perceived influence on students' speaking performance, confidence, and speaking anxiety in an EFL boarding school context using a descriptive qualitative approach. The findings indicate that oral peer feedback was generally implemented in a supportive manner and was perceived by students as beneficial for increasing awareness of speaking strengths and weaknesses, enhancing motivation, and fostering greater confidence in speaking English, particularly when feedback was delivered respectfully and accompanied by encouragement. However, students demonstrated limited feedback literacy, especially in providing actionable suggestions, and some learners continued to experience speaking anxiety when feedback was perceived as overly critical or emotionally challenging. As this study was conducted in a single institutional context with a limited observation period and relied on students' perceptions rather than measurable speaking outcomes, the findings cannot be generalized or interpreted as causal effects. Future research is therefore recommended to employ mixed-methods or longitudinal designs, incorporate validated speaking and anxiety assessment tools, and examine the impact of explicit feedback training to better understand how oral peer feedback can effectively support speaking development across diverse EFL learning contexts.

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