

**THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PEER SUPPORT AND
ENGLISH SPEAKING CONFIDENCE AMONG STUDENTS
AT THE ELEVENTH GRADE OF SMA NEGERI 1
TEMBILAHAN HULU**

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ABSTRACT

The importance of conducting this research is to examine the correlation between peer support and students' English speaking confidence, highlighting how peer support can help improve students' confidence in speaking English. English speaking confidence is essential for students' academic achievement and personal development. However, many high school students still face difficulties in speaking English fluently due to anxiety and lack of self confidence, revealing a gap between the recognized importance of speaking skills and students' actual performance. This study aimed to investigate the correlation between peer support and English speaking confidence among the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Tembilahan Hulu. Using a correlational research design, data were collected from 98 students through Likert scale questionnaires measuring peer support and English speaking confidence. The Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis revealed a correlation coefficient of $r = 0,356$ which is greater than the critical values at both the 5% (0,195) and 1% (0,256) significance levels. It indicates a low but significant positive correlation between the two variables. Accordingly, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted, and the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. Descriptive results showed that while most students perceived high peer support, their speaking confidence was at a moderate level. These findings indicate that peer support positively influences English speaking confidence, but other factors also play a role. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers adopt a comprehensive approach that includes peer support alongside other psychological and contextual strategies to enhance students' confidence in speaking English.

Key words: *Peer support, Speaking, Self Confidence.*

INTRODUCTION

In today's interconnected world, English has emerged as a global lingua franca, making language proficiency an invaluable asset for students worldwide.

Mastery of English involves four key skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Sabrina et al., 2020: 74). Among these, speaking is particularly crucial as it enables direct and immediate interaction. However, in non native English speaking countries like Indonesia, students often struggle to speak confidently. As noted by Saniasa (2018: 3), students tend to experience anxiety and fear of making mistakes, which reduces their willingness to participate in speaking activities.

During teaching practice at SMA Negeri 1 Tembilahan Hulu, it was observed that a lack of confidence and fear of negative judgment from peers often prevent students from actively participating in speaking activities. This aligns with the findings of Rumiati and Seftika (2018: 56), who stated that peer pressure and classroom dynamics can significantly affect students' confidence. In this context, peer support has the potential to serve as a positive influence by creating a safe, encouraging environment for learners to practice speaking without fear of judgment (Penny, 2018: 1).

Sato & Ballinger (2016) in Ukhra, et al. (2020: 321) define peer support in the context of language learning as the help learners provide to one another to achieve success in acquiring a foreign language. This implies that peer support involves every student playing an active role in assisting others to achieve learning objectives. When students engage in supportive peer interactions, they often feel more comfortable, which helps reduce anxiety, encourages participation, and enhances their speaking performance.

The role of peer support has been explored in various educational contexts, especially in relation to emotional aspects and collaborative learning. For instance, Huang (2023) studied the impact of peer support on self-efficacy and foreign language emotions in online learning environments and found that it enhanced enjoyment while reducing anxiety. Similarly, Kos (2023) observed that cognitive and linguistic support among young EFL learners during pair tasks contributed to language development. In a more specific setting, Suryani, Agustina, and Bijaksana (2024) found a significant negative correlation between

peer support and public speaking anxiety among Islamic boarding school students engaged in da'wah activities. Despite these findings, the direct relationship between peer support and English speaking confidence among high school students still lacks sufficient investigation. Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether there is a significant correlation between peer support and English speaking confidence among eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Tembilahan Hulu. The results of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for English teachers and students in identifying the speaking aspects that can be enhanced through supportive peer interactions within the language learning environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Peer Support

Peer support is a teaching strategy in which people or students in a community help each other to achieve a goal. It is a form of cooperative learning which has a variety of more specific roles students may take on to enhance the learning of others. Peer support, which is received from friends of similar age, plays a crucial role in encouraging and sustaining their presence in the educational environment (Suryani et al., 2024: 60). Peer support refers to an organized method of offering and receiving assistance, grounded in the inherent human tendency to show empathy and provide help, drawing from the knowledge gained through their shared experiences (Penny, 2018: 1).

In the context of language learning, peer support refers to the assistance learners provide to one another in achieving success in acquiring a foreign language (Sato & Ballinger, 2016, in Ukhra et al., 2020: 321). This definition emphasizes the active involvement of each student in supporting their peers toward attaining shared learning objectives. Furthermore, Solomon (2004, in Wulandari, 2022: 33) highlights that peer support encompasses both social-emotional and instrumental forms of assistance, wherein individuals with similar

experiences or challenges mutually contribute to one another's social and personal development.

Drawing from these perspectives, peer support can be understood as a collaborative educational strategy rooted in cooperative learning. It involves individuals working together to achieve common academic goals, particularly within language learning contexts. Peer support not only enhances academic growth, but also provides social, emotional, and instrumental support, fostering positive social and personal development within a supportive community.

As stated by Solomon (2004) in Yanti (2020: 21) there are three types of support, namely:

1. Emotional Support (Providing empathy, attention, comfort, and encouragement).
2. Instrumental Support (Offering practical help such as resources, explanations, or task assistance).
3. Informational Support (Giving advice, feedback, and guidance to solve problems and improve understanding).

In conclusion, peer support should be recognized as one of the most essential aspects in promoting students' academic and social development. By considering the three main types of peer support; emotional support, instrumental support, and informational support, both teachers and students can contribute to creating a collaborative and supportive learning environment. This mutual involvement enhances student engagement, encourages positive interactions, and supports overall success in the learning process.

The Concept of English Speaking Confidence

According to Jones (2004) in Nety, et al (2020: 9), effective communication involves not only the content of the message but also how it is delivered, emphasizing the importance of conveying meaning clearly. This suggests that speaking is not merely about articulating words but also about ensuring that the message is comprehensible to the listener. Furthermore, Nety, et al (2020: 10)

stress the essential role of self-confidence in speaking competence. Self confidence enables individuals to confront challenges with assurance and motivation. It empowers learners to trust their own abilities, act independently, and maintain a positive perception of themselves and their learning process. In contrast, learners with low self confidence may experience discomfort, fear, or frustration when engaging in speaking tasks, which in turn negatively impacts their academic performance and overall communicative effectiveness (Al-Hebaish, 2012: 63).

In light of these findings, effective communication and self-confidence are closely interconnected. While clear communication ensures message delivery, self-confidence empowers individuals to express themselves effectively. English speaking confidence, therefore, plays a vital role in enhancing communicative competence and academic performance.

Nety, et al (2020: 10) defined the characteristic of people who have self confidence namely:

1. Self confidence involves believing in oneself, understanding one's abilities, and knowing how to take action.
2. Independence is a key trait of confident individuals, as they rely on their own capabilities to accomplish tasks.
3. A sense of self-worth means having positive self-esteem, which allows individuals to be valued and appreciated by others.
4. Confidence eliminates hesitation, enabling individuals to approach tasks with certainty.
5. Confident individuals do not feel the need to boast about their abilities or show them off to others.
6. Confidence includes having the courage to take action and face challenges with bravery.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used quantitative approach. The design of the study employed a correlational research design to investigate the relationship between peer support and English speaking confidence among eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Tembilahan Hulu. According to Elliot (1993) in Rifansah (2020: 42), a correlational study aims to identify the relationship between two or more variables and determine the extent to which one variable influences another. It is also in line with Cresswell (2012) in Rahayu (2020: 47) that describes correlational design as a quantitative research method used to examine the relationship between two or more variables through correlational analysis.

Based on the definition above, it is clear that the purpose of the correlational research is to find out whether there is a correlation between two or more sets of data.

This research was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Tembilahan Hulu. It is located at Sapta Marga street No. 70 Indragiri Hilir regency. The population of this research included all the eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 1 Tembilahan Hulu in the academic year 2024/2025. The school has ten eleventh grade classrooms, with total 328 students. In this study, the researchers employed probability sampling with random sampling method. According to Satishprakash & Shukla (2020: 1), the random sampling method refers to a sampling technique where every unit in the population has an equal chance of being selected in the sample. The random sampling method implemented through a lottery technique. The number of the sample in this research was 30% of the population which was 98 students.

The researchers used questionnaires as research instrument. Questionnaire consists of written questions used to gather information from respondents, such as details about their personal experiences or knowledge on a particular topic (Arikunto, 2013 in Rahayu, 2020: 50). The type of the questionnaire used was close ended questionnaire, as it provided several answers, and students were required to assign a score to each statement using a Likert Scale.

The data analysis technique is the step after collecting the data from questionnaires. In analyzing the data, the researchers calculated the student's score in several categories by using the following formula:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{Total score obtained}}{\text{Ideal (highest) score}} \times 100\%$$

Widoyoko (2012: 110)

After analyzing and calculating the score, the upcoming step is categorizing the peer support and English speaking confidence scores using the criterion. The categorization aims to determine the student's level in each variables. The researchers categorized the level of students' peer support and their English speaking confidence by using the following categorization:

Table 1: The Categorization of Peer Support Level

Categories	Formula
Low	$X < M - 1SD$
Medium	$M - 1SD \leq X < M + 1SD$
High	$X \geq M + 1SD$

Reference: Azwar (2012) in Wulandari (2022: 67)

Explanation:

X = Individual Score

M = Mean (average score)

SD = Standard Deviation

Table 2: The Categorization of English Speaking Confidence Level

Categories	Value Categorization
Very Low	0 – 25
Low	26 – 50
Medium	51 – 75
High	76 – 100

Reference: Yuliani, et al (2022) in Brilianti (2023: 153)

To calculate the percentage of variable for each category, the following formula is used:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Explanation:

P= Percentage of variable

F = Students frequency of each category

N = Total number of students

Sugiono (2007) in Nopriyanti, et al (2020: 6)

The next step is correlational analysis. To examine whether there is a significant correlation or not between those variables, the data analyzed using a statistical formula which is *Product Moment Correlation*.

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N(\sum XY) - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[N \cdot \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N \cdot \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

Explanation:

r_{XY} = the number of correlation index between variable X and variable Y

N = number of samples

X = Independent Variable

Y = Dependent Variable

Widoyoko (2012: 155)

Meanwhile, in order to get easy in analyzing the data, the researchers used SPSS 27.0 program for Windows. After obtaining the value r (degree of correlation). The coefficient categorized following the interpretation of correlation number recommended by Sugiyono (2014):

Table 3: Interpretation of Correlation

Coefficient Interval	Intepretation
0,00 – 0,199	Very Low
0,20 – 0,399	Low
0,40 – 0,599	Moderate
0,60 – 0,799	Strong
0,80 – 1,00	Very Strong

Reference: Sugiyono (2014) in Sadha, et al (2022: 2204)

There are two hypotheses in this research; they are alternative hypothesis (H_1) and the Null hypothesis (H_0). To know the correlation, we can interpret based on the value of r coefficients and see on the table above. Statistically the hypotheses are:

- a. Alternative Hypothesis (H_1) is accepted if $r_{observed}$ is greater ($>$) than r_{table} . It means that there is a significant correlation between peer support and English speaking confidence among students at the eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 1 Tembilahan Hulu.
- b. Null Hypothesis (H_0) is accepted if $r_{observed}$ is less ($<$) r_{table} . It means that there is no significant correlation between peer support and English speaking confidence among students at the eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 1 Tembilahan Hulu.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This study purposes to find out the correlation between between peer support and English speaking confidence among students at the eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 1 Tembilahan Hulu. The results of the data could be presented as below:

Peer Support

The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the 98 students. She has selected students' scores in the questionnaires. There are three indicators to measure the students' peer support; emotional support, instrumental support, and information support. The results could be seen as follow:

Table 4: The Results of Percentage of X Variable Based on Category

Categories	Value Categorization	Frequency	Percentage	Average
Low	$X < 53,677$	1	1,0%	61,87
Medium	$53,677 \leq X < 70,063$	13	13,3%	
High	$X \geq 70,063$	84	85,7%	
Total		98	100%	Medium

Based on the analysis of peer support scores from 98 students, the data shows that the majority of students perceive a high level of peer support. Specifically, 84 students (85,7%) fall into the *high* category, 13 students (13.3%) are in the *medium* category, and only 1 student (1%) is in the *low* category. Despite the large proportion of students reporting high peer support, mean score

of peer support is 61,87 which indicates that, in general, students' peer support is in the *medium* category. This discrepancy suggests some variability in the quality, frequency, or consistency of peer interactions. It may reflect that while many students receive substantial support, others may experience peer support that is less impactful or less frequent, thereby influencing the average score.

English Speaking Confidence

The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the 98 students. She has selected students' scores in the questionnaire. There are four indicators to measure the students' English speaking confidence; belief in oneself, independence, self worth, and courage to act. The results could be seen as follow:

Table 5: The Results of Percentage of Y Variable Based on Category

Categories	Value Categorization	Frequency	Percentage	Average
Very Low	0 – 25	0	0%	57,65
Low	26 – 50	1	1,0%	
Medium	51 – 75	61	62,2%	
High	76 – 100	36	36,7%	
Total		98	100%	Medium

Based on the analysis of English speaking confidence scores from 98 students, the data indicates that the majority of students demonstrate a moderate level of confidence in their English speaking abilities. Specifically, 61 students (62,2%) are categorized in the *medium* category, 36 students (36,7%) fall into the *high* category, and only 1 student (1,0%) is categorized as *low*. The mean score of English speaking confidence is 57,65 which indicates that, in general, students' English speaking confidence is in the *medium* category. This suggesting that although many students feel fairly confident, there remains room for improvement. Some students may still struggle with issues such as anxiety, limited vocabulary, or fear of making mistakes, which can impact their willingness to speak in English.

The Correlation between Peer Support and Students' English Speaking Confidence

To obtain the result of the correlation between peer support and students' English speaking confidence score, the researchers calculated the data through SPSS 27.0 program for Windows. The results from the program is below:

Table 6: The Results of Correlation Calculation

Correlations			
		Peer Support	English Speaking Confidence
Peer Support	Pearson Correlation	1	.356**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	98	98
English Speaking Confidence	Pearson Correlation	.356**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	98	98

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the table above, it can be seen that the correlation coefficient of Pearson Product Moment between two variables. The score is 0.356, which is categorized as a low correlation. Additionally, by using manual analysis it found that $r_{observed}$ 0.356 then r_{table} (1%= 0.256 and 5%=0.195), so $r_{observed} > r_{table}$. Therefore, H_1 is accepted and H_0 is rejected. It means that there is a significant correlation between peer support and English speaking confidence among students at the eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 1 Tembilahan Hulu.

CONCLUSION

The researchers concluded that there is a significant correlation between peer support and English speaking confidence among eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Tembilahan Hulu in the academic year 2024/2025. The *Pearson Product Moment* correlation coefficient resulted in an $r_{observed}$ of 0,356, indicating a positive correlation between the two variables. This finding suggests that an increase in peer support is associated with an increase in students' confidence in

speaking English, though the strength of this relationship remains relatively modest.

The modest correlation may be influenced by several factors within the learning environment. For example, not all peer interactions provide the depth of encouragement or constructive feedback needed to significantly boost confidence. Additionally, some students may face personal challenges such as speaking anxiety or limited vocabulary, which peer support alone cannot fully address. Classroom time constraints and the structure of speaking activities may also restrict opportunities for meaningful peer collaboration, thereby reducing the overall impact of peer support. Furthermore, other elements like individual motivation, teaching methods, and prior speaking experiences likely play important roles in shaping students' speaking confidence. Therefore, while peer support is beneficial, it should be complemented with other supportive strategies to foster more substantial improvements in students' English speaking confidence. Finally, future studies are recommended to explore additional variables that may influence English speaking confidence. A broader investigation of these factors would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics that influence speaking confidence among students.

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