

MASTER'S STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PEER ASSESSMENT IN ENHANCING SPEAKING PERFORMANCE AT UNIVERSITAS NEGERI SEMARANG

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Abstract

Assessment plays an important role in language learning as it supports students' development through formative practices. In EFL contexts, peer assessment has been widely used as a student-centred approach that engages learners in evaluating and providing feedback on their peers' performance. Although previous studies have highlighted its potential benefits, issues related to students' perceptions and challenges in its implementation, particularly in speaking contexts at the master level, remain underexplored. This study aims to investigate master students' perceptions of peer assessment in enhancing speaking performance in an EFL context. This study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive survey design involving thirty master's students in an English Education program. The participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their experience in peer assessment activities. The data were collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire consisting of items measuring peer assessment and perceived speaking performance. The instrument was developed based on relevant theoretical frameworks and administered using a five-point scale. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and percentage) to describe students' perceptions, and Pearson correlation analysis to examine the relationship between peer assessment and perceived speaking performance. All analyses were conducted using JASP software to ensure accuracy and reliability. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of effective peer assessment practices in EFL speaking classrooms.

Key words: Peer Assessment, Speaking, English Foreign Learner, master's students, English Language Teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Assessment is widely recognized as an essential component of language learning, as it not only functions as a tool to measure students' ability but also serves to support and enhance the learning process (Brown, 2019). In recent years, the role of assessment has evolved from a traditional focus on summative evaluation toward a more formative orientation, often referred to as

assessment for learning. This perspective highlights the importance of continuous feedback in guiding students' progress and improving learning outcomes (Creswell, 2009; Li et al., 2022). In EFL contexts, where students may have limited exposure to authentic language use, effective assessment practices become particularly crucial in facilitating meaningful engagement and skill development. Therefore, incorporating

interactive and student-centred assessment strategies is essential to promote active participation and sustained language improvement (Agustianingsih et al., 2026; Hoinbala, 2023)

One of assessment that can be used in teaching and learning especially in the context of EFL that is promoting student-centred is peer assessment. It is a technique of assessment which the student assesses other students' work or performance using a criterion provided by the teacher (Liu & Carless, 2005). Peer assessment is considered a student-centred practice because it promotes active engagement, collaboration, and reflective learning during the assessing process (Li et al., 2022). Through this process, students are not only recipients of feedback but also active contributors to the assessment process, which can enhance their understanding of the material they learned.

Peer assessment techniques could be recommended because some of previous studies have highlighted several benefits of it, particularly the development of critical thinking skills, increased students' autonomy, and improved engagement in classroom activities (Agustianingsih et al., 2026; Mardiah, 2023). Additionally, peer assessment also provides opportunities for students to receive diverse perspectives, which can enrich their understanding of language use and performance (Hoinbala, 2023).

In the context of language learning, peer assessment has been shown to support skill development across various aspects, particularly in productive skills such as speaking and writing (Double et al., 2020). By engaging in peer feedback activities, students become more aware of linguistic features and communication strategies, which can lead to improvements in their own performance (Li et al., 2022). Furthermore, peer assessment encourages students to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses,

thereby fostering metacognitive awareness and self-regulated learning (Agustianingsih et al., 2026). Despite these advantages, the effectiveness of peer assessment largely depends on how it is implemented and how it is perceived by students.

From the four of language skills, speaking is often considered the most challenging for EFL students (Verdiyeva & Huseynova, 2017). Speaking requires students to produce language spontaneously while managing multiple components such as fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and interactional competence. Many students experience anxiety and lack confidence when speaking in a foreign language, which can hinder their performance and participation in classroom activities (Isnani et al., 2021). In this case, peer assessment can play a significant role in supporting speaking development by creating a more interactive and supportive learning environment. Research has shown that peer feedback can enhance students' fluency and pronunciation, as well as increase their confidence in speaking (Isnani et al., 2021; Syafitri & Tiarina, 2025). Moreover, engaging in peer assessment allows students to practice speaking more frequently and to receive immediate feedback, which is crucial for skill development.

However, while peer assessment offers numerous benefits, it has several challenges that must consider. Several studies have reported concerns regarding the reliability and validity of peer-generated feedback, particularly when students have differing levels of language proficiency (Li et al., 2022). In addition, social factors such as friendship, politeness, and reluctance to criticize peers may influence students' judgments, leading to biased or less accurate assessments (Tanaka, 2025). These challenges highlight the importance of understanding students' perceptions of

peer assessment, as their attitudes and beliefs can significantly affect the effectiveness of its implementation (Agustianingsih et al., 2026; Hoinbala, 2023).

Despite the growing interest in peer assessment, some of the existing research has focused on writing skills, leaving speaking relatively underexplored. Speaking, as an interactive and performance-based skill, presents unique challenges that require different forms of assessment and feedback compared to writing (Li et al., 2022). Furthermore, many previous studies have employed qualitative or mixed-method approaches, which provide in-depth insights but may lack generalizability. There is still a need for quantitative studies that systematically examine students' perceptions of peer assessment in speaking contexts using structured instruments such as Likert-scale questionnaires. In addition, research focusing on master's students in EFL contexts remains limited, particularly in the Indonesian context where higher education increasingly emphasizes students' autonomy and collaborative learning (Agustianingsih et al., 2026; Hoinbala, 2023).

To respond to these gaps, it is important to conduct further research that explores how peer assessment is perceived by students and how it contributes to their speaking development. Through understanding students' perceptions, this study can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of peer assessment and inform the design of more effective assessment practices in EFL classrooms.

Therefore, this study aims to explore master's students' perceptions of peer assessment in enhancing speaking performance in an EFL context. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions (1) How do master's students perceive the use of peer assessment in EFL speaking

classes? (2) What the relationship exists between peer assessment and master's students speaking performance?

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the growing body of research on alternative assessment and to provide practical implications for educators in implementing peer assessment more effectively in EFL speaking classrooms.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach to investigate master students' perceptions of peer assessment in enhancing speaking performance in an EFL context. A quantitative approach is appropriate for this study because it allows researchers to systematically measure variables and analyse relationships using numerical data (Creswell, 2009). Quantitative research is useful for examining patterns, trends, and generalizable findings across a group of participants through statistical analysis. Since this study focuses on measuring students' perceptions and identifying the relationship between peer assessment and speaking performance, a quantitative design provides a structured and objective framework for data collection and analysis.

This study adopted a descriptive survey design, which is commonly used in educational research to describe participants' attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs (Creswell, 2009). The participants of this study consisted of thirty master's students enrolled in an English Education program. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants who had experienced peer assessment activities in speaking classes, ensuring that the data collected were relevant to the research objectives.

The primary instrument used in this study was a Likert-scale questionnaire, which is widely recognized as an effective tool for measuring perceptions, attitudes, and opinions (Likert, 1932).

The questionnaire consisted of twenty-five statements that separated into two main variables, particularly peer assessment perception which has fifteen statements and perceived speaking performance which has ten statements. Each of the item was rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 which mean strongly disagree to 5 which mean strongly agree. The use of Likert-scale items allows for the quantification of subjective perceptions, enabling statistical analysis of the data (Creswell, 2009).

The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including mean scores, standard deviation, and percentages, were used to describe students' perceptions of peer assessment. To examine the relationship between peer assessment and perceived speaking performance, Pearson correlation analysis was employed. This statistical technique is appropriate for identifying the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables measured on an interval scale (Creswell, 2009). All the data analyses were conducted using statistical software JASP to ensure accuracy and reliability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on descriptive statistics analysis conducted by researcher, the result shows that most of the participants, who are master's students, had relatively positive perceptions toward the implementation of peer assessment. It is supported by the result of mean score, that is 64.10, and the standard deviation score, that is 7.448, as present on table 1. Furthermore, similar result were also shown, indicating that most participants generally perceived their speaking performance positively after participating in peer assessment activities. These findings indicate that peer assessment was positively received by the participants and may contribute to

developing a more supportive and interactive leaning environment specifically in the EFL speaking classroom. Therefore, peer assessment can be considered as one of assessment strategy that has potential to increase students' engagement and perceived speaking development.

Thus, the results of descriptive statistics analysis answered the research question number one regarding the master's students' perceptions in the use of peer assessment in EFL speaking classes. These results can be interpreted as indicating that master's students have a positive perception of peer assessment, as reflected in both the average scores between perceptions and the perceive speaking performance. These results also suggest that peer assessment may indirectly improve master's students' English language skills.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	<i>Peer Assessment Perception</i>	<i>Perceived Speaking Performance</i>
Valid	30	30
Missing	0	0
Mean	64.10	42.10
Std. Deviation	7.448	5.061
Skewness	-2.039	-2.040
Std. Error of Skewness	0.427	0.427
Kurtosis	4.797	5.397
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.833	0.833
Minimum	38.00	24.00
Maximum	74.00	50.00

Afterward, to determine the correlation between peer assessment and perceived speaking performance, a correlation test is necessary to be conducted. However, before the test is conducted it is important to first determine whether the data is normally distributed. To this end, the researcher conducted a normality test using the Shapiro-Wilk through the JASP application. The result of this test can be seen on table 2.

In this normality test, researcher revealed that the data is not normally distributed. It is supported by the score of p-value, that is $<.001$, in which the score is less than .05. Thus, the normality assumption required in parametric analysis was violated. As a result, a non-parametric correlation test was employed to evaluate the correlation relationship between peer assessment and perceived speaking performance.

Table 2. Normality Test

	<i>Peer Assessment Perception</i>	<i>Perceived Speaking Performance</i>
Shapiro- Wilk	0.775	0.791
P-value of Shapiro- Wilk	$<.001$	$<.001$

The non-parametric correlation test were conducted through Spearman rho test using JASP application. This test indicated that there is a weak positive relationship between peer assessment and perceived speaking performance. This result can be interpreted from the positive correlation coefficient, that is 0.305. In other words, students who has more positive perceptions regarding peer assessment tended to report slightly better perceived speaking performance.

Furthermore, the result of correlation test also shows that there is no significant relationship between peer assessment and perceived speaking performance. This result is supported by the significant score, that is $p = .101$, in which the score is more than p-value 0.05. Thus, perception of peer assessment did not have a significant relationship with perception of students' speaking performance in this study.

Table 3. Correlation Test

		<i>Spearman's rho</i>	<i>p</i>
Peer Assessmen	Perceived Speaking	0.305	.101

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The findings of this study indicate that master's students specifically in English education perceived peer assessment positively in the context of speaking. Although the correlation analysis shows a weak positive relationship between peer assessment and perceived speaking performance, the relationship was not significant. These research findings suggest that peer assessment may still contribute to master's students' speaking development.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated master's students' perceptions of peer assessment in enhancing speaking performance in EFL speaking classes and examined the relationship between peer assessment and perceived speaking performance. The findings revealed that most participants had positive perceptions toward the implementation of peer assessment, indicating that this assessment strategy may create a more interactive, supportive, and student-centered learning environment. In addition, the correlation analysis showed a weak positive relationship between peer assessment and perceived speaking performance. However, the relationship was not statistically significant. These findings suggest that although peer assessment may contribute to students' speaking development and classroom engagement, its impact on speaking performance may also be influenced by other factors. Therefore, future studies are recommended to involve larger samples and additional variables to obtain more comprehensive findings.

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