

Classroom Interaction and Second Language Speaking Fluency: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

This systematic review explores the role of classroom interaction in enhancing second language (L2) speaking fluency. Twenty-one peer-reviewed studies published between 2020 and 2025 were analyzed thematically and chronologically from ERIC, Scopus, and Google Scholar databases. Findings indicate that teacher-student and peer-to-peer interactions significantly improve learners' confidence, engagement, and oral fluency. Structured classroom dialogue and feedback foster natural speech development, while collaborative tasks such as group discussions and role-plays encourage communicative competence. However, anxiety, fear of criticism, and large class sizes remain barriers to participation. The review suggests adopting balanced interactive strategies, low-stakes speaking tasks, and supportive classroom environments enhanced by digital tools to optimize fluency outcomes. Future studies should explore long-term impacts and the integration of emerging technologies in L2 pedagogy.

Keywords: Speaking Skills, Oral Fluency, Classroom Interaction, Collaborative Learning

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Introduction

Among all the languages spoken today, English should be considered as a world language. English is widely used as a means of instruction in various areas such as learning, teaching, and communication. It is a language that connects individuals from different regions, cultures, religions, and nations. As stated by Brown and Lee (2015), "English is increasingly being used as a medium for interaction among nonnative speakers". Of all four language skills, speaking appears to be more crucial to communication (Zaremba, 2006). In the Philippines, English is categorized as a secondary language (Kirkpatrick & Deterding, 2011), it is also referred to as one of the nation's two official languages, along with Filipino. It serves as the primary medium of instruction in education (Cabigon, 2015), as well as the language of business, science, technology, government, and international communication.

Upon learning a second language, accuracy and fluency are essential components. Given the importance of accuracy, what receives more attention is drawn to fluency in speaking. Richards (2006) defines fluency as the use of language that a speaker naturally employs when engaging in and maintaining meaningful communication. Fillmore (1979, cited in Nation, 1989, p. 377) asserts that a proficient speaker prepares their words in advance and knows what to say. Baily (2003) also defines fluency as the capacity to use language rapidly, confidently, and with little hesitations, awkward

pauses, etc. Being able to participate in conversations and discussions effectively requires fluency. However, if we are to observe, most of the students are not able to communicate fluently because they are not provided enough opportunities to communicate in English both within and outside of the classroom.

One of the major challenges in learning a second language is the student's lack of confidence and motivation to speak due to their fear of making errors. According to Shand (2011), students frequently feel anxiety when performing in front of a large group during drama activities, worried about potential mistakes in their speech and actions. This anxiety can seriously impede their progress in achieving fluency. Students with lack of fluency may experience difficulties in their studies if gaps are left unnoticed. This challenge should be addressed for better and more effective learning. To address this, teachers should prioritize classroom interaction for several reasons. First, interaction fosters a more welcoming and supportive learning atmosphere, aiding students in overcoming their fear of speaking and making errors (Shand, 2011). Second, it promotes active engagement, which results in improved fluency and a more profound comprehension of the language (Zhou, 2010). Third, classroom interaction enables students to gain confidence in their communication abilities by offering them chances to practice their skills in various contexts (Alzubi et al., 2024). Lastly, interaction aids students in developing social and communication skills, nurturing a sense of community in the classroom, and allowing learners to benefit from their peers (Alzubi et al., 2024).

This review primarily explores on how classroom interaction improves and strengthens students' second language fluency in speaking. From different types of classroom interactions like student-teacher, teacher-student, whole class, and small group interaction, research on second language fluency has examined a wide range of elements that impact learning. Research has looked at how these elements impact second language fluency, how classroom interaction affects L2 speaking abilities, how essential and effective to implement this strategy is, and how fluency affects learning a second language. Additionally, studies have looked at the impact and role of classroom interaction in speaking fluency.

With the above-mentioned situations, the main objective is to provide students and teachers various benefits of classroom interaction to improve fluency. This is mainly for the purpose of addressing fluency gaps of students for effective learning. Therefore, the goal is to identify how classroom interaction for language learning and teaching contributes to improved language fluency outcomes.

Although numerous studies have addressed factors influencing English-speaking skills, there remains a limited synthesis of how distinct classroom interaction patterns—such as teacher-student and peer collaboration—collectively shape speaking fluency in diverse L2 contexts. Hence, this review aims to bridge that gap by systematically examining recent empirical evidence on classroom interaction and its influence on L2 oral fluency.

Research Method

This study adopted a qualitative systematic review design. Twenty-one peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2020 and 2025 were retrieved from ERIC, Scopus, and Google Scholar databases using keywords such as “speaking fluency,” “classroom interaction,” and “oral proficiency.” Inclusion criteria focused on studies examining classroom-based interventions or interactional patterns that enhance L2 speaking fluency. Non-peer-reviewed works and publications prior to 2020 were excluded. The selected studies were analyzed thematically and chronologically to identify recurring pedagogical strategies, outcomes, and contextual trends.

Result and Discussion

Role of Whole Class Interaction & Small Group Interaction

Interactions in school environments have a significant impact on the development of speaking L2 fluency during the second language learning process. It is possible for active learning to transform language instruction. Collaborative and interactive classroom activities make students far more fluent and confident in their language skills by creating a supportive environment and fostering meaningful interactions with their peers. For example, students not only practiced new vocabulary and sentence structures during collaborative narrative exercises, but also worked as a team and learned how to coordinate language use and adapt different narrative styles (Zadiqzade, Z., 2025). On the other hand, the negative impact and drawback of classroom interactions is that learners can be reluctant to talk to others, as they can say they are being corrected and criticized. For this reason, teachers are expected to adapt tasks of teamwork, peer learning, and social intelligence, especially for those who may not be able to perform the task themselves (Alzubi, A., et al 2024).

Another research has shown that collaborative activities such as group projects, discussion, and role-playing can be used to significantly improve learners' speech skills (Alzubi A et al., 2024). Classroom interactions can benefit students. They are easy to learn and feel comfortable when speaking a second language. The advantage is that it can lead to discussion, collaboration, and participation in activities with colleagues to improve your speaking skills. According to Ellis, C. (2024), effective classroom interaction strategies, such as negotiation of meaning and corrective feedback, are essential for facilitating second language acquisition. This indicates that when learners engage in meaningful interactions, they are more likely to notice gaps in their language use, which can lead to improvements in fluency as they adapt their language output based on peer interactions and teacher feedback. It was found that classroom interactions that involve peer feedback and collaborative learning experiences lead to significant improvements in second language fluency (Hanzawa, T., 2024).

Research highlighted how important it is for learners to provide a positive climate that is safe to experiment with language without fear of judgment (Moosa et al., 2024). A balanced classroom atmosphere that promotes active participation, generates positive interactions, and is important for

educators to talk about language use. Classroom interactions have a significant impact on the acquisition of English, but both mental and sociocultural factors must be taken into consideration to understand their effectiveness. English learners as a foreign language often bring their socio-cultural background to the classroom. This applies especially to educational conferences, where classroom interactions can be a critical component of language development (Shawaqfeh et al., 2024).

In linguistically varied classrooms, Santiago-Garabieta et al. (2023) highlight the advantages of interactive groups, where cooperative interactions encourage encouraging student exchanges that are essential for improving language proficiency and fostering healthy relationships. Adams and Oliver (2022), who assert that small group interactions promote peer learning and aid in oral language and literacy, echo this focus on various interaction formats. Through these interactions, students gain the ability to express themselves more clearly, which enhances their fluency and confidence when speaking the second language. Santhana Samy and Yunus (2022) came to similar conclusions, showing that flipped learning and whole-class involvement greatly enhanced the speaking skills of elementary school children. This suggests that class discussions created a good environment that inspired students to practice speaking both inside and outside the classroom, therefore helping them to be more competent speakers in general.

Moreover, Ebn-Abbasi and Nushi (2022) discovered that encouraging EFL students' desire to interact depends much on whole-class involvement. Additionally, whole-class engagement is essential for encouraging the willingness of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners to communicate, according to Ebn-Abbasi and Nushi (2022). Improved language fluency among students in both public and private educational contexts was associated with higher levels of classroom enjoyment, which were enhanced by participatory whole-class activities. Saito et al. (2021) state that long-term whole-class involvement—especially weekly conversation exchanges with native speakers—has a major influence on second language learners' speech acquisition. On the other hand, in Swedish adult L2 classrooms, Wedin and Shaswar (2021) found that extended whole-class interactions prompted meaning negotiation and assessed students' language proficiency; they suggested incorporating small group activities to ensure adequate individual participation and fluency improvement.

The development of second speaking fluency is greatly aided by classroom and small group interactions, particularly when using collaborative and active learning strategies. But not every student gains from these exchanges in the same way since some can feel nervous, afraid of being judged, or reluctant to engage. This emphasizes the necessity for instructional strategies that consider the unique characteristics of each student and establish welcoming, stress-free settings for language practice.

Role of Teacher-Student Interaction & Student-Student Interaction

A dynamic learning environment that promotes spoken fluency is created by a range of interaction styles, including teacher-student, peer-to-peer, and student-student. Through responsive

discourse and active engagement, these methods aid in the development of communicative competence. Supporting this, Demszky et al. (2021) take a more systemic view of lower-level phenomena by studying interactions between students and teachers in relation to each other's speech using natural language processing tools. Their research substantiates the claim that more elaborate dialogue interactions lead to greater student attention and better language learning outcomes. These studies, in their variety, demonstrate the importance of different types of interactions in the classroom for developing fluency and effective communication skills in EFL learners.

While Augustine et al. (2021) examine various types of social interactions, both pedagogical and peer-to-peer, through a sociolinguistic lens. Their research adds support for the claim that a combination of different types of interactions fosters language learning because students are provided ample opportunities to engage with English in various ways. Wei (2021), on the other hand, details a case study implementing a flipped classroom model with greater teacher-student interaction, which resulted in heightened engagement and improved spoken output by the students. This case study demonstrates the value of interactive learning environments when paired with creative teaching approaches. Namaziandost et al. (2020) demonstrate that small group interactions through the Student Teams-Achievement Division (STAD) method significantly improve learners' spoken fluency by fostering collaboration and peer-supported learning.

Focusing on teacher talk, Winanta et al. (2020) analyze senior high school classrooms in Indonesia, finding that teacher-led interactions have a strong influence on students' opportunities to speak and engage in meaningful language practice. As Some-Guiebre (2020) notes, the classroom is a crucial component in developing communicative skills since it is frequently the only setting in which students are exposed to the target language. However, this exposure must be purposeful and meaningful in order to truly aid in the development of fluency. Patwary and Chowdhury (2020) highlight the crucial role of both student-teacher and student-student interactions in developing speaking fluency among tertiary-level EFL students in Bangladesh. Their findings suggest that active engagement through these interaction forms promotes a more communicative and confident classroom culture. Similarly, Some-Guiebre (2020) underscores the importance of teacher-student interaction as a foundational tool for fostering speaking competence in African high school classrooms, emphasizing the need for responsive and supportive teacher engagement.

For English fluency, a well-rounded strategy that includes both teacher-led instruction and peer learning is therefore necessary. Research continuously shows that enhanced fluency, communicative competence, and general language competency are positively correlated with interactive learning environments. Creating chances for meaningful communication and active student participation should be the top priority of effective language instruction. In the end, creating a lively and stimulating learning environment in the classroom is critical to producing confident and fluent English speakers.

Overall, the reviewed studies confirm that classroom interaction—whether teacher-guided or peer-mediated—serves as a catalyst for linguistic development and communicative confidence. Nevertheless, contextual barriers such as class size, anxiety, and limited teacher training highlight the need for adaptive, inclusive interactional frameworks in L2 instruction.

Conclusion

This review investigates how classroom interactions impact L2 (second language) speaking fluency growth. Many studies have shown that there are various kinds of interaction that improve fluency. Learning depends on a few essential elements that really affect one's education. The classroom interactions between students and teachers, small-group interactions, building collaboration with others, and class discussions. These ideas can greatly increase students' self-esteem and inspire them to speak more openly in front of people, which will improve their language proficiency and make learning much more pleasurable. But according to some research, students could be reluctant to speak up because they're afraid of being corrected, as if they are judged and criticized. Creating a good setting where pupils can confidently investigate the language and present their ideas without concern of criticism is therefore crucial. The research emphasizes the necessity of equilibrium and the application of several communication techniques to get maximum profit.

While little group work lets learners get individualized instruction fit to their individual needs and mentoring from classmates, whole class (or large group) teaching can boost participation from every pupil. While teacher-led discussions offer helpful education and critique, classmates motivate each other and encourage sure teamwork. Apart from exposure to the target language, the evaluation stresses the need of meaningful and deliberate interactions. Effective approaches are group projects, role-playing, and meaning negotiation. This review generally supports the ideal of a wide-ranging and intentional curriculum to improve second language ability. Developing a secure and engaging learning environment that fosters peer engagement with active student involvement and well-informed teacher direction is essential when thinking about how to assist students overcome their worries and thoroughly improve their communication skills. Future studies could investigate the best mix of the several kinds of interaction across the levels of pupils with varied circumstances.

This review confirms that classroom interaction significantly contributes to second language speaking fluency through dynamic exchanges between teachers and learners. Effective strategies include group discussions, role-plays, peer feedback, and collaborative problem-solving tasks that encourage spontaneous communication.

Teachers should foster a supportive environment that minimizes anxiety and maximizes participation through meaningful, low-pressure speaking opportunities. Blended learning and technology-assisted platforms can further enhance interaction quality and learner autonomy.

Future studies should conduct longitudinal investigations into the long-term impact of interactive pedagogies and explore how digital innovations and cross-cultural contexts influence speaking fluency outcomes.

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