

Peer Tutor Method as a Solution to Improve English Language Skills of UIN Walisongo Semarang Students

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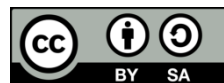
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ABSTRACT

In the current era, there are numerous learning methods that can be employed to enhance the effectiveness of learning. One such method is the peer tutor method, which has been widely utilized in language learning. This research focuses on the application of the peer tutor method as a solution for improving English language skills. The subjects of the study are students of UIN Walisongo who are members of the Walisongo English Club (WEC). The Student Activity Unit (UKM) of Walisongo English Club (WEC) conducted this research to ascertain the impact of peer tutoring on the English language proficiency of Walisongo State Islamic University of Semarang students. This study employed a qualitative approach and utilized data collection techniques, including questionnaires, interviews, and documentation. The results demonstrated that the implementation of the peer tutor method yielded numerous benefits for the WEC members, including enhanced English language proficiency, a more relaxed learning environment, and elevated self-assurance. Additionally, the method facilitated increased confidence in English communication. However, there were limitations due to the limited knowledge of the peer tutors. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that the peer tutor method is an effective solution for improving the English language skills of UIN Walisongo Semarang students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a process of transferring knowledge and skills from one party to another or educators to students by learning and practicing (Nurhasanah & Gumiandari, 2021). Educators are not only limited to professions, such as teachers or lecturers, but the role of an educator can be carried out by everyone. In this era, educators are required to be able to teach professionally. In the teaching and learning process, educators apply methods that make students understand the learning material, active, and effective.

Learning is the process of understanding, applying, and mastering the material that has been learned, the result of past experiences and influences from the surrounding environment (Muawanah & Muhid, 2021). Learning is not just learning theory, but related to the process of active interaction between educators, students, and the learning environment. Students must also actualize what has been obtained during the learning process. Teaching is an activity in achieving cognitive, affective, and psychomotoric goals (Suharti et al., 2020). Educators must be careful in using methods that will be applied in the learning process. The knowledge conveyed must be understood by all students who are taught. The different characteristics of students in the process of understanding a scientific theory must be taken seriously in order to achieve learning objectives. Do not let there be a gap in understanding for students who do not master the concept of science.

In this era, there are various learning methods to support learning that can generate motivation to learn more effectively. One method that can be used as a solution to the gap in students' understanding is the peer tutor method. The peer tutor method, according to Suherman in (Yuliana Puspitasari, 2019) is a learning approach where a student or several students who already understand the learning material well help other students who have difficulty understanding the material. The criteria for becoming a peer tutor according to Suryo and Amin in (Mukhlis, 2016) among others: 1) the tutor helps students who have difficulty understanding the material; 2) the tutor has the ability to master the material well; 3) can work in groups or individually according to the instructions of the educator; and 4) can act as a good leader. The selection of peer tutors can be discussed among educators and learners. Learners who are considered to have more ability in certain areas can be selected as tutors. The peer tutor method can anticipate learners who still do not understand the material and as a medium to improve learner competence. According to Uzezi and Deya in (Nurkholis, 2023) that peers can influence the spirit of competence in learners to try so that they can also improve their academic performance, the thought that others can then they can also spur themselves to try harder.

According to Masitoh and Dewi (Nurhasanah & Gumiandari, 2021) in the peer tutor method, *the* educator provides an overview of a material and then will be developed by students either individually or in groups, the development of the material is carried out according to their respective understanding abilities. This method provides an opportunity for students to share their knowledge with each other. If many learners feel awkward to ask the educator, this method can act as a medium for them to pour out the questions or statements they have without hesitation. Learners can also be more active and creative with the concepts given to them so that the concepts are easier to understand. Learning with peers must have a different sensation, the competitive side of the learners will grow. The thought that friends who are considered as tutors can add motivation for themselves to seriously understand the theories that they initially considered difficult.

A subject that can effectively utilize the peer tutor method is English. English learning in this era is in the spotlight, especially in the world of education, especially the level of lectures and jobs. Nowadays, many educational institutions require their students to pass an English test. Meanwhile, student itself means someone who takes a certain study program or major at an educational institution or university. Sarwono (in Ebtanastiti & Muis, 2014) students are individuals who are studying in higher education with an age range of 18-30 years.

Although English teaching is considered important, there are still many who cannot get it, especially students who study not within the scope of the English study program, they only get the basic theory of English. Through the peer tutor method, it is easier for students to learn together with friends who are considered to have English language skills above them.

The researcher raised the issue of the peer tutor method as a solution to improve the English language skills of Walisongo State Islamic University Semarang students. Some of them do not really care about their English language skills, they only learn in class without practicing it. If educators allow the use of Indonesian, learners prefer to use it rather than having to trouble themselves to pronounce English vocabulary. Many assume that English is a difficult theory, let alone to use it in daily life. Students' interest in English is decreasing. They think that learning English is just a learning need, whereas various opportunities and chances can be obtained through mastery and ability to speak English. In addition to learning that is only fixated in the classroom, there is a Student Activity Unit (UKM) that focuses on the study of English. The UKM is the Walisongo English Club

(WEC), in which there are different fields as a forum for students who want to improve their English language skills. Some fields in WEC apply the peer tutor method because it is considered capable of providing understanding to its members. The existing fields, such as Talent and Development (TnD), focus on screening and developing skills such as news anchor, story telling, debate, and speech. Then in the Education field, this field contains English commonly or general English material. The system used in WEC is weekly. The question is whether the method is able to provide understanding to its members and how the improvement of English language skills after applying the method. This study aims to find out how much influence and effectiveness of the application of peer tutors in measuring English language skills of Walisongo State Islamic University Semarang students who follow WEC.

Prior to this research, the researcher reviewed articles on how the peer tutor method and its effectiveness. Some of the articles used as references in this study are: *First*, research by (Ekawati & Karmila, 2017) aims to determine student learning outcomes in Real Analysis courses by using cooperative learning models with peer tutors, either before the application of media or after. Researchers used experimental research using the peer tutor method with the One Group Pretest-Posttest Design system. The results of this study were that the VI semester students of the UNCP Mathematics Education Study Program experienced an increase in the learning outcomes of the real analysis course after applying the peer tutor cooperative learning model. *Second*, research conducted by (Hasibuan, 2021) which aims to determine the extent of improvement in student learning outcomes with the application of the peer tutor model. Researchers use the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method. The study found that the application of the peer tutor method was proven to be able to improve student learning outcomes in English language subjects on the topic of Announcement. *Third*, research from (Mahsup et al., 2020) which aims to analyze the application of the peer tutor method in learning fourth semester students of the Mathematics Education study program, FKIP UM Mataram. The research method taken is class action research (PTK). Based on learning observations, it is found that lecturer activities and student activities are in good criteria, the result is that learning with the peer tutor method can improve learning outcomes. In the final test of cycle I, it is known to have achieved classical learning completeness with a percentage of achievement of 75%.

These studies show that the implementation of peer tutor learning methods can make student learning outcomes better, increase students' self-confidence, and dare to appear in front of the public. Of course, the method must still be supervised by the teacher to achieve success.

2. METHOD

This research on the peer tutor method as a solution to improve English language skills of UIN Walisongo Semarang students takes the subject of UIN Walisongo Semarang students who join the University Student Activity Unit (UKM-U) Walisongo English Club. This research is a qualitative research with descriptive method, according to Pupu (in Syahrizal & Jailani, 2023) qualitative research is research that relies on observations from researchers described through language and terms. While the descriptive method, which is a method used to find facts accompanied by appropriate interpretations or conclusions (Yuliani, 2018).

To collect data variables, researchers used questionnaires or questionnaires, interviews, and documentation. Researchers used this method to find out how much influence the application of peer tutors on educational students of Walisongo State Islamic University Semarang in measuring English language skills. The stages of activities that will be carried out include: (1) making a questionnaire containing questions related to the influence of peer tutors and taking information from students who fill out the questionnaire, (2) conducting interviews with educational students containing questions related to the peer tutor method, and (3) conducting documentation of the research activities. Furthermore, the researcher analyzed the data by describing, analyzing and summarizing the events or phenomena studied.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research is in the form of interviews conducted with students of Walisongo State Islamic University Semarang who are members of the Walisongo English Club. This activity unit was chosen because it uses the peer tutor method learning system.

The application of the peer tutor method at Walisongo English Club (WEC) to improve the English language skills of Walisongo State Islamic University Semarang students gave good results for their understanding and English language skills. This can be seen when the researchers conducted interviews, students explained some of the benefits gained during the learning process using the peer tutor method.

Table 1. Results of Interviews with Interviewees

No.	Source	Question	Answer
1.	ZKT, PBI, Semester 4	What's the reason for joining the WEC?	Seeing an opportunity to improve my skills, especially story telling.
		How do you think the implementation of peer tutor learning model in Walisongo English Club?	Very good, positive, because here are peer tutors so we are free to have opinions and expressions.
		How do you think the peer tutor learning model differs from the conventional learning model?	In the classroom, there is pressure when the lecturer is teaching and also not free to express opinions, while in WEC the tutors are not judging.
		Are there any obstacles while learning with peer tutors?	There must be, like insecurity but because I've always had the principle that the more insecure the more I have to pursue, so I try not to take the negative.
		Is the peer tutoring method at WEC effective in improving your English language skills?	Very effective.
		What is the impact of the peer tutor method to improve English language skills from before joining WEC or TnD to after?	Become more confident in speaking English
		How do you feel about participating in peer tutoring at WEC?	Enjoy.
2.	RMS, Pure Chemistry, 4th semester	What is the reason for joining the WEC?	I've loved English since elementary school. However, I was recruited at first and gradually became comfortable.
		How do you think the implementation of peer tutor learning model in Walisongo English Club?	That's good. Because we can share our thoughts with each other. It's also not only offline but also private or online.
		Are there any obstacles while learning with peer tutors?	I was shy at first but eventually I didn't.
		How do you think the peer tutor learning model differs from the conventional learning model?	It is more effective with peer tutors because after learning we can evaluate together, while with lecturers we only learn general materials.
		Is the peer tutoring method at WEC effective in improving your English language skills?	Yes.

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|---|---|--|
| | What is the impact of the peer tutor method to improve English language skills from before joining WEC or TnD to after? | This method is suitable for improving English language skills. |
| | How do you feel about participating in peer tutoring at WEC? | Happy. |
| 3. TMI, Psychology, Semester 2 | What's the reason for joining the WEC? | I've always liked English but I haven't improved so I chose to join. |
| | How do you think the implementation of peer tutor learning model in Walisongo English Club? | It's good because we don't have to study here, so we can relax. |
| | How do you think the peer tutor learning model differs from the conventional learning model? | If you're with a lecturer, you just focus on learning, but with Mr. D, it's more relaxed and less formal. |
| | Are there any obstacles while learning with peer tutors? | The timing is uncertain, sometimes delayed. |
| | Is the peer tutoring method at WEC effective in improving your English language skills? | Effective. Because we learn together by ourselves, we don't feel like we're being patronized, so it feels good. |
| | What is the impact of the peer tutor method to improve English language skills from before joining WEC or TnD to after? | I found it effective in improving my English skills from before. |
| 4. LPK, MPI, Semester 4 | How do you feel about participating in peer tutoring at WEC? | It's delicious. |
| | What's the reason for joining the WEC? | Because I had participated in a debate competition and was offered by one of the seniors, I joined to improve my skills again. |
| | How do you think the implementation of peer tutor learning model in Walisongo English Club? | We can practice with each other and give each other feedback. |
| | How do you think the peer tutor learning model differs from the conventional learning model? | Here we are trained more in public speaking, if the lecturer is only the material. |
| | Are there any obstacles/drawbacks while learning with peer tutors? | Some members have not been able to prioritize time to study together. |
| | Is the peer tutoring method at WEC effective in improving your English language skills? | Effective. |
| | What is the impact of the peer tutor method to improve English language skills from before joining WEC or TnD to after? | It really improved my public speaking skills. |
| | How do you feel about participating in peer tutoring at WEC? | Happy. |
| 5. H, Islamic Guidance and Counseling, 4th semester | What's the reason for joining the WEC? | Sharpen English skills |

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| | How do you think the implementation of peer tutor learning model in Walisongo English Club? | I don't know because I haven't participated, because this is the first time I have participated in a meeting that uses peer tutors. |
| | How do you think the peer tutor learning model differs from the conventional learning model? | I enjoy being a professional, I enjoy being a lecturer. |
| | Are there any obstacles while learning with peer tutors? | None. |
| | Is the peer tutoring method at WEC effective in improving your English language skills? | Effective, but lacking in knowledge, it could be that peer tutors don't know more about it and the delivery is lacking. |
| | What is the impact of the peer tutor method to improve English language skills from before joining WEC or TnD to after? | There is no impact yet because I have just started following the peer tutor method. |
| | How do you feel about participating in peer tutoring at WEC? | There has been no impact or perceived impact. |
| 6. | S,
Psychology,
4th
Semester | What is the reason for joining the WEC?
Improve English language skills. |
| | How do you think the implementation of peer tutor learning model in Walisongo English Club? | There are improvements, maybe there should be a beginning such as debriefing and there should be examples from peer tutors so that they can be examples and there is try and error in learning. |
| | How do you think the peer tutor learning model differs from the conventional learning model? | I can be more expressive and interactive too if the lecturer is usually only one-way, so I only deliver and am invited to ask questions but there is a sense of reluctance. |
| | Are there any obstacles while learning with peer tutors? | None. |
| | Is the peer tutoring method at WEC effective in improving your English language skills? | Effective, but if offline, face-to-face is better because it is more interactive for more interaction. |
| | What is the impact of the peer tutor method to improve English language skills from before joining WEC or TnD to after? | It increases especially when the two of them are already on good terms, usually as the topic of conversation in life is more connected so it is more relatable. |
| | How do you feel about participating in peer tutoring at WEC? | Because it has only been three meetings, there has been no improvement. |
| 7. | AR, Physics
Education,
6th
Semester | What is the reason for joining the WEC?
Already interested in English, because there is WEC, I feel there is a place to improve my English skills. |

- How do you think the implementation of peer tutor learning model in Walisongo English Club? It is quite helpful because having peers ask questions to the tutor is also a trigger for us to dare to ask questions.
- How do you think the peer tutor learning model differs from the conventional learning model? It's very different, because the lecturer teaches according to his ability sometimes it doesn't match the ability of the students, the language delivered is too high and theoretical so it is difficult to understand, while peer tutors have the same understanding and simpler explanations so it's easy to understand.
- Are there any obstacles while learning with peer tutors? The knowledge is still lacking, we haven't really mastered it so we are limited in teaching.
- Is the peer tutoring method at WEC effective in improving your English language skills? Very effective.
- What is the impact of the peer tutor method to improve English language skills from before joining WEC or TnD to after? It is very impactful because with this method we become confident to learn, motivated, encouraged to learn, not awkward and comfortable in learning.
- How do you feel about participating in peer tutoring at WEC? Happy, confident, motivated, excited and enjoy being more open with friends.
8. NNAT, English Education, Semester 6
- What's the reason for joining the WEC? Because I like English, I like linguistic things, so I joined an UKM that accommodates its members to learn.
- How do you think the implementation of peer tutor learning model in Walisongo English Club? So far it has been quite effective, we not only give but we get, besides we teach something to them we also get something from them so we give each other feedback, criticism and suggestions.
- How do you think the peer tutor learning model differs from the conventional learning model? It's not bad to feel a sense of reluctance when learning from a lecturer, while it's easier to ask questions with friends.
- Are there any obstacles while learning with peer tutors? In some cases, there were shortcomings, lacking knowledge and delivery so we could not ask detailed questions.
- Is the peer tutoring method at WEC effective in improving your English language skills? Effectively, if we are friends, it feels more enjoyable, relaxed and less rigid, and there are no boundaries that make us feel awkward.
- What is the impact of the peer tutor method to improve English language The impact is that the children become too reluctant, feel inferior or afraid of being judged, because

skills from before joining WEC or TnD to after?	it is a peer comment, not only comments from the tutor but also from friends so it is more relaxed.
How do you feel about participating in peer tutoring at WEC?	It's great, apart from us getting criticized we also learn how to convey our opinions, suggestions and good criticism to others.

Based on interviews from several interviewees, Z's reason for joining WEC was because she saw an opportunity to improve her English skills. He felt that the application of the peer tutor method at WEC was very positive because he felt free to have opinions and expressions. According to her, the difference between the peer tutor method and conventional teaching is that she feels less judging when she is with a tutor. The obstacle is that sometimes he still feels insecure. For him, this method is very effective in improving his English skills. She is more confident in speaking English. Interviewee RMS admitted that she joined WEC because she has liked English since elementary school and was initially recruited by a friend, then became comfortable. He said the peer tutor method was good because he could share his thoughts. The barrier she used to experience was shyness, but not anymore. She feels this learning is even more effective than with a lecturer. She also said this method is effective and suitable for improving her English language skills. She feels happy with this method at WEC. TMI's reason for joining WEC is that she likes English and wants to improve her skills. She admitted that with a lecturer the learning is too formal while at WEC it is more relaxed. The obstacle she felt was when the learning schedule was sometimes not on time. But she still felt the effectiveness of this method in improving her English skills. LPM joined WEC because she wanted to improve her skills, especially since she had already won an English debate competition. She said the application of the peer tutor method enabled her to practice with friends and give feedback to each other. According to him, learning with the peer tutor method in WEC makes him learn more about public speaking while with lecturers it does not. There are many reasons why the interviewees joined WEC, such as H, who wanted to improve her English skills. Because she was new when she joined, she experienced the peer tutor method for the first time. She felt that peer tutoring was an effective method but the tutor's lack of knowledge made the delivery less in-depth. Interviewee S also joined WEC to improve her English skills. He was able to be more expressive and interactive with the peer tutor method compared to the lecturer who only delivered the material in one direction. He also felt that his skills improved because the material delivered by peer tutors was more relatable. However, there are still shortcomings that he thinks should be improved such as the briefing and giving examples first by peer tutors. AR said that she was interested in English and used WEC as a platform to develop her skills. He feels that peer tutors are very helpful in learning compared to lecturers who provide material according to their abilities which sometimes are not in line with the students. Peer tutors, on the other hand, provide a simpler understanding that is easy to understand. Similar to H, interviewee AR also said that the drawback is that the knowledge possessed by peer tutors is sometimes still lacking. However, he admitted that his English language skills improved and he was encouraged to learn and learn more. NNAT also used WEC as a platform to further develop her interest in English. She feels that peer tutoring is effective because those who teach and those who are taught give feedback to each other, so they can find out where they went wrong. The peer tutor method is more relaxed and fun but the knowledge taught can be received immediately, if you don't understand the material you can also ask directly without feeling reluctant because you are still a peer.

From the results of these interviews, it can be said that the influence of peer tutor learning methods provides many good benefits to students. Students experience significant differences such as, they feel more relaxed in learning and there is no embarrassment and more freedom to ask questions related to material that has not been understood to peer tutors. Compared to learning in the classroom, they feel that the delivery of material is only one-way and only given the opportunity to ask or answer questions given by the lecturer. When English pronunciation is wrong, there are lecturers who correct directly in front of the class and some do not correct. The students also

experienced differences in themselves, they felt happy and more confident while following the peer tutor learning method.

Other results show that the effect of the peer tutor learning method also has some shortcomings in terms of learning and delivery. For example, the students felt that they lacked the knowledge of the peer tutors. When given more detailed questions, peer tutors still experience limited insight and ability so that the explanation comes from the same and simpler thoughts. In contrast to lecturers or teachers who provide explanations of more complex material without the constraints of limited ability and insight in delivering.

Researchers also spread questionnaires or questionnaires through Google Form so that the results of the interviews are more accurate and supported by data.

Table 2. Knowledge of the Peer Tutor Method

Respondents	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Yes	27	90,00%
No	3	10,00%
Total	30	100,00%

Based on the questionnaire that the researcher distributed through Google Form aimed at WEC members, the respondents knew what the peer tutor method was. A total of 27 people (90%) knew what the peer tutor method was while 3 people (10%) did not know what the peer tutor method was.

Table 3. Discussion with Friends for Understanding

Respondents	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Always	5	16,67%
Often	10	33,33%
Sometimes	12	40,00%
Never	3	10,00%
Total	30	100,00%

Respondents discussed with peers when they did not understand the material.

At least 5 people (16.67%) always discussed with peers when they did not understand the material.

A total of 10 people (33.33%) often have discussions with their peers.

12 people (40%) sometimes conduct discussions to understand the material.

Followed by 3 people (10%) who never did it.

Table 4. Understanding of Tutor Delivery

Respondents	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Always	6	20,00%
Often	19	63,33%
Sometimes	5	16,67%
Never	0	0,00%
Total	30	100,00%

6 people (20%) always understand what is conveyed by peer tutors.
A total of 19 people (63.33%) often understand the material from peer tutors.
At least 5 people (16.67%) sometimes understood what the tutor said.
No respondents answered "Never".

It can be concluded that 63% of respondents understand the material presented by peer tutors.

Table 5. Comfort of being taught by the tutor

Respondents	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Always	9	30,00%
Often	14	46,67%
Sometimes	6	20,00%
Never	1	3,33%
Total	30	100,00%

9 people always feel comfortable when taught by peer tutors.
A total of 14 people (46.67%) often felt comfortable with the peer tutor teaching method.
Followed by 6 people (20%) who were sometimes comfortable with the delivery of peer tutors.
Only 1 person (3.33%) never felt comfortable with peer tutoring.

The level of comfort of respondents when learning with peer tutors concluded that respondents felt comfortable because most answered "Often". The level of comfort in learning is indeed a very important aspect because according to (Ariadi et al., 2021) comfort in learning is a feeling when someone feels comfortable and calm when absorbing lessons or during the learning process so that this will be able to improve learning outcomes: facilities and infrastructure are very helpful in supporting learning success.

The third data collection technique that researchers use is documentation. Through documentation, it can be seen how the peer tutor method is applied.



Figure 1. Peer Tutor Method in Progress at Campus 3 UIN Walisongo Semarang

The peer tutor method is used during speeches by UKM Walisongo English Club. The peer tutor is giving an example speech in front of the members. After that, the members will be given time to practice. During the practice, the peer tutor will note what is lacking and needs to be evaluated. Peer tutors will give feedback directly to members, feedback is given in a relaxed and non-judgmental manner so that members do not feel insecure.

The results of the three data collection techniques conducted are students feel that learning using peer tutor methods in improving English language skills is more effective and the effect is quite

significant, such as more interactive learning between tutors and students and the feedback obtained makes students more expressive during learning. Students become more free in asking questions without fear like when learning in the classroom. Students who are members of WEC claim that their English language skills have improved compared to classroom learning alone.

4. CONCLUSION

The peer tutor method used in English learning at Walisongo English Club (WEC) UIN Walisongo is effective. This is evidenced by the increase in English language skills of WEC members after participating in learning using peer tutors. In addition, it can also be proven by those who become more confident to perform in front after being motivated by the tutors. Although there are many positive impacts felt by the members of WECs, there are still shortcomings in peer tutors, namely the lack of knowledge or limited knowledge of peer tutors. Nevertheless, the members still feel happy after joining UKM WEC. In the future, of course, it is hoped that the peer tutor method applied in UKM WEC will develop even better and can be an example for the learning process of English or other foreign languages because learning a foreign language is no less important than even just English.

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