

The Impact of Student-Teacher Relationships toward English-Speaking Performance

Annisa Nurfadhilah¹, Hariswan Putera Jaya²

^{1,2} Sriwijaya University, Palembang, Indonesia

Corresponding Email: annisnfd@gmail.com

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Abstract. This study investigated the correlation between student-teacher relationships quality and English-speaking performance among 154 second-year students at MAN 1 Ogan Ilir. The 25-item Student-Teacher Relationship Measure (S-TRM) was used to assess relationship quality, and the results were divided into three groups: Good, Fair, and Poor. A structured task on the topic of “My Favorite Hobby” was used to evaluate speaking performance. A rubric comprising fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar accuracy, and comprehension was used. A sample of 33 students (11 of each group) was assessed. Relationship quality and speaking scores were shown to be moderately and statistically significantly correlated ($r=0.450$, $p=0.009$). Significant variations in speaking performance across the three groups were verified by one-way ANOVA ($f=5.180$, $p=0.012$), with the Good and Poor relationship groups showing the largest difference. These results support Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory of Learning by demonstrating that good student-teacher connections lead to improved English-speaking ability.

Keywords: student-teacher relationship, English, speaking performance

Introduction

A key component of successful language learning is effective student-teacher interaction in the classroom. Effective communication is essential in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to promote student engagement and language development, especially in speaking-focused sessions. Communication can be done with verbal and nonverbal. Both are essential for maintaining students’ engagement and communication the meaning (Xie & Derakhshan, 2021). Learning requires more than just imparting knowledge; it also entails creating an emotional and social environment in the classroom, which has a big impact on a student’s motivation to communicate. Strong student-teacher interactions are essential for promoting students’ engagement, motivation, and general academic achievement (Zhou et al., 2023) ; (Thornberg et al., 2023). Students that have a closer bond with their instructor typically show higher levels of behavioral engagement (Monteiro et al., 2021). Positive

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relationships also enhance students' participation, confidence, and verbal communication (Siswanto & Kuswandono, 2020). In contrast, negative relationships can hinder student performance and classroom involvement which marked by feelings of unfairness, disconnection, or lack of support.

This impact of student-teacher relationships on speaking skills has not identified as thoroughly as other skills. Other research has concentrated on general academic success or writing skills as well as classroom behavior. Sulistyo et al., (2024) showed how revision feedback from a teacher helped the writing skills of a student. Al Thowaihi (2024) proves that the quality of student-teacher relationships influenced significantly by the willingness of students in communicating. Then, Song et al. (2022) investigated that interpersonal communication could foster a supportive classroom environment to promote students' participation and feeling in learning. Therefore, there are lack of researches which examined the direct relationship quality between students and teachers and students' English-speaking performance, especially among high school students in EFL settings.

It's widely accepted that speaking is one of the toughest language skills to nail because it requires to think fast and interact naturally on the spot. This often makes many students anxious about speaking in front of their peers and worried about making mistakes. Supportive and trusting relationship with the teacher can reduce this anxiety. Despite of it, there are not much solid data to show whether students who have strong bond with their teachers actually do better in English-speaking tasks compared to those who do not.

This study offers a novel contribution by quantitatively examining the link between student-teacher relationship quality and English-speaking performance which rarely explored in Indonesian senior high school EFL settings. Before the research began, classroom observations clearly showed that many students held back from speaking activities, they seemed hesitant, lacked confidence, or barely participated. At the same time, noticeable differences in student-teacher relationship were observed since some students were very comfortable and communicative with their teacher, while others appeared distant or unresponsive. The differences clearly suggested the potential link which needed a systematic and data-driven approach.

The goal of this research is to determine how senior high school students' English-speaking ability in an EFL context is impacted by the quality of student-teacher interactions, which can be classified as good, fair, or poor. The specific aim of this research is to determine whether speaking ability is a significant factor and how much the relationship affects speaking performance outcomes. So, the research provides valuable strategies to improve speaking ability and offers deeper insight into interpersonal and emotional dynamics within language classrooms.

Theoretical Framework

This research investigates the relationship between students-teachers and students' speaking performance by using number of related hypotheses which could provide targeted viewpoints for analyzing the information, comprehending the important factors, and validating the ideas about how interpersonal dynamics affect the language acquisition success.

Student-Teacher Relationship as a Core Variable

The student-teacher relationship refers to the emotional and professional connection that develops through continuous interaction within an educational setting. Students' academic achievement, personal growth, and learning behaviors are shaped by such relationship. Students need affection involving emotional warmth and care. A sense of security and stability or attachment is when students feel in their interaction with their teachers. When teachers effectively manage the classroom, it helps in creating a supportive learning environment that promotes both academic and emotional development. The proven data supports idea that supportive interpersonal interaction can significantly improve students' understanding and their willingness to participate in language learning (Thao et al., 2023). It emphasizes the value of healthy relationships that foster mutual respect, trust, and understanding. These qualities produce a learning atmosphere where students feel secure to ask questions, express themselves, and engage in speaking activities. Meanwhile, negative relationships are characterized by a lack of empathy or communication and often lead to disengagement and decreased motivation (Nazish & Kang, 2024). The quality of student-teacher relationship is therefore seen under this framework as a significant independent variable that influences English-speaking performance.

The Motivational Framework

A crucial element that links speaking performance to the overall quality of student interactions is motivation. The positive connections have been demonstrated to both directly and indirectly boost academic motivation by providing vital emotional support (Ali & Rehman, 2024). Then, the Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes the critical role that relational and environmental factors play in promoting intrinsic motivation. In particular, students are much more likely to participate in learning activities with more passion when they believe that their teachers value, encourage, and understand them.

In contrast, poor student-teacher relationships may lead to lower motivation, increased anxiety, and students' reluctance to actively engage in classroom activities. In the language learning, motivation is commonly classified into two types: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation stems from learners' internal interest and enjoyment of the learning process and extrinsic motivation arises from external rewards, expectations, or pressures (Liu, 2024; Chhor et al., 2024). For this reason, motivation serves as a key construct for understanding how relational dynamics influence students' speaking

performance. Moreover, students' motivation is not determined solely by their personal characteristic but it is significantly shaped by the learning environment created by the teacher (Yi, 2023). Accordingly, this study conceptualizes motivation as both a mediating variable and a potential outcome of student-teacher relationships. This perspective underscores that supportive and positive relationships can enhance students' motivation, which in contributes to improved speaking performance.

Characteristics of Supportive and Unsupportive Relationships

This research will operationalize and define the scope of analyses using the following categories in comparing a classification system for student-teacher relationships: good, fair, and poor. Good relationship would be characterized by hallmarks like trust, transparent communication, and emotional support given on a consistent basis. The classification provides ore accurate explanation of how students' academic and communication outcomes are impacted by different relationships. Fair relationships are marked by neutral and transactional interactions with little emotional investment. Poor relationships are usually strained, devoid of mutual respect and dominated by misunderstanding and disengagement (Hosseini et al., 2022). Supportive relationships can be further elaborated by the five elements in the partnership in the classroom for social justice framework; inclusion, connection, respect, value, and inspiration (Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bao, 2025). These features align with the broader agenda of developing a classroom climate that promotes students' voice and confidence, two essential conditions for effective language learning. In contrast, unsupportive relationships can foster stress, make students less confident, and hinder them from participating in classroom interactions.

Interpersonal Interaction and Language Acquisition

Language learning is inherently social. According to Social Interactionist Theory, students acquire language best through meaningful communication and interaction with more knowledgeable interlocutors (Rasid & Jobar, 2022). How students and teachers mutually influence each other's emotions and behavior is extended by the Interactive Co-regulation Model (InCoRe) in managing classroom challenges and enhancing engagement in language tasks (Bhuvaneshwara et al., 2023). Students' confidence and involvement in speaking activities are greatly enhanced by interpersonal interactions, both verbal and nonverbal. When teacher acknowledge effort, encourage expression, and provide emotional reinforcement, students are more likely to take linguistic risks. This theory supports the idea that interpersonal dimension is fundamental for language learning mechanism, especially speaking.

Teacher's Role as Facilitator of Meaningful Interaction

Teachers themselves are not just content providers but facilitators of interaction who can create conditions for students to practice the language

meaningfully. Such a facilitative role is in tune with the sociocultural theory by Vygotsky. The facilitator-teacher may give emotional and constructive feedback to the students to enhance their emotional well-being and facilitate improvement in the process of learning (Cahyono, 2025).

The CLT approach stands for Communicative Language Teaching which comes to the fore in this framework, emphasizing authentic communication, collaboration, and the use of natural language. Freedom of expression makes students increase fluency, vocabulary usage, as well as communicative competence (Eisenring & Margana, 2019).

Speaking Performance as the Dependent Variable

Speaking skill is necessary to express ideas. It is the most essential skill in order to communicating well among the four language skills in this era (Rao, 2019). Communicating is the primary purpose of speaking. It is used to convey thoughts and feelings. In addition, speaking should be effectively expressed to enable others to understand what the speaker discussed. Also, the conveyed messages and the meanings can easily be received and absorbed by the recipient. Thus, there is a process of action and reaction to build good communication. Students can deliver their thoughts in class with their friends and teachers. By developing their speaking abilities, their speaking performance can improve and foster positive relationships with others (Syakur et al., 2020).

Speaking is a complex skill requiring simultaneously using several abilities that often develop at different rates. There are several aspects to be considered in speaking performance: fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension (Weir, 2005). First, Fluency is defined as the effortless and meaningful expression. Fluency in speaking is an ability to handle various situations, such as social and professional situations (Ghasemi & Mozaheb, 2021). Second, Pronunciation is the way someone speaks the words of a language. Pronunciation is a crucial aspect of speaking because it is used to understand the messages transmitted during communication (Suprayogi & Pranoto, 2020). Incorrect pronunciation can result in misunderstandings and negative impressions with others. Vocabulary defines as the words which people used in language skills (Ivan et al., 2020). Choosing the vocabulary plays important role in speaking and writing ability. The last, comprehension is the mind's power to understand the words (Ramadani & Hamdani, 2021). It is the ability to process spoken words and respond appropriately.

Material and Method

This study employed a quantitative research design using correlational and comparative analysis to examine the relationship between student-teacher relationship quality and students' English-speaking performance. There are two methods used, correlational analysis and one-way ANOVA, in order to measure the degree of association between variables and to compare speaking scores across relationship groups.

Participants

The research was conducted at Man 1 Ogan Ilir with 154 second-year students as the total population. Based on their perceived relationship quality with their English teacher, they were categorized into three groups: good, fair, and poor. Then, the researcher selected 33 students as a sample (21.5% of population) with 11 students in each category by using purposive sampling and the Nomogram Harry King technique with a 12% error tolerance (Ismail, 2020).

This research has two main instruments: The Student-Teacher Relationship Questionnaire and the English-Speaking Performance Test. The first instrument, The Student-Teacher Relationship Measure (S-TRM) was adapted from Aldhafri & Alhadabi (2019) which consist of 25 items covering two key dimensions: Social Relation (10 items) and Academic Relation (15 items). It used a 5-point Likert scale to assess students' perceptions of their relationships with their English teacher. Then students' relationship quality was classified into good, fair, and poor categories using percentile rankings according to their responses.

The second instrument is a speaking performance test on "My Favorite Hobby", assessed by two raters using a standardized rubric adapted from Weir (2005). The rubric has five components to evaluate: fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar accuracy, and comprehension. Each of five elements is scored from 1 to 4 which provide a quantitative measurement of each student's English-speaking performance for the further analysis.

Next, in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, the first instrument (Aldhafri & Alhadabi, 2019) has conducted Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) which demonstrated a strong model fit. The first is Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.04, indicating a minimal discrepancy between the model and real data, suggesting a good fit. Second is Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = 0.03, representing low differences between the expected and actual relationships. It supports accuracy of the model. Third is Comparative Fit Index (CFI)=0.96, meaning that the model fits the data significantly better than a baseline model where all variables are unrelated. Then, TLI which stands for Tucker-Lewis Index scored 0.96 showing the model compensates for the complexity of relationships measure. Finally, the Cronbach's alpha values for Academic Relations=0.92 and for Social Relations=0.89 indicated the excellent internal consistency with overall score=0.95 confirming the reliability.

Procedures

The online questionnaire is used. It is a 25-item Student-Teacher Relationship Measure (S-TRM) consisting of 10 statements concerning social relations and 15 statements related to academic relations through a 5-point Likert scale (1=definitely does not apply, 2=applies little, 3=applies sometimes, 4=applies often, 5=definitely applies). The result will be categorized into

reasonable, fair, and poor relationships based on actual data using percentile ranks.

After administering the questionnaire online and classifying students into relationship categories, the speaking test was conducted on "My Favorite Hobby". A total of 33 students (11 from each category) were selected to represent each relationship quality level by using a random sampler. Two raters independently recorded and assessed each student's speaking performance to ensure objectivity using a standardized rubric with five speaking components: fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar accuracy, and comprehension (Weir, 2005).

Data Analysis

The data analysis procedures were performed using SPSS version 27. Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to examine the relationship between student-teacher relationship scores and speaking performance. The correlation coefficient interpretation guideline is used. Additionally, a one-way ANOVA was used to determine whether significant differences in speaking performance existed among the three relationship categories (Good, Fair, and Poor).

Questionnaire Scoring

The scoring was done by using percentile ranks according to Pianta, R. C., & Nimetz (2001). The questionnaire responses were scored and categorized based on standard psychological research practice in the original STRS (Student-Teacher Relationships Scale) by Pianta (2001) where the top 25% (good), middle 50% (fair), and bottom 25% (poor). Such method interpret a meaningful quality of students and teachers.

The scale of questionnaire used a 5-point Likert from 1= definitely does not apply to 5=definitely applies, with the maximum total score is 125. The formula for calculating the final score was $(\text{student's score} \div 125) \times 100$.

English-speaking Performance Test

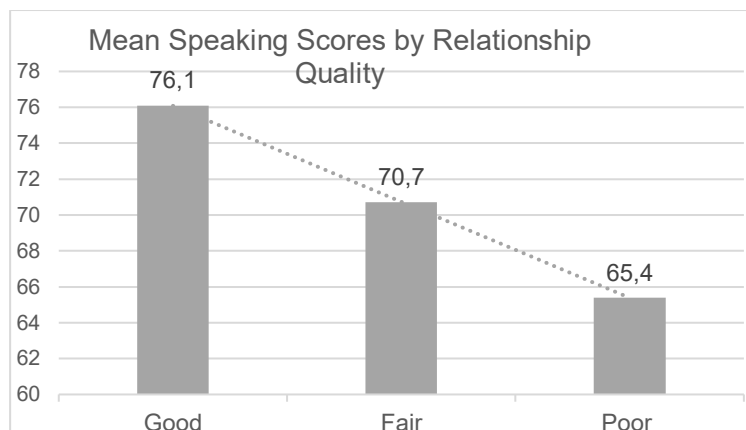
Two raters assessed the speaking test by using a standardized rubric. It consists with five speaking components, they are fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar accuracy, and comprehension (Weir, 2005). Each component was rated from 1 to 4, resulting in a maximum total score of 20. The speaking score was then converted to a percentage using the formula: $(\text{student's score} \div 20) \times 100$.

Results and Discussion

Results

Result of Speaking Score

The chart below shows the comparison result for three relationship groups.

**Diagram 1.**

The result of relationship quality and speaking performance scores

The result shows that students with good relationships scored the highest on average, followed by those with fair and poor relationships, respectively. It supports the trend where more positive relationships are associated with better speaking ability.

Statistical Analysis

Normality Test

In order to determine if the data had a normal distribution, the normality was checked before the correlation analysis was performed.

Table 1.
Normality Test

No	Speaking Scores' Category	N	Sig.(2-tailed)	Result
1	Good	11	0.324	Normal
2	Fair	11	0.835	
3	Poor	11	0.833	

Based on the table analysis, the significance value (2-tailed) for the category of students' scores were 0.324 in good category, 0.835 in Fair category, and 0.833 in Poor category exceeding 0.05. This indicates that the speaking score data in each category is normally distributed.

Homogeneity Test

Homogeneity test defines as a test that determine the variance of the data compared which essential in ensuring the assumptions of the ANOVA. In this research, this test aimed to examine whether the groups involved (good, fair, and poor S-TR) had equal variances in the speaking performance scores. The results are presented in the table below:

Table 2.
Homogeneity Test

No	Speaking Scores' Category	N	Levene Statistic	Result
1	Good	11	0.580	Homogeny
2	Fair	11		
3	Poor	11		

The result of the homogeneity test shows that the significance value (p-value) based on mean = 0.580. The p-value (0.580) is greater than 0.05. It means that variances of the data are homogeny.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient is used to examine the correlation between variables. This study figured out the correlation between student-teacher relationships quality in relation to their English-speaking performance. The table below presented the result of the correlation:

Table 3.
Correlation Analysis

The correlation between Student-Teacher Relationships on Students' speaking Score	N	Sig(2-tailed)	Pearson Correlation	H ₀	H ₁
	33	0.009	0.450	Rejected	Accepted

As presented in the table, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation produced an r-obtained value of 0.450 and a significance value of 0.009. The r-obtained (0.450) indicates that there is moderate correlation (Petrus, 2024) between student-teacher relationship and speaking performance score. Since the p-value (0.009) is less than 0.05, H₀ is rejected and H₁ is accepted. It means that there is a significant correlation between student-teacher relationships qualities on students' English-speaking performance score.

One-way ANOVA

A one-way ANOVA is used to compare speaking performance among different relationship groups (good, fair, and poor). The results of the test are presented in the table below:

Table 4.
One-way ANOVA

Students' speaking Score between categories	Mean Square	F	Sig	H ₀	H ₁
	316.098	5.180	0.012	Rejected	Accepted

The result of the one-way ANOVA shows that the significance value (p-value) = 0.012. Since the p-value (0.012) is less than 0.05, H₀ is rejected and H₁

is accepted. This indicates that there is a significant difference in students' English-speaking performance score among good, fair, and poor relationships.

Discussion

Several interpretations were drawn from the results presented earlier to enhance the credibility of this research. According to the data analysis, the results of this study revealed that there is a significant correlation between the quality of student-teacher relationships and students' English-speaking performance.

The three classifications of student-teacher relationships show different speaking scores. Based on the speaking score's average of each category, the result shows that students with good relationships scored the highest followed by those with fair and poor relationships, respectively. This analysis reveals a clear trend indicating that greater speaking performance is strongly associated with more positive relationships. Specifically, students who reported good relationships with their teachers tended to always score higher in speaking performance assessments compared to those who were categorized as having poor relationships. This would thus imply that the quality of the relationship between students and teachers significantly influences the improvement of oral practice and overall language performance in students. This outcome lends the idea that students experience increased confidence and motivation to engage in speaking when situated within a supportive and trusting relationship with their teacher (Ariyani et al., 2024). The result also relates to the research emphasizing the criticality of emotional and interpersonal support within the language learning environment (Song et al., 2022). In addition, a supportive and trusting relationship can reduce anxiety and promote a safe environment for practicing speaking. The findings are further supported by the study of Syahabuddin et al. (2020), which established that the student-teacher relationship corresponds with the process of teaching and learning English. In other words, good student-teacher relationship serves as the basis for a supportive learning environment and raise the standard of teaching, especially in English class.

Furthermore, the one-way ANOV analysis was conducted and supported by Zainullah et al. (2023) which found that prioritizing positive relationship in educational settings is urgent because it can enhance students' academic success. Such results further resonate with Vygotsky (1978) who states that social interaction is the fundamental support in language development.

Consequently, both formulated hypotheses of this study are accepted: (1) there is a statistically significant correlation between student-teacher relationship quality and students' English-speaking performance, and (2) there is a significant difference in speaking performance observed among students in the three relationship categories.

Thus, the findings have several pedagogical implications. First, the findings highlight the urgency in conducting emotionally supportive classroom atmosphere in EFL settings. The role of teachers as facilitators is becoming

increasingly important. According to the scope of educational psychology, the role of teacher as facilitator can create safe learning environment and also motivate students to actively engage (Rajammal, 2024). Hence, teachers who build trust and demonstrate care for their students can create a psychologically safe space, encourage active speaking and reduce language anxiety. It proves that the teacher's ability can recognize students' potential, emotional needs and learning style since using useful teaching strategies can create meaningful learning experience (Andriatno et al., 2024). The result suggests that integrating relationship-building strategies into teacher training programs can improve instructional effectiveness in EFL contexts. Furthermore, school administrators and policymakers should consider assessing relational competencies as a part of teaching evaluations and curriculum design particularly in skill-based learning like speaking.

This research contributes to the literature expand especially on the place where emotional and interpersonal dynamics is essential. In EFL learning, the empirical evidences are given of how relationship quality between students and teachers influences English speaking performance. Key findings have shown that students with better relationship quality with their teacher performed significantly better in speaking, with a moderate correlation coefficient at $r=0.450$, $p=0.009$ and a statistically significant difference among the relationship groups at $F=5.180$, $p=0.012$. These results are meaningfully helping teachers and institutions to improve student speaking outcomes, as suggest that positive relationships may play pivotal role in enhancing performance as academic instruction.

Based on these findings and limitations, further research is desired to include multiples perspective approaches, such teacher self-reporting or observational methods, for a deeper understanding. For the better comprehension of student-teacher relationship, the further research should investigate the specific strategies which can improve English language learning. The longitudinal or qualitative designs may provide richer insights into how these relationships evolve and impact performance over time. Because this study classified student-teacher relationships based solely on the perceptions pf students, it has certain advantages in offering insight into how students make meaning of their interactions with teachers.

Conclusion

This study researched the association of student-teacher quality with the performance in speaking English among the second-year student at MAN 1 Ogan Ilir. Quantitatively, S-TRM was used to divide the students into three relationship groups, namely Good, Fair, and Poor, and measure their speaking performance through a structured test on the topic "My Favorite Hobby".

The result showed a statistically significant moderate correlation ($r = 0.450$, $p = 0.009$) and a notable difference in speaking performance among the three groups ($F = 5.180$, $p = 0.012$), particularly between students with good and poor

relationships. These findings affirm that the quality of students-teacher relationships plays the most essential role in the development of English-speaking skills. Particularly, this relationship will notably affect students' motivation, confidence, and willingness to participate in classroom interaction-a prerequisite for developing proper speaking skills.

From a pedagogical perspective, this study emphasizes the critical need for educators to prioritize relational pedagogy, which involves fostering trust, care, and emotional safety, alongside conventional academic instruction. The teachers who establish good relationships with students contribute greatly to the development of a better learning environment, which consequently improves communicative competence and overall performance substantially. This positive relationship with teacher helps to create a welcoming classroom atmosphere that encourages involvement and gives students the self-assurance they need to effectively communicate their thoughts.

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