

IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING PERFORMANCE THROUGH THINK-PAIR-SHARE: EVIDENCE FROM A CLASSROOM-BASED RESEARCH

Yohana Logha¹, Bernadus Kopong Danibao^{2*}, Aplonia Nelci Ke Lomi³, Elvis Albertus Bin Toni⁴
Widya Mandira Catholic University^{1,2,3,4}

Email korespondensi: bernardusdanibao@unwira.ac.id

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini melaporkan sebuah penelitian berbasis kelas yang bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara bahasa Inggris siswa kelas VIII melalui penerapan strategi Think-Pair-Share (TPS) di SMP Negeri 7 Kupang, Indonesia. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji sejauh mana TPS meningkatkan kefasihan, ketepatan, dan kepercayaan diri siswa dalam berbicara, serta menjelaskan bagaimana strategi tersebut mendorong keterlibatan siswa dalam kegiatan berbicara. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain metode campuran explanatory sequential, yang melibatkan tes berbicara pre-test dan post-test, observasi kelas, serta wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan siswa. Hasil kuantitatif menunjukkan adanya peningkatan yang signifikan pada kemampuan berbicara siswa setelah penerapan TPS, dengan peningkatan yang terlihat pada aspek kefasihan, ketepatan, dan kepercayaan diri. Data kualitatif selanjutnya mengungkapkan meningkatnya partisipasi siswa, menurunnya kecemasan berbicara, serta terciptanya interaksi antarteman yang lebih suportif selama kegiatan berbicara. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa TPS menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang kolaboratif dan menyenangkan yang mendukung kesiapan mental, dukungan sebaya, dan praktik berbicara secara aktif. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pedagogi EFL dengan menyajikan bukti empiris dari konteks sekolah menengah pertama yang masih jarang diteliti di wilayah Indonesia Timur serta menunjukkan kesesuaian TPS dengan prinsip pembelajaran berpusat pada siswa dan kolaboratif dalam Kurikulum Merdeka. Oleh karena itu, TPS direkomendasikan sebagai strategi pembelajaran yang efektif untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara dalam kelas EFL.

Kata kunci: Think-Pair-Share, keterampilan berbicara, kefasihan, ketepatan, kepercayaan diri, EFL

ABSTRACT

This article reports a classroom-based study on improving eighth-grade students' English speaking performance through the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) strategy at SMP Negeri 7 Kupang, Indonesia. The study aimed to examine the extent to which TPS enhances students' speaking fluency, accuracy, and confidence, and to explain how the strategy promotes students' engagement in speaking activities. Employing a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design, the research involved pre-test and post-test speaking assessments, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews with students. Quantitative findings revealed a notable improvement in students' overall speaking performance after the implementation of TPS, with gains observed across fluency, accuracy, and confidence dimensions. Qualitative data further indicated increased student participation, reduced speaking anxiety, and more supportive peer interaction during speaking tasks. These findings demonstrate that TPS creates a collaborative and joyful learning environment that facilitates mental readiness, peer support, and active oral practice. The study contributes to EFL pedagogy by providing empirical evidence from an under-researched junior high school context in Eastern Indonesia and by illustrating how TPS aligns with the student-centred and collaborative principles of Kurikulum Merdeka. Therefore, TPS is recommended as an effective instructional strategy for enhancing speaking skills in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: Think-Pair-Share, speaking skills, fluency, accuracy, confidence, EFL

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a core component of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning because it reflects learners' ability to use language

communicatively in real contexts. In junior high school settings, speaking competence is essential for enabling students to express their ideas, participate in classroom interactions, and build

confidence in using English. However, Indonesian EFL learners frequently experience difficulties in speaking due to limited vocabulary, inaccurate pronunciation, grammatical problems, and high levels of anxiety (Abubakar, 2023; Ajeng, 2022). This study focuses on the application of the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) strategy as a cooperative learning approach to address these challenges in the context of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 7 Kupang

Previous studies have consistently reported the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in improving speaking skills. Think-Pair-Share, introduced by Lyman (1981), is intended to enhance student participation, fluency, and confidence by providing structured opportunities for individual thinking, peer discussion, and public sharing. Research conducted in various EFL contexts demonstrates that TPS improves oral performance by reducing speaking anxiety and increasing meaningful interaction among learners (Mena, 2022; Warliati et al., 2019), improving speaking ability and fluency (Alipour & Barjesteh, 2017; Putri et al., 2020).

Theoretically, TPS aligns with Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, which emphasises learning through social interaction within the Zone of Proximal Development. Through peer collaboration, learners receive scaffolding that supports language development and communicative competence (Morales & Torres, 2020).

In response to the increasing use of the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) in EFL classrooms, this study offers several explicit points of scientific novelty. First, although the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) strategy has been widely examined, most previous studies focus either on a single aspect of speaking skills (eg, fluency or confidence) or employ a single research approach. This study advances existing research by simultaneously analysing three interrelated dimensions of speaking skills: fluency, accuracy, and confidence within one integrated analytical framework.

Second, this research is novel in its contextual specificity. Empirical studies on TPS are still limited in under-researched regions of Eastern Indonesia, particularly at the junior high school level. By situating the study at SMP Negeri 7 Kupang, this research provides empirical evidence from a geographically and socio-educationally distinct context, thereby enriching the diversity of EFL research settings in Indonesia.

Third, the novelty of this study lies in its methodological integration. Using a mixed-methods design, the research not only measures the effectiveness of TPS quantitatively but also explains how and why the strategy influences students' speaking performance through qualitative classroom phenomena. This approach responds to the gap in prior studies that often report outcomes without sufficiently explaining the pedagogical processes behind them.

Fourth, this study contributes novelty by aligning the implementation of TPS with the principles of *Kurikulum Merdeka*, which emphasises student-centred learning, collaboration, and active participation. Empirical evidence linking TPS explicitly with *Kurikulum Merdeka* at the classroom level remains scarce. Therefore, this study provides a practical and policy-relevant contribution by demonstrating how TPS operationalises the curriculum's pedagogical ideals in real classroom practice.

Considering these four dimensions of novelty, analytical, contextual, methodological, and curricular position, this study makes a meaningful contribution to EFL pedagogy and cooperative learning research, particularly for junior high school education in Indonesia. Based on the above background, the research problems are formulated as follows: (1) To what extent does the Think-Pair-Share strategy enhance students' fluency, accuracy, and confidence in speaking English? and (2) How does the Think-Pair-Share strategy contribute to students' engagement in speaking activities?

Accordingly, this article aims to analyse the improvement of students' speaking performance after the implementation of TPS and to explain the processes through which TPS facilitates students' speaking performance.

METHOD

This study employed a mixed-methods approach as proposed by Creswell (2009). Quantitative data were collected and analysed first to determine the effectiveness of the TPS strategy, followed by qualitative data to explain and enrich the quantitative results. This design was chosen to provide both measurable outcomes and an in-depth understanding of classroom processes.

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 7 Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. The participants were 30 students in the eighth-grade class in the 2025/2026 academic year. The class was selected because students at this level are

developing basic communicative competence in English.

Three instruments were used. (1) speaking tests administered as pre-test and post-test to measure fluency, accuracy, and confidence; (2) classroom observation sheets to record students' participation, interaction, and engagement during TPS activities, and (3) semi-structured interview guidelines to explore students' perceptions of the TPS strategy.

The study was conducted in several stages. First, a pre-test was administered to identify students' initial speaking ability. Second, the TPS strategy was implemented over three instructional sessions, following the stages of Think, Pair, and Share. During the implementation, classroom

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated the extent to which the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) strategy improves eighth-grade students' speaking performance, specifically fluency, accuracy, and confidence, as well as how the strategy facilitates students' engagement in EFL speaking activities. The findings of this study can be presented as follows (see Table 1):

Table 1. Comparison of Students' Speaking Performance Before and After the Implementation of Think-Pair-Share (TPS)

Indicators	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Total Score	1.582	1.917
Average Score	52.73	63.90
Fluency	2.0 (50%)	2.63 (65.83%)
Accuracy	2.1 (54.17%)	2.56 (64.17%)
Confidence	2.1 (54.17%)	2.53 (63.33%)
Students \geq 70 KKM	10 Students	13 Students

The quantitative findings in Table 1 demonstrate that the implementation of the TPS strategy resulted in a measurable improvement in students' overall speaking performance. The mean speaking score increased from 52.73 in the pre-test to 63.90 in the post-test, indicating a positive instructional impact. In addition, the number of students achieving the Minimum Mastery Criterion

observations were conducted. After the intervention, a post-test was administered using the same speaking rubric. Finally, Interviews were conducted with selected students to obtain qualitative insights

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics to compare pre-test and post-test scores. Qualitative data from observations and interviews were analysed thematically to identify patterns related to student engagement, confidence, and interaction (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Triangulation was applied to enhance the validity of the findings.

(KKM \geq 70) increased from 10 to 13 students, suggesting progress toward mastery, although optimal achievement was not attained by all learners.

Among the three assessed dimensions, fluency showed the most substantial improvement, rising from an average score of 2.0 (50%) to 2.63 (65.83%). This finding indicates that students were able to speak more smoothly with fewer pauses after participating in TPS-based instruction. Speaking accuracy also improved from 2.1 (54.17%) to 2.56 (64.17%), reflecting a reduction in grammatical and pronunciation errors. Similarly, students' speaking confidence increased from 2.1 (54.17%) to 2.53 (63.33%), suggesting greater willingness to speak and improved self-assurance when presenting ideas orally.

These data suggest that the Think stage provided students with essential space to organize their ideas independently before speaking. This aligns with Phan and Do (2021), who state that TPS offers learners sufficient planning time, leading to smoother oral production and reduced hesitation.

The enhancement in fluency was further confirmed by interview results, in which 7 out of 10 students reported that TPS facilitated more fluent speech through peer discussion. During the treatment process, specifically in the Think stage, students were required to create brief notes and mini mind maps regarding a person's physical and personality traits. This structured preparation effectively minimised the long pauses observed in the pre-test. Similarly, Mena (2022) emphasises that the supportive structure of TPS assists students in speaking more continuously and confidently.

Regarding speaking accuracy, the average score increased from 2.1 (54.17%) to 2.56

(64.17%). This progress was driven by intensive interaction during the Pair stage, where students engaged in peer correction of adjectives and grammar. In interviews, Student S6 noted that they could mutually correct their English sentences. This process is consistent with Apriyanti and Ayu (2020), who argue that TPS encourages learners to recognise and rectify language errors through collaborative discussion before presenting ideas to the class.

Qualitative data from classroom observations and interviews explain how and why TPS contributed to these improvements. Classroom observation results yielded an average student engagement score of 70.67, indicating a moderate to high level of participation across the Think, Pair, and Share stages. Students who actively engaged in all stages, particularly during peer discussion and sharing, tended to achieve higher post-test scores, whereas students who remained passive during these stages continued to perform below the Minimum Mastery Criterion. Interview findings further revealed that TPS reduced students' speaking anxiety by allowing them time to organise ideas individually and refine them collaboratively before speaking in front of the class. Most interviewed students reported that peer interaction helped them speak more fluently and confidently, as they felt supported and less afraid of making mistakes. Peer correction during the Pair stage was perceived as particularly beneficial for improving accuracy, while the Share stage provided authentic opportunities for public speaking practice. This finding is consistent with Ajeng (2022) explains that speaking anxiety is often rooted in the fear of making mistakes; by providing a non-threatening environment through small group discussions, TPS successfully fostered a sense of security.

From a scientific and pedagogical perspective, the findings of this study elucidate what aspects of speaking improved, why these improvements occurred, and how the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) strategy facilitated the improvement process. In terms of what improved, students demonstrated measurable gains in speaking fluency, accuracy, and confidence following the implementation of TPS.

The reasons why these improvements occurred can be attributed to the supportive and collaborative learning environment created through TPS, which reduced speaking anxiety and encouraged active learner participation. The

manner in which TPS facilitated these improvements lies in its structured instructional stages: the Think stage enhanced students' cognitive readiness by allowing individual planning and idea organisation, the Pair stage provided peer scaffolding and opportunities for mutual feedback and error correction, and the Share stage offered guided public speaking practice that gradually strengthened learners' confidence and oral performance (Lestariningsih & Darmawan, 2023).

However, the findings also indicate that the effectiveness of TPS varied depending on individual engagement and group dynamics. A small number of students reported confusion during group discussions or discomfort due to unsupportive peer behaviour, highlighting the importance of teacher monitoring and the establishment of a respectful and inclusive classroom climate. This suggests that while TPS provides a supportive instructional framework, its success is contingent upon meaningful student participation and effective classroom management.

Overall, the integration of quantitative gains and qualitative classroom evidence confirms that the Think-Pair-Share strategy positively influences students' speaking skills, with fluency showing the most prominent development, followed by accuracy and confidence. These findings are consistent with previous studies reporting that TPS enhances speaking performance and learner confidence through collaborative learning and peer interaction. Moreover, this study extends prior research by demonstrating the effectiveness of TPS in the specific context of *SMP Negeri 7 Kupang and within the Kurikulum Merdeka* framework, thereby reinforcing the relevance of TPS as an effective pedagogical strategy for contemporary Indonesian EFL classrooms.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the Think-Pair-Share strategy plays a significant role in improving eighth-grade students' speaking skills, particularly in terms of fluency, accuracy, and confidence. TPS also fosters active engagement and creates a supportive learning environment that encourages students to use English with greater confidence. Therefore, TPS is recommended as an effective instructional strategy for EFL speaking classes in junior high schools.

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