

The Use of Cooper's Modified Think Pair Share Technique in Improving Students' Speaking Skill

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Abstract

This research aimed to help students at SMP Negeri 19 Pontianak improve their speaking skills by applying Cooper's Modified Think Pair Share Technique, the latest modification of the original Think Pair Share Technique, emphasizing student-centered learning. The focus of improving speaking skills was on procedural text material related to water-saving. Students created texts on four randomly assigned topics, which included washing dishes, washing vehicles, washing clothes, and watering plants. The research employed a classroom action research method with 32 students from class 8D at SMP Negeri 19 Pontianak as the participants. The researcher collected data using observation sheets, field notes, and oral assessments. The study was conducted over two cycles. In Cycle I, students had an average score of 66.44, which increased to 71.72 in Cycle II, exceeding the Learning Objective Accomplishment Criteria (KKTP) of 71. This indicates that Cooper's Modified Think Pair Share Technique effectively enhances students' speaking skills.

Keywords: Cooperative Learning; Speaking Skill; Think Pair Share

INTRODUCTION

A key component of learning English as a foreign language is developing speaking skills, as the main goal of language acquisition is to effectively understand and communicate in the target language. A learner's proficiency in speaking serves as a vital measure of their communication ability in the target language (Zyoud, 2016). Rao (2019) stated that in a globalized world, effective communication is essential for success in all aspects, facilitated by the use of language. Speaking is an ability that deserves to be emphasized. Many of the learners' most fundamental transactions require them to speak confidently. It is the most commonly evaluated skill and the one that determines the way someone will accept or miss chances in life (Namaziandost et al., 2018). Richards (2008) stated that speaking involves doing something, generating ideas, figuring something out, or simply socializing with others. Burns and Joyce (1997, as cited in Leong & Ahmadi, 2017) defined speaking as the process of creating meaning through the production, reception, and understanding of information. Effective speaking abilities are essential and significantly impact communication in any language, especially when individuals are using a language other than their native one (Altun & Sabah, 2020).

In conclusion, speaking ability is crucial for EFL students as it supports their everyday interactions and is fundamental in higher education and the workplace. However, speaking ability remains a challenge for students in class 8D at SMP Negeri 19 Pontianak. Observations conducted by the researcher revealed that almost all students faced difficulties in speaking English, such as mispronouncing words, using incorrect grammar, stuttering, and lacking confidence. These issues arose because students were not accustomed to speaking English in the classroom and did not utilize vocabulary properly. For example, they were unsure about which activities, topics, or conversations to use certain vocabulary and how to construct grammatically correct sentences. Additionally, students' lack of confidence was influenced by

anxiety, fear of judgment, and limited experience with speaking English. Without proper teaching techniques, students might remain fearful of learning to speak English.

Therefore, Cooper's Modified Think Pair Share Technique was the method the researcher proposed to address this issue. This technique was the latest modification of the original Think Pair Share Technique, first proposed by Lyman (1981, as cited in Sembert et al., 2021). It is a form of cooperative learning that relies on collaboration between students to solve problems or explain a particular topic, involving three stages: thinking, pairing, and sharing. In the thinking stage, students reflected individually on a question. In the pairing stage, they discussed their thoughts with a partner. Finally, in the sharing stage, they presented their ideas to the class. Furthermore, a modification made by Cooper (2018) added several enhancements to this structure. Before class, students engaged in independent reading on the topic and developed at least two questions, which deepened their understanding and prepared them for the discussion. This pre-class activity expanded the traditional thinking stage. During the pairing stage, students not only shared their initial reflections but also exchanged and attempted to answer each other's questions, fostering deeper engagement. In the final sharing stage, each pair selected their best questions to present to the class. The teacher initially addressed the first one or two questions, and the remaining questions were discussed openly among the students. This modification placed greater emphasis on student-centered learning and active participation, aligning the technique with evolving educational needs.

Several studies have examined the Think Pair Share Technique and its impact on learning, particularly in speaking skills and critical thinking. Apriyanti and Ayu (2020) investigated its effectiveness in engaging students in classroom speaking activities through a descriptive qualitative study. Their research focused on eighth-grade students at a junior high school in Bandar Lampung, where the technique was applied to storytelling material. The results indicated that the Think Pair Share Technique positively influenced students' learning process in storytelling. Specifically, students were able to identify key points of a story, structure them into a coherent and engaging narrative, and effectively deliver the story using hand props to support the main ideas.

Despite previous research on the Think Pair Share Technique, no studies have specifically applied Cooper's Modified Think Pair Share Technique to improving students' speaking skills. The only study utilizing this technique was conducted by Kurjum et al. (2020), which focused on enhancing students' critical thinking in Islamic studies. This quasi-experimental research involved 209 university students, with 108 in the experimental group and 101 in the control group. The study aimed to develop students' critical thinking and promote a more student-centered learning environment. The findings showed that students taught using Cooper's Modified Think Pair Share Technique demonstrated greater improvement in critical thinking skills than those taught using conventional methods.

Previous research on the Think Pair Share Technique for teaching speaking skills primarily employed qualitative methods and focused on storytelling, following Lyman's (1981) original model. In contrast, studies on Cooper's Modified Think Pair Share Technique emphasized critical thinking and used a quasi-experimental approach with university students. However, neither study provided detailed explanations of the curricula used in the schools where the research was conducted.

This study addresses that gap by conducting classroom action research with the Merdeka Curriculum. It applies Cooper's Modified Think Pair Share Technique to teaching procedural texts to enhance students' speaking skills. Through classroom observations, this study examines how the modified technique improves students' speaking abilities. Specifically, it integrates the technique into the theme "Presenting a Procedure for Saving Water," which promotes water conservation as part of environmental education.

To better align the technique with procedural text instruction, some adjustments were made. The requirement for students to formulate two questions during the “Thinking” stage was removed. In the “Pairing” stage, instead of asking partners questions, students focused on discussing and compiling procedural texts. Later, they had the opportunity to ask other groups questions. Finally, during “Sharing” stage, students presented the procedural texts they had created. Any remaining questions were addressed in a reflection session, where teachers and students discussed them together.

METHOD

This research employed Classroom Action Research, adhering to the four phases outlined in the model developed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988 as cited in Burns & Rochsantiningasih, 2006) which consisted of planning, taking action, conducting observations, and doing reflections. The research was conducted over two cycles, involving 32 students from class 8D at SMP Negeri 19 Pontianak. Data collection involved observation sheets completed by the English teacher of class 8D, who served as a collaborator. Additional data were collected through the researcher's own observations and supplementary notes from the collaborator during the study. An oral test was also conducted to assess the students’ speaking skills related to water-saving practices at home. Since the speaking material was based on procedural texts, the students’ oral test scores were evaluated based on both their writing of the procedural text and their speaking skills when presenting it. After evaluating the students’ oral tests, the researcher compiled all of the score data. The average score (mean) of the class 8D students was calculated using this data. If the students’ mean score met the Learning Objective Accomplishment Criteria of 71, it could be said that their speaking skills had improved. The formula for finding the mean value, according to Peck et al. (2008) is as follows:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{n}$$

X = Mean

Σx = The total number of student scores

n = Total of students

For the procedural text scoring system, the researcher used the following scoring rubric:

Table 1. Procedure Text Scoring Rubric

Components	Points	Description
Goals	20	Excellent to very good: Clearly stated the purpose
	15	Good to average: Related to the purpose
	10	Fair to poor: Purpose may be stated
	5	Very poor: Purpose not clearly stated
Materials needed	16-20	Excellent to very good: Mentioning all the material and the tools used
	11-15	Good to average: mentioning some of the material and tools used
	6-10	Fair to poor: Mentioning only one of the materials or tools used

The steps	0-5	Very poor: Mentioning unrelated items or not mentioning the material and tools at all
	16-20	Excellent to very good: Stated the steps in order
	11-15	Good to average: Stated the steps almost in order
	6-10	Fair to poor: Stated the steps with less order
Present tense	0-5	Very poor: Stated the steps out of order
	16-20	Excellent to very good: Correct in using simple present tense
	11-15	Good to average: Mostly correct in using simple present tense
	6-10	Fair to poor: Frequently incorrect in using simple present tense
	0-5	Very poor: Consistently incorrect in using the simple present tense

Adapted from Heaton (1988, as cited in Darmadi, 2015)

Then, for the oral test scoring rubric, the researcher used the rubric shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Oral Test Scoring Rubric

Criteria	5–Excellent	4–Good	3–Fair	2–Poor	1–Bad
Grammar	Shows an excellent degree of control of simple grammatical forms.	Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms.	Shows sufficient control of simple grammatical forms.	Shows poor control of simple grammatical forms.	Shows only limited control of a few grammatical forms.
Vocabulary	Uses a wide range of well-chosen vocabulary.	Uses a good range of relatively well-chosen vocabulary.	Uses an adequate range of vocabulary.	Uses basic vocabulary with some words clearly lacking.	Uses vocabulary that doesn't match the task.
Pronunciation	Pronunciation is excellent; highly intelligible.	Pronunciation is good; mostly intelligible.	Pronunciation is sufficient; reasonably intelligible.	Pronunciation is okay; often unintelligible.	Pronunciation is lacking; hard to understand.

Fluency	Maintains simple exchanges; with few to no hesitations.	Maintains simple exchanges; few hesitations.	Maintains simple exchanges despite some difficulty; some hesitations.	Has considerable difficulty maintaining simple exchanges; hesitant with some sentences left uncompleted.	Has considerable difficulty maintaining simple exchanges; hesitant and strained except for memorized phrases.
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Cited from Damayanti et al. (2022 p. 135)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of the research, along with some detailed information, are shown in the following table and figures.

Table 3. The Results of Students' Oral Tests in Cycle I

No.	Category	Score
1.	The Highest Score	78
2.	The Lowest Score	53
3.	The Average Score	66,44

Figure 1. Students' Oral Test Score Classification in Cycle I

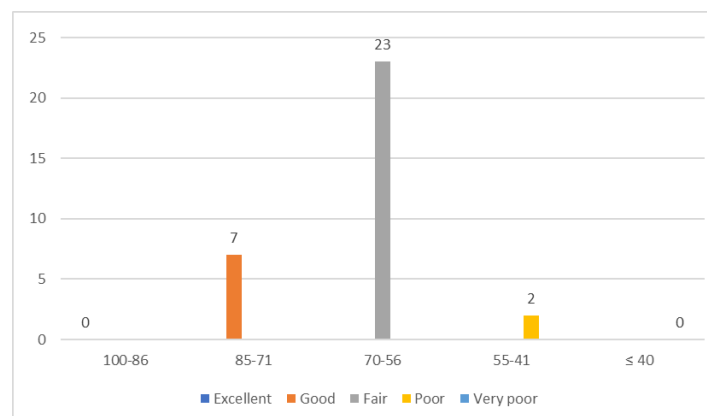
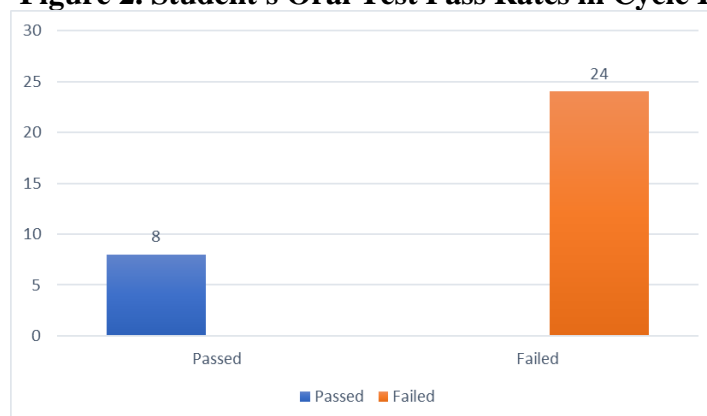


Figure 2. Student's Oral Test Pass Rates in Cycle I



1. Cycle I

As shown in Table 3, the average score was 66.44, with the highest score being 78 and the lowest 53. The classification of scores, as presented in Figure 1, indicates that no students scored below 40. Only two students scored within the 41 to 55 range, which is classified as poor category. The largest group, consisting of 23 students, scored between 56 and 70, placing them in the fair category. Meanwhile, seven students scored between 71 and 85, placing them in the good category. Unfortunately, no students achieved an excellent score (86 to 100).

The chart in Figure 2 illustrates students' oral test pass rates in Cycle I, clearly comparing those who passed with those who did not. Only eight students passed the oral test, while 23 did not. In Cycle I, many student groups did not actively engage in the learning process because they did not fully understand their assigned tasks. As a result, their procedural texts did not follow the generic structure or include the necessary language features. During the grading of oral test scores in Cycle I, various student characteristics were observed. The two groups that volunteered to take the oral test first demonstrated strong text memorization skills. However, individual performance varied. While some students had good pronunciation, most struggled with pronouncing English words and lacked confidence, as evidenced by their lack of eye contact, low voice volume, stuttering, and frequent pauses.

Since the average oral test score in Cycle I was only 66.44, which was below the Learning Objective Accomplishment Criteria of 71, the researcher decided to revise the lesson plan and continue the research into Cycle II. The revisions included the following solutions:

1. Eliminating the “Question and Answer” sessions between student groups, as they took up too much time.
2. Emphasizing learning activities that promote active student involvement.
3. Ensuring that discussions between pairs encouraged equal participation.
4. Motivating students to compose well-structured procedural texts and improve their English-speaking skills.

Continuing to Cycle II, the research findings can be seen in the table and figure below:

Table 4. The Results of Students' Oral Tests in Cycle II

No.	Category	Score
1.	The Highest Score	83
2.	The Lowest Score	62
3.	The Average Score	71,72

Figure 3. Students' Oral Test Score Classification in Cycle II

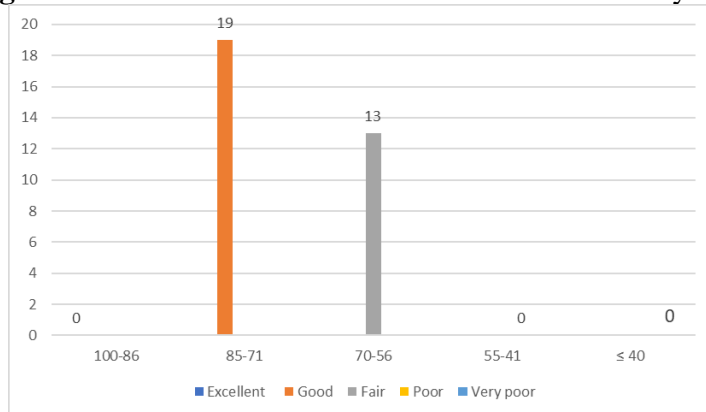
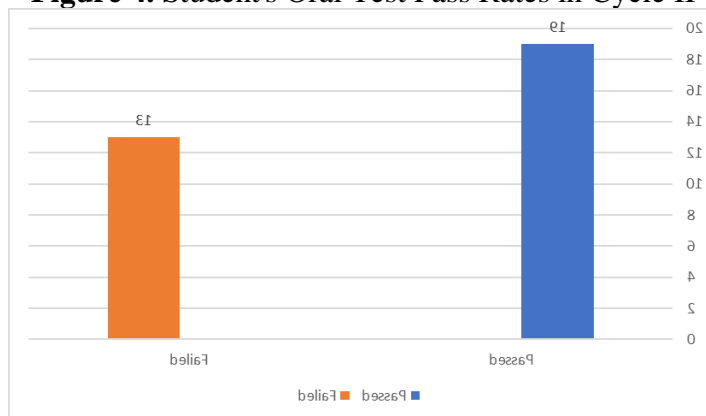


Figure 4. Student's Oral Test Pass Rates in Cycle II



2. Cycle II

Based on the data on students' oral test results in Cycle II, as shown in Table 4, the average oral test score was 71.72, with the highest score being 83 and the lowest 62. The classification of students' oral test scores, as presented in Figure 3, indicates that no students scored below 40. Additionally, no students fell within the poor category (41 to 55). However, 13 students were classified under the fair category within the range of 56 to 70. Furthermore, 19 students scored between 71 and 85, placing them in the good category, which was the largest group. Notably, no students attained a score within the excellent range (86 to 100).

The chart in Figure 4 illustrates the pass rates for students oral tests in Cycle II, comparing those who passed with those who did not. In this cycle, 19 students passed the oral test, while 13 did not. The data suggest an improvement in students' speaking skills in Cycle II compared to Cycle I. Initially, in Cycle I, most students were classified in the fair category (56 to 70). However, in Cycle II, the majority advanced to the good category (71 to 85).

Following the revision of the lesson plan for Cycle II, noticeable improvements were observed in students' learning processes. In this cycle, students demonstrated a clearer understanding of their tasks, and feedback from Cycle I enabled them to identify areas requiring improvement. The researcher also observed enhanced group dynamics, with students actively engaging in discussions to refine their procedural texts. Additionally, students provided peer support in memorizing their texts before the second oral test. These positive developments contributed to significant improvements in students' speaking abilities, including more accurate pronunciation, increased eye contact during presentations, and reduced nervousness due to prior

oral test experiences. Although some students still used filler words and exhibited stuttering, these issues were less pronounced compared to Cycle I.

The improvement in students' speaking skills was also reflected in the average oral test score of 71.72, which met the Learning Objective Accomplishment Criteria of 71. Therefore, it can be concluded that Cooper's Modified Think Pair Share Technique effectively enhanced students' speaking skills in Cycle II, signifying the completion of the research.

Discussion

The data collected from Cycle I to Cycle II clearly showed that Cooper's Modified Think Pair Share Technique significantly enhanced students' speaking abilities. This improvement was evident from the rise in average oral test scores, which increased from 66.44 in Cycle I to 71.72 in Cycle II, exceeding the Learning Objective Accomplishment Criteria (KKTP) score of 71. By using Cooper's Modified Think Pair Share Technique, students participated in discussions that promoted greater classroom engagement. This collaborative approach also contributed in reducing their anxiety about making mistakes during speaking activities. The technique allowed students to present their individual thoughts and collaborative outcomes to both their classmates and the teacher, creating a classroom environment rich in speaking activities. This fostered a more dynamic atmosphere, helping students overcome anxiety and shyness. As their confidence grew, they became more motivated to improve their speaking skills. Cooper's Modified Think Pair Share Technique promoted student-centered learning by encouraging active engagement with the material. The teacher's role was to facilitate the learning process, ensuring all students made progress while providing continuous positive reinforcement to keep them motivated.

CONCLUSION

This is because the technique provided students with more speaking opportunities in class, which facilitated their adaptation and reduced nervousness or fear associated with speaking tasks. The findings and discussions from this study lead to the conclusion that Cooper's Modified Think Pair Share Technique effectively improved students' speaking abilities. Additionally, the learning activities incorporating this technique could be tailored to students' needs and interests, aligning with its goal of promoting student-centered learning and fostering cooperation among students to create an effective learning environment.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, the writer wishes to express deep gratitude to Allah SWT for granting ease, strength, and good health, which made it possible to complete this research. Additionally, the writer extends heartfelt thanks to Mr. Eusabinus Bunau, S.Pd., M.Si., Ph.D., and Mrs. Wardah, S.Pd., M.Pd., for their valuable support, including feedback, suggestions, and encouragement, which played a significant role in helping the writer finish her research. Furthermore, the author wishes to extend her heartfelt thanks to her parents, family, and friends for their constant love and steadfast support throughout her educational journey.

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