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The Effect of Think-Pair-Share on Eleventh Grade Students' Speaking Performance: A Quasi-Experimental Study

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ABSTRACT

Students in EFL classrooms often exhibit low participation in speaking activities, leading to passive interaction and limited oral practice. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the effect of applying the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique on improving students' speaking skills at SMAN 5 Palu. A quasi-experimental design with pre-test and post-test was employed involving two intact classes selected through purposive sampling: class XI M9 as the experimental group and class XI M7 as the control group, each consisting of 35 students. The experimental group received instruction using the TPS technique, while the control group received conventional instruction. Students' speaking performance was assessed based on accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility. Data from pre- and post-tests were analyzed using an independent-samples t-test. The results showed a statistically significant improvement in students' speaking skills after the implementation of the TPS technique. The experimental mean score increased from 30.20 on the pre-test to 67.14 on the post-test, whereas the control group showed only a slight increase from 30.40 to 41.45. The statistical analysis indicated a significant difference between the two groups, t (68) = 12.20, $p < .05$. These findings indicate that the Think-Pair-Share technique is effective in enhancing students' speaking performance.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking skills play a central role in educational contexts, enabling learners to express ideas, opinions, and emotions while engaging in meaningful communication. Through speaking, students can interact with others, exchange information, and actively participate in both academic and social contexts. Alfadley and Qasem [1] define communication as the exchange of ideas, feelings, and information through spoken

language, emphasizing its role as a primary medium for interaction. In language learning, speaking is viewed as an interactive process in which learners negotiate meaning, respond to feedback, and co-construct understanding with others [2]. This suggests that speaking is not merely the production of correct sounds but a dynamic process that involves linguistic, cognitive, and social engagement. Therefore, effective speaking instruction aims to develop learners' communicative competence by fostering their ability to communicate ideas accurately, fluently, and meaningfully in real-life situations [3].

Despite its central role in language learning, many EFL students still struggle to develop effective speaking skills. Preliminary observations at SMAN 5 Palu revealed that eleventh-grade students showed low participation and limited confidence during speaking activities. Most students were hesitant to respond to oral questions in English. At the same time, only a few actively participated in classroom interaction. This condition was largely influenced by teacher-centered instruction for meaningful oral communication, resulting in underdeveloped speaking performance, particularly in fluency, accuracy, and comprehensibility. Classroom records and teacher reports indicated that students' speaking performance had not yet met the expected minimum standard, and fewer than half actively participated in speaking activities. Previous studies have similarly identified that speaking is one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners. Rao [4] emphasizes that learners often struggle to speak fluently due to excessive hesitation and limited opportunities for spontaneous language use. Philp [5] further notes that speaking fluency develops through meaningful interaction rather than a sole focus on linguistic form. In terms of accuracy, Migdadi [6] explains that it refers to the appropriate application of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, ensuring linguistic precision in oral production, while Gilakjani & Sabouri [7] highlight that accurate pronunciation enhances intelligibility even when grammatical errors occur. Moreover, Alqahtani [8] and Rustandi et al. [9] underline that limited vocabulary mastery constrains learners' ability to construct meaningful spoken sentences. Comprehensibility is also identified as a critical challenge, as Soraya [10] asserts that successful oral communication depends on the listener's ability to understand the speaker's intended message. Taken together, these findings indicate that speaking difficulties among EFL learners are not merely individual shortcomings but are closely related to instructional practices that limit interactive speaking opportunities.

To address these challenges, teachers are encouraged to implement interactive instructional strategies that promote active participation and meaningful oral communication in EFL classrooms. One such approach is the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique, a cooperative learning strategy proposed initially by Lyman [11], which engages students in structured stages of individual thinking, peer discussion, and class sharing. In Indonesian, cooperative learning promotes group collaboration and shared responsibility among students [12]. TPS functions as a cooperative discussion strategy consisting of three phases: learners initially reflect independently on a given prompt or topic, then exchange their ideas with a peer, and ultimately present the outcome of their discussion to the whole class [13]. This technique is grounded in Vygotsky's [14] Social Constructivist Theory, which emphasizes that learning develops through social interaction and collaborative support within the Zone of Proximal Development. Previous studies have

demonstrated the effectiveness of TPS in improving students' speaking performance. Supraba [15] reported that TPS significantly enhanced students' speaking ability and attitudes toward learning, while Putri & Dangin [16] reported increases in confidence, motivation, and accuracy. Similarly, Aeni [17] observed that TPS created a positive classroom atmosphere that encouraged fluency and the expression of ideas.

Additionally, Rullu & Abdullah [18] confirmed that the TPS technique significantly improved students' speaking ability. One of the earliest applications of TPS was conducted by Elvanah [19]. In civic education, it demonstrates its adaptability across subjects and learning environments. These findings indicate that the Think-Pair-Share technique provides an interactive and supportive framework for developing students' speaking skills in EFL classrooms. However, to understand why TPS is effective in facilitating speaking development, it is necessary to examine its theoretical foundation in relation to language learning processes.

The Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique can effectively stimulate learners' engagement and help them express their ideas with greater clarity and organization during oral communication [19]. Brown and Yule [20] describe speaking as an interactive activity in which meaning is exchanged between speakers and listeners. Slavin [21] indicates that cooperative learning promotes interaction and mutual responsibility among students. The TPS model also allows students to work both individually and collaboratively, fostering a balance between independent thinking and cooperative problem-solving (Kaddoura [22]). Vygotsky explains that learning develops through social interaction within the Zone of Proximal Development, where peers support each other's understanding. Lyman adds that the Think-Pair-Share technique reflects these principles by engaging students in thinking, collaborating, and sharing ideas through communicative activities. Through these stages, TPS provides opportunities for learners to develop speaking accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility through guided interaction and peer support.

Despite previous studies confirming the effectiveness of the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique in enhancing students' speaking performance, most existing research has been conducted at the university or junior high school level and predominantly employed qualitative or classroom action research designs. Limited empirical evidence is available regarding the implementation of TPS in Indonesian senior high school EFL contexts, particularly using a quantitative experimental approach to measure students' speaking performance across specific components such as accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility. Moreover, few studies have examined the effectiveness of TPS by comparing experimental and control groups through statistical testing to establish measurable differences in speaking outcomes. This gap limits the generalizability of existing findings and underscores the need for empirical quantitative evidence at the senior high school level.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether the Think-pair-Share technique significantly improves the speaking performance of eleventh-grade students at SMAN 5 Palu. Specifically, this research seeks to determine whether students taught through the TPS technique achieve better speaking performance than those taught through conventional teacher-centered instruction. Accordingly, the research hypothesis is formulated as follows: *H_1: The application of the Think-Pair-Share technique significantly*

improves students' speaking performance compared to the conventional teaching method. This study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of TPS in improving EFL learners' speaking skills and offering pedagogical insights for English teachers in designing more interactive, communicative, and student-centered speaking instruction at the senior high school level.

2. METHOD

This study employed a quasi-experimental design using a pre-test and post-test control group format. The design was selected because the researcher worked with intact classes that could not be randomly assigned. Two groups were involved: an experimental group that received instruction through the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique and a control group that was taught using conventional teacher-centered instruction. The purpose of this design was to examine whether the application of the Think-Pair-Share technique resulted in a significant improvement in students' speaking performance.

The study population consisted of all eleventh-grade students at SMAN 5 Palu during the 2024/2025 academic year. Two intact classes, XI M7 and XI M9, each consisting of 35 students, were selected as the research sample. Class XI M9 was assigned as the experimental group, while Class XI M7 served as the control group.

Purposive sampling was applied based on explicit inclusion criteria: (1) the same teacher taught both classes, (2) they followed the same curriculum and learning materials, and (3) they demonstrated relatively similar English proficiency levels based on prior classroom observation and school academic records. To further confirm group equivalence, a speaking pre-test was administered to both groups before the treatment. The comparable pre-test mean scores indicated that the two groups had similar initial speaking performance. The pre-test results showed no statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups, confirming initial group equivalence prior to the treatment and allowing post-test differences to be more confidently attributed to the implementation of the Think-Pair-Share technique.

The treatment was conducted over four instructional sessions, each lasting 120 minutes. During these sessions, the experimental group was taught using the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique to enhance students' speaking skills, while the control group received conventional teacher-centered instruction. Both groups were taught the same speaking materials and topics, including expressing opinions, describing past experiences, giving advice, and discussing future plans, to ensure instructional equivalence in content and time allocation.

In the experimental group, the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique was implemented consistently across all sessions through three structured stages. In the *think* stage, students were given a speaking prompt related to the lesson topic and allotted time to think individually and organize their ideas. In the *pair* stage, students discussed their responses with their partner to clarify ideas, rehearse expressions, and receive peer support. In the *share* stage, students presented or expressed their ideas orally to the class or responded to teacher-guided questions. This sequence was applied in each session to ensure consistency of implementation and to provide students with repeated opportunities for oral practice.

Meanwhile, the control group was taught using conventional teaching methods, primarily teacher explanations, model dialogues, and individual student responses, without structured peer discussion. The duration of instruction and the speaking topics covered in the control group were equivalent to those in the experimental group, ensuring that the primary difference between the two groups lay in the instructional strategy rather than in content or instructional time.

The Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique served as the independent variable, while students' speaking proficiency was the dependent variable. Speaking performance was evaluated based on three components such as accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility using a speaking test administered before and after the treatment. The assessment instrument was adapted from Heaton [23], with the original scoring scale simplified into a four-point scale (1-4) to suit the proficiency level of senior high school students while preserving the original assessment criteria.

Students' performances were scored using an analytical rubric and a consistent scoring procedure for both tests. The researcher, as a single rater, following the rubric descriptors, conducted the assessment. To ensure content validity, the adapted speaking rubric was reviewed by English education lecturers to evaluate its relevance and clarity in relation to the assessment criteria. Prior to the actual scoring, the researcher conducted a pilot scoring to familiarize themselves with the rubric descriptors and ensure consistent application of the scoring criteria. Although inter-rater reliability was not examined, the use of an established rubric and uniform scoring criteria was intended to enhance scoring consistency. The absence of inter-rater reliability is acknowledged as a limitation of this study. The test required students to perform short dialogues on topics practiced during the treatment sessions, such as expressing opinions, describing past experiences, giving advice, and discussing future plans. Students' performances were evaluated using an analytical scoring rubric adapted from Daryanto [24], which assessed three components:

- **Accuracy:** correct use of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.
- **Fluency:** smooth and continuous speech with minimal hesitation.
- **Comprehensibility:** clarity and ease of understanding for the listener.

The research was carried out in three stages:

- **Pre-test:** Administered to both groups to measure their initial speaking performance.
- **Treatment:** Conducted over four meetings. The Think-Pair-Share technique was used, while the control group received the same material through conventional teacher-centered methods.
- **Post-test:** Administered to both groups after the treatment to assess improvement in speaking ability.

A quantitative analysis of students' pre-test and post-test scores was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were calculated manually using Microsoft Excel. A t-test, as outlined by Arikunto [25], was then applied to examine whether a statistically significant difference existed between the experimental and control groups.

Prior to hypothesis testing, an independent-samples t-test was considered appropriate given the balanced sample sizes and the test's robustness to moderately

distributed data. Hypothesis testing was performed at a 0.05 level of significance, and when the calculated t-value exceeded the t-table value, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted, indicating a significant effect of the Think-Pair-Share technique on students' speaking performance. Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted with caution and viewed as preliminary quantitative evidence within the context of this study.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique was effective in improving students' speaking performance. Analysis of the pre-test and post-test scores indicated that the experimental group taught using TPS showed greater improvement than the control group taught through conventional instruction. Overall, the results demonstrate that the Think-Pair-Share technique improved speaking performance in fluency, accuracy, and comprehensibility.

3.1 Results

The pre-test results indicated that the experimental and control groups demonstrated comparable levels of speaking performance prior to the implementation of the treatment. The experimental group achieved a mean pre-test score of 30.20, whereas the control group recorded a mean score of 30.40. These findings indicated that the two groups began the study with relatively equivalent proficiency levels in accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility study.

Table 1. Pre-test Results of the Experimental and Control Groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Experimental	35	30.20	6.48	25	42
Control	35	30.40	6.70	25	50

The data in Table 1 show that both groups had comparable mean scores prior to the treatment, indicating that the students' speaking ability was at a similar level.

Following the treatment, the post-test was administered to assess improvement in speaking performance.

Table 2. Post-test Results of the Experimental and Control Groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Experimental	35	67.14	9.77	50	92
Control	35	41.45	8.73	25	58

After four treatment sessions, the post-test results showed that the experimental group performed better than the control group. The experimental group attained a mean score of 67.14, whereas the control group recorded a mean score of 41.45.

Table 3. Gain Score Comparison of the Experimental and Control Groups

Group	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Gain
Experimental	30.20	67.14	36.94
Control	30.40	41.45	11.06

The experimental group obtained a gain score of 36.94, which was markedly higher than that of the control group (11.06).
To examine the research hypothesis, a t-test analysis was conducted.

Table 4. Independent Sample t-test Result

t-counted	t-table (0.05, df=68)	Decision
12.20	1.668	Ha accepted

The computed t-value (12.20) exceeded the critical t-table value at the 0.05 level of significance with 68 degrees of freedom. These results indicate a statistically significant difference in speaking performance between the experimental and control groups competence.

3.2 Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique led to statistically significant improvements in students' speaking performance, including fluency, accuracy, and comprehensibility. Among these sub-skills, fluency demonstrated the most substantial improvement in the experimental group. In addition to fluency, improvements were also observed in accuracy, indicating better control of grammatical structure, vocabulary use, and pronunciation during oral communication. Nevertheless, comprehensibility remains a crucial component of effective spoken communication, as it determines the extent to which listeners can understand the speaker's intended message [26]. The higher post-test mean score and gain score of the experimental group compared to the control group, as well as the significant t-test result. These results provide empirical evidence that TPS positively contributed to students' speaking development in the context of this study.

The observed improvements may be interpreted through the instructional structure of the Think-Pair-Share technique, which systematically provides opportunities for individual thinking, peer interaction, and public sharing. During the think stage, students are encouraged to organize their thoughts before speaking, while the pair stage allows them to rehearse ideas and receive peer support. The share stage further provides opportunities for oral practice in a broader classroom context. These structured stages may have increased students' opportunities for meaningful interaction and speaking practice, which are essential for developing fluency and accuracy. This interpretation is consistent with Slavin's cooperative learning theory and Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective, which emphasize the role of social interaction and scaffolding in language development.

Although previous studies have reported improvements in learners' confidence and reductions in speaking anxiety through the use of Think-Pair-Share, these affective factors were not directly measured in the present study. Therefore, confidence enhancement and anxiety reduction should not be interpreted as confirmed outcomes. Instead, the improvement in fluency observed in this study may be partially explained by reduced performance pressure during peer interaction, particularly during the pair stage, when students could rehearse their responses before speaking publicly. In addition, alternative explanations should be considered, including teacher-related effects, novelty effects,

increased familiarity with the speaking test format, and differences in classic dynamics. These factors suggest that the observed gains cannot be attributed solely to TPS without caution.

Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. The short treatment duration and the involvement of only two intact classes limit the generalizability of the findings. In addition, students' speaking performance was assessed by a single rater using an adapted rubric, which may introduce subjective bias and potential rater bias, and the similarity of the pre-test and post-test tasks may have influenced test familiarity. Despite these limitations, the findings offer practical pedagogical implications. Teachers are encouraged to implement TPS using small pairs, allocate sufficient time for each stage, and employ communicative speaking prompts relevant to students' contexts. Overall, the results support the integration of TPS as a collaborative strategy for improving students' speaking performance, particularly fluency. Future studies are recommended to include longer treatments, larger samples, multiple raters, and direct measurement of affective variables.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrated that implementing the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique led to a statistically significant improvement in students' speaking performance, particularly in fluency, accuracy, and comprehensibility. By engaging learners in structured, collaborative, active thinking through the think, pair, and share stages, the technique provided systematic opportunities for oral practice and interaction. The statistical evidence supported this improvement: the experimental group's mean scores increased from 30.20 in the pre-test to 67.14 in the post-test, whereas the control group showed only a modest improvement from 30.40 to 41.45. Furthermore, the calculated t-value (12.20) exceeded the t-table value (1.668) at the 0.05 level of significance, indicating a statistically significant difference between the two groups.

These results indicated that the Think-pair-Share technique facilitated more active student participation in speaking activities and supported the development of key speaking components. Compared to conventional teacher-centered instruction, TPS offered a more interactive and collaborative learning environment that encouraged students to engage in oral communication through guided peer interaction and structured discussion.

From a pedagogical perspective, the Think-Pair-Share technique can be applied as a complementary instructional strategy in English language teaching to enhance interaction and students' engagement in speaking activities. However, it should be integrated alongside appropriate teacher guidance to ensure balanced instruction that supports both accuracy and communicative practice.

This research has several limitations, including the short duration of the treatment and the involvement of only two intact classes, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. In addition, using a single rater to assess speaking performance may introduce scoring bias. Therefore, the results should be interpreted with caution.

In conclusion, the implementation of the Think-Pair-Share technique proved effective in improving students' speaking performance in this study context. From a

pedagogical perspective, teachers are encouraged to apply this technique as a supplementary strategy to promote active participation and meaningful interaction in speaking activities. Furthermore, future research is recommended to include longer treatment periods, larger sample sizes, multiple raters, and affective variables to further examine the impact of TPS on students' speaking development across different educational levels and learning contexts.

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