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# The Application of Scaffolding Technique: Think-Pair-Share (TPS) to Improve the English Speaking Skills of Grade XI Students at SMA Negeri 1 Penebel in the 2024/2025 Academic Year

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## Abstract

This study aims to improve the english speaking skill of Grade XI-1 students at SMA Negeri 1 Penebel n the 2024/2025 academic year through the application of the Scaffolding Technique using the Think Pair and Share (TPS) strategy. Speaking is one of the essential language skill that reflect students' communicative competence; however, many students continue to face challenges in vocabulary use, grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, and confidence. To address these issues, this research employed a Classroom Action Research design, which was conducted following the model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart. The study focused on how the TPS strategy, as a form of scaffolding, could actively engage students in speaking and gradually enhance their performance. The study was implemented in two cycles, each consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The results showed progressive improvement across the cycles. The pre-test score totaled 370 with an average of 12.76 and 63.79% of students achieving the minimum mastery criterion (KKM). After Cycle I, the total score increased to 392 with an average of 13.52 and a completeness rate of 67.59%. Significant improvement was recorded in Cycle II, where the total score reached 483, the average rose to 16.66, and completeness reached 83.28%. These findings indicate that the TPS technique effectively enhanced students' speaking skills by fostering collaborative learning, active participation, and structured oral practice. It also increased student engagement and confidence in speaking English. The study recommends the use of TPS as an alternative strategy to improve speaking performance in EFL classrooms.
Keywords: Scaffolding, Think Pair Share, Speaking Skill, Cooperative Learning

## Introduction

Speaking is a critical component of English language learning, particularly in EFL contexts where opportunities for real-life communication are limited. It is the most direct and expressive language skill, essential for interaction, self-expression, and academic success. However, in many classrooms, including SMA Negeri 1 Penebel, students face persistent difficulties in developing oral communication skills. These challenges are characterized by a

lack of fluency, limited vocabulary, poor grammar usage, inaccurate pronunciation, and a fear of making mistakes, which collectively hinder their ability to express themselves effectively.

Tarigan (1986) emphasized that speaking proficiency does not develop naturally but requires consistent practice, structured training, and appropriate pedagogical strategies. Many learners exhibit anxiety and low self-confidence when asked to speak in English, which leads to passive participation and reluctance to communicate. This situation necessitates a teaching approach that not only builds linguistic competence but also fosters a supportive and interactive learning environment.

One effective strategy to address these issues is the application of scaffolding techniques, particularly the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) method developed by Lyman (1981). TPS is a cooperative learning model that supports speaking development through a structured process where students first think individually, then discuss their ideas with a peer, and finally share with the class. This gradual exposure to speaking tasks reduces anxiety, enhances comprehension, and builds confidence.

Initial observations in class XI 1 at SMA Negeri 1 Penebel revealed that most students lacked the confidence and language skills to participate actively in speaking activities. To address this issue, the TPS technique was implemented through a classroom action research design. The goal was to improve students' speaking ability in terms of fluency, accuracy, vocabulary use, and confidence by providing a scaffolded, interactive platform for oral communication.

Scaffolding in language learning refers to the temporary support provided by teachers or peers to help learners perform tasks they would not be able to accomplish independently. This concept, grounded in Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), emphasizes the importance of guided learning through interaction and assistance (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). In the context of EFL classrooms, scaffolding helps reduce learners' anxiety and increases their capacity to engage in authentic communication.

Ellis (2008) points out that scaffolding plays a crucial role in second language acquisition, as it allows learners to develop new language structures and functions through gradual and interactive exposure. Particularly in speaking, scaffolding enables students to overcome fear and hesitation, promoting fluency and confidence in communication.

Think-Pair-Share (TPS) is a cooperative learning strategy developed by Lyman (1981) that fits well within the scaffolding framework. The method involves three stages: Think: Students reflect independently on a question or prompt, Pair: They discuss their responses with a partner, and Share: Finally, they present their ideas to the whole class.

Kagan (1994) and Walqui (2006) have emphasized that TPS fosters active participation, deeper thinking, and collaborative learning. The scaffolded nature of the technique reduces performance anxiety by allowing students to rehearse ideas in small, low-pressure settings before sharing publicly.

Speaking is a complex skill that involves fluency, accuracy, vocabulary usage, and comprehension (Brown, 2004). Ur (1996) noted that EFL students often struggled with speaking

due to limited vocabulary, poor grammar control, and fear of public mistakes. TPS addresses these issues through its staged approach.

First, during the "Think" phase, students have time to prepare their responses, reducing hesitation. In the "Pair" phase, they get feedback and clarity from a peer, allowing corrections and vocabulary enhancement. Finally, the "Share" phase gives students structured speaking practice in a larger forum, boosting confidence and verbal competence.

Several studies have validated the effectiveness of TPS in improving speaking skills:

a) **Khaeruddin et al. (2023)**: TPS enhanced speaking scores and reduced anxiety in SMA Insan Cendekia Syeh Yusuf Gowa.

b) **Al Karim et al. (2022)**: TPS improved fluency and pronunciation in online learning environments.

c) **Misria et al. (2021)**: Significant score increases were found after TPS application at SMA Negeri 1 Simpang Ulim.

d) **Olivia et al. (2024)**: Students taught with TPS outperformed those in traditional classes at SMA Negeri 7 Palu.

e) **Yanti et al. (2017)**: TPS increased participation and fluency among vocational school students in Pontianak.

The study is based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, especially the Zone of Proximal Development, where learning occurs best through guided social interaction. TPS provides a gradual pathway from individual thought to public expression, making it an ideal scaffolding tool to address the speaking challenges faced by EFL learners. This technique bridges the gap between passive knowledge and active speaking performance.

This study is important because speaking is often the weakest skill among Indonesian EFL learners, particularly at SMA Negeri 1 Penebel, where students frequently struggle to speak fluently, vocabulary, and confidence. The significance of this research lies in demonstrating how scaffolding through TPS can provide a sustainable and replicable model for improving oral communication, not only in this school but also in similar EFL contexts across Indonesia.

## Research Method

This study was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Penebel during the 2024/2025 academic year. The participants were 29 students of Class XI 1. The class was selected due to observed speaking deficiencies such as low vocabulary mastery, poor grammar use, and a lack of confidence in oral activities. The research used Classroom Action Research (CAR) based on Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) model. Each cycle consisted of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The goal was to assess whether TPS could systematically improve students' speaking abilities across cycles.

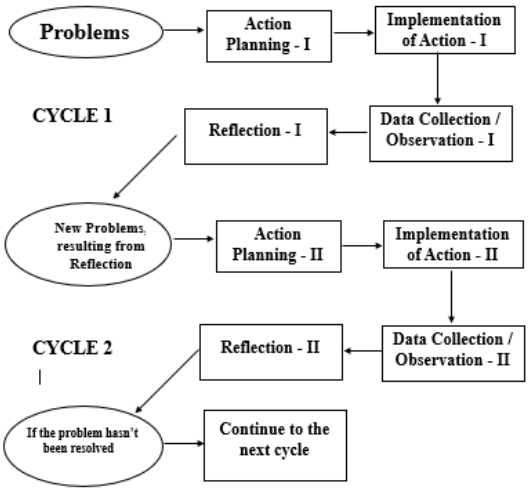


Chart 1. Classroom Action Research (CAR) model based on Kemmis and McTaggart's cyclical process

This study followed the Classroom Action Research model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart, which is characterized by a cyclical and reflective processaimed at improving teaching and learning practices. The cycle begins with the identification of classroom problems, followed by the planning of actions designed to address those problems. In Cycle I, the researcher implemented the planned actions and collected data through observation and assessment. The results of this implementation were then analyzed in the reflection stage to determine the effectiveness of the intervention and to identify any new issues that emerged. Based on the reflection, a second cycle was carried out with revised planning and actions, aiming to resolve the remaining problems and enhance student learning outcomes. This second cycle also included implementation, data collection, and reflection. If necessary, the process could be continued into subsequent cycles until the identified problems are satisfactorily addressed. This iterative approach ensures continuous improvement through planning, action, observation, and reflection, making it an effective framework for implementing educational innovations such as the Think-Pair-Share technique.

The data were collected using speaking performance tests. Students were evaluated before and after the intervention using a rubric covering fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension. Scores were calculated and analyzed quantitatively.

A speaking rubric was used to measure five components on a 5-point scale (maximum score = 25). The Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) was set at 70% or 18 points.Descriptive statistics were used to calculate:

a) Mean score of student performance
b) Percentage of students meeting the KKM
c) Comparison of results from pre-test to each cycle
d) Classical completeness was achieved if at least 85% of students met or exceeded the KKM.

## Finding and Discussion

The initial findings from the pre-test revealed that a significant number of students encountered difficulties in fluency, vocabulary use, and overall confidence when speaking in English. The average score obtained was 12.72 out of a maximum score of 25, indicating a relatively low level of speaking proficiency. Only 63.6% of the students managed to reach the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM), highlighting the need for an effective instructional intervention to address these challenges.

In Cycle I, after the implementation of the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique, there was a modest improvement in students' speaking performance. The average score increased to 13.51, and the percentage of students achieving the KKM rose to 67.5%. During this cycle, students began to show more active participation, especially in the pair discussion phase. However, some students remained hesitant during the "Share" phase, where they were expected to speak in front of the class. The reflection phase of Cycle I suggested that while TPS was beneficial, some elements needed refinement—particularly in selecting more engaging and relevant speaking topics and providing clearer scaffolding support to guide students through the stages of the activity.

Significant progress was observed in Cycle II, which incorporated improvements based on the reflections from the previous cycle. The average score rose considerably to 16.65, and 83.2% of the students successfully met the KKM. In this cycle, students exhibited noticeable improvements in pronunciation, grammar usage, and fluency during class discussions and presentations. The instructional changes—such as the introduction of more familiar and contextual speaking topics along with enhanced scaffolding strategies—proved instrumental in helping students perform better. The classroom environment became more supportive and interactive, allowing students to express their ideas with increased confidence.

The progressive improvement in speaking scores from Cycle I to Cycle II supports previous findings. For example, Khaeruddin et al. (2023) also reported that TPS not only improved students' speaking proficiency but also reduced anxiety. Similarly, Misria et al. (2021) found significant gains in fluency and accuracy after applying TPS. In contrast, Al Karim et al. (2022) conducted TPS in an online learning setting, while this study was carried out in a face-to-face classroom, yet both showed comparable results. These similarities suggest that TPS is a flexible scaffolding technique adaptable to various learning environments.

Table 1. Students' Speaking Performance Across Test Stage.

| Test Stage | Total Score | Average Score | %Meeting KKM |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-Test | 370 | 12.76 | 63.79 |
| Cycle I | 392 | 13.53 | 67.59 |
| Cycle II | 483 | 16.66 | 83.28 |

The gradual improvement in student performance from the pre-test through Cycle I and Cycle II clearly illustrates the effectiveness of the TPS technique in enhancing speaking skills. The structured steps of the technique—thinking individually, pairing with a peer, and

sharing with the class—created a safe and progressive pathway for students to develop their speaking abilities. This strategy allowed learners to process their thoughts internally before speaking, receive immediate feedback from a peer, and build enough confidence to communicate their ideas publicly. This instructional approach aligns with Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which emphasizes the role of social interaction in helping learners accomplish tasks they could not achieve independently.

Additionally, the findings of this study corroborate with previous research. For instance, Olivia (2024) and Misria et al. (2021) reported that TPS significantly increased students' speaking performance and active engagement in the classroom. In this study, many students who were initially passive and reluctant speakers became more enthusiastic and articulate as the cycles progressed. Regular opportunities for practice, along with the structured and supportive nature of TPS, contributed to the development of greater fluency, improved accuracy, and enhanced confidence among the students. Overall, TPS functioned effectively as a scaffolding technique that bridged the gap between students' current abilities and their potential performance in English speaking activities.

## Conclusion

The findings of this classroom action research demonstrate that the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique is an effective scaffolding strategy for improving the speaking skills of Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 1 Penebel. The implementation of TPS promoted structured communication, encouraged cooperative learning, and created a supportive classroom environment. Students' speaking proficiency improved significantly across the two cycles, as reflected in the increase in average scores and the higher percentage of students achieving the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM). In addition to enhancing fluency, accuracy, and vocabulary use, the strategy also boosted learners' confidence and willingness to participate actively in oral activities.

The results indicate that TPS can serve as a practical and replicable approach for addressing persistent challenges in English speaking among EFL learners. This study provides evidence that gradual scaffolding, through the structured phases of thinking, pairing, and sharing, helps students overcome hesitation and develop communicative competence more effectively.

Future studies could explore the application of TPS in improving other language skills such as writing or listening, or extend the research to different educational levels, including vocational schools and universities. Moreover, further research could examine long-term retention to determine whether improvements in speaking performance are sustained after the intervention. These directions would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the broader potential of TPS as a scaffolding technique in diverse EFL contexts.

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