

The Effectiveness of Pair Work Activities on Students' Speaking Anxiety and Speaking Ability

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Abstract

Students' anxiety about speaking English is significant to solve because it can affect their speaking ability. This study aims to measure the effectiveness of pair work activities on students' speaking anxiety and speaking ability. The researchers conducted quasi-experimental research in Palangka Raya in the academic year of 2021/2022. In collecting the data, a questionnaire and a speaking test were used. The population in this study were eighth graders students in one of the public junior high school. The researcher used two classes as the sample, the experimental and control class, which comprised 60 students. The data were analyzed using the descriptive statistics and Multivariate Analysis of Variance test via SPSS.23. The result showed pair work activities effectively decreased the students' speaking anxiety and increased the students' speaking ability. It evidenced by the average score in the post-test of students' speaking anxiety in the experimental class was 52.77, while the control class was 60.00. In addition, the average score in the post-test of the students' speaking ability in the experimental class was 76.63, while the control class was 64.43. It showed that there is a significant difference between the two classes. Therefore, this study indicates that pair work activities effectively lower students' speaking anxiety and increase their speaking ability at eighth graders students in one of the public junior high school in Palangka Raya.

Keywords: speaking anxiety; pair work; speaking

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking plays an essential role in daily life since it helps communication in daily activities and influences students' ability to learn a language. Speaking is necessary to support students' capability to apply the language. Hammad & Ghali (2015) Hammad and Abu Ghali (2015) define speaking as a productive aural/oral process that uses grammatical rules, cohesive devices, lexical items, and phonological rules to express someone's thoughts and feelings in speech. In learning English, for foreign language learners, speaking English is not easy to practice.

Tuan and Mai (2015) revealed that students found difficulties in speaking due to several factors, such as knowledge, students' listening ability, listener's support or motivation to speak, teachers' feedback during speaking activities, confidence, students' preparation, and pressure to perform well. Speaking tends to make students' emotional changes into anxiety and nervousness. Furthermore, Ozturk and Gurbuz (2014) state that speaking is considered an anxiety-triggering factor by most students. According to Said and Weda (2018), state that speaking anxiety affects students' achievements. Speaking anxiety can be from a slight feeling of "nervousness" to a high fear level, and affecting students' speaking performance. Students' anxiety about speaking English is significant to solve because it can affect their speaking ability. Teachers must create a situation that can engage students to be active and reduce their anxiety. Additionally, Atma (2018) revealed that teachers should provide an atmosphere of classroom activities that are free from anxiety situation and make students speak English more comfortably.

Given the importance of oral communication skills in today's society, students' anxiety about speaking English is very important to solve because it can affect their speaking ability and cause negative achievement. Therefore, teachers need to find a strategy and create a situation that can engage students to be active and create a supportive learning environment that will help students get along in the classroom. One of the

strategies that a teacher can use in the teaching and learning process namely pair work activities. In pair work, students need to interact and require them to work together with their partners. Pair work is a way for students to learn from their partners and get the most benefit. Pair work is a learning activity in which two or more students work together to accomplish tasks or achieve common goals. The pair work activities is the appropriate method that can help students learn to improve their speaking ability. Students are required to do the task in pairs and each student works with their partner simultaneously.

The results of previous studies have also shown that pair work activities gave a positive effect when applied in the teaching and learning process. Research carried out by Taka (2020) showed that using the pair work technique was effective in teaching and develop students' competence. When students work in pairs, they can share ideas and support each other in learning which it's a good situation for the students to learn together. Furthermore, research conducted by Baleghizadeh & Farhesh (2014). This study aimed to investigate the effect of pair-work on EFL learners' motivation. The result indicated that students liked to work in pairs because they could interact and discuss more with their partners. They also felt more comfortable when talking in English with their friends. Pair work activities positively contributed to increasing students' motivation in learning. Research carried out by Zohairy (2014) states that teachers could apply pairwork strategies effectively. Teachers can effectively use pairs in a balanced way to provide students with the benefits they need. In addition, research conducted by Achmad (2014) also showed that pair work activities that teachers apply were effective for most students. The method and pattern of the interaction have a considerable impact on students' language learning achievement and proficiency in the classroom. Working in pairs allows students to communicate more, increases their participation in the learning process, and can reduce students' anxiety because these activities also reduce classroom tension and give them the opportunity to help each other.

The previous studies focused on senior high school and college students, but it is very rare to find research in public junior high school. Based on the data from preliminary observation, the researcher found that students have difficulties in speaking, making them feel anxious when they try to speak English. In addition, Kralova & Tirpakova (2019) revealed that the fear of mainly speaking came from high anxiety and lack of communication because of the limited opportunities to practice. Students become more anxious when they have to speak spontaneously without any preparation. In contrast to the previous studies, this study seeks to determine whether the pair work activities is suitable for use in English learning by analyzing the effectiveness of pair work activities in lowering students' speaking anxiety and increasing students' speaking ability at eighth graders in one of the public junior high school. The purpose of this study was to measure the effectiveness of pair work activities on students' speaking anxiety and students' speaking ability. The researcher assumes that the students' taught using pair work activities is different from those taught not using pair work activities. The result of this study, it is expected that teachers could use the appropriate strategies to help the students reduce their speaking anxiety and engage students' participation in learning.

METHODS

This research used quantitative research methods through a quasi-experimental design. The population in this study were eighth graders students in one of the public junior high school in the academic year of 2021/2022 in Palangka Raya, totaling 352 students. The sampling technique used in this study was the cluster random sampling technique. The sample comprised of 60 students. In determining these two classes as samples was based on the teacher's recommendation and the English subject of the two classes were taught by the same teacher. The details of the experimental and control group participants are as follows: 60% (n = 18) of participants were male, and 40% (n = 12) were female in the experimental group. For the control group, 53,3% (n = 16) of participants were female, and 46,7% of them (n = 14) were male. This study used a questionnaire and a speaking test to collect the data. The researcher adapted a questionnaire from Yaikhong and Usaha (2012), namely the PSCAS (Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale), to measure the anxiety level of students in their speaking performance. The second instrument of the research was a test in the form of a speaking test through pre-test and post-test. The procedures do by researcher as follows:

1. Giving Pre-Test

The researcher introduced herself and explained the purpose of her coming to the class. The researcher asked the students to make a short descriptive text. After that, students were asked to fill out the questionnaire to know the students' anxiety level and speaking ability before giving treatment.

2. Giving Treatment

The experimental class gave a treatment by implementing pair work activities in the teaching learning process, while control class by using individual learning activities (work individually without any treatment). The treatment was conducted about 3 times. The time duration was 2 x 40 minutes for each meeting. The stages of pair work in the teaching-learning process are divided into three activities. The activities are pre-activity, core activity, and closing activity. In the pre-activity, the main activity is explaining the objective of the teaching process, giving a short explanation about the material, and giving instructions about the next activity. The core activities are (1) the students are randomly divided into several groups (paired), and the teacher gives a task; (2) the pair work strategy and its purpose is introduced by the teacher; (3) the students discuss with their pairs about the topic given; (4) after discussing the topic the students have to perform their work in front of their friends. Finally, the closing activities allow the students to ask questions related to the topic that is not yet understood, and the teacher provides appreciation, motivation, and common errors to the students.

3. Giving Post-Test

The procedure followed during the post-test was similar to the procedure used during the pre-test to determine whether or not the effect of pair work activities on students' speaking anxiety and speaking ability after treatment was conducted.

In analyzing data, the researcher scoring the students answer in pre-test and post-test and calculated the data description of both classes. After that, did the normality dan homogeneity test. To determine whether or not both classes significance different and to prove the hypothesis, the researcher tests the hypothesis of the research using Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) via SPSS.23

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Result

In this study, the researcher presented data descriptions of the experimental and control class students in Table 1, where the mean score and standard deviation were described. Then, the researcher tested the hypothesis of the research using Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) through SPSS.23. Field (2018), in his book stated that MANOVA is used to test the difference between groups across several outcome variables/outcomes simultaneously. The result of the calculation were shown in Table 2-3.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Experiment and Control Group

Group			Mean	SD	N
Pre-Test	Speaking Anxiety	Pair Work Activities	59.03	9.163	30
		Conventional Method	61.10	7.364	30
	Speaking Ability	Pair Work Activities	66.00	15.636	30
		Conventional Method	60.37	14.419	30
Post-Test	Speaking Anxiety	Pair Work Activities	52.77	9.811	30
		Conventional Method	60.00	6.963	30
	Speaking Ability	Pair Work Activities	76.63	13.868	30
		Conventional Method	64.43	12.414	30

Table 2. Multivariate Test

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Group	Pillai's Trace	.282	11.199 ^b	2.000	57.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.718	11.199 ^b	2.000	57.000
	Hotelling's Trace	.393	11.199 ^b	2.000	57.000
	Roy's Largest Root	.393	11.199 ^b	2.000	57.000

Table 3. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	Speaking Anxiety	784.817 ^a	1	784.817	10.845	.002
	Speaking Ability	2232.600 ^b	1	2232.600	12.889	.001
Intercept	Speaking Anxiety	190744.817	1	190744.817	2635.748	.000
	Speaking Ability	298497.067	1	298497.067	1723.298	.000
Group	Speaking Anxiety	784.817	1	784.817	10.845	.002
	Speaking Ability	2232.600	1	2232.600	12.889	.001
Error	Speaking Anxiety	4197.367	58	72.368		
	Speaking Ability	10046.333	58	173.213		
Total	Speaking Anxiety	195727.000	60			
	Speaking Ability	310776.000	60			
Corrected Total	Speaking Anxiety	4982.183	59			
	Speaking Ability	12278.933	59			

The descriptive statistics in Table.1 showed that the average score of students' speaking anxiety in the experimental class decreased between pre-test and post-test, from 59.03 to 52.77. On the other hand, the average score for the control class decreased from 61.10 to 60.00. Furthermore, the average in the post-test of the student's speaking ability was increased greater in the experimental class than the control class, where the average of the experimental class post-test was 76.63 while the control class was 64.43.

According to Table. 2, as we can see Pillai's Trace was significant since the *Sig.* of value is less than the significance (α) = .05 (Trace = .282, F = 11.199 and P = .000). Therefore, it showed that pair work activities have different abilities in influencing students' speaking anxiety and speaking ability simultaneously, which means there was a significant difference between the experimental and control class. From the result of Tests of Between-Subjects Effects in Table. 3, the significance of speaking anxiety showed $.002 < .05$. It can be concluded that pair work activities influence students' speaking anxiety. Furthermore, the significance of speaking ability showed $.001 < .05$, which showed that pair work activities also indicates an influence on students' speaking ability.

2. Discussion

This study result indicates that pair work activities had a positive effect on the students. The effect of using pair work activities in the teaching and learning process is more effective in lowering students' speaking anxiety than the conventional method where students learn individually. It is evidenced by the data collected through the PSCAS questionnaire, where after the treatment was conducted, the average score in was smaller the experimental class than the control class. According to the findings in the post-test, the effect of using pair work activities in the teaching and learning process was more effective in decreasing students' speaking anxiety which in the experimental class the students were less anxious than those in the control class since the result of the post-test in the experimental class was lower than in the control class. It was evidenced by the experimental class's average score decreasing between the pre-test and post-test, from 59.03 to 52.77. It showed that 6.26 points were reduced in the experimental class. On the other hand, the average score for the control class decreased between pre-test and post-test, from 61.10 to 60.00. The control class showed 1.10 points decrease. The experimental class showed a more significant mean score reduction than the control class after the treatment was given. This findings are supported by Gustafson (2015), who stated that when a student had a group member/partner to help in understanding the task and learn together, they felt less anxious. The data collected through the speaking test showed that pair work activities enhanced the student's speaking ability. Pair work activities also positively affected on the students' speaking ability since there was a better enhancement in their speaking scores, where in the experimental class was increased higher than the control class, where the average score of the experimental class post-test was 76.63 while the average score of the control class was 64.43. In addition, the experimental class showed 13.868 for standard deviation, and for the control class was 12.414. It means that the standard deviation of the students who learn and are taught

using pair work activities was greater than the control class. In addition, the researcher found that the pair work activities also gave better enhancement to students' speaking ability, which is evidenced by increased scores in post-test results in the experimental class. In line with this, Baleghizadeh & Farhesh (2014) stated that in pair work activities, the interaction not only occurs between students – student interaction, but there was also teacher-student interaction, creating a supportive environment where students feel safe and develop the students ability in the teaching learning process. The stages of pair work in the teaching-learning process are divided into three activities: pre-activity, core activity, and closing activity.

Pair work activities allowed students to participate more in communicative activities. Pair work was part of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). In line with communicative language teaching, Alamri (2018) stated that the CLT approach allows language learners to share their thoughts with one another during class. This allows for the exchange of ideas and developing a working knowledge of the language and get involved in the class discussion. CLT was a kind of approach to teaching and learning a language communicatively by practicing it immediately. This kind of activity helps students build their self-confidence in order not to be afraid when the teacher asks them to do the task, reduces classroom tension, and gives the students an opportunity to help each other. Pair work activities stimulate students' abilities to work in cooperation and pair work activities, and it was hoped can increase students' participation in learning.

Furthermore, the result from the Multivariate Test and Tests of Between-Subjects Effects showed a significant influence on students' speaking anxiety and speaking ability when students learn taught using pair work activities. The result from Multivariate Test in Table 2. showed a significant influence on students' speaking ability and speaking ability when students learn taught using pair work activities with a *Sig.* value of $.000 < .05$. These findings also support the result of the Test of Between-Subjects Effects in Table 3, where the significance of speaking anxiety showed $.002 < .05$, while the significance of speaking ability showed $.001 < .05$. Based on the result of multivariate analysis of variance and other findings, the researcher can conclude that students who learn speaking taught using pair work activities better than those who taught not using pair work activities. In addition, the purpose of the pair work activities learning approach is to give students the same chances to speak English in the classroom and assist students in understanding and applying existing knowledge. It is hoped to be able to increase students' confidence to speak in front of others. In line with this, research carried out by Zohairy (2014) states that teachers could effectively apply pairwork strategies. The researcher believes that teachers can effectively use pairs in a balanced way to provide students with the benefits they need. Additionally, research conducted by Baleghizadeh and Farhesh (2014) also showed that pair work positively contributed to increasing students' motivation in learning.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study showed that students' speaking anxiety level taught using pair work activities was lower than those taught using a conventional method. Pair work activities also gave better enhancement to students' speaking ability of eighth graders students in one of the public junior high school in the academic year of 2021/2022 in Palangka Raya. The multivariate test result showed a significant influence on students' speaking anxiety and speaking ability when students learn taught using pair work activities. Based on the result of multivariate analysis of variance and supported by other findings, the researcher can conclude that students who learn speaking taught using pair work activities better than those who taught not using pair work activities. The different methods (treatment) in learning process cause a significant difference. Therefore, the teachers need to use the appropriate and exciting learning methods and adjust to students' levels to reduce anxiety of the students and enhance students speaking ability. The researcher suggests comparing the pair work activities to other teaching material to know which methodology affects lowering students' speaking anxiety. Furthermore, it should be better to use other topics and manage the time allocation to conduct the research.

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