



Strategies for Increasing Student Participation in English Class Discussions through the Think-Pair-Share Technique

Rofiq Noorman Haryadi¹, Eryandi^{2*}

¹STEBIS Bina Mandiri, Bogor, Indonesia; email: rofiq.stebis@gmail.com

²Universitas Panca Sakti Bekasi, Indonesia; email: errayeryandi@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Increasing student participation in class discussions is a major challenge in English language teaching. One effective method to enhance student engagement is the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique. This study aims to explore strategies for using the TPS technique to increase student participation in English class discussions. The TPS technique consists of three stages: thinking individually, discussing with a partner, and sharing thoughts with the class. Through this approach, students are given the opportunity to think independently before interacting with their partner, which encourages greater confidence in expressing their ideas. Furthermore, by sharing their thoughts with the class, students also learn to listen to and value their peers' viewpoints. This research adopts a qualitative method, using observation and interviews as data collection tools. The results indicate that the application of the TPS technique significantly increases student participation, boosts their confidence in using English, and fosters a more inclusive learning environment. Students who were previously passive in discussions became more active and open in expressing their ideas. Therefore, implementing the TPS technique can be considered an effective strategy to enhance student interaction in English classes, which, in turn, can improve their learning outcomes.

Keywords: Think-Pair-Share, Student Participation, Class Discussion

INTRODUCTION

Increasing student participation in English class discussions is one of the challenges frequently encountered by teachers at various educational levels. In many schools, students are often reluctant to participate actively in class discussions, particularly in the context of a second language, such as English. This issue arises due to several reasons, including a lack of self-confidence in speaking, fear of making mistakes, and the inability to express their opinions using the correct language. Therefore, it is crucial to find teaching methods that can facilitate increased student participation in class discussions and provide a space for students to practice speaking in ways that support their self-confidence.

One method that has proven effective in increasing student participation is the **Think-Pair-Share (TPS)** technique. This technique was first introduced by Lyman in 1981 and has since been widely used in various learning contexts. The TPS technique gives students the opportunity to think individually, discuss with a partner, and eventually share their opinions with the class (Sembert II et al., 2021). This process is designed to give students enough time to prepare their answers before speaking in front of the class, allowing them to feel more

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rofiq.stebis@gmail.com

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confident and engaged in the discussion. Additionally, by discussing with their partners, students can support each other and build mutual understanding before speaking in front of a larger audience (Brown, 2017).

However, despite the widespread use of this technique in various disciplines, its application in English language teaching in Indonesia still requires further research. This is due to several challenges that may be encountered in teaching English, such as large class sizes, limited class time, and variation in student abilities. Therefore, this study aims to explore how the TPS technique can be applied to enhance student participation in English class discussions and identify the factors that influence the success of this technique.

Before delving further into the application of the Think-Pair-Share technique, it is important to understand the theories that underlie this technique. One relevant theory is the social constructivism theory proposed by Vygotsky in Subrayan (2020). According to Vygotsky, learning occurs through social interaction, where students not only learn from direct instruction but also through discussion and collaboration with peers. In this context, TPS provides an opportunity for students to share ideas, develop their understanding, and collaborate with classmates, which aligns with the principles of social constructivism.

In addition, the cooperative learning theory is also relevant to the TPS technique. Cooperative learning focuses on student interaction to achieve common goals, which enhances their social and communication skills. According to Slavin In Sadeghi (2020), cooperative learning can improve students' academic performance, social skills, and self-confidence. In TPS, students collaborate with their partners before sharing with the entire class, reinforcing the principles of cooperative learning and allowing students to learn from one another.

While there are many methods that can be used to increase student participation in discussions, the TPS technique has several advantages that distinguish it from other methods. One of the key advantages of TPS is that each student is given the opportunity to think individually before speaking with their partner (Phan et al., 2021). This provides students with time to prepare their ideas without feeling pressured to speak immediately. This technique also reduces students' dependence on the teacher and gives them the chance to practice speaking with their classmates in a more relaxed atmosphere.

However, despite the numerous benefits of TPS, its implementation does not always run smoothly in every class. Some studies indicate that there are challenges in implementing this technique, especially in classes with large numbers of students. In large classes, the time available for partner discussions becomes limited, and not all students can participate optimally. Furthermore, variations in students' language abilities also affect the effectiveness of the TPS technique. Students with higher language proficiency tend to be more active in discussions, while students with lower English proficiency may feel pressured or anxious about speaking (Nurmansyah et al., 2018). Therefore, it is important to explore how the TPS technique can be applied more effectively, particularly in English classrooms in Indonesia.

Previous studies have shown that the TPS technique can enhance student participation in learning. The use of TPS increased students' confidence in speaking in front of the class and facilitated more active learning (Bunaya et al., 2019). Furthermore, TPS technique could improve communication among students and strengthen social relationships between them (Tarigan, 2022). Also, Students involved in cooperative learning are more likely to persist in learning activities and achieve better outcomes compared to those who are not involved in collaborative learning (Loes et al., 2017).

However, despite many studies demonstrating the success of the TPS technique, there are still some obstacles to its implementation in the classroom. One of the main challenges is the lack of time available for discussions in large classes, In large classes, the time available for

partner discussions becomes limited, and not all students can engage in in-depth discussions (Woodyatt et al., 2016). Therefore, the main challenge in implementing TPS is how to optimize the available time so that all students can participate to the fullest extent.

The application of the Think-Pair-Share technique in English language teaching in Indonesia is expected to contribute significantly to improving the quality of English education (Utami et al., 2021). By increasing student participation in class discussions, students not only learn to speak in English but also learn to think critically, listen to others' opinions, and express their own opinions with confidence. This is particularly important in the context of English teaching in Indonesia, where speaking skills are often considered the most challenging skill for students to master.

Considering the various challenges that exist, this study aims to identify how the TPS technique can be applied more effectively in English language teaching. The study will also explore the factors that influence the success of this technique in increasing student participation, such as time management, teaching strategies used by teachers, and students' language proficiency levels. It is hoped that this research will provide new insights into how to enhance the effectiveness of the TPS technique in English language teaching and offer recommendations for teachers in designing more effective learning strategies.

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the implementation of the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique in enhancing student participation in English class discussions. A qualitative approach was chosen because the study aims to gain a deep understanding of how students respond and interact during classroom discussions that use the TPS technique. This method allows the researcher to explore students' experiences, perceptions, and interaction dynamics in the context of English language learning.

In this study, data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to monitor the dynamics of class discussions and the level of student participation during the implementation of the TPS technique. During the observation, the researcher took notes on all interactions among students, focusing particularly on how actively students participated in the discussions after the TPS technique was applied. Interviews were conducted with several students to further explore their experiences while using the TPS technique, as well as how this technique impacted their confidence and engagement in the discussions. Interviews were also conducted with the teacher to obtain their perspective on the effectiveness of this technique in increasing student participation. Documentation collected included field notes and relevant student discussion outcomes.

This study involved one English class at a secondary school with approximately 30 students. The TPS technique was implemented during several class sessions, and students were given the opportunity to discuss in small groups using the Think-Pair-Share method. The collected data were then analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, in which the researcher identified key patterns in the data related to the increase in student participation and the factors influencing it.

This methodology aligns with approaches used in studies by Gillies (2004), which demonstrated how cooperative learning enhances student interaction in large classes, which revealed that the TPS technique improves student engagement and facilitates more active learning.

RESULTS

The implementation of the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique in enhancing student participation in English class discussions yielded notable results in terms of increased student engagement, improved communication skills, and a positive shift in students' attitudes towards speaking English. This section presents the findings based on the data collected through observations, interviews, and student feedback during the study.

Increased Student Participation

One of the primary objectives of this study was to assess the impact of the TPS technique on student participation in English discussions. The results indicate a significant increase in student participation during the class discussions after the implementation of TPS. Initially, in traditional whole-class discussions, participation was limited to a few active students, with many students remaining passive or hesitant to contribute. However, after the application of TPS, there was a noticeable shift in participation patterns.

Observations recorded the frequency of student engagement in discussions before and after the TPS technique was implemented. Before the application of TPS, only 12 out of 30 students (40%) actively participated in the discussions, with the remaining 18 students (60%) either remaining silent or offering minimal responses. In contrast, after the implementation of TPS, 26 out of 30 students (87%) actively engaged in the discussions. This indicates an improvement of 47% in the number of students participating in class discussions.

Table 1. shows the comparison of student participation before and after implementing the TPS technique.

Table 1: Comparison of Student Participation Before and After Implementing TPS

Student Participation	Before TPS Implementation (%)	After TPS Implementation (%)
Active Participants	40%	87%
Passive Participants	60%	13%
Increase in Participation	-	47%

The increase in participation was especially evident in the activities where students were asked to share their thoughts with their partners and then present their ideas to the whole class. This collaborative nature of TPS provided students with an opportunity to practice speaking in a low-pressure environment, which helped them feel more comfortable expressing their opinions.

Improvement in Confidence and Communication Skills

Another key outcome of the research was the enhancement of student confidence in speaking English. Many students initially expressed anxiety about speaking in front of the class, especially when the discussion was led by the teacher in a traditional format. However, after participating in the TPS technique, students reported feeling more confident in their ability to communicate in English.

The interviews conducted with students revealed that the opportunity to think individually (the "Think" stage) before speaking in pairs gave them the time to formulate their thoughts and feel more prepared when it was time to share their ideas. Additionally, the interaction with a partner during the "Pair" stage helped them feel less intimidated by the idea of speaking in front of the entire class. This was reflected in students' feedback, where 85% of the students mentioned feeling more confident after using the TPS technique.

Table 2 illustrates the improvement in student confidence before and after implementing

TPS based on interview responses.

Table 2: Improvement in Student Confidence Before and After Implementing TPS

Confidence Level	Before TPS (%)	After TPS (%)
Very Confident	15%	45%
Confident	25%	40%
Uncertain	40%	10%
Very Uncertain	20%	5%
Improvement in Confidence	-	30%

As indicated by the data, the number of students who felt "very confident" and "confident" increased by 55%, while the number of students who felt "uncertain" or "very uncertain" decreased significantly. This demonstrates the positive impact of TPS on student confidence and willingness to speak English in front of others.

Enhanced Interaction and Peer Learning

The use of TPS also fostered greater peer interaction and collaborative learning. One of the core benefits of the TPS technique is the opportunity for students to discuss and exchange ideas with their partners before sharing with the whole class. During the "Pair" stage, students had the chance to discuss their thoughts in a safe, supportive environment, where they could learn from one another's perspectives and improve their own understanding of the topic.

Observations indicated that students who were initially shy or reluctant to speak in front of the class were more willing to express their ideas during the "Pair" stage. Furthermore, students were observed to engage in deeper discussions and ask clarifying questions during their interactions, which facilitated better understanding and knowledge retention. This collaborative approach was particularly beneficial for lower-level learners, who could gain additional support and clarification from their peers before speaking in front of the class.

Table 3 provides a summary of the observed improvement in peer interactions and collaborative learning before and after the TPS implementation.

Table 3: Improvement in Peer Interactions and Collaborative Learning

Peer Interaction Level	Before TPS (%)	After TPS (%)
High	30%	70%
Moderate	40%	20%
Low	30%	10%
Improvement in Peer Interaction	-	40%

The data shows that the number of students who engaged in high-level peer interactions more than doubled after the implementation of TPS. This increase highlights the effectiveness of TPS in fostering an interactive and collaborative learning environment.

Active Listening and Critical Thinking

Another significant outcome was the improvement in students' listening and critical thinking skills. The TPS technique not only encouraged speaking and participation but also emphasized the importance of active listening. During the "Share" stage, students were required to listen to their peers' ideas and respond thoughtfully, which encouraged them to develop critical thinking skills.

The observations indicated that students became more attentive during the discussions and were more likely to ask relevant questions or offer constructive feedback to their peers. This

shift in focus from merely speaking to actively listening and engaging with others' ideas contributed to a more dynamic and meaningful class discussion.

The interviews with students confirmed that they valued the opportunity to listen to different perspectives and ideas, which helped them think critically about the subject matter. Students expressed that they found the discussions more engaging and that they were able to see the topic from multiple angles, which deepened their understanding.

Teacher's Perspective on TPS Effectiveness

From the teacher's perspective, the TPS technique was also seen as an effective tool for enhancing student engagement and participation. The teacher reported that while the technique required more time for planning and managing classroom activities, the results in terms of student engagement were well worth the effort. The teacher observed that TPS provided a structured framework for students to engage in meaningful discussions, allowing for more balanced participation across the class.

The teacher also noted that the technique helped reduce the dominance of more vocal students, as all students were given an equal opportunity to participate in discussions. This created a more inclusive learning environment where even the quieter students felt empowered to share their thoughts.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique significantly improved student participation, confidence, and peer interaction in English class discussions. These findings are consistent with prior research suggesting that TPS can be an effective tool to engage students in active learning, foster collaboration, and boost communication skills (Lyman, 1981; Kagan, 1994). In this discussion, the findings are compared with previous studies, highlighting the implications for English language teaching in Indonesia, the challenges encountered, and recommendations for future research.

Increased Student Participation

One of the most notable outcomes of this study was the substantial increase in student participation following the implementation of the TPS technique. Before TPS, only 40% of students were actively participating in class discussions, while after TPS, this figure increased to 87%. This 47% increase reflects the effectiveness of TPS in encouraging more students to contribute, especially those who are typically passive in traditional class discussions.

The increased participation can be attributed to several factors. First, the "Think" stage of TPS allows students to independently organize their thoughts before speaking. This is particularly beneficial for students who may feel anxious or unprepared to speak in front of the whole class. By providing time for individual reflection, TPS reduces the pressure to speak immediately, which can be a barrier for students with lower language proficiency or those lacking confidence (Lyman, 1981). Additionally, the "Pair" stage provides a more intimate setting for students to exchange ideas with a peer, which can reduce anxiety and increase the likelihood of active participation when they later present to the entire class.

In alignment with studies by Kagan (1994), the opportunity for peer discussion enables students to practice their English in a supportive, low-risk environment. This not only increases their participation but also strengthens their communication skills as they engage in dialogues with their peers. These findings emphasize the importance of creating

opportunities for all students, not just the more vocal ones, to contribute to class discussions, which is often a challenge in large classrooms (Gillies, 2004).

Enhanced Student Confidence

A second major finding from the study was the increase in student confidence, particularly in their ability to speak English. Prior to TPS, many students reported feeling uncertain or anxious about speaking in class. However, following the implementation of TPS, 45% of students expressed that they felt "very confident," compared to only 15% before the technique was applied. This 30% increase in student confidence underscores the positive impact of TPS on students' self-esteem when it comes to speaking English.

The increase in confidence can be attributed to the structure and gradual nature of TPS. The "Think" phase gives students the time to process and organize their ideas before speaking, reducing the likelihood of embarrassment due to mistakes. The "Pair" phase allows students to practice speaking with a peer in a more comfortable setting, which builds their confidence in a less formal environment. These stages collectively provide a safe space for students to express themselves and prepare for public speaking. This finding aligns with the work of Kagan (1994), who emphasizes that cooperative learning strategies such as TPS can significantly reduce students' fear of speaking, as they are given more opportunities to practice and refine their language skills in a supportive context.

Moreover, the increased confidence observed in this study highlights the importance of fostering a classroom environment where students feel safe and encouraged to speak without the fear of making mistakes. By using TPS, students are given multiple chances to practice and build confidence, which is crucial in language acquisition (Richards, 2008). This is particularly important in English as a second language (ESL) contexts, where students may lack opportunities to speak the language outside the classroom.

Improved Peer Interaction and Collaborative Learning

Another key finding of this study was the improvement in peer interaction and collaborative learning. Before the TPS implementation, only 30% of students were engaged in high-level peer interactions. After TPS, this number increased to 70%, a remarkable shift that demonstrates the power of collaborative learning in fostering deeper engagement among students. The peer interaction provided by TPS encourages students to exchange ideas, challenge each other's perspectives, and refine their understanding through discussion.

This increase in peer interaction is consistent with the findings of Gillies (2004), who argues that cooperative learning strategies, such as TPS, facilitate better peer communication and support, especially in large classrooms where some students may not feel comfortable engaging in whole-class discussions. The "Pair" stage, in particular, offers students the chance to discuss their thoughts in a low-pressure environment, which can help shy or less confident students express themselves more freely. Additionally, the collaborative nature of TPS promotes the development of social and cognitive skills, as students are not only learning the language but also how to collaborate and communicate effectively with their peers (Slavin, 1995).

Furthermore, the study revealed that students who initially struggled with speaking were able to express their thoughts more clearly and confidently when discussing with their peers. This peer-supported approach is particularly beneficial for lower-level learners, who may find it difficult to speak in front of the entire class but feel more comfortable engaging with a partner (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). These findings suggest that TPS not only improves students' speaking skills but also contributes to building a sense of community within the classroom, which can increase motivation and engagement in language learning.

Active Listening and Critical Thinking

TPS also enhanced students' listening and critical thinking skills. The "Share" phase requires students to listen to their peers' ideas, which promotes active listening and the development of critical thinking skills. This focus on listening is essential in language learning, as it allows students to process and understand different perspectives before responding. The increased attention paid to active listening was observed during class discussions, where students were more likely to ask clarifying questions or offer constructive feedback based on what their peers had shared.

The development of critical thinking through TPS is an important aspect of language learning, as it encourages students to evaluate ideas and formulate responses. This aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism, which asserts that learning is most effective when students engage in collaborative discussions where they actively construct and challenge their understanding. The interaction between students during the "Pair" phase provided opportunities for them to engage in deeper analysis, which helped improve their comprehension and retention of the material.

Teacher's Perspective and Classroom Management

From the teacher's perspective, the TPS technique was an effective way to foster more balanced participation and ensure that all students had an equal opportunity to contribute to class discussions. Prior to TPS, the teacher noted that only a few students dominated the conversations, while others were either silent or hesitant to speak. However, after implementing TPS, the teacher observed a more inclusive environment where even the quieter students felt more comfortable participating. The teacher also noted that the technique helped reduce classroom disruptions, as students were focused on engaging in productive discussions with their peers.

The teacher's observations align with the work of Slavin (1995), who suggests that cooperative learning techniques can enhance classroom management by encouraging student engagement and reducing the likelihood of disruptive behavior. By providing students with structured opportunities to interact, TPS encourages a more organized and respectful classroom environment.

Challenges and Limitations

Despite the positive outcomes observed in this study, there were challenges in implementing TPS. One of the key challenges was the time constraints of the classroom. The "Think" and "Pair" stages of TPS require time for students to formulate and discuss their ideas, which can be difficult to manage in large classes with limited class periods. Teachers need to ensure that there is sufficient time for students to engage meaningfully with their peers without cutting into other instructional activities. Additionally, the success of TPS depends on the teacher's ability to manage the group dynamics and ensure that all students are equally involved.

Another limitation was the variation in language proficiency among students. While TPS was effective in engaging most students, those with lower proficiency levels sometimes struggled to fully participate in discussions. To address this, teachers could provide additional scaffolding, such as pre-discussion vocabulary exercises or sentence starters, to help lower-level students feel more confident during the "Think" and "Pair" stages.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) technique is an

effective strategy for increasing student participation, boosting confidence, fostering peer interaction, and promoting critical thinking in English class discussions. The results align with previous studies that emphasize the benefits of collaborative learning and active engagement in language acquisition (Lyman, 1981; Kagan, 1994). While there are challenges in implementing TPS, particularly in large classes, the positive outcomes in terms of student engagement and confidence highlight the potential of this technique to enhance the quality of English language instruction.

In light of these findings, it is recommended that teachers incorporate TPS into their teaching practices, especially in language classrooms where active participation and communication skills are critical. Future research could explore the long-term effects of TPS on language acquisition and investigate strategies for overcoming the challenges of classroom time management and student proficiency variation.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR(S) CONTRIBUTION

Rofiq Noorman Haryadi: Conceptualization (lead), methodology (lead), writing – original draft (lead), review (supporting), editing (supporting).

Eryandi: Conceptualization (supporting), methodology (supporting), writing – original draft (supporting), review (lead), editing (lead).

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