

The Use of Dyadic Essay Technique to Increase Speaking Skills in Senior High School Surakarta

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ABSTRACT

The research investigates the implementation of Dyadic Essay Technique (DET) as an instructional strategy to improve speaking skills among senior high students in Surakarta. While DET is primarily used to improve writing skills, this study explores its adaption for speaking activities through collaborative questions generation and peer discussions. A Classroom Action Research (CAR) design was used involving 30 of the eleventh-grade students in one private senior high school in Surakarta. Data collection method was observation, oral performance assessments, student's journal, and interviews. The findings reveal that Dyadic Essay Technique fosters better engagement, confidence, and speaking fluency by promoting meaningful dialogue and peer feedback. Moreover, students reported increased motivation and engagement due to the interactive and peer-supported nature of the technique. The researcher suggests that incorporating DET into speaking instruction can effectively support language development in communicative contexts. Further researchers may also consider using DET in improving another English language skill like reading and writing prior to see its broader applicability.

Keywords: classroom action research; dyadic essay technique; speaking skill

INTRODUCTION

Language is a social control. Caronia (2021) explained how language and social interaction the primary tools through which cultures, moral orders, social organizations, and identities are constituted, framing language as foundational to everyday social structure and regulation. The process of learning English as a foreign language is a complex process because language is not only an act of putting meaningful words together, but also needs an intellectual, physical, and emotional response. Language learning involves more than memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules. It is a process that engages cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions (Almesaar, 2022).

The study from Peng (2023) showed that EFL learning is deeply embedded in socio-cultural and ecological contexts. Learners negotiate multiple layers of cultural identity (macro to micro scales), which influences how they think, sense, and act in English. This aligns with the idea of learning new culture, way of thinking, sense, and acting alongside language acquisition. Additionally, according to Riadil (2019) in their qualitative study surveyed and found that EFL students in Indonesia place high value on fluency first, believing that once

fluent they can gradually improve accuracy and complexity of expression. One respondent stated that fluency empowers self-correction over time. This supports the layered competence (fluency → accuracy → meaning).

Teaching and learning are two terms which are related to each other because they are two processes which cannot be separated. Teaching is a process of transferring knowledge to someone, and learning is a process of getting knowledge from someone. According to Brown (2007), teaching is showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instructions, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand. The definition from Brown is similar with the Rule of National Educational Ministry (2003) which states that teacher facilitates students to gain studying experience and basic competence.

English is one of the keys to face the globalization era. It is related to the operational reference of Merdeka Curriculum that promotes the Four Cs Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity in English lessons. It stresses that critical thinking is essential for problem-solving and meaningful language use, aligning with curriculum aims to produce globally competitive learners (Arum, 2025). In Indonesia, English has important roles because most sources of information and school subject come from English language. The main purpose of teaching English in Indonesia are to enable the students in order understand the language structured and enable to use the language in spoken and written activities.

English speaking is essential in English language learning, especially learning English as a foreign language (furthermore EFL) context like Indonesia. Due to the central role of speaking skill and its escalating demands of instruction in various levels of education in Indonesia, a myriad of teaching approaches and strategies have been applied to equip learners with the competences enabling the development of this skill (Syarifudin, 2019). It enables learners to express their ideas, thoughts, and opinions clearly and effectively in real-life communication. Despite its importance, speaking English is challenging for students, so they keep trying to master it well. Most of senior high school students have problems with confidence, fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary when expressing themselves in English.

Traditional classroom practices often focus heavily on grammar drills and written exercises, which do not adequately prepare students for communicative competence. As a result, students may have a good grasp of English grammar and vocabulary but less fluent in speaking English with spontaneity and fluency. This method of teaching is believed to produce learners who cannot use the language communicatively although they have considerable knowledge of grammar rules contributing to learners' passive participation and negative feelings towards grammar learning (Fitrihani, 2019).

According to Putra (2017), speaking is the ability to communicate effectively and meaningfully in interactive contexts. Speaking also allows individuals to express their thoughts, ideas, and emotions (Wardani et al., 2020). Additionally, a perception-based study from Malik et al. (2025) found that restricted vocabulary, fear of error, low confidence, and lack of real-life speaking practice collectively hinder students' oral English performance. Improving speaking skills requires not only grammatical competence but also fluency, pronunciation, interactional skills, and confidence.

To address this issue, innovative teaching technique that engage students in meaningful speaking are necessary. One such method is the Dyadic Essay Technique (furthermore DET); a collaborative learning strategy that typically involves students speaking take turns, make questions and answers in pairs and then discussing them together.

According to Oktakalindo et al. (2023), the Dyadic Essay Technique initially proposed by Foote (1999) was shown to significantly improve EFL students' narrative writing by pairing learners to compose, exchange, and collaboratively revise essays. The technique involves three main steps: Writing an essay, generating open-ended question based on the essay, and engaging in a dyadic (pair-based) discussion where partners exchange essays and respond to each other's questions orally.

While Dyadic Essay Technique was initially used in reading and content-based courses, it has been adapted in language learning to bridge writing and speaking skills. According to Jacobs and Renandya (2005), integrating writing with speaking activities allows learners to organize their thoughts more effectively and supports fluency in oral expression.

Dyadic Essay Technique also encourages student-centered learning and interaction, which are essential elements in communicative language teaching.

Barkley et al. (2005) state, this technique (DET) is a collaborative learning technique. Student individually make question of essay and answer's model on assignment's reading, speech or giving presenting. Then, next period, they exchange questions and put down an answer one another, finally, trade, read, and compare with the answers in the whole class then the students write an essay or text based on their model answers they have discussed. This collaborative learning technique gives students practice identifying the most important feature of a learning activity and formulating and answering questions about their activity. In this collaborative learning technique, the students also get the peer revision from their partners.

Nation and Newton (2009) state, peer interaction in Dyadic Essay Technique helps create a low-anxiety environment where students can negotiate meaning, ask for clarification and develop conversational competence. While Dyadic Essay Technique has been widely used to improve writing skills, it holds potential to foster speaking abilities through structured peer interaction, critical thinking, and discussion. By adapting the Dyadic Essay Technique for speaking activities, students can be encouraged to engage in pair-based discussions that simulate authentic communication. This technique enables students to develop their English speaking in classroom setting and its environment, while also fostering cooperation, idea exchange, and self-reflection. Therefore, this research conducted to explain how the usage of Dyadic Essay Technique can increase the students' speaking skill at one of Senior High School in Surakarta.

From the description above, Dyadic Essay Technique shows strong potential for improving speaking skills in senior high school students. It provides an integrated approach that combines writing and speaking, encourages collaboration in pair, and supports communicative competence. Dyadic Essay Technique supports students to increase their English speaking and builds confidence, motivation through structured, and meaningful interaction.

In classroom action research settings, Dyadic Essay Technique aligns well with the cyclical model of identifying a problem (for example low speaking performance), implementing a strategy, observing results, and reflecting for improvement. It promotes not only speaking practice but also critical thinking, collaboration, and learner autonomy.

The method of Classroom Action Research is a series of scientific steps taken by people and teacher to investigate and evaluate their own work to improve their own professional practices. Action research can be applied in any level of education because its goal is to improve students' competency not just apply the method in classroom.

The results of pre-research through observation, questionnaire, and pre-test, showed the students were indicated that they are less knowledgeable about speaking. In fact, the students got difficulties to practice their speaking effectively. Furthermore, the process of learning English speaking in classroom lack of supporting technique and situation for students in increasing their speaking skills. Moreover, they lack vocabulary, grammar, and language use. It happens because the class situation was not inspiring, and the speaking class was poor of speaking practice. Hence, the students were not active in speaking class, so they confused how to start speaking English.

Most of students have uncomfortable situation. The condition is protracted so that students experience boredom in learning English speech. Teachers teach using old methods routinely without realizing that such routines make students bored and not pay attention to the lessons. As a result, they got less information from the lessons. Tsang & Davis (2024) implied in the research with young EFL learners indicated that repetitive, unchallenging, and uninteresting classroom exercises (e.g., writing, dictation, quiet drills) are rated as the most

boring activities, correlating with low motivation, little participation, and diminished enthusiasm.

This condition also decreased the students' motivation to learn English. Because of these things, a new technique is needed that will make students excited and have high motivation to learn, so that their English speaking can increase significantly. As a credible English teacher, we must have many ideas to apply new techniques in teaching-learning process to create a new atmosphere that inspires students in learning. With high motivation, students will be enthusiastic in learning which results in their speaking skill increasing.

The purpose in this research is students can improve their speaking skills by using Dyadic Essay Technique. The research questions are how is Dyadic Essay Technique implemented to improve speaking skills at the eleventh-grade students of one state Senior High School in Surakarta and what are students' responses toward the use of Dyadic Essay Technique in speaking activities?

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted at one state Senior High School in Surakarta. It is in middle of the Surakarta city. The research was conducted from December 2024 to February 2025, which is beginning from observation, writing the research proposal, up to the last activity that is revising the research report and examination on thesis. The research subject was students in class XI consists of 30 students in the Academic Year of 2024/2025. Most of the students still low motivation in speaking and lacked knowledgeable about speaking skills.

The method of this research was Classroom Action Research. Action Research is a form of enquiry which is taken by people and teacher to investigate and evaluate their own work to improve their own professional practices. A multi-method study describes action research as professional development that enables teachers to become more reflective and critical of their own work, connecting theory to practice and improving their own educational practice through cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection (Lynch et al., 2024). The goal of this method is to identify problems or conditions participants including teacher, students, managers, administrations, or even parents. The focus is that, as teachers, we frequently see interval between what is literally occurring in teacher's circumstances and what whole preferably like to see occurring (Burns, 2010).

Classroom Action Research have several characteristics. This method works collaboratively, investigating, practitioners, and purpose to change/improve things. The stages consist of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. This research was conducted in two cycles. In collecting the data, the researcher doing observation, interview, questionnaire, test and dairy. Meanwhile, analyzing the data, she applies quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data from pre-test and post-test. Analyzed data using descriptive statistics to compare students' speaking scores before and after the implementation. Qualitative data from observations, interview, dairy, and questionnaires. Analyzed data through thematic analysis to identify patterns, challenges, and students' responses to the Dyadic Essay Technique.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research conducted through two cycles of classroom action research. The result addresses the implementation process of Dyadic Essay Technique, its effect on students' speaking skills, and students' responses on the technique.

Before implementing Dyadic Essay Technique, a speaking pre-test was conducted to assess performance of students' ability. The results showed that many students had difficulty

expressing ideas fluently, made frequent grammatical errors, struggled with pronunciation, lacked confidence and hesitated while speaking. Average score of pre-tests: 61,9. Percentage of students achieving minimum passing score (75): 24%. These results confirmed the need for an intervention to improve students' speaking performance.

IMPLEMENTATION THE TECHNIQUE

The finding consisted of the description of the students' activities of the first cycle until the second cycle in which each of them consisted of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

THE IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE 1

Planning; the lessons plans were designed to integrate Dyadic Essay Technique with speaking activities. Materials included short texts, essay prompts, and speaking rubrics. Students were trained on how to create essay questions and answers.

Acting; in this phase, students worked individually to read a short a reading text, formulate a question' essay grounded the text, then, prepare an answer's model. Next, they worked with pairs to exchange questions, respond orally to their partner's question and discuss and compare responses.

Observing; students were actively engaged but some still read from their notes during discussion. Participant was moderate, means confident students dominated the interaction and vocabulary usage was limited but improving.

Reflecting; although there was improvement, some students lacked fluency and continued to rely on memorized phrases. Adjustments were planned for cycle two including providing vocabulary support, encouraging more spontaneous responses, and giving clearer instruction and discussions goals.

In the first cycle, the technique was introduced to and topic selected was "The Impact of Social Media in Our Life." Student wrote short essays, created three to five open-ended questions, and worked in pairs to exchange their essays and engage in spoken discussion. Approximately half of the students were actively involved in dyadic essay discussion and many students appeared hesitant at first, frequently relied on written notes during speaking, and struggled with vocabulary and fluency. While most students found the activity interesting, some expressed confusion about how to ask and answer open-ended questions. In this cycle, students need more support in question formation and in building speaking confidence, then, additional scaffolding (question prompts, vocabulary banks, speaking frames) was planned for cycle 2.

THE IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE 2

Planning; additional scaffolding such as vocabulary lists and speaking frames was prepared and time was adjusted to allow longer pair discussions.

Acting; students repeated the Dyadic Essay Technique with new texts and prompts, peer feedback was encouraged more explicitly, and teachers monitored and gave feedback in real-time.

Observing; in this phase students showed noticeable improvement in fluency, confidence increase, it means more students volunteered to share answers with the class, and pronunciation improved, though some issues remained with intonation.

Reflecting; Overall, Dyadic Essay Technique was more effective in Cycle II. Most students were able to engage in interactive and meaningful dialogue. Besides, improvements were especially visible in fluency, vocabulary use, and confidence.

TABLE 1. Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

| Assessment | Average | Scores Students >75 |
|--------------------|---------|---------------------|
| Pre-Test | 61.9 | 24% |
| Post-Tests Cycle 1 | 70.6 | 68% |
| Post-Test Cycle 2 | 78.8 | 84% |

The data show a significant increase in the number of students reaching the minimum competency level. This indicates that Dyadic Essay Technique can increase students' speaking performance significantly.

From the second cycle the research, improvements were made in the instructional approach. Students received more structured guidance, including examples of good questions, vocabulary support, and practice time before discussion.

The improvements suggested that Dyadic Essay Technique when supported with structured guidance, was effective when enhancing students' speaking performance. The collaborative, low-pressure environment encouraged interaction and reduced students' anxiety about making mistakes.

The results from both cycles demonstrate are this technique effective strategy to increase students' speaking skills in a senior high school English foreign language context. The gradual increase in speaking scores and student participation reflect the positive impact of Dyadic Essay Technique on various aspects of oral communication, including fluency and coherence, vocabulary development, confidence, and interaction skills. Writing essay allowed students to organize their thoughts, leading to more fluent speech and exposure to academic topic and peer questions helped expand students' vocabulary range. Furthermore, repeated structured practice in pairs created a supported environment that reduced speaking anxiety.

The dyadic essay format promoted turn-taking, asking for clarification, and follow-up questions, which are crucial for real-life communication. These results are consistent with theory by Vygotsky (1978) which accenting the importance interaction language development.

Furthermore, they support the principles of Communicative Language Teaching, which values authentic, student-centered interaction in language learning.

The classroom action research results indicate this technique (DET) is effective and practice in enhancing speaking skills of senior high school students. It increases English speaking language performance, fosters students' engagement, confidence, and autonomy. Continued application Dyadic Essay Technique with appropriate scaffolding and topic selection, is recommended for speaking-focused English Foreign Language instruction.

STUDENTS' RESPONSES

Based on interviews and questionnaires; 88% students said Dyadic Essay Technique made speaking class more enjoyable, 79% felt more confident speaking in English after the Dyadic Essay Technique Cycles, and 83% found it helpful to discuss answers with peers before speaking to the class. Students appreciated the structured interaction, and many expressed that the technique reduced their speaking anxiety and helped them organize their thoughts better.

The result supports that this technique is effective to increase students' speaking skills. Through collaborative learning, Dyadic Essay Technique fosters fluency, vocabulary use, confidence, and critical thinking. Regular speaking practice in a low-stress environment improved students' fluency, the structured preparation phase helped students access and apply appropriate vocabulary. Meanwhile, pair discussion reduced anxiety and encouraged

more active participation, and creating and answering essay-style questions enhanced depth of thought and language use.

Improving speaking skills remains a vital goal in EFL education. This research shows that integrating structured, student-centered methods like Dyadic Essay Technique can greatly enhance the speaking ability of senior high school students. Through preparation, collaboration, and meaningful interaction students not only learn to speak better but also become more confident communicators.

This result aligns with previous research showing the benefits of Dyadic Essay Technique in enhancing interaction and engagement (Yunus & Eliastuti, 2020).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Dyadic Essay Technique was implemented in structured phases; students first read a text, formulated questions' essay and answers' model with pairs. The process encouraged meaningful communication, cooperative learning, and peer feedback.

The application of Dyadic Essay Technique significantly improved speaking performance of the student's fluency, pronunciation vocabulary, and confidence. The result indicated a notable increase that most of students achieving the minimum passing score compared to the pre-test.

Students responded positively to Dyadic Essay Technique, reporting that the technique made them more comfortable and motivated in speaking class. They appreciated the chance to speak in pairs before presenting ideas to the whole class, which reduced anxiety and built confidence.

Dyadic Essay technique proved to be an effective instructional technique for speaking practice, especially in English Foreign Language contexts where students often lack confidence and opportunities to speak. The combination of writing preparation and oral discussion contributed to deeper understanding and better oral performance. The technique, which integrates writing, question generation, and peer discussion, significantly enhanced students' fluency, vocabulary usage, pronunciation, and confidence in speaking English. Students also demonstrated improved interaction skills, such as asking and answering questions, clarifying meaning, and building conversations naturally with peers.

The collaborative and communicative nature of Dyadic Essay Technique provided students with meaningful speaking practice in a low-anxiety environment. The technique also encouraged critical thinking and helped learners organize their thoughts before speaking, which is particularly useful in an EFL classroom. The success of this classroom action research confirms that Dyadic Essay Technique is powerful and flexible technique that not only improves speaking ability but also fosters meaningful peer interaction and learner autonomy- EFL setting.

From the results and reflecting this research, the researcher proposes some recommendation that the teachers can adopt Dyadic Essay Technique in speaking classes to provide structured and collaborative speaking opportunities, guide students in preparing meaningful questions and answers and to monitor pair discussions to ensure active participation, and provide necessary support such as vocabulary lists, sentence starters, and speaking models especially in early stages of implementation.

Meanwhile for the students, they are encouraged to actively engage in pair discussions and make the most of peer feedback during Dyadic Essay Technique activities and focus on both content and delivery when preparing and discussing answers, as both aspects are essential for speaking improvement.

For further researchers may also consider using Dyadic Essay Technique in improving another English language skill like reading and listening prior to see its broader applicability.

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