

Enhancing Students' Speaking Skills through the Jigsaw Method: A Collaborative Learning Approach

Nuralam Jumadi

nuralamjumadi03@gmail.com

Sam Hermansyah

sam.hermansyah82i@gmail.com

Buhari

buharifakkah9@gmail.com

Sitti Aisa

sitti.aisa@gmail.com

Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidenreng Rappang

ABSTRACT

This research aims to enhance students' speaking skills through the implementation of the Jigsaw Method as a collaborative learning approach. The subjects of the study were students of class VIII.2 at UPT SMPN 4 Panca Rijang, selected through purposive sampling due to their low speaking skill. The study employed a pre-experimental design using a one-group pretest-posttest model. The instruments used were speaking tests and questionnaires. Data were analyzed quantitatively using a paired sample t-test with SPSS 25. The results showed a significant improvement in students' speaking scores, with the mean increasing from 53.22 in the pretest to 73.65 in the posttest. The t-test revealed a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$, indicating a statistically significant difference. Moreover, questionnaire responses showed that most students had positive perceptions of the Jigsaw Method. They felt more confident, active, and engaged in speaking activities through group collaboration. The Jigsaw Method is proven to be effective in improving students' speaking abilities while fostering peer interaction and responsibility in the learning process. It is recommended as an alternative strategy for teaching speaking skills in junior high school English classes.

Keywords: Speaking Skills; Jigsaw Method; Collaborative Learning

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the four essential language skills that learners of English must master in order to communicate effectively. It is not merely the production of sounds or words but the ability to convey meaning through verbal and non-verbal symbols in various contexts (Kayi, 2006). Through speaking, learners can express ideas, feelings, and opinions, as well as interact meaningfully with others. In educational settings, speaking is a primary tool for active participation, knowledge exchange, and collaborative learning. For English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

learners, however, mastering this skill can be particularly challenging due to limited exposure to authentic communication opportunities.

Despite the recognized importance of speaking, many students still face significant difficulties in this area. At UPT SMPN 4 Panca Rijang, for example, a considerable number of students struggle to speak English confidently and accurately. Common problems include a lack of vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, and low self-confidence, all of which hinder their willingness to participate in oral activities. As a result, their communicative competence remains limited, and their opportunities for improvement are reduced. Hale (2002) notes that self-confidence is a critical factor influencing performance; students who are confident are more likely to take risks, engage actively, and learn from experience. Conversely, those with low confidence tend to avoid participation, which further hampers skill development.

Addressing these challenges requires teaching strategies that not only develop language competence but also create a supportive, interactive environment. One such strategy is the Jigsaw Method, a cooperative learning model designed to promote collaboration, interdependence, and active participation among students. Originally developed by Aronson (1978) and later adapted by various educators, the Jigsaw Method assigns each student a specific portion of the learning material, which they must master and then teach to their peers. This approach ensures that every learner plays an essential role in achieving the group's objectives, thereby fostering both academic and social skills.

The Jigsaw Method offers several pedagogical advantages for speaking classes. It encourages students to use the target language for meaningful communication while exchanging information within their groups. This peer-teaching process enhances comprehension, retention, and verbal fluency because learners must process the material deeply enough to explain it to others. Moreover, the method reduces teacher-centeredness, increases student engagement, and promotes a sense of responsibility for one's own and others' learning. Such conditions are conducive to developing speaking skills in an EFL context, where students often need structured yet communicative opportunities to practice.

Previous research has demonstrated the effectiveness of the Jigsaw Method in improving students' speaking skills, confidence, and motivation. Studies by Fatimah (2020), Yuliana and Pratama (2021), and Rahmawati (2022) show that students taught through the Jigsaw technique exhibit significant improvement in fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and participation compared to those taught using traditional methods. These findings are consistent across different educational levels and learning environments, including both face-to-face and online classes, suggesting the method's adaptability and reliability as a teaching strategy.

In the context of UPT SMPN 4 Panca Rijang, the implementation of the Jigsaw Method is expected to address students' speaking difficulties by providing a structured yet interactive platform for communication. Through expert groups and

home groups, students will have multiple opportunities to speak, listen, and negotiate meaning in English. This process not only builds linguistic competence but also enhances interpersonal skills such as cooperation, empathy, and mutual respect qualities that are essential for collaborative learning and lifelong communication.

This study is therefore designed to investigate the effectiveness of the Jigsaw Method as a collaborative learning approach to enhance students' speaking skills. It focuses on two key aspects: (1) determining whether there is a significant improvement in students' speaking performance after being taught using the Jigsaw Method, and (2) exploring students' perceptions of learning speaking through this technique. By combining quantitative data from pre-tests and post-tests with qualitative insights from questionnaires, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the method's impact.

Ultimately, the findings of this study are expected to contribute to the growing body of literature on cooperative learning in EFL contexts, particularly in junior high schools. They may serve as a reference for English teachers seeking innovative, student-centered approaches to teaching speaking. Furthermore, the study aims to highlight the practical benefits of integrating the Jigsaw Method into classroom practice, not only for enhancing language skills but also for fostering positive attitudes toward learning and communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking is widely recognized as one of the most important skills in second and foreign language learning. It is the primary medium through which learners convey meaning, negotiate understanding, and build social relationships in the target language. According to Nunan (2003), speaking is a productive aural/oral skill that involves the systematic verbal production of language for communication. Similarly, Kayi (2006) emphasizes that speaking requires both verbal and non-verbal elements to express meaning effectively in different contexts. In EFL settings, speaking skill is often regarded as the ultimate measure of a learner's language proficiency, as it reflects the ability to use language spontaneously and appropriately in real-life situations.

The development of speaking skills involves mastering several key components. Harris (1969) identifies five core elements: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Pronunciation ensures intelligibility and listener comprehension, grammar contributes to accuracy, vocabulary provides the necessary range of expression, fluency ensures smooth speech delivery, and comprehension enables the speaker to respond appropriately. These components are interdependent, and deficiencies in any area can affect overall speaking performance. Therefore, speaking instruction should address all these aspects holistically to ensure balanced skill development.

Various assessment methods have been developed to evaluate speaking ability. Harmer (2007) outlines techniques such as interviews, live monologues, recorded monologues, role-plays, and collaborative discussions. Each method has its own advantages and limitations, but all aim to measure a learner's ability to use the target language in meaningful contexts. For example, role-plays and discussions provide interactive opportunities that closely mirror authentic communication, while monologues assess sustained speech production. These assessment types are particularly relevant in classroom-based research, as they allow for practical evaluation of learners' progress over time.

Teaching speaking in EFL contexts presents unique challenges. Many learners experience anxiety, limited vocabulary, and a lack of confidence, which hinder their participation in oral activities. Harmer (2007) identifies three main reasons for teaching speaking: providing rehearsal opportunities for real-life communication, offering feedback on language use, and encouraging fluency through meaningful practice. To address these challenges, teachers need methods that are both interactive and supportive, creating an environment where students feel safe to experiment with language and learn from their peers.

The Jigsaw Method is one such approach that aligns with these objectives. Developed by Aronson in the 1970s, the Jigsaw Method is a cooperative learning technique in which students are divided into groups, with each member assigned a portion of the material to master and teach to their peers. This structure fosters interdependence, as each learner's contribution is essential to completing the group's task. According to Slavin (2005), cooperative learning models like Jigsaw promote higher achievement, better retention, and stronger interpersonal relationships compared to competitive or individualistic approaches.

In language learning, the Jigsaw Method offers distinct advantages. It creates a communicative need for students to use the target language, thereby increasing opportunities for meaningful interaction. Silberman (2005) notes that this method encourages active engagement, peer teaching, and mutual accountability, which can lead to improved comprehension and language production. By explaining material to others, learners deepen their own understanding and gain confidence in speaking. Additionally, the collaborative nature of the method helps reduce anxiety, as responsibility is shared among group members rather than placed solely on the individual.

Empirical studies support the effectiveness of the Jigsaw Method in enhancing speaking skills. Fatimah (2020) found that its implementation improved students' fluency and engagement in speaking activities. Yuliana and Pratama (2021) reported increased confidence, better pronunciation, and more organized oral presentations among high school students. Rahmawati (2022) demonstrated that Jigsaw remained effective in online learning settings, where it enhanced interaction and reduced passive participation. These findings indicate that the method is adaptable across contexts and can yield positive results in diverse learning

environments. the literature indicates that speaking is a complex but teachable skill, requiring attention to multiple linguistic and communicative components. The Jigsaw Method, as a form of cooperative learning, addresses many of the challenges associated with speaking instruction in EFL classrooms by fostering interaction, accountability, and confidence. Prior research consistently shows its positive impact on learners' oral performance and engagement, providing strong theoretical and empirical justification for its use in this study. This review thus positions the Jigsaw Method as a promising strategy for improving speaking skills among junior high school students at UPT SMPN 4 Panca Rijang.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This study employed a pre-experimental design with a one-group pre-test and post-test model as outlined by Sugiyono (2017). In this design, a single group of participants was tested before and after the implementation of the treatment to determine whether there was a significant improvement in their speaking skills. The treatment in this research was the application of the Jigsaw Method in teaching speaking. The pre-test served to assess the students' initial speaking proficiency, while the post-test measured their progress after the treatment. This design was selected because it allowed the researcher to evaluate the effect of the Jigsaw Method without the need for a control group, making it practical within the constraints of the school setting. The population of the study consisted of all eighth-grade students at UPT SMPN 4 Panca Rijang, totaling 47 students divided into two classes: VIII.1 (24 students) and VIII.2 (23 students). The sample was selected using purposive sampling, focusing on class VIII.2, as recommended by the English teacher based on observations of their lower speaking proficiency. This selection was intended to maximize the observable improvement in speaking skills, as students with lower initial ability were expected to benefit significantly from the intervention.

Instrument and Procedures

Two primary instruments were used to collect data: a speaking test and a questionnaire. The speaking test, administered in both the pre-test and post-test, assessed three main aspects of speaking ability: fluency, accuracy (grammar and pronunciation), and comprehension, based on a modified version of Heaton's (1990) speaking assessment criteria. The questionnaire, adapted from Airasian, was designed to capture students' perceptions of learning through the Jigsaw Method. It included items related to enjoyment, participation, comprehension, confidence, peer support, and overall classroom atmosphere. The procedure of data collection consisted of three stages: pre-test, treatment, and post-test with questionnaire. In the pre-test, each student was asked to introduce themselves and talk about their last holiday, with their responses recorded for scoring. The treatment stage was conducted over five sessions (90 minutes each), during which the Jigsaw Method

was applied with different speaking topics, such as “My School” and “Holidays.” Students worked in expert groups to master subtopics and then taught these to their home groups, followed by presentations and feedback. The post-test replicated the pre-test tasks to measure improvement, and the questionnaire was administered immediately afterward to gather students’ reflections on the method.

Data Analysis

The speaking test scores from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics via the paired sample t-test in SPSS 25. This analysis determined whether the observed differences between pre-test and post-test scores were statistically significant. The questionnaire data were analyzed descriptively to determine the percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement, providing insights into their attitudes and perceptions toward the Jigsaw Method. Ethical considerations were addressed by obtaining permission from the school principal and informing the participants about the research objectives and procedures. Students were assured that their participation would not affect their grades and that their responses would remain confidential, ensuring compliance with ethical standards in educational research and fostering a comfortable learning environment.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study are presented in two main sections: (1) the students’ speaking test scores before and after the implementation of the Jigsaw Method, and (2) the students’ responses toward learning speaking using the Jigsaw Method. The findings are based on data collected from 23 students in class VIII.2 at UPT SMPN 4 Panca Rijang through a pre-test, post-test, and questionnaire. The pre-test scores indicated that the students’ speaking skill was generally low before the treatment. As shown in Table 4.2, 20 students (86.96%) were classified in the “Poor” category with scores ranging from 49 to 61, and 3 students (13.04%) were in the “Very Poor” category with scores below 49. No students reached the “Fair,” “Good,” or “Excellent” categories, demonstrating the need for targeted intervention.

Following the implementation of the Jigsaw Method, substantial improvement was observed in the post-test results. Table 4.3 shows that 11 students (47.83%) achieved the “Good” category (scores 75–87), 11 students (47.83%) reached the “Fair” category (scores 67–74), and only 1 student (4.35%) remained in the “Very Poor” category. This shift reflects the positive effect of the Jigsaw Method on students’ speaking performance. The mean score increased from 53.22 in the pre-test to 73.65 in the post-test, indicating an average improvement of 20.43 points (see Table 4.4). This gain suggests that the treatment significantly enhanced students’ fluency, accuracy, and comprehension in speaking English.

The paired sample t-test further confirmed this improvement as statistically significant. As presented in Table 4.7, the t-value was -19.40 with a significance

level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), which means the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted. This result validates that the improvement was not due to chance but was directly related to the application of the Jigsaw Method. In addition to test scores, the questionnaire revealed positive student perceptions toward the Jigsaw Method. More than 85% of students agreed or strongly agreed that the method made speaking lessons more enjoyable, increased their confidence, encouraged active participation, and improved their understanding of the material. For example, 14 students strongly agreed and 7 agreed that they enjoyed learning through Jigsaw, while 15 strongly agreed that it made lessons more fun. Overall, the results indicate that the Jigsaw Method not only improved students' speaking scores but also enhanced their motivation and engagement. These findings are consistent across both quantitative and qualitative data, demonstrating the method's effectiveness in this context.

Table 1. Mean Score of Students' Speaking Test

| Test Type | Mean Score | Gain |
|-----------|------------|-------|
| Pre-test | 53.22 | - |
| Post-test | 73.65 | 20.43 |

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of the Jigsaw Method in improving students' speaking skills. The significant increase in the mean score, from 53.22 in the pre-test to 73.65 in the post-test, suggests that the method provided students with meaningful opportunities to practice and enhance their oral communication abilities. This supports Brown's (2004) argument that speaking competence develops through active engagement in communicative tasks. The paired sample t-test results ($p = 0.000$) reinforce the statistical significance of the improvement, confirming that the Jigsaw Method had a direct positive effect on the students' speaking performance. This is consistent with Slavin's (2005) assertion that cooperative learning strategies foster both academic achievement and social interaction, which are essential for language learning.

One of the key factors contributing to this improvement is the structure of the Jigsaw Method itself. By dividing students into expert and home groups, the method ensures that each learner plays an active role in the learning process. This aligns with Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, which emphasizes the importance of interaction and scaffolding in developing higher-order thinking and communication skills. Moreover, the Jigsaw Method appears to have addressed affective barriers such as low confidence and fear of making mistakes. The questionnaire results show that students felt more comfortable and motivated to speak in English when working collaboratively. This is in line with Kayi's (2006) observation that a supportive learning environment can reduce anxiety and encourage risk-taking in language use.

The peer-teaching element of the Jigsaw Method also contributed to deeper learning. When students explained material to their peers, they were required to process the information more thoroughly, which enhanced their retention and

speaking fluency. This finding is supported by Silberman (2005), who argues that peer teaching reinforces understanding and builds communication competence. Additionally, the method fostered a sense of responsibility and interdependence among students. As each group's success depended on the contributions of all members, learners were motivated to prepare and participate actively. This mirrors Aronson's (1978) original goal for the Jigsaw Method: to create a cooperative learning environment where students rely on each other for academic success.

Comparing these results with previous studies further validates the findings. For example, Fatimah (2020) and Yuliana & Pratama (2021) also reported significant gains in speaking performance and confidence using the Jigsaw technique. Rahmawati (2022) extended this evidence to online contexts, showing the method's flexibility across different learning environments. The discussion highlights that the Jigsaw Method effectively enhanced students' speaking skills by combining structured interaction, peer teaching, and collaborative responsibility. Beyond improving test scores, it also positively influenced students' attitudes toward learning English, suggesting that the method holds strong potential for wider application in EFL classrooms.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the effectiveness of the Jigsaw Method as a collaborative learning approach to improve the speaking skills of eighth-grade students at UPT SMPN 4 Panca Rijang. The findings revealed a significant increase in students' speaking performance, with the mean score rising from 53.22 in the pre-test to 73.65 in the post-test, representing an average gain of 20.43 points. The paired sample t-test results ($p = 0.000$) confirmed that this improvement was statistically significant, indicating that the Jigsaw Method had a direct positive effect on students' fluency, accuracy, and comprehension. In addition to measurable improvements in test scores, the students' responses toward the Jigsaw Method were overwhelmingly positive. More than 85% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the method made speaking lessons more enjoyable, increased their confidence, encouraged active participation, and improved their understanding of the material. These results suggest that the Jigsaw Method not only enhanced students' linguistic competence but also positively influenced their motivation and attitudes toward learning English. Overall, the study concludes that the Jigsaw Method is an effective instructional strategy for enhancing speaking skills in junior high school EFL contexts. Its collaborative structure promotes active participation, peer support, and shared responsibility, which contribute to both cognitive and affective gains in language learning. Therefore, the Jigsaw Method is recommended for broader implementation in English language classrooms, particularly where learners face challenges in confidence, vocabulary, and engagement.

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