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ENHANCING STUDENTS' CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION: CAN THE TALKING CHIPS TECHNIQUE IMPROVE THE SPEAKING SKILLS OF EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT SMPN 2 UBUD?

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ABSTRACT
This study was prompted by the low English-language proficiency of eighth-grade students at SMPN 2 Ubud, characterized by issues with pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension in speaking. One learning method to deal with this problem is the Talking Chips. The purpose of this study is to improve the speaking skills of eighth-grade students at SMPN 2 Ubud during the academic year 2025–2026 using Talking Chips. Classroom Action Research is a study methodology that consists of two cycles: planning, action, observation, and reflection (CAR). The research subjects were thirty-three students from class VIII-D. The research tools included a questionnaire to measure student responses and a speaking exam (pre- and post-test). The study found that the children's speaking skills increased dramatically. In cycles I and II, the average student score rose from 44.24 on the pre-test to 64.66 on the post-test and 79.54 on the post-test, respectively. Additionally, the survey results showed that the students received the Talking Chips method well. The results show that using the Talking Chips can improve students' speaking skills. English teachers are encouraged to adopt the Talking Chips strategy as an alternative teaching method to improve students' speaking skills and engagement.
Keywords: speaking skill; Talking Chips strategy

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a language skill that plays a crucial role in English learning because it serves as the primary means for students to express ideas, opinions, and information verbally (Negi, 2024). According to Brown (2004) speaking was a productive skill that could be observed directly and empirically. With strong speaking skills, students are expected to communicate effectively in both academic and everyday contexts (Krismayani et al., 2025; Leonita et al., 2023). However, in English learning at school, speaking remains a challenging skill for most students. students often experience high levels of speaking anxiety, triggered by fear of making mistakes, embarrassment when teased by peers, and anxiety about judgment from teachers or their peers (Brown, 2007).

This situation also occurred among eighth-grade students at SMPN 2 Ubud in the 2025/2026 academic year. Based on initial observations and interviews with English teachers, students still had

difficulty orally conveying procedural texts. According from Procedure text is a type of text in English that shows and explains how to do or produce something through a series of orderly actions and steps (Huwaida, 2018). According to Mahsun (2014), procedure text is a type of text that falls into the factual genre of the procedure subgenre. The teacher-dominated learning process and limited opportunities to practice speaking led students to be passive and less actively involved in learning. Therefore, learning strategies are needed to create an active, communicative classroom atmosphere and to provide equal opportunities for all students to practice speaking.

Numerous earlier studies have demonstrated the efficacy of cooperative learning techniques, such as the Talking Chips strategy, in enhancing students' speaking abilities. According to Jolliffe (2012), cooperative learning requires students to work together in small groups, helping and supporting one another to improve the learning process and outcomes, both for themselves and for other group members. According to Kagan (2009) ,Talking Chips is a speaking teaching strategy that encourages students to work in groups. Additionally, there is still a dearth of studies on the application of the Talking Chips technique in junior high school, namely in the eighth grade, within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum. This suggests a research void about the efficacy of the Talking Chips technique in raising junior high school students.

In light of this research gap, the purpose of this project is to use the Talking Chips technique to enhance the speaking abilities of eighth-grade students at SMPN 2 Ubud throughout the 2025–2026 academic year. In line with the requirements of the Merdeka Curriculum, it is anticipated that this research will enhance active and communicative learning and aid in the creation of more effective English language learning practices.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design to improve students' speaking skills by applying the Talking Chips strategy. The study was conducted in two cycles, each consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection (Ary et al., 2010). This study was conducted at SMPN 2 Ubud during the odd semester of the 2025–2026 school year. Thirteen male and sixteen female students in grade VIII-D at SMPN 2 Ubud served as the subjects. Based on preliminary observations showing poor student

speaking abilities, especially in communicating procedural materials verbally, the class was chosen.

This study employed questionnaires and tests as data collection methods. The speaking test was created to evaluate students' speaking progress and was administered as a pre-test and post-test at each cycle. Students' reactions to the use of the Talking Chips technique in speaking instruction were evaluated using a questionnaire.

Data collection instruments in this study included a speaking skills assessment rubric and a closed-ended questionnaire. According to Brown (2018) the solution for each score in the response is pronunciation, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency and grammar, all of these criteria are very useful and needed by teachers when assessing speaking skill. However, only comprehension, pronunciation, and fluency were evaluated in this study. To gauge students' views and reactions to the learning process, a Likert scale was used in the questionnaire.

Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods were applied. The average score and the percentage increase in students' speaking abilities for each cycle were computed to analyze the quantitative data from speaking test results. To bolster the overall research findings, qualitative data were gathered from the questionnaire responses and descriptively analyzed.

FINDINGSS AND DISCUSSION

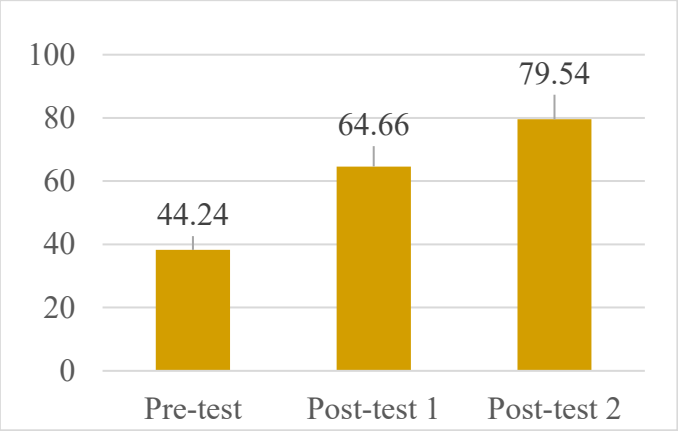
Cycle I, Cycle II, and a pre-cycle comprise this Classroom Action Research (CAR) project. Planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection make up each cycle. Speaking assessments were used to gather research findings, which were then corroborated by observations made during the learning process.

A pre-test was given to students to gauge their speaking proficiency before the Talking Chips technique was used in the pre-cycle phase. The pre-cycle findings showed that students' speaking abilities remained comparatively low. The majority of students had trouble pronouncing words correctly, understanding the material, and speaking fluently. According to Pollar (2008) stated that this difficulty is caused by the complexity of the elements involved in the speaking process. The average student score in the pre-cycle stage remained below the school's Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM).

The Talking Chips technique was used in speaking learning activities in cycle

I, continuing the activity based on the pre-cycle findings. During cycle I, students started actively participating in group discussions while managing turn-taking with chips. In contrast to the pre-cycle results, the post-test results from cycle I demonstrated improvement in students' speaking skills. Still, a few students fell short of the KKM, especially in comprehension, pronunciation, and fluency.

After that, the action carried on into Cycle II, with Cycle I thoughts guiding improvements. Clearer speaking examples and improved time management were used in Cycle II to apply the Talking Chips technique. Even greater improvements were seen in the Cycle II post-test results. Speaking more eloquently, confidently, and formally was possible for most students. The research success indicator was achieved when a significant increase in the number of students reaching the Minimum Competency (KKM) was observed.



Graph 1. Depicting the Subjects' Progressing Achievement

Interpreting the research findings by relating them to pertinent earlier studies is the main goal of this discussion. According to the findings, students' speaking abilities improved over time from the pre-cycle to the second cycle when the Talking Chips technique was used. This development demonstrates how well the Talking Chips method works to motivate students to actively participate in speaking exercises.

The Talking Chips strategy's primary feature—that it gives every student an equal chance to speak—explains the

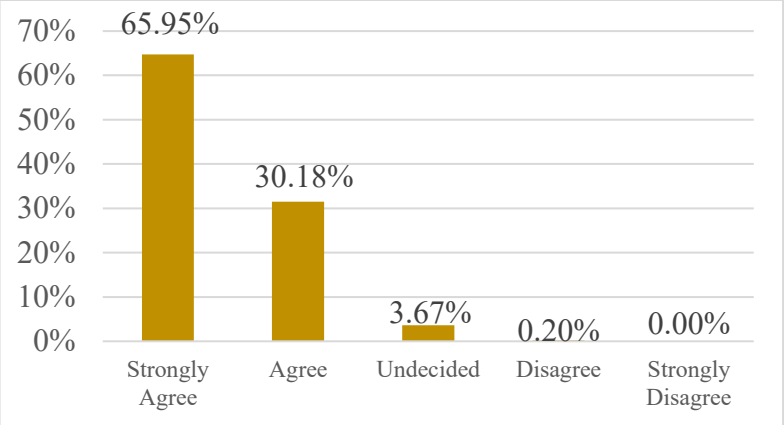
development in students' speaking abilities. Students are encouraged to voice their ideas more actively and become less reliant on more dominating peers by using chips to organize turns. This result is consistent with earlier studies that demonstrate how cooperative learning techniques can raise student interest and English proficiency.

Implementing the Talking Chips technique increased students' confidence and involvement. Because of the organized and encouraging learning environment, students gained confidence when speaking. Students' comprehension, pronunciation, and fluency all improved as a result. These findings support the idea that improving speaking abilities requires a supportive learning environment. According to Dörnyei (2001) states that developing speaking skill plays an important role in increasing students' self-confidence and motivation.

The findings of this study show that the Talking Chips strategy can serve as an alternate learning method to enhance students' speaking abilities, especially when teaching English at the junior high school level. This is supported by the pre-test (44.24), post-test 1 (64.66), and post-test II (79.54). Teachers can promote equitable participation in class and foster more communicative, student-centered learning by using this tactic.

Additionally, the student questionnaire showed positive results: 0.00% strongly disagreed, 30.18% disagreed, 3.67% were unsure, 0.20% disagreed, and 65.95% strongly agreed. This implies that students' speaking abilities are highly influenced by their involvement in the Talking Chips method of learning to speak English. Thus, the Talking Chips method significantly improves English-speaking abilities and has a positive impact.

This study, however, has several shortcomings. This study was conducted over a brief period in a single class with a small number of participants. Additionally, because speaking abilities were the exclusive focus of this study, the findings cannot be widely applied. Therefore, to obtain more thorough results, further study is advised that includes more people, longer investigations, and the examination of different language skills.



Graph 1. Depicting the Subjects' Responses Toward the Implementation of the Talking Chips Strategy.

At the end of Cycle II, students received a questionnaire to get their thoughts on the approach in addition to the speaking tests. Ten statements on a five-point Likert scale—Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1)—were included in the questionnaire. The questionnaire's goal was to investigate students' comfort levels, motivation, confidence, and involvement in speaking exercises that used the technique.

The questionnaire analysis showed that most students responded positively to the strategy. Out of the total score of 1.471, 970 responses, or 65.95%, fell into the Strongly Agree (SA) category; 444 responses, or 30.18%, fell into the Agree (A) category; 54 responses, or 3.67%, fell into the Undecided (U) category; 3 responses, or 0.20%, fell into the disagree category; and 0 responses, or 0.0 percent, fell into the strongly disagree category. According to these results, practically every student agreed that the Talking Chips Strategy should be used during speaking exercises. These findings suggest that students found the talking-chips method beneficial for honing their English-speaking skills. It demonstrates how effectively a plan raises students' skill levels.

Consequently, the questionnaire answers support the conclusions drawn from the speaking assessments. The talking chips method receives positive feedback and is effective in improving students' speaking abilities, including fluency, pronunciation, and comprehension accuracy.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Implementing the Talking Chips technique can help eighth-grade students at SMPN 2 Ubud improve their speaking

skills in the 2025–2026 academic year, according to the research findings and the debate. The speaking test outcomes, which show an increase in the average score from pre-test to post-test in each cycle, clearly demonstrate improvement in students' speaking abilities. By giving every student an equal chance to engage in speaking exercises, the Talking Chips strategy helps students gain confidence, improve their oral communication skills in procedural texts, and better employ proper pronunciation and comprehension. Furthermore, students' reactions to the Talking Chips strategy indicate a positive outlook, suggesting that this approach can create a more engaging, interactive, and joyful learning environment. As a result, the Talking Chips approach is an effective substitute teaching tool for improving students' English proficiency.

The research findings allow for the formulation of a number of suggestions for stakeholders. English teachers are advised to implement the Talking Chips strategy as an alternative speaking learning strategy, as it has been proven to increase students' active participation and speaking skills. Teachers are also advised to combine this strategy with a variety of contextual materials and topics to keep students motivated and optimally engaged in speaking activities.

Students are advised to actively and responsibly utilise the speaking opportunities provided through the Talking Chips strategy. Their courage to express opinions and participate in discussions will continue to be developed to enhance students' speaking skills further.

The findings of this study help schools decide how to encourage the use of cooperative learning techniques, especially Talking Chips, by offering resources and guidelines that promote student-centered learning.

Further researchers are advised to expand their research by involving a broader range of subjects, conducting longer research periods, and examining the application of the Talking Chips strategy to other language skills or at different educational levels to obtain more

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