

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COOPERATIVE SCRIPT IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL: A PRE-EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH AT A JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN CENTRAL SULAWESI, INDONESIA

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of the Cooperative Script method in improving students' speaking skills. This study employed a pre-experimental research design utilizing a pre-test, treatment, and post-test. The sample consisted of eighth-grade students selected through a total sampling technique. Data were collected using oral tests based on short stories to evaluate students' speaking skills before and after the treatment. The findings indicated a slight increase in the mean score, from 28.29 in the pre-test to 31.94 in the post-test. However, the hypothesis testing revealed that the t-counted (0.97) was lower than the t-table (2.120) at a 0.05 significance level (df=16). Consequently, the hypothesis was rejected, demonstrating that the Cooperative Script method did not significantly improve the students' speaking skills. Based on classroom observations, this lack of significant improvement was influenced by several obstacles, such as students' reluctance to express ideas, fear of being judged by their peers, and a lack of enthusiasm during the learning process.

Keywords: Speaking Skill; Cooperative Script; Pre-Experimental; SMP Negeri 2 Banawa Tengah.

BACKGROUND

Speaking is a productive skill essential for effective communication, enabling individuals to convey thoughts, ideas, and emotions articulately to diverse audiences. English speaking proficiency is particularly vital for learners, as it equips them to expand social, academic, and professional networks globally. This stems from English's role as the primary international lingua franca in business, diplomacy, education, science, and technology, directly addressing the communication goals emphasized in elementary and high school curricula.

Elementary and high school students learn English with a focus on strengthening their proficiency across six integrated language skills, listening, speaking, reading, viewing, writing, and presenting, in various

text types. At these levels, English instruction aims to build communication skills, particularly speaking. However, many students struggle with developing robust speaking abilities, often exhibiting hesitancy or limited fluency (Hidayati et al., 2023).

Teaching speaking skills presents a significant challenge for educators. Students encounter difficulties speaking English due to factors such as insufficient practical language proficiency, lack of self-confidence, disinterest in learning English, and limited vocabulary and grammar knowledge (Hidayati et al., 2023). The researcher observed that many students struggled with English speaking, attributing this to vocabulary deficiencies, anxiety, fear of tension, fear of making mistakes, low self-

confidence, and shyness in front of peers. To address shyness and low self-confidence, a method that promotes small-group interactions is essential; the Cooperative Script technique fulfills this need effectively.

The potential of Cooperative Script has been highlighted in a study conducted by Wahyudi (2014), where the method significantly boosted the speaking ability of vocational high school students. The data indicated that students taught using this strategy achieved a notably higher mean score (72.93) compared to those who were not (66.27). Given its proven success in a different educational context, this strategy provides a strong foundation for investigating its impact on younger learners, such as junior high school students.

Based on the identified problems and the potential of the proposed strategy, this research aims to explore the use of Cooperative Script in addressing students' speaking limitations. To guide the investigation, the researcher formulated the following research question: 'Is the Cooperative Script method effective in enhancing the speaking performance of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Banawa Tengah?'

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Speaking

Speaking is defined simply as sharing ideas activity. Zuhriyah (2017) explains that speaking is the ability to use language to share someone's ideas, information, suggestions, and feelings with other people orally. This explanation is supported by (Guebba, 2021), who states that speaking is the physical manifestation of the human schema's ideas, concepts, and presumptions. In other words, speaking is the act of expressing thoughts, ideas, or information using language verbally. Conversely, others define speaking as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing

information (Salsabilla et al., 2022). This perspective highlights speaking not merely as an output skill but as a dynamic, bidirectional communicative act integral to effective interaction and the comprehension of others' perspectives (Munir et al., 2023).

The Element of Speaking

Speaking is a complex skill that requires the simultaneous use of several different abilities, which often develop at different rates (Galindo & Cáceres, 2019). To achieve effective communication, several linguistic elements must be mastered, they are Vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar.

The first element is vocabulary. It is the fundamental building block of language, consisting of a collection of words used to convey meaning (Ramsook et al., 2019). It is an essential aspect of language because it is integrated into every language skill, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Without an adequate vocabulary, learners will face significant difficulties in expressing their thoughts and understanding others during oral communication (Widodo et al., 2022).

The second is pronunciation. It refers to the production of speech sounds, including articulation, stress, and intonation (Omar et al., 2022). It is particularly crucial for non-native speakers because incorrect pronunciation can lead to misunderstandings and hinder the flow of communication. According to Gilakjani (2012), pronunciation involves the repeated practice of producing sounds through the mouth, which must be corrected to ensure clarity and accuracy.

And the last is grammar. Grammar is the set of structural rules that govern the composition of clauses, phrases, and words in any given natural language (Bustari et al., 2017). It is a significant language element that must be learned in depth because mastery of grammar directly affects a person's overall language proficiency. When learners struggle with grammar, they often

find it difficult to arrange sentences correctly, which can lead to confusion in the delivery of their message.

The Problems in Speaking

Speaking a foreign language is often considered the most difficult skill for learners to master due to various internal and external factors. According to several scholars, these problems can be categorized into four main areas:

- *Inhibition*: a psychological barrier where students feel self-conscious and worried about making mistakes when speaking a foreign language. In the classroom, students often fear being judged by their peers or their teacher, which leads to a lack of participation. This anxiety prevents them from practicing their English even when they have the ability to do so.
- *Lack of Topical Knowledge (Nothing to Say)*: Many learners struggle to speak simply because they cannot think of anything to say. This "nothing to say" problem often arises because students lack the necessary vocabulary or do not have enough motivation to express themselves beyond the feeling that they "should" be speaking. Without sufficient input or interest in the topic, students find it difficult to formulate ideas in their minds.
- *Low or Uneven Participation*: In a large classroom setting, talking time is often dominated by only a few students, while others speak very little or not at all. This uneven participation means that most students do not get enough practice to develop their fluency. This problem is compounded when the more dominant students take over the discussion, leaving shy or less confident students behind.
- *Mother Tongue Interference*: Students often find it easier and more natural to use their mother tongue in class, especially when they cannot find the

right words in English. This reliance on the native language creates a lack of discipline in using the target language during the learning process. Most students feel more comfortable using their mother tongue to convey their feelings, which ultimately hinders their progress in acquiring speaking proficiency.

Cooperative Script in Speaking Class

The Concept of Cooperative Script

Cooperative Script is an innovative model of cooperative learning designed to foster active student engagement. According to Astuti and Purwanti (2016), this method requires students to work in pairs and take turns acting as speakers and listeners. In the context of a speaking class, it provides a structured platform for students to practice expressing their ideas orally while receiving immediate peer feedback. The listener is tasked with paying attention, correcting the speaker's mistakes, and ensuring that the communication is delivered properly. Theoretically, a series of studies have consistently found that students who study using this cooperative method learn and retain information far better than those who summarize or read the material on their own.

The Implementation Procedure

To apply this method effectively in a speaking class, teachers must follow a structured procedure. Based on Suyatno (2009), the implementation of Cooperative Script consists of several systematic steps:

1. **Grouping**: The teacher divides the students into pairs.
2. **Preparation**: The teacher provides a text or material (such as a short story) for the students to read and summarize.
3. **Role Assignment**: The teacher and students determine who will act as the first speaker and who will be the listener.

4. Speaking Phase: The speaker orally delivers their summary, ensuring that all main ideas are communicated.
5. Listening and Correcting Phase: While the speaker is talking, the listener pays close attention, corrects any mistakes, and identifies any incomplete central ideas.
6. Role Exchange: The students swap roles; the previous speaker becomes the listener, and vice versa, giving both students equal speaking opportunities.
7. Conclusion: The teacher and students collaboratively summarize the lesson before closing the class.

METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

Research Design

This research employed a pre-experimental design, specifically the one-group pre-test and post-test design, without utilizing a control group (Sugiyono, 2010). The objective of this design was to measure the students' speaking ability before and after the implementation of the treatment. The research flow is formulated as $O_1 \rightarrow X \rightarrow O_2$, where O_1 represents the pre-test, X is the treatment (the application of the Cooperative Script method), and O_2 denotes the post-test (Suprpto, 2013).

Population and Sample

The population of this research consisted of one class of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Banawa Tengah, totaling 24 students. However, the researcher utilized a purposive sampling technique based on the students' consistency in attendance. Out of the total population, only 17 students consistently attended all research phases, including the pre-test, the six treatment sessions, and the post-test. Consequently, these 17 students were selected as the final sample for data analysis to ensure the validity of the research results.

Variables of the Research

This research involved two variables. The independent variable was the use of the Cooperative Script method, while the dependent variable was the speaking skill of the eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Banawa Tengah.

Instruments of Data Collection

To gather data, the researcher utilized two instruments: tests and observation.

- 1) Speaking Test: The researcher administered a pre-test and a post-test in the form of an oral test based on a short story. The pre-test was given to determine the students' baseline speaking skills, while the post-test was administered to measure any improvement after the treatment.
- 2) Observation Checklist: Observation was conducted during the teaching and learning process to monitor students' participation, responses, and the challenges they faced while the Cooperative Script method was being applied.

Data Analysis Technique

The data obtained from the speaking tests were analyzed quantitatively. First, the researcher calculated the individual score for each student based on the maximum possible score. Then, the mean scores of both the pre-test and the post-test were computed to determine the average performance of the class. Finally, to determine the statistical significance of the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, the researcher employed a paired sample t-test formula (Arikunto, 2010). The calculated t-value (t_{counted}) was then compared to the t-table value at a significance level of 0.05 to test the hypothesis.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This section presents the data gathered from the pre-test and post-test to evaluate the effectiveness of the Cooperative Script method on students' speaking skills. The data were analyzed to determine the mean scores and the results of the hypothesis testing.

Students' Speaking Scores

The researcher administered a pre-test before the treatment and a post-test after the treatment to the 17 students who consistently participated in the research. The comparison of the mean scores between the pre-test and the post-test is summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The Mean Score of Pre-test and Post-test

Test	Number of Students	Mean Score
Pre-test	17	28.29
Post-test	17	31.94

As shown in Table 1, there was a slight increase in the students' speaking performance. The mean score improved from 28.29 in the pre-test to 31.94 in the post-test, resulting in a mean difference of 3.65. Although an improvement was observed, it was relatively small.

Hypothesis Testing

To determine whether the improvement was statistically significant, the researcher performed a t-test analysis. The results of the t-test calculation are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The Result of t-test Analysis

t-counted	t-table ($\alpha=0.05$)	df	Status
0.97	2.120	16	Rejected

The statistical analysis revealed that the value of t_{counted} (0.97) was lower than the t_{table} value (2.120) at a significance level of 0.05 with 16 degrees of freedom ($df = 16$). Based

on this result, the null hypothesis (H_0) was accepted, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was rejected. This indicates that the implementation of the Cooperative Script method did not significantly improve the speaking skills of the eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Banawa Tengah.

Discussion

The research was conducted from August 7th to September 7th, 2023, involving 17 eighth-grade students. The primary objective was to evaluate whether the Cooperative Script method could effectively address the speaking difficulties observed at SMP Negeri 2 Banawa Tengah. However, the statistical analysis revealed that the implementation of this method did not yield a significant improvement, as the t_{counted} (0.97) was lower than the t_{table} (2.120). Several factors, both pedagogical and psychological, contributed to this outcome.

Implementation of Cooperative Script

The researcher implemented the Cooperative Script through six treatment sessions where students worked in pairs to summarize and retell short stories. Theoretically, this method should foster active engagement as students take turns acting as speakers and listeners who provide mutual corrections. During the initial meetings, students were introduced to the procedure of summarizing material and presenting main ideas. However, in practice, the students required constant clarification and struggled to fulfill their roles effectively. This indicates that the transition from traditional learning to a structured cooperative model requires more time than the six sessions provided in this study.

Analysis of Speaking Obstacles

The lack of significant improvement can be traced back to the fundamental problems in speaking identified in the literature review:

- **Inhibition and Shyness:** Throughout the treatments, many students remained shy and reluctant to speak English. This aligns with the theory of inhibition, where students fear making mistakes and worry about being judged by their peers. As noted by Istarani (2011), a primary cause of failure in Cooperative Script is the students' fear of being judged by their group members, which was clearly observed in this classroom.
- **Lack of Linguistic Elements:** The students' inability to retell stories was hampered by a limited vocabulary and poor grammar. According to Wardani (2015), vocabulary is an essential building block for all language skills. Without sufficient vocabulary, students faced the "nothing to say" problem, where they lacked the linguistic tools to express the main ideas of the stories they had read.
- **Mother Tongue Interference:** Observations showed that the learning process did not run smoothly because students frequently reverted to their mother tongue. It is often easier for students to use their native language because it feels more natural, leading to a lack of discipline in practicing the target language.

Environmental and Behavioral Factors

Beyond linguistic and psychological barriers, external factors also played a role in the hypothesis rejection. The researcher noted a lack of enthusiasm and interest in the chosen materials (short stories). Furthermore, logistical issues such as students arriving late disrupted the flow of the Cooperative Script procedure. As Istarani (2011) emphasizes, the success of this method depends heavily on the teacher's ability to socialize the method and the students' readiness to accept a new learning model. In this case, the eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Banawa Tengah were not yet fully prepared to adopt the autonomous nature of Cooperative Script, resulting in a

performance that did not meet the expected statistical significance.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, this research concludes that the implementation of the Cooperative Script method did not significantly improve the speaking skills of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Banawa Tengah. Although there was a slight increase in the mean score from the pre-test (28.29) to the post-test (31.94), the improvement was statistically insignificant. This is evidenced by the t_{counted} value (0.97), which was lower than the t_{table} value (2.120) at a 0.05 significance level. The rejection of the hypothesis suggests that the method's effectiveness was hindered by several factors, including students' linguistic limitations such as lack of vocabulary, and psychological barriers like shyness and fear of being judged by peers. Ultimately, while Cooperative Script is theoretically sound, its success in this specific context was limited by the students' readiness and the brief duration of the treatment.

Suggestion

Considering the obstacles encountered during this research, several suggestions are offered for teachers and future researchers:

1. **For Teachers:** It is essential to ensure that students are thoroughly familiarized with the cooperative learning model before the actual treatment begins to reduce confusion and reluctance. Furthermore, teachers should carefully select teaching materials that are highly engaging and relevant to the students' interests to boost their enthusiasm for speaking.
2. **For Future Researchers:** Future studies should consider extending the duration of the treatment to allow students more time to adapt to the Cooperative Script procedure. It is also recommended to integrate creative technology and more varied media beyond short stories to

accommodate different learning styles and increase student involvement.

3. Student Grouping: Researchers should pay closer attention to students' characters when forming pairs or groups, ensuring a balance between active and passive students to facilitate better peer support and reduce inhibition.

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