# The Effectiveness of Talking Stick Method to Improve Students' Speaking Ability at English Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong

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## Abstract

This research aimed to assess the effectiveness of the Talking Stick Method in enhancing students' speaking ability at the English Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong. The research adopted a descriptive quantitative method, employing a pre-experimental design with a one-group pre-test post-test approach. Purposive sampling was utilized, involving 19 students as the sample group. The findings revealed that the implementation of the Talking Stick Method led to a significant improvement in students' speaking ability. A notable difference was observed between the pretest and posttest results, with the mean score increasing from 1.93 to 2.83. The comparison of mean scores using the t-test formula yielded a result of 10.112, surpassing the critical value of 2.861 at the 1% significance level. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis (H1: 10.112 > 2.861) was accepted, while the null hypothesis (Ho: 2.861 < 10.112) was rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Talking Stick Method effectively enhances students' speaking ability at the English Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong.

*Keywords: Speaking Ability, Talking Stick Method.*

## INTRODUCTION

Speaking is undeniably one of the four fundamental skills in English, holding immense significance as a means of communication. However, mastering this skill is no easy feat, as it necessitates rigorous practice, particularly when aiming for proficiency in the target language, such as English (Akib, 2017). For Indonesian speakers, speaking English presents a unique challenge, requiring not only grammatical accuracy but also an understanding of the social context and function of each utterance.

Language learners worldwide prioritize the development of speaking skills due to its multifaceted role in human interaction. Speaking entails various functions, including expressing ideas and opinions, conveying wishes or desires, negotiating, problem-solving, establishing social relationships, and conducting professional endeavors. As articulated by Arsjad and Mukti (1991), speaking involves articulating statements to express, conclude ideas, convey opinions, and emotions. These diverse functions underscore the importance of speaking proficiency in overall language competence. However, Grammar also can help students to improve the use of formal English. Thus, it helps them to feel confidents when they speak and write, Wael, A., Akib, R., & Ermawati, E. (2024)

Given the myriad reasons why individuals aspire to improve their speaking abilities, it is evident that speaking skill plays a pivotal role in achieving linguistic fluency and effectiveness in communication (Uluelang, 2017). Students should be able to carry out and dig their deep understanding about how they can use English orally as well as they can (Wael, Asnur & Ibrahim, 2018). Overall, students encounter numerous challenges in improving their English-speaking skills. Many students struggle to communicate in English in front of their peers due to feelings of shyness, anxiety, and fear of making mistakes or facing criticism (Akib & Saputra, 2019). This apprehension often leads to a reluctance to express ideas, resulting in a sense of frustration and inhibition. Only a minority of students demonstrate genuine interest in learning English, while others find it difficult to actively participate in discussions despite understanding the topic (Safitri et al., 2018). The pervasive use of the mother tongue during English lessons further impedes progress, as teachers tend to prioritize grammar instruction over speaking practice, relying heavily on the Indonesian language for explanations (Rahman et al., 2023). Additionally, students are more drawn to novel activities that engage them, as opposed to traditional methods that may be perceived as tedious. Ur (1996) identifies several common challenges in speaking activities, including inhibition, lack of ideas, low participation, and reliance on the mother tongue. These obstacles underscore the need for innovative teaching approaches and strategies to foster a supportive environment conducive to English language development (Saputra et al., 2023).

Based on the statement provided, it appears that one effective strategy for improving students' speaking ability is through the implementation of cooperative learning, particularly utilizing the Talking Stick Method. This method allows students to learn independently while providing equal opportunities for each student to express their ideas and concerns within a group setting (Saihu, 2020).

The Talking Stick Method originates from Native American culture, where it was used during council meetings to ensure everyone had a chance to speak without interruption. This practice fostered respectful dialogue and well-considered decisions by granting participants a designated speaking turn through a physical object, such as a stick. Holders of the Talking Stick have the exclusive right to speak while others listen attentively, fostering an environment free from interruption or criticism (Knockwood, 1992). This not only promotes active listening but also encourages thoughtful participation from all members of the group, regardless of their usual level of participation (Sari et al., 2019).

Research has shown the Talking Stick Method's effectiveness in educational settings across various disciplines. Wahyuni's (2013) study found that it improved students' science learning outcomes, possibly by encouraging active engagement with scientific concepts during discussions. Similarly, Sari & Sembiring's (2019) research explored its impact on English speaking skills, demonstrating its ability to enhance student participation and positive responses to the learning process. Their findings suggest that the Talking Stick Method can build confidence and a sense of belonging in language learning environments. Saihu's (2020) investigation further confirms its benefits, highlighting a significant improvement in learning outcomes for students of Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) compared to conventional methods. This suggests that the Talking Stick Method can be a valuable tool for fostering critical thinking and deeper understanding in a variety of subjects.

Given the potential benefits of this method in promoting democratic communication and equal participation, the writer expresses interest in conducting research to explore its effectiveness in improving students' speaking ability. The study will be conducted within the English Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong, aiming to investigate the impact of the Talking Stick Method on enhancing students' oral communication skills in English.

### Definition of Speaking

Based on the statement provided, speaking is characterized as a productive and multifaceted language skill that involves expressing thoughts and emotions orally. It goes beyond merely utilizing grammatical structures and appropriate vocabulary; effective speaking also entails ensuring that listeners comprehend the conveyed message.

Various linguistic experts offer insights into the nature of speaking. Brown (2004) defines speaking as a skill that can be observed directly, although the accuracy and effectiveness of the listener's comprehension may influence the reliability and validity of oral production tests. Underwood, as cited in Indramawan, A., & Akhyak, D. (2013) describes speaking as a creative process involving active interaction between the speaker and listener, incorporating both thought and emotion. Additionally, Wier emphasizes five key aspects of speaking: content, vocabulary, grammar, performance, and fluency.

Hornby and Crowther (1995) argue that speaking is the skill most judged in real-life situations. As a crucial part of daily interaction, fluency and comprehensiveness in speaking often form the first impression of someone. Therefore, teachers have a responsibility to equip students with the ability to speak English effectively outside the classroom. Building on this point by linguists, speaking is a key skill for students to express their ideas, making it valuable in both learning and teaching. In summary, speaking is depicted as an interactive activity wherein participants, both speakers and listeners, engage in rapid exchanges of information. It involves not only articulating thoughts and emotions but also ensuring mutual understanding and effective communication between all parties involved.

### Talking Stick Method

The Talking Stick, originating from Native American traditions, served as a method to ensure equitable participation and fair discourse during tribal council meetings. According to Indigenous American tradition, the stick possessed spiritual significance, invoking the guidance of ancestors in decision-making processes. Its use guaranteed that every member who desired to speak had the opportunity to express their thoughts, emphasizing the equal value placed on each participant within the community circle. This fostered a climate of respect and ensured well-rounded decisions that considered diverse perspectives. Developed by Kagan (1992:1), the Talking Stick Method is a form of cooperative learning where students engage in independent learning within a group setting. Similar to the traditional Talking Stick, it ensures every individual has an equal chance to voice their ideas and concerns. This promotes active listening skills and encourages thoughtful participation from all members of the group.

As described by Locust (in Huda: 2013), the talking stick has been utilized for centuries by various Indian tribes as a symbol of impartiality and fair hearing. During council circles, the leading elder would initially hold the stick, initiating discussions. Once finished, they would pass the stick to the next individual wishing to speak, thus ensuring that all voices were heard. This process continued until everyone had the opportunity to express their views, with the stick ultimately returned to the elder for safekeeping (Tahang et al., 2018). The Talking Stick's enduring legacy demonstrates the importance of respectful dialogue and inclusive decision-making processes.

### METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative approach to investigate the efficacy of the Talking Stick Method in enhancing students' speaking skills within English lessons. The primary objective is to empower students to articulate their ideas and opinions effectively. Following Creswell's (2015) guidelines, the research design utilizes a pre-experimental method, specifically employing a one-group pre-test and post-test design. The target population comprises students enrolled in the English Education Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong, with a sample size of 19 third-grade students selected from Class A within the faculty. In addition to traditional testing methods, the researcher supplements data collection

with field notes and a scoring rubric inspired by Brown's theoretical framework. This comprehensive approach aims to provide a holistic understanding of the impact of the Talking Stick Method on students' speaking proficiency. Pre-test and post-test assessments are administered before and after the intervention, allowing for a thorough evaluation of its effectiveness.

## RESULT

After collecting the data, the researcher meticulously analyzed it using statistical techniques to ensure accuracy and reliability. The scoring classifications and percentages presented in the tables offer a comprehensive overview of the students' performance, allowing for a nuanced understanding of their scores. Additionally, the t-test analysis served as a crucial tool in examining the significance of the findings. By comparing the pre-test and post-test scores, the researcher was able to discern the extent of improvement in students' speaking abilities following the implementation of the Talking Stick Method. This analytical approach enabled the researcher to draw robust conclusions based on empirical evidence, contributing to the overall validity of the study.

**Table 1**. Scoring Classification and Percentage of Pretest

| Classification | Pre test | | Post test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Frequency | Percentage % | Frequency | Percentage % |
| Very good (4.01 – 5.00) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Good (3.01 – 4.00) | 0 | 0 | 5 | 26.31 |
| Fair (2.01 – 3.00) | 3 | 15.79 | 13 | 68.42 |
| Poor (1.01 – 2.00) | 16 | 84.21 | 1 | 5.27 |
| Very Poor (0.01 – 1.00) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total ($\Sigma$) | 19 | 100 | 19 | 100 |

The scoring classifications for the pre-test and post-test are as follows: Pre-test score: 3 students (15.79%) achieved an average score, 16 students (84.21%) achieved a poor score, no students received a very good or good score, and none received a very poor score. Meanwhile, Post-test score: 5 students (26.31%) achieved a good score, 13 students (68.42%) achieved an average score, 1 student (5.27%) achieved a poor score, no students received a very good, poor, or very poor score. These classifications provide insights into the distribution of scores among the students before and after the intervention.

The mean score of the post-test (T2) is 2.83. Comparatively, the final score of the pre-test was 36.6, while the final score of the post-test was 53.8. This data indicates a noticeable improvement in speaking ability from the pre-test to the post-test following the implementation of the Talking Stick Method. The increase in scores suggests that the method effectively contributed to enhancing students' speaking skills.

Based on the tabulated data, the researcher utilized a significance level (p) of 0.01 and a sample size (N) of 19 to determine the critical value of t from the t-table, which was found to be 2.861. Formulating two hypotheses, the null hypothesis (H0) suggests no significant difference in students' speaking ability before and after treatment using the Talking Stick Method, while the alternative hypothesis (H1) proposes that there is a significant difference. Given that the calculated t-test value (10.112) exceeds the critical t-value from the table (2.861), the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted. This indicates a significant improvement in students' speaking ability following the implementation of the Talking Stick Method.

In conclusion, the findings of this study underscore the effectiveness of the Talking Stick Method in enhancing students' speaking ability. Analysis of the pre-test and post-test scores revealed a notable

improvement in students' performance following the intervention. The distribution of scores before and after the implementation of the method illustrates a positive shift, with an increase in the number of students achieving good scores. Moreover, the mean score of the post-test indicates a substantial enhancement in speaking ability compared to the pre-test. Statistical analysis further corroborated these findings, with the calculated t-test value surpassing the critical t-value, signifying a significant difference in students' speaking ability before and after treatment. Thus, it can be inferred that the Talking Stick Method effectively contributed to the improvement of students' speaking skills within the context of this study.

## DISCUSSION

Considering the discussion above, the researcher asserts that the implementation of the Talking Stick Method has led to noticeable improvement among students of the English Department at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong, particularly among third-grade students in the Teacher and Training Education Faculty. The analysis of students' speaking results indicates an overall enhancement in their speaking ability.

Based on the indicators observed in students' speaking, particularly in grammar, it is evident that most students can typically manage elementary constructions. However, they lack confident control over grammar usage, as evidenced by phrases such as "have beaned increasing," "price of fuel will make some a cost a plus for nation," "I would explain about price of fuel," "because of that increase can be unsteadying for small people," "I was a student's really feel heavy," and "I would like explain." These examples highlight that students often make errors and exhibit deficiencies in grammar usage.

Secondly, in terms of vocabulary, most students demonstrate a broad enough range that they rarely have to grope for words. For example, phrases like "I'm going to explain my opinion about the effect by social media. By now, we are all aware that social media has a tremendous impact on our culture," "I would like to express my opinion on the effect of social media," and "using the internet to prevent unwanted incidents" indicate a satisfactory vocabulary level. However, a few students still frequently make errors and exhibit deficiencies in vocabulary usage.

Thirdly, regarding fluency, most students can discuss topics with reasonable ease and rarely struggle to find words. In other words, most students' speech flows smoothly and is easily understood by listeners without much effort. However, a small number of students speak with less reasonable fluency, which means there is no specific fluency description for students' speaking ability.

Moving on to pronunciation, most students' accents are intelligible but often quite faulty. For instance, some students mispronounce words like "opinion" (/ə'piniyon/ instead of /ə'pinyən/), "price" (/priss/ instead of /prais/), "fuel" (/fuwel/ instead of /'fyuwəl/), "effect" (/efekt/ instead of /ə'fekt/), and "very" (/'perie/ instead of /'verie/). These examples highlight that some students frequently make errors and lack proficiency in pronunciation.

Lastly, in terms of content, some students demonstrate a good understanding of parts of the topic. For example, one student discusses the impact of social media on culture, business, and privacy, while another emphasizes the importance of maintaining and caring for social media for public benefit and education. However, only a few students consistently exhibit a full understanding of the topic, while others show deficiencies in content comprehension.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher draws conclusions based on the analysis and discussion presented in the previous chapters. It is concluded that teaching English using the Talking Stick Method is an effective approach for improving students' speaking ability, particularly in intensive speaking activities, despite occasional instances of student disengagement during the learning process. The research findings reveal that the mean score of the pre-test (T1) is 1.93, while the mean score of the post-test (T2) is 2.83, indicating

a significant improvement in speaking ability following the implementation of the Talking Stick Method. Therefore, it can be inferred that the Talking Stick Method is effective in enhancing students' speaking skills, specifically among third-grade students in the English department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong, particularly within the teacher and training education faculty.

Additionally, the observations during the implementation of the Talking Stick Method provided valuable insights into the dynamics of student engagement and participation. Despite occasional challenges, such as initial hesitancy or distractions, the method consistently encouraged active involvement and equitable opportunities for all students to express their ideas and opinions. Furthermore, students' responses during post-test assessments demonstrated a noticeable improvement in their confidence and fluency in speaking English. This suggests that the Talking Stick Method not only fosters linguistic development but also promotes self-assurance and communication skills among students. Moreover, the positive outcomes observed in this study highlight the potential of innovative teaching approaches to address the diverse learning needs of students in language education. Thus, the findings underscore the significance of incorporating interactive and student-centered methodologies, such as the Talking Stick Method, in English language teaching practices.

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