

## **Improving The Eleventh Grade Students' Speaking Ability Through Topic Based-Paired Conversation Activity at SMA Negeri 3 Parepare**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research was based on the students' problem regarding the English teaching, especially the students' speaking ability. It was caused by the teaching activity applied in the classroom, where the teacher was more active than the students. Consequently, the students' speaking ability was low. Therefore, the objective of the research was to find out whether or not the use of topic based-paired conversation activity improves the eleventh grade students' speaking ability at SMA Negeri 3 Parepare. The researcher applied quasi-experimental design, with two groups pre-test and post-test design. The population of this research was the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 3 Parepare academic year 2016/2017. The sample of the research was taken by using total random sampling which consisted of 56 students from two classes taken from the population of the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 3 Parepare, XI. IPA 2 as the experimental class and XI.IPA 1 as the control class. The result of the data analysis showed that the students' speaking ability was improved, it was showed by the mean score of pre-test was 31.19 and the post-test was 59.82. It showed that the speaking ability of the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 3 Parepare improved through topic based-paired conversation activity. After analyzing the data by using SPSS version 21, the result of probability value in post-test was 0.00 and significance value was 0.05. It means that the probability value (0.00) was lower than significance value (0.05). Those indicated that  $H_0$  was rejected and  $H_1$  was accepted. It means that the eleventh grade students' speaking ability at SMA Negeri 3 Parepare for experimental class and control class was significantly difference. In conclusion, teaching speaking through topic based-paired conversation activity was effective to improve the eleventh grade students' speaking ability at SMA Negeri 3 Parepare of academic year 2016/2017.

**Keywords: Speaking Ability, Topic Based-Paired Conversation Activity, Teaching Speaking**

## INTRODUCTION

English is used in almost worldwide. It plays an important role in constructing the global aspects such as technology, business, agriculture, economic, scientific, research, social interaction, application, etc. It shows that English is not only used to communicate but also compete globally. In the scientific aspect, English is one of the subjects applied in the education system as a whole, for instances are in senior high school and junior high school which it had been studied as the compulsory subject. On the other hand, it is also implemented as the local content especially in elementary school.

English is a compulsory subject from junior high school up to senior high school because the government had been putting it on the national curriculum in order to make students study about it. On the national curriculum of Indonesia 2016, English has four skills to be studied; those are reading, speaking, listening, and writing. Moreover, there are also four aspects of it; those are vocabulary, pronunciation, structure and grammar.

Those four skills (reading, speaking, listening, and writing) are mostly important to be studied. One of the most important skills is speaking. Speaking is a tool to communicate and interact with people. It uses to express ideas and arguments. Without speaking, people will be difficult to communicate and interact with others, because in the globalization era, the people only communicate by using verbal communication. One of the ways to achieve that is having a good speaking.

Speaking is a skill which everyone can improve through practice. This practice can be started by singing a song, responding when someone asking for something, describing things in the environment, etc. in such manner, speaking is not an easy skill to be mastered. It was proved by seeing the speaking ability of students in Indonesia, for example: in the pre-test at the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 3 Parepare, the researcher discovered students' speaking ability was low. Their mean score was 27 and it was collected through interview. This score was categorized as low achievement based on the achievement classification of *Dirjen Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah 2014* where the predicate standard of the good score is B- and if it is converted to 100 scales, it becomes 62. It is categorized good score.

The reason why students' speaking ability was low, it was because of the teaching activity. This data was obtained by giving the questionnaire to the students. The result

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discovered that 63 % of students stated that they were unsatisfied on the teaching activity in their classroom. In order to solve it, there is one teaching activity can be used to improve speaking ability of the students in senior high school, namely topic-based paired conversation activity. This activity is an easy way to improve students' speaking ability, for it is using topic talk. By giving the topic, the students will be easy to argue their ideas. Topic-based paired conversation activity had been successfully improving the confidence in speaking English for EFL students in Japan. It was researched by DeSteffen (2015). In his activity, he used Topic Talk (TT) activity as the main tool to improve the confidence of Japan students' in speaking English.

## METHODOLOGY

The strategy applied in this research was the quasi-experimental method, with non-equivalent control group design. The researcher used two classes as the sample, namely experimental class and control class. The population of this research was the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 3 Parepare academic year 2016/2017. There were two classes of IPA, namely IPA 1 and IPA 2: consisting of 31 students each. So the total number of population was 62 students. The sample was taken by using total sampling technique. The first, the researcher wrote down the name of the class XI IPA 1 and XI IPA 2 on papers to determine which class would be the sample. Then the sample that would be taken was class XI IPA 2 as the experimental group and class XI IPA 1 as a control group.

To find out the improvement of teaching speaking through topic based-paired conversation, the researcher gave interview test to the students. In interview test, the researcher gave several topics to be chosen by the students and then the researcher gave 1 to 3 minutes to be explained by the students. In this case, the researcher used iPhone 4S to record the students' interview. The test applied was pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was used to find out the students' speaking ability before giving treatment, and post-test was used to find out the students' speaking ability after giving treatment.

Firstly the researcher interviewed the students by giving topic. Then, the researcher explained what the students were going to do and interview them one by one related to the given topic and the last was the researcher checked the students' work and gave them score. After giving the treatment, the researcher gave post test, this was the last meeting. The researcher gave post-test to measure the students' speaking ability taught through topic based-paired conversation activity and report activity. The post-test consisted of four

questions of the interview. In the treatment, the researcher taught speaking through topic based-paired conversation activity as the pre-speaking activity for experimental group in helping the students to enhance their idea. On the other side, for control group the researcher gave speaking material by using report activity. It was held in four times to find out the student's speaking ability.

## FINDINGS

The findings were obtained through speaking test at the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 3 Parepare in academic year 2016/2017. The researcher applied all of the procedures that had been showed in the last chapter, as has been explained previously in collecting data, the researcher conducted two terms of test, namely pre-test and post-test in experimental class and control class by using SPSS version 21. It aims to find out the significant difference of the student from both of the classes, the researcher collected the data from the tests which has been given to the students after analyzing the data, the researcher found the students' score and it was tabulated in the table.

**Table 1: The mean score and Standard Deviation of the Students in Pre-test**

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Experimental	26	31.19	15.16
Control	30	23.51	10.49

Table 1 shows that the mean score obtained by the students before giving the treatment in both experimental class and control class is significantly different. The mean score of experimental class was higher and the mean score of control class. The mean score for both experimental and control class were classified into poor classification. It means that the mean score of the pre-test obtained by the two classes were significantly different before giving treatment. The standard deviation of experimental class before giving treatment was higher than the standard deviation of control class. It means that the students' ability of experimental class in understanding the material was more variated than students' ability of control class.

**Table 2: The mean score and Standard Deviation of the Students in Post-test**

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Experimental	26	59.82	16.50
Control	30	42.03	18.94

Table 2 shows that the mean score obtained by the students after giving the treatment in both experimental class and control class is significantly different. The mean score of experimental class was higher and the mean score of control class. The mean score for both experimental and control class were classified into fair classification. It means that the mean score of the pre-test obtained by the two classes were significantly different before giving treatment. The standard deviation of experimental class after giving treatment was lower than the standard deviation of control class. It means that the students' ability of control class in understanding the material was more variated than students' ability of experimental class. Besides, the standard deviation both experimental and control class was improved after giving treatment. It means that the activity used in the treatment process made the students' ability of experimental class and control class in understanding the material was more variated.

**Table 3: The gain score in pre-test and post-test**

Sample	Pre-test	Post-test	Gain Score
Experimental	31.19	59.82	28.63
Control	23.51	42.03	18.52

Table 3 shows that the gain score of experimental class is higher than the gain score of control class. It means that the gain score of the pre-test and post-test by two classes were different. It shows that the gain score of experimental class is slightly higher than the gain score of control class.

In testing the hypothesis, the researcher applied a t-test formula at the level of significance with  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The result of the calculation (SPSS 21.0) is shown as follows:

**Table 4: The t-test result of the students' pre-test in experimental class and control class to improve the students' speaking ability.**

Independent Samples Test									
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Mean	Std. Error	Lower	Upper
Equal variance assumed	7,065	,010	2,22	54	,030	7,6778	3,44716	,76674	14,589
Pre test									
Equal variance not assumed	2,17	43,58			,035	7,6778	3,53675	,54810	14,807

Table 4 shows that the probability value (0.03) is lower than the significance value ( $\alpha$ )=(0.05). The analysis shown that the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected and alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) was accepted. It means that the eleventh grade students' speaking ability at SMA Negeri 3 Parepare of academic year 2016/2017 for experimental class and control class before giving treatment is significantly different. It means that the speaking ability of experimental class and control class have different ability.

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**Table 5: The t-test result of the students' post-test in experimental class and control class to improve the students' speaking ability.**

Independent Samples Test										
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
Equal variance assumed	2,106	,152	3,718	54	,000	17,792	4,7851	8,1986	27,385	
Post test	Equal variance not assumed	3,756	53,99		,000	17,792	4,7375	8,2939	27,290	

Table 5 shows that the probability value (0.00) is lower than the significance value ( $\alpha$ )=(0.05). The analysis shown that the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected and alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) was accepted. It means that the eleventh grade students' speaking ability at SMA Negeri 3 Parepare of academic year 2016/2017 for experimental class and control class is significantly different.

**Table 6: Gain score of Pre-test and Post-test for Both Experimental and Control Class**

Independent Samples Test											
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
Gain score	Equal variances assumed	,284	,596	2,01	54	,049	10,114	5,0116	,06652	20,1621	
	Equal variances not assumed			2,00	51,70	,050	10,114	5,0355	,00829	20,2203	

Table 6 shows that the probability value (0.049) is lower than the significance value ( $\alpha$ )=(0.05). The analysis shown that the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected and alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) was accepted. It means that the eleventh grade students' speaking ability at SMA Negeri 3 Parepare of academic year 2016/2017 for experimental class and control class after giving treatment is significantly different. It means that teaching speaking through topic based-paired conversation activity is significantly improving the eleventh grade students' speaking ability at SMA Negeri 3 Parepare of academic year 2016/2017.

## DISCUSSION

This part presents the result of data analysis. Before conducting pre-test and post-test, the researcher found some facts when doing observation in SMA Negeri 3 Parepare, the facts explained some reasons why the researcher conducted this research in it with the aims to increase the students' speaking ability. First of all, the researcher conducted the

interview in the observation. Observation is important for data collection through direct visual or auditory experience of behavior. It focuses on hypothesis testing and knowledge accumulation, whereas in parcatice it is a tool for change or amelioration of undesirable condition (Monette, Sullivan, & Dejong, 2011). During the observation, the researcher found that most of the students got bored on their teaching activity because the learning activity used by the teacher was never being varied and the teacher sometimes did not enter in their classroom to teach English. Varying the teaching activity is very important in teaching English because the students' learning differences in the classroom are easy to be accommodated (Orlich, Harder, Callahan et.al, 2010).

The result of observation showed that the students' speaking ability was still low. It was proven by the interview result of speaking test. In experimental in which interview is the one that takes place between one interviewer and one interviewee (Etchegoyen, 2005). The mean score of the student' speaking ability was 27 and it was categorized as low achievement based on the assessment of *Dirjen Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah 2014* where the predicate standard of the good score is B- or 62. Consequently, the researcher implement topic based-paired conversation activity to improve the eleventh grade students' speaking ability.

Before giving treatment, the researcher conducted pre-test for both experimental and control class to know the students' prior knowledge in English speaking. Pre-test and post purpose for comparing groups and/or measuring change resulting from experimental treatments (Dimitrov & Jr, 2003). The pre-test result shown that the students' achievement frequencies and its percentage in the pre-test was still poor and most of them got poor classification score. After conducting the pre-test, the researcher gave four times of treatment in both experimental calss and control class. The given materials were same for both classes. The materials given in each meeting were smoking in the public place, corruption in Indonesia, increasing price of BBM, and ASEAN economic community. In eperimental class, firstly, the students were designed to sit with their own partner (pair). After having their partner, the researcher gave a topic to the students to be discussed in pair and watched them a video related to the given topic. The video aims to give a guide line of the topic that would be discussed by every pair of students. Besides, giving a video in conversation could generally lead to improve the students' speaking ability (Amoozesh & Gorjian, 20150).

Secondly, the researcher gave a paper containing a table. The table was used to write the question of brainstorming and information related to the given topic. It was also

functioned to write the different information of students that was found from their own partner. Brainstorming is a way to help the students to speak effectively, quickly and freely. The benefit of it is that the students are not criticized other students' ideas so that it helped the students to share their new ideas freely (Kayi, 2006). In the learning process, the use of brainstorming was very effective in giving undersatnding to the students. Most of students problem were because they did not have enough ideas to deliver. On the other hand, by using brainstorming in this research, students are easily argue their ideas by noticing the question of brainstorming. Moroever, table of brainstorming also help the students developed their ideas by combining it with new information from their partner.

New information from the partner was got from different information. In order to get the new information, the students should be able to identify the new information explained by their own partner. The activity is similar with information gap activity and find the difference activity, in which information gap activity involves the students to be working in pair. It is a very effective activity because every student has a chance to speak (Kayi, 2006). The students shared the information that they got and his/her partner wrote it down on the table as a new information. This also aims to involve the students to be focus on the conversation process, in which the students gave more attention to their partner's explanation.

On the other hand, find the difference activity is an activity to find the difference of things whether it is a picture or information (Kayi, 2006). Find the difference in this research was used in the conversation of experimental class, in which the students analyzed the information they heard from his/her partner. They analyzed what was a different information of his/her partner and they wrote it down on the table of brainstorming.

After completing the table, the researcher instructed the students to do discussion with their own partner. The Discussion aims to make communicative competence, share ideas about information that we have, find solutions in their discussion group, andinvolve students in an acticity (Efrizal, 2012; Oradee, 2012). Therefore, through this activity, it will help the students to build their critical thinking and decision making (Kayi, 2006). Thus, They learn how to express their ideas in polite ways. The discussion activity was used in this research was successful in activating the students in doing conversation, because before they did the conversation, they discussed the topic given by the researcher.

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In control class, however, the materials given by the researcher were same. The difference was only at the activity. Activity used in control class is report activity. Reporting is an activity that the researcher used in the control class, this activity involves the students to look for the information and they will report it in front of the classroom based on the received information (Kayi, 2006). It was also successful in activating the students to deliver their ideas. By implementing this activity students were motivated, enjoyed, and active in looking for the information based on the given topic (Somjay & Jansen, 2015). It was also successful in improving their speaking ability if it was compared with students' speaking ability before giving treatment.

After giving the treatment to the students, the researcher conducted post-test. In post-test, the researcher interviewed the students as well as in pre-test. Interview aims to give the students chance to practice their ability either in the classroom or outside the classroom (Kayi, 2006). It can be conducted by giving the topic to the students or to suppose the students to select the given topic. In this activity, however, the researcher must provide some questions to the students so that the researcher was able to find out which question they can ask or what path to follow, yet students should also prepare their own interview question. This interview was used in conducting the pre-test and post-test in order to know students' speaking ability. It was conducted by making some questions regarding the topic. Therefore, by interviewing the students, they were easy to argue their ideas.

The result of post-test showed that the percentage score and frequencies of students' achievement increased in both experimental and control class because there were many students got good classification. But, the classifications were different, where in experimental class many of students were in good classification, while in the control class most of students were still in poor classification. it means that teaching English speaking to the students through topic based-paired conversation activity is significantly different than teaching speaking teaching speaking through report activity.

Table 1 discussed the mean score and standard deviation of the students pre-test both in experimental class and control class, the table indicated that the mean score of the students pre-test in experimental class was low (31.19) and it was higher than the mean score of the students in control class (23.51). While the satndard deviation in the pre-test of experimental class was higher (15.16) than in control (10.49). It revealed that the speaking ability of the students both in experimental class and control class have different comprehension before giving treatment. Comprehension occurs when and the elements

that join in the process achieve a stable state in which the majority of elements are meaningfully related to one another and other elements that do not fit the pattern of majority are suppressed (Kintsch, 2003). As the consideration, the table 2 the researcher put the result of mean score and standard deviation of the students post-test both in experimental class and control class. In the description of the table 2, it indicated that the mean score of students' post-test in experimental class was higher (59.82) than the mean score of the students' post-test in control class (42.03). The standard deviation in the post-test of experimental class was lower (16.50) than the standard deviation in the post test of control class (18.94). It revealed that the mean score and standard deviation of the students' post-test were different. It means that teaching speaking through topic based-paired conversation activity was better than teaching speaking through report activity.

Table 4 shows that the probability value of the students' pre-test in experimental class and control class was lower (0.030) than the significance value ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.05, it shows that the probability value was lower than the significance value. The analysis shows that the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected and alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) was accepted. It indicates that there is significant difference between the eleventh grade students' speaking ability before giving treatment. In the table 5 shows that the probability value of the students' pre-test in experimental class and control class was lower (0.00) than the significance value ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.05, it was shown that the probability value was lower than the significance value. The analysis shows that null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) was accepted. It indicates that there is significant difference between the eleventh grade students' speaking ability after giving treatment. In order to analyze the data deeply, the researcher compared each students' gain score for both experimental class and control class in table 6 to know what hypotheses were actually going on.

Table 6 shows that the probability value of the students' gain score in experimental class and control class was lower (0.049) than the significance value ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.05, it was shown that the probability value was lower than the significance value. The analysis shows that null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) was accepted. It indicates that there is significant difference between the eleventh grade students' speaking ability who were taught through topic based-paired conversation activity that the students who were taught through report activity at the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 3 Parepare in academic year 2016/2017.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the finding and the discussion presented in the previous chapter, the researcher concluded that “teaching speaking through topic based-paired conversation activity improved the eleventh grade students’ speaking ability at SMA Negeri 3 Parepare”.

After seeing the result from pre-test and post-test found through findings of the research shows that the result of the post-test was higher than the pre-test. Besides, after calculating the t-test score, it shows that there was significant difference between two classes after giving treatment. It means that teaching speaking through topic based-paired conversation activity significantly improved the eleventh grade students’ speaking ability at SMA Negeri 3 Parepare.

## SUGGESTION

Based on the conclusion, the researcher gives some suggestions for some elements related to this research, as follows:

1. For the English teacher
  - a. The teacher is recommended to implement topic based-paired conversation activity as the activity to improve students’ speaking ability.
  - b. The teacher has to be more creative and up to date in information about English materials in teaching and learning process. Besides, the teacher has to vary his/her teaching activity in order the students would not be bored in teaching and learning process.
2. For the students
  - a. The students should spend a lot of time to practice their speaking ability by listening and watching more English video, movies, news, etc and enrich their vocabularies.
  - b. The students should practice their speaking every day in their classroom.
3. For the curriculum designer

The curriculum designer is suggested to integrate topic based-paired conversation activity in the national curriculum as the activity to increase the quality of English language teaching especially teaching speaking skill in the future, so that the students will be easily improving their speaking ability.
4. For the next researcher

Topic based-paired conversation activity is an activity that can be implemented to improve the students' speaking ability. For the next researcher, the result of this researcher can be used as reference to create a better research in the future.

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