

The Effectiveness of the Fishbowl Technique on Eighth-Grade Students' Speaking Skills at SMP Wahidiyah Kediri

Auliya Rahmadina

Universitas Wahidiyah. Email: owliaul1@gmail.com

Siti Nafi'yah

Universitas Wahidiyah. Email: sitinafiyah90@gmail.com

Abstract

Speaking skill is one of the essential language skills that enables students to communicate ideas, opinions, and information effectively. However, many junior high school students still experience difficulties in speaking English due to limited confidence, vocabulary, and opportunities to practice. This research aimed to measure the effectiveness of the Fishbowl Technique in improving students' speaking skills at the eighth grade of SMP Wahidiyah Kediri in the 2025/2026 academic year. This research employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental design involving two classes: an experimental class and a control class, each consisting of 44 students. Data were collected through speaking pre-tests and post-test and assessed using Brown's speaking rubric. The findings revealed that the experimental class showed a greater improvement than the control class. The mean score of the experimental class increased from 60.34 in the pre-test to 85.68 in the post-test, while the control class improved from 51.36 to 77.50. The result of the independent sample t-test showed that the obtained t-value (4.27) was higher than the critical t-value (1.998) at the 0.05 significance level, indicating a statistically significant difference that the Fishbowl Technique is effective in improving students' speaking skills by encouraging active participation, collaborative discussion, and meaningful oral communication in the classroom.

Keyword: Fishbowl Technique, Speaking Skills, Quasi-Experimental Design, English Language Teaching, Junior High School Students

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is widely regarded as one of the most important skills in English language learning because it enables students to communicate ideas, exchange information, and build interaction in academic as well as everyday situations. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, speaking is often considered a productive skill because learners are required to generate language actively rather than simply receive information. To communicate effectively, students must organize their ideas, choose appropriate vocabulary, apply grammatical structures, pronounce words clearly, and respond to others in real time. Brown (2004) explains that speaking involves conveying meaning appropriately in different communicative situations, while Harmer (2007) emphasizes that language learning should ultimately support students in using English for meaningful communication. Therefore, speaking competence is closely related to the development of communicative competence among EFL learners.

The role of speaking has become increasingly significant as English language teaching has shifted from teacher-centered instructional toward more communicative and student-centered approaches. Contemporary language learning encourages students not only to understand linguistic forms but also to participate actively in discussion, collaboration, problem solving, and authentic communication. Through speaking activities, students are expected to express opinions, respond to others, negotiate meaning, and interact appropriately in various situations. Consequently, speaking skill is not merely associated with linguistic accuracy, but also with confidence, interactional skill, and active participation in the learning process. Developing speaking skills can therefore contribute to students' language proficiency as well as their skill to engage in meaningful classroom communication.

Despite its importance, speaking remains one of the most challenging skills for many EFL students. Students often encounter difficulties related to limited vocabulary, insufficient grammatical knowledge, inaccurate

pronunciation, and restricted opportunities to practice English in meaningful contexts. In addition to these linguistics challenges, psychological factors such as an anxiety, fear of making mistakes, low confidence, and concern about negative evaluation may reduce students' willingness to speak in front of others. Akhter (2021), notes that speaking is frequently perceived as a difficult productive skill because learners must manage accuracy, fluency, and interaction simultaneously. Similarly, Ameen (2003) reports that many EFL students tend to remain passive during speaking activities because they are afraid of making pronunciation or grammatical errors. Also, Putri et al., (2020) explain that students often experience difficulties because of limited vocabulary, pronunciation, pronunciation problems, grammatical errors, and anxiety when speaking English. As a result, classroom speaking activities may involve only a small number of students, while many others choose to remain silent.

These challenges indicate that speaking instruction should provide learners with meaningful opportunities to communicate rather than focus solely on language knowledge. Effective speaking activities should encourage students to exchange ideas, respond to different viewpoints, solve problems collaboratively, and use English in authentic communicative situations. A student-centered learning environment allows learners to become active participants in constructing knowledge through interaction with their peers. Crisianita and Mandasari (2022), explain that collaborative discussion activities can improve students' speaking skill because students have opportunities to express opinions, respond to others, and negotiate meaning during the learning process. Therefore, selecting an appropriate instructional strategy is an important step in creating a classroom atmosphere that support active participation and continuous speaking practice.

One instructional technique that has received considerable attention in language educational is the Fishbowl Technique. The Fishbowl Technique is a discussion-based instructional strategy that organizes students into two groups with different roles during classroom discussion. Students in the inner circle actively discuss a given topic, while those in the outer circle observe the discussion, listen attentively, take notes, and evaluate their peers' skill. After a designated period, the groups exchange roles, allowing every student to experience both speaking and observing. This structured discussion process encourages active participation, collaborative learning, and meaningful interaction while providing equal opportunities for students to develop their speaking skills (Ameen, 2023; Tombo et al., 2026).

The Fishbowl Technique is closely related to the principles of students-centered and collaborative learning.

Instead of relying primarily on teacher explanation, the learning process emphasizes interaction among students. During the discussion, students practice speaking while also developing listening skills, critical thinking, and impersonal communication. Tsai (2025), explains that discussion-based learning encourages students to construct knowledge through interaction and collaboration. Because students are supported by their peers and participate in a structured discussion environment, they may feel more confident when communicating in English. As a result, classroom interaction can become more dynamic, participatory, and conducive to language development.

From the perspective of speaking instruction, the Fishbowl Technique offers several pedagogical advantages. First, it increases students' opportunities to practice speaking because each student is involved either as a speaker or as an observer. Second, the observation stage allows students to learn from their classmates' strengths and weaknesses before performing their own speaking tasks. Third, collaborative discussion may reduce speaking anxiety because students communicate within a smaller discussion group rather than performing individually in front of the entire class. These conditions can encourage students to express ideas, ask questions, and respond to different opinions more confidently. Continuous interaction during the discussion may also support the development of fluency, vocabulary usage, grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, and overall communicative competence.

Previous studies have reported positive findings regarding discussion-based learning and the Fishbowl Technique in speaking instruction. Rosyidi and Paris (2023) found that the implementation of the Fishbowl Technique improved students' speaking skill by encouraging active participation and collaborative discussion. The research indicated that students became more confident in expressing opinions because classroom interaction was not dominated solely by the teacher. Similarly, Ameen (2023) reported that the Fishbowl Technique created a supportive classroom atmosphere in which students could gradually overcome speaking anxiety through repeated discussion activities. Crisianita and Mandasari (2022) also found that small-group discussion enhanced students' speaking skill by increasing classroom interaction providing more opportunities for students to express ideas. In addition, Tombo et al., (2026) emphasized that Fishbowl Technique promotes active learning, collaborative interaction, and self-confidence, making it a promising strategy for developing English speaking in EFL classroom.

Although previous studies have shown positive contributions of the Fishbowl Technique, several

limitations remain. Many studies have focused primarily on students' participation, motivation, or speaking confidence, while fewer studies have evaluated speaking skill comprehensively using standardized assessment criteria. In addition, empirical evidence regarding the implementation of the Fishbowl Technique among Indonesia junior high school students in EFL classrooms is still relatively limited. Differences in research settings, participants, instructional procedures, and assessment methods indicate that further investigation is needed to provide stronger evidence regarding the effectiveness of the Fishbowl Technique in improving students' speaking skill.

The present research seeks to address these limitations by evaluating students' speaking achievement using Brown's (2004) speaking assessment rubric, which assesses four important aspects of speaking skill: fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and comprehension. In addition to quantitative data obtained from pre-test and post-test scores, this research also considers classroom observation and teacher interview data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the Fishbowl Technique. By combining these sources of information, the research is expected to provide richer evidence regarding how the Fishbowl Technique influences students' speaking development.

The need for this research was also supported by the learning conditions at SMP Wahidiyah Kediri. Based on interviews with the English teacher, speaking instruction had not been implemented intensively because classroom activities mainly emphasized grammar, regarding comprehension, and vocabulary development. As a result, students had limited opportunities to practice speaking English during classroom instruction. The teacher also explained that many students were reluctant to participate in speaking activities because they lacked confidence, had limited vocabulary, and were afraid of making mistakes in pronunciation and grammar. Another challenge was the relatively large class size, which made it difficult to provide equal speaking opportunities and individual feedback for every student.

Considering the learning conditions at SMP Wahidiyah Kediri, where students had limited opportunities to practice speaking and showed low confidence in using English, the Fishbowl Technique was considered a suitable instructional technique because it promotes discussion, collaborative learning, and equal participation. Therefore, this research aimed to measure the effectiveness of the Fishbowl Technique to improve students' speaking skill at eight grade of SMP Wahidiyah Kediri in academic year 2025/2026 by comparing the speaking achievement of students taught using the Fishbowl Technique with those who received

conventional teaching. The findings are expected to contribute the growing body of literature on collaborative learning strategies in English language teaching and provide practical recommendations for creating more interactive and student-centered speaking classrooms.

METHOD

This research employed a quantitative method using a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and a post-test control group design. This design was selected because the participants could not be randomly assigned to the experimental and control class while allowing the researcher to examine the effect of the Fishbowl Technique on students' speaking skills (Sugiyono, 2017).

The research was conducted at SMP Wahidiyah Kediri, East Java, Indonesia, during the 2025/2026 academic year. The participants consisted of 88 eighth-grade students from two intact classes selected by the English teacher. Class VIII A, comprising 44 students, served as the experimental class and received instruction through the Fishbowl Technique, whereas Class VIII B, consisting of 44 students, served as the control class and was taught using the conventional teaching method.

The primary research instrument was a speaking test administered as both a pre-test and a post-test. The pre-test was conducted to determine the students' initial speaking skill before the treatment, while the post-test was administered after the treatment to measure students' improvement. Students' speaking skill was assessed by using Brown's (2004) speaking rubric, which evaluates four aspects of speaking skill: fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and comprehension. The same assessment criteria were applied in both tests to ensure scoring consistency.

The research procedure consisted of three stages: preparation, implementation, and data analysis. During the preparation stage, the researcher prepared the research instruments and validated the speaking assessment rubric. In the implementation stage, both classes completed the pre-test before receiving different instructional treatments. The experimental class participated in six instructional meetings using the Fishbowl Technique integrated into speaking activities topic of Degree of Comparison, while the control class received conventional instruction covering the same learning materials. After the treatment was completed, both classes took the post-test under the same assessment procedures.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were employed to calculate the students' mean scores and describe the improvement in speaking skill before and after the treatment. To determine whether there was a significant difference between the experimental and

control classes, an independent-samples *t*-test was conducted as a significance level of 0.05 (Nuryadi, 2017). The statistical analysis was used to test the research hypothesis regarding the effectiveness of the Fishbowl Technique in improving students' speaking skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The effectiveness of the Fishbowl Technique was examined by comparing the speaking achievement of students in the experimental and control classes before and after the treatment. Both classes completed the same pre-test and post-test, which were assessed using Brown' speaking rubric covering fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and comprehension.

Table 1. Comparison of Students' Speaking Scores

Group	N	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Mean Gain
Experimental	44	60.34	85.68	25.34
Control	44	51.36	77.50	26.14

As presented in Table 1, both groups demonstrated improvement after the learning process. However, the experimental group achieved a higher post-test mean score (85.68) than the control group (77.50). The experimental group also exceeded the school's Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) of 75 by a wider margin, indicating better speaking skill after receiving instruction through the Fishbowl Technique.

The improvement in the experimental group was evident not only from the mean score but also from the distribution of students' achievement. Before the treatment, the students' speaking skill was generally categorized as fair, with several students experiencing difficulties in expressing ideas fluently and accurately. After six treatment sessions using the Fishbowl Technique, most students showed noticeable improvement in fluency, pronunciation, grammar and comprehension. This indicates to the development of their speaking skills.

To determine whether the difference between the two groups was statistically significant, the data were analyze using an independent *t*-test. The analysis revealed that the obtained *t*-value was 4.27, which exceeded the critical *t*-value of 1.998 at the 0.05 significance level ($df = 86$). Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted. These findings indicate that the Fishbowl Technique had a statistically significant effect on students' speaking skills.

The improvement observed in this research is consistent with the characteristics of the Fishbowl

Technique proposed by Tsai (2025), who explains that students actively participate in discussions while their peers observe, listen carefully, and provide feedback after the discussions. Such structured interaction enables every student to engage in speaking activities from different perspectives, either as speakers or observers. Likewise, Brown emphasizes that speaking skill develops through meaningful communication and frequent opportunities o use the target language in authentic situations (Nurul et al., 2019). The Fishbowl Technique created this learning environment by encouraging students to exchange ideas, respond to arguments, and practice English in collaborative discussions.

These findings are also in line with previous studies reporting the effectiveness of the Fishbowl Technique in improving students' speaking ability. Ahmad Zuhri and Atika Salman (2023) found that structured Fishbowl discussions increased students' participation and communication skills by providing equal opportunities for discussion and reflection. Similarly, Stesia et al. (2026) reported that although the Fishbowl Technique requires more classroom time and careful classroom management, it successfully promotes students' engagement and confidence in speaking activities. The present research confirms these findings, demonstrating that students who learned through the Fishbowl Technique achieved significantly higher speaking performance than those taught using conventional methods.

Overall, the integration of quantitative findings, classroom observations, and supporting theories demonstrates that the Fishbowl Technique is an effective instructional strategy for teaching speaking. The technique not only improves students' speaking achievement statistically but also creates a more interactive learning environment in which students actively communicate, collaborative with their peers, and developing greater confidence in expressing their ideas in English.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This research concludes that the Fishbowl Technique is effective to improve students' speaking skill at SMP Wahidiyah Kediri. Students who learned through the Fishbowl Technique achieved better speaking skill than those who received conventional instruction, as reflected in their higher post-test mean score and the statistically significant *t*-test result ($t = 4.27 > t_{table} = 1.988$). these findings indicate that structured discussion activities provide students with greater opportunities to express ideas, interact with peers, and develop fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and comprehension. Therefore, the Fishbowl Technique can be considered an effective alternative strategy for teaching speaking in English

classrooms, particularly for encouraging active participation and improving students' communicative competence.

Suggestion

Based on the findings of this research, English teachers are encouraged to apply the Fishbowl Technique as an alternative teaching strategy to promote students' active participation and improve their speaking skills. Future researchers are also recommended to measure the effectiveness of the Fishbowl Technique in different educational contexts, language skills, or learning levels with larger samples and longer treatment periods to obtain more comprehensive findings.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Akhter, S. (2021). *Exploring the Significance of Speaking Skill for EFL Learners*. Sir Syed Journal of Education & Social Research.
- Ameen, S. T. (2023). *Fishbowl technique at TESOL Classes and Figuring out Speaking Skills Limitations and Solutions*. International Journal on Humanities and Social Sciences, 235.
- Brown, H. D. (2004). *Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices*. Pearson Education.
- Crisanita, S., & Mandasari, B. (2022). *The Use of Small-Group Discussion to Improve Students' Speaking Skill*. Journal of Research on Language Education (JoRLE), 62.
- Guebba, B. (2021). *The Nature of Speaking in the Classroom: An Overview*. Middle East Research Journal of Linguistics and Literature.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (4th ed.). Pearson Longman.
- Khanday, S. A., & Khanam, D. (2019). *The Research Design*. Journal of Critical reviews, 367.
- Putri, S. A., Amri, S., & Ahmad. (2020). *The Students' Difficulties Factors in Speaking*. J-SHELVES OF ANDRAGIRI, 117.
- Rosyidi, A. Z., & Paris, A. S. (2023). *The Effect of Fishbowl Strategy in Speaking Ability for The Second Year Students of SMPN 1 Terara in The School Year 2022-2023*. Jurnal Asimilasi Pendidikan, 63.
- Sugiyono. (2017). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Tombo, S. A., Darmawan, & Wahyudin. (2026). *The Use Of The Fishbowl Technique In Teaching English Speaking Skills: A Library*. Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities .
- Tsai, K.-J. (2025). *Fostering 'talk to learn' in an EFL classroom*. Cogent Education.