

# EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING THINK-PAIR-SHARE STRATEGY IN IMPROVING THE PARTICIPATION AND CONFIDENCE OF NON-ENGLISH MAJORS IN SPEAKING LESSONS AT HAI PHONG UNIVERSITY (HPU).

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**ABSTRACT:** Think-Pair-Share strategy (TPS) is considered an effective strategy to help students improve their language skills. Therefore, the study was conducted to evaluate at evaluating its effectiveness in enhancing students' participation and confidence for non-English majors at the faculty of Tourism in speaking lessons. The research design used a mixed method to collect data from 24 students in the faculty of Tourism at HPU. The results of the research showed that TPS strategy brought to considerably effective improvements to students' participation and confidence in speaking lessons.

**Keywords:** Think-Pair-Share strategy; Speaking skill; Non-English majors

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**ĐÁNH GIÁ TÍNH HIỆU QUẢ CỦA VIỆC SỬ DỤNG CHIẾN LƯỢC CHIA SẺ - NHÓM - ĐÔI TRONG VIỆC CẢI THIỆN SỰ THAM GIA VÀ SỰ TỰ TIN CỦA SINH VIÊN KHÔNG CHUYÊN ANH TRONG CÁC GIỜ HỌC NÓI TẠI TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC HẢI PHÒNG (HPU).**

**TÓM TẮT:** Chiến lược Chia sẻ - Nhóm - Đôi (TPS) được coi là một chiến lược hiệu quả giúp cải thiện các kỹ năng ngôn ngữ của sinh viên. Vì vậy, nghiên cứu này được thực hiện nhằm mục đích kiểm tra tính hiệu quả của nó trong việc cải thiện sự tự tin và sự tham gia của sinh viên không chuyên khoa Du lịch trong các giờ học nói. Nghiên cứu sử dụng phương pháp nghiên cứu hỗn hợp để thu thập dữ liệu từ 24 sinh viên khoa Du lịch, trường Đại học Hải Phòng. Kết quả của nghiên cứu chỉ ra rằng phương pháp Chia sẻ - Nhóm - Đôi mang tới nhiều thay đổi tích cực với sự tham gia và sự tự tin của sinh viên trong các giờ học nói.

**Từ khóa:** Phương pháp Suy nghĩ - Nhóm đôi - Chia sẻ; Kỹ năng nói; Sinh viên không chuyên Anh

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Relating to the comprehensive development of language skills, speaking skill is one of the most challenging factors for students. Because this skill requires the combination of a lot of knowledge such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and

sentence structure to confidently present the opinion in front of others. The researcher also realizes that the development of oral communication in and out of the language classrooms plays a significant role in learning process, however, students normally have few chances to practice

speaking or communicating with others by the target language. In most cases, they feel timid, embarrassed or frightened when being required to express their idea or communicate with others in English. Consequently, most of students show the reluctance to their study, refuse to take part in activities with others or even feel stressed in each lessons. Non-English majors in the faculty of Tourism are also not an exception, they are compulsory to complete two ESP subjects with the professional knowledge which focus on developing the speaking skill to cater for their future jobs. However, most of the student are not confident in communication as well as do not have chances to practice English speaking in reality and in learning process. The reasons may be the limitation of basic English knowledge, the lack of self-confidence, the embarrassment or shyness if accidentally making mistakes when speaking in front of others. Therefore, teachers always try their best to find out the suitable methods to help students improve their learning.

Think-Pair-Share strategy proposed by Lyman (1981) is considered an effective and efficient one for most of the students to bring positive changes in learning process as well as increase students' learning motivation. In particular, there are some studies about the effectiveness of using Think-Pair-Share strategy investigated by researchers. For example, the research of Abdurrahman Hi Usman (2015) studied about using TPS strategy to improve students' speaking ability at Stain Ternate. The researcher said that students achieved the positive result in speaking lessons and the good improvement in their ability. Another study of Ida Ubaidah Hidayati (2012) about the effect of TPS

in improving vocabulary mastery of the second class students of Muhammadiyah vocational high school. The author showed that TPS strategy could help students improve their vocabulary mastery, make make the students more interested and actively involved in the learning process. In addition, the research of Andrew P. Kwok<sup>1</sup>, Alexandria Lau (2015) about the using TPS in promoting cooperative learning strategy, the study also pointed out that "TPS enhance the cognitive learning process. The students had more academic learning time spent in discussion, enhanced their thinking process from peer's corrective feedback and self-reflection for deeper and more thorough understanding".

Therefore, to help my students increase the confidence and participation in speaking lessons, the teacher decided to apply TPS strategy in learning process to evaluate its real effectiveness to non-English students in the faculty of Tourism at HPU. Two following questions are used to clarify the main target of the research:

1. What is the effect of TPS strategy to non-English majors' confidence in speaking lessons at HPU?
2. What is the effect of TPS strategy to non-English majors' participation in speaking lessons at HPU?

## 2. DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1 Literature review

#### 2.1.1 Speaking skill

Speaking skill is believed to be one of the most challenging and important part in learning foreign language process, especially for foreign language students because this skill requires them

to develop oral communication ability comprehensively. According to Brown (2004) "speaking is a productive skill that can be directly and empirically observed, those observations are invariably colored by the accuracy and effectiveness of the test-takers listening skill, which necessarily compromises the reliability and validity of an oral production test". Thornbury (2005) also said that speaking was an interactive process and required the ability to cooperate in the management of speaking turn. In general, speaking is an interactive cooperation developed and enhanced as means of effective communication through producing, receiving and processing information.

Speaking skill is also a complicated process with the simultaneous participation of both speakers and listeners. Therefore, students are forced to accumulate their knowledge then apply to express their ideas as well as numerous language functions not only inside but outside classroom. However, "communication can only be effective when the student is sensitive to the social and cultural aspects of language use and how these differ between his first and second language" (Applegate, 1975). Therefore, to improve the effectiveness in speaking lessons, teachers need pay attention to using suitable teaching approaches, provide students with interesting activities as well as create more learning motivations for them.

For most non-English majors in HPU, speaking is really a challenging task because they need to deal with language obstacles which prevent them from expressing their opinion fluently and confidently. Besides, their psychology of shyness, unfamiliarity to present in front of others as well as lack

of chance to practice speaking English causes them not to gain a good speaking skill. Therefore, there are a lot of different techniques used to help students develop their communicative skills through interactive strategies, TPS strategy is one of the most popular strategy to be used to improve students' speaking skill.

### 2.1.2 Think-*Pair*-Share strategy

Think-*Pair*-Share strategy is a cooperative learning technique which is proposed by Lyman (1981) and proved by a lot of researchers to bring a lot of benefits such as (Lujan & DiCarlo, 2006); (Goodwin, 2005); (Arends, 2008). Using cooperative learning strategy means that students in different levels of ability use a wide variety of learning activities such as work in pair, in a small group or in a combination of both to improve their academic achievement, skills and students' self-esteem (Goodwin, 1999). Each student participates in activities not only for learning but also for helping other teammates by giving immediate feedbacks and reinforcements. The common goals of applying TPS strategy are to increase students' participation in speaking, enhance students' confidence in speaking lessons. As a result, they can partly improve their academic achievement, develop language skills and the ability to work with others.

A lot of teachers select TPS to apply in their classroom because this cooperative learning strategy is considered as an effective way to diversify class discussion atmosphere (Trianto, 2007). Lyman (1981) gives three steps in the TPS procedure including students are given a task or assignment to think individually in a short period of time, they think about the answers of the question, formulate

and organize them in a suitable sequence. Then students work in pair or in a group to discuss their thinking with teammates and report their findings for relating tasks. This was considered an advantage of this strategy because Pressley (1992) said that the activity allowed students to have opportunity to think and provided them with a good chance to find out what knowledge they knew and what knowledge they needed to study more. In the final step, students share their opinion with other individuals in the group which creates the chances to interact with the whole group, present their own idea in an active manner as well as stimulate the oral communication skills.

Besides, TPS strategy is a favorite activity of a lot of researchers because the evidences for the positive effect on studying process are given. Firstly, according to Lie (2002), "Think-Pair-Share is learning strategy that gives students the opportunity to work independently and in collaboration with others", which helps build the peer interaction and the positive interdependence because the success of the whole group depends on the individuals' participation, so every group member's participation and engagement is essential (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Moreover, TPS learning strategy also helps develop students' self-studying thanks to putting students in the center of learning activities, turning teachers' role into guidance and organization. Therefore, active engagement of students is stimulated, more students participate in the classroom's activities to debate, communicate with other students which creates an ebullient and effective learning atmosphere.

Secondly, according to (Johnson & Johnson, 1999) face-to-face interaction is also an advantage of TPS strategy. Because it engages the whole class, allows all students including low-level students or timid students to take part in and reflect their idea. TPS strategy also reduces putting too much pressure on individuals when responding to the questions in front of the class which motivates students' confidence and participation. Besides, allowing students to have enough time to think about the questions or tasks then discuss with others is also an advantage making students feel more confident in answering rather than responding directly by themselves. As Westwood, Peter and Oliver (1979) mentioned that teachers needed ensure active participation because what student practiced saying would help improve communicating ability not what they heard.

Besides, the competition among groups or pairs also helps students have more confidence in learning, thinking and expressing their own ability. This learning strategy also requires students to learn the way to work with other in the team, learn how to express their opinions, share and respect other's opinion basing on the common goals or objectives. As the result, students can gradually improve critical thinking, problem solving, decision-making skills and feel more interested in the enjoyable learning environment.

In general, using TPS learning strategy has been proved to bring students more benefits. Therefore, the researcher decided to doing a study to evaluate the effectiveness of using TPS strategy in improving students' participation and confidence in speaking lessons.

## 2.2 Methodology

The study uses a mixed method including questionnaire surveys and observation method to collect data for the study. Because questionnaire surveys are very effective and useful for the research as Richards and Lockhart (1994) said that questionnaires were a useful way of "gathering information about effective dimensions of teaching and learning, such as beliefs, attitudes, motivation, and preferences, and enable a teacher to collect a large amount of information relatively quickly." Therefore, in this study, they can help me investigate students' actual learning situations in speaking lessons. Secondly, to observe non-verbal gestures, facial expressions as well as the change in student' attitude and participation in learning process, the author decides to use the observation method which is considered as a useful technique of carrying out research in psychology. Its goal is to obtain a snapshot of specific characteristics of students which are normally difficult to collect through questionnaire surveys. Therefore, using observation method helps the author discover the level of confidence and participation of students in learning process.

### 2.2.1 Research setting and participants

This study was conducted in eight weeks from November to December, 2019 in the faculty of Tourism at Hai Phong University. The subject is English for Hotel industry which is an English for specific purpose subject (ESP) has the aim to provide students basic knowledge of hotel industry and develop the ability to communicate with foreign customers in some common situations. Students apply the ESP knowledge to communicate in

different situations, thus speaking is a compulsory content in learning process. There were eleven units used for this program, the participants are twenty-four juniors of Tourism administration class including both 16 female students and 8 male ones with the pre-intermediate level.

### 2.2.2 Data collection instrument and research design

This study had the main aim to evaluate the effectiveness of using TPS strategy in improving student's confidence and participation in speaking skill, therefore a mixed method research design was given. Using the data in different manners can help the researcher to get a thorough picture of students' view of their abilities, their attitude to speaking skill, their actual participation in class discussion and the ways they took part in speaking lessons. Students were announced about the purpose of the study at the first lesson and all agreed to participate. In the first week and the final week, the author carried out collecting data through pre-survey and post-survey test about students' attitude to speaking skill. In the following five weeks, the author implemented observation method to get data for the research. The procedure of the study included the following steps, firstly teachers prepared materials for teaching strategy including observation checklists, field notes, criteria for assessments. During the study, in each lesson, students were given a small task to discuss some given questions in a group of four while teacher observed the way students applied TPS strategy. After a limited period of time, teacher accidentally asked one students in a certain group to present their idea of the group and marked. One another activity using



TPS strategy was that students worked in pair to make a short conversation with the given topic, after that, teacher invited some of them to present. To collect data, the researcher used an observation list to assess the process of applying TPS strategy included the information of such as participants, frequency and their attitude. Students were marked in different columns with a tick to show the evidence that they were active in conversation by posing questions, gave a long explanation, responded quickly to the answer, gave feedbacks to partners or showed what their attitude in speaking lessons. Finally, the researcher summarized all collected data to analyze and gave the findings for the study.

### 2.3. Findings of the research

With the purpose to answer the questions for the study about the changes of students' participation and confidence in speaking lessons, the collected data showed a significant improvement in students with Think-Pair-Share strategy. To clarify the result of changing students' participation and confidence in learning speaking, the researcher carried out analyzing the result of the pre-survey and post-survey. There were six given questions, the following table illustrated the answers for the study.

Besides, two open questions were also given to find out the result of using TPS strategy in the post survey. For the first question "Do you feel interested in taking part in speaking skill? Why", most of students agreed with the advantages of using TPS as some suggested answers. Firstly, teachers allowed them enough time to discuss, thanks to the period of time they could communicate with their friends to

understand more about the assigned tasks, had a chance to discover new knowledge and found out the best solution. Secondly, accidentally appointing students to present idea by teacher forced all students in the group to take part in and master knowledge which avoided the concentration of task in one individual. Moreover, the atmosphere in speaking lessons seemed to be more comfortable and competitive with various chances to practice speaking directly with their partners.

For the second question "Do you think that your speaking skill is partly improved thanks to TPS strategy?" Nearly all agreed with the idea and there were some suggestions chosen by students including I felt more confident to speak, I could speak longer sentences, I knew how to structure the content of speaking and I could apply more specific purpose knowledge in communicating better.

At the same time, the data which was collected through observation method helped the researcher understand more about students' participation. For the first week, some students did not show active attitude in speaking skill (Tien Anh, Ngoc Hai, Duc Hai, Hai Giang, Hong Chung, Hoa, Hieu, Lien, Mai, Thu, Trang). They showed the shyness, embarrassment in communication. They also used more Vietnamese in discussion, answered in short sentences and made a lot of mistakes in grammar and pronunciation. Even Ngoc Hai, Chung and Tien Anh only spoke one or two sentences in Vietnamese and sat silently. In the class, only Huong, Thuy, Ngoc Linh and Hong were active in their activity, gave long answers, explained the answers with the peer while other students also tried to take part in but most of them

showed the nervousness and troubles in speaking process. Even some groups could not complete the assigned tasks in the required time.

In the second and third week, students had more willingness in their speaking activity. They seemed to get on well with each other, began to speak more with more questions and long answers; they also had more discussions and felt free to express. Students' tension appeared to reduce partly but there was still nervousness and embarrassment in some students such as Duc Hai, Giang, Thu, Chung, Thanh Trang. They also began to finish their discussion in time and more quickly such as the group of Hoai and Hong, Thuy and Khanh Linh, Minh and Ngoc Linh. They were also familiar to how to organize the group to work effectively and complete the assigned work but there were still 3 groups could not complete in time including Lan and Thanh, Duc Hai and Tien Anh, Ngoc Hai and Chung.

In the fourth, fifth and sixth week, when students were gradually familiar with TPS strategy, they showed the noticeable progress in speaking lessons. Students gradually managed the time as well as the content in tasks better with more professional knowledge applied in conversations. Nearly all groups could respond actively to the requirement for speaking, students were active to speak more, explained and corrected mistake for each other. The mistakes in grammar and pronunciation as well as structures were still existent but improved considerably. The speaking content was also organized logically and reasonably. When presenting speaking skill, students did not show much shyness or tension instead of they

were more comfortable, confident in expressing. They also spoke more fluently and correctly without depending on paper and the atmosphere in class seemed more comfortable and friendly.

To sum up, the findings of the research indicated that using TPS brought to the positive changes in students' participation and confidence in speaking lesson. Students took part in more in speaking lessons and could complete these tasks in time and effectively. This strategy also helped them feel confident in speaking thanks to having enough time to think, having more chances to work in pair or in group and sharing ideas with other partners. Students, at the same time, got numerous opportunities to practice speaking, correct mistakes as well as receive instant feedbacks from their partners. Moreover, instead of sitting passively, students had more opportunities to communicate, actively participated in different activities and presented more in front of the public which gradually built their confidence in communication.

### 3. CONCLUSION

In general, speaking skill plays an important role in studying a foreign language, using TPS strategy in learning process helps bring students a positive effect on their participation and confidence. Students can have more direct chances to take part in learning process, think individually, organize their idea in a logical chain, then share ideas with others to find out the suitable options for the tasks. Thanks to these processes, students learn how to work in a team effectively, manage time and learn the way to be responsible for their job. They also speak and communicate more in the target language with their classmate which build the confidence and help them

receive instant feedbacks to correct mistakes better and more quickly. Students are also more familiar with practicing English, TPS strategy also relieve their shyness and embarrassment when speaking in front of the public. Besides, students also have better awareness of their knowledge and have more motivation in learning. Therefore, the researcher thinks that the TPS learning strategy should be applied more in learning and teaching process to promote students' learning ability and interest.

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