

THINK-PAIR-SHARE: ITS EFFECT ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ESL STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study delved on the effects of Think-Pair-Share, a cooperative learning approach in enhancing the academic performance of the English as Second Language (ESL) students. Forty six students enrolled in the English Communication Skills course in the Second Semester of the Academic Year 2009 – 2010, were used as subjects of the study. The Quasi-Experimental Design was utilized in the study. A pre-test was conducted, in which the pre-test mean scores are the bases in identifying the initial learning framework of the participants. After the conduct of the selected lessons employing the Think-Pair-Share approach, the students were given a post-test. Results showed the students who were subjected to the Think-Pair-Share approach had enhanced performance in the English Communication Skills course. Apparently, ANCOVA results on the post-test mean scores of the participants reported that there is a significant effect on the academic performance of the experimental group in which the Think-Pair-Share approach had been used. Findings also reveal that there is a significant relationship between the motivational orientations in learning English and students' academic performance in English.

Keywords: Think- Pair- Share, Cooperative Learning, ESL, Motivational Orientations in Learning English.

1. The problem and its background

The growing concern on academic gaps had been underscored by educational institutions especially in the highly cognitive core courses namely English, Mathematics, and Science in which English is the medium of instruction. Educators have been introducing academic innovations and scaffoldings in order to bridge the gaps among the English as Second Language (ESL) students who vary in race, culture, beliefs, religion, attitudes, and aptitudes. A number of these innovations and academic scaffoldings had been based on the social constructivist principles which highlight the social learning environment as a strong correlate of academic performance. Among the theorists who triumphed the social foundations in learning is Lev Vygotsky's who emphasized the significance of social interaction in the enhancing the cognitive aspect of the learner, especially in language learning. Vygotsky further asserted that the learning environment and the community as whole have primordial roles in the course of "making meaning." Eeds & Wells, 1991; Gambrell, 1996; Almasi & Gambrell, 1997; McCormack, 1997 Clay, 1998; Palincsar, 2003; Palincsar, 2003 Clark & Graves, 2005; Ketch, 2005 attested that a social environment which is a result of collaborative and cooperative learning among the students betters interaction, comprehension, construction of knowledge and cognitive development. Supporting these tenets, Brewer and Daane (2002) further elaborated that constructivist teaching exudes learning which is active and constructive; students' learning is built on their prior schema; students' independence is promoted; and social interaction is deemed beneficial for knowledge construction and active learning.

The role of language and thought in learning is exemplified by this social constructivist paradigm.

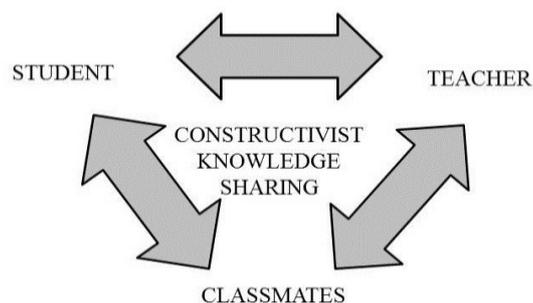


Figure 1. Social Constructivism

Source: <http://fultonbeth.edublogs.org/2011/01/21/social-constructivism/>

This diagram elaborates how constructivist classroom should be. It further depicts the importance of the social context of learning which is a concerted effort of the teacher, the student, and the classmates. Ergo, this is made possible by the collaborative and cooperative learning strategies integrated by the teacher in the day-to-day classroom activities. One of the most utilized strategies in cooperative learning, the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) is cooperative learning strategy developed by Lyman (1978). TPS integrates wait-time, verbal rehearsal, discussion, and cooperative learning. TPS is defined as “a multi-mode discussion cycle in which students listen to a question or presentation, have time to think individually, talk with each other in pairs, and finally share responses with the larger group” (McTighe & Lyman, 1988). Alverman et al. (1987), Baumeister (1992), and Howe (1992) carried out that TPS gives way for active participation by giving opportunities for students to contribute their ideas and fine-tune their thinking. A number of studies have been conducted to foster the notable inputs brought about by the TPS strategy in the academic performance of students in several disciplines. Dales (2007) noted a significant difference in the achievement test scores of the students exposed to Think-Pair-Share. Dales advanced that TPS is an effective strategy in teaching mathematics. Pressley (2000), Whitehead (2001), Duffy (2003), Farstrup (2002), Duke & Pearson (2002) claimed that TPS can be adapted to enhance the reading comprehension skills of the students. In the same vein, Carss (2007), implied that TPS has positive effects on reading achievement. TPS is also believed as a vehicle to further interaction, and a good strategy that can be adapted to match the attention span and the academic needs of the heterogeneous groups of students. Gabus (2010), Ofodu and Lawal (2011) and Onovughe and Adebayo (2011) research results showed a significant effect of TPS on the reading comprehension skills of students in the various comprehension levels. TPS does not only aid in improving the reading skills but also the speaking and writing skills of the students. Izzati (2012) asserted that the implementation of TPS method in the classroom activities can help enhance the students’ speaking skill while Rifqi’s (2011) research findings established that TPS has considerable effects on the students’ writing skills. Hence, this study aimed to find out the effects of TPS in the academic performance of ESL students in selected English Communication Skills topics.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

This study was conducted to ascertain the effects of the Think-Pair-Share strategy in the academic performance of ESL students in chosen topics in English Communication Skills course.

Specifically, it delved on the following questions:

1. What are the students/ motivational orientations in learning English?
2. What are the mean pre-test and post-test mean scores of students exposed to the Think-Pair-Share strategy and traditional teaching method?
3. Are there significant differences between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of students exposed to the Think-Pair-Share strategy and traditional teaching method?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the students’ motivational orientations in English and their academic performance in English?

1.2 Research Paradigm

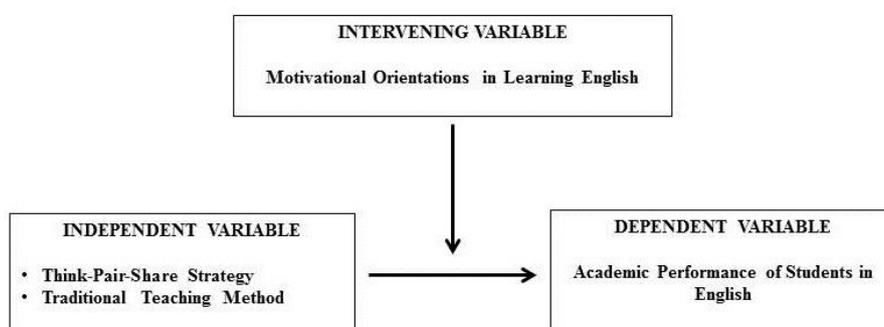


Figure 2. The Research Paradigm

Figure 2 exhibits the paradigm of the study. This research work identified the probable academic performance gaps between the experimental group exposed to the Think-Pair-Share strategy and the control group subjected to the Traditional Teaching method. The ESL students’ motivational orientations in learning English is pointed out as cogent correlate in the academic performance of students in English Communication Skills course.

2. Research Methodology

Pretest-posttest control group design, also known as Quasi-Experimental Design was utilized in this research. This gave underpinnings for the effects of the independent variable to the dependent variable comprising the experimental and control groups. The Think-Pair-Share strategy was used in the experimental group. This was limited only on the selected topics on parts of speech which are nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections. After the teacher has introduced the lesson, students are given questions and activities for them to form ideas of their own. Then, students are grouped in pairs for them deliberate their thoughts regarding the activities given by the teacher. At this point, students articulate their ideas and consider those of others. Student pairs then share their ideas and answers with a larger group, such as the whole class. Basically, the use of pair groupings was introduced in the experimental group. Analysis of the scores was conducted to derive the causal effect of the independent variables. In the case of the traditional

teaching method, the usual lecture discussion, assignment, seatwork activities and exercises were done to the control group. This study was conducted at the College of Arts and Sciences of the Western Visayas College of Science and Technology, Philippines during the Second Semester of the Academic Year 2009 – 2010. Two sections of forty six students taking up the English Communication Skills course were utilized in the study. To determine the experimental group, lottery method was utilized. This research adapted the questionnaire on Motivational Orientations in Learning EFL (Glomo, 2009) in determining the motivational orientations in learning English which may either be integrative or instrumental. An integrative orientation simply means the learner is pursuing a second language or a foreign language for social and/or cultural purposes while an instrumental orientation means that learners are studying a language in order to further a career or academic goal. To determine the academic performance of students in the selected topics of the course, a Teacher Made Test developed by the researcher was used. The content validity of the instrument was determined through a two-way Table of Specification. Pre-test was conducted to identify the students’ academic performance in English. For statistical analyses, mean, percentage, t-test, ANCOVA, and Pearson-r correlation were utilized.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Motivational Orientations in Learning English

	Motivational orientation	Participants		Mean	Interpretation
		Experimental	Control		
1.	Integrative	4.75	4.70	4.73	Strongly agree
2.	Instrumental	4.63	4.72	4.68	Strongly agree
	Average	4.69	4.71	4.76	Strongly agree

Table 1 shows students’ motivational orientations in learning English. Both the experimental and control groups strongly agree that they learn English because of the integrative and instrumental benefits that they would get from being proficient in the language. Students affirmed that English proficiency has social and/or cultural, and career or academic-related implications. Results of this study are supported by other research findings which reveal that L2/FL learners may be intrinsically motivated, that is motivational orientation is integrative (Gardner and MacIntyre, 1993; Oller, Hudson and Liu, 1977; Shaaban and Ghaith, 2000) or extrinsically motivated, or the motivational orientation is instrumental (Alhuqbani, 2009; Liu, 2007; Luckmani, 1972; Abu-Rabia, 1997; Alhuqbani, 2009; Al-Katib, 2007; Voget and Oliver, 1999; Al-Huneidi and Basturkmen, 1996) or they bear both kinds of motivations to learn a language (Chalak and Kassaian, 2010; Al-Khatib, 2007; Obeidat, 2005; Malallah, 2000; Williams, 1994; Deci and Ryan, 1985; Kebabian, 2006).

Table 2. Test of Difference on the Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores of the Participants

	Participants	N	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test	Experimental group	24	8.28	-.415	42.523	.589
	Control group	22	8.36			
Post-test	Experimental group	24	15.59	4.455	45.452	.001 *
	Control group	22	11.10			

Table 2 presents the mean of the pre-test and post-test scores of the ESL students on the achievement test given after the end of the treatment stage of the study. Results indicate that that the control group had a better learning framework on the selected topics in English Communication Skills course with a mean of 8.36 if

compared to the 8.28 of the experimental group. On the other hand, results revealed that the experimental group exposed to the TPS strategy had enhanced academic performance after the treatment with 15.59 mean over the 11.10 of the control group. Moreover, Table 2 presents the test of difference on the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the experimental and control groups. Results elucidate that there is no significant difference on the mean pre-test scores of the participants with a t-value -0.415 and p-value of .589 at 0.05 level of significance. As such, the null hypothesis of no significant difference on their prior learning framework and abilities in the English Communication Skills is accepted. In addition, it has to be noted that there is a significant difference on the mean scores of the participants in the post-test t-value of 4.455 and a p-value of <.001 at 0.05 level of significance. These findings reject the null hypothesis of no significant difference on the mean scores of the participants in the post-test after the TPS strategy was inculcated. Results of the present investigation had been corroborated by Izzati (2012), Rifqi (2011), Onovughe and Adebayo (2011) , Ofodu and Lawal (2011) , Gabus (2010), Dales (2007), Carss (2007), Duffy (2003), Farstrup (2002), Duke & Pearson(2002) , Whitehead (2001), and Pressley (2000) whose research findings established that TPS has considerable effects on the students’ academic performance in various courses such as English, Math, and Science.

Table 3. Relationship between Motivational Orientations in English and Students’ Academic Performance in English

		Motivational orientations in English	
		Integrative	Instrumental
Post-test	Pearson Correlation	-.415*	.454*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	
		.002	.001
		N	
		46	46

Table 3 exemplifies the relationship of the students’ academic performance in English and their motivational orientations in learning English. A significant relationship was observed in the integrative and instrumental motivational orientations of the students and their academic performance in English with p values of .002 and .001 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between the motivational orientations in learning English and students’ academic performance had been rejected. Results had been backed up by Tamimi and Shuib (2009), Lifrieri (2005), Gardner, (2000), and Oxford and Shearin (1994) who asserted that motivation is a key factor for successful second language (L2) or foreign language (FL) learning and it also determines the level of learners' positive, active and personal engagement in the process of target language (TL) learning and their performance in the language.

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