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## DEVELOPING VOCABULARY THROUGH *PAIR COUNTING* TEACHING TECHNIQUE

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Oleh :

**Anton Setiawan**  
SMP Negeri 26 Surabaya  
tonset81@gmail.com

### Abstrak

Mengembangkan keahlian berbicara dalam bahasa asing dianggap sebagai tugas yang menakutkan bagi sebagian besar pembelajar bahasa. Kebanyakan siswa beranggapan tidak memiliki cukup kosakata untuk berbicara. Mereka juga malu dan takut membuat kesalahan dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris. Sebagian besar siswa juga tampak tidak percaya diri untuk mengekspresikan sudut pandang mereka. Akibatnya, mereka tidak mampu berbicara dengan lancar. Jurnal ini mencoba untuk memberikan penyelidikan lebih lanjut mengenai efek teknik *Pair Counting* atau menghitung berpasangan untuk meningkatkan kosakata peserta didik, terutama dalam menggambarkan objek. Penelitian sebelumnya telah menunjukkan bahwa *Pair Counting* adalah cara yang cepat, mudah, dan interaktif untuk meningkatkan kelancaran dan tata bahasa siswa dalam berbicara. Namun, hasil penelitian tidak dilaporkan secara spesifik dengan menyajikan temuan rinci. Penelitian metode campuran ini mencoba mengamati dan menafsirkan berbagai bentuk data yang diambil dari ucapan siswa kelas 7 SMP yang berkaitan dengan menggambarkan objek dalam tiga fase dan dalam waktu yang terbatas. Hasil dalam setiap fase dibandingkan untuk melihat apakah ada peningkatan signifikan dalam kosakata siswa. Kajian ini menunjukkan adanya peningkatan kosakata 9 kelompok siswa dari total 10 kelompok. Peningkatan ini dihasilkan dari meningkatnya jumlah kosakata dalam beberapa fase. Temuan ini memperkuat pemahaman untuk mempertimbangkan teknik tertentu dalam meningkatkan kosakata siswa.

**Kata kunci:** Kosakata, tidak percaya diri, teknik mengajar.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Increasing the capability to express idea orally in a foreign language is commonly depressing anxiety for furthest language students. Most of them think that they are not well prepared by enough vocabulary to speak. Moreover, learners often impress worried of creating mistakes in speaking English. Most of them also appear indeterminate to express their argument. As a result, they speak uncomfortably.

Relating to the teaching technique to improve vocabulary and spoken fluency, Soresi (2005) recommends a "sentences per minute" technique to support students construct more vocabulary. Implementing this approach, students evaluate the amount of produced sentences about a topic in a particular duration. Moreover, in the same duration, they reiterate to tell the equal subject, attempting to develop the quantity of sentences they express. Students are allowed to recycle or re-express sentences from the beginning part in the course of their second and third speaking effort. On the other hand, this technique appears to have negative points as it is very difficult to calculate the right sentences. To simplify the difficulty, the researchers simply calculate learners' adjectives and sum of words connecting to describing object.

If learners show inactive classroom attitudes, it is more possible to be a result of the instructive situations that have been or are now delivered for them, than of any ordinary atmospheres of the learners themselves. That is why educators sought to deliver a positive

teaching method to change the inactive learners into the dynamic ones. Instructors are able to control their teaching schemes easily, one of them is by duplicating other's teaching approaches.

During the presentation of describing object material, learners tend to have smaller amount of fluency due to lack of vocabulary. During the uncomfortable learning circumstance, their spoken fluency can be worse since they are very difficult to deliver their point of view. To reduce the obstruction of fluency, it is necessary to shape a compassionate learning atmosphere and makes learners impress in comfort. In a teaching space where variety is appreciated and errors are measured as chance to learn, learners improve the belief that is serious if they take the threat of constructing fluency. Learners want to recognize that peers will not laugh at their errors and that teachers will review them on struggle and progress, not just on result.

The same as the statement above, spoken fluency can be constructed by giving repetitive information in a pleasurable circumstance to preserve student motivation as well as to inspire learners to construct steady arrangements. The repetition in speaking can be applied by delivering exactly the same vocabulary as well as changing the previous vocabulary into similar idea. Learners' vocabularies possibly increase if they are in a constant motivation and comfortable atmosphere.

This study is directed to the seventh grader of state Junior High School in Surabaya. Since it is a

favorite and prominent school with a high score of students' intake, most students in this school should be in better understanding of English. The students should also own good skill in speaking English. However, the students' speaking ability is not satisfying as predicted.

Duplicating and adapting Hanson's study entitled *Pair Counting to Improve Grammar and Spoken Fluency* in 2017, this study attempts to display how to develop vocabulary in describing objects, which can be in the matter of describing persons, things, animals or even places. This replication is trying to adopt the previous teaching technique and adapted to the different learning atmosphere with some modifications to accomplish better vocabulary.

Speaking are possible to be the most problematic ability if it is not customary in teaching and learning practice. In general, learners in an EFL framework do not run through the language in authentic conditions. Learners retain incapability of communicating properly. The condition makes learners become lack of self-confidence and prevention from speaking English. Furthermore, communicative events can encourage the learners and create worthy relationship between the teacher and the learners as well as among the learners so as to raise a supportive atmosphere for language learning. Reducing the unwillingness of learners to communicate English throughout the teaching and learning practice will be the attention of this study. By implementing and adapting *Pair Counting* teaching technique, this study makes an effort to obtain the growth in the students' vocabulary.

## 2. METHODS

The design of this study is mixed method, combining qualitative and quantitative, which is carried out to the seventh grader of favorite state junior high school in Surabaya. The contributors are the best 10 acquired English written final test score in the previous semester. Most of the participants have better capability in English, however they are in trouble of vocabulary in speaking skill.

This study implements participant observation as the instrument. Directing "Sentence per minute" method presented by Soresi, the learners calculate the number of sentences which they produce about a topic of describing object in a given duration from audio recording. Furthermore, in the same time allotment, the learners repeat to speak the equal topic, attempting to increase the amount of sentences they have produced. Learners are allowed to recycle or reformulate sentences from the first phase to their second and third speaking effort. On the other hand, this method appears to have difficulty as it is very hard to calculate the right sentences. To simplify the weakness, the researcher

only count the students' adjectives and sum of words connecting to the topic of describing object.

The collected data are evaluated by seven-stage conceptualization of mixed methods data analysis offered by Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003). The stages consist of data reduction, data display, data transformation, data correlation, data consolidation, data comparison, and data integration.

This study is directed in three steps. The procedure will be clarified in detail as follows:

### Step 1 (Preparation):

The first step to be conducted is introducing the procedure to the learners. Learners are occupied to a floating literacy class, the fresh place encircled by Reflection Park and above the great pond, in which learners acquire coziness in learning.

In the floating literacy class, the 10 learners are divided into five groups. Every group consists of 1 Talker coded by A1 to A5, whose responsibility is speaking as much as possible to answer the question. Another one is as Counter, coded by B1 to B6, whose is responsible for delivering question, recording the talker's reply as well as calculating all responses taken from the audio recording.

Since the lesson is about describing object, a counter calculates some adjectives and some words concerning to describing object distributed by a talker. The equal question and the equal treatment are implemented in 3 phases. The outcome in each phase is noted and evaluated to identify whether or not there is an enhancement in vocabulary. Preparation will be the most essential step since it is stage requiring the participants' understanding before going to the data taking. The activity during the preparation can be observed in the following image.



Image 1

The preparation of *Pair Counting*

### Step 2 (Recording):

The following stage is managing the learners to select a comfortable spot to record the talker's response. Separately, the five different groups are searching the comfortable place to record their description by using the learners' gadgets. The counter inquires a question relating to describing an object, then the talker attempts to describe the object with as many as sentences in a minute. All

statements of the counter and the talker are documented in an audio recorder. This activity runs in three phases to seek the improvement of the learners' vocabulary.

Having completed all phases, the role is revolved. The talkers are turned into the counters and they conduct the equal practice as the previous one in which the counters ask a question relating to describing person, thing, animal, or place, while the talkers try to describe by as many as sentences.

**Step 3 (Noting):**

Taking a note of the talker's statements are the last stage conducted by the counter. The counter listens to the talker's audio recording and writes the talker's utterances relating to describing object in 3 phases. The counter from each group selects some talker's utterances relating to describing object. In general, there are some adjectives used to describe objects in the form of person, animal, thing and place. In detailed data analysis, the researcher checks the result of the counter's calculation so as to acquire more valid data. Since it concerns to vocabulary, the grammar is omitted.

**3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

All talkers and counters actually have conducted their duty well. During the first phase, each group chose 1 of 4 things of description randomly. Moreover, each group was also requested to find out comfortable place to record the Talkers' descriptions. While the Talkers (represented by A1 to A5) were describing objects based on the questions delivered by the counters (represented by B1 to B5), the talkers have stated various sentences relating to describing objects. The amount of sentences during the first phase recording ranged from 7 to 17 sentences in a minute. This amount of sentences would be the basic sum for further data takings in the next phase.

The different learning atmosphere happened in the second phase. In this phase, some of passing schoolmates on the way to floating canteen were noticing what the talkers and counters were doing in the literacy park. Since it was break hour, the recording quality had some noise due to the noise of the passersby. However, the recording was still clear enough to be observed. This kind of learning atmosphere could lead the participants in an unconfident feeling. Speaking English by being recorded in public by being looked at by many people would not be an easy practice for the seventh graders.

On the other hand, the talkers seemed to have better confidence while they were describing object. Such feeling was very worthy to increase the number of vocabulary in speaking skill. This atmosphere was really different from the one in the previous phase that was quiet enough for them to speak. The situation of describing objects in public in the second phase can be observed in the image below.



Image 2

Describing object, recording sounds and counting sentences in the second phase

Having conducted the second phase, there was still progress in the amount of vocabulary. However, the improvement of vocabulary was not from all talkers describing objects. From the total of ten groups, six groups achieved certain progress, while there was one group showing constant result and three groups had decreased number of vocabulary.

This various result indicated that there was specific gap from the first to the second phase. The changing learning atmosphere contributed to the result in this phase. Learners seemed to have sudden shock while there was a different learning condition. Learners appeared to enjoy describing object during the first phase. However, it was slightly different in the second one. This phase was dissimilar as other students having break hour. Some participants looked worried and anxious while they were viewing many other students looking at them speaking English. The detailed progress from the first to the second result are shown in the following table.

Table 1

The progress of the first and the second phase

Kind of Description	Talker - Counter	Total Description in the 1 <sup>st</sup> Phase	Total Description in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Phase	Progress of the 1 <sup>st</sup> to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Phase
Place	A1 - B1	7	7	0 % (Constant)
Place	B1 - A1	11	16	0.455 % (Increased)
Animal	A2 - B2	13	12	0.077 % (Decreased)
Animal	B2 - A2	14	13	0.071 % (Decreased)
Place	A3 - B3	17	18	0.059 % (Increased)
Place	B3 - A3	15	18	0.200 % (Increased)
Thing	A4 - B4	8	11	0.375 % (Increased)
Thing	B4 - A4	8	10	0.250 % (Increased)
Person	A5 - B5	12	11	0.083 % (Decreased)
Person	B5 - A5	11	13	0.182 % (Increased)

From table 1 it can be comprehended that three groups experienced lower number of description. The group of A2-B2, B2-A2 and A5-B5 were failed in maintaining the previous result in the previous phase. All of the three groups got the same decreasing amount of vocabulary. Each of them decreased 1 vocabulary in which resulted from the description of person and animal.



Relating to the constant result, there was 1 group getting constant result. While the Talker was describing place, the group of A1-B1 got the same amount of vocabulary in which they had seven description in both the first and the second phase. Describing place seemed to be difficult material so that they could not improve their vocabulary. Furthermore, the difference of learning atmosphere from the first to the second phase also contributed to the decreasing amount of vocabulary. The passing students leading to the floating canteen as well as the noise from many students appeared to be contribution of the learners' failure to increase the amount of vocabulary in this phase.

Relating to the vocabulary improvement, there were six groups succeeding in achieving the increased number of description. The groups were B1-A1, A3-B3, B3-A3, A4-B4, B4-A4 as well as B5-A5. They got progress of vocabulary in describing place, thing and person. The highest amount of vocabulary, B1-A1 had improved the amount of vocabulary in which they got 16 vocabularies from 11 vocabularies in the previous stage. On the contrary, the smallest progress was contributed to the group of A3-B3 in which they tried to describe place. The group was increased in 1 vocabulary from 17 vocabularies in the previous phase to 18 vocabularies in this phase. Overall, most participants had better amount of description in this phase.

During the third phase, the participants were given opportunity to move from the previous place. It was intended to maintain the best performance in speaking. From the total of ten groups, three groups decided to seek other places while the rest of them were still on the same places. The moving group tended to choose more comfortable places in which they feel free to express their idea in describing objects. Two groups were still in a literacy park which are separated each other, while another group was sitting on a bench near the floating canteen. The situation of the moving students can be observed in the following image.



Image 3

Separated groups for having more comfort in speaking

Having chosen the suitable places to describe the next object, the talkers and counters were ready to express their idea. Each counter took randomly

arranged questions relating to describing objects which was going to be described by the talkers. Kinds of object to be described could be different from the previous ones.

During the third phase, both talkers and counters seemed to have more confidence in describing objects. Some of them repeated certain words in their description. It was allowed as far as the words had connection to the object being described. Throughout one minute time allotment, the talkers shared some new vocabularies indicating that every group would achieve some more vocabularies from the previous phase.

After recording the talkers' utterance, the counters as well as the researcher played the recording back and wrote anything stated in the recording. Sentences relating to describing object were noted and counted as the contribution of vocabulary progress, while some words which did not relate to the given objects to be described were omitted. Researcher evaluated the counters' calculation for the validity of the acquired number. During this process, the main concern was on the matter of adjectives relating to describing objects. Therefore, learners having incorrect grammar were still permitted as far as they have contribution to the right vocabulary of describing person, animal, thing and place.

Relating to the amount of improvement, from 8 groups getting improvement of vocabularies in this phase, A2 and B2 accomplished the most vocabulary achievement while the talker was describing animal. The talkers improved the amount of vocabulary from 12 vocabularies in the second phase to 19 vocabularies in the third phase. However, there were 4 groups having the smallest progress. They were A1-B1, A3-B3, B4-A4 as well as A5-B5. All of the four groups had improvement of 1 vocabulary from the second to the third phase. All counted sentences relating to the third phase as well as the progress are stated in the following table.

Table 2:

The progress of the second and the third phase

Kind of Description	Talker - Counter	Total Description in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Phase	Total Description in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Phase	Progress of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> to the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Phase
Place	A1 - B1	7	8	0.143 % (Increased)
Place	B1 - A1	16	19	0.188 % (Increased)
Animal	A2 - B2	12	17	0.417 % (Increased)
Animal	B2 - A2	13	12	0.077 % (Decreased)
Place	A3 - B3	18	19	0.056 % (Increased)
Place	B3 - A3	18	20	0.111 % (Increased)
Thing	A4 - B4	11	11	0 % (Constant)
Thing	B4 - A4	10	11	0.100 % (Increased)
Person	A5 - B5	11	12	0.091 % (Increased)
Person	B5 - A5	13	15	0.154 % (Increased)

The result shown in table 2 is quite different from the previous table in which participants tended to have significant progress. The amount of participants getting decreased number of description was lower than the previous phase. Two groups having decreased result in the first phase had increased their ability in describing object. It meant that they had performed better vocabulary. However, there was still one group getting constant result. A4 Talker and B4 counter got equal number of description in the second and third phase. Therefore, in this phase the students' tended to have more vocabulary than the second and the first phase so that there were only one group getting decreased vocabulary.

The comparison of the students' progress in vocabulary from the first phase until the third one showed that the students had got better vocabulary. Two groups getting constant result in the first or second phase gradually turned into progressive outcome. As a consequence, there was only 1 group, B2 and A2 kept on having consistently decreased vocabulary from the first to the third phase. The progress comparison for each phase can be shown on the following table.

Table 3  
The improvement in general

Description	Talker - Counter	Progress of the 1st to the 2nd Phase	Progress of the 2nd to the 3rd Phase	Average Progress
Place	A1 – B1	0 % (Constant)	0.143 % (Increased)	0.072 % (Increased)
Place	B1 – A1	0.455 % (Increased)	0.188 % (Increased)	0.322 % (Increased)
Animal	A2 – B2	0.077 % (Decreased)	0.417 % (Increased)	0.170 % (Increased)
Animal	B2 – A2	0.071 % (Decreased)	0.077 % (Decreased)	0.074 % (Decreased)
Place	A3 – B3	0.059 % (Increased)	0.056 % (Increased)	0.058 % (Increased)
Place	B3 – A3	0.200 % (Increased)	0.111 % (Increased)	0.156 % (Increased)
Thing	A4 – B4	0.375 % (Increased)	0 % (Constant)	0.188 % (Increased)
Thing	B4 – A4	0.250 % (Increased)	0.100 % (Increased)	0.175 % (Increased)
Person	A5 – B5	0.083 % (Decreased)	0.091 % (Increased)	0.087 % (Increased)
Person	B5 – A5	0.182 % (Increased)	0.154 % (Increased)	0.168 % (Increased)

Table 3 revealed the overall progress of all participants in three phases. From the table above, it could be seen that the results were various. From all data withdrawal, there was only one decreased average from B2 talker and A2 counter. The outcome was resulted from the simultaneously decreased progress from the first phase until the third one. It similarly happened to A2 talker and B2 counter. They experienced decreased result in the first phase to the second one. However they achieved significant improvement in their description of animal in the third phase. Consequently, their average progress was improved.

Some learners also got constant result, in which they had the same number of description in

their phases. In the first and the second phase, A1 counter and B1 talker experienced the equal number of description. It also happened to A4 talker and B4 counter since they had the same result in describing thing in the second to the third phase. Although both of them had the constant result in single phase, they still achieved improvement in another phase.

The only group getting failure in the amount of vocabulary was B2-A2. This group acquired decreasing number of vocabulary from the beginning to the end of the phase. During the second phase, this group was at the decreasing amount of vocabulary while they were describing animal. This failure seemed to be contributed to the same object to be described they had taken randomly from the first to the third phase. The group of B2-A2 always got the same object of animal to be described even though the animals were different in every phase. Considering the constant failure in every phase, the group of B2-A2 appeared to have trouble with the vocabulary of describing animal so that they acquired persistent failure in every phase. However, the inferior result might be in the diverse condition if the group got dissimilar object of description in the randomly arranged drawing, as being experienced by other groups.

Talking about the progress in general, most talkers and counters were improving in average progress in describing object. This development happened to 9 groups from the total of ten groups. The improvement was resulted from the increased number of vocabulary in various phases. Since the treatment in every phase was equal, while the number of vocabulary was increased, the spoken fluency was automatically improved.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Having observed the finding of *Pair Counting* performance stated on the table as well as the explanation above, it can be summarized that:

1. *Pair Counting* is an effective teaching technique to improve vocabulary.
2. Learning atmosphere contributes to the improvement of the teaching method as the talkers and the counters are in the relaxed condition while they are performing the method.
3. Self-confidence encourage learners to improve their vocabulary since the amount of students' vocabulary in every phase can be decreased due to the low self-confidence.
4. Although the average progress is not significantly increased, *Pair Counting* technique is still recommended to improve the learners' vocabulary.
5. *Pair Counting* technique can be modified and applied into different teaching and learning purpose to improve different skill.

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