

## **Improving Students' Speaking Skill Through Short Answer Questions (SAQs)**

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### **Abstract**

*This research is aimed at finding out whether the application of the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge Approach (TPACK) is effective or not in teaching students speaking skills to students at MA MA Putra Al-Islahuddiny Kediri in Academic Year 2024/2025. The research was an experimental research and the design was used as one group pre-test and post-test. The population of the study was the XI grade students of MA Putra Al-Islahuddiny Kediri in Academic Year 2024/2025. The sample of this was taken only 22 students. The data was collected through speaking test namely interview. This research had been done in eight meetings. For the data analysis, the researcher used parametric statistics, namely Paired Sample T-test through SPSS. The results of the analysis showed that the Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000 so that because the value of Sig. (2-tailed) < 0.05 (5%) then  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted so that there is an effect of the short answer questions technique/ SAQs speaking for the XI grade students at MA Putra Al-Islahuddiny Kediri in Academic Year 2024/2025.*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **Background of the Study**

There are many languages used by the people around the world, each country has its own language. Language is formally taught at school. The schools in each country have required their students to study their own language. Besides studying their national language, some schools in many countries obligate their students to study at least a foreign language either as a second or a foreign language.

English is an International language which has been received by countries all over the world. The function of it is as a means of communication in meeting business or other activities among government over the world. Mastering English is very crucial for life in some aspects such as used at science of knowledge, new invention in field of modern technology, politic, social, economy, education pharmaceutical, medical, etc. Concerning so, English is taken as compulsory subject at Indonesian level.

In Indonesia, English is learnt and taught to junior high school, Senior high school even at university. There are four skills in learning English they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Brown:1980). From the four skill, speaking skill is the skill that very dominant for daily life, judging so does meant that ignoring the three other skills. The development of skill in speaking is the result of a carefully planned and purposeful program in teaching

(Early :1960).

Teaching speaking can be done through dialogues, picture, games, short answer questions (SAQs) and etc. The teacher should choose a suitable way such as: using short answer questions (SAQs). If the teacher uses it, the students will have a lot of opportunity to practice pronunciation and communication or in other words it means that the students will get knowledge or input from those questions. They are generally questions that require students to construct a response. Short answer questions require a concise and focused response that may be factual, interpretive or a combination of the two (Greene:1960).

Concerning the existence of short answer questions (SAQs) the writer then deeply focused to investigate about “Improving students’ speaking skill through short answer questions (SAQs) for XI Grade students of MA Putra Al-Islahuddiny Kediri Lombok Barat in Academic year 2024/2025 ”. The main purpose and limitation of this study is merely on the use of the technique of short answer questions (SAQs) for XI year students of MA Putra Al-Islahuddiny Kediri Lombok Barat in Academic year 2024/2025 ”

## 2. DISCUSSION

### A. Definition of Speaking

Speaking is one of the skills in English. So, it plays an important rule in studying the subject, because as we know that English is an international language. Since most of books are written in English, so Indonesians student have opportunity to practice this language in the class. In this case, the teachers must be able to help them to master the language in the limited time. Beside that the students themselves should study hard in order to be able to understand it well. There are the definitions of some words of theme:

Speaking is to express thoughts a loud using the voice or talk (Hornby:1995 Dictionary of Contemporary English). David P. Harris (1977), in his book “Testing English as a Second Language” defines speaking. Speaking is a complex skill requiring the simultaneous use of number of different abilities which often develop at different rates. Either four or five components are generally recognized in analyses of speech process: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

### B. The Nature of Short Answer and Questions

The term of Short answer questions (or SAQs) can be used in examinations or as part of assessment of speaking. Short-answer questions are open-ended questions that require students to create an answer (Munkres:1959). They are commonly used in examinations to assess the basic knowledge and understanding (low cognitive levels) of a topic before more in-depth assessment questions are asked on the topic. They are generally questions that require students to construct a response. Short answer questions require a concise and focused response that may be factual, interpretive or a combination of the two.

SAQs can also be used in a non-examination situation (Anthony: 1963). A series of SAQs can comprise a larger assessment task that is completed over time. It can give both Advantages and limitations such as:

- Questions can reveal a student’s ability to describe, explain, reason, create, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate.
- Gives opportunities for students to show higher level skills and knowledge.
- Allows students to elaborate on responses in a limited way.
- Provides an opportunity to assess a student’s writing ability.
- Can be less time consuming to prepare than other item types.

- Structured in a variety of ways that elicit a range of responses, from a few words to a paragraph.

In implementing the technique of short answer questions for students in classroom, There some guidelines for constructing short answer questions while teaching speaking for students in the classroom. The guidelines are :

- Effective short answer questions should provide students with a focus (types of thinking and content) to use in their response.
- Avoid indeterminate, vague questions that are open to numerous and/or subjective interpretations.
- Select verbs that match the intended learning outcome and direct students in their thinking.
- If you use 'discuss' or 'explain', give specific instructions as to what points should be discussed/explained.
- Delimit the scope of the task to avoid students going off on an unrelated tangent.
- Know what a good response would look like and what it might include reference to.
- Practice writing a good response yourself so you have an exemplar and so you are aware of how long it may take to answer.
- Provide students with practice questions so they are familiar with question types and understand time limitations.
- Distribute marks based on the time required to answer.
- Review the question using the following questions:
  - ✓ Does the question align with the learning outcome/s?
  - ✓ Is the focus of the question clear?
  - ✓ Is the scope specific and clear enough for students to be able to answer in the time allocated?
  - ✓ Is there enough direction to guide the student to the expected response?

*(adapted from Bailey et al:*

*1960)*

The short answer questions actually able to access a range of cognitive skills/action verbs for student in the classroom regarding the speaking ability (Cameron:2001). The short answer questions can give any stimuli for students to: 1. List/identify, 2. Define, 3. Explain, 4. Justify/support, 5. Relate and 6. Combination. For further details, can be seen in the following description:

The short answer questions or SAQ requires students to simply identify or list (Swan and Smith: 1987). The question may indicate the scope of requirements. e.g. List three, List the most important.

For example:

- ✓ "List the typical and atypical neuroleptics (anti-psychotics) used to treat schizophrenia."

Besides that, the short answer questions asks student to define a term or idea.

For example:

- ✓ "What is the capital gains tax?"
- ✓ "Define soundness as an element of reasoning".

As the sequences for explanation, short answer questions asked the students to provide an explanation. The explanation may address what, how or why.

For example:

- "Why does the demand for luxury goods increase as the price increases?"

- “What are the important elements of a well-presented communication strategy?”
- “Why does an autoantibody binding to a post-synaptic receptor stop neuron communication?”
- “Explain the purpose of scaffolding as a teaching strategy”.

Further, short answer questions give a question that includes a requirement to justify or support can ask students to provide an example of one or several specific occurrences of an idea or concept.

For example:

- ✓ “Use 2 examples to show how scaffolding can be used to improve the efficacy of teaching and learning”.

In addition, the short answer questions provide some kinds of question, asks students to discuss how two or more concepts or objects are related. Is one different from the other? If so, how? Are they perfectly alike? Does one represent the other in some way?

For example:

- ✓ “Why would a rise in the price of sugar lead to an increase in the sales of honey?”

Actually, short answer questions allow the students to combine answer with synonym or terms that represent the answer of the questions.

For example:

- ✓ “List the three subphyla of the Phylum Chordata. What features permit us to place them all within the same phylum? “
- ✓ “What benefits does territorial behavior provide? Why do many animals display territorial behavior?”
- ✓ “Will you include short answer questions on your next exam? Justify your decision with two to three sentences explaining the factors that have influenced your decision.”

Short Answer Questions do not have a generic structure (David:2003). Questions may require answers such as complete the sentence, supply the missing word, short descriptive or qualitative answers, diagrams with explanations etc. The answer is usually short, from one word to a few lines. Often students may answer in bullet form.

### C. The Way to Design a Good Short Answer Question class for Speaking Class.

In teaching speaking through short answer questions, the English teacher can use the following steps:

1. Design short answer items which are appropriate assessment of the learning objective
2. Make sure the content of the short answer question measures knowledge appropriate to the desired learning goal
3. Express the questions with clear wordings and language which are appropriate to the student population
4. Ensure there is only one clearly correct answer in each question
5. Ensure that the item clearly specifies how the question should be answered (e.g. Student should answer it briefly and concisely using a single word or short phrase? Is the question given a specific number of blanks for students to answer?)
6. Consider whether the positioning of the item blank promote efficient scoring
7. Write the instructions clearly so as to specify the desired knowledge and specificity of response
8. Set the questions explicitly and precisely.

9. Direct questions are better than those which require completing the sentences.
10. For numerical answers, let the students know if they will receive marks for showing partial work (process based) or only the results (product based), also indicated the importance of the units.
11. Let the students know what your marking style is like, is bullet point format acceptable, or does it have to be an essay format?
12. Prepare a structured marking sheet; allocate marks or part-marks for acceptable answer(s).
13. Be prepared to accept other equally acceptable answers, some of which you may not have predicted.

Actually, teaching English speaking through Short Answer Questions technique not only has an advantage but also has the disadvantage. The advantage and the disadvantage of using Short Answer Questions technique are elaborated bellow:

➤ Advantages of Short Answer Questions

- Short Answer Questions are relatively fast to mark and can be marked by different assessors, as long as the questions are set in such a way that all alternative answers can be considered by the assessors.
- Short Answer Questions are also relatively easy to set compared to many assessment methods.
- Short Answer Questions can be used as part of a formative and summative assessment, as the structure of short answer questions are very similar to examination questions, students are more familiar with the practice and feel less anxious.
- Unlike Multiple Choice Questions, there is no guessing on answers, students must supply an answer.

➤ Disadvantages of Short Answer Questions

- Short Answer Questions (SAQ) are only suitable for questions that can be answered with short responses. It is very important that the assessor is very clear on the type of answers expected when setting the questions, because SAQ is an open-ended question, students are free to answer any way they choose, short-answer questions can lead to difficulties in grading if the question is not worded carefully.
- Short Answer Questions are typically used for assessing knowledge only, students may often memorize Short Answer Questions with rote learning. If assessors wish to use Short Answer Questions to assess deeper learning, careful attention (and many practices) on appropriate questions are required.
- Accuracy of assessment may be influenced by handwriting/spelling skills
- There can be time management issues when answering Short Answer Question.

#### **D. Research Design**

This research is an experimental research. The object of this research was the XI Grade students of MA Putra Al-Islahuddiny Kediri West Lombok This research was started for collecting the data from August to October 2024. The writer just took 22.. One group was taken as control group and the other one was taken as experimental group. Before giving any treatment to the students, the writer gave speaking test that intended to measure the speaking ability of both of the group. The next steps were given any treatment for teaching and learning for 8 meetings for both of the groups. The control group was treated through Dialogue in pairs technique, whereas the

experimental group was treated though Short answer questions technique. After the treatment has completed already, then the writer gave the speaking test. Meanwhile, for the speaking test the writer used interview where the questions are consisting of short questions.

To measure students' speaking ability, researchers used a speaking test in the form of interview (Richard:1993 ). For the scoring rubric of speaking test, the writer used scoring rubric of speaking test that proposed by David P. Harris as followed:

*Table 1. Five Components of Grading Speaking Scale*

Rated Qualities	Behavioral Statements	Points
<b>Pronunciation</b>	• Has few traces of foreign accent.	5
	• Always intelligible, though one is conscious of definite accent.	4
	• Pronunciation problems necessitate concentrated listening and occasionally lead to to misunderstanding.	3
	• Very hard to understand because of pronunciation problems. Must frequently be asked to repeat.	2
	• Pronunciation problems to severe as to make speech virtually unintelligible.	1
<b>Grammar</b>	• Makes few (if any) noticeable errors of grammar or word order.	5
	• Occasionally grammatical; and/or word order errors which do not, however, obscure meaning.	4
	• Makes frequent error of grammar and word order which occasionally obscure meaning.	3
	• Grammar and word order error make comprehension difficult. Must often rephrase sentences and/or restrict him to basic patterns.	2
	• Errors in grammar and word order to severe as to make speech virtually unintelligible	1
<b>Vocabulary</b>	• Use vocabulary and idioms is virtually that of a native speaker.	5
	• Sometimes uses inappropriate terms and/or must rephrase ideas because of lexical inadequacies.	4
	• Frequently uses the wrong words; conversation somewhat limited because of inadequate vocabulary.	3
	• Misuse of words and very limited vocabulary make comprehension quite difficult.	2
		1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary limitations so extreme as to make conversation virtually impossible.</li> </ul>	
<b>Fluency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speech as fluent and efforties as that of native speaker.</li> </ul>	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speech of speech seems to be slightly affected by language problems.</li> </ul>	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speed and fluency are rather than strongly affected by language problems.</li> </ul>	3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usually hesitant; often forced into silence by language limitations.</li> </ul>	2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speech is fragmentary SO halting and as to make conversation virtually impossible</li> </ul>	1
<b>Comprehension</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appears to understand everything wighout difficulty.</li> </ul>	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands nearly everything at normal speed, although occasional repetition maybe necessary.</li> </ul>	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands most of what is said at slower-than-normal speed with repetitions.</li> </ul>	3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has great difficulty following what is said. Can comprehend only "social conversation" spoken slowly and with frequent repetitions.</li> </ul>	2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cannot be said to understand even simple conversational English.</li> </ul>	1

Maximum score: 25

Total score:

Student's score  $\times 100$

Maximun score

### E. Research Finding

Based on the speaking test that given to the students for both of the group, the writer got the data that tabulated in the following table and the Computation as well for the total of student's deviation scores between post-test ( $X_2$ ) to pre-test ( $X_1$ ) for two groups and square of deviation scores.

*Table 2 The Students' Scores of Pre-Test*

No	Name	Criteria					Student's Scores	Total Scores $\frac{\quad}{25} \times 100$
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	Student 1	2	2	2	2	2	10	40
2	Student 2	2	2	2	2	2	11	44
3	Student 3	4	3	3	4	3	17	68
4	Student 4	1	1	2	2	2	8	32

5	Student 5	2	2	2	2	2	10	40
6	Student 6	1	2	2	2	2	9	36
7	Student 7	2	2	1	2	2	9	36
8	Student 8	3	3	3	3	3	15	60
9	Student 9	3	3	3	3	4	16	64
10	Student 10	2	2	2	3	3	12	48
11	Student 11	1	2	2	2	2	9	36
12	Student 12	3	3	3	4	4	17	68
13	Student 13	2	2	2	3	2	11	44
14	Student 14	2	2	2	3	2	11	44
15	Student 15	3	2	2	3	2	12	48
16	Student 16	3	3	3	4	4	17	68
17	Student 17	3	2	3	4	4	16	64
18	Student 18	3	3	2	3	3	14	56
19	Student 19	3	2	3	3	3	14	56
20	Student 20	2	2	2	3	3	12	48
21	Student 21	3	3	3	3	3	15	60
22	Student 22	2	2	3	3	2	12	48
TOTAL								1108
MEAN								50.36

*Note: The Components of Criteria: 1. Pronunciation, 2. Grammar, 3. Vocabulary, 4. Fluency and 5. Comprehension*

From the table above, it can be seen that the highest students score was 17 and the lowest students score was 8. The data analysis shows the highest total score was 68 and the lowest score was 32 while the mean of pre-test was 50.36.

*Table 3 The Students' Scores of Post-Test*

No	Name	Criteria					Student's Scores	Total cores ————— ×100 25
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	Student 1	3	2	2	3	2	12	48
2	Student 2	3	3	3	3	3	15	60
3	Student 3	4	4	4	4	4	20	80
4	Student 4	2	2	2	2	2	10	40
5	Student 5	3	3	3	3	3	15	60
6	Student 6	2	2	2	2	2	10	40
7	Student 7	3	3	2	3	3	14	56
8	Student 8	4	3	3	4	4	18	72
9	Student 9	4	3	3	4	4	18	72
10	Student 10	3	3	3	3	3	15	60
11	Student 11	2	2	2	2	2	10	40
12	Student 12	4	4	3	4	4	19	76
13	Student 13	3	2	3	3	2	13	52
14	Student 14	3	2	2	3	3	13	52
15	Student 15	3	3	3	3	3	15	60
16	Student 16	4	4	4	4	4	20	80



17	Student 17	4	3	3	4	4	18	72
18	Student 18	3	3	3	4	4	17	68
19	Student 19	3	3	3	4	4	17	68
20	Student 20	3	3	2	3	3	14	56
21	Student 21	3	3	3	4	3	16	64
22	Student 22	3	3	3	3	3	15	60
TOTAL								1336
MEAN								60.72

*Note: The Components of Criteria: 1. Pronunciation, 2. Grammar, 3. Vocabulary, 4. Fluency and 5. Comprehension.*

From the table above, it can be seen that the highest students score was 20 and the lowest students score was 10. The data analysis shows the highest total score was 80 and the lowest score was 40 while the mean of pre-test was 60.72.

The hypothesis testing procedure is designed to determine whether the hypothesis is accepted or rejected. The purpose of hypothesis testing is to detect significant differences between pre-test and post-test results and to determine the effectiveness of using the Short answer and questions / SAQs technique in teaching students' speaking skills.

The hypothesis test used in this study is a parametric statistical test, namely the Paired Sample T-test because it comes from two interrelated variables. This test is used to determine whether or not there is an average difference between two groups of samples that are paired/related (Muhid 2012). The point is two samples but two different treatments.

*Table 4 Paired Sample T-Test*

**Paired Samples Statistics**

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 Pre-Test Scores of Students' Speaking Skills	50.41	22	11.665	2.487
Post-Test Scores of Students' Speaking Skills	60.73	22	12.198	2.601

*Table 5 Paired Sample Test*

	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1 Pre-Test Scores of Students' Speaking Skills -Post-Test Scores of Students Speaking Skills	-11.162	21	.000

The statistical table hypotheses above clearly shows that:

If significance > 0.05, then Ho is accepted

If the significance < 0.05, then Ho is rejected

Based on table 4.6 about the t-test (paired sample t-test) above, it shows that there is a significant difference between the results before and after treatment. The results of the analysis above show that the Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000 so that because the value of Sig. (2-tailed) < 0.05 (5%) then Ho is rejected and Ha is accepted so that there is an effect of

the Short answer and questions / SAQs technique in teaching speaking skills of XI grade students at MA Putra Al-Islahuddiny Kediri in the academic year 2024/2025.

The discussion in this study is the effectiveness of using the Short answer and questions / SAQs technique in teaching students speaking skills. This research was conducted using a Pre-Experimental design approach in the form of a group Pre-test and Post-test design, which was conducted from August to October 2024. This study only used one class of 22 students from XI grade of MA Putra Al-Islahuddiny Kediri.

Based on the above findings, supporting theories and research, it can be concluded that the Short answer and questions / SAQs technique is effective in teaching the speaking skills of XI grade students at MA Putra Al-Islahuddiny Kediri in the academic year 2024/2025.

### 3. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the implementation of the short answer and questions / SAQs technique is effective in teaching students speaking skills. This is proved by the results of the average post-test student score (60.72) higher than the average student score in the pre-test (50.36). Based on the sig (2-tailed) pre-test and post-test is 0.000 so because the value of Sig. (2-tailed) <0.05,  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted so that writer convenience to conclude that the short answer and questions / SAQs technique is able to improve speaking skills of XI grade students at MA Putra Al-Islahuddiny Kediri Lombok Barat in academic year 2024/2025.

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