

DEVELOPING INDONESIAN SPEAKING SKILLS USING LANGUAGE GAME LEARNING METHOD FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS IN LABUHAN BATU REGENCY

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Abstract

Indonesian speaking skills of fourth-grade students is low because of lack of confidence, fluency, and minimal active participation in conventional oral learning. This study also aims to determine the effectiveness of using language game learning methods in improving students' speaking skills and activeness. The research method uses Kemmis and McTaggart's Classroom Action Research (CAR) model which is implemented in two cycles, where each cycle consists of four stages. The subjects are 30 fourth-grade students. Data collection instruments includes a performance test (oral assessment) and student activity observation sheets. The criteria for success of the action are determined if the percentage of classical completeness reaches at least 80%. The results shows that there is a consistent and significant increase. The average score of students' speaking skills in pre-action stage only reaches 55.00 with a very low percentage of classical completeness. After the implementation of language games in Cycle I, the average score increases to 72.50 (65% completeness). Through corrective actions in Cycle II, the average score increases again to 85.00, and the classical completion percentage reaches 90%. This improvement is also accompanied by increasing students' activity and confidence in speaking in class. Based on these results, this study concludes that the language game learning method is effective and successful in developing Indonesian speaking skills. This method is proved to create a fun, interactive learning environment and motivate students to dare to speak, so the action hypothesis is accepted.

Keywords— classroom action research, elementary school students, language games, speaking skills.

Introduction

Speaking skills are a crucial aspect of Indonesian language learning that must be mastered by elementary school students. These skills form the foundation for students to communicate effectively, both within the school environment and in everyday life. In the Independent Curriculum, speaking skills are emphasized as part of basic literacy that needs to be developed through various active and enjoyable learning strategies. However, in practice, speaking instruction in elementary schools still faces various challenges that hinder the development of students' skills. Based on initial observations, it was found that most fourth-grade students experienced difficulty speaking fluently and confidently. Students tended to be passive when asked to speak in front of the class, lacked adequate vocabulary, and struggled to construct coherent and logical sentences. Furthermore, some students feared making mistakes, opting to remain silent or only speaking when directly prompted by the teacher. This situation indicates that

students' speaking skills still need to be improved through more innovative and engaging learning methods.

One factor contributing to students' low speaking skills is the still-conventional learning approach. Classroom learning tends to be teacher-centered, with lecture and question-and-answer methods that provide little opportunity for students to practice speaking actively. Furthermore, the teaching materials used focus primarily on reading and writing, while speaking skills receive insufficient attention. As a result, students receive limited opportunities to practice and develop their speaking skills optimally. To address this issue, a more innovative and interactive learning approach is needed to encourage students to actively participate in speaking activities. One method that can be used is language games. This method allows students to learn to speak in a fun, engaging, and communicative environment. Language games can help students overcome their fear of speaking, boost their confidence, enrich their vocabulary, and practice their ability to construct coherent sentences. Furthermore, this method encourages interaction between students, thus motivating them to speak in more natural and contextual situations.

Language plays a vital role in human life as a primary means of communication. This is especially important for Indonesian language teachers and teachers of other subjects. In the learning process, the primary goal of language teaching is to enable students to use the language actively and communicatively in everyday life, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Indonesian plays a crucial role in educational success because it supports the learning of various subjects. However, low student scores in language competency achievement indicate challenges in language skills, particularly speaking. This can be caused by various factors, such as a lack of linguistic understanding, a lack of innovative learning methods, and limited speaking practice in a pleasant atmosphere.

Schools, as educational institutions, play a crucial role in developing students' language skills. Teachers, as the primary drivers of the learning process, must be able to create a learning environment that supports speaking skills. However, in reality, many students still struggle to speak Indonesian fluently, especially at the elementary school level. Based on initial observations most students experience difficulties in speaking Indonesian fluently. Many still feel shy, lack confidence, and are afraid of making mistakes when speaking in front of the class. In fact, in everyday learning situations, students often use their regional languages to communicate, both with peers and with teachers. This limits their ability to use Indonesian communicatively. Initial observations also indicate that in Indonesian language learning, teachers have attempted to involve students in various learning activities. However, these activities tend to be passive, such as reading texts or memorizing dialogues, without providing sufficient challenges for students to speak spontaneously and expressively. As a result, students' speaking skills remain low, particularly in terms of fluency, intonation accuracy, expression, and comprehension.

For example, when given the task of reading a dialogue, many students are reluctant to speak in front of the class. Some hesitate and choose to nominate other students to come forward. They also tend to speak softly and lack expression. When asked about the reasons behind this attitude, the majority of students admitted to feeling embarrassed, afraid of making mistakes, and worried about being laughed at by their peers. This situation indicates that Indonesian language learning in fourth grade at Panai Hilir 15 Public Elementary School is not yet optimal in developing students' speaking skills. One contributing factor to this problem is the learning strategy, which does not stimulate students to speak actively and confidently. One solution to address this problem is the use of language game learning methods. Play is a natural and enjoyable activity for children. In a playful atmosphere, students become more engaged in learning without feeling pressured. The language game method not only creates a more enjoyable learning environment, but also helps gradually improve students' speaking skills.

The language game method aligns with the principles of Contextual Teaching & Learning (CTL) and Active, Innovative, Creative, Effective, and Enjoyable Learning (PAIKEM), which emphasize student involvement in the learning process. Through language games, students are encouraged to speak more actively, interact with peers, and develop confidence in speaking Indonesian. Based on the results of the initial assessment students' speaking skills still fall short of the expected standard. Preliminary data indicates that 60% of students still have difficulty speaking fluently and confidently, 30% of students are only able to speak in short, limited

sentences, and only 10% of students are able to speak well enough to convey ideas. Several previous studies have shown that language game methods have a positive impact on the development of students' speaking skills in elementary schools. Learning packaged in the form of games not only improves speaking skills but also provides a more enjoyable and meaningful learning experience for students. Therefore, this study aims to develop the Indonesian speaking skills of fourth-grade students at SD Negeri 15 Panai Hilir through the application of language game learning methods.

Through this research, it is hoped that effective learning strategies can be found to improve students' speaking skills and contribute to the world of education, particularly in Indonesian language learning in elementary schools. Thus, speaking lessons, which have been considered difficult and boring, can be made more engaging, interactive, and tailored to the characteristics and needs of students. These results indicate that Indonesian language learning in fourth grade is still not optimal and requires innovative, more effective learning strategies. Therefore, this study was conducted to develop students' speaking skills using language game learning methods as a more interactive and enjoyable solution.

Problem Identification and Formulation

Teachers tend to use conventional methods such as lectures and reading texts without actively engaging students in speaking. As a result, many students lack confidence in expressing their opinions, lack sufficient vocabulary, and have difficulty constructing good and correct sentences. Furthermore, social interaction between students during learning is still less than optimal due to the limited availability of engaging and varied learning methods. The use of media in learning is also still minimal, thus reducing student motivation to develop their speaking skills. To address this issue, it is necessary to implement more innovative and enjoyable learning methods, one of which is language games. This method allows students to learn to speak in a more relaxed and interactive atmosphere, thereby increasing their confidence and speaking skills.

Based on the problem identification above, the problem formulation in this study is: how can the application of the language game learning method improve Indonesian language speaking skills? To ensure this research remains focused and comprehensive, the following limitations have been established that this study only examines the development of Indonesian language speaking skills, not other language skills (writing, reading, or listening), the learning method used is the language game method, which includes various forms of educational games that encourage students to speak actively. Based on the formulated problem, this research aims to explain how the application of the language game learning method improves Indonesian language speaking skills in fourth-grade students, analyze the effectiveness of the language game learning method in increasing students' confidence in speaking, and describe the influence of the language game method on students' active participation in Indonesian language learning.

Literature Review

Development

Development, according to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), is the method, process, and act of developing (KBBI, 2021). Development generally refers to efforts to gradually improve conceptual, theoretical, and moral abilities through education and training. According to Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 18 of 2002, development is a scientific and technological activity that utilizes scientific principles and theories to improve the functionality, benefits, and applications of existing science and technology or to produce new technologies (Law of the Republic of Indonesia, 2002). The field of development encompasses various technologies used in learning. Learning development is a form of formal and non-formal educational activity that is carried out consciously, planned, targeted, and responsibly.

Learning development aims to introduce, enhance, guide, and develop knowledge and skills in accordance with talents and a balanced personality foundation. This aims to foster, enhance, and develop self and an environment that is useful in realizing the highest human dignity and quality, as well as independent individuals. Development in the field of education or learning is carried out through development research. Development research is a research method used to

produce a specific product and assess its effectiveness.

Speaking Skills

To achieve maximum results, an employee must work diligently, utilizing all their skills, and be supported by available facilities and infrastructure. If an employee works half-heartedly, the work produced will not be as optimal as expected. This means that a person's skills can be measured by the level of knowledge and skills they possess in carrying out assigned tasks. With existing skills, employees will strive to improve the quality and quantity of their work. There are two basic skills that must be possessed to support a person in carrying out work or tasks to achieve maximum results, namely, technical and conceptual skills

These are the skills required to see the big picture and recognize the important elements in a situation and understand the relationships between these elements. Social skills are the ability of employees to work within a team or work group. This is important because if they withdraw into themselves, work results will not be optimal. Skills in communicating, expressing ideas and opinions, and accepting the opinions and suggestions of others can be factors in successfully carrying out tasks. Conceptual skills are an employee's ability to analyze and formulate assigned tasks.

Furthermore, mastery of the ideas to be conveyed and the ability to understand the language of the interlocutor are required (Nurgiyantoro, 2005). Speaking is the skill of pronouncing articulated sounds or words to express, state, and convey thoughts, ideas, and feelings (Tarigan, 2000). The primary purpose of speaking is to communicate. Essentially, speaking has three main purposes: to inform, to report (to inform), to entertain, and to persuade, invite, urge, and convince (to persuade) (Tarigan, 2000).

There are several benefits of speaking and in the context of learning, skills can be interpreted as interactions that occur in the learning process that can transform various potentials within humans into emanations or explosions of passion that can be transmitted or demonstrated to others (Hernowo, 2006). Speaking is a language skill that develops in childhood, and it is during this period that speaking or learning skills are acquired (Tarigan, 2000). Speech is a form of human behavior that utilizes physical, psychological, neurological, semantic, and linguistic factors extensively, so it can be considered a human tool (Hernowo, 2006).

Language Games

Language games are a new medium utilized in language learning programs. The results of this application have a very positive impact on language skill acquisition, because the process of learning a foreign language essentially requires a fun situation. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary, "game" has several meanings, namely: (a) toy (tool for playing), (b) performance or spectacle, (c) adornment, and (d) an act done without seriousness. Essentially, language games are activities to acquire certain language skills in a fun way (Soerparno, 2007). In the realm of language learning, language games are defined as activities involving cooperation or competition between students to achieve predetermined goals with specific rules.

Language games are activities that combine elements of play and learning, with the goal of acquiring specific language skills in a fun way. According to (Soerparno, 2007), "if the skills acquired in the game are specific language skills, then the game is called a language game." Therefore, a game can be considered a language game if it meets two requirements: enjoyment and practice of language skills.

There are four purposes and four things to consider when using language games which also have three important aspects (Soerparno, 2007). When selecting language games for the learning process, six points must be considered. According to (Tarigan, 2009), learning methods involving games, simulations, role-playing, and pair communication can be implemented to increase the effectiveness of language learning. The language learning approach must emphasize language use (language skills). Learning occurs when students' thought patterns or structures interact and adapt to their environment. Therefore, teachers are expected to create a conducive learning environment so that students are more active in learning. (Baidawi, 2011) argues about the improvement in Indonesian speaking skills through storytelling techniques. The similarity between (Baidawi, 2011). and this study is that the research aimed to examine speaking skills.

The difference between Fahru Roji Baidawi's research and this study is that this study used the word card method, while Fahru Roji Baidawi's study used the storytelling technique.

The similarity between (Imam, 2010) research and this study is that both aim to improve speaking skills and the difference is that this study focuses more on the language game learning method with word cards, while Imam Zubaidy Anshory's research emphasizes the pragmatic approach. The similarity between (Ratnawati, 2010) and this study is that both aimed to improve speaking skills. The difference between Eka Ratnawati's and this study is that Eka Ratnawati's study focused on learning using storytelling, while this study used language games with word cards.

Research Method

Type, Place and Time, and Subjects of Research

This research is a collaborative study categorized as classroom action research. Classroom action research is a systematic study of classroom learning practices with the aim of improving the quality of learning and student learning outcomes through these actions. According to Arikunto, classroom action research is research that implements specific actions to improve the learning system professionally. Classroom action research is a process that includes planning, action or implementation, observation, and reflection. These four aspects form a series of steps in a spiral. This research will be conducted in two cycles. This research was conducted in the fourth grade of SD Negeri 15 Panai Hilir, Labuhan Batu Regency, during the 2025-2026 academic year, during the odd semester. The subjects of this research were 29 fourth grade students of SD Negeri 15 Panai Hilir, Labuhan Batu Regency, during the 2025-2026 academic year, including one researcher and one teacher. The object of this research was the speaking skills of fourth-grade students. The researcher's role in this study was as observer, data collector, and data analyst, as well as reporting the research results. The teacher took action to improve the quality of learning using methods that were better than before

Data Collection Techniques

Based on the implementation of actions in the first and second cycles, it was clear that students had demonstrated significant improvement in their speaking skills, and therefore, this classroom action research was concluded. Furthermore, to obtain accurate data in this action research, the author also conducted observations, speaking test, and documentation. The outline of the learning implementation observation sheet, Student Learning Activity Observation Sheet, and Speaking Ability Test Grid are shown in Tables 1-3.

Table 1. Learning implementation observation sheet

No	Observed Aspects	K	C	B
1	Prepare tools, learning media, and learning resources.			
2	Prepare the Lesson Implementation Plan (RPP).			
3	Provide motivation and explain learning objectives.			
4	Convey to students that today's lesson will use language games (word cards).			
5	Explain the learning material clearly and effectively.			
6	Memfasilitasi siswa untuk bertanya mengenai materi yang telah dijelaskan. Encourage students to ask questions about the material that has been explained.			
7	Explain the language game technique (word cards).			

Table 2. Student learning activity observation sheet

No	Observed Aspects	K	C	B
1	Students are ready to participate in learning using language game techniques (word cards with pictures).			
2	Students pay attention to the material presented by the teacher.			

3	Students ask questions about the material presented.			
4	Students pay attention to the teacher's explanation of the language game technique (word cards with pictures).			
5	Students sit in groups to discuss using the language game technique.			
6	Student groups discuss, ask questions, and provide suggestions using language game techniques.			
7	Group leaders present the results of their discussions to the class.			
8	Students' active participation in applying language game techniques (word cards).			
9	Accuracy in selecting and attaching word cards.			
10	Students' ability to engage in discussions using word cards.			
11	Students' courage in offering suggestions.			
12	Students' courage in asking questions.			
13	Students' motivation in participating in learning using language game techniques.			
14	Students' attitudes during learning.			
15	Students take oral tests.			

Table 3. Speaking ability test grid

No	Indicator	Descriptor	Score
1	Accuracy	Appropriate use of language and word choice when speaking.	20
		Inappropriate use of language and word choice when speaking.	15
		Inappropriate use of language and word choice when speaking.	10
2	Fluency	Fluent and relevant in speaking.	20
		Less fluent in speaking.	15
		Slow and choppy in speaking.	10
3	Intonation	Clear word breaks/pauses.	20
		Unclear word breaks/pauses.	15
		Unclear word breaks/pauses.	10
4	Expression	Animating in language games.	20
		Less soulful in language games.	15
		Not imbued in language games.	10
5	Theme	The conversation is on topic.	20
		The conversation is less on topic.	15
		The conversation is not on topic.	10

Action Procedures

This classroom action research was conducted in the classroom. This research used a cycle, with each cycle consisting of four important stages: planning, implementing the action, observing and evaluating the process and results of the action (observation and evaluation), and reflecting. This process continues until the desired improvement or increase is achieved (success criteria). The four stages in classroom action research are elements that form a cycle, a series of sequential activities that return to the initial steps. This study was conducted to obtain a theoretical basis and references related to CAR. According to (Arikunto, 2010), CAR is research conducted to improve the quality of learning through a systematic approach. The evaluation criteria in this

study used observation, performance tests, and attitude scales to measure changes in students' speaking skills (Sugiyono, 2011). The collected data were analyzed descriptively, qualitatively, and quantitatively to determine the effectiveness of the actions taken (Sudjana, 2002). CAR aims to improve and enhance the quality of learning and help empower teachers in solving learning problems in schools. This classroom action research consists of two cycles. Each cycle consists of four stages referring to the CAR model.

Research instruments are tools used to collect data and information needed for research. The test used was a performance test in the form of a language game to assess students' speaking skills. Data were obtained through observation sheets in checklist format. (Arikunto, 2013),

With this procedure, the research is expected to provide valid and reliable results to improve the speaking skills of fourth-grade students at SD Negeri 15 Panai Hilir, Labuhan Batu Regency, in the 2025-2026 academic year. In case of data analysis technique the average student score is obtained by adding up all the scores obtained by each student and then dividing by the number of students in the class. The formula used is as follows:

$$X = \frac{\sum X}{N} \quad (1)$$

Description:

X = Average student grades

$\sum X$ = Total student grades

N = Number of students

(Source: Wardhani & Wihardit, 2013: 5.19)

To calculate the percentage of learning completion, the following formula is used:

$$P = \frac{\text{Jumlah siswa yang tuntas belajar}}{\text{Jumlah seluruh siswa}} \times 100\% \quad (2)$$

This analysis is conducted during the reflection stage to inform further planning for improving learning outcomes. The results of the analysis are also used as reflection material to improve the learning design and as considerations in determining appropriate learning methods. For observation results from observation sheets, analysis is carried out using the formula (1) and (2).

Table 4. Criteria for student learning success

No	Value Interval	Category
1	90 - 100	Very Good
2	80 - 89	Good
3	70 - 79	Fair
4	60 - 69	Poor

Results and Discussion

Pre-Action Results (Initial Conditions)

The pre-action phase aimed to measure students' initial abilities before the language game intervention was implemented and to identify key learning challenges. Data was obtained through initial observations and a speaking skills test. The pre-action test was conducted by asking students to tell or describe a simple topic. The results showed that the average score for students' speaking skills was 55.00.

Table 5. Pre-Action Results

Value Category	Value Range	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
Completed	> 75 (KKM)	3	10%
Not Completed	< 75	27	90%
Total		30	100%

From the Table 5, only 10% of students achieved learning completion (KKM 75). This percentage falls far short of the established CAR success criteria, which is a minimum of 80% classical completion. Observations indicate that the main student difficulties lie in the following aspects, such as, self-confidence (expression)--most students (around 70%) exhibited shyness,

were reluctant to come forward, make eye contact with the audience, and spoke in a low voice, fluency and clarity--students frequently experienced long pauses and repeated words, indicating a lack of vocabulary mastery and difficulty constructing sentences spontaneously, and intonation and articulation--most students spoke in a monotone, making the conversation less engaging and difficult to understand. Based on these initial conditions, it was decided to implement a language game learning method, which is hypothesized to improve students' motivation, self-confidence, and ultimately their speaking skills.

The Cycle I focused on implementing simple language games to describe pictures (such as picture cards), with the aim of addressing basic confidence and fluency issues. The action planning includes develop a lesson implementation plan (RPP) that integrates the steps of the language game, prepare learning media in the form of picture cards and visual aids, and prepare observation instruments and end-of-cycle tests. In case of implementation the actions were carried out in two meetings. The teacher began with an explanation of the descriptive text material and continued with a game where students had to describe the pictures they found in groups. The teacher provided intensive guidance and encouragement, especially to passive students. observation and evaluation in cycle I the observations showed an increase in active participation, but participation was still dominated by groups of students who already possessed basic confidence. Some passive students tended to remain silent or simply follow their peers' instructions. The average value increased significantly (from 55.00 to 72.50), but the percentage of completion (63.3%) has not reached the target of 80%.

Table 6. Results of learning in cycle 1

Aspects of Speaking Skills Assessment	Average Pre-Action Score	Average Cycle I Score	Increase (%)
Clarity (Articulation)	10	14	40%
Intonation and Expression	11	15	36,4%
Fluency (Organization of Ideas)	12	16	33,3%
Participation and Interaction	12	17	41,7%
Average Total of Students' Score	55,00	72,50	31,8%

Despite improvements, the actions in cycle I are not yet successful. The main weaknesses are game variety--the games used lacked variety, leading to boredom by the end of the session, passive student engagement--the teacher focused insufficiently on strategies to encourage very passive students to speak, and time management--the time allocated to each group for the games is inefficient. Based on this reflection, it is decided to proceed to cycle II with improved actions.

Cycle II focuses on improvements based on the cycle I reflection, namely by increasing the variety of games and implementing strategies to encourage all students' participation (e.g., chain word guessing games or chain picture storytelling). The cycle II action planning are revise the lesson plan, incorporating new types of language games that require greater individual interaction and participation, focus on intonation and expression as areas that still need improvement from cycle I, and tighten classroom and time management so that all students have a turn to speak. In the implementation of cycle II actions the actions were carried out in two meetings. The teacher implemented a more dynamic language game. During the implementation, the teacher implemented a reward system (praise) for every student who dared to speak, especially those who had previously been passive. The classroom atmosphere appeared more lively, enthusiastic, and positively competitive. Observations show active participation almost evenly across all students. Students' shyness had decreased drastically, and they interacted spontaneously in the game. The average class score reached 85.00, and the classical completion percentage reached 90%. This figure exceeds the PTK success criteria (80%).

Table 7. Results of observation and evaluation of cycle II

Aspects of Speaking Skills Assessment	Average Score in Cycle 1	Average Score in Cycle II	Increase (%)
Clarity (Articulation)	14	18	28,6%
Intonation and Expression	15	20	33,3%
Fluency (Organization of Ideas)	16	21	31,3%

Participation and Interaction	17	26	52,9%
Average Total of Students' Score	72,50	85,00	17,2%

The results of Cycle II demonstrate the success of the intervention. The highest improvement is available in the participation and interaction aspects, which directly correlates with decreased shyness and increased student confidence. With the success criteria achieved, the study is terminated.

Discussion

The results of this study empirically demonstrate that the language game learning method is effective in developing the speaking skills of fourth-grade students. The dramatic improvement from pre-action to Cycle II indicates that in overcoming psychological barriers language games create a relaxed, stress-free, and enjoyable learning environment. This effectively breaks down the barriers of shyness and fear of making mistakes, which are major barriers to speaking for elementary school students. In activating participation (communicative) games inherently require positive interaction and competition, thus encouraging students to actively use language as a means of communication, rather than simply as a passive subject. To support for the action hypothesis the increase from 55.00 (Pre-Action) to 85.00 (Cycle II) strengthens the hypothesis that speaking skill development can be enhanced through the application of the language game method. The highest improvement was seen in the participation and expression (self-confidence) aspect. This indicates that the core of the initial problem (psychological/motivational) was successfully addressed by the game method. When students are confident in speaking (increased participation), other technical aspects such as intonation, fluency, and clarity automatically improve with frequent speaking practice in a fun context. Overall, the language game method has proven highly relevant to the characteristics of elementary school students, who tend to learn more effectively through physical and interactive activities.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the results of the classroom action research (CAR) conducted over two cycles, the following conclusions can be drawn in the followings. The language game learning method proves significantly effective in improving the fourth-grade Indonesian language speaking skills. This success is measured through a comparison of evaluation results; in pre-action, the average student speaking skill score was 55.00, with a very low percentage of classical completion (below 50%). In cycle I, after the implementation of the initial action, the average score increases to 72.50, with a percentage of classical completion reaching 65%. Although there is improvement, this result does not reach the established success criteria (80%). In cycle II, after revision and reinforcement of the actions, the average score increases dramatically to 85.00, and the classical completion percentage reached 90%. This figure indicates that the research's success criteria have been exceeded. The application of language game methods, such as picture card games and chain word guessing games, successfully addresses the inhibiting factors in speaking skills that existed initially. All this success is supported by increased self-confidence, increased active participation, and development of oral aspects. This conclusion empirically supports the action hypothesis proposed in the study, namely, the application of the language game learning method can improve the Indonesian language speaking skills of fourth-grade students.

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