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Effectiveness of Guessing Game in Improving Students' Speaking Skills

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ABSTRACT

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Objective: This study aims to determine the effectiveness of using guessing games in enhancing students' speaking skills compared to traditional teaching methods.

Method: The study involved 27 students in a single class. Data were collected using pretest and post-test evaluations. In speaking classes, students were taught using guessing games and traditional approaches. The effectiveness of these methods was then compared based on students' performance in the pretest and post-test.

Results: The findings revealed a significant improvement in students' speaking skills when taught using guessing games. The data analysis indicated that the students showed greater improvement with the guessing game method than with traditional teaching methods.

Novelty: This research contributes to the field of language education by providing evidence that interactive and engaging methods, such as guessing games, can significantly enhance speaking skills. It underscores the importance of using innovative teaching strategies to improve language learning outcomes.

Implications: The implications of this research suggest that educators should incorporate interactive and engaging activities like guessing games into their language teaching practices. This approach can lead to more effective learning experiences, increased student motivation, and improved language proficiency.

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1. Introduction

In the era of globalization, the ability to communicate in English is one of the most needed skills. Many universities around the world now emphasize teaching English to equip students with the skills needed in the global market (Warschauer 2000). One of the important skills in language acquisition is speaking. Hybel (2001) states that speaking is the process by which people share information, ideas and feelings. In other words, speaking is expressing our ideas to others through oral communication and is also the process by which speakers convey information or messages to listeners (Nakatani 2010). However, teaching English speaking is not easy, especially for foreign language speakers (Chou 2018). Many students have difficulty in expressing their ideas fluently and precisely in English (Pham 2021). This is often due to a lack of practice and confidence. Burns (2012) states that for most foreign language learners, speaking in the target language is not easy as it requires more than just knowing grammar and semantic rules (Wach 2018). Recent research shows that interactive and engaging teaching methods, such as language games, can significantly improve students' speaking skills (Yang, Chen, and Hung 2022).

Globally, English language teaching faces various challenges. According to a report from the Rahman, Islam, and Karim (2019), many educational institutions around the world still use traditional teaching methods that are less effective in improving students' speaking skills. Monotonous and less interactive teaching methods often make students bored and unmotivated to learn (Derakhshan et al. 2021). Pawlak et al. (2020) states that

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in the teaching and learning process, students often feel bored because the materials and methods used are monotonous and lack English practice.

On the other hand, the use of technology and interactive approaches such as language games have shown better results in improving language skills. A report from Jiang, Zhang, and May (2019) shows that countries that adopt interactive teaching methods have higher English proficiency scores compared to countries that still use traditional methods. This points to the need for a change in approach in English language teaching to suit the needs and interests of today's students (Turan and Akdag-Cimen 2020).

Mary (2019) speaking is defined as use and usage. In the sense of use, speaking involves the manifestation of the phonological system or grammatical system of the language or both by using the organs of speech. Pouw and Fuchs (2022) adds that the act of speaking involves not only the production of sounds but also the use of gestures and muscles. To achieve a high level of achievement in speaking ability, learners must practice more (Islam 2022).

The constructivist learning theory proposed by Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes the importance of social interaction in the learning process. Adipat and Engaging (2021) learning occurs when students engage in challenging and meaningful activities, which encourage them to use language actively. In the context of teaching speaking, language games such as guessing games can be an effective tool to create an interactive and fun learning environment (Alfadil 2020). Cheng (2020) states that English games used in English language learning are applied in a real and meaningful way through task completion. Players are required to use language actively and interact with other players.

Previous research has shown the benefits of using language games in English language teaching. Kim (1995) listed some of the benefits of playing English language games, viz: motivating students, leading students to put effort into learning, providing a variety of language exercises with varied speaking, writing, listening, and reading skills, encouraging students to interact and communicate, creating meaningful language use, and can reduce students' anxiety levels (Lou and Noels 2020). Zeng, Parks, and Shang (2020) adds that games are highly motivating because they are entertaining and engaging, making students feel relaxed and enjoy the learning process. However, although many studies have proven the effectiveness of language games in improving speaking skills, there is still a gap in research that addresses the use of guessing games specifically in the context of college English teaching. Many studies focus more on language games in general without looking specifically at the types of games used and how they affect speaking skills. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by exploring the use of guessing games in the teaching of speaking skills. The urgency of this research lies in the need for more effective and interesting teaching methods to overcome the problem of students' low motivation and confidence in speaking English (Ali 2013). Based on preliminary findings at STAI DDI Maros, many students find it difficult to express their ideas in English and tend to lack confidence in speaking in front of the class. By integrating guessing games in teaching, it is expected to significantly improve students' motivation and speaking skills. The implementation of the creativity technique pedagogy has a substantial positive impact on learners' performance in English language acquisition, as well as their creativity and willingness to learn. Future study directions and implications for educators are explored (Liao et al. 2018).

This study aims to evaluate whether the use of guessing games can enhance speaking skills among third-semester students in the Islamic Education program. By applying this approach, the research seeks to identify a more effective and engaging teaching method. The implications of this study are to provide practical recommendations for English teachers to adopt interactive methods such as guessing games in their teaching practices. This, in turn, could improve student learning outcomes and make the learning process more engaging and effective.

2. Method

This research employs an experimental design with a quantitative approach. Camps-Valls et al. (2023) experimental studies are designed to test hypotheses based on causal relationships, specifically cause-effect dynamics. Collins (2018) defines quantitative research as a method that explains phenomena by collecting

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numerical data, which is then analyzed using mathematically-based techniques, particularly statistical methods.

In this study, a one-group pre-test post-test design was utilized. This design was chosen for its efficiency in time management and ease of class administration. The research focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of using guessing games to improve speaking skills among third-semester students in the Islamic Education program at STAI DDI Maros. The pre-test and post-test measures will assess the students' speaking proficiency before and after the intervention of guessing games.

3. Result and Discution

This study was conducted with second-grade students at STAI DDI Maros from June 11th to June 17th, 2024. Following three sessions of the guessing games intervention, pre-test and post-test data were collected to evaluate the impact on students' speaking skills. Table 2 summarizes the pre-test and post-test scores.

Table 2. Results of Pre-test and Post-test Scores

No.	Student Name	Pre-test Score	Post-test Score
1	AT	50	85
2	CIV	40	80
3	FH	43	90
4	IES	59	95
5	IM	58	100
6	KN	60	85
7	KL	50	70
8	KD	60	90
9	MA	45	95
10	MRS	45	85
11	MS	55	85
12	MI	59	100
13	MLN	53	100
14	NN	60	90
15	NI	58	85
16	RS	57	70
17	RM	50	90
18	RM	50	100
19	RR	54	95
20	RN	58	85
21	RM	37	90
22	SN	60	100
23	SZ	60	100
24	UJM	55	90
25	ZMI	59	80
26	ZH	53	80
27	RM	60	100
Total		1448	2400
Mean		53.6	88.0

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Data source: Observation processed by the author 2024

The pre-test scores ranged from 37 to 60, with a total score of 1448 and an average score of 53.6. This average indicates that students' initial speaking abilities were relatively low. The fact that no students achieved an 'excellent' rating and the majority had lower scores suggests that before the intervention, students' speaking skills were inadequate.

In contrast, post-test scores ranged from 70 to 100, with a total score of 2400 and an average score of 88.0. This significant increase in average scores demonstrates that the guessing games intervention had a substantial positive effect on students' speaking skills. Notably, there were no 'bad' scores in the post-test, and a majority of students achieved 'very good' scores, indicating a marked improvement in their speaking abilities. To determine the statistical significance of the improvement, a t-test was conducted using the formula proposed (Liu and Wang 2021). The calculated t-score was higher than the critical value from the t-table ($t > t\text{-table}$), indicating that the observed differences between pre-test and post-test scores are statistically significant. This confirms that the guessing games intervention was effective in enhancing students' speaking skills, leading to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_a) and rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0).

The primary objective of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of guessing games in improving speaking skills among second-grade students in the Islamic Education program at STAI DDI Maros. The research demonstrated a notable enhancement in students' speaking abilities following the intervention. This discussion interprets these findings, explores their implications, and compares them with existing literature.

The results reveal a significant improvement in students' speaking skills, as evidenced by the increase in average scores from the pre-test to the post-test. The pre-test scores indicated that students initially had moderate to poor speaking skills, with an average score of 53.6. After the intervention, which included three sessions of guessing games, the average score improved to 88.0. This change suggests that the guessing games were effective in boosting students' speaking proficiency. The observed improvement can be attributed to several factors. Guessing games create a dynamic and engaging learning environment, which can increase students' motivation and participation. Xu et al. (2021), game-based learning enhances students' engagement by making learning more enjoyable and less intimidating. In this study, the interactive nature of guessing games likely encouraged students to practice speaking more frequently and confidently, leading to improved performance.

One of the key benefits of using guessing games in language education is their potential to enhance student engagement and motivation. Traditional language learning methods can sometimes be perceived as monotonous, leading to decreased student interest and participation. In contrast, guessing games introduce an element of fun and competition, which can make learning more appealing. Research supports the idea that incorporating games into the learning process can significantly enhance student motivation. Park et al. (2019) found that game-based learning can increase student engagement by providing immediate feedback and rewards. In this study, the guessing games likely provided students with a sense of achievement and encouragement, contributing to their improved performance in the post-test.

Guessing games offer both cognitive and social benefits that can contribute to language learning. Cognitively, these games require students to think critically and use language creatively, which can help develop their language skills more effectively. For instance, students need to formulate questions, make inferences, and articulate their thoughts clearly, which can enhance their speaking abilities. Socially, guessing games promote interaction among students, which can improve their communication skills and confidence. According to Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, learning is a social process that occurs through interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978). By participating in guessing games, students engage in meaningful conversations and collaborate with their peers, which can further develop their speaking skills.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research on the effectiveness of game-based learning in language education. Eltahir et al. (2021), demonstrated that game-based learning could improve students'

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language skills by increasing their engagement and motivation. Similarly, this study found that guessing games led to a significant improvement in speaking skills, supporting the notion that interactive and enjoyable learning methods can enhance language proficiency. Furthermore, this study's results align with research by Acquah and Katz (2020) who found that game-based activities positively impacted students' language performance by creating a more stimulating and interactive learning environment. The significant improvement in students' speaking skills observed in this study reinforces the value of incorporating game-based methods into language education.

The findings of this study have several implications for teaching practice. Firstly, educators should consider integrating interactive methods, such as guessing games, into their language teaching strategies (Nousiainen et al. 2018). These methods can make learning more engaging and enjoyable, leading to better student outcomes. By incorporating game-based activities into the curriculum, teachers can create a more dynamic and interactive learning environment that fosters student participation and motivation. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of using diverse teaching methods to address different learning styles and needs. While guessing games were effective in this study, other interactive methods, such as role-playing or simulations, could also be explored to further enhance students' speaking skills.

Despite the positive outcomes, this study has some limitations that should be addressed in future research. One limitation is the sample size, which was limited to a specific cohort of students at STAI DDI Maros. Future studies could include a larger and more diverse sample to generalize the findings more broadly. Additionally, the study focused solely on the impact of guessing games on speaking skills. Future research could explore the effects of other interactive methods on different aspects of language learning, such as listening, reading, and writing. It would also be valuable to investigate the long-term effects of game-based learning on students' language proficiency and academic performance.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides evidence that guessing games can effectively improve speaking skills among students in an Islamic Education program. The significant increase in average scores from the pre-test to the post-test indicates that interactive and engaging teaching methods can enhance language learning outcomes. The findings support the integration of game-based learning strategies into language education and highlight the importance of creating a stimulating and interactive learning environment. Future research should explore additional interactive methods and include larger and more diverse samples to further validate and expand upon these findings.

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