

Exploring the Use of Various Board Games to Enhance Speaking Skills Viewed from Students' Phonology Awareness

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Abstract

Speaking skill is classified as a productive skill after writing skills. It is related to communicative performance dealing with phonetic, fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, grammatical competence, intonation, and vocabulary mastery. Besides, students' phonology knowledge is crucial in understanding speakers' utterances in speaking activities. Therefore, students' phonology awareness in speaking classes determine the students are success or not in having speaking skills. This study aims to elaborate the use of speaking board games to improve students' speaking skills viewed from phonology awareness. To attain the research aims, this study employed classroom action research. The problems are focused on students' speaking skills in relation to phonology awareness. The research data are classified into qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data were gained using interview and observation sheets, while the quantitative data were collected using speaking tests. Based on the research findings, this study can be concluded that the use of speaking board games in teaching speaking classes which was combined with other various materials was able to improve students' confidence and critical thinking skills to speak. It helped students practice their fluency, practice their accuracy, and gave smooth correction to the grammatical errors being made. Providing students with various speaking practices, the use of board games also facilitated students to improve their pronunciation inside and outside classes, vocabulary, and engage them to learn the English daily expressions in various topics.

Keywords: Speaking Board Games; Speaking Skills; Phonology Awareness

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INTRODUCTION

In institutional education of senior high schools, listening and speaking skills are assumed as partial language skills because both are not easy to learn in formal education. Therefore, both have lack of attention and proportion in English teaching and learning compared to reading and writing skills (Wang, 2016; Makiabadi & Square, 2019). Some English teachers assume that writing and reading tasks makes them participatory attitudes and more effective instructional processes rather than providing them speaking and listening assignments or tasks (Tragant & Vallbona, 2018). In addition, the English examination in national education provides much proportion in reading-writing test and small proportion provides a speaking test or oral production test in the same aims in

national examination (Widodo, 2016; Haerazi et al. 2020). Consequently, students thought that listening and speaking skills are not really serious to learn in formal classes.

Speaking includes a productive skill after writing skills. It is related to communicative performance dealing with phonetic, fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, grammatical competence, intonation, and vocabulary mastery (Nasution & Sukmawati, 2019). They must be treated in language teaching-learning processes to help learners capable to practice English as a means of communication. In this study, speaking refers to an ability of learners to communicate using English in real-life situation. Speaking ability is an important part of interaction for international interaction and relation. Besides, learners in the 21st century skills are demanded to speak English fluently and comprehensibly (Sumarsono et al., 2020). Therefore, English teachers have an important role to prepare their students to speak the target language in the real context (Anugerah et al., 2019).

Conducting preliminary study through classroom observation and interview with English teachers and students in senior high schools, researchers identified learning problems in the speaking teaching-learning process. Teachers hardly provided learners with interesting activities. It caused because teaching materials in speaking classes are less designed to facilitate students to learn and utilize their higher order thinking skills (Rachmawati, 2020; Aprianoto & Haerazi, 2019; Haerazi et al., 2019; Suparlan, 2021). The speaking activities are focused on reading texts taken from a worksheet and then they are asked to answer questions related to reading texts. It is in line with Uztosun (2020) who measure learners' speaking skills that speaking learning should involve learners' motivation and self-improvement without pressing them with reading tasks. In speaking classes, teachers tend often to select materials in the worksheet. The students were also asked to replicate or to take notes of the teaching materials distributed by teachers (Khodabandeh, 2018). Very often, teachers also practice their students to imitate and repeat some English expressions on how these are expressed in the real context.

Dealing with speaking materials provided by teachers, students felt lack of abilities to explore speaking materials and tasks because they relied on the speaking tasks from the textbooks. Therefore, students did not have initiative and strong intention to explore speaking teaching materials to fit in with their learning needs. Other problem faced by students, according to Sumarsono et al. (2020), teachers did not have initiative to encourage their students to compare to other speaking tasks from other sources. Besides, teachers felt uneasy to teach speaking because they did not have skills to speak full English in the class. Teachers just have a duty to bring their learners just get good result of the National English subject examination in the last stage of semesters. Consequently, the teacher provided students with speaking materials for national examination.

Based on the things mentioned above, the researcher tried to make speaking activities more effective for students in learning English by determining the appropriate and effective techniques to teach speaking. This research intended to employ various board games as a teaching-learning technique in speaking classes. Therefore, researchers apply various board games to facilitate students to enhance their speaking skills. it is as a good effort to provide learners with phonology awareness in order to speak English, linguistically accurate.

METHOD

Research Design

Classroom Action Research (CAR) was applied to find out the efficacy of speaking board games in improving speaking skills. The use of CAR in this study is to identify problematic issues in order to provide critical solutions and informed changes in practices

(Burns, 2010:2). The speaking problems are found in the senior high schools in Bima district. Students are, in terms of economy level, in medium economy level. They have eastern cultures in which they feel shy to speak and reluctant to answer teachers' questions. The current study is focused on how speaking board games are applied in the speaking class to help students to communicate. The data are categorized into two types; qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data are related to the implementation of action processes and specific changes seen during the actions in speaking classes. These data are gained using interview and class observation. Researchers assisted by research assistance make notes during the action taking places. Meanwhile, the quantitative data are related to students' speaking score before and after the implementation of speaking board games in the class. The data are collected using speaking tests. 34 students are involved in this study.

The aim of observation actions is to monitor learning processes before, during, and after the actions carried out (Cohen, Lawrence, & Keith, 2005). Researchers and research assistances explored and observed learning processes directly. Researchers and research assistance are completed with observation checklists. The observation results are presented in a brief evocative description (vignette). Using this vignette, researchers invite students in activities of the in-dept interview. It is aimed to find out information or issues that cannot be attained by the observation activities before, during, and after the implementation. The interview activities are carried out in guided interview. In this case, researchers are allowed to provide further questions to gain more information from the responses. In doing this, researchers are completed with interview guidelines. The interview data are in the form of transcripts.

Dealing with the quantitative data, researchers gain the data using speaking tests; pre-test and post-test forms. The speaking pre-test is given before action and the post-test is distributed after the implementation of actions. The pre-test and the post-test are in the form of performance tests. Both are employed to assess students' speaking skills on some themes or topics provided. In doing assessment, researcher and raters evaluate students' speaking performances in line with a speaking rubric. The pre-test and the post-test data are in the form of speaking scores. The scores of the post-test are computed and compared with the pre-test scores.

Data Analysis Technique

The technique of data analysis in the present study applied Burns' theory which has some stages; namely assembling stages, coding stage, comparing stage, and reporting stage (Burns, 2010: 104-105). In assembling stages, researchers get the data related to ongoing reflections in which researcher can review the initial and revised questions. Researchers go through the data and look for clear patterns, trends and ideas enabling to answer the research questions. Afterwards, researchers started coding the data into categories and patterns. Then, the data are coded qualitatively and quantitatively. In the next stage, researchers compare the data. Researchers compare the categorized data to see whether they show the same issues or whether there are contradictions. The last stage is making report. It aims to build meanings and interpretations. Researchers pay a deep intention about the data by scrutinizing the immediate surface details. Then, researchers start proposing questions, connections, and explanations about the collected data in the broadest level. In doing reporting stage, researchers consider how the data are organized from beginning to end, and not just exhibiting the analysis and findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

This study aims to investigate the use of speaking board games to improve speaking skills viewed from students' phonology awareness. Phonology awareness is control variable that has crucial role in helping students to be fluent and accurate to communicate in speaking classes. In this study, the actions are conducted in classroom actions that are focused on speaking problems. After discussing the observation results, researchers find some field problems in the teaching-learning process. Those can be presented in Table 1 as follows.

Table 1. Students' speaking problems

No	Speaking Problems	Codes
1	Not confident to speak English	S
2	Feel shy and reluctant to speak in front of classes	S
3	Not speak accurately	S
4	Difficulties in applying grammatical knowledge	S
5	Uneasy to pronoun English words	S
6	Insufficient vocabulary mastery	S
7	Feel afraid of making mistakes while speaking	S
8	Uneasy to apply English expressions in a real context	S
9	Not actively participate in speaking activities	S
10	Have fewer speaking practices	S

English teachers told their problems dealing with speaking learning processes that students feel uneasy to go through. In speaking classes, learners face low ability in using grammar, pronouncing English words, vocabulary mastery, pronunciation knowledge, and fluency. Students are still passive and shy to speak in front of their classmates. In speaking classroom activities, students are asked more often to practice a simple conversation and deep discussion.

As declared in the beginning of this part, this current study is only targeted in improving the students' speaking skills viewed from phonology awareness. Therefore, after scrutinizing the speaking problems, researchers decide to overcome the field problems based on the urgent level. Researchers look for solutions for the identified learning difficulties by doing a focus-group discussion. The real problems are shown in Table 2 as follows.

Table 2. The Most Urgent Problems

No	Field Problems	Code
1	Learners have low self-confident to speak English	S
2	Learners feel shy and reluctant to speak in front of classes	S
3	Learners do not speak fluently in English	S
4	Learners have difficulties in applying grammars in use	S
5	Learners feel uneasy to pronoun English words	S
6	Learners have insufficient vocabulary mastery	S
7	Learners feel afraid of making mistakes while speaking	S
8	Learners feel uneasy to use English expressions in real context	S
9	Learners do not actively participate in speaking activities	S
10	Learners have fewer speaking practices inside and outside the class	S

S→Students

After weighing the students' speaking problems with the urgency level, researchers and team selected the most feasible issues to solve. In this research, researchers formulate

the indicators of success that relates to the most feasible problems to find solutions. These indicators guide the research team to determine the actions.

Table 3. Indicators of Success Formulations

No	Indicators of Success
1	Learners become more self-confident and not passive to follow speaking activities.
2	Learners speak more accurately.
3	Learners are able to use grammar correctly and accurately
4	Learners are able to pronounce English words correctly.
5	Learners have varied English words.
6	Learners are able to use expressions accurately.
7	Learners participate in full speaking activities and have more chance to speak.

After finding the solution, researchers come to the quantitative data based on students speaking tests (pre-test and post-test). These data are to support the qualitative data that state the implementation of speaking various games are able to improve students' speaking skills with good phonology awareness. Two raters are involved in assessing speaking skills. each rater conduct assessment of pre-test and post-test. In the pre-test, the mean score of speaking skills is 68 from the two raters. After researchers implement the actions, the post-test is carried out. The mean score of the post-test is 75 from rater 1 and 76 from rater 2. The difference is not significant. The improvement of speaking skills is seen in the post-test scores. The scores of the speaking improvement can be seen Figure 1 as follows.

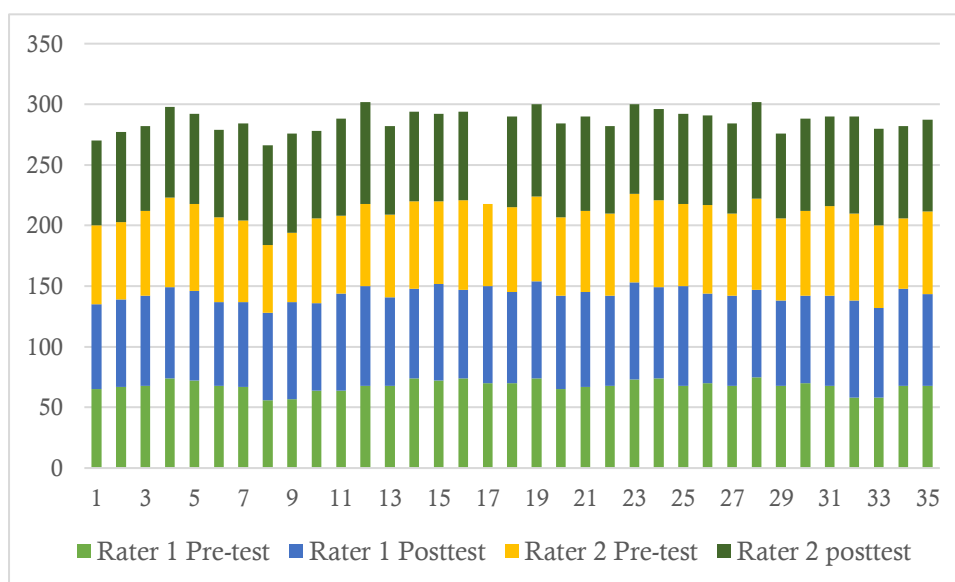


Figure 1. Speaking Achievement of Pre-test and Post-test

Discussion

This study aims to investigate the use of speaking board games integrating with phonology awareness to improve students' speaking skills. The problems have been identified to find out solutions. The problem relating to which learners still have low confident and less active to speak in any speaking activities is overcome by utilizing various interesting board games. In the speaking games, individual student gives more chance to speak as much as possible in English. Giving big chances to speak can encourage

students to think and communicate in the target language spontaneously. It is in line with Fitri et al. (2021), Hanan & Budiarti (2019), and Rusmawan et al. (2021) who state in speaking classes students should be given opportunities to explore their selves using the target language being learnt so that they can realize what linguistic aspects they have low level. Besides, the English teacher reduce the use of Indonesian language in speaking classes.

The use of full English in the speaking class using board games gives strong effect for students to imitate how the target language is expressed in use. Students also try imitating and practicing English each other. The more students have chances to speak, the more they can speak more fluently. It is in accordance with Afifah and Devana (2020) who inform that giving students with various tasks and big chance to speak is able to help them to improve their fluency to use the target language. It is also supported by Ayu et al. (2020) who found that giving various games and big opportunities in speaking practices is able to facilitate students to increase their fluency. In this study, teachers asked students to imitate how English expressions are expressed in real life communication. In doing so, students are divided in pairs and they communicate each other dealing with topics discussed. In the first cycle, students are still slow to communicate but in second cycle students perform good fluency in speaking performance.

The use of board games in this study seem that students have motivation and interest to practice much more to speak. In a group discussion, for example, students have good participatory attitudes because students are given large time to discuss. Group discussion integrated in the form of various games facilitate them to control their grammar use. This finding is the same case with what Hayati (2020) and Hadiyansah (2020) informed that games and specific media integrated in certain designed game can help students to control their grammatical competence in practicing speaking skills. Moreover, students try practicing to apply English grammar correctly and accurately. In the discussion class, students feel they don't have hesitation to be afraid of making mistake and errors. Students in the first cycle still have fear to make grammatical errors, but in the second cycle, they are able to produce sentences and utterances with correct and accurate grammar. Giving various games is very helpful for students to rethink and repeat English sentences in correct grammar. It is in line with Rahman & Isroyana (2021) and Wahyuningsih & Putra (2020) who state communication strategies can be done using different media including speaking games which are designed to practice speaking to improve students' grammatical competences.

In the present study, the use of board games in speaking class encourages students to construct a cooperative learning environment. That students are divided into small groups and in pairs aims to construct a learning environment amongst students in practicing speaking skills (Sudarmaji et al., 2021; Muliani & Sumarsono, 2019). This learning design helps students to practice to pronounce English words correctly. Sometimes, they correct their pronunciation each other while speaking practices (Nurman, 2021). For instance, students in pairs are asked to play a role as a TV reporter and the one plays as a speaker. Students practice to imitates how native speaker pronoun words of news on television. It is effective to control their pronunciation improvement. The success of the pronunciation improvement is affected by students' phonology awareness (Muter & Sonwling, 1997; McCutchen et al., 2002; Del Campo et al., 2015). The students' phonology awareness seems low level in the first cycle and seem improved in the second cycle. In this study, the issue of students' phonology awareness was improved in the second cycle. The improvement of phonology awareness emerged because students are asked to participate in full speaking activities and they have more big chance to practice speaking in the classes (Nurman, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The use of full English in the speaking class using board games gives strong effect for students to imitate how the target language is expressed in use. Students imitate and practice their speaking skills each other in the form of pairs and discussions. The use of board games in this study seem that students have motivation and interest to practice much more to speak. In a group discussion, for example, students have good participatory attitudes because students are given large time to discuss. Group discussion integrated in the form of various games facilitate them to control their grammar use. Giving various games is very helpful for students to rethink and repeat English sentences in correct grammar.

In this study, teachers are seen to apply some communication strategies using different media including speaking games which are designed to practice speaking to improve students' grammatical competences. therefore, the use of board games in speaking class encourages students to construct a cooperative learning environment. That students are divided into small groups and in pairs aims to construct a learning environment amongst students in practicing speaking skills. dealing with phonology awareness, students' phonology awareness seems low level in the first cycle and seem improved in the second cycle. In this study, the issue of students' phonology awareness was improved in the second cycle. The improvement of phonology awareness emerged because students are asked to participate in full speaking activities and they have more big chance to practice speaking in the classes. Therefore, this study can be concluded that the use of speaking board games is able to improve students' speaking skills in relation to students' phonology awareness. For further studies, researchers need to see the level of morphological awareness and linguistic awareness.

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