

Young Learners' Engagement in Speaking Activity Taught by Using Game

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Abstract: The researchers found problems with the focus of the seventh-grade students at one of the Islamic Boarding School in Kudus, they often did not listen to lessons which made them lack vocabulary and have difficulty speaking English. The purpose of this research was to To explore the seventh-grade students' engagement in speaking activity taught by using game. The design of the research was qualitative research with the seventh-grade students of the Islamic Boarding School in Kudus as the participants. The instrument of this research was an observation checklist which was adapted from the International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE) with consists of five aspects that are related to learner engagement, each aspect consists of several Likert-type format statements which required a numerical scale varying from 1 through 4, namely (1) is a rating of low, (2) medium, (3) good, and (4) very good.. The result of the research presents that students' engagement in speaking activity taught by using game shows a high criteria.

Keywords: Young Learners' Engagement in Speaking Activity

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a productive language skill to express meaning (Garton et al., 2019). It involves expressing ideas, opinions or a need to do something and establishing and maintaining social relationships and friendship. Speaking will often quickly follow and provide evidence to the teacher of learning. Speaking is important because it is the most prominent skill in language learning where learners can showcase their ability to produce the language meaningfully (Pakula, 2019). As an informative and interactive means of communication, speaking calls for the integration of cognitive and affective abilities of the speakers, which may be hampered by many factors. It has been documented that student hardly utter the second language because the teachers are 'doing Speaking' rather than 'teaching Speaking' where skilled learners are active and the unskilled speakers are left behind (Burns, 2019). There is a need to apply the cycle of teaching Speaking where learners are scaffolded through several steps, including guide planning, speaking tasks, reflection, and feedback in learning (Burns, 2019).

The students involved in this research are the seventh-grade students of Islamic Boarding School in Kudus. They are in the age of 12-13 and categorized into young learners. The problem found in the classroom was the students were not focus in the learning process and not have willingness to speak English. Garton et al (2019) stated that young learners have short attention spans. They need variety in listening and speaking task that is short, varied, motivating, and interesting. And game is one of the activities that the teacher can use to have an interesting speaking activity in the classroom. Hadfield (1990) says a game is an activity with rules, a goal and element of fun. Furthermore, Martin (1995) in Brewster and Ellis (2002: 172) explains a game in language teaching is any fun activity which gives young learners the opportunity to practice the foreign language in a relaxed and enjoyable way.

Language games has advantages in their usage in teaching foreign language (Klimova, 2015). First, games encourage students to involve actively in the learning process. Then, games can initiate learners to be creative and spontaneous in using the language learnt. In addition, games can provide a relaxing atmosphere in a language class. The most important benefit of language games is they can minimize students' anxiety to speak and use the language learnt in front of teacher and other students. Sukmawati and Pujiani (2023) conducted a research to find the correlation between the use of online games and classroom engagement. They found there was a positive correlation between the use of online games and classroom engagement.

The difference between this study and previous research is the kind of the game used in the classroom. The researcher used a guessing game that was played directly in the classroom to make the classroom activity more fun.

RESEARCH METHOD

How is the seventh-grade students' engagement in speaking activity taught by using game?
To explore the seventh-grade students' engagement in speaking activity taught by using game.

Design of the research : qualitative research design

Participants : the seventh-grade students of Islamic Boarding School in Kudus

The instrument of the research is an observation checklist which is adapted from the International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE)'s Student Engagement Walkthrough Checklist by Jones (2009). It consists of five aspects that are related to learner engagement. They are:

1. Positive Body Language (PBL): students exhibited body postures that indicate they pay attention to the teacher and/or other students.
2. Consistent Focus (CF): students focused on the learning activity with minimum disruptions.
3. Verbal Participation (VP): students expressed thoughtful ideas, reflective answers, and questions relevant or appropriate to learning.

4. Students’ Confidence (SC); students exhibited confidence and initiative, completed a task with limited coaching, and could work in groups.
5. Fun and Excitement (F&E); students exhibited interest and enthusiasm and used positive humor.
- Each aspect consists of several Likert-type format statements which required a numerical scale varying from 1 through 4, namely (1) is a rating of low, (2) medium, (3) good, and (4) very good.

Table 1. Checklist of Engagement

No	Aspects	Indicators	Result			
			4	3	2	1
1	Positive Body Language (PBL);	Students exhibited body postures that indicate they were paying attention to the teacher and/or other students				
2	Consistent Focus (CF)	The students focused on the learning activity with minimum disruptions				
3	Verbal Participation (VP)	Students expressed thoughtful ideas, reflective answers, and questions relevant or appropriate to learning				
4	Students Confidence (SC)	Students exhibited confidence and initiative, and completed a task with limited coaching, and could work in groups				
5	Fun and Excitement (F&E)	students exhibited interest and enthusiasm and used positive humor				

The result of the observation of students’ engagement in speaking activity taught by using game is classified based on the mean score using the following criteria:

Table.2 Criteria for Students’ Engagement

Score	Criteria
36% - 51.99%	Low
52% - 67.99%	Medium
68% - 83,99%	High
84% - 100%	Very High

Those indicators will be examined to define the engagement level of the students in the speaking activity.

Procedures for analyzing data

1. Identifying each student’s behavior during the implementation of game in speaking activity.
2. Calculating the number of behavior occurs during the observation

$$P = \frac{f_o}{n} \times 100\%$$

P : Percentage
fo : frequency observed
n : Total Score

3. Determining the percentage of the number of each behavior.
4. Interpreting the percentage score with the criteria of students’ engagement
5. Making the conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the meeting process, the researcher used guessing game to be implemented in the lesson. In the beginning of the classroom activity, the researcher introduced the vocabulary about profession that had to be memorized by the students. After having introduction to the topic, the game was begun. The class was divided into two groups and they should guess the name of profession by using the clue of the work’s place. During the guessing game session, the students looked very happy and excited, the use of guessing game made them speak spontaneously.

After conducting the meeting and analyzed the situation in the classroom through the recorded video, the researcher presented the seventh-grade students’ engagement in speaking activity taught by using game in the following table.

Table 3.
The Students’ Engagement in Speaking Activity Taught by Using Game

Participants	Students’ Engagement					
	Positive Body Language (PBL);	Consistent Focus (CF)	Verbal Participation (VP)	Students Confidence (SC);	Fun and Excitement (F&E);	Total
Student 1	3	3	3	3	4	16
Student 2	3	4	3	3	3	16

Student 3	4	3	3	4	4	18
Student 4	3	4	3	3	3	16
Student 5	3	4	3	3	3	16
Student 6	4	4	3	4	4	19
Student 7	3	4	3	2	4	16
Student 8	3	3	3	3	4	16
Student 9	4	3	3	4	3	17
Student 10	3	3	3	3	3	15
Total	33	35	30	32	35	165
Percentage	83%	88%	75%	80%	88%	83%
Criteria	High	Very	High	High	Very High	High

From the table presented above, the researcher finds that the positive body language's percentage is 83%, it shows a high criteria. While the consistent focus is 88% which means the students had a very high focus on the learning activity with minimum disruptions. The verbal participation is high in 75% and also high students' confidence in 80%. And the last criteria is fun and excitement that shows very high in 88%. The students exhibited interest and enthusiasm and used positive humor. To sum up, the students' engagement in speaking activity taught by using game shows a high criteria in 83%. It can be concluded that students' engagement when taught to speak using guessing game has a good effect, they show happy gestures during class, answer the teacher's questions enthusiastically and increase their confidence in speaking English.

This research aimed to explore the seventh-grade students' engagement in speaking activity taught by using game. Therefore, the researcher identified each student's behavior during the implementation of game in speaking activity. The theoretical approach was applied by reviewing articles related to the use of game in the speaking learning process. Besides, to support the data, the researcher collected empirical evidence using observation checklist which is adapted from the International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE)'s Student Engagement Walkthrough Checklist by Jones (2009). From the data, it can be shown that there are five aspects that were used as a reference to measure students' engagement. They are Positive Body Language, Consistent Focus, Verbal Participation, Students' Confidence, and Fun and Excitement.

From the table, the criteria of Positive Body Language shows a high criteria. It can be interpreted that students exhibited body postures that indicate they pay attention to the teacher and the other students while having game. The criteria of Consistent Focus also shows the students had a very high focus on the learning activity with minimum disruptions. The students focused on the game activity to support their team winning the game. The verbal participation is high by showing a reflective answer when the other students gave a question. This shows a pleasant classroom atmosphere compared to the situation in which the students were shy when they had to guess questions from the teacher. It also shows a good students' confidence to be involved in the classroom activity. And the last criteria is fun and excitement that shows the students exhibited interest and enthusiasm and used positive humor. They clapped when a friend guessed correctly and supported when a friend guessed wrong. This condition made the classroom situation more fun.

The students' engagement in speaking activity taught by using game shows a high criteria. The result of this research confirmed that the use of game in the speaking class can improve the students' engagement positively. This result also supported the research of Sukmawati and Pujiani (2023) that found there was a positive correlation between the use of online games and classroom engagement.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion obtained, it can be concluded that game can be used properly in speaking activity for secondary school students who use English as their foreign language. This method has proven to be very suitable for speaking activity because it can make the classroom environment become more fun. Game also helps students to be brave to speak in the classroom. This is evidenced by their enthusiasm when learning activities

Hopefully, the results of this research contributes to the innovation in teaching and learning speaking skill, especially for young learners. Future research may be carried out in the area by applying game to other English skills, such as reading, listening, or writing.

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