

The use of digital *pictoword* game to improve students' speaking skill at the eleventh grade of senior high school

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ABSTRACT

The Digital Picture-to-Word Game is an innovative instructional approach designed to infuse excitement into classroom learning, thereby fostering heightened interest in language acquisition among students. While leveraging games for learning can potentially lead to diminished discipline due to extended time consumption, this research sought to explore the impact of the digital picture-to-word game method on enhancing the speaking skills of high school students. Conducted as a classroom action research project at MA Darus Solah Jember, the study involved 19 participants. The primary focus was on assessing various aspects of speaking skills, including fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. Data analysis employed the Wilcoxon test. The findings revealed a positive correlation between the utilization of the digital picture-to-word game and improved speaking skills among students. Noteworthy enhancements were observed in pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. In conclusion, while the digital picture-to-word game method exhibited effectiveness in elevating students' speaking skills, it's acknowledged that certain aspects may not have been comprehensively addressed.

Keywords: *Digital picture, Game, Speaking skill*

I. INTRODUCTION

The English language serves as a prominent international medium of communication among the diverse linguistic tapestry of our world. Acknowledging the pervasive use of English globally, (Sharifian, 2013) emphasizes its ubiquity as a language adopted by people across the globe. Indeed, English has become an indispensable tool not only in interpersonal communication but also in the professional realm, where proficiency in English is often a prerequisite for securing well-paid employment opportunities (Linse, 2006). Beyond the scope of employment, the significance of English extends to the realm of education, as asserted by Hakim (2016). Students navigating the educational landscape recognize English as a crucial asset, a conduit that supports the realization of their aspirations for a brighter future. The mastery of English is deemed essential for effective social interaction, given our inherent sociability as human beings. This proficiency fosters the establishment of meaningful connections and relationships with others. Moreover, for students, the acquisition of English is pivotal, as emphasized by Genesee *et al.*, (2005), serving as a foundational preparation for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

In essence, the multifaceted importance of the English language is underscored not only by its role as a global means of communication but also by its instrumental value in shaping

professional trajectories, supporting educational pursuits, and facilitating meaningful social interactions. As such, the mastery of English emerges as a crucial investment in one's personal and professional development.

Learning English in Indonesia poses a significant challenge due to it being a foreign language for Indonesians (Kahrs, 1967). Since English is not the native language, students, who are not native English speakers, often struggle with its acquisition (Chairina, 2019). This challenge is particularly pronounced in the classroom setting, presenting a formidable task for both educators and students (Riasati and Rahimi, 2018). The difficulty in mastering English is evident across all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Khunaifi, 2013). Among these skills, speaking emerges as a particularly challenging aspect for both students and teachers (Jufri, 2008). Overcoming this difficulty becomes a primary focus for educators, recognizing the inherent complexity associated with teaching and learning spoken English.

Effective speaking skills are crucial for instilling self-confidence in daily life, occupying a pivotal role in the realm of teaching and learning (Anjaniputra, 2013). The advantages of proficient speaking are manifold, encompassing enhanced self-assurance, vocabulary enrichment, effective communication, and fluency in conversation (Pakula, 2019). Speaking serves as a gateway to acquiring knowledge, insights, and information, with students benefitting significantly from verbal expression (Rusdi, 2019). Consequently, speaking becomes a foundational skill for expanding one's knowledge base. Engaging in speaking not only imparts the ability to articulate thoughts but also facilitates various cognitive processes such as evaluation, recreation, analysis, and comprehension of meaning (Wahyuni and Utami, 2021). Developing an interest in speaking and cultivating it as a habit not only refines oral communication skills but also contributes to overall proficiency (Marriam Bashir; Muhammad Azeem; Ashiq Hussain Dogar, 2016). Despite the importance of speaking skills, students often exhibit limited proficiency in this area (Samiullah, 2018). This deficiency can be attributed to various factors, and initial investigations suggest that the underutilization of media in the teaching and learning process is one such factor (Rhonda Oliver, Samantha Vanderford, 2020). Media, particularly visual elements like images, play a crucial role in education, offering a dynamic and widely utilized medium (Rosenfeld and Pfaltz, 1966).

A picture, as per Merriam-Webster, is a visual representation crafted to convey diverse sensory information. Within the realm of education, pictures are recognized as a form of visual learning material (Klette and Rosenfeld, 2004). These visual aids encompass a wide range, from images featuring single objects, individuals, and popular figures to group activities, locations, original sources, information-rich scenes, news images, fictional scenes, maps, symbols, and various collections of images. The significance of images extends beyond mere representation; they play a crucial role in stimulating interest and motivation among students, providing a novel and effective medium for learning (Rosenfeld, 1969). In the educational context, pictures serve as dynamic tools that engage students and enhance the learning experience.

Games also have great potential to be applied in the process of teaching speaking. Using games in the classroom can be one of the effective approaches, as suggested by Harmer (2001), who states that games can increase students' interest in learning English. In the context of teaching speaking, games have the capacity to motivate students to be more enthusiastic in learning speaking (Harmer, 1991). The use of a variety of learning strategies in the teaching-learning process will help students create a more conducive learning situation (Nurdini, 2018). Although creating a conducive learning situation is not an easy task, an example occurred in one

of Darus Sholah Jember high schools. In that school, some problems were identified in the teaching-learning process, especially in class B in eleventh grade, where students' English speaking ability still needs to be improved. They had difficulty in pronouncing English words and expressing their confusion. Taking these problems into consideration, the researcher intended to carry out an action research by combining two strategies, namely using pictures and word games, to overcome the problems that arose in the classroom, which is often referred to as the 'Pict to word' game." The game gives students the opportunity to use English orally (Dr. Am Mang Latifa, Dr. Rafi'ah Nur, 2019). This means that students can practice and develop their ability to speak English. Some previous research have provided support for the utilization of games as an effective educational tool. These games have been shown to enhance grammar skills (Haryanto, 2015), boost motivation for learning and speaking skills (Ho et al., 2019), improve listening abilities, and encourage active language practice among students.

The Pict to Word (*pictoword*) game, also known as a guessing game, stands out as an effective strategy for English language instruction. This engaging activity involves participants guessing various pieces of information, such as titles, phrases, locations, or object names. The author employs *Pictoword* to gauge student responses, recognizing that integrating educational content with enjoyable games can significantly enhance students' comprehension and retention. Importantly, this game provides students with a platform to express themselves orally in English, making the language learning experience both enjoyable and interactive.

Games offer a powerful avenue for improving speaking skills in the language learning process. Harmer (2001) suggests that incorporating games into the classroom can heighten students' interest in learning English. Specifically focusing on speaking, games possess the unique ability to inspire enthusiasm among students (Harmer, 1991). The integration of diverse learning strategies, as proposed by Nurdini (2018), contributes to creating a more favorable learning environment. Recognizing challenges in English speaking proficiency among eleventh-grade students in a Darus Sholah Jember high school, the researcher embarked on an action research initiative. This involved combining two strategies—utilizing pictures and engaging in word games, commonly referred to as the 'Pict to Word' game. This innovative approach aims to address challenges identified in the classroom, offering students a dynamic opportunity to express themselves orally in English (Dr. Am Mang Latifa, Dr. Rafi'ah Nur, 2019). Through this game, students can actively practice and enhance their English speaking abilities. Past research reinforces the efficacy of games as educational tools, demonstrating their positive impact on grammar skills (Haryanto, 2015), motivation for learning and speaking (Ho et al., 2019), listening abilities, and overall language proficiency. These findings underscore the potential of games in fostering a comprehensive and engaging language learning experience.

Numerous researchers have underscored the benefits of incorporating guessing games to enhance spoken communication skills. A study conducted by Maqfirah et al. (2018) with junior high school students in Banda Aceh demonstrated a significant improvement in speaking fluency through the use of such games. Dewi et al. (2016) examined students in Kuta Utara and found that 60.68% of participants strongly endorsed the effectiveness of guessing games in enhancing their speaking abilities. Similarly, Nirwaty (2020) conducted research in class VIII A of SMPN 1 Tanjungpinang, concluding that guessing games were more effective in improving students' speaking achievements, evident in both test results and the students' engagement, interest, confidence, and seriousness during the teaching and learning process.

In this study, a specific senior high school was selected as the research setting, distinguishing it from prior studies. Focusing on the impact of using the Pictoword game in the

speaking learning process, the research aims to uncover two potential outcomes. The first possibility is the effective utilization of the strategy in the learning process, while the second involves the strategy proving ineffective for application in the learning process.

II. METHODS

This classroom action research took place at MA Darus Solah in Jember, focusing on a group of 11th-grade students, comprising a sample of 19 students from the 2023 cohort. The study primarily targeted the 11th-grade senior high school student population.

Methodology:

To evaluate speaking skills, a digital picture-to-word game was employed. In this activity, students randomly selected a picture and its corresponding word, presenting their description verbally to the class. The teacher's assessment covered five essential aspects: grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension in English speaking. An assessment form was crafted, using a 1-5 scoring system to categorize speaking ability across these aspects, ranging from poor to excellent.

Implementation and Observation:

Activities were collaboratively observed by the teacher and researchers, with the teacher overseeing learning processes during both teacher-led activities and student participation. Various research instruments, including observation sheets, field notes, and tests, were utilized for comprehensive data collection.

Data Analysis:

Speaking skill assessments were conducted before and after the intervention. The data from pre-test and post-test were subjected to statistical analysis using the Wilcoxon test, aiming to discern the average speaking skills between the two assessments. This comprehensive approach allowed for a nuanced understanding of the impact of the intervention on students' English-speaking proficiency.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

RESULTS

Cycle I

In the initial phase, the instructor commenced by delivering comprehensive explanations and providing illustrative examples of the Pictoword game across three sessions. The culmination of this cycle involved the administration of a speaking test to gauge the students' progress. The researcher initiated the class with greetings and attendance, followed by a clear articulation of the learning objectives and their practical applications in real-world contexts. Prior to introducing and explaining the Pictoword game, the researcher facilitated introductions between themselves and the students to cultivate a harmonious and positive classroom environment. With the subject matter thoroughly delivered, the researcher employed media tools, including a laptop and sound, to guide students through the topic effectively. Following this, the students were organized into three groups, fostering a collaborative and interactive learning environment.

Table 1 The result of pre-test and post-test in cycle 1

No	Name of Students'	Pre-test	Post-test 1
1.	C F S	50	75
2.	D H H	50	80
3.	D S	45	70
4.	F I	60	70
5.	F M M	45	80
6.	G R O	50	70
7.	I M R	55	75
8.	K S	40	45
9.	L A F	50	50
10.	L A	65	70
11.	M Z R	75	70
12.	M A S W	80	45
13.	R A	45	80
14.	R R N	50	75
15.	S N	85	90
16.	G A F	60	70
17.	K P S	60	45
18.	M R A S	75	75
19.	A S	50	50
	Total	1090	1285
	Mean	57,36	67,63

The data from Table 1 reveals insights into students' performance in the initial cycle. In the pre-test, the average score stood at 57.36, with 57.9% of students scoring below 60, and 42.1% scoring 60 and above. This suggests that, initially, students' speaking proficiency fell below the assessment criteria. Following the intervention, the average score in the post-test rose to 67.63, with 42.1% scoring below 60 and 57.9% scoring above 60.

The tabulated information indicates a noticeable improvement in students' speaking proficiency after incorporating the Pictoword game as a teaching tool. While enhancements were observed in various aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension, the overall average score for speaking mastery reached 67.63. However, despite the progress, the students' scores in the initial cycle did not meet the minimum passing grade (KKM) of 70 for speaking mastery.

This situation arose due to a higher number of passive students compared to active participants. Moreover, some students exhibited reduced interest in the teaching strategy, primarily due to lingering confusion about the application of the Pictoword Game. Additionally,

the average score for students' vocabulary proficiency fell below the minimum criteria required for English subjects at MA Darussholah Jember. Consequently, the researcher identified the need for adjustments in plans, efforts, and activities for the second cycle, aiming to enhance students' interest, motivation, and proficiency in speaking.

Cycle II

In the second cycle, the researcher took proactive measures to enhance student engagement by consistently posing questions and encouraging active participation. Reflecting on insights from the initial cycle, it was recognized that a revised plan for the succeeding cycle was imperative. A meticulous preparation process was undertaken, with a primary focus on overhauling the Pictoword Game activity to deepen students' understanding of spoken language.

To introduce novelty and prevent monotony, group arrangements were reshuffled, allowing students to collaborate with new partners. Additionally, comprehensive guidance was provided to ensure a thorough comprehension of all facets involved in playing the Pictoword game. The approach became more intimate and individualized, particularly for students facing academic challenges, as they were grouped with higher-achieving peers. This strategy aimed to capture the students' interest and infuse excitement into the learning process.

Observations were conducted to assess students' grasp of the subject matter, and their work was reviewed to verify the accuracy of task execution. The initial lesson focused on describing pictures, commencing with a collective prayer and relevant questions. To ensure comprehensive understanding, a reiterated explanation of the Pictoword Game was provided, enabling effective task comprehension.

The researcher actively monitored students' activities by circulating among them and addressing any issues. At the end of the class, an assignment related to the lesson was given to gauge students' speaking mastery. Additionally, a vocabulary mastery test was administered, following a format similar to the first cycle, involving the description of pictures and written explanations of the descriptions. This comprehensive approach aimed to assess students' progress and mastery after the implementation of the Pictoword Game.

Table 2 The result of pre-test and post-test in cycle 2

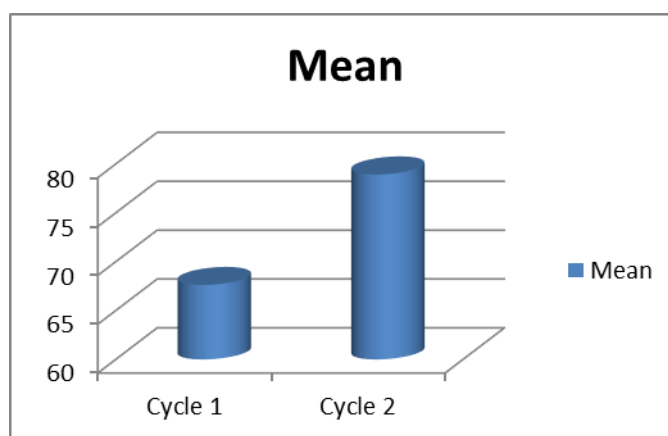
No	Name of Students'	Pre-test	Post-test 2
1.	C F S	50	80
2.	D H H	50	75
3.	D S	45	80
4.	F I	60	80
5.	F M M	45	90
6.	G R O	50	75
7.	I M R	55	75
8.	K S	40	60
9.	L A F	50	90
10.	L A	65	75
11.	M Z R	75	60
12.	M A S W	80	90
13.	R A	45	90
14.	R R N	50	80
15.	S N	85	90
16.	G A F	60	80
17.	K P S	60	80

18.	M R A S	75	75
19.	A S	50	75
Total		1090	1500
Mean		57,36	78,94

Table 2 shows that the average score of students in the pre-test of the second cycle is 57.36. Among the students, 11 (57.9%) scored below 60, while 8 (42.1%) scored 60 and above. This indicates that, initially, students' speaking ability remained below the assessment criteria. In contrast, the average score of students in the post-test of the second cycle surged to 78.94. Notably, none of the 19 students scored below 60, signifying that students have now attained speaking skills that meet the assessment criteria.

Moreover, a visual representation of the pre-test and post-test results for both cycles 1 and 2 is provided in the figure below.

Figure 1. Mean of post-test 1 and 2 cycles.



In this phase, the researcher meticulously analyzed a comprehensive dataset, including vocabulary test scores, observation records, field notes, and interview transcripts. Post the implementation of the second cycle, it was discerned that the challenge pertaining to students' speaking difficulties had been effectively addressed. This was evident in the outcomes of the students' speaking tests, reflecting an average score of 67.33—an improvement from the initial cycle's average score of 78.94 for the students' vocabulary test. Hence, it can be reasonably concluded that the utilization of the Pictoword Game resulted in a notable enhancement of students' speaking skills.

DISCUSSION

There is a notable transformation in the speaking skills of senior high school students when employing the game method of describing digital pictures. This transformative approach highlights enhancements in pronunciation, fluency, comprehension, and grammar. The research incorporates specific rules, including discouraging mockery during picture descriptions and fostering appreciation through attention and applause. This strategy creates a positive and motivating learning environment, addressing concerns for less proficient students and encouraging them to bravely attempt English pronunciation and description.

Drawing support from Wang et al. (2011), it is affirmed that games serve as a powerful motivational tool for English learning, particularly benefiting students with lower language skills who may experience anxiety due to peer pressure. The findings endorse the idea that games effectively reduce anxiety and boost confidence in English learning, addressing challenges faced by students with lower language proficiency, as noted by Leo & Cely (2010). In this research, a noticeable improvement in pronunciation scores was observed, with the post-test average surpassing that of the initial test. This signifies an enhancement in pronunciation skills following instruction using the digital picture description game method. The diversity in English pronunciation poses challenges for certain individuals. These findings are in line with Timothy et al. (2020), affirming that students experienced improved pronunciation abilities through the use of the game "Word Detector." However, Leong & Ahmadi (2017) reported different outcomes, suggesting that while games can enhance communication skills and speaking proficiency, some students encounter difficulties in expressing language lessons in terms of pronunciation. Consequently, this challenge leads to difficulties in articulating thoughts in a foreign language, often resulting in psychological obstacles and a reluctance to engage in conversation (Hidayatullah, 2018).

Moreover, there was a significant difference in the average vocabulary score, with the post-test score surpassing the initial test. This indicates that vocabulary can expand through the use of the digital picture description method in English learning, as students absorb language from their peers participating in the description process. Vocabulary, categorized among language elements, serves as a foundational building block and is crucial for effective communication. While the average score for grammar skills in the post-test showed improvement compared to the pre-test, the difference was not statistically significant. This outcome is attributed to the teaching emphasis on speaking, prioritizing the development of students' confidence to attempt expressions. Grammar is concurrently studied in constructing sentences for describing and explaining pictures to classmates.

Similarly, the average score for comprehension skills in the post-test exceeded the pre-test, although the difference was not statistically significant. Comprehension, being a multifaceted cognitive process, involves deliberate interaction with text to extract meaning. This aligns with the study's focus on strategic actions to enhance understanding and language comprehension (Phuong, 2018). Games play a pivotal role in bolstering students' speaking abilities. Beyond just offering motivation, they instigate behavioral changes, fostering active engagement in classroom learning and, consequently, influencing the development of effective speaking skills. This implies that enhancing speaking proficiency is not solely reliant on interest, motivation, and a positive atmosphere; rather, it requires a deliberate examination of the objectives and targets intended to be achieved through gameplay. Additionally, determining the minimum required time for effective outcomes becomes essential in this process.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The utilization of the digital picture-to-word game proved to be a effective instructional approach in enhancing the pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary of senior high school students. However, limitations stemming from the brief learning duration may account for the observed lack of improvement in comprehension and grammar skills. This research suggests that the digital picture-to-word game serves as a viable alternative method for improving speaking skills among senior high school students. Notably, the study's constraint lies in its one-month duration and the absence of detailed observation to assess students' responses comprehensively.

Furthermore, there is a pressing need for the development of learning materials that leverage the digital picture-to-word game to ensure a more effective and comprehensive learning experience.

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