

## The Influence of Tic Tac Toe Game towards Students' Speaking Ability

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### Abstract

This study investigates the impact of using the Tic Tac Toe game on the speaking abilities of second-grade students at SMK N 7 Bandar Lampung in the 2023/2024 academic year. It employs a quasi-experimental design with a sample of 64 students from two classes: XI Accounting 1 (experimental class) and XI Accounting 2 (control class). The experimental class used the Tic Tac Toe game, while the control class used role-playing. Data were collected through pre-and post-tests focused on asking and giving opinions. Using the independent t-test formula from SPSS 26, the study found a significant impact of the Tic Tac Toe game on students' speaking skills, with a Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000, less than the 0.05 threshold. The findings suggest that the Tic Tac Toe game is an effective tool for improving students' speaking abilities, offering valuable insights for language educators.

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## INTRODUCTION

Language is the foundation of human communication and interaction, allowing us to express our feelings and ideas. English is an international language, allowing us to communicate with people worldwide (Pratiwi, 2021). Learning English is essential for a developing country like Indonesia. Quality human resources can help a country thrive. The ability to communicate in English daily is one of the requirements for high-quality employees. Over 500 million people around the world speak English (Rao, 2019).

In Indonesia, English is a foreign language taught in schools, universities, and other settings. Reading, speaking, listening, and writing are the four fundamental skills that students and teachers of English must master (Hidayat & Sujarwati, 2024). Speaking is the most difficult of the four skills mentioned above for a learner because persuasive oral discourse requires practice in everyday social situations.

Speaking is expressing feelings, thoughts, and ideas through spoken language. Students should be able to share information orally with their friends (Kobayashi, 2003). It means that if students can communicate with one another, they will improve their social skills and self-confidence when speaking English. As a result, the researcher chose speaking skills as a research topic because it is one of the most valuable skills to teach. Speaking is a productive skill in which one or more speakers and listeners interact in a communicative situation (Meisuri et al., 2022). Learning and mastering from students is critical. This enables students to express themselves and interact with others.

Students will hesitate to speak in public because it is difficult and requires characteristics such as pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, grammar, and so on (S. Al Soud & Al Soud, 2023). As a result, students refrain from public speaking because they are embarrassed to make mistakes. Unfortunately, this also causes teachers to speak excessively and dominate the teaching-learning

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process. As a result, students choose to listen passively rather than actively working to improve their speaking skills.

Students frequently become bored while teaching and learning English because the material and method are monotonous, and the teacher needs to provide more English practice (Kruk & Zawodniak, 2018). The lack of teaching methods for English will also cause students to become bored during the teaching-learning process. As a result, the teacher should make the teaching-learning process enjoyable, keep the students engaged, and motivate them. There are numerous methods, such as games, for developing students' speaking ability and self-confidence when using English in the classroom (Gürler, 2015).

A game is entertaining, engaging, and challenging, in which learners play and interact with one another (Hamari et al., 2016). It is an activity with rules, a goal, and a sense of enjoyment. Games have the potential to boost self-esteem, increase positive feelings, and reduce anxiety because learners are not afraid of punishment or criticism while freely practicing the target language (Sykes, 2018). Numerous games can be used to teach students English, and they will learn without even realizing it.

The tic tac toe game allows the teacher to create active and effective learning speaking activities. Tic tac toe is a board game played on a board or paper with three and three columns (Karraske et al., 2018). A while later, the understudies try to form a relationship between three lexical items in vertical, diagonal, and horizontal rows to win the game. Tic-tac-toe is also known as noughts and crosses. In this game, the teacher should divide the students into two groups, one called the noughts group and the other the cross group. If the understudies want to win, they should compete against the inverse (Hidayati, 2015).

Based on preliminary research conducted at SMKN 7 Bandar Lampung, the speaking skills most of the students at SMK N 7 Bandar Lampung are at the primary level, most of the students have problems with self-confidence because most are shy, less enthusiastic. They think English is the most difficult language to learn, making them afraid of making mistakes, especially when speaking. For complex material like that, it is easy for the students. Still, most of those at the lower level are not confident and are embarrassed to speak English, so they must be prodded to do so, such as having a dialogue with friends in front of the class or answering questions given by the teacher to receive additional value rewards.

Previous studies have discussed the use of games in English teaching and learning, such as the use of truth or dare game (Dionar & Adnan, 2018),

This study focuses on asking and giving opinions related to a syllabus. The primary skill in this material is speaking. With the proper teaching methods, asking and giving opinions can help students improve their speaking skills. For example, students can express their ideas and thoughts by engaging in a dialogue with their friends about asking for and providing feedback on new shoes.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is convinced of the potential of the Tic Tac Toe Game to enhance students' speaking skills. This conviction led to the researcher's interest in using the game to improve speaking abilities. To investigate this, the researcher conducted a quasi-experimental quantitative study, co-lecturing data in two groups using pre-test, treatment, and post-test procedures. One group served as the experimental group and the other as the control group. The study focused on the impact of the tic-tac-toe game as the independent variable on students' speaking abilities as the dependent variable.

## METHOD

The researcher conducted a quantitative research for this study, with a focus on fairness and objectivity. A quantitative research design, which centers on collecting, analyzing, and interpreting numerical data, was chosen (Lodico et al., 2006). Sugiyono's classification of experimental research designs, including pre-experimental design, true experimental design, factorial design, and quasi-experimental design, was considered (Sugiyono, 2014). The researcher decided on a quasi-experimental design, which included pre- and post-tests. The researcher then compared two research classes, ensuring that both were treated equally. One class of students received special treatment using the Tic Tac Toe Game as an experimental class, while another class served as the control class.

This design includes two tests: one before and one after the experiment. These tests are known as pre-tests and post-tests, with the pre-test being the observation conducted before the experiment and the post-test being the observation conducted following the experiment. The samples consist of two groups of students. Before receiving treatment, both groups took a pre-test to determine their level of speaking competence. The treatments lasted 65 minutes per meeting, with the experimental group receiving treatment via the Tic Tac Toe Game. Meanwhile, in the control class, they taught through role-play. The normality, homogeneity, and t-tests were used in the study to compare the speaking abilities of the experimental and control groups.

The population is a generalized area made up of objects or subjects of a certain size and characteristics chosen by the researcher to be studied before drawing conclusions (Ary et al., 2009). The population of this research was the entire second grade of SMKN 7 Bandar Lampung, and the sample was selected using the cluster random sampling. The obtained data was tested for normality and homogeneity before being tested for hypothesis test, which is the independent sample t-test.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the researcher taught an experiment class using the tic tac toe game. In the first meeting, the researcher took the pre-test score before the treatment was applied, and in the last meeting, the researcher took the post-test score after the treatment had been applied.

From the result of post-test in both classes, the researcher obtained the mean score of the experiment class was 74.96 and the control class's mean score was 67.39. it was clear to recognize that treatment conducted on experimental class produced higher results. Therefore, the treatment of using Tic Tac Toe Game was effective to help students of their speaking ability, especially in speaking language in asking and giving opinions.

The researcher performed the normality test on the data obtained from the tests using the SPSS 26 version, specifically Shapiro-Wilk. The normality test is aimed to know whether the data were normally distributed, and the result would be used to decide whether to use parametrical statistics or non-parametrical statistics.

**Table 1. The Result of Normality Test**

Tests of Normality							
	Class	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
PreTest	Experiment	.151	31	.069	.955	31	.212
	Control	.144	33	.082	.953	33	.164
PostTest	Experiment	.138	31	.140	.954	31	.196
	Control	.150	33	.058	.959	33	.241

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

According to Table 1 above, the normality test resulted in a significant Shapiro-Wilk score of 0.212 for the pre-test in the experimental class and 0.164 for the control class. The post-test scores for the experimental and control groups were 0.196 and 0.241, respectively, with  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The pre-test and post-test sig. values for the experimental and control classes were greater than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . It could be concluded  $H_0$  was accepted, which means the score of residual data was normally distributed, and a paired sample test could be conducted as the next step to determine the homogeneity of variances.

In analyzing the homogeneity test, the researcher used the SPSS 26 feature which is *One-Way Anova* to know the homogeneity result. The result of the homogeneity test can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2. The Result Homogeneity Test**

Test of Homogeneity of Variance				
	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.

Result	Based on Mean	2.477	1	62	.121
	Based on Median	2.303	1	62	.134
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	2.303	1	58.702	.135
	Based on trimmed mean	2.559	1	62	.115

Table 2 show that homogeneity was tested using SPSS 26 version data, with a pre-test significance value on mean of 0.472 and a post-test significance value on mean of 0.115, indicating  $\alpha \geq 0.05$ .  $H_0$  is accepted with a significance level of Sig.  $\geq 0.05$ , indicating homogeneity between the control and experiment classes.

According to the previous explanation, the normality and homogeneity tests were passed. The researcher in this study tested the hypothetical test using parametric statistics, an independent sample T-test.

**Table 3. The Result of Hypothetical Test**

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
Result		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Result	Equal variances assumed	2.477	.121	3.929	62	.000	7.574	1.928	3.720	11.427
	Equal variances not assumed			3.896	56.083	.000	7.574	1.944	3.680	11.468

Table 3 shows that all results were significant (2-tailed) at  $0.000 \leq 0.05$ . Thus,  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. Based on the computation, it can be concluded that there was a significant influence of using Tic Tac Toe Game on students' speaking ability in second grade at SMK N 7 Bandar Lampung.

The results above show that the students' post-test scores in the experimental class were higher than those in the control class. In the experiment class, the students were taught using the Tic-Tac-Toe Game, while in the control class, they used the role-playing technique. The material requested and provided opinions. Five components assess students' speaking ability: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

However, in this study, the researcher discovered some issues, such as students finding it difficult to express their ideas or thoughts because they were shy, needed more confidence, were afraid of making mistakes when speaking English, and needed more motivation to learn to speak. The teacher also needs to have a particular technique for teaching speaking, which causes the students to become bored quickly. The problem when the researcher implemented this game was that the students needed to be made aware of it, and they were extremely noisy when the researcher delivered the material and instruction to the students. However, the Tic Tac Toe game increased the students' enthusiasm for learning English, mainly speaking. Hence, the class became

more enjoyable, and the students participated actively and responsively in the teaching-learning process. It means the students are more engaged and braver enough to speak English.

The five used this technique in previous research in Chapter 2 to teach English about the tic tac toe game. The similarities between the five previous studies in Chapter 2 and this study are that the researchers used the Tic Tac Toe Game to teach learning English; Tic Tac Toe can teach learning tenses, speaking, and vocabulary (Kristin, 2015). This study also used the Tic Tac Toe Game to teach speaking. Still, it differed from previous studies in that the researcher applied the Tic Tac Toe Game to a vocational school, and the objects and research topics differed from those mentioned in Chapter 2. The researcher anticipates that the results and conclusions will also differ.

On March 18th, 2024, the researcher validated the instrument and collected the sample using cluster random sampling. The researcher conducted the pre-test on March 19th, 2024, and collected the data. In the first step, the researcher presented six situations to the students and asked them to choose one of them to practice the dialogue with their friends in front of the class. The researcher assisted the students in explaining the meaning of each situation so they could easily understand it. The results showed that the students' speaking scores remained low and needed help to present ideas effectively. The researcher identified students who needed more confidence in communicating their ideas or opinions and were shy when speaking in front of the class.

Furthermore, the researcher administered the treatment. It ran from March 20th to April 23rd, 2024. In the first treatment, before playing the Tic Tac Toe game, the researcher explained the material about asking and giving opinions to the students and asked them to identify the expressions and different ways to ask and give opinions. The researcher demonstrated how to pronounce sentences, ask questions, and express opinions to the students. Before beginning the game, the researcher explained to the students what the Tic Tac Toe Game was and how to play it, as all students were unfamiliar. All activities went well; all students paid attention to the researcher while he presented the lesson and appeared more enthusiastic and motivated to learn using the Tic Tac Toe Game, mainly when speaking. When the students were playing a game, they appeared to be confused about how to converse with the game's keyword or clue, so they continued to look at the material and were caught secretly using the gadget to compose words or dialogue with their friends.

In the second and third treatments, where the researcher reviewed previously studied material and played a game, the participants appeared enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the game. During the second and third treatments, the students' speaking skills improved. This is evident in enthusiastic people who enjoy playing the game without consulting the material or copying it from their phones or other devices. They communicate with their friend by using clues or keywords from the game. Based on my observations, the learning in the second and third treatments was significantly better than in the previous meeting. During the first treatment, some students did not understand the material or the game, and they cheated by looking at the material or secretly using gadgets or phones to compose words or dialogue with their friends; however, at this meeting, they enjoyed, paid attention, were enthusiastic, and understood the material, and they were able to improve their speaking abilities.

At the last meeting, the researcher conducted the post-test on April 24th, 2024, and collected the data. The researcher presented six scenarios and asked the students to choose one to practice a dialogue with their friends in front of the class. The researcher assisted the students if they needed to be made aware of the situation. The post-test was administered to assess the improvement of speaking ability in both classes following treatment. When the researcher conducted a post-test, the students' speaking skills improved compared to the pre-test. Their speaking abilities had improved significantly since the previous meeting.

The study's findings revealed that the Tic-Tac-Toe Game influences students' speaking abilities. The post-test results for students in the experiment class were higher than those for the control class. In addition, the Tic-Tac-Toe game can improve all aspects of a student's speaking ability, including grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and pronunciation.

Games make teaching and learning activities more enjoyable. Games can also boost students' motivation and creativity, make them more active, and increase their interest in the teaching-learning process (Alberth, 2018). Tic-tac-toe is a good technique for motivating students to learn English.

According to Harmer, speaking contributes to the communication process and involves many aspects of language structure (Harmer, 2007). Speaking can be considered one way for someone to communicate his intentions, goals, or objectives. Using proper grammar and vocabulary, students could communicate their intentions based on the given situation without hesitation. However, the test results also indicated that the students' pronunciation was still something to consider, as they may be familiar with the vocabulary but need to correct their pronunciation of the words.

Based on the above description, tic-tac-toe is an appropriate game for teaching speaking. It can increase students' motivation in learning activities, make them feel comfortable in class, and improve their speaking skills.

## CONCLUSION

Based on research conducted in the second grade of SMK N 7 Bandar Lampung during the academic year 2023/2024, as well as data analysis of students' pre-test and post-test in both classes, the researcher concluded that using the Tic Tac Toe Game has a significant impact on student's speaking abilities. It was demonstrated by analyzing the data calculation for a hypothetical test in which the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected. The independent sample test indicated that the significance value (2-tailed) was less than 0.05. It was supported by the student's scores, which improved after the researcher administered the treatment using the Tic Tac Toe game.

Importantly, the Tic Tac Toe Game has the potential to significantly enhance students' speaking skills. The gain score of students before and after treatment clearly demonstrates this potential. By integrating the Tic Tac Toe Game into teaching and learning, educators could foster substantial improvements in students' speaking abilities, a crucial skill for effective communication.

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