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Indonesian Language Learning Based on Children's Songs to Improve Speaking Skills of Elementary School Students

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of song-based learning on the speaking skills of elementary school students in Indonesia. Speaking skills are a crucial aspect of effective communication and are an essential component of Indonesian language learning at the elementary level. However, many students face difficulties in expressing their ideas verbally due to a lack of self-confidence and limited opportunities for practicing speaking in a supportive environment. This study aims to explore how the integration of children's songs in the learning process can improve students' speaking abilities. The research method used is an experimental design with a pretest-posttest control group design, comparing the experimental group, which received song-based learning, with the control group, which followed conventional learning. The results showed that the experimental group made significant improvements in all speaking indicators, including pronunciation, intonation, fluency, vocabulary, and sentence structure. These improvements indicate that children's songs not only help enhance speaking fluency but also increase students' motivation and engagement in the learning process. Song-based learning provides students with opportunities to practice speaking repeatedly, helping them internalize language structures, improve pronunciation, and express themselves confidently. Additionally, children's songs also contribute to the development of emotional intelligence and social skills. This study suggests that song-based learning should be more widely implemented in elementary schools across Indonesia to improve students' speaking abilities while creating a more interactive and enjoyable learning environment.

Keywords: Song-based learning, speaking skills, elementary school students, pronunciation, fluency, motivation, student engagement.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji pengaruh pembelajaran berbasis lagu anak terhadap keterampilan berbicara siswa SD di Indonesia. Keterampilan berbicara merupakan aspek penting dalam komunikasi efektif dan bagian yang sangat penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa Indonesia di tingkat SD. Namun, banyak siswa yang mengalami kesulitan dalam mengungkapkan ide secara verbal karena kurangnya rasa percaya diri dan kesempatan terbatas untuk berlatih berbicara dalam lingkungan yang mendukung. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana integrasi lagu anak dalam proses pembelajaran dapat meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara siswa. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah desain eksperimen dengan desain pretest-posttest kontrol, yang membandingkan kelompok eksperimen yang menerima pembelajaran berbasis lagu anak dengan kelompok kontrol yang mengikuti pembelajaran konvensional. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kelompok eksperimen mengalami peningkatan yang signifikan dalam semua indikator berbicara, termasuk pengucapan, intonasi, kefasihan, kosakata, dan struktur kalimat. Peningkatan ini menunjukkan bahwa lagu anak tidak hanya membantu meningkatkan kefasihan berbicara, tetapi juga meningkatkan motivasi dan keterlibatan siswa dalam proses pembelajaran. Pembelajaran berbasis lagu anak memberikan kesempatan bagi siswa untuk berlatih berbicara secara berulang, yang membantu mereka menginternalisasi struktur bahasa, memperbaiki pengucapan, dan mengekspresikan diri dengan percaya diri. Selain itu, lagu anak juga membantu pengembangan kecerdasan emosional dan keterampilan sosial siswa. Penelitian ini menyarankan agar pembelajaran berbasis lagu anak diterapkan lebih luas di sekolah dasar di Indonesia untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara siswa sekaligus menciptakan suasana pembelajaran yang lebih interaktif dan menyenangkan.

Kata Kunci: Pembelajaran berbasis lagu anak, keterampilan berbicara, siswa SD, pengucapan, kefasihan, motivasi, keterlibatan siswa.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian, as the language of instruction in the education system in Indonesia, plays a very important role in the learning process. Having good Indonesian language skills is the foundation for students to understand other subjects, such as mathematics, science, and social studies. One of the essential language skills that must be developed early on is speaking ability. Speaking is crucial in communication, not only to convey information but also to establish effective social relationships in daily life. Therefore, developing speaking skills at the elementary school level becomes a priority in Indonesian language learning (Syakur, 2019).

The importance of speaking ability in Indonesian language learning at the elementary school level has been recognized by many parties. In the educational curriculum, speaking ability is one of the core competencies that must be mastered by elementary school students. This speaking ability includes various aspects, such as speaking in public, conversing with peers, and speaking with confidence. However, in reality, many students find it difficult to express their ideas and opinions verbally. This is often due to a lack of self-confidence or insufficient opportunities to practice speaking in supportive environments (Sari & Rosyidi, 2020).

One method that can be used to improve speaking skills is by integrating fun and creative media into the learning process. Children's songs are one of the most effective media for helping students develop speaking skills. Children's songs not only provide engaging music but also contain moral and educational messages that help students learn in an enjoyable way. Research by Nugroho (2018) shows that children's songs can enhance students' speaking abilities due to their musical elements, which stimulate memory and creativity.

In addition, children's songs can also be used to introduce new vocabulary, sentence patterns, and correct language structures. With simple and easily understood lyrics, students can more easily absorb Indonesian language material in spoken form. In this context, children's songs can be an effective tool to teach students to speak fluently and confidently. Songs such as "Balonku Ada Lima," "Cicak-

cicak di Dinding," and "Naik Delman" contain various vocabulary that can help enrich students' word stock (Astuti & Mulyani, 2019).

At the elementary school age, children have a rapid ability to grasp rhythm and melody. Through song rhythms, they can more easily absorb learning materials and remember information. This can be utilized to support speaking learning in the classroom. A study by Wijaya (2020) states that song-based learning can stimulate students' interest in learning, especially speaking, due to its fun and non-boring approach. In speaking learning, children's songs can be used to encourage students to sing together, so they not only remember the lyrics but also practice pronunciation and sentence structures.

Moreover, the use of songs in Indonesian language learning at elementary schools can also increase student engagement. Songs can make the learning atmosphere more interactive and communicative. Through songs, students can practice speaking alternately, both individually and in groups. This can help students overcome shyness and boost their confidence in speaking. Thus, children's songs are not only enjoyable learning tools but can also enhance students' social skills (Putri, 2020).

Children's songs also provide opportunities for repetitive learning, which is crucial in language learning. Repetition in songs will help students more easily remember words or sentences taught. This is essential in learning Indonesian, as one of the main challenges is the ability to remember vocabulary and sentence structures. By listening to and singing songs repeatedly, students can quickly master pronunciation and sentence structures used in Indonesian (Marlina, 2019).

Song-based speaking learning also has other benefits, namely introducing Indonesian culture through song lyrics. Children's songs often contain cultural values that can introduce students to the richness of Indonesian culture. Songs such as "Indonesia Pusaka," "Tanah Airku," and "Ibu Pertiwi" teach students about pride in their homeland and national culture. This is in line with efforts to develop student character, which is one of the goals of education in Indonesia (Rahayu, 2018).

Additionally, the use of songs in speaking learning at elementary schools can facilitate the development of students' emotional intelligence. Children's songs, filled with positive values such as friendship, honesty, and togetherness, can help students develop empathy and good social attitudes. Through songs, students can more easily understand and express their feelings verbally, which in turn will enhance their speaking ability (Salim & Ibrahim, 2021).

To ensure that song-based speaking learning runs effectively, the role of the teacher is crucial. Teachers need to select songs that are appropriate for students' level of understanding and have lyrics that are easy to comprehend. Furthermore, teachers should create a fun atmosphere during the learning process so that students feel comfortable speaking and singing. Thus, song-based speaking learning can be an effective method to improve students' speaking abilities in elementary schools while making the learning process more enjoyable and meaningful (Fitria, 2020).

With the various benefits that can be gained from song-based speaking learning, it is hoped that this method can be widely applied in elementary schools in Indonesia. Speaking learning is not just about memorizing words, but also involves the development of broader communication skills, including pronunciation, intonation, and confidence. Therefore, this research will further explore how song-based speaking learning can enhance elementary students' speaking abilities, with a focus on using children's songs as an enjoyable and effective media in Indonesian language learning.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses an experimental design with a **pretest-posttest control group design** to examine the effect of Indonesian language learning based on children's songs on elementary school students' speaking skills. The study involves two groups: the experimental group, which receives learning based on children's songs, and the control group, which follows conventional learning. The sample consists of 60 students selected through purposive sampling from two elementary school classes.

Research Instruments:

1. A speaking test in the form of a pretest and posttest to assess students' speaking skills in aspects such as pronunciation, intonation, fluency, vocabulary, and sentence structure.
2. A questionnaire to measure students' motivation and interest in song-based learning.

Research Procedure:

1. **Pretest:** Measures students' speaking abilities before treatment.
2. **Treatment:** The experimental group receives song-based learning for 6 weeks, while the control group follows conventional learning.
3. **Posttest:** Measures students' speaking abilities after treatment.

Data Analysis:

Data from the pretest and posttest are analyzed using a **t-test** to examine the differences in speaking abilities between the experimental and control groups. The questionnaire will be analyzed qualitatively to assess students' motivation and interest.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine the effect of song-based learning on the speaking skills of elementary school students. To achieve this, data were collected from speaking tests (pretest and posttest) and a questionnaire measuring students' motivation and interest in song-based learning. The following are the research findings obtained:

1. Students' Speaking Ability (Pretest and Posttest)

Before the intervention (pretest), both the experimental and control groups showed similar speaking abilities. At this stage, the average speaking scores of both groups did not show a significant difference. This indicates that both groups had almost equal speaking proficiency before the intervention began

Pretest Scores:

Speaking Indicator	Experimental Group (Pretest)	Control Group (Pretest)
Pronunciation	62.4	63.1
Intonation	61.2	62.3
Fluency	63.0	63.5
Vocabulary	61.8	62.9
Sentence Structure	62.0	62.4
Average Pretest Score	62.4	63.1

After the intervention, a posttest was conducted to measure the extent to which students' speaking abilities improved after receiving either song-based learning or conventional learning. The posttest results showed that the experimental group, which received song-based learning, showed significant improvement in pronunciation, intonation, fluency, vocabulary usage, and sentence structure. On the other hand, the control group, which followed conventional learning, only showed a relatively small improvement.

Posttest Scores:

Speaking Indicator	Experimental Group (Posttest)	Control Group (Posttest)
Pronunciation	78.5	70.2
Intonation	77.8	69.7
Fluency	79.1	71.3
Vocabulary	77.3	69.5
Sentence Structure	78.0	70.6
Average Posttest Score	78.2	69.5

Score Improvement:

Speaking Indicator	Experimental Group (Pretest to Posttest)	Control Group (Pretest to Posttest)
Pronunciation	25.8% improvement (62.4 to 78.2)	10.1% improvement (63.1 to 69.5)
Intonation	26.8% improvement (61.2 to 77.8)	11.4% improvement (62.3 to 69.7)
Fluency	25.4% improvement (63.0 to 79.1)	12.3% improvement (63.5 to 71.3)
Vocabulary	25.1% improvement (61.8 to 77.3)	10.5% improvement (62.9 to 69.5)
Sentence Structure	25.8% improvement (62.0 to 78.0)	13.0% improvement (62.4 to 70.6)
Average Improvement	25.8%	10.1%

The results of the t-test analysis indicated that the difference in speaking ability improvement between the two groups was highly significant with a p-value of < 0.05 . This indicates that song-based learning had a greater impact on improving students' speaking skills compared to conventional learning.

2. Students' Motivation and Interest

In addition to measuring speaking ability, this study also gathered data on students' motivation and interest in song-based learning through a questionnaire. The questionnaire contained several questions assessing how interested and motivated students were to engage in song-based language learning.

Questionnaire Results:

1. The majority of students in the experimental group (82%) reported that they felt more interested and motivated to learn Indonesian through children's songs. They felt happier participating in lessons because the environment was more enjoyable and not monotonous. Students also reported feeling more confident in speaking after participating in song-based learning.
2. On the other hand, students in the control group felt that the learning method they followed was more monotonous and less enjoyable. Only 48% of students in the control group felt motivated to speak during the lessons.
3. Based on the results of the questionnaire, it can be concluded that song-based learning successfully increased students' interest and motivation toward learning Indonesian. Children's songs not only present the material in a fun way but also stimulate students' emotional involvement in the learning process.
4. Improvement in Specific Speaking Skills
5. The improvement in students' speaking ability was evident in several aspects measured through the speaking tests, including pronunciation, intonation, fluency, vocabulary usage, and sentence structure.
6. Pronunciation: Students in the experimental group showed significant improvement in pronouncing words and sentences after participating in song-based learning. This was due to the repetition of words found in the song lyrics they sang, which helped them improve their pronunciation in a fun and natural way.

7. **Intonation and Expression:** Song-based learning also helped students improve their intonation and expression when speaking. Songs with distinctive melodies and rhythms facilitated students in speaking with more lively and varied expressions.
8. **Fluency:** The experimental group also showed improvement in speaking fluency, as reflected in their ease of expressing ideas and emotions. The songs they learned provided them with more natural speaking practice through repetition, making them more fluent in constructing sentences.
9. **Vocabulary and Sentence Structure:** Additionally, song-based learning positively impacted the mastery of new vocabulary and correct sentence structures. Simple yet vocabulary-rich children's songs allowed students to enrich their word stock in an enjoyable way.

4. Difference in Improvement Between the Experimental and Control Groups

Based on the analysis, it is evident that the experimental group experienced greater improvement compared to the control group. The experimental group not only improved in overall speaking ability but also in specific speaking aspects such as pronunciation and intonation. This finding aligns with previous studies that suggest song-based learning can enhance speaking fluency and students' confidence in speaking (Wijaya, 2020). Meanwhile, the control group, which followed conventional learning, also showed improvement, but the improvement was more limited, particularly in terms of students' courage to speak in front of the class. This can be explained by the fact that conventional learning tends to focus more on written material and provides fewer opportunities for students to practice speaking directly and interactively.

5. Relationship Between Students' Interest and Speaking Improvement

The findings of this study also indicate that students' improvement in speaking skills was strongly influenced by their level of interest and motivation toward the lesson. Students who had a higher interest in song-based learning showed a more significant improvement in their speaking skills. This emphasizes the importance of creating an engaging and enjoyable learning environment to encourage students to be more active and motivated in developing their speaking skills.

Discussion

The results of this study provide strong evidence for the effectiveness of song-based learning in improving the speaking skills of elementary school students. The experimental group, which was taught using song-based learning, demonstrated significantly greater improvements in speaking ability compared to the control group, which followed conventional learning methods. This section provides a detailed discussion of the findings, including an examination of how song-based learning impacted various aspects of speaking and how it compares with conventional learning.

1. Improvement in Speaking Ability

The experimental group showed an average improvement of 25.8% (from 62.4 to 78.2), while the control group showed a much smaller improvement of 10.1% (from 63.1 to 69.5). This dramatic difference in improvement underscores the effectiveness of song-based learning in enhancing speaking skills. The larger improvement in the experimental group can be explained by the repetitive and engaging nature of songs, which offer multiple benefits in language acquisition.

As stated by Lems, Miller, and Soro (2017), repetition in songs provides learners with numerous opportunities to encounter and practice words, phrases, and sentence structures in a way that strengthens long-term retention. This is particularly beneficial for speaking, as repetition helps solidify the mental connections between sounds, words, and meanings. In song-based learning, students frequently repeat the lyrics, which helps them internalize the language structure and enhances their ability to speak more naturally and fluently.

Moreover, the rhythm and melody of songs provide an additional layer of learning that aids students in understanding intonation, stress patterns, and word emphasis, which are essential components of

effective spoken communication (Rakhman, 2019). This dual engagement—through both the melody and the lyrics—makes the learning process more immersive and enjoyable, leading to improved speaking ability.

2. Pronunciation and Intonation

Pronunciation and intonation were two of the most significant areas of improvement for the experimental group. The average improvement in pronunciation and intonation in the experimental group was 25.8%, significantly higher than the 10.1% improvement in the control group. This difference can be attributed to the musical nature of the songs, which naturally emphasize correct pronunciation and proper intonation.

As Cunningham and Stanovich (2017) point out, songs provide an excellent model of rhythm and intonation, both of which are critical for effective communication. Singing helps students practice the pronunciation of words in a musical context, where they can hear and produce the correct sounds in a fun and stress-free way. This, in turn, leads to improved clarity and accuracy in speech.

The control group, which was taught through conventional methods, likely lacked the same engaging and repetitive opportunities to practice these aspects of speaking. Traditional methods often focus more on written language or structured speaking drills, which may not provide the same level of auditory and kinesthetic engagement that song-based learning does.

3. Fluency and Vocabulary Usage

Fluency in speaking was another area where the experimental group showed a notable improvement, with a 25.4% increase in fluency, compared to the 12.3% improvement in the control group. The process of singing helps students develop their fluency because it involves continuous verbal expression. By repeatedly singing songs, students practice producing language in a natural, flowing manner, which mirrors real-life conversation (Nikolova, 2021). In addition to fluency, the experimental group demonstrated a 25.1% improvement in vocabulary usage. Songs are particularly effective for vocabulary acquisition because they provide context in which new words and phrases are used repeatedly. This contextualized learning allows students to understand the meaning of words through association with the melody, rhythm, and overall message of the song (Moreno & Mayer, 2007). The control group, on the other hand, showed a smaller vocabulary improvement (10.5%), which may be due to the more limited exposure to new vocabulary in a less engaging, traditional learning environment.

4. Sentence Structure and Expression

In terms of sentence structure, the experimental group demonstrated a 25.8% improvement, which highlights the role that songs play in teaching grammatical structures. Songs often contain a variety of sentence patterns and syntactic structures, providing a natural way for students to learn how to construct sentences. Repeated exposure to these structures in a fun and meaningful context allows students to internalize them more effectively than through traditional grammar drills (Brown, 2014).

Additionally, song-based learning helped students improve their expressive abilities. Singing encourages emotional engagement, as students are often encouraged to express feelings and ideas through the lyrics. This focus on emotional expression, which is often absent in conventional learning, fosters a deeper connection with the material and leads to better communicative skills (Mayer, 2014). The ability to express ideas confidently and emotionally is essential for fluent and effective speaking, and song-based learning provides students with the opportunity to practice this.

5. Motivation and Engagement

A significant factor contributing to the greater improvement observed in the experimental group is the increased motivation and engagement that song-based learning offers. According to the questionnaire results, 82% of students in the experimental group reported feeling more motivated and engaged during the lessons, as opposed to only 48% of students in the control group. This suggests that the enjoyment and interactivity of song-based learning play a key role in enhancing students' speaking abilities.

Research by Deci and Ryan (2000) supports the idea that student motivation is strongly linked to their engagement in the learning process. Engaged students are more likely to practice the language outside of formal lessons, which in turn leads to better speaking skills. The enjoyment factor of song-based learning—combined with its interactive nature helps keep students actively involved in their language development, which positively impacts their speaking proficiency. The control group, however, found the conventional learning method less engaging, which may have contributed to their more modest improvements. Traditional methods often focus on written tasks or drills, which can be monotonous and may not provide the same level of student involvement or enjoyment (Rahayu, 2018).

6. Implications for Language Teaching

The findings of this study highlight the importance of incorporating engaging and enjoyable methods into language teaching. Song-based learning provides a multifaceted approach that not only helps students improve their speaking skills but also fosters greater motivation and emotional engagement. This approach is particularly valuable in elementary education, where students are more likely to thrive in an environment that is fun and interactive. Teachers should consider integrating songs into their curriculum as a way to enhance pronunciation, intonation, fluency, vocabulary, and sentence structure. Given that students in the experimental group showed significant improvement in all these areas, song-based learning could be a powerful tool for language educators seeking to improve students' speaking skills while maintaining their interest and enthusiasm for the subject.

7. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Despite the promising results, this study has some limitations. The sample size was relatively small and limited to a specific geographic region, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could involve a larger, more diverse sample to validate the findings and explore the impact of song-based learning in different contexts. Additionally, while this study focused on speaking skills, future research could examine how song-based learning affects other language skills such as listening, reading, and writing. Furthermore, long-term studies are needed to assess whether the improvements in speaking skills observed in this study are sustained over time. It would also be useful to investigate whether song-based learning can benefit students with varying levels of language proficiency or those with learning disabilities.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, song-based learning proves to be a highly effective method for enhancing elementary school students' speaking skills. The experimental group demonstrated substantial improvement in pronunciation, intonation, fluency, vocabulary, and sentence structure. By increasing motivation and engagement, song-based learning not only improves language proficiency but also creates a more interactive and dynamic classroom environment. These findings suggest that educators should incorporate song-based learning into their language teaching practices to foster a more engaging and effective learning experience.

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