



The Effect of Using Who Is It Game On Students' Speaking Ability

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Receive: 27/07/2025

Accepted: 01/08/2025

Published: 01/10/2025

Abstrak

This research investigated the impact of the Who Is It game on enhancing students' speaking skills at MTS Swasta Darul Ulum Budi Agung Medan. It was driven by the challenges students faced in acquiring grammar, vocabulary, and fluency in English communication. The study explored whether incorporating game-based learning could create a more engaging classroom dynamic and boost students' self-assurance and enthusiasm for speaking. Employing a quantitative methodology with a quasi-experimental framework, the study involved 66 participants split into two groups: 30 in the experimental group, who received instruction via the Who Is It game, and 36 in the control group, who followed traditional teaching approaches. Data collection relied on pre-test and post-test evaluations of speaking performance, assessed using Brown's (2004) rubric. Statistical analysis included tests for normality, homogeneity, and an independent samples t-test. The outcomes showed that the experimental group attained a higher average post-test score (84.00) compared to the control group (75.53), with a significance level of Sig. (0.000) below 0.05, demonstrating a notable advancement in speaking abilities through the game. These results imply that the game successfully improves speaking proficiency by encouraging active participation, alleviating speaking apprehension, and establishing a supportive and pleasurable learning setting. Consequently, educators are advised to adopt interactive games as a viable method to strengthen communicative skills in English as a foreign language classrooms.

Keywords: Who is it game, speaking ability, quasi experimental, game based learning

Abstract

Penelitian ini mengkaji dampak penerapan permainan Who Is It? dalam meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara siswa di MTS Swasta Darul Ulum Budi Agung Medan. Kajian ini didasarkan pada hambatan yang dialami siswa dalam menguasai tata bahasa, kosakata, dan kelancaran berbicara bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan apakah pembelajaran berbasis permainan dapat membangun suasana kelas yang lebih interaktif serta memperkuat rasa percaya diri dan semangat siswa dalam berbicara. Menggunakan metode kuantitatif dengan rancangan kuasi-eksperimental, penelitian ini melibatkan 66 siswa yang terbagi ke dalam dua kelompok: 30 siswa dalam kelompok eksperimen yang belajar melalui permainan Who Is It? dan 36 siswa dalam kelompok kontrol yang menggunakan metode pengajaran tradisional. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan tes awal dan tes akhir untuk menilai kemampuan berbicara siswa, menggunakan rubrik Brown (2004). Analisis data mencakup pengujian normalitas, homogenitas, dan uji t independen. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa kelompok eksperimen mencapai rata-rata skor tes akhir yang lebih tinggi (84,00) dibanding kelompok kontrol (75,53), dengan nilai signifikansi Sig. (0,000) di bawah 0,05, yang mengindikasikan adanya kemajuan signifikan dalam kemampuan berbicara berkat permainan Who Is It?. Temuan ini menyimpulkan bahwa permainan tersebut berhasil meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara siswa dengan cara mendorong keterlibatan aktif, menurunkan kecemasan saat berbicara, dan menciptakan lingkungan pembelajaran yang menyenangkan serta mendukung.

Kata Kunci: Permainan Who is it, kemampuan berbicara, pembelajaran berbasis permainan

Introduction

Speaking represents a core competency in language acquisition, allowing learners to convey thoughts, viewpoints, and sentiments with clarity and precision. It serves as a key element in fostering communicative proficiency and is frequently employed as a measure of overall language capability. As Nation and Newton (2009) note, speaking provides a vital avenue for articulating ideas and emotions via oral expression in both structured and casual settings.

Yet, within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environments, numerous learners continue to encounter difficulties with this skill. Common obstacles include restricted lexical resources, inaccuracies in grammar, inadequate pronunciation, and insufficient fluency, which often lead to diminished enthusiasm, reluctance to engage verbally, and apprehension over errors in group settings.

During observations at MTS Swasta Darul Ulum Budi Agung Medan, the researcher noted that the majority of seventh-grade pupils exhibited suboptimal proficiency in English speaking. Their mean score in speaking assessments stood at 57.2, falling short of the desired proficiency threshold. Learners typically displayed hesitation in articulating concepts, relied on flawed grammatical structures, and stumbled over word pronunciations.

Moreover, they often lacked self-assurance and showed unwillingness to join in-class dialogues. Such challenges imply that conventional instructional approaches may fall short in captivating learners or advancing their oral skills. Consequently, creative methods that foster fun and interactive sessions are essential to boost learners' confidence and drive in English practice.

A promising approach to mitigate these hurdles involves incorporating games into language instruction. These activities can revitalize the classroom into a lively, pleasurable, and anxiety-reduced space that promotes enthusiastic involvement. Agustina (2015) highlights how games facilitate collaborative and immersive learning, enabling natural reinforcement of linguistic abilities. Within the array of language-based games, the Who Is It activity stands out as an effective tool for bolstering speaking proficiency.

In this game, participants deduce a person's or character's identity through yes-or-no interrogatives, thereby honing descriptive terminology, grammatical precision, and conversational flow. Thornbury (2005) further underscores the value of such games in refining interactive query-response dynamics, which form essential aspects of effective dialogue.

Prior research (for instance, Aprilliani, 2022; Mahuda Safutri, 2021; Tasnim Mufidah, 2022) has demonstrated that inference-oriented games enhance learners' oral performance and participation levels. Nevertheless, many of these investigations targeted senior high school contexts and emphasized vocabulary enhancement over holistic speaking evaluations via standardized criteria. Addressing this shortfall, the current study examines the impact of the Who Is It? game on the speaking capabilities of seventh-grade learners at MTS Swasta Darul Ulum Budi Agung Medan.

The research seeks to ascertain if notable disparities exist in speaking outcomes between groups instructed via the Who Is It? game and those following standard techniques. Its results are anticipated to advance game-integrated pedagogies in EFL settings and offer actionable guidance for educators in designing more captivating, learner-focused, and impactful speaking exercises.

Method

This research utilized a quantitative approach, incorporating a quasi-experimental framework with a non-equivalent control group design. This particular design was selected due to the inability to randomly allocate participants to the experimental and control groups, given that they belonged to pre-established classes. The primary objective was to assess the influence of the Who Is It? game on the speaking proficiency of students at MTS Swasta Darul Ulum Budi Agung Medan. The study involved two groups: an experimental group that underwent instruction via the Who Is It? game, and a control group exposed to traditional teaching techniques. To evaluate changes in speaking skills, both groups completed pre-tests and post-tests prior to and following the intervention.

The population encompassed all seventh-grade students at MTS Swasta Darul Ulum Budi Agung Medan during the 2024/2025 academic year, comprising 198 individuals across six classes (VII-1 through VII-6). Purposive sampling was applied to choose two classes exhibiting comparable levels of English proficiency. Specifically, Class VII-2, with 30 students, was designated as the experimental group, whereas Class VII-6, with 36 students, functioned as the control group, resulting in a total sample size of 66 participants. The intervention spanned eight sessions for each group.

In the experimental group, instruction centered on the Who Is It? game, where learners inferred the identity of a concealed figure by posing and responding to yes-or-no questions. The instructor outlined the procedures, provided demonstrations, and facilitated gameplay in pairs or small teams. Participants alternated between describing individuals and deducing identities from hints offered by classmates, thereby honing vocabulary, grammatical structures, pronunciation, and fluency within an engaging and low-pressure atmosphere.

Conversely, the control group followed standard pedagogical practices, emphasizing textbook-based activities and direct teacher-led explanations, without incorporating games. Learners were prompted to read descriptions and portray figures from images, though opportunities for dynamic oral interaction remained constrained.

The primary tool employed in this investigation was an oral speaking assessment, implemented as both a pre-test and post-test. Participants were tasked with verbally describing individuals or figures in English, with their responses evaluated according to Brown's (2004) rubric for speaking, encompassing five key aspects:

- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension
- Fluency
- Pronunciation

Scores for each aspect ranged from 1 to 5, yielding an overall rating that reflected participants' proficiency in speaking. To maintain impartiality and uniformity, two evaluators—the classroom English instructor and the investigator—independently reviewed each

performance. The robustness of this tool was verified through assessments of validity and reliability.

Content validity was confirmed by ensuring the test elements fully captured the essential elements of speaking proficiency outlined in Brown's framework. The tool underwent scrutiny by qualified reviewers, such as experienced English educators and the study supervisor.

Reliability was evaluated via Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, calculated using SPSS version 25. The resulting value fell into the "reliable" range, demonstrating that the instrument provided stable and consistent evaluations of speaking skills. Data gathering proceeded in the following sequence:

- Pre-test: Delivered to the experimental and control groups alike to gauge baseline speaking proficiency prior to the intervention.
- Intervention: The experimental cohort received instruction via the Who Is It? game, whereas the control cohort followed established instructional practices.
- Post-test: Administered post-intervention to assess enhancements in speaking proficiency.

Recordings of all assessments were maintained and graded uniformly against the rubric to uphold consistency. The gathered data underwent processing with SPSS version 25, involving multiple analytical phases:

- Normality assessment: To verify normal distribution of the data.
- Homogeneity evaluation: To confirm equivalent variances across groups.
- Independent samples t-test: To contrast average scores between the experimental and control groups.

A threshold of statistical significance at 0.05 ($\alpha = 5\%$) was adopted. A p-value (Sig.) below 0.05 signified a meaningful disparity between the groups. The outcomes revealed that the experimental group attained a superior average post-test score (84.00) relative to the control group (75.53), accompanied by a p-value

of 0.000, which was less than 0.05. This substantiates the Who Is It? game's efficacy in elevating students' speaking proficiency.

Result and Discussion

The experimental group demonstrated a notable enhancement in performance following the implementation of the treatment. This indicates that the applied intervention had a positive and measurable effect on the participants' outcomes.

- Mean pre-test (Experimental): 68.00
- Mean post-test (Experimental): 84.00
- Mean pre-test (Control): 66.75
- Mean post-test (Control): 75.53

The results of the independent t-test revealed a significance value of 0.000, which is considerably lower than the conventional significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the implementation of the *Who Is It?* game had a statistically significant impact on improving students' speaking skills. In other words, the use of this interactive learning activity effectively contributed to enhancing learners' oral communication performance. In simpler terms, the application of this game effectively contributed to measurable improvements in learners' oral performance, confirming its positive influence on their speaking skill development. of the game contributed meaningfully to enhancing learners' ability to speak more effectively.

Tabel 1. Summary of Students' Mean Scores

Group	Pre-test	Post-test	Mean Difference
Experimental	68.00	84.00	+16.00
Control	67.75	75.53	+8.78

The objective of this investigation was to evaluate whether implementing the Who Is It? game produced a notable impact on the speaking proficiency of students at MTS Swasta Darul Ulum Budi Agung Medan. The statistical findings revealed a marked enhancement in the speaking outcomes of the experimental group relative to the control group. Specifically, the average post-test score for the experimental class reached 84.00, surpassing the control class's 75.53, with a p-value of 0.000, which fell below the 0.05 threshold. These results affirm a statistically meaningful distinction between the groups, underscoring the beneficial influence of the Who Is It? game on learners' oral skills.

The progress observed in the experimental group stems from the game's interactive and captivating design. Throughout the intervention, participants were prompted to pose and respond to questions in English as they depicted characters or inferred identities from provided hints. Such engagement offered ample chances to refine pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension—the core elements of speaking as delineated by Brown (2004).

By enabling purposeful application of English within authentic scenarios, the game surpassed rote memorization or translation exercises, thereby strengthening communicative effectiveness. Furthermore, incorporating the Who Is It? game alleviated common obstacles like speaking-related anxiety and apprehension about errors. Observations during the sessions indicated that experimental students displayed heightened enthusiasm and assurance in their English usage.

This observation resonates with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which posits that learning thrives in collaborative, stimulating interactions. The game's teamwork-oriented format cultivated a supportive setting that boosted motivation, encouraged peer exchanges, and promoted constructive learning mindsets, transforming students from mere observers into engaged communicators.

These outcomes align closely with findings from earlier research. For instance, Aprilliani (2022) demonstrated that the Who

Am I game elevated speaking abilities by fostering greater fluency and involvement in discussions. In a similar vein, Mahuda Safutri (2021) observed that inference-focused games bolstered learners' confidence and expanded their lexical range. Tasnim Mufidah (2022) likewise found that the Who Am I activity improved descriptive skills in English. The present study reinforces these insights, illustrating that game-infused approaches not only aid vocabulary development but also elevate comprehensive speaking competence.

In relation to prior work, this research advances the field by employing a rigorous evaluation framework based on Brown's (2004) rubric and targeting junior high school students. The evidence suggests that even adolescent learners can gain substantially from such interactive methods when properly facilitated. The Who Is It? game compelled participants to employ interrogative structures (e.g., "Is he wearing glasses?"), apply descriptive adjectives and pronouns precisely (e.g., "She has long hair," "He is tall"), and reply promptly, resulting in evident gains in fluency and grammatical precision.

Additionally, the results endorse the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT), which prioritizes authentic exchanges and practical dialogue. During gameplay, students engaged in impromptu speaking, shifting emphasis from rigid accuracy to fluid expression. Achieving equilibrium between precision and spontaneity remains a key aim in EFL instruction, and the experimental group's post-test advancements indicate that the Who Is It? game adeptly harmonized these dimensions.

Conclusion

This research examined the impact of incorporating the Who Is It? game on the speaking proficiency of students at MTS Swasta Darul Ulum Budi Agung Medan. Drawing from the statistical outcomes and in-class observations, it is evident that this game exerted a substantial positive influence on learners' English oral performance. The experimental group, instructed through the Who Is It? game, recorded a superior

average post-test score of 84.00, in contrast to the control group's 75.53, with a p-value of 0.000, which is below the 0.05 level. These findings demonstrate that the game's application led to more effective gains in speaking skills than traditional instructional approaches.

Enhancements were evident across all evaluated dimensions of speaking, as per Brown's (2004) rubric—encompassing grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. Participants in the game demonstrated greater precision in forming sentences, employed a broader range of words, exhibited smoother delivery, and developed stronger assurance in articulating their thoughts. The game's engaging and collaborative format fostered a low-stress, pleasurable classroom dynamic, which diminished learners' apprehension and promoted greater involvement in oral tasks.

From a practical standpoint, these results recommend that EFL educators integrate instructional games like Who Is It? into their routines to enhance the appeal and efficacy of lessons. For learners, such methods alleviate concerns over errors and cultivate a stronger drive to engage in English conversation. Researchers in the future might extend this work by exploring extended interventions, expanded participant groups, or varied academic stages to deepen understanding of game-based methods' role in linguistic growth.

In summary, the Who Is It? game tool that boosts speaking competence while establishing a nurturing, dynamic, and participatory educational space. It offers educators a viable option for advancing communicative skills in English as a Foreign Language settings.

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Curriculum Vitae

Rima Aulia Fayi, the author of this thesis, entered the world in Medan on April 19, 2004. She holds the position as the firstborn among three siblings to Mr. Sudarmaji and Mrs. Marni Arie Sukentri. Her upbringing took place in Medan, specifically in Medan Labuhan District, and she presently lives at Jl. Pancing V Ling III, Gang Washliyani.

Her academic path commenced at Washliyani, where she completed her studies in 2016. She proceeded to Hang Tuah 2 Titipapan, graduating in 2019, and subsequently pursued her high school education at Raksana 2 Medan, finishing in 2021.

Following her high school graduation, she promptly joined the English Language Education Study Program at Potensi Utama University in Medan.