



Determining students' speaking skill based on guessing game at the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 2 Lolofitu Moi

Asirida Waruwu¹, Afore Tahir Harefa², Kristof Martin Efori Telaumbanua³,
Elwin Piarawan Zebua⁴

^{1,3,3,4}Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Nias, Gunungsitoli, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This research entitled "Determining Students' Speaking Skill Based on Guessing Game at the Eighth Grade of SMP Negeri 2 Lolofitu Moi" aims to determine students' speaking skill levels and the factors influencing them through the use of a guessing game. This study employed a qualitative descriptive method with data collected from observation and interviews with students and an English teacher. The results showed that most students were at the basic speaking level, able to produce simple sentences but still made errors in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. The guessing game made learning more interactive and enjoyable, increased students' confidence, and encouraged active participation. However, challenges such as limited vocabulary and fear of mistakes remained. It can be concluded that guessing games effectively improved students' motivation and speaking confidence, although further practice is needed to enhance fluency and accuracy.

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Corresponding Author:

Asirida Waruwu,
English Education,
Universitas Nias,
Jl. Yos Sudarso No. 118/E-S, Ombolata Ulu, Gunungsitoli, Kota Gunungsitoli, 22812, Indonesia
Email: asridawaruwu01@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is an important skill in language learning especially in English language. Speaking is an oral language skill that enables us to clearly and efficiently convey messages, ideas, or information to others. In Leonita et al. (2023) argued that speaking skills are one of the most essential components of English language skills since they allow you to convey meaning in the form of ideas, thoughts, feelings, opinions, and sympathies. Students must be able to communicate, explain their ideas, and actively participate in class discussions and other academic activities. Furthermore, speaking helps pupils gain confidence, especially when speaking in public, delivering presentations, or engaging with teachers and friends. Speaking abilities can include attributes such as fluency, clarity, and precise language use, as well as tone and nonverbal emotions that enhance communication.

According to Huda et al. (2024) stated that speaking is a productive ability that generates something in order to interact with others. This speaking skill is very important for students where they engage in meaningful conversation and express themselves well. Strong speaking skills will make it easier for students to communicate with teachers and friends, express themselves, and

participate actively in class activities. In both group conversations and classroom presentations, students who speak with confidence and fluency are better equipped to understand and explain the subject matter. Students with great speaking skills also tend to be more socially adaptive since they can express their opinions and communicate with others in an efficient manner. Speaking improves students' academic performance and long-term success, especially in terms of preparing them for the working world. Thus, early speaking practice will help children in many areas of their lives later on. The achievement of speaking skills for students is of course also influenced by various factors, one of which is the method and atmosphere of learning carried out in the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

One of the teaching strategies often used by teachers in schools is guessing games. Guessing game is a game that can be used as an effective tool in activating students' speaking ability. By Agnesia and Astutik (2022) explained that guessing games can be an excellent educational method for teachers to improve their students' fluency in spoken English. Guessing game is communicative language activities that get students to think critically, estimate answers, and engage in participatory learning activities while having fun. Supported by Meiningsih & Madya (2021) stated that guessing games improve speaking skills in all areas, including pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and understanding. The guessing game approach seeks to enhance students' language proficiency, particularly in the areas of speaking, listening, and vocabulary enrichment. Guessing game encourage active language use by providing a joyful and dynamic learning environment free from pressure. As Asdar & Mujahidah (2024) said that interactive and entertaining techniques, like guessing games, can greatly improve speaking abilities. As a result, by utilizing guessing games in place of more traditional teaching approaches, students are able to learn actively and assimilate the information more readily. The guessing game also increases students' interest in learning and their motivation to learn due to the element of fun in learning.

As stated in the flow of learning objectives (ATP) in phase D of 2024/2025 used in grade eighth of SMP Negeri 2 Lolofitu Moi, one of the English learning outcomes is that students are expected to be able to speak in English to exchange ideas, experiences, opinions, and views with teachers, peers, and others. They engage in discussions, express opinions, and use simple sentence structures and verbs to explain and clarify their answers. Speaking is an essential language learning skill that every student should have. Students' speaking skills are expected to develop more naturally and happily as a result. They should also improve their speaking fluency, extensive vocabulary, and taught self-assurance in using expressive language. Reducing speaking anxiety or dread is another important area that needs to be improved in order to give pupils the confidence to express their thoughts without fear of making a mistake. Students should also be passionate and interested in the learning process and not lose interest in the classroom setting.

After the researcher has conducted a preliminary study at SMP Negeri 2 Lolofitu Moi as the intended research location, by conducting an interview with one of English teacher at the school. Researcher conducted interviews about the obstacles experienced by students in learning English at the school. Students face a number of challenges when learning English especially in terms of their speaking skills, including: Limited vocabulary, not actively participating in speaking, less of supported strategy/ activity in speaking, Difficulty in pronunciation English words properly and correctly, Lack of interactive activity in speaking, and less of appropriate material passed level of speaking, a lack of confidence in speaking because they are embarrassed and afraid of making mistakes in English grammar and pronunciation; a limited vocabulary that makes it difficult for them to construct sentences correctly; mistakes or difficulties in correctly pronouncing English words; difficulty applying or composing sentences with proper grammar; a tendency for students to listen more to the teacher's explanations than to actively participate in speaking; a tendency for students to become bored while learning English; and the use of repetitive and less varied vocabulary.

This study contributes to the development of effective English language learning strategies by highlighting the use of guessing games as an interactive approach to enhance students' speaking skills at SMP Negeri 2 Lolofitu Moi. By engaging students in enjoyable and communicative activities, this strategy encourages active language use, reduces speaking anxiety, and strengthens students' confidence in expressing their ideas. It provides a meaningful and low-cost solution for improving speaking competence in junior high school contexts, particularly in rural or limited-resource areas. Furthermore, the findings are expected to offer valuable insights for English teachers and curriculum developers to design more student-centered, engaging, and contextually relevant learning environments that foster both linguistic ability and learner motivation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To conduct this research, the researcher employed a qualitative descriptive method, which is designed to describe and explain a phenomenon in depth through the use of non-numerical data. According to Furidha (2024), qualitative descriptive research aims to provide a systematic, factual, and accurate account of the characteristics, facts, and relationships among the phenomena being investigated. Similarly, ZA et al. (2022) state that the descriptive approach seeks to depict current conditions as they naturally occur without any manipulation of variables, thereby allowing a comprehensive understanding of the research context. In essence, the qualitative descriptive method enables the researcher to present detailed descriptions of real-life situations and interpret them meaningfully. Therefore, this approach was considered appropriate for this study as it focuses on identifying and analyzing students' English-speaking skills, particularly in terms of fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension as demonstrated during the guessing game activity.

The study was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Lolofitu Moi and involved eighth-grade students along with an English teacher as participants. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation to obtain comprehensive and reliable information. Observation was employed to record students' performance and behavior during the guessing game activities, while interviews with both the students and the English teacher were conducted to explore their perceptions and experiences regarding the use of guessing games in developing English speaking skills.

The data in this research were analyzed qualitatively through three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction stage, the researcher selected and simplified relevant data from observations, interviews, and speaking tests based on five indicators of speaking skills: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The reduced data were then presented in descriptive narratives and tables to identify patterns and relationships, and conclusions were drawn from all analyzed data to answer the research questions. The assessment of students' speaking skills followed the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale adapted from Brown and Hughes (Palayukan et al., 2025), which provided an objective and systematic framework for evaluating students' proficiency. To ensure consistency and clarity in the evaluation process, the scoring rubric used in this study is presented in the following table.

Table 1. Scoring rubric of students' speaking skill

Score	Description	Speaking Ability Indicators
0	No Proficiency	The student cannot produce understandable utterances; unable to communicate.
0+	Memorized Proficiency	The student can produce isolated words or memorized phrases but cannot form sentences independently.
1	Elementary Proficiency	The student can produce simple sentences for basic needs; frequent pauses and grammatical errors occur.
1+	Elementary Plus	The student can participate in short exchanges and respond with limited but

Score	Description	Speaking Ability Indicators
	Proficiency	comprehensible vocabulary and better fluency.

Each of the five components was scored individually for every student. To determine the final speaking skill level, the researcher calculated the average of all five component scores using the following formula:

Where:

$$\text{Average Score per Student} = \frac{P + G + V + F + C}{5}$$

P = Pronunciation, G = Grammar, V = Vocabulary, F = Fluency, C = Comprehension.

After obtaining the average score, the student's final speaking level was determined by matching the score with the ILR scale as follows:

Table 2. Criteria for determining students' final speaking level (based on ilr scale)

Average Range	Final Level (ILR)	Interpretation
0.0 - 0.4	0	No Proficiency
0.5 - 0.9	0+	Memorized Proficiency
1.0 - 1.4	1	Elementary Proficiency
1.5 - 1.9	1+	Elementary Plus Proficiency
≥ 2.0	2	Limited Working Proficiency

This system allowed the researcher to evaluate students' speaking performance objectively and consistently across all aspects while minimizing subjective bias. The ILR scale also provided a clear standard for identifying students' strengths and weaknesses and for measuring their progress in English speaking skills through the Guessing Game activity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section, the researcher presents the findings obtained from the research conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Lolofitu Moi. Observations were carried out to determine the students' levels of speaking skills when using guessing games, while interviews with both the students and the English teacher were conducted to explore their opinions and perceptions of the effectiveness of this strategy.

To achieve the main objective of the study, which was to identify the students' speaking skill levels through the use of guessing games in English language learning, the researcher observed eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Lolofitu Moi. A speaking assessment rubric was used to measure five key indicators of speaking performance: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The students' performances were categorized according to the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Speaking Proficiency Scale. A total of 20 students participated in the observation.

To provide a clearer overview of the distribution of students' speaking skill levels, the following diagram presents the percentage of students at each final ILR level.

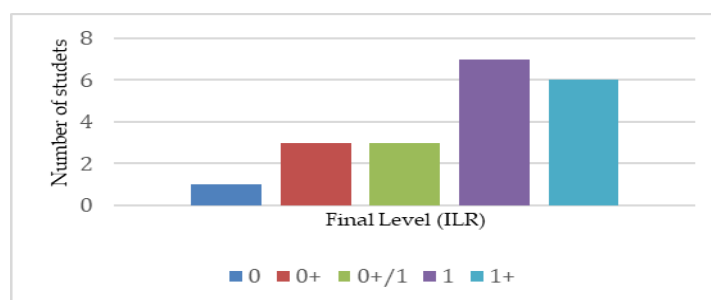


Figure 1. Distribution of students' final speaking skill levels (ILR)

The diagram above illustrates the distribution of students' speaking skill levels based on the ILR scale. Out of 20 students observed, the results show that only one student (5%) remained at Level 0, indicating very limited ability and an inability to construct meaningful sentences. Meanwhile, three students (15%) were categorized at Level 0+, showing that they were able to pronounce memorized words or phrases but still lacked the ability to form sentences. Another three students (15%) were positioned at the transitional level (0+/1), where they were beginning to form simple sentences but still had difficulties in fluency and comprehension.

The majority of students were found at Level 1 (Elementary Proficiency), consisting of seven students (35%). At this stage, students were able to produce simple sentences to express basic ideas, although frequent errors in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary remained. In addition, six students (30%) reached Level 1+ (Elementary Plus). This group showed more confidence in speaking, clearer pronunciation, and better comprehension, although they had not yet consistently met the requirements for Level 2.

These findings indicate that most students are still situated within the elementary range (Level 1 and 1+), which reflects that their speaking skills are developing but remain limited to simple communication. The presence of students at Level 0 and 0+ highlights the gap between individuals in the class, where some are still struggling to participate actively in spoken interaction. On the other hand, the progress of those at Level 1+ demonstrates the potential impact of the guessing game in encouraging greater participation, increasing vocabulary use, and improving fluency.

In addition to observation, the researcher also collected data through interviews with eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Lolofitu Moi. These interviews were conducted on 26 July 2025 with the aim of finding out how students responded to the use of guessing games in English language learning, as well as to see the extent to which this strategy contributed to the development of their speaking skills. Through these interviews, the researcher sought to explore the students' experiences, opinions, and impressions of participating in learning activities that utilize guessing games, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of their impact on students' speaking skills.

To provide a clearer picture of the students' response to the use of guessing games, the interview results can be seen in Figure 4.2 below.

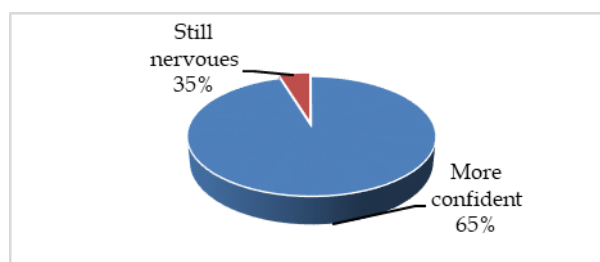


Figure 2. Summary of student responses to the guessing game

The diagram shows how students responded to the use of the guessing game in their English class. Most of them, about 65%, said that they felt more confident and motivated to speak when learning through the game. They mentioned that the activity made the classroom atmosphere more relaxed and enjoyable. On the other hand, 35% of the students still felt hesitant to speak because of limited vocabulary or the fear of making mistakes. This finding suggests that the guessing game helped many students become more active, but some of them still need extra support to overcome their difficulties.

After interviewing the students, the researcher continued to collect data through interview with one of English teacher who teach in eighth grade at SMP Negeri 2 Lolofitu Moi. This interview was conducted on 5 August 2025 with the aim of obtaining teacher's views on the use of guessing games as a learning strategy to support students' speaking skills in English language learning. Through the interview, the researcher sought to explore the teacher's understanding of the effectiveness, benefits, and challenges faced in implementing guessing games in the classroom.

To provide a clearer picture of the main obstacles in implementing guessing games (according to teachers), the interview results can be seen in Figure 4.3 below.

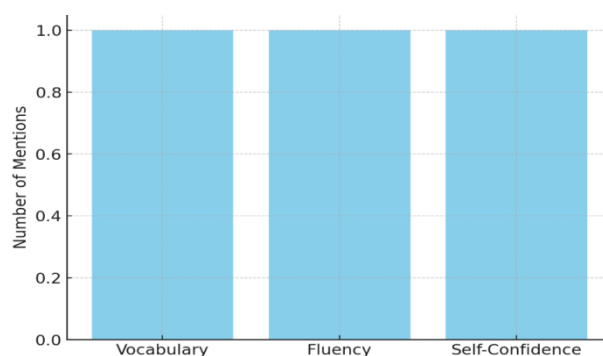


Figure 3. Aspects that improved according to teachers

The majority, 85% of students (17 students), expressed that they would be interested because this method is fun, motivating, and helps reduce boredom during lessons. On the other hand, 15% of students (3 students) were not sure about using it frequently, as they felt that their limited speaking ability might hinder their participation. The diagram highlights the teacher's view on which speaking aspects improved the most when students played the guessing game. The teacher noticed that vocabulary and fluency developed significantly, as many students dared to use new words and speak more smoothly. Another important aspect that improved was students' confidence, since they became less afraid of trying to speak in front of their peers. Even though grammar and pronunciation were still areas of weakness, the teacher believed that students were slowly making progress in those aspects as well.

After describing the results of the research above, the researcher will then provide a discussion of the research results to answer the formulation of the problem, namely to identify the students' speaking skill level based on guessing game at the Eighth Grade of SMP Negeri 2 Lolofitu Moi and to analyze why students' speaking skill level based on guessing game can occur at the Eighth Grade of SMP Negeri 2 Lolofitu Moi.

The Students' Speaking Skill Level Based on Guessing Game at the Eighth Grade of SMP Negeri 2 Lolofitu Moi

Based on observations of 20 eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Lolofitu Moi, it can be understood that the students' speaking skills through the use of guessing games are still in the basic category according to the ILR (Interagency Language Roundtable) scale, which is divided into five categories of student speaking skills, namely pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The following is a discussion of the findings from the observation data, which can be adjusted according to the Interagency Language Roundtable (2011).

First, most students are at Level 1, which means that they can use simple sentences to answer questions and convey ideas, although there are still many errors in pronunciation, grammar, and limited vocabulary. Then, some students also began to show improvement towards

Level 1+, particularly in terms of pronunciation, grammar, and comprehension. These students were more confident, more fluent, and began to be able to combine their vocabulary into more meaningful sentences, albeit still simple ones. This shows that the use of guessing games can provide a positive boost to students' courage to speak and try to express their ideas without being too afraid of making mistakes.

On the other hand, there are also a number of students who are still at Level 0 to 0+, which means that their abilities are still limited to mentioning basic vocabulary or repeating words and phrases that they have memorized. Students in this category tend to have difficulty forming sentences, experience long pauses when speaking, and some even remain silent more often due to a lack of confidence.

Thus, it can be concluded that the speaking skills of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Lolofitu Moi through the guessing game method are generally still at a basic level (Level 0 - 1+). However, the fact that some students have reached Level 1+ indicates that the guessing game has the potential to improve speaking skills, especially in terms of fluency and the courage of students to actively use English.

The Reason of Students' Speaking Skill Level Can Occur Based on Guessing Game at the Eighth Grade of SMP Negeri 2 Lolofitu Moi

The following is a discussion of the two sets of findings from interviews with students and interviews with English teachers in the eighth grade at SMP Negeri 2 Lolofitu Moi regarding the use of guessing games in English language learning to determine the level of students' speaking skills. The main purpose of this discussion of the two interview results is to determine why students' speaking skill levels based on guessing games occur in the eighth grade at SMP Negeri 2 Lolofitu Moi. This is based on interviews with students to explore how students responded to the use of guessing games in English language learning, as well as to see the extent to which this strategy contributed to the development of their speaking skills. Meanwhile, the interview with the teacher aimed to obtain the teacher's views on the use of guessing games as a learning strategy to support students' speaking skills in English language learning. Through the interview, the researcher sought to explore the teacher's understanding of the effectiveness, benefits, and challenges faced in implementing guessing games in the classroom. The following are the results of the discussion.

Based on interviews with eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Lolofitu Moi, the implementation of guessing games had a positive impact on their motivation and courage to speak English. Most students felt that the learning atmosphere became more enjoyable, interactive, and less boring. This has made them more enthusiastic and confident to try speaking, despite still facing challenges such as limited vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, and fear of making mistakes. The fear of making mistakes lowers students' self-confidence and participation in English classroom presentations, yet supportive surroundings can help them overcome this. A small number of students also admitted to still feeling awkward when asked to explain difficult words or speak in front of their peers due to fear of making mistakes, but overall, the guessing game has helped them participate more actively in speaking activities.

The students' views are in line with the results of interviews with English teachers. Teachers assessed that guessing games are quite effective because they create a relaxed learning atmosphere and encourage students to speak more actively than conventional methods. Rohimah & Kiptiyah (2025), Guess games help students improve their speaking skills by fostering a comfortable learning environment and promoting participation in the lesson. Students began to confidently use new vocabulary they encountered during the game, although mistakes in grammar and pronunciation still frequently occurred. According to the teacher, the most noticeable change is the increase in students' confidence, as they feel supported by their peers and the teacher during the learning process. With a more relaxed classroom atmosphere, students feel free to try speaking without fear of being punished or mocked for their mistakes. Peer-correction tactics in the

classroom can increase student autonomy, interaction, and participation while also creating a comfortable learning atmosphere. (Luna López et al., 2022).

Analysis of these two interviews shows that there is consistency between the students' experiences and the teachers' observations. The improvement in students' speaking skills through guessing games occurred due to supporting factors such as a pleasant learning atmosphere, support from teachers and friends, and more opportunities for students to practice speaking directly. However, both students and teachers are aware of the challenges that still need to be addressed, such as limited vocabulary, nervousness, differences in ability among students, and time constraints for implementing the game. The teacher added that this method does not always have the same impact on all students; active students usually adapt more quickly, while shy students or those with limited vocabulary require more time. It is emphasized by Nirwaty (2020) that games can help students develop their speaking skills, but their effectiveness is influenced by factors such as restricted vocabulary and student competence.

CONCLUSION

Provide a statement that what is expected, as stated in the "Introduction" chapter can ultimately result in "Results and Discussion" chapter, so there is compatibility. Moreover, it can also be added the prospect of the development of research results and application prospects of further studies into the next (based on result and discussion).

Based on the results of research conducted in class VIII of SMP Negeri 2 Lolofitu Moi, it can be concluded that students' speaking skills through the use of guessing games are still at a basic level according to the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale (Level 0-1+). Most students are able to form simple sentences and answer basic questions, but they still often make mistakes in grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Nevertheless, there are some students who are beginning to show improvement, particularly in pronunciation and comprehension, although there are also students who tend to be passive and can only remember simple words or phrases. Overall, these findings indicate that students' speaking skills still require improvement, especially in terms of vocabulary mastery, grammar, and fluency.

Meanwhile, based on interviews with students and teacher, it was revealed that the use of guessing games had a positive effect on the development of students' speaking skills. Most students feel happier, more motivated, and more confident when learning through games, thereby increasing their courage to speak and expanding their vocabulary. This is also supported by teacher's observations, who assess that guessing games can create an interactive learning environment and encourage students to be more willing to try speaking, even though they still often make mistakes. However, students' speaking skills have not fully developed due to challenges such as limited vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, feelings of shyness or fear of making mistakes, differences in ability among students, and time constraints. Therefore, the level of students' speaking skills through guessing games can be achieved when they are supported by a pleasant learning environment, teacher guidance, and self-confidence, but may not be optimal if these obstacles are not addressed.

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