

THE EFFECT OF USING THE HANGMAN GAME AS A TEACHING MEDIA TO IMPROVE ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of using the Hangman Game as a teaching medium to improve students' English-speaking skills. It specifically examined whether the use of the Hangman Game contributed to improvements in students' fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and speaking confidence. This study employed a quantitative pre-experimental research design using a one-group pre-test–post-test design. The participants were 15 eighth-grade students of SMPIT An-Nida' Lubuklinggau in the 2024/2025 academic year, selected through total sampling. Data were collected through speaking tests administered before and after the treatment and were analyzed using descriptive statistics and a paired-samples t-test. The results showed that the students' mean speaking score increased from 66.33 in the pre-test to 76.33 in the post-test, while the standard deviation decreased from 7.67 to 5.81. The paired-samples t-test also showed a significant difference between students' speaking performance before and after the implementation of the Hangman Game. The improvement was particularly observed in vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. These findings indicate that the Hangman Game can be an effective and practical teaching medium for developing English-speaking skills among junior high school EFL learners.

Keywords: *The Hangman Game, Teaching Media, Speaking Skills*

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INTRODUCTION

There are four language skills in English, one of which is speaking. In this era, the ability to speak English is needed across sectors, including education, economics, scientific meetings, conferences, and more. Many companies prefer applicants who can master English. English-speaking proficiency is widely recognized as an essential competence for EFL learners, as it enables effective communication in academic, professional, and social contexts (Utami, 2021). According to Rosalina et al (2025), speaking in both first and second languages is a skill that should be given the same consideration as literary skills. The majority of people believe that speaking is the most crucial aspect of learning a second or

foreign language, and the ability to communicate successfully is used to determine success. Students studying English need to become proficient in four key areas: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Speaking is considered the most crucial of the four abilities to master. Despite its importance, many students continue to experience difficulties in developing speaking skills, particularly in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical accuracy (Nurarifah et al., 2025). These findings highlight the need for instructional strategies that provide students with meaningful opportunities to practice speaking in engaging classroom environments. Almost everyone produces a lot of words every day, or even more. So, speaking is a natural ability that people can learn and struggle with. Based on the explanation above, English-speaking is a skill that deserves attention as a literary skill in both the first and second languages and requires opportunities for rehearsal, feedback, and successful meaning in conversation (Utami, 2021). Nurarifah et al. (2025) explained that most students had a low level of English-speaking ability, either in pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary.

Teaching English in junior high schools includes four language skills, namely: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. All of this is supported by other language elements, namely vocabulary, Grammar, and pronunciation, in accordance with the theme, as a means of achieving (Ernaeni et al., 2023). The ability to speak English is a must in the era of communication and globalization. Studying English in Junior High School, especially speaking competence, is highly prioritized. This is a self-development tool for students in science, technology, and art.

Fluency, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and the actual substance of speaking are examples of supporting competencies in speaking. According to Concesal & Roslaini (2024), speaking is the process of creating and communicating meaning in a range of circumstances through gestures and words. According to Rosalina et al., (2025), Speaking competence consists of several interrelated components, including fluency, grammar, pronunciation, and comprehension. Fluency refers to the ability to produce speech naturally with appropriate rhythm, intonation, stress, and pacing. Grammar involves the accurate use of grammatical structures to convey meaning effectively. Pronunciation refers to the clear and intelligible production of spoken language so that listeners can understand the intended message. Meanwhile, comprehension reflects speakers' ability to understand and respond appropriately during communication. These components collectively contribute to successful oral communication and are therefore essential aspects of speaking proficiency.

Previous studies have consistently reported that many EFL students experience difficulties in developing speaking skills due to limited vocabulary, inaccurate pronunciation, low confidence, and insufficient opportunities for oral practice (Nurarifah et al., 2025). These challenges often reduce students' participation during classroom activities and make speaking one of the most difficult language skills to master. Furthermore, researchers have emphasized that engaging instructional media is needed to create interactive learning environments and encourage students to participate actively in speaking activities. This happens for many reasons, such as students not being motivated to learn due to the

teacher's poor performance, which leads them to dislike how the teacher applies it. In addition, a limited vocabulary makes them even more reluctant to learn foreign languages. To overcome these problems, teachers must teach students in interesting ways. Before teaching English, the teacher should first explain what English is. In learning a foreign language, four skills must be mastered, namely, reading, speaking, writing, and listening.

When teaching or learning English, media are needed as teaching materials so that students can easily understand the subject matter. Media is something that can convey information and support teaching and learning activities (Nurammida et al., 2024). Therefore, this research adopts an innovative approach using the Hangman game. The digital media categories include, among other things: a) interpersonal communication media, such as email; b) interactive gaming media, like games; c) media for information searching, such as searches on the internet (Google, Yahoo, etc.); d) participatory media, such as internet chat rooms (Nurarifah et al., 2025). All the media available today should be used as best as possible to support students' abilities and skills, especially in improving their ability to speak English. By integrating this technology, it is hoped that students will participate more actively in the learning process, strengthen relationships between words, and improve their language skills organically. To help the students improve their English skills, the teacher has to be more creative in creating teaching and learning activities in the classroom. The teacher needs to create interesting activities in the classroom. Syakur, (2020) states that games are interesting, motivating, and amusing. Besides that, using games in the teaching and learning process is considered helpful.

The advancement of technology is a sign of this digital age. Such technological developments include computers, the Internet, and mobile phones. The presence of technology in this digital age has a significant impact on the order of human life, including the patterns of learning and dissemination of information. According to Adawiyah & Dalimunthe (2024), learning media are educational resources used to engage students' cognition, emotions, focus, or skills, thereby facilitating the learning process. One of the learning media for practicing students' English-speaking skills is games. The implementation of technology in English language learning in Indonesia is considered insufficient, as most teachers remain highly dependent on textbooks. That issue leads students to have understanding skills, but be unable to use the language. Using advanced technology as learning media in English classrooms will improve students' interest in learning the language and enhance their language skills (Cahyadi et al., 2022). One example of advanced technology that can be used as learning media is the Hangman Game.

Games play a major role in student-centered learning, enabling students to engage fully in learning. Games, in particular, have a significant role in student-centered learning and facilitate active engagement in the learning process. This statement reinforces the researcher's decision to incorporate games into the research (Kurniawan et al., 2024). A game is a structured form of play typically played for fun, pleasure, or education. It can also help people develop skills or compete with others. A game is an engaging and enjoyable activity that often

requires effort and involves players interacting with each other (Bryan et al., 2025).

Hangman is a word-guessing game in which learners identify hidden words by predicting letters within a limited number of attempts. In EFL classrooms, the game has been widely used to reinforce vocabulary acquisition, spelling, and pronunciation through repeated exposure to target words and active learner participation. These characteristics make the Hangman Game a potentially valuable instructional medium for speaking activities, as students are encouraged not only to recognize words but also to pronounce them accurately and use them in oral communication.

In this research, researchers use the Hangman Game to improve English speaking skills. Hangman is a guessing game represented by a set number of dashes. The dashes represent unknown words and the clues. It involves progressive drawing, with a line for each incorrect answer. The Hangman game, played by two or more people, consists of a host and players. The players guess letter by letter, while the host draws the part of the hangman. This game focuses on spelling, pronunciation, and vocabulary. According to Munikasari et al., (2021) There are some advantages of the Hangman game. First, the Hangman game provides motivation for students. It can make students interested in language learning. Second, the Hangman game can avoid monotony. Third, students' skills, particularly pronunciation, concentration, and spelling, can be improved. Fourth, it trains them to be competitive naturally and also cooperate at the same time. The use of the Hangman game is intended to provide an interactive and fun learning experience while effectively increasing students' speaking ability.

Previous studies have demonstrated that the Hangman game is effective for improving vocabulary mastery, spelling, reading comprehension, and learners' motivation in English classrooms. However, these studies have predominantly examined Hangman as a vocabulary-learning activity rather than as a pedagogical strategy for developing productive language skills, particularly speaking. Although vocabulary knowledge supports oral communication, improvement in vocabulary does not necessarily translate into better speaking performance, which also requires fluency, pronunciation, confidence, and spontaneous language production. Consequently, empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of the Hangman game in enhancing English speaking skills remains limited, especially in junior high school EFL contexts. This gap highlights the need for further investigation into whether the Hangman game can function not only as a vocabulary-learning tool but also as an interactive instructional medium for improving students' speaking performance. Based on the research gap identified above, this study addresses research questions is there a significant difference in students' English-speaking skills before and after being taught using the Hangman game?. Accordingly, this study aims Tt investigate whether the use of the Hangman game significantly improves students' English-speaking skills.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative pre-experimental research design using a one-group pre-test–post-test design. This design was selected because it enabled the researcher to measure students' speaking performance before and after the implementation of the Hangman Game. The comparison between the pre-test and post-test scores was used to determine the effectiveness of the treatment. As Creswell (2018) A quantitative experimental design examines the relationship between variables and the effects of interventions within a controlled environment. This study applies an experimental approach to the effect of using the hangman game as a teaching medium to improve English speaking skills. This research used a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental one-group pre-test-post-test design because the intervention was given in an experimental group without a control group, and the comparison tests were given before and after the intervention to assess the effect of using the hangman game as a teaching medium to improve English speaking skills (Syafryadin & Safnil, 2024).

The independent variable was the hangman game, and the dependent variable was English-speaking skills. This design was chosen for this case because it directly measured the impact of the hangman game on students' speaking ability. Also, this design was selected for its focus on immediate effects, allowing for a direct evaluation of changes that occur following the implementation of the hangman game. Thus, this design is crucial for assessing the immediate benefits of the hangman game, providing valuable insights into its effectiveness without the complexity and resource requirements of more elaborate experimental designs.

Participant

The participants of this study eighth-grade students of SMPIT An-Nida' Lubuklinggau in the 2024/2025 academic year. The participants were selected through total sampling, as the researcher included all students in the class. This sampling technique was chosen due to the relatively small class size and to ensure that every student had an equal opportunity to participate in the study.

Instrument

The researchers utilized both a pre-test and a post-test to gauge changes in speaking skills before and after the intervention. Before the treatment, the students were given a pre-test to measure their initial speaking ability. The researcher explained the test instructions clearly before the test began. The students were instructed to speak individually in English based on the topic and vocabulary provided by the researcher. Each student was asked to pronounce the target words and use them in simple spoken sentences. The students were encouraged to speak independently and were not allowed to receive assistance from their classmates during the test. The researcher listened to each student's performance and assessed their pronunciation, vocabulary use, and fluency using the prepared scoring rubric.

Data Collection and Analysis

To investigate the impact of the intervention, pre-test and post-test data were analyzed using SPSS software. The researchers analyzed the quantitative

survey data using descriptive statistics, including percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

The purpose of this study was to determine how teachers use the hangman game to teach and learn English, as it has been shown to improve speaking abilities. The students' pretest and posttest results were used to gather the data. The group was given the pretest first. The pretest results reveal information on the speaking proficiency of the groups. After the group had the therapies, the posttest was given to them. The students' speaking abilities are scored using the analytical scoring system that was modified from Arthur Hughes. Pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency are the scoring factors employed in this test. (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) exactly paired t-test formula to know the mean before and after giving treatment. Here is interpretation of SPSS output:

Table 1 Paired Samples Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experiment pre-test Pair 1	66,333 3	1 5	7,66874	1,98006
Experiment post test	76,333 3	1 5	5,81460	1,50132

According to several student statistics, the average speaking skill before and after using the Hangman game was 66,34, and the average speaking skill after using the game was 76,34. The students' speaking skill was 15 while they were not using the Hangman game. The standard deviations were 7.67 before and 5,81 after playing the Hangman game. According to this description, the average (mean) level of students' speaking skill mastery before and after using the Hangman game was 66.34 and 76.34, respectively. This indicates that utilizing the hangman game to improve speaking skills was more effective. The results of the paired statistical analysis also confirmed a significant difference between the students' speaking performance before and after the treatment. The improvement in students' speaking performance may be attributed to the interactive nature of the Hangman Game. Unlike conventional teacher-centered instruction, the game required students to actively retrieve vocabulary, pronounce target words, and communicate with peers during the guessing process. These repeated opportunities for oral production likely contributed to greater fluency and pronunciation accuracy while reducing students' hesitation to speak. Therefore, the observed improvement was not merely the result of vocabulary exposure but

also of increased speaking practice in a supportive classroom environment. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the implementation of the Hangman Game was associated with improvements in students' speaking performance, particularly in pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. These improvements suggest that integrating game-based activities into speaking instruction provides learners with repeated opportunities to retrieve vocabulary, practice pronunciation, and produce spoken language in an engaging classroom context. Consequently, the Hangman Game may serve as an effective instructional medium for supporting the development of English-speaking skills among junior high school EFL learners.

Based on the analysis of the students' speaking achievement, the pre-test mean score was 66.33, while the post-test mean score increased to 76.33. The standard deviation also decreased from 7.67 in the pre-test to 5.81 in the post-test, indicating that the distribution of students' scores became more consistent after the implementation of the Hangman Game. These results suggest that the students showed noticeable improvement in speaking skills after receiving treatment using the Hangman Game media.

This study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of using the Hangman Game as a teaching medium in improving students' English speaking skills. The findings were based on classroom implementation, observation, and quantitative analysis using pre-test and post-test scores. The speaking skills examined in this study included pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency, which were assessed using an analytical scoring rubric. The findings are presented below to show how the Hangman Game contributed to changes in students' speaking performance.

Before the treatment was given, the students were asked to perform a pre-test in order to measure their initial speaking ability. Based on the pre-test results, the mean score of the students' speaking performance was 66.33, which indicates that, on average, the students were categorized as having a moderate or fairly good speaking ability. The results also revealed several common problems. During the pre-test activity, many students struggled with vocabulary retrieval and pronunciation accuracy. Some students hesitated for a long time before speaking, and several others still relied on Indonesian words when they ran out of English words. These results suggested that although students had some preliminary knowledge of English, they lacked fluency and confidence when speaking spontaneously.

After several meetings using the Hangman Game as a teaching medium, a post-test was administered to measure the improvement in students' speaking skills. The results of the post-test showed a clear increase in performance. The mean score increased from 66.33 in the pre-test to 76.33 in the post-test. The standard deviation also decreased from 7.67 to 5.81, meaning the distribution of the scores became more consistent. This decrease in score variation suggests that most students benefited from the intervention and their scores tended to cluster in a higher range.

The results revealed that the Hangman Game was effective not only in raising the overall mean score but also in improving specific speaking aspects. First, students' vocabulary mastery showed noticeable improvement. During the

pre-test, students tended to use only limited lexical items or basic English words; meanwhile, in the post-test, students were able to mention more varied vocabulary and used it appropriately in their sentences. The Hangman Game exposed students to repeated guessing activities, which helped reinforce new vocabulary and recall previously learned words. As a result, vocabulary retention became better and more natural.

Second, students' pronunciation showed a positive change. During the pre-test, many students mispronounced several English words, particularly those with unfamiliar letter combinations. Through the Hangman Game, students saw the written form of the word while simultaneously being required to pronounce it aloud. This combination of spelling and speaking practice helped the students become more aware of letter-sound correspondence. As a consequence, they demonstrated more accurate pronunciation during the post-test.

Third, students' fluency improved significantly. The game-based activity helped to reduce students' tension and hesitation when speaking. Students became more spontaneous and confident in producing language because the learning environment was interactive and enjoyable. In classroom observations, students were more active in expressing ideas, guessing words, and participating in discussions. They had fewer pauses and fewer breakdowns in speech during the post-test compared to the pre-test. The increasing fluency was also supported by the fact that students had meaningful speaking practice while playing the game, which allowed them to produce language in a natural and communicative context.

The findings also demonstrated behavioral improvements during the learning process. Initially, during the first meeting, some students were passive, reluctant to speak, or afraid of making mistakes. However, after the implementation of the Hangman Game, most students became more motivated and confident. They actively competed in guessing the hidden words, discussing possible answers with peers, and correcting their pronunciation when necessary. These behavioral changes suggested that the game's competitive and entertaining nature stimulated students' intrinsic motivation. The activity helped reduce classroom anxiety and made speaking practice enjoyable rather than stressful.

From a classroom management perspective, the Hangman Game also contributed to increasing student engagement. Observational data showed that students participated more actively, interacted more frequently with their classmates, and collaborated to solve problems during gameplay. Students discussed vocabulary choices, made predictions, and practiced speaking when it was their turn. This environment encouraged natural communication in English, which is essential in speaking skill development. The game created a low-pressure context that supported language acquisition and provided sufficient exposure and interaction.

Additionally, the statistical analysis confirmed the effectiveness of the Hangman Game. The difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores indicated that the intervention had a significant impact on improving speaking skills. The improvement in the mean score and the decrease in standard deviation indicated that students became more proficient and consistent in their speaking

performance. The results can therefore be interpreted as evidence that the Hangman Game is a valuable instructional medium for teaching English speaking.

Discussion

The research findings highlight a significant effect of using the Hangman game as a teaching medium to improve English speaking skills. This means that the implementation of the Hangman Game had a positive effect on the development of the students' speaking ability. The improvement is evident not only in the increase in the average score but also in the reduced variation in students' performance, demonstrating that the learning approach was effective and beneficial for most students in the class. This opinion is also supported by Bryan et al., (2025) Hangman is a classic word-guessing game where one person thinks of a word. The other tries to figure it out by guessing. This can help and advise educators on how to use games as an exciting motivator to improve students' vocabulary and knowledge. Using various games can increase students' interest in learning English. Instead of conveying the learning material in a boring way, such as by explaining the material and giving assignments, the teacher should incorporate games into the learning process because most students like to play games, even simple games. This game-based teaching method, especially in teaching English, must be appropriate for the teacher because, besides students mostly liking to play games, they also acquire material and new vocabulary more easily for English speaking (Dharmayasa, 2022).

The Hangman Game has been widely recognized as a word-based instructional activity that supports English language learning by encouraging learners to identify target words through repeated guessing and immediate feedback. Previous studies have shown that this game effectively promotes vocabulary acquisition and pronunciation practice by repeatedly exposing students to the spelling and pronunciation of target words. In the present study, these characteristics have contributed to improvements in students' speaking performance. As students were required not only to identify the target words but also to pronounce and use them during classroom activities, they had more opportunities to practice oral production. This finding suggests that the pedagogical value of the Hangman Game extends beyond vocabulary learning and can also support the development of speaking skills when it is integrated into communicative classroom activities. There are multiple ways to play the Hangman game. Both offline and online Hangman games are available. Previously, several academics employed the Hangman game as a digital or online game. However, researchers used Hangman offline and adapted it to the settings and requirements of EFL learners at the research site. It accounts for poor internet connections and the limitations of digital devices such as tablets and smartphones (Fadilah & Fadilah, 2022). The hangman game is one of many educational games that help students express their thoughts. Kahar (2023) States that the Hangman game is a word-guessing game and an interesting medium for learners, especially young learners. It helps students express their ideas and learn new words. In the Hangman game, students play according to the teacher's instructions. 7Hangman game is a game that students play in groups. The students must memorize the

words about everything. After that, the teacher divided the students into two groups. The students must guess the words, and if their guess is wrong, the teacher makes the picture that people hang on the board.

Previous studies have primarily investigated the use of the Hangman Game to improve students' vocabulary mastery rather than speaking skills. For example, Munikasari et al. (2021) reported that the Hangman Game effectively strengthened young learners' vocabulary through an interactive and enjoyable learning environment. Similarly, Fadilah and Fadilah (2022) found that the offline Hangman Game significantly improved EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition by encouraging active participation and repeated exposure to target words. Bryan et al. (2025) also demonstrated that the Hangman Game positively influenced students' vocabulary mastery and increased their engagement during English lessons.

The findings of the present study are consistent with previous studies, showing that the Hangman Game creates an engaging classroom atmosphere that supports language learning. However, unlike previous research, which mainly focused on vocabulary acquisition, the present study examined the effectiveness of the Hangman Game in improving students' speaking skills. The results indicate that the game contributed not only to vocabulary development but also to improvements in pronunciation and fluency, as reflected in the students' post-test scores. These findings suggest that the pedagogical value of the Hangman Game extends beyond vocabulary learning and can be adapted as an instructional medium for developing English speaking skills in junior high school EFL classrooms.

This game can be highly beneficial for students' English-speaking skills. Many students' understanding of speaking materials improves significantly when they use the Hangman game as a teaching medium in the classroom. Additionally, they express high levels of motivation, confidence, and effectiveness in applying the Hangman game in the classroom. In addition, the findings of this study also align with constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes that learners actively construct knowledge through meaningful interaction and experience. The Hangman Game provides opportunities for students to actively engage in problem-solving, collaboration, and verbal expression, which are essential components of communicative language learning. Through repeated exposure to vocabulary and immediate feedback from peers and teachers, students are encouraged to refine their pronunciation and improve fluency in a natural context. This supports the view that meaningful interaction plays a crucial role in second language acquisition.

Moreover, the positive learning atmosphere fostered by the Hangman Game significantly increased students' willingness to participate. Many students who were previously passive became more confident in expressing their ideas orally. This finding is consistent with previous studies suggesting that game-based learning can reduce anxiety and foster a supportive learning environment. When students feel less pressured and more engaged, they tend to take more risks in using the target language, which is essential for developing speaking competence. Another important implication of this study is that the Hangman Game

encourages collaborative learning. Students worked together to guess words, exchange ideas, and correct each other's pronunciation, which strengthened peer interaction and communication skills. Such collaboration not only enhances linguistic competence but also promotes social skills such as cooperation and mutual respect. Therefore, the Hangman Game functions not only as a language-learning tool but also as a medium for fostering positive classroom interaction. Overall, these findings reinforce the idea that integrating game-based activities like Hangman into English instruction can effectively support students' speaking development, motivation, and classroom engagement.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings suggest that the Hangman Game can serve as a practical alternative to traditional speaking instruction, particularly in junior high school EFL classrooms. Rather than using the game solely for vocabulary review, teachers may integrate it into speaking activities by requiring students to pronounce target words, explain their meanings, and use them in simple spoken sentences. However, teachers should carefully design the activities to ensure that students receive sufficient opportunities for meaningful oral communication rather than focusing exclusively on guessing letters. Therefore, the effectiveness of the Hangman Game depends not only on the game itself but also on how teachers facilitate interaction during classroom implementation.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the findings and data analysis, this research concludes that using the Hangman Game as a teaching medium positively improves students' speaking skills. The results of the pre-test and post-test demonstrated a significant increase in students' speaking scores, particularly in vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. Students showed greater accuracy in word choice, greater confidence in spoken language, and fewer pauses or hesitations during speaking activities. The Hangman Game also created a more interactive, enjoyable, and student-centered learning environment, which increased students' participation and motivation. Furthermore, the decrease in standard deviation from the pre-test to the post-test indicates that the improvement did not only occur in several students but was experienced consistently across the group. Therefore, the Hangman Game can be considered an effective and practical teaching strategy for enhancing students' English-speaking skills in junior high school settings. Further research may investigate the long-term effects of Hangman on students' speaking proficiency or compare its effectiveness to other games. Future studies may also involve larger sample sizes, different grade levels, or the integration of digital versions of Hangman to explore technological adaptation.

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