The Effectiveness of Using Werewolf Games to Enhance Speaking Skills

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness of the Werewolf game in improving the speaking skills of second-semester English Education students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidenreng Rappang. Speaking is one of the most essential language skills, yet many students face difficulties in fluency, confidence, and vocabulary usage. Traditional teaching methods often fail to actively engage students in meaningful communication. Therefore, implementing game-based learning, such as the Werewolf game, offers an interactive and enjoyable approach to language learning. This research employed a one-group pre-test and post-test pre-experimental design involving seven students. Participants engaged in structured speaking activities before and after the intervention. Data were analyzed using SPSS, revealing a significant improvement in students' speaking performance. The mean score increased from 54% to 83%, with a p-value of 0.006 (< 0.05), indicating a statistically significant impact. These findings suggest that incorporating the Werewolf game into speaking lessons can effectively enhance students' participation, motivation, and confidence in expressing their ideas in English. The Werewolf game promotes real-time interaction, critical thinking, and spontaneous speech, which are crucial for developing communicative competence. By encouraging students to articulate their thoughts, respond to others, and negotiate meaning in a dynamic setting, the game fosters a more engaging and less anxiety-inducing environment compared to conventional methods.
Keywords: Werewolf Game; Speaking Skills; Language Learning Effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

English is a global language that plays a vital role in communication, academic success, and career opportunities. Mastery of English allows students to interact effectively in diverse cultural and professional settings, making it a crucial skill in today's interconnected world. Among the four primary language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—speaking is particularly significant, as it enables individuals to express ideas clearly, engage in discussions, and participate actively in various social and academic contexts. However, many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners struggle with speaking due to factors such as lack of confidence, limited vocabulary, anxiety, and insufficient practice opportunities.

For English Education students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidenreng Rappang, these challenges are particularly evident. Many students experience difficulties with pronunciation, sentence structure, and fluency, which hinder their ability to communicate effectively. Research by Alrajafi (2021) highlights that Indonesian students often lack the confidence to speak English due to fear of making mistakes and limited exposure to real-life conversations. Additionally, classroom environments that emphasize grammar and written exercises over interactive speaking activities contribute to students' reluctance to engage in verbal communication. Therefore, there is a need for innovative teaching methods that encourage active participation and create a more supportive and engaging learning atmosphere.

One promising approach to overcoming these barriers is game-based learning, which has been widely recognized for its potential to enhance student engagement and motivation. Games provide an interactive and enjoyable way to practice language skills, reducing anxiety and encouraging spontaneous communication. In particular, the Werewolf game, a social deduction game that requires players to use persuasive language, logical reasoning, and role-playing, presents a unique opportunity for improving speaking skills. Through discussions, debates, and strategic planning, students are encouraged to communicate fluently and confidently in English. The game's competitive yet cooperative nature fosters a low-pressure environment where students can practice speaking without fear of criticism.

The Werewolf game has been widely used in various educational settings to improve students' communicative abilities. Research by Sadiku (2015) emphasizes that speaking is a crucial aspect of language acquisition, as it allows learners to develop fluency and confidence. Similarly, Daniel (2013) found that students who engage in interactive speaking activities are more likely to overcome communication barriers and develop stronger oral proficiency. Games like Werewolf encourage active participation and provide a real-world context for language use, making them valuable tools for enhancing speaking skills.

Despite the growing interest in game-based learning, there is limited research on the specific impact of the Werewolf game on English-speaking proficiency, particularly among university students. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of the Werewolf game in enhancing the speaking skills of second-semester English Education students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidenreng Rappang. By implementing a pre-experimental design, the research will assess students' speaking performance before and after engaging in the game. The study will explore whether the Werewolf game can improve students' fluency, confidence, and ability to articulate ideas in English.

The findings of this research hold both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it will contribute to the field of language learning by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of game-based learning in improving speaking skills. Practically, the results may offer valuable insights for educators seeking to implement engaging and interactive teaching methods. If proven effective, the Werewolf game could serve as a practical classroom tool to enhance students' speaking abilities, promote active participation, and create a more enjoyable language learning experience. By integrating game-based strategies into English instruction, educators can foster a more dynamic, student-centered approach to developing oral communication skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous Related Studies

Several studies have investigated the impact of the Werewolf game on speaking skills. Adhiyati and Fatimah (2019) conducted research on high school students and found that students who participated in Werewolf-based speaking activities demonstrated significant improvements in their ability to express opinions, engage in conversations, and speak fluently. Similarly, Rahmayanti (2024) studied the effectiveness of the game among high school students and observed increased confidence, fluency, and accuracy after using game-based learning strategies. These findings align with previous research on game-based learning, which highlights the benefits of games in creating immersive and supportive learning environments. By reducing anxiety, increasing motivation, and providing authentic communication opportunities, the Werewolf game serves as a valuable tool for language teachers.

The Role of Games in Language Learning

Games have been widely recognized for their ability to engage students in an interactive and enjoyable manner, promoting motivation and active participation. According to Kim (1995), games introduce a sense of challenge and excitement, making learning more enjoyable and reducing language anxiety. In speaking activities, games create a low-risk environment, allowing students to practice without fear of making mistakes, which is particularly beneficial for developing fluency and confidence. Ersoz (2000) highlights that games encourage

communication in foreign language classrooms by providing opportunities for students to use language spontaneously. This interactive approach fosters natural language acquisition and improves students' ability to express themselves in real-life situations. Additionally, Wright, Betteridge, and Buckby (2005) argue that games contribute not only to linguistic development but also to social and emotional learning, as students engage in teamwork, negotiation, and problem-solving, all of which require effective communication. The interactive nature of games enhances engagement and motivation. Huyen and Thu Nga (2003) found that students who participated in game-based learning retained vocabulary, grammar structures, and speaking strategies more effectively. When students are actively engaged, they are more likely to take risks, speak more frequently, and improve their oral communication skills.

Challenges in Developing Speaking Skills

Among the four core language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—speaking is often considered the most challenging for second-language learners. Sadiku (2015) emphasizes that speaking skills are essential for interaction and communication in academic, social, and professional settings. However, many students struggle with speaking due to lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and limited opportunities to practice. Speaking requires a balance between accuracy (grammatically correct and contextually appropriate language) and fluency (speaking naturally and smoothly). Without sufficient speaking practice, students often hesitate to express their ideas, leading to frustration and reluctance in communication. Ur (1984) argues that without regular conversational practice, students may struggle to improve oral proficiency, even if they excel in other language skills such as reading or writing. Games can help overcome these challenges by providing a structured yet flexible environment for students to practice speaking. By engaging in role-playing, discussions, and interactive tasks, students can build their confidence and develop spontaneous speaking abilities.

The Werewolf Game and Its Application in Language Learning

The Werewolf game, derived from the classic Mafia game, was created in 1986 by Dmitry Davidoff as a social psychology experiment to understand group dynamics and persuasion. The game requires players to assume different roles—villagers, werewolves, and special characters such as the Seer or the Doctor—while using logic, persuasion, and deduction to achieve their objectives. The game's highly interactive nature makes it particularly effective for language learning. Xiong (2018) explains that Werewolf promotes critical thinking, strategic communication, and social interaction, as players must construct arguments, question others, and negotiate meaning. The game naturally encourages various speaking functions, such as explaining, defending, persuading, and debating, all of which are essential components of speaking proficiency. In educational contexts, the Werewolf game has been adapted to enhance English speaking skills. Tan (2021) found that the game encourages students to negotiate, question, and express ideas in English,

fostering greater fluency and confidence. The game's role-playing element allows students to take on different personas, making speaking less intimidating and more engaging.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This study utilized a pre-experimental design with a one-group pre-test and post-test to assess the effectiveness of the Werewolf game in enhancing speaking skills among second-semester English Education students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidenreng Rappang. The pre-test was conducted before the intervention to measure students' baseline speaking abilities, specifically focusing on fluency, accuracy, and comprehension. After the intervention, which involved the Werewolf game, a post-test was administered to evaluate whether there were improvements in students' speaking skills following the game-based learning experience. The participants in this study consisted of seven second-semester English Education students, selected through purposive sampling. These students were chosen because they were at the early stages of their language learning journey, making them ideal candidates for observing changes in their speaking skills. During the intervention, students actively participated in the Werewolf game, assuming different roles (e.g., villagers, werewolves) and using English for interaction, persuasion, and communication in a dynamic and engaging environment.

Instrument and Procedures

Data was collected using pre-test and post-test assessments, where students were required to describe pictures in English while focusing on vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure. Both assessments were evaluated using a scoring rubric that measured pronunciation, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and overall clarity. The pre-test served as a benchmark for the students' initial speaking abilities, while the post-test aimed to measure improvements after engaging in the Werewolf game.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, including the mean score and standard deviation, to determine overall performance changes. Additionally, a paired sample t-test was conducted to assess the statistical significance of any improvements in students' speaking skills. Ethical considerations were also observed throughout the research. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and they were assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation, with the option to withdraw at any time. By adhering to ethical guidelines and employing a structured research methodology, this study aimed to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of game-based learning, specifically the Werewolf game, in improving English-speaking proficiency among university students.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Developing strong speaking skills is essential for language learners, yet many students face challenges in fluency, accuracy, and confidence when communicating in English. This section presents the findings of the study on the effectiveness of the Werewolf game as a tool for enhancing speaking skills among second-semester English Education students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidenreng Rappang. The analysis includes a comparison of pre-test and post-test scores to assess students' progress after participating in the game-based learning intervention.

Pre-test Results

The pre-test was conducted to evaluate students' initial speaking skills. Students participated in a picture description activity, focusing on fluency, accuracy, and comprehension. The results showed that most students had limited proficiency, particularly in pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, and coherence.

Table 1. Pre-test Score Distribution

Score Range	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0 – 48	Very Poor	4	57.1%
49 – 61	Poor	1	14.3%
62 – 74	Fair	2	28.6%
75 – 87	Good	0	0%
88 – 100	Excellent	0	0%

The majority of students (57.1%) were categorized as "Very Poor", indicating significant difficulties in fluency, pronunciation, and grammatical accuracy. Only 28.6% of students demonstrated "Fair" speaking skills, while no students achieved a "Good" or "Excellent" level.

Post-test Results

After the intervention, students completed the same picture description task in a post-test to measure their progress. The post-test results showed substantial improvement in students' speaking performance.

Table 2. Post-test Score Distribution

Score Range	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0 – 48	Very Poor	0	0%
49 – 61	Poor	1	14.3%
62 – 74	Fair	1	14.3%
75 – 87	Good	2	28.6%
88 – 100	Excellent	3	42.9%

The post-test results demonstrated significant progress, with 71.5% of students now classified as "Excellent" or "Good". No students remained in the "Very Poor" category, and only one student was still categorized as "Poor". Students exhibited greater confidence, reduced hesitation, improved pronunciation, and better sentence structure, indicating that the Werewolf game successfully enhanced their speaking abilities.

Statistical Analysis

A paired sample t-test was conducted to determine whether the improvement in students' speaking skills was statistically significant.

Measure	Pre-test	Post-test
Mean Score	162.86	248.57.00
Standard Deviation	29.28.00	44.51.00
p-value	0.006	

The paired sample t-test yielded a p-value of 0.006, which is less than 0.05, confirming that the increase in students' speaking skills was statistically significant. The findings confirm that the Werewolf game had a positive and measurable impact on students' speaking proficiency. The game created an engaging and interactive learning environment, encouraging students to use English for reasoning, persuasion, and discussion. The significant improvement in students' post-test scores, along with the statistical validation of the results, supports the effectiveness of the Werewolf game as a tool for enhancing fluency, accuracy, and comprehension in English-speaking skills.

The findings of this study support the hypothesis that game-based learning, specifically the use of the Werewolf game, can significantly enhance students' speaking skills. The improvements observed in the post-test results are consistent with previous research that suggests games can increase student motivation and engagement, which in turn positively impacts language acquisition (Wright, Betteridge, & Buckby, 2005; Huyen & Thu Nga, 2003).One of the most notable improvements was in fluency. Fluency in speaking refers to the ability to speak smoothly and naturally without hesitation or pauses. Before the intervention, students showed significant hesitation, frequent pauses, and a limited range of vocabulary, which made their speech disjointed and difficult to follow. However, after the intervention, students demonstrated more confident and coherent speech, with fewer pauses and more fluid delivery. The Werewolf game likely played a crucial role in this improvement, as it required students to speak spontaneously, think quickly, and engage in real-time conversation with their peers. As they took on roles in the game and interacted with others, students were forced to use English for various communication functions, such as accusing others, defending their role,

and persuading peers, all of which helped them practice speaking in a dynamic and interactive environment.

The increased fluency could also be attributed to the non-threatening nature of the game. By participating in a social and interactive game, students were able to overcome the fear of making mistakes, which is often a major barrier to speaking in a foreign language. As noted by Ersoz (2000), games help reduce anxiety and create a more relaxed learning atmosphere, making it easier for students to participate in speaking activities without the fear of judgment or embarrassment. In terms of accuracy, the students showed noticeable improvements in their grammar and pronunciation. In the pre-test, many students struggled with basic sentence structures and pronunciation, which affected the clarity of their speech. After participating in the Werewolf game, students were more capable of constructing grammatically correct sentences and using appropriate vocabulary in context. This improvement could be attributed to the repetitive nature of the game, which encouraged students to use certain phrases and vocabulary repeatedly throughout the rounds. As they practiced speaking in a more structured setting, students were able to internalize the correct grammatical forms and pronunciation.

The role of the teacher in providing guidance and feedback during the Werewolf game also contributed to the improvement in accuracy. While the game provided an interactive learning environment, the teacher's role in moderating and encouraging correct language use was crucial. Feedback, whether positive reinforcement or corrective input, can help students recognize and correct errors, leading to greater accuracy in their spoken English. In addition to fluency and accuracy, students' comprehension also improved as a result of the Werewolf game. The game requires players to listen actively, process information, and respond appropriately. In this study, the post-test results indicated that students were better able to understand spoken English and convey their thoughts clearly. This is consistent with findings from previous research, which suggests that interactive games like Werewolf help students improve their listening and comprehension skills by providing them with opportunities to engage in meaningful dialogue with their peers (Tan, 2021).The interactive nature of the Werewolf game forced students to focus on understanding the arguments and perspectives of others, as they had to evaluate the information provided by their peers and make strategic decisions. This critical listening and processing of information likely contributed to improvements in their overall comprehension.

The Werewolf game's success in enhancing speaking skills can also be attributed to the motivational aspects of game-based learning. As noted by Kim (1995), games provide students with challenges that keep them engaged and motivated. The competitive nature of the Werewolf game, where students had to use language strategically to achieve their goals, likely increased their enthusiasm to participate. This sense of motivation and engagement is crucial for language learning, as students are more likely to actively practice speaking when they are motivated and interested in the activity. Moreover, the collaborative and social nature of the game

helped foster a sense of community among students. By working together and interacting with their peers, students were able to practice speaking in a social context, which closely mirrors real-world communication scenarios. The results of this study demonstrate that the Werewolf game is an effective tool for enhancing students' speaking skills. Through game-based learning, students improved their fluency, accuracy, and comprehension in speaking English. The Werewolf game provided a dynamic and interactive learning environment that encouraged active participation, reduced language anxiety, and fostered greater confidence in speaking. The statistical analysis confirmed that the improvements in students' speaking abilities were significant, further supporting the potential of game-based learning as a valuable pedagogical tool in language education.

Given the positive impact observed in this study, it is recommended that educators integrate games like Werewolf into their teaching methods to provide students with engaging opportunities to practice speaking in English. Future research could explore the long-term effects of game-based learning on speaking proficiency, as well as compare the effectiveness of different types of games in language acquisition. Additionally, expanding the sample size and using a control group could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the Werewolf game in improving speaking skills.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the effectiveness of the Werewolf game in enhancing speaking skills among second-semester English Education students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidenreng Rappang. The research aimed to assess improvements in fluency, accuracy, and comprehension through a game-based learning approach. The findings from the pre-test and post-test results demonstrated significant improvements in students' speaking abilities, highlighting the positive impact of the Werewolf game as an educational tool. The pre-test results revealed that most students initially struggled with fluency, accuracy, and comprehension. However, after participating in the Werewolf game, students showed marked improvements across all three areas. The statistical analysis using a paired sample t-test confirmed that the differences between pre-test and post-test scores were statistically significant, further supporting the effectiveness of the Werewolf game in promoting speaking proficiency.

The Werewolf game encouraged active participation, reduced language anxiety, and provided a fun, engaging, and low-pressure environment for students to practice speaking. The game's interactive and social nature, which involved negotiation, persuasion, and strategic thinking, fostered better fluency and confidence in using English. Additionally, the game's structure allowed for repeated practice, which improved both accuracy and comprehension. In conclusion, game-based learning, specifically through the Werewolf game, proves to be an effective method for enhancing students' speaking skills in English. This approach not only makes learning enjoyable but also creates a more dynamic and supportive environment for

language practice. Based on the findings, it is recommended that educators incorporate similar game-based strategies into their teaching practices to further engage students and improve their speaking abilities. Future research could explore the long-term impact of such interventions on language learning.

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