

## **The Implementation of Snake and Ladder Game in Teaching Speaking: The Advantages and The Disadvantages**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Speaking is one of the critical communication skills that students should be able to acquire. By speaking, they can convey thoughts, feelings, arguments, and ideas as well as emotions and other mental states. Yet, there are many problems faced by students in learning speaking. Due to those problems, choosing an appropriate media for teaching learning is an ability that every teacher must have. One of the entertaining and intriguing games that may be used to teach speaking is snake and ladder game. This study reports the advantages and the disadvantages of snake and ladder game in teaching speaking. While, the outcome can be summed up as follows: The Snake and Ladder game's design has both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages of the Snake and Ladder game is that it encourages students to practice speaking since it creates an enjoyable and relaxed learning environment. By forcing students to practice speaking since they must do so while playing, the snake and ladder game may help students indirectly enhance their English-speaking abilities. One of the drawbacks of the Snake and Ladder game is that it takes a lot of planning and practice time.*

**Key Words: Snake and Ladder Game, Teaching Speaking**

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## INTRODUCTION

### A. Research Background

Due to its status as an international language, English is spoken and taught in Indonesia as a foreign language. It becomes a local topic in elementary school, a required subject in junior high and senior high school, as well as a supplemental subject in higher education. Four fundamental language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—are covered by English as a subject in secondary education up to the university level.

Speaking is one of the most crucial skills for students to develop and perfect as a form of effective communication. For many students of second languages, mastering the English language as a second language is essential (Richard, 2008). Speaking is a talent that, in both a first and second language, demands just as much attention as literary skills, according to Gate (2003). Students are routinely evaluated on this competence. Additionally, it serves as the ideal vehicle for business, social mobility, and professional progress (Jones, 1989).

Speaking is regarded as difficult aspect in language learning. Even though it has been taught in secondary schools up to university, in reality, many senior students still face some problems in speaking. Many of them choose to be silent instead of expressing their thought through speaking, even they feel nervous, reluctant and afraid of making mistakes then easily become speechless. As Juhana (2012) said that feeling afraid of being laughed by their friends is the factor that get in the students away from having speaking practice.

Being amotivation, lack of vocabularies and poor pronunciation are common reasons that students often conveyed. Liu and Jack (2008) claimed that having lack of vocabulary is a major obstacle for students in reaching the stage of verbal communication. It also become a big reason why students cannot express their ideas or thought clearly and accurately in English. The boring situation due to the materials or media used also give contribution in students' motivation in learning speaking. The more unattractive materials or media the more unmotivated students in learning speaking. Since speaking English is difficult and complicated subject and once the method, strategy, material

or media used are not interesting and appropriate in learning speaking, the students will be still difficult to overcome the problems.

Actually, there are many ways that can be done to face those students' speaking problems. Harmer contends that in order to encourage students to talk, teachers must adopt a communicative strategy that avoids focusing on grammar and vocabulary while highlighting the importance of language function (Harmer, 2001). In other words, these exercises will have students engage in genuine conversation, when completing the task at hand is more crucial than utilizing language that is accurate. Harmer however persisted in his assertions that there must be a motivator for students to engage in these activities if they are to be engaged in communication (Harmer, 2004). The use of interactive learning media through games is one way to increase student interest and learning results at School From Home (SFH) (Salam, Safei, & Jamilah, 2019).

As mentioned by Prank, games are utilized to provide students a deep and ardent interest in communication so that they can sense joy and pleasure in learning in this circumstance. (Mahmoud & Tanni, 2014). A game, according to Hadfield (2004), is an activity that has rules, a purpose, and a sense of fun. The fun factor in games gives students additional opportunities to develop their ideas in their own ways while still following the rules in real-world situations. With enjoyable activities that encourage engagement, thinking, learning, and problem-solving techniques, it is the ideal way to assist students in learning a new language. must comprehend what others are saying or writing (Gate, 2003)

A game is also an activity in which the learners participate and typically engage with others (Wright et al., 2006). They continued by adding that in order to express their own opinions or provide information, students must talk or write, just as they must comprehend what others are saying or writing in order to comprehend what they are trying to convey (Gate, 2003). In short, the principle of developing interactional habits will naturally establish students' confidence. Teachers must therefore make an effort to encourage students to communicate by employing games in order to perhaps establish a positive

environment, encourage students to participate actively, and raise the level of students' communicative ability.

Board games are a fun way to teach English to pupils, especially speaking. According to Christanto (2016), a board game is a traditional game that is made utilizing hard paper or wood as the playing medium. It is a type of game with rules that can be utilized for language learning as well as entertainment. Speaking can be taught using it as a medium. Snake and ladder game is one of the board games that can be used to teach English. Children and adults all over the world enjoy playing this board game. Snake and ladder is a type of instructional game that aims to improve students' speaking speed. The board, snake and ladder, image paper, and dice are some of the items needed for this game. There are 20 command squares on the board, and many players are required to participate. Each square in this instance contains the command that has been altered to describe any object, person, location, or action that may be updated to correspond to the course contents. Since they are at the core of the teaching and learning process, the students are practically required to participate in the game in class.

The board game Snakes and Ladders is an illustration of a game that can be used to teach English. The teacher, especially, and also the students should recognize the strengths and the weaknesses of it so they can avoid some things that can distract the teaching learning activity while implementing this game in order to create interesting teaching learning process.

### **B. Research Question**

According to the foregoing explanation of the research backdrop, the following research question is put forth:

"What are the strength and weaknesses of snake and ladder game in teaching learning speaking?"

### **C. Research Objective**

The following research objective is developed in light of the aforementioned research background: "To describe the strength and weaknesses of snake and ladder game in teaching learning speaking.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **A. Snake and Ladder as a Game**

Applying game in teaching speaking is believed as one of strategy to improve student's ability in mastering teaching material. Bekoff, mentioned in Ferawati (2009), maintains that play develops a brain with higher behavioral flexibility and enhanced learning potential, including the ability to learn difficult skills like speaking; it does this through increasing connectivity across the brain. To best adapt to kids' brains, teachers are advised to have fun and play.

There are numerous ways to define a game. A game is a physical procedure that allows a learner to experience a new notion before he can formally acknowledge it, according to Kim (1995). Furthermore, according to Erzoz (2000), a game is an activity in which participants engage while adhering to a set of rules in order to achieve a specific goal. Wright (1984) claims, however, that a game is a type of activity carried out according to a set of rules in order to accomplish a specific task while still having enjoyment. Although many teachers are enthusiastic about adopting games as "A teaching method," according to Silvers (1982) cited in Uberman (1998), they frequently view games as little more than time fillers. He also asserts that many professors frequently fail to see that actual learning occurs in an environment where pupils are free to speak the language they have previously studied and practiced. However, it's important to take appropriateness into account while talking about games. They must be appropriate for the topic being introduced or rehearsed, the students' level or age, or both.

Wright (1984) stated that games assist the teacher in establishing circumstances in which the language is practical and meaningful. Games are also very motivating because they are entertaining and difficult at the same time, according to Erzoz (2000). Additionally, Erzoz agrees with Wright that the game fosters and improves teamwork. In reality, there are several ways and methods that can be used to educate speaking. Applying the Snake and Ladder Game is one of the approaches that is suitable to use to assist pupils in improving their speaking abilities. A board game and a dice are used in the game of snake and ladder. There

are 20 command squares on the board, and many players are required to participate. Each square in this instance has the command that has been altered to describe any object, individual, location, or action. Since they are at the core of the teaching and learning process, the students are practically required to participate in class.

In fact, it is believed that applying snake and ladder as a game can improve students' behavior and ability in speaking. However, beside the advantages that can we find when we apply snake and ladder in teaching speaking, in this case, there are also some difficulties or weaknesses faced by both teachers and students when they applied snake and ladder game in teaching learning speaking.

### **B. The Strengths of Snake-and Ladder game**

Dealing with some speaking problems or difficulties faced by the students, the teacher applied snake-and-ladder game in teaching speaking. As snake-and-ladder game is believed as to be one of ways to overcome the students' speaking problems or difficulties such as having lack of vocabularies, poor pronunciation, amotivation, being nervous and shy, fear of making mistakes and of having their peers tease them because they don't understand the subject or the grammar. As stated by Nunan (2014), he confirmed that using board game in language classroom to teach speaking especially is the effective way to reduce the speaking anxiety and also give much fun for students. They can study and practice speaking (communication) in a way that is enjoyable and practical.

A game called Snakes and Ladders involves two or more players on a board with numbered squares (1-100). There are some tools used in playing this game, such as board, dice, counters, and some use cards (Fata, etc, 2016). Each square in the board game, which is often 5x5 cm, 8x8 cm, 10x10 cm, or 12x12 cm in size, differs from board to board, as does the precise placement of the snakes and ladders, and both aspects of the game have an impact on how long it takes to play. This game can be modified and be adapted as the students' needs (based on the materials or topic). Since it is a flexible game, snakes -and-ladders

board game can be played by all ages with different topics or materials and size. It can be adjusted and adapted as the students' need. Teacher is capable to producing her own English-number dice (Mujib and Rahmawati, 2011). While Hayuningtyas and Mega (2019) developed a board game from combining snakes-and-ladders and monopoly to teach speaking. They not only used snakes-and-ladders board with dice and pion but also use cards as the additional tool as in monopoly. There are no specific rules regarding the selection of these counters as long as the counters of each player can be distinguished by either shape or color. But normally, the counters that are owned by each player are the same size of the game board. The dice used in this game are usually small cubes that have six sides with one to six dots on each side. In addition, a board is a field or place where players can move their counters. The path or trajectory used in this board game used a standard snakes-and-ladders track. While the cards used as the instruction given to the players every they step on each number on board.

The students found learning speaking through the snakes-and-ladder game to be more enjoyable and relaxing. They did not feel anxious or pressure that they acted like playing game as usual. This situation is encouraged and motivated them to learn speaking. They felt enjoy when they had to reveal and explore their idea. As they thought that it was just a game, they were not reluctant or nervous even afraid of making mistakes anymore. They just enjoyed when they had to repeat their sentences as they were incorrect grammar or pronunciation. The situation created by this game is attracting. There were no more boring speaking class anymore. As stated by Trahenar, Ningsih and Kurniawan (2017), there are some strengths of snakes-and-ladders game such as make students enjoy the speaking class, improve the students' motivation in learning speaking and create fun atmosphere in the classroom. One of the essential components for a stress-free and joyful learning experience and boosting creativity is the game of snakes and ladders. Greater self-esteem and a sense of belonging and attention are the results of this. Having motivated and relax in speaking class made the students easy to explore their ideas. In addition, one of the strengths of snake-and-ladders game is make



students active to speak and easy to implement the ideas, as the instructions and the directions in that game are so clear enough to be understood.

The other strength of snakes-and-ladders game is flexible. The teacher can adapt and adjust the size of the board, the dice, the counters and also the cards according to the needs. If it is used in small class so it could be big size. Actually, in this class, the teacher used a normal size of board. It used an A2 size hard paper complete with the dice, 5 counters, and 41 cards. There are some instructions written in the cards dealing with topic that should be done/ solved by the students. This way indirectly forces the students to think smart and fast. It increases students' brain function for they should compete with others. Beside the competition, the snakes-and-ladders game also brings students closer and strengthen the relationship if it is done in pairs or team works. The procedure of playing this game is so simple, as it is played by all ages. So, the next strength of snakes-and-ladders game in teaching learning speaking is easy to use. All students are familiar with this game so it is not necessary for the teacher to deeply explain about it. Just give brief explanation about the material that will be learnt by using that game is enough. Since it is flexible as the size can be arranged, the students can play it both inside or outside the classroom. The changing situation of teaching learning process is believed can increase the students' motivation in learning speaking.

Ersoz (2000) asserted that a game, including snake and ladder game, can aid in character development. It instills virtues like patience and diplomacy because many games require players to strike deals, persuade partners, devise complicated schemes, or engage in negotiation with one another. Games foster teamwork, respect, and cooperation, such as when pupils respect turn-taking.

From those explanation above, it can be concluded that there are some strengths of snakes-and-ladders game, they are make students enjoy the speaking class, improve the students' motivation in learning speaking and create fun atmosphere in the classroom, leads to greater self-esteem and a feeling of being included and noticed, make students active to speak and easy to implement the ideas as the instructions and the directions in that



game are so clear enough to be understood, flexible, increases students' brain function, brings students closer and strengthen the relationship as it is done in pairs or team works and easy to use.

Since there are several strengths possessed by snakes-and-ladders game in teaching learning speaking, it is highly recommended for teacher to use this kind of game to teach speaking.

### **C. The Weaknesses of Snake-and-ladder Game**

The snakes-and-ladders game has some strengths over other teaching methods for speaking, but it also has weaknesses. The lengthy preparation period required for this game is one of its weaknesses. Since this game needs some tools to be played, the teacher should prepare it before the D-date. Moreover, because the teacher could not use the commercial board from the market so it needs more effort to make the board since the teacher should adapt with the students' learning material. There are many commercial boards available on the market, but the researcher must modify the game to meet the requirements of instructional activities.

There are some things must be considered in adapting the game such as the topic to be learnt, the level, the vocabularies used, the time and the amount of the students. Buchanan via Rachmawati in Sidiq (2016) confirmed some steps to make board games. The preparation of the material comes first, followed by planning the game's journey, choosing the game's start and end, and finally designing the path. The design of the game's complexity and the subject matter that needs be studied come in at number five. The teacher's creativity is needed here to design or develop the board game that suitable the students. Though the students have already been familiar with the game, but it is very necessary for the teacher to explain about the procedure of implementing the game. As a result, more time should be allocated at the start of class for the teacher to explain the game's rules and play a few rounds with the students so they can grasp how to use the game.

In addition, as the topics of speaking are so varied the teacher should adjust the topic with the snake and ladder game's

theme. As the example when the material that being taught is about expression of apologizing and sympathy so the game should be about it also. The teacher should create some instruction or situation based on the topic being taught. It needs more time and creativity and also patience for the teacher in preparing this. According to Hadfield (2002), the author should give a brief explanation of the game's rules, distribute the photocopied cards, and give players some time to study them. Additionally, the teacher must give more focus to the students. He has to walk around and observe so that their faults can be noted in order to the teacher can identify the mistakes and give correction at the end of the game. Briefly said, playing board games has several drawbacks. In order to overcome these concerns, the teacher must thoroughly prepare the game before the class and ensure that the students have access to all the necessary materials.

Although using this snake and ladder game to teach speaking has some drawbacks or challenges for both teachers and students, it is still be suggestion for both of them to apply it as there are some advantages are possessed by snake and ladder, one of them is it can improve good atmosphere in learning speaking as it can make the students feel fun and happy while learning speaking by implementing snake and ladder game.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### **A. Conclusion**

The result can be summarized as follows based on the research given in the discussion: Both strengths and weaknesses exist in the way the Snake and Ladder game is implemented. The advantage of the Snake and Ladder game is that it encourages students to practice speaking since it fosters a positive learning environment where they can have fun and unwind while learning. Applying the snake and ladder game might indirectly improve students' English speaking skill since it pushes students to study speaking because they must speak in English while playing. The fact that the Snake and Ladder game requires a lot of preparation and application time is one of its disadvantages.

### **B. Suggestion**

These are some recommendations the author would like to make based on the findings to enhance the teaching and learning process, particularly in teaching speaking. The suggestions fall into the following categories: The activity in the Snakes and Ladders game is able to make students engaged in speaking, hence the author suggests using it as a medium to improve the students' speaking abilities. For the pupils to be motivated to learn, the teacher should provide a positive environment and engaging materials. Media and good motivation can make students happy and enthusiastic about their studies. When using the Snake and Ladder game, the teacher should closely monitor the students to ensure that they are all playing according to the game's rules.

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