

The Use of Dixit Board Game to Develop EFL Students' Speaking Skills

Fathira Qalbina¹, Rofiqoh Rofiqoh¹, Zarkiani Hasyim¹, Konder Manurung¹

¹Universitas Tadulako, Indonesia

*Correspondence: fqalbina23@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Many (EFL) frequently encounter difficulties in developing their speaking abilities, frequently because of restricted chances for practice and the lack of interactive activities in the classroom. This research aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Dixit board game in enhancing the speaking abilities of eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 9 Palu through a quasi-experimental design. The study included two groups: class XI MIA 2, which acted as the experimental group, and class XI MIA 1, which served as the control group, both selected through purposive sampling. A speaking test was employed as the research instrument, focusing on three main criteria: fluency, accuracy, and comprehensibility. Both groups underwent a pre-test and a post-test, with the experimental group participating in six treatment sessions using the Dixit board game. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 25. The results indicated that the average score of the experimental group increased from 54.46 to 76.46, while the control group's score rose from 49.10 to 59.20. The Shapiro-Wilk test confirmed normal distribution of the data, and Levene's Test indicated equal variances ($p = 0.610 > 0.05$). A paired sample *t*-test demonstrated a significant improvement in the experimental group ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), and an independent sample *t*-test revealed a significant difference in post-test scores between the two groups ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). These findings suggest that utilizing the Dixit board game significantly enhances students' speaking skills and supports its use as an interactive and student-centered tool in EFL speaking instruction.

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1. Introduction

Speaking is regarded as an essential aspect of English language proficiency, serving as a primary means of communication in academic, social, and professional contexts. According to Nunan (2015), the act of speaking involves more than just grammatical and lexical knowledge; it also requires mastery of paralinguistic features such as intonation, stress, facial expressions, and body language. These elements are crucial for conveying meaning clearly and interactively, making speaking a complex and essential skill in language learning. Within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum, students are encouraged to develop essential competencies, including communication, collaboration, and critical thinking. This curriculum promotes student-centered, project-based learning that incorporates speaking activities into meaningful and authentic learning contexts (Inayah, 2024; Mochammad et al., 2025; Faisal et al., 2025). Such an approach allows students to express ideas more freely while building real-world communication skills. EFL students often face challenges in enhancing their speaking skills because of insufficient practice, lack of confidence, and instructional methods that are overly teacher-centered. These traditional approaches tend to generate anxiety and limit student involvement, which negatively affects their fluency, accuracy, and overall clarity in spoken English.

Despite these goals, many students continue to encounter challenges in speaking English due to limited practice, low self-confidence, and teacher-dominated instructional approaches. Such traditional methods often restrict opportunities for students to participate actively in classroom discussions, resulting in anxiety and reluctance to speak (Weda et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2019; Ko et al., 2025). This highlights the need for engaging and interactive strategies that can build students' confidence and participation. To address these barriers, it is essential for educators to provide instructional media that not only assist students in understanding the material, but also make the learning process more enjoyable and motivating. Media that stimulate creativity and encourage students to express ideas confidently can significantly enhance their engagement in speaking activities. In this context, Adam (2015) contends that instructional media include tools that

support students' understanding and, when used appropriately, can enhance communication, creativity, and confidence in speaking. One type of instructional media that supports these goals is game-based learning, which provides a dynamic and collaborative environment to support the development of speaking proficiency.

Many studies have highlighted the positive impact of educational game in language learning, particularly in enhancing students' motivation and classroom interaction. As a result, creating a comfortable and pressure-free learning environment is considered essential to encourage students to speak more actively in English. One approach that supports this kind of atmosphere is the use of game as instructional tools, especially in speaking activities. Game offer students the opportunity to express themselves naturally without excessive pressure. In addition, game can stimulate creativity and help build students' confidence throughout the learning process (Indari, 2021). Kaur and Aziz (2020) emphasize that games encourage spontaneous interaction among students, which plays a crucial role in developing speaking fluency. While individual interaction is important, learning tends to be more effective when conducted in groups, as students not only speak but also practice listening, responding, and collaborating in building ideas. In this context, Nisa et al. (2023) found that structured group game help learners improve linguistic accuracy while maintaining an enjoyable and interactive learning atmosphere.

Beyond creating a relaxed environment, game that incorporate visual elements or narrative structures have also proven effective in developing students' speaking skills. Visual media and storytelling activities allow learners to freely express ideas and construct stories spontaneously. Imam (2014) contends that visual card games can enhance students' fluency and speaking confidence, as visually engaging materials tend to encourage learners to share their thoughts without fear. Moreover, visual media not only assist students in formulating ideas or structuring sentences but also help them explain concepts spontaneously based on visual cues (Ihsan, 2022; Cahyani et al., 2025). This approach aligns well with the demands of modern learning, which require students to think quickly and communicate effectively. Supporting this, Cheng (2018) found that picture-based storytelling game significantly improved fluency, coherence, and learner confidence in EFL contexts. These findings suggest that game particularly those with visual and narrative components serve as effective instructional media to holistically improve students' communicative competence.

Among various educational board game, Dixit stands out for its imaginative visual design, which naturally stimulates students' imagination and supports the development of speaking skills. The game encourages learners to describe picture cards, construct meaningful stories, and interpret ideas, all of which require the use of spoken language in a collaborative and engaging setting. This process promotes fluency and confidence, as students are guided to speak spontaneously and convey ideas clearly. Mattheoudakis and Panteliou (2023) emphasize that integrating Dixit into speaking activities significantly improved student participation and engagement, offering a more relaxed environment compared to conventional methods. Rather than relying on rigid drills, learners were able to express themselves freely, which contributed to increased motivation. In addition, Vitancol and Baria (2018) contends that Dixit fostered meaningful interaction among students, particularly benefiting those who were initially hesitant to speak. The game also supported the development of empathy, as students interpreted different perspectives through storytelling. Furthermore, Ihsan (2022) emphasize that visual card games such as Dixit enhanced students' speaking fluency and confidence by reducing their cognitive load and helping them generate ideas more naturally. These findings suggest that the visual and interactive nature of Dixit creates a supportive learning environment that facilitates the improvement of speaking performance, particularly in EFL classrooms.

Although prior study has shown the potential benefits of game like Dixit, most studies were conducted in general EFL settings and lacked structured experimental procedures or relied heavily on qualitative observations. This study seeks to fill the existing research gap by utilizing a quasi-experimental design to evaluate the effectiveness of the Dixit board game in enhancing the speaking abilities of eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 9 Palu. Through the implementation of structured speaking tasks and the use of analytical scoring rubrics, the research aims to offer empirical insights into how a game-based learning approach can significantly improve students' fluency, accuracy, and comprehensibility in English speaking.

2. Methodology

This research utilized a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design to assess the impact of the treatment on students' speaking abilities. The study involved comparing the results of pre-tests and post-tests between an experimental group and a control group to evaluate whether the implementation of the Dixit board game significantly influenced students' speaking performance.

The participants were drawn from two classes—XI MIA 1 and XI MIA 2—selected through purposive sampling from the eleventh-grade cohort at SMA Negeri 9 Palu. This method allowed the researcher to intentionally designate one group as the experimental group, while the other served as the control group. Based on feedback from the English teacher, both classes encountered similar challenges in speaking. Consequently, XI MIA 2 was assigned as the experimental group, while XI MIA 1 acted as the control group.

To measure students' speaking performance, the study utilized a speaking test that evaluated three core aspects: fluency, accuracy, and comprehensibility. The scoring rubric was adapted from Heaton (1988) and employed a 4-point scale for each component. This rubric was consistently applied in both the pre-test and post-test to maintain reliability in scoring.

Data were collected in three stages: pre-test, treatment, and post-test. In the pre-test, all students were asked to speak individually on a familiar topic in English. Their speaking performances were evaluated directly based on the rubric. The experimental group then received six meetings sessions using the Dixit board game, during which students practiced speaking in groups by describing picture cards and engaging in collaborative guessing and discussion activities. Meanwhile, the control group continued learning through conventional speaking instruction without the use of games. After the treatment phase, both groups took the post-test, which followed the same procedure as the pre-test.

The gathered data were examined utilizing SPSS version 25. The analysis commenced with the Shapiro-Wilk test to assess if the data adhered to a normal distribution. Subsequently, Levene's Test was performed to evaluate the homogeneity of variances between the experimental and control groups. To assess the progress in the experimental group, a paired sample t-test was utilized to compare their pre-test and post-test scores. Additionally, an independent sample t-test was employed to determine if there was a significant difference in post-test scores between the two groups. These statistical analyses were carried out to assess the effectiveness and impact of the treatment administered.

3. Result and Discussion

The average score of the experimental group rose notably from 54.46 in the pre-test to 76.46 in the post-test, indicating an improvement of 22.00 points. The majority of students in this group showed notable progress in their speaking abilities after being taught using the Dixit board game. The greatest improvement was seen in student AS, whose score rose from 41 to 83, while student DC showed no change, maintaining a consistent score of 75 in both tests. The pre-test results ranged between 33.33 and 75.00, whereas the post-test scores increased markedly, ranging from 58.33 to 100.00. This indicates that the treatment was beneficial for students across different performance levels. Overall, the results emphasize the beneficial impact of the Dixit board game on improving speaking abilities, particularly in fluency, accuracy, and the confidence to express ideas. As such, the use of Dixit can be considered an effective alternative in teaching English speaking, especially in overcoming common challenges faced by high school students.

Table 1. Pre-test and Post-test Score of Experimental Group

No.	Name	Pre-test	Post-test
1.	AS	41	83
2.	AA	41	66
3.	AR	50	75
4.	FA	58	66
5.	FR	58	83
6.	LP	66	75
7.	MRR	33	58
8.	AF	58	75
9.	AN	75	100
10.	AS	58	83
11.	AU	50	66
12.	CS	50	66

13.	DC	75	75
14.	EAM	50	83
15.	FS	66	91
16.	FK	50	83
17.	FA	41	58
18.	HA	58	75
19.	IPN	75	91
20.	LVW	58	83
21.	LQS	66	100
22.	NMP	50	83
23.	NA	41	58
24.	PAR	58	91
25.	SA	50	75
26.	SNS	58	75
27.	ST	41	58
28.	WY	50	66
Total Score		1.525	2.141
Mean Score		54.46	76.46

Based on the data obtained from the control group, The mean score in the pre-test was 49.10 and rose to 59.20 in the post-test, showing a mean improvement of around 10.10 points. While the majority of students demonstrated some improvement, the overall progress was relatively modest. Notable improvements were observed in students MH and GIK each of whom achieved a 25-point increase; for instance, student MH improved from 41 to 66, and GIK from 33 to 58. However, several students—including AAR, IS, and MF showed no change at all, maintaining identical scores. The comparison between the pre-test and post-test results showed that the control group obtained a lower mean score in the post-test, reaching only 59.20, while the experimental group reached 76.46. In addition, the mean improvement in the control group was notably smaller at 10.10, whereas the experimental group experienced a greater mean increase of 22.00. These differences suggest that while conventional teaching methods may yield some positive outcomes, their impact is generally limited and inconsistent. The findings underline the greater effectiveness of using creative and interactive media, such as the Dixit board game, in enhancing speaking skills. This supports the idea that integrating innovative strategies can lead to more meaningful improvements in students' communicative competence, especially within the framework of English language acquisition for students in the eleventh grade.

Table 2. Pre-test and Post-test Score of Control Group

No.	Name	Pre-Test	Post-Test
1.	AAR	58	58
2.	AAR	33	66
3.	IS	66	66
4.	MH	41	66
5.	MF	50	50
6.	MGW	58	66
7.	RRO	50	58

8.	WS	50	50
9.	AK	58	66
10.	AMA	41	50
11.	ACP	33	58
12.	AP	41	50
13.	BA	75	75
14.	FR	41	50
15.	GIK	33	58
16.	HI	58	58
17.	NNS	33	33
18.	NCL	41	50
19.	NO	50	66
20.	NA	33	58
21.	NA	50	58
22.	RM	66	75
23.	RM	58	75
24.	SA	41	41
25.	SYR	50	58
26.	SNA	50	75
27.	UN	41	50
28.	ZS	50	50
29.	MKA	75	75
Total score		1.398	1.700
Mean score		49.10	59.20

3.1 Descriptive Statistics

Following the evaluation of the speaking test outcomes for both the experimental and control groups during the pre-test and post-test phases, the researchers proceeded with the analysis by calculating the mean and standard deviation for each group. The findings from the descriptive statistical analysis revealed that the experimental group showed more significant advancement than the control group. In particular, the mean score for the experimental group rose from 54.46 in the pre-test to 76.46 in the post-test, with standard deviations of 11.04 and 12.12, respectively, highlighting a notable enhancement in speaking skills. In contrast, the control group's mean rose from 48.18 to 58.64, with standard deviations of 11.18 and 11.03, reflecting only a modest enhancement. These values clearly indicate that the experimental group not only achieved higher outcomes but also displayed more diverse improvements across individuals. This trend reinforces the idea that the game-based approach—particularly the use of Dixit—had a more engaging and effective influence on students' speaking development. Moreover, the descriptive data suggest early on those students in the experimental group benefited more significantly from the treatment than those taught through traditional methods, even before conducting further inferential statistical testing.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre- Test Experimental	28	54.46	11. 040
Post – Test Experimental	28	76.46	12. 121
Pre – Test Control	29	48.18	11.182
Post – Test Control	29	58.64	11. 039

The data presented in Table 3 clearly reinforce the statistical explanation previously outlined, highlighting the difference in speaking improvement between the experimental and control groups. This further validates the earlier conclusion that the experimental group experienced greater progress throughout the treatment.

3.2 Tests of Normality (Shapiro-Wilk)

Table 4. Tests of Normality

	Sig. Value
Pre–Test Experimental	.082
Post–Test Experimental	.097
Pre–Test Control	.050
Post–Test Control	.157

Before conducting the hypothesis testing using a t-test, the researchers examined the data's conformity to normal distribution for assessment if it followed a normal distribution. This step was necessary because the t-test assumes that each group's score distribution follows a normal curve. In this study, the Shapiro-Wilk test was utilized to evaluate the normality of the data, using a significance threshold of 0.05. A p-value exceeding 0.05 suggests that the data follows a normal distribution. Based on the testing outcomes, the experimental group's pre-test produced a significance value of 0.082, while the control group's was 0.050. These values indicate that both sets of data were normally distributed. Likewise, in the post-test phase, the experimental group exhibited a significance value of 0.097, while the control group had a value of 0.157—both exceeding the 0.05 threshold. These results validate that the data from both the pre-test and post-test fulfilled the assumption of normality, this is an essential criterion for performing the independent samples t-test. Confirming that the data adhered to a normal distribution improved the dependability of the statistical findings and guaranteed that the variations in mean scores between the groups were not influenced by irregular data patterns.

3.3 Tests of Homogeneity of Variances (Levene's Test)

After confirming that the data followed a normal distribution, the next step in the preliminary analysis was to evaluate the homogeneity of variances between the experimental and control groups. This assumption is essential before conducting the independent samples t-test, as it guarantees that both groups have equal or comparable variances. To evaluate this, the researchers applied Levene's Test of Equality of Variances. According to the interpretation criteria, if the significance value (Sig.) exceeds 0.05, the variances are deemed homogeneous if it is below 0.05, the assumption is violated.

Table 5. Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene's Test	df1	df2	Sig. Value
.264	1	55	.610

Table 5 presents the result of Levene's Test for the post-test scores, revealing a significance value of 0.610, which is above the 0.05 benchmark. This result suggests that the variances across the experimental and control groups are statistically equivalent. Consequently, the assumption of equal variances is fulfilled, allowing the independent samples t-test to be applied appropriately. Verifying this assumption enhances the credibility of the results by confirming that the differences in mean scores stem from the treatment itself, not from inconsistent variance between groups.

3.3 Paired and Independent Sample t-test

The Paired Sample t-test was utilized to assess if there was a notable difference in students' speaking abilities before and after the intervention within the same group. This analysis was conducted separately for both the experimental and control groups to evaluate the advancement of each group on its own. This test is suitable for comparing two related averages, such as the results from pre-tests and post-tests from the same participants—and requires the data to be normally distributed. The results revealed that the experimental group showed a meaningful improvement in speaking scores, as reflected by a Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000, which is lower than the 0.05 threshold. This indicates a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results, confirming that the use of the Dixit board game had a positive influence on students' speaking abilities. The control group showed a significance value of 0.000, indicating a minor improvement; however, this increase was significantly lower than that observed in the experimental group. This difference underscores the superior effectiveness of the game-based learning approach over traditional teaching methods in enhancing students' speaking abilities.

Table 6. Paired Sample t-test

	Mean Difference	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-Test vs Post-Test (Experimental group)	-22.00	-12.747	27	.000

The Independent Sample t-Test was conducted to examine the differences in the average post-test scores between the experimental group and the control group, with the goal of assessing whether the implementation of the Dixit game led to a statistically significant improvement in speaking performance. This test relies on the assumptions of normal distribution and equal variances, both of which had been confirmed through earlier tests. The analysis yielded a two-tailed significance (Sig.) value of 0.000, which is lower than the 0.05 significance threshold. This suggests that there is a significant difference in the speaking scores between the two groups following the treatment. In other words, students who were taught using the Dixit board game achieved notably higher speaking scores than those who experienced conventional teaching methods. These findings support the idea that integrating visual, interactive, and storytelling elements through games like Dixit can effectively enhance learners' speaking fluency, self-confidence, and active participation in English language learning.

Table 7. Independent Sample t-test

Levene's Test for Equality	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Lower	Upper
.264	.610	-5.572	55	.000	-17.257	3.097	-23.464	-11.051

3.4 Discussion

The findings demonstrated that the experimental group obtained a notably higher average results when compared to the control group. The implementation of the Dixit board game was effective in enhancing students' speaking precision, smoothness, and clarity. It contributed to creating a more enjoyable speaking environment, enabling students to share their ideas with greater freedom and confidence. The positive impact of Dixit as an instructional tool was also observed throughout the process of teaching and learning showed that students in the experimental group exhibited greater enthusiasm and engaged more actively. The activity encouraged them to describe visual prompts, construct meaningful sentences, and speak confidently in front of their peers. During the sessions, the researchers provided discussion topics and visual cards, which the students used to practice and present their ideas using the game as a medium.

During the six meetings, each lasting 90 minutes, students developed spoken interaction in a playful yet structured setting. The improvement was not only evident in the mean scores but also supported by statistical analysis. The visual and imaginative nature of Dixit help students overcome hesitation, speak more freely, and build creative responses. This aligns with Ihsan (2022), who found that visual card-based tasks reduce students' speaking anxiety and promote spontaneous speech. These findings are strongly supported by previous research. Mattheoudakis and Panteliou (2023), working with high school students, found that Dixit significantly increased participation and created a more relaxed, collaborative classroom environment. Vitacol and Baria (2018) studied senior high school students that Dixit promoted

meaningful interaction, especially among shy learners. Cheng (2018) also contends that picture-based storytelling enhanced coherence and fluency in students' speech.

These studies were carried out across various levels of education, including lower secondary education, upper secondary education, and higher education. Yet, there is no significant research showing the use of Dixit or similar tools at the elementary school level. Given that young learners are generally more responsive to visual and play-based learning, future studies are encouraged to investigate the use of Dixit in primary education. It may provide an effective foundation for developing basic speaking skills, creativity, and communicative confidence in younger EFL learners.

To conclude, the results showed that although improvements were observed in both among the experimental and control groups, the experimental group showed a notably larger improvement. This result was supported by statistical method analysis, a probability value lower than 0.05, signifying that the effect was statistically significant. Thus, it can be inferred that implementing the Dixit board game contributes positively to enhancing students' speaking abilities and serves as an engaging alternative method in EFL teaching practices.

4. Conclusion

From the results of data discussion and analysis, it can be inferred that the application of the Dixit board game contributed positively to students' motivation and self-confidence in learning English, particularly in developing their speaking skills. This study involved two main procedures in data collection: testing and treatment. The testing phase included pre-tests and post-tests, which used different sets of questions with equal levels of difficulty. The findings showed that the application of the Dixit board game as a treatment contributed to the improvement of speaking skills among students in the eleventh grade at SMA Negeri 9 Palu. This was supported by the t-count value exceeding the t-table value, indicating that the hypothesis was accepted. This means that the students who received the treatment showed notable improvement in their speaking abilities. Thus, it can be concluded that the Dixit board game is an effective tool for enhancing learners' speaking performance in English. This study's findings also suggest that English teachers should consider integrating visual-based games like Dixit into their speaking instruction to create a more engaging and student-centered classroom atmosphere. The game's use of open-ended prompts and collaborative play offers meaningful situations where students can practice speaking in natural and realistic settings. Future research is encouraged to examine the extended effects of using Dixit at various levels of language proficiency and to analyse its potential contribution to the improvement of other language aspects, including vocabulary enrichment and pronunciation skills.

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