



Improving Students' Speaking Skills Through Ventriloquist Dolls at the Eighth Grade of SMP Generasi Bangsa

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: 2025-10-07 Revised: 2025-11-13 Published: 2025-12-02	This study aims to determine whether the implementation of ventriloquist dolls can significantly improve students' speaking skills. The subjects were eighth-grade students of SMP Generasi Bangsa Medan in the 2024/2025 academic year. This study was conducted using the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method. Two types of data were collected, quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative data were obtained through speaking tests, while qualitative data were collected through interviews, classroom observations, diary notes, and documentation. Based on the findings from the quantitative data, students' speaking skills improved significantly, as indicated by the increase in their mean scores, from 57.24 in the pre-test to 68.56 in the post-test of Cycle I, and 82.8 in the post-test of Cycle II. Furthermore, the researchers found that the use of ventriloquist dolls made students enjoy the class more because the dolls' characters attracted their attention and increased their enthusiasm for storytelling, thereby enhancing their speaking skills. Teachers also get new ways of teaching that are not boring and effective in helping students speak.
Keywords: <i>Classroom Action Research (CAR); Speaking Skill; Ventriloquist Dolls.</i>	
Artikel Info	Abstrak
Sejarah Artikel Diterima: 2025-10-07 Direvisi: 2025-11-13 Dipublikasi: 2025-12-02	Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah penerapan boneka ventriloquist dapat secara signifikan meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara siswa. Subjek penelitian adalah siswa kelas VIII SMP Generasi Bangsa Medan pada tahun ajaran 2024/2025. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode <i>Classroom Action Research (CAR)</i> atau penelitian tindakan kelas. Dua jenis data dikumpulkan, yaitu data kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Data kuantitatif diperoleh melalui tes berbicara, sedangkan data kualitatif dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi kelas, catatan harian, dan dokumentasi. Berdasarkan temuan dari data kuantitatif, kemampuan berbicara siswa meningkat secara signifikan, yang ditunjukkan oleh peningkatan skor rata-rata dari 57,24 pada <i>pre-test</i> menjadi 68,56 pada <i>post-test</i> siklus I, dan 82,8 pada <i>post-test</i> siklus II. Selain itu, peneliti menemukan bahwa penggunaan boneka ventriloquist membuat siswa lebih menikmati proses belajar karena karakter boneka menarik perhatian mereka dan meningkatkan antusiasme dalam bercerita, sehingga kemampuan berbicara siswa menjadi lebih baik. Guru juga memperoleh cara mengajar baru yang tidak membosankan dan efektif dalam membantu siswa berbicara.
Kata kunci: <i>Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK); Kemampuan Berbicara; Ventriloquist Dolls.</i>	

I. INTRODUCTION

English is a language used throughout the world, English is an international language for communication among countries. Indonesia is a country that has the most culture in the world, so it uses many regional languages, the mother tongue used in Indonesia is a regional language and the second language in Indonesia is Indonesian. There are four important skills that must be mastered in learning a foreign language, namely speaking, reading, listening and writing. Speaking is the highest target in English language because speaking is the basis of communication which becomes a function of learning. Speaking is the most important skill of the four skills and requires full attention and concentration from students.

According to Thornbury, (2005), speaking allows a person to express ideas and feelings in everyday communication. Good speaking skills depend heavily on self-confidence and skills in organizing thoughts and interacting with the other person. This skill can effectively ask for something, share knowledge, or exchange information. The first way to interact and communicate is by expressing ideas and communicating what is desired verbally. As social humans, humans always interact and communicate with each other. Tahir (2015) emphasizes that mastery of a foreign language is demonstrated through one's ability to speak it effectively.

Ventriloquism or the art of the stomach or voice magic is the art of speaking without moving the lips. Derived from the Latin word *venter*

which means stomach, loqui which means to speak, and ism which means science or understanding, ventriloquism is often interpreted as the science or skill of speaking from the stomach. People who can use ventriloquism are called ventriloquist, namely someone who is an expert in speaking or making sounds in such a way that it seems to come from something or someone else or even sounds from a place quite far away. In Indonesian it is also known as a ventriloquist or voice magic expert. The art of ventriloquism can be used to entertain, teach, and promote. A ventriloquist's performance is popular with children to adults because it is generally presented in the form of comedy. The media commonly used by a ventriloquist are puppets, dolls or character dolls.

Ventriloquists always use their speaking skills to show the art of voice that uses media, this can help increase students' interest in learning to explore more in the art of voice or students' speaking skills. By using ventriloquist doll, students will start to feel interested in learning it, and find out different sound sources from the media used, students can also improve their speaking skills by through ventriloquist dolls.

II. METHOD

This study used a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design. In CAR, researchers carefully observed and analyzed the phenomena that occur during the teaching and learning process. The main purpose of CAR is to gain a deeper understanding of the issues that arise during learning and to provide context-specific solutions through actions or modifications in classroom practices. Classroom Action Research (CAR) focuses on examining social situations that allow for improvements in teaching and learning in the classroom. This approach involved ongoing intervention and reflection carried out by all participants involved in the learning process. This study aimed to improve students' speaking skills through ventriloquist dolls. The focus is to address practical challenges in teaching English, specifically in improving students' speaking skills among eighth grade students at SMP Generasi Bangsa Medan during the 2024/2025 academic year.

This research involved English teacher, researcher and 25 students of grade VIII in the 2024/2025 academic year who work together in one team to conduct this research. In doing the research, researchers conducted class action research in two cycles. Ferrance (2000:9) states

that the action research process in one cycle there is planning, action, observation and reflection. In this study, researchers used five types of data collection techniques, namely observation sheets, interviews, documentation, field notes, and Speaking tests. A ventriloquist is a performer who is skilled in the art of ventriloquism, which involves speaking without moving their lips, so it appears that their voice is coming from another source, such as a puppet or a dummy. The ventriloquist typically uses a puppet/doll to create the illusion that the Doll is speaking independently, while the ventriloquist manipulates the Dolls and produces the voice from a different position.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Result

A preliminary study took place on Thursday, June 9th, 2025, at SMP Generasi Bangsa Medan. The research involved eighth-grade students during the first semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. Based on the researchers' initial classroom observations, several issues were identified, particularly related to speaking skills. Many students were reluctant to speak English, which stemmed from various factors. The first factor was a lack of self-confidence that made students feel embarrassed to speak, while the second factor was difficulty in pronunciation when using English.

The initial test was conducted before the CAR (Classroom Action Research). The initial test was conducted on Monday, July 9, 2025, starting at 08.10 WIB. The initial test was used to measure students' abilities in conversations that had been given by the researchers. Researchers asked students to introduce themselves with several aspects that must be mentioned, researchers took the test results from the self-introductions made by the students. Based on the results of the initial test, the average initial test data was 52.37. Only 4 students reached the Minimum Competency Criteria (MCC). A total of 19 other students were below the criteria. The lowest achievement was obtained by 25 students. From this analysis, it is clear that students' speaking abilities in conversations are still low.

1. Quantitative Data

The researchers carried out several stages in the first cycle, including planning, action, observation, and reflection. This cycle took place over three sessions:

Wednesday, June 11th; Friday, June 13th; and Monday, June 16th, 2025. After analyzing students' responses and test scores from the first cycle, the researchers proceeded to the second cycle to further enhance the outcomes. The second cycle focused on improving students' speaking abilities. Following Cycle II, notable progress was observed in students' post-test performance. Their scores showed improvement from the initial speaking test to the final one, as illustrated in the table below:

No	Students' initial names	Scores		
		Pre-test	Post-test 1	Post-test 2
1	AF	45	60	81
2	AGS	45	59	75
3	AH	50	75	80
4	AM	55	69	82
5	AR	75	75	90
6	AS	48	55	80
7	AU	50	65	80
8	CK	49	55	88
9	DA	53	65	80
10	DE	50	65	80
11	DP	47	62	80
12	EPR	60	76	90
13	FR	65	72	80
14	HY	75	80	90
15	IAS	50	62	73
16	MRA	56	63	74
17	MRP	68	80	90
18	MRS	50	65	80
19	NZ	60	75	90
20	PM	75	83	90
21	RA	61	70	80
22	RW	50	65	74
23	SBH	75	80	90
24	SW	59	65	83
25	VT	60	75	90
TOTAL		$\sum X: 1.431$	$\sum X: 1.714$	$\sum X: 2.070$
TOTAL		$X: 57,24$	$X: 68,56$	$X: 82,8$

Researchers administered a storytelling test using Ventriloquist Dolls to students at the end of each cycle. Researchers found that the students' average scores consistently increased from the pre-test to the post-test in the second cycle. The average student score can be calculated using the following formula:

$$X = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

In the pre - test, the total score of the students was 1.456 and the number of the students who took the test was 25

students, so the mean of the students score was:

$$X = \frac{1.431}{25} = 57,24$$

In the post - test of the first cycle, the students score was 1.794 and the number of the students who took the test was 25, so the mean of the students score was:

$$X = \frac{1.714}{25} = 68,56$$

In the post test of the second cycle, the students score was 1,915 and the number of the students who took the test was 25, so the mean of the students score was:

$$X = \frac{2.070}{25} = 82,8$$

Test	Students who got up to 75	Percentage
Pre - Test	4	16%
Post - Test I	9	36%
Post - Test II	22	88%

Researchers presented the students' score progression from the pre-test to post-test II in the table provided. During the pre-test, 4 students achieved a score of 75, representing 16% of the class. In the first post-test, the number of students scoring 75 rose to 9, or 36%. By post-test II, this number increased again to 11 students, accounting for 44.45%. These results indicated that students' speaking skills improved through the use of ventriloquist Dolls.

2. Qualitative Data

Researchers did classroom observation and also interview both English teachers and students. Researchers used thematic analysis and had two major themes from the interview, they were 1) Student's Speaking Ability, and 2) Students Learning Interest.

English teacher explained about student's speaking ability, "There are three students who take English lessons outside of school hours, so they are quite good at speaking English. However, most of the students have lack confidence and find English very difficult to learn".

English teacher explained about student's learning interest, "Most of them like English, but some of them find learning English boring. Students are more interested using ventriloquist dolls in learning and memorizing vocabulary, which helps improve their speaking skills".

Meanwhile, there were two major themes from the interview between researchers and students, they were; Problem of speaking, Attractive Speaking Strategy. Students mentioned the problem of speaking they had during English class and interesting about attractive speaking strategy;

"Because I do not like English, Miss. We are just entertained by Bibil, Miss. She is funny, so I want to be able to chat with her."

"Sometimes speaking English is really hard, ma'am. I often pronounce it wrong."
Student 1

"I do not know what you want to say, Miss, we learn by always memorizing, Miss. We always memorize every week, so only those who like to memorize are always superior."
Student 2

Bibil is so unique, Miss. It makes me enthusiastic about learning English. It's also easier to tell stories using a ventriloquist Dolls."
Student 1

"Listening to Bibil talking funny Ms, so I want to change my voice to sound like Bibil when saying English words."
Student 2

B. Discussion

Several weaknesses were identified in this process, such as poor speaking skills, low interest in learning English, and a lack of motivation. In this research, most students scored below, as evidenced by their scores on the pre-test. Some students get nervous when introducing themselves as part of the speaking pre-test. They also struggled with vocabulary development. Improvements in student performance can be seen in the table for each cycle.

In the pre-test stage, students experienced difficulties in speaking, selecting suitable vocabulary, and expressing their ideas in English. Following the pre-test, researchers carried out the activities for Cycle I. During this cycle, the researcher taught the speaking material using alternative media, such as Dolls. After the explanation, students were given a task, performing a short story in front of the class, to assess their speaking practice.

During Cycle I, many students were disinterested when the teacher began explaining the material. Some were busy making noise with their classmates or playing around while the teacher was explaining. However, as time went on, students began to

listen to the researcher and interact with her, even though they were using Indonesian. Especially when the teacher taught them to use Dolls, they appeared enthusiastic, discovering the uniqueness of the Dolls as a learning medium.

After completing the activities in Cycle I, the researcher proceeded to Cycle II, applying the same strategy as before. However, in this stage, the teacher encouraged students to use their imagination more freely when creating and telling their stories. This cycle demonstrated a notable improvement in the students' speaking abilities.

Based on the quantitative results, the average student score in Cycle II (82.8) was higher than that of Cycle I (68.56) and the pre-test (57.24). Additionally, the percentage of students achieving a score of 75 or above increased significantly. In the pre-test, only 4 out of 25 students (16%) met this criterion; during the first post-test in Cycle I, the number increased to 9 students (36%), and in the second post-test, it reached 22 students (88%). These results show consistent progress in students' performance across the sessions. Overall, the findings suggest that using ventriloquist dolls effectively improved students' speaking skills, as reflected in the steady increase of their average scores. As explained in the previous chapter, Ventriloquist Dolls have several advantages for students, the advantages can be seen from the effects of using ventriloquist dolls such as students' speaking skills starting to improve, students are more active, and students will not get bored quickly when learning English.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

Based on the research conducted with eighth-grade students at SMP Generasi Bangsa Medan, it can be concluded that using ventriloquist dolls in storytelling activities effectively enhances students' speaking skills. The test results show a clear improvement in students' performance. In the pre-test, the average score was 57.24, with only 4 students (16%) meeting the Minimum Mastery Criteria. In Cycle I, the average score increased to 68.56, and 9 students (36%) achieved the required standard. By Cycle II, the average post-test score rose to 82.8, with 22 students (88%) successfully meeting the criteria. These quantitative findings are also supported by

qualitative data collected through observation sheets and interview responses.

The use of ventriloquist dolls made the learning process more enjoyable and helped students better understand the material. The puppets' engaging characters captured students' attention and motivated them to participate more actively in storytelling activities, which in turn improved their speaking abilities. As reflected in the interview results, students expressed greater interest in learning to tell stories through ventriloquist dolls, and teachers also discovered a new, more engaging, and effective method to help students develop their speaking skills.

B. Suggestion

Future researchers are advised to further explore the use of ventriloquist dolls in developing other language skills or at different educational levels.

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