

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORD CHAIN GAME TO IMPROVE LISTENING SKILLS IN INDONESIAN LANGUAGE LEARNING FOR THIRD-GRADE STUDENTS AT SDN 129 HUTARIMBARU PANYABUNGAN TIMUR

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the implementation of the word chain game and its impact on improving students' listening skills in Indonesian language learning. The research was conducted in Grade III of SD Negeri 129 Hutarimbaru with a total of 25 students, consisting of 11 boys and 14 girls. The method employed was Classroom Action Research (CAR), carried out in two cycles comprising the stages of planning, action, observation, and reflection. Data were collected through observation, listening skill tests, and documentation. The findings revealed a significant improvement in students' listening skills, with classical mastery increasing from 69.75% in the first cycle to 84.75% in the second cycle. Student activity also rose from 52.5% in the first cycle to 92.5% in the second cycle. Therefore, the implementation of the word chain game proved to be effective in enhancing students' listening skills while also creating an active, interactive, and enjoyable learning atmosphere.

Keywords: Word Chain Game, Listening Skills, Classroom Action Research.

I. INTRODUCTION

Elementary education is a formal level of education administered by the government and completed within six years. Elementary schools play an important role as institutions where students acquire fundamental knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Therefore, the teaching and learning process must be carried out effectively to achieve educational goals. In classroom learning, students are expected to possess the ability to listen, comprehend, and interpret information delivered by teachers, particularly through spoken language (Subakti, 2023).

Listening skill is one of the most essential language skills because it serves as the foundation for the development of other language skills, namely speaking, reading, and writing. Through listening activities, students can obtain information, understand learning materials, and develop their communication abilities. However, listening skills do not develop automatically; they require well-planned and engaging learning activities that actively involve students in the learning process.

Based on a preliminary observation conducted in Grade III of SD Negeri 129 Hutarimbaru on December 4, 2024, students' listening skills were found to be relatively low. The observation results revealed that the percentage of students' ability to listen to information was only 48%, answer accuracy reached 48%, clarity of speech was 42%, and concentration and focus were 42%.

Table 1. Preliminary Data on Students' Listening Skills

Indicators	Percentage
Listening to Information	48%
Answer Accuracy	48%
Clarity of Speech	42%
Concentration and Focus	42%

The data indicate that students' listening skills are still categorized as low and require improvement through the implementation of more engaging and interactive learning strategies that actively involve students in listening activities.

The low level of students' listening skills is believed to be caused by the limited variety of teaching methods used in the classroom. Teachers predominantly employ lecture methods, group discussions, and silent reading activities. Lecture-based instruction tends to make students passive recipients of information. Group discussions are often less effective in developing listening skills because students tend to speak more than listen. Meanwhile, silent reading activities focus more on reading skills than on listening skills (Sukma & Saifudin, 2021).

One alternative strategy that can be implemented to improve students' listening skills is the Word Chain Game. The Word Chain Game combines learning and play, creating an enjoyable learning environment that encourages active student participation. According to Tedjasaputra (2001), games provide significant benefits for children's physical, intellectual, and socio-emotional development. Furthermore, Ramlah (2024) argues that the Word Chain Game can increase students' learning motivation, improve concentration, strengthen memory, and develop listening skills through active and collaborative participation.

In the Word Chain Game, students are required to listen carefully to the word spoken by the previous student, understand the information received, and respond appropriately by producing another word that follows the game's rules. This activity allows students to practice listening repeatedly in a fun and engaging atmosphere, thereby increasing their attention and participation during the learning process.

Based on the above considerations, it is necessary to conduct a Classroom Action Research (CAR) study through the implementation of the Word Chain Game in Indonesian language learning to determine whether students' listening skills can be improved. The study focuses on Grade III students of SD Negeri 129 Hutarimbaru, Panyabungan Timur District. Through this method, students are expected to become more active in listening, understanding information, and responding appropriately. Consequently, their listening skills can improve, and the learning process can become more effective, enjoyable, and meaningful.

II. METHOD

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR), an approach aimed at improving the quality of learning by involving teachers actively and responsibly in classroom management while simultaneously seeking solutions to students' learning problems (Ramadhan, 2021).

The CAR model adopted in this study was the Kemmis and McTaggart model, which consists of four main stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The research was conducted in two cycles, with each cycle comprising these four stages in sequence.

In the first cycle, the researcher prepared the learning plan by identifying the existing problems and designing learning activities using the Word Chain Game method. The participants of this study were 25 third-grade students of SD Negeri 129 Hutarimbaru, East Panyabungan District, Mandailing Natal Regency, consisting of 11 boys and 14 girls.

Data were collected through oral tests and classroom observations. The oral tests were administered during the third meeting of each cycle to assess students' listening skills based on four indicators: listening to information, answer accuracy, clarity of speech, and concentration and focus. Observation sheets were also used to evaluate teacher performance and student participation during the implementation of the learning activities.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Before implementing the action, the researcher conducted a pre-cycle assessment. During this stage, students were given an oral test to determine their initial listening skills. The test covered four aspects: listening to information, answer accuracy, clarity of speech, and concentration and focus. The results indicated that students' listening skills were still low, with an average score of 50.75%. This finding suggests that most students had not yet achieved the predetermined minimum mastery criterion.

In Cycle I, learning activities were conducted using the Word Chain Game method. The cycle consisted of three meetings. The first and second meetings focused on introducing the game rules and practicing listening activities in turns, while the third meeting was devoted to an oral test to measure students' listening skills. The results of Cycle I showed that the average listening skill score increased to 69.75%. The average scores for each aspect were 2.84 for listening to information, 2.68 for answer accuracy, 2.80 for clarity of speech, and 2.84 for concentration and focus. These findings indicate that the implementation of the Word Chain Game had begun to produce positive effects on students' listening skills, although the results had not yet reached the expected target.

Teacher observation in Cycle I yielded an average score of 92.5%, indicating that the teacher had implemented the learning activities according to the planned procedures despite encountering several challenges, particularly in time management and the delivery of learning objectives. Meanwhile, student observation reached only 52.5%, indicating that students' participation and concentration remained relatively low. Many students paid insufficient attention to the teacher's instructions and experienced difficulties in continuing the word chain correctly. Reflection on Cycle I revealed several challenges, including students' lack of concentration, limited participation, and ineffective time management. Therefore, improvements were made for Cycle II.

In Cycle II, the learning activities were redesigned to be more structured, with greater emphasis on student motivation, improved time management, and variations in the Word Chain Game, such as introducing time limits for word responses. The implementation remained similar to Cycle I, consisting of two game sessions and one oral test session. The results demonstrated a significant improvement, with the average listening skill score increasing to 84.75%. The average scores for listening to information, answer accuracy, clarity of speech, and concentration and focus were 3.32, 3.28, 3.44, and 3.44, respectively. Nearly all students achieved the expected level of mastery.

Teacher observation in Cycle II increased to 97.5%, indicating excellent implementation of the learning process. The teacher was able to clearly communicate the learning objectives, provide appropriate guidance, and maintain a conducive classroom atmosphere. Student observation also increased substantially to 92.5%, demonstrating that students became more enthusiastic, focused, and actively engaged in the learning activities.

The reflection results from Cycle II indicated that the use of the Word Chain Game significantly improved students' listening skills. The teacher was able to manage classroom time more effectively, provide reinforcement, and create an interactive learning environment.

Furthermore, students showed clear improvements in participation, concentration, and their ability to listen to and understand information.

Table 2. Students' Learning Mastery Level

Description	Cycle I	Cycle II
Total Score	279	339
Average Score	69.75%	84.75%

Based on Table 2, students' listening skills improved considerably after the implementation of the Word Chain Game. The average score increased from 69.75% in Cycle I to 84.75% in Cycle II. These findings indicate that the Word Chain Game was effective in enhancing students' listening skills in Indonesian language learning.

Discussion

The Implementation Process of the Word Chain Game

The implementation of the Word Chain Game proved to be effective because it not only created an enjoyable learning environment but also enhanced students' listening skills. Students became more engaged since the game was conducted interactively, was not monotonous, and provided equal opportunities for all students to participate. The classroom atmosphere became more dynamic because every student had the opportunity to continue the word chain. Furthermore, the game required students to listen carefully before responding, transforming listening from a passive activity into an active and participatory process.

These findings are consistent with the study conducted by Putri (2020), which found that the Word Chain Game effectively improves students' concentration and memory, leading to enhanced listening skills. Similarly, Suryani (2021) explained that language games create an interactive and enjoyable classroom environment and contribute directly to the improvement of language skills. Rahmawati (2019) further supported these findings by demonstrating that game-based learning encourages student participation while improving learning outcomes in both listening and speaking skills. In addition, Susanti (2022) emphasized that game-based learning is more effective than conventional teaching methods.

Hidayat (2020) stated that the Word Chain Game not only improves listening skills but also strengthens elementary school students' vocabulary mastery. Likewise, Lestari (2021) reported that language games increase student interaction, encourage learners to express their ideas more confidently, and enhance their self-confidence. Anggraini (2022) added that the Word Chain Game improves listening skills because it requires students to focus on detailed information, thereby increasing their comprehension and retention of learning materials.

Therefore, the implementation of the Word Chain Game in this study is consistent with the principles of active learning and supports previous research demonstrating the effectiveness of this method. Activities requiring concentration, memory, accuracy, and collaboration make the Word Chain Game an innovative, enjoyable, and effective strategy for teaching Indonesian language skills, particularly listening skills, at the elementary school level.

The Improvement of Listening Skills Through the Implementation of the Word Chain Game

The improvement in students' listening skills became evident after the implementation of the Word Chain Game in Indonesian language learning. In Cycle II, the average listening skill achievement reached 84.75%, indicating that nearly all students had achieved the expected level of mastery. Improvements were observed in all assessed aspects, including listening to information, answer accuracy, clarity of speech, and concentration and focus. Classroom observations also showed a significant increase in student participation, reaching 92.5%. These

findings demonstrate that the Word Chain Game not only enhances listening skills but also encourages students to become more confident, active, and enthusiastic during the learning process.

Ramlah (2024) reported that the use of the Word Chain Game enriches students' vocabulary and improves their ability to select appropriate words, which subsequently contributes to better poetry-writing skills. In that study, student achievement in Cycle II reached 85%. Similarly, Khoiriyah (2023) found a significant improvement in students' poetry-writing skills, with average scores increasing from 48.61 in Cycle I to 80.00 in Cycle II. Wulandari (2021) also found that educational games in language learning effectively develop listening skills by enhancing concentration, memory, and understanding of word meanings.

Furthermore, Prasetyo (2020) argued that game-based learning models are more effective than traditional lecture methods because they increase students' engagement in listening activities and encourage attention to detailed information. Handayani (2019) added that language games play a crucial role in promoting active participation and developing careful listening abilities, which positively affect learning outcomes. Likewise, Utami (2022) emphasized that game-based activities in Indonesian language learning improve listening skills while simultaneously strengthening students' vocabulary mastery. Fauzi (2021) further noted that enjoyable learning strategies, such as educational games, help students develop language skills naturally without experiencing excessive learning pressure.

Based on these findings, the implementation of the Word Chain Game was proven effective in improving students' listening skills. This improvement occurred because the game integrates concentration, motivation, and active participation within an enjoyable learning environment. Consequently, the Word Chain Game can be considered a relevant and innovative instructional strategy for enhancing listening skills among elementary school students.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the implementation of the Word Chain Game in Indonesian language learning for third-grade students at SD Negeri 129 Hutarimbaru was proven effective in improving students' listening skills. Through this method, the learning process became more enjoyable and interactive, encouraging students to concentrate more effectively, listen carefully, and respond appropriately. As a result, listening activities that were previously passive became more active and participatory.

The results demonstrated a significant improvement in students' listening skills from the pre-cycle stage to Cycle II. In the pre-cycle stage, the average listening skill score was only 50.75%. After the implementation of the Word Chain Game, the score increased to 69.75% in Cycle I and further improved to 84.75% in Cycle II. The improvement was evident across all assessed aspects, including listening to information, answer accuracy, clarity of speech, and students' concentration and focus. In addition, student participation increased substantially from 52.5% in Cycle I to 92.5% in Cycle II.

These findings indicate that the Word Chain Game is an effective instructional strategy for enhancing listening skills in elementary school students. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to incorporate interactive and game-based learning activities into Indonesian language instruction to create a more engaging learning environment and improve students' language development.

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