IMPROVING SPEAKING SKILLS THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF STORY QUESTIONS AND PROMPTS FOR GRADE V STUDENTS AT UPT. STATE ELEMENTARY 060816

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini membahas upaya peningkatan kemampuan berbicara siswa kelas V di UPT SD Negeri 060816 melalui penerapan metode Story Questions and Prompts. Permasalahan utama yang dihadapi siswa antara lain kurangnya rasa percaya diri, keterbatasan kosakata, dan kesulitan menyusun kalimat secara runtut. Untuk menjawab permasalahan tersebut, penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik wawancara dan observasi terhadap guru sebagai narasumber. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan keterampilan berbicara yang signifikan setelah metode diterapkan. Siswa menjadi lebih berani, lebih lancar, dan mampu menyampaikan gagasan dengan lebih terstruktur. Selain itu, kegiatan berbasis cerita membuat suasana kelas lebih hidup sehingga meningkatkan antusiasme siswa. Dengan demikian, metode Story Questions and Prompts dinilai efektif sebagai strategi pembelajaran yang mendorong perkembangan keterampilan berbicara siswa secara bertahap.
Kata Kunci: Kemampuan Berbicara, Story Questions And Prompts, Pembelajaran Berbasis Cerita.

Abstract: This study discusses efforts to improve the speaking ability of grade V students at UPT SD Negeri 060816 through the application of the Story Questions and Prompts method. The main problems faced by students include lack of confidence, limited vocabulary, and difficulty composing sentences in a coherent manner. To answer these problems, this study uses a qualitative approach with interview techniques and observation of teachers as resource persons. The results of the study showed that there was a significant increase in speaking skills after the method was applied. Students become bolder, more fluent, and able to convey ideas in a more structured way. In addition, story-based activities make the classroom atmosphere more lively, increasing student enthusiasm. Thus, the Story Questions and Prompts method is considered effective as a learning strategy that encourages the gradual development of students' speaking skills.
Keywords: Speaking Ability, Story Questions And Prompts, Story-Based Learning.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking ability is one of the basic skills that has an important role in the development of language skills of elementary school students. This skill not only helps students express ideas, feelings, and opinions, but also serves as a provision for interacting and communicating effectively in the school environment and daily life. However, the results of initial observations at the State Elementary School 060816 show that the speaking ability of grade V students is still at a low level. Many students feel embarrassed, afraid of making mistakes, and lack confidence when asked to speak in front of the class. In addition, vocabulary limitations and difficulties in arranging sentences sequentially are quite significant obstacles in the learning process.

The urgency of this problem is increasingly evident when the teacher said that most students tend to be passive and need help in developing speech skills. This condition is in line with the findings of several previous studies that show that fear of being wrong and lack of vocabulary are the main factors in the weak speaking ability of elementary school students. Research by Hidayati & Suryani (2019) and Fitriyani & Sari (2021) corroborates that students need learning strategies that are interesting, contextual, and able to encourage them to be actively involved in speaking activities.

One of the approaches that is considered effective based on the results of previous research is the use of *the Story Questions and Prompts* method. This method combines listening or reading stories with prompts that help students respond verbally in a more directed way. The use of stories as a learning medium has been shown to be able to capture students' attention because it is close to their lives, while prompts help overcome the fear of speaking by providing guidance on sentence structure and flow of thought. Research by Susanti & Anggraini (2022) and Saputra (2021) shows that the use of prompts can increase confidence, fluency in speaking, and the ability to organize ideas. Based on the context and findings of the previous research, the use of *the Story Questions and Prompts* method is considered relevant to be applied in an effort to improve the speaking ability of grade V students at UPT SD Negeri 060816. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of this method in helping students speak more confidently, concisely, and communicatively.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a focus on an in-depth understanding of the

application of *the Story Questions and Prompts method* in improving the speaking ability of grade V students at UPT SD Negeri 060816. The English teacher was chosen as the main informant because of his direct involvement in the learning process. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations, assisted by instruments in the form of interview guidelines, observation sheets, audio recordings, and field notes. The focus of the research includes aspects of students' courage to speak, fluency in the use of language, and their ability to compose sentences in a sequence during learning activities.

The research procedure is carried out through several stages starting from initial observation to identify problems, in-depth interviews about teachers' experiences in applying the method, to observation of student responses during the activity. Data analysis is carried out continuously through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The entire process is carried out naturally in real classroom situations so that the research findings are able to reflect the factual conditions and provide a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of the *Story Questions and Prompts method*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study were obtained through interviews with the English teacher and direct classroom observations, both of which provided comprehensive insight into students' speaking abilities before and after the implementation of the Story Questions and Prompts method. The data revealed several key findings that demonstrate not only linguistic improvement but also changes in students' psychological readiness, motivation, and engagement in learning. These findings are discussed in detail below, supported by relevant literature.

Before the Story Questions and Prompts method was applied, the teacher explained that students' speaking ability was generally low. Many students hesitated to speak, often looked down, and appeared visibly anxious when called upon to answer simple questions. Even when they attempted to respond, their speech tended to be unclear, fragmented, and lacking organization. The teacher noted that only a small number of students could deliver coherent sentences, while the majority struggled to generate ideas. This condition is consistent with the findings of Hidayati and Suryani (2019), who observed that most elementary students face difficulty expressing ideas verbally due to anxiety, fear of mistakes, and insufficient exposure to structured speaking tasks. Thus, the low speaking ability of the students in this study reflects

a common issue in primary-level language learning.

Another important finding is that psychological barriers played a major role in students' reluctance to speak. The teacher identified fear of being laughed at by peers, fear of making mistakes, and low self-esteem as the most dominant issues. These observations align with Fitriyani and Sari (2021), who argue that negative emotions such as embarrassment and fear significantly hinder oral expression in young learners. In the classroom, these emotions manifested through avoidance behaviors, such as students refusing to volunteer, whispering instead of speaking clearly, or giving extremely short answers. Some students even tried to avoid eye contact to avoid being selected. These findings also support the argument of Yuliana and Arsyad (2024), who state that speaking anxiety is one of the strongest predictors of low oral performance among elementary students.

In addition to emotional barriers, cognitive factors also contributed to students' difficulties. The teacher noted that many students struggled to remember the sequence of events in a story or the details needed to construct meaningful responses. For example, when asked to retell a story, students often forgot the main characters or mixed up events. This observation aligns with Rahmawati (2020), who explains that young learners often have difficulty retaining story elements unless storytelling is delivered in a structured, repetitive, and engaging way. Furthermore, the teacher mentioned that limited vocabulary prevented students from expressing themselves, even when they understood the content. As Fitriyani and Sari (2021) emphasize, vocabulary mastery is strongly correlated with speaking fluency, and students with limited vocabulary typically produce shorter, simpler, and less expressive utterances.

To address these challenges, the teacher selected stories that were closely related to students' daily lives. She explained that stories about friendship, honesty, and everyday school situations were particularly effective because students could easily relate to them. This approach is supported by Putri and Yuliani (2020), who argue that the selection of meaningful and age-appropriate stories is central to enhancing student engagement and comprehension. During classroom observations, students did indeed appear more attentive during storytelling sessions. Many reacted positively—nodding, smiling, or showing curiosity—which aligns with Sari and Utami's (2021) findings that storytelling naturally increases students' emotional involvement and encourages verbal participation.

When the Story Questions and Prompts method was finally implemented, several significant changes were observed. The teacher reported that students began responding more confidently when they were given guiding questions. For example, when the teacher asked, "Who is the main character?" or "What problem did the character face?", even previously passive students were willing to try answering. This result is consistent with Susanti and Anggraini (2022), who found that prompts act as scaffolding tools that reduce cognitive load and help students structure their speech more effectively. Prompts allowed students to retrieve information more easily and speak longer and more confidently, which directly supports Saputra's (2021) research indicating that prompts enhance speaking fluency by providing cognitive direction.

Classroom observations reinforced these findings. Students no longer remained silent; instead, they demonstrated increased willingness to take part in discussions. Their responses became more detailed and grammatically structured. Where they previously gave one- or two-word answers, they began producing full sentences such as, "The main character is a brave boy who helps his friend," or "The story teaches us to always be honest." This progression aligns with the findings of Sari and Utami (2021), who highlight that storytelling combined with prompting allows students to produce longer and more meaningful utterances because they have a clearer linguistic framework to follow.

The improvement was not limited to fluency and structure. Students also demonstrated greater expressiveness in their speaking. Some began to use appropriate intonation, hand gestures, and facial expressions when answering questions or retelling story segments. This marks a shift from merely producing speech to delivering expressive oral communication, which is an important component of speaking competence. The teacher noted that students seemed to "enjoy" speaking more than before, a finding consistent with Yuliana and Arsyad (2024), who assert that emotional engagement significantly enhances students' oral performance.

Another noteworthy result is the improvement in vocabulary usage. The teacher observed that students were able to incorporate new words from the stories into their responses. This supports the argument by Fitriyani and Sari (2021) that storytelling provides rich contextual exposure to vocabulary, allowing students to acquire and use new lexical items more naturally. Students also began using descriptive words such as "kind," "clever," "honest," or "brave,"

reflecting not only improved speaking ability but also deeper comprehension of story themes.

Furthermore, students' motivation increased significantly. The classroom atmosphere became more interactive, lively, and student-centered. Observations showed that students frequently raised their hands to answer questions, eagerly participated in group activities, and appeared more comfortable speaking in front of their peers. These behavioral changes support Rahmawati's (2020) claim that when learning is meaningful and scaffolded appropriately, students become more active and self-directed.

In summary, the results demonstrate that the Story Questions and Prompts method effectively improved multiple aspects of students' speaking skills, including fluency, vocabulary, expressiveness, and confidence. The findings align strongly with previous research (Putri & Yuliani, 2020; Susanti & Anggraini, 2022; Saputra, 2021), which confirms that combining storytelling with guided prompts is a powerful strategy for promoting oral language development in elementary school students. The method successfully transformed students from passive and hesitant speakers into more confident and expressive communicators.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that the Story Questions and Prompts method really helps improve the speaking skills of grade V students at UPT SD Negeri 060816. Before this method was applied, many students still felt insecure, shy, hesitant when speaking, had limited vocabulary, and had difficulty composing ideas when it came to expressing their opinions. These challenges are commonly experienced by elementary school students, so a learning approach that is able to provide clear support and direction is needed.

Once the Story Questions and Prompts method is used, the positive changes are quite obvious. Through a combination of storytelling activities and guided questions, students gain structure and support that makes them more courageous to speak up. They began to be able to produce longer, more concise, and easier to understand sentences. In addition, their ability to remember the details of the story, understand the elements of the story, and retell the content of the story develops well because the prompt helps them process information in a more directed way.

The study also found that the method increased students' motivation and engagement in learning. Students appear more enthusiastic, raise their hands more often to answer, and are

more willing to participate in speaking activities. The learning environment also becomes more comfortable because speech anxiety is reduced. With various benefits such as improved speaking fluency, vocabulary, sentence structure, confidence, and motivation, this method is worth recommending as an engaging and student-centered approach. In the future, this method can be tested at other levels, compared to other strategies, or combined with digital media to enrich students' learning experiences

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