

## APPLICATION OF GROUP DISCUSSION METHOD TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY

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### ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the low speaking ability of students in Indonesian language learning, which is indicated by the lack of courage in expressing opinions, low activeness during discussions, and speaking ability that does not meet the learning indicators. This condition is caused by learning that is still centered on the teacher so that students have limited opportunities to practice speaking. This research aims to improve students' speaking ability through the application of group discussion methods. The research uses a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach which is implemented in two cycles, where each cycle includes the planning stage, action implementation, observation, and reflection. The research subjects were 32 eighth grade junior high school students. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, speaking practice tests, interviews, and documentation. Data were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative descriptive techniques. The results of the study indicate that the application of the group discussion method is able to improve students' speaking ability. This is seen from the increase in students' average score from 67.5 in the pre-cycle to 75.8 in the first cycle and increasing to 84.6 in the second cycle. The percentage of learning completion also increased from 43.75% to 81.25%.

*Keywords: Group Discussion Method, Speaking Ability, Indonesian Language, Classroom Action Research, Learning Outcomes.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Education is a crucial process in developing superior human resources with character and the ability to adapt to changing times. Through education, students are expected to acquire not only academic knowledge but also develop 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. One crucial skill in both academic and social life is communication. Good communication skills enable students to convey ideas, interact effectively, and build positive social relationships within the school and community (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). In the context of formal education in Indonesia, the Indonesian language subject plays a strategic role in developing students' communication skills. Indonesian is not only taught as a means of communication but also as a means to develop thinking skills, express ideas, understand information, and develop students' character. Learning Indonesian encompasses four main skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which must be developed in a balanced manner to ensure students possess good language competence (Dalman, 2021).

Of these four language skills, speaking is particularly important because it is directly related to daily oral communication activities. Speaking skills help students convey ideas, ask questions, answer questions, discuss, present work, and actively participate in learning. According to Tarigan (2020), speaking is the ability to produce articulate sounds or words to verbally express thoughts, ideas, and feelings to others. Good speaking skills will assist students in various learning situations. Students with good speaking skills tend to be more active in class discussions, more confident during presentations, and more easily express opinions or arguments coherently and logically. Conversely, students with poor speaking skills tend to be passive, have difficulty expressing their opinions, and experience obstacles in academic and social interactions.

In the 21st-century learning era, speaking skills are increasingly important because students are required to communicate effectively, work collaboratively in groups, and convey ideas clearly. The Partnership for 21st Century Learning places communication as one of the core competencies that students must possess to compete in the future (Trilling & Fadel, 2019). The Independent Curriculum also emphasizes the importance of student-centered learning and the development of communication competencies. Students are expected to be active, creative, collaborative individuals, and able to convey ideas effectively in various learning situations (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2022). However, this ideal situation has not yet been fully realized in practice. Based on initial observations conducted in eighth-grade junior high school, it was found that students' speaking skills were still relatively low. Most students had difficulty expressing their opinions verbally in front of the class. Many students appeared hesitant when asked to answer the teacher's questions, and some even remained silent when asked to express their opinions. Furthermore, students often experience difficulty constructing coherent sentences when speaking. They tend to use unstructured sentences, lack clarity in conveying ideas, and often exhibit nervousness when speaking in front of their peers. This situation indicates that students' speaking skills still need to be improved.

Initial observations also showed that out of 32 students, only around 14 actively spoke during the lesson. Most students preferred to be passive listeners. The results of the speaking skills assessment also showed that the class average score was still below the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM) set by the school. Students' low speaking skills are influenced by various factors. One of the main factors is the use of teacher-centered learning methods. Teachers predominantly use lectures, which severely limit student interaction during learning. Students simply listen to the teacher's explanations without having much opportunity to practice their speaking skills.

Another factor affecting speaking skills is students' lack of self-confidence. Many students are afraid of making mistakes when speaking in front of the class due to concerns about negative responses from their peers. According to Wulandari and Sitepu (2024), fear, anxiety, and low self-confidence are major obstacles to developing students' speaking skills. Lack of regular speaking practice also contributes to students' poor oral communication skills. Learning that focuses too much on theory without providing space for practice results in students not being accustomed to active speaking. This problem needs to be addressed immediately because speaking skills have a significant impact on student learning success. Students who can speak well will more easily understand the material, collaborate with their peers, and convey ideas effectively.

One solution that can be implemented to address this problem is the use of group discussions. Group discussions are a learning method that provides students with opportunities to exchange opinions, discuss, convey ideas, and solve problems together with their group. According to Shoimin (2021), group discussions are a learning strategy that actively engages students in the process of exchanging ideas to achieve specific learning objectives. This method can train students' courage in speaking and enhance social interaction among students. Through group discussions, students have more opportunities to speak than through lectures. Students can express their opinions in small groups initially, thereby gradually increasing their confidence. Group discussions also create a more active and collaborative learning environment. Students learn to listen to others' opinions, respect differing perspectives, and practice polite argumentation. Previous research has shown that group discussion methods are effective in improving students' speaking skills. Research by Siregar and Yunitasari (2022) demonstrated an increase in students' speaking skills after implementing group discussion methods in two learning cycles.

Research by Haslinda et al. (2023) also found that discussion methods can increase students' active participation and courage in expressing opinions during Indonesian language learning. Research by Lutfiana et al. (2024) showed that group discussion methods have a positive impact on students' oral communication skills at the secondary school level. Theoretically, group discussion methods align with Vygotsky's constructivism theory, which states that learning occurs through social interaction. Through discussion, students construct knowledge with their peers through active

communication. In this study, group discussion methods were applied to eighth-grade Indonesian language learning, specifically on speaking or expressing opinions. Students were divided into small groups to discuss a specific topic and then present the results of their discussions to the class. Through the implementation of group discussion methods, it is hoped that students will become more active speakers, more confident in expressing their opinions, and significantly improve their speaking skills.

Classroom action research was chosen because it allows teachers to directly improve learning through concrete actions in the classroom. According to Arikunto (2021), classroom action research aims to improve the quality of learning through a continuous reflective process. Based on this description, the purpose of this study is to improve students' speaking skills through the implementation of group discussion methods in Indonesian language learning for eighth grade junior high school students. The action hypothesis in this study is that if group discussion methods are optimally implemented in Indonesian language learning, students' speaking skills will significantly improve.

## 2 RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach with the aim of improving students' speaking skills through the application of group discussion methods in Indonesian language learning. Classroom action research was chosen because it focuses on efforts to directly improve the learning process in the classroom through concrete actions taken by teachers. According to Arikunto (2021), classroom action research is research conducted by teachers in their own classrooms with the aim of continuously improving the quality of learning practices. This opinion is supported by Sukardi (2022), who states that CAR is reflective research conducted systematically to improve the quality of learning through specific actions.

This study also refers to the opinion of Mulyasa (2020), who explains that classroom action research aims to solve learning problems that occur in the classroom through planned and repeated actions. Furthermore, according to Prihantoro and Hidayat (2019), CAR is highly relevant for use in educational contexts because it can provide direct solutions to learning problems faced by teachers and students. Meanwhile, Sanjaya (2021) states that classroom action research provides teachers with the opportunity to innovate learning based on the real needs of students in the classroom. Thus, the use of the CAR approach in this study was deemed appropriate because the problems faced were directly related to students' low speaking skills.

The research design used was based on the Kemmis and McTaggart model, which consists of four main stages in each cycle: (1) planning, (2) acting, (3) observing, and (4) reflecting. According to Kemmis and McTaggart in Hopkins (2020), this model is the most widely used CAR model because it has systematic stages and facilitates researchers in conducting evaluations at each action cycle. This research was conducted in two cycles, each consisting of two learning meetings and one evaluation of students' speaking skills. If the success indicator was not achieved in cycle II, the research could continue to the next cycle. However, the research was discontinued once the success indicator was achieved.

The research was conducted at a public junior high school in the even semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The subjects were 32 eighth-grade students, consisting of 17 boys and 15 girls. The selection of research subjects was based on initial observations, which indicated that students' speaking skills were still low. The object of this research was to improve students' speaking skills in Indonesian through the application of group discussion methods. The learning material used in this study was the topic of expressing opinions in discussions. The group discussion method was implemented by dividing students into small groups of 4–5 students. Each group was given a specific discussion topic to discuss together, and then the results of the discussion were presented to the class. According to Shoimin (2021), group discussion methods are effective in increasing students' confidence in speaking and their ability to express opinions verbally.

The main materials and tools used in this study include:

1. Indonesian Language teaching modules
2. Student Worksheets (LKPD)
3. Student activity observation sheets
4. Teacher activity observation sheets
5. Speaking ability assessment rubric
6. Learning documentation
7. Stationery
8. Laptop and projector to support learning

The data collection techniques in this study utilized several methods to ensure more complete and accurate data.

1. Observation

Observation is used to observe teacher and student activities during the learning process. Observations are conducted using a pre-prepared observation sheet. According to Firdaus et al. (2023), observation in CAR serves to assess the implementation of actions and student responses during learning.

2. Speaking Practice Test

This test is used to measure students' speaking skills after implementing the group discussion method. Assessment is based on aspects of fluency, courage, clarity of idea delivery, intonation, and language use.

3. Interviews

Interviews are conducted with several students and collaborating teachers to obtain additional information regarding challenges during the learning process. According to Rahmadani and Bakri (2024), interviews help researchers obtain in-depth data regarding students' experiences during the actions.

4. Documentation

Documentation is used to collect data in the form of photographs of learning activities, student grade lists, field notes, and other documents supporting the research. According to Sa'adi (2025), documentation serves as supporting data in classroom action research.

The operational definition of the variables in this study consists of two variables:

1. Action Variable

The group discussion method is a learning method that involves students in small groups to discuss, exchange ideas, and present the results of the discussion.

2. Outcome Variable

Speaking ability is the student's ability to convey ideas, thoughts, and opinions orally, as measured by a speaking practice test.

The data analysis techniques used consisted of quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Quantitative data were obtained from the results of the student speaking ability test using the average formula:

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

Description:

$\bar{X}$  = average student score

$\sum X$  = total score

$N$  = number of students

The completion percentage is calculated using the formula:

$$P = \frac{n}{N} \times 100\%$$

Description:

$P$  = percentage of completion

$n$  = number of students completing the course

$N$  = total number of students

Qualitative data was obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation, analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing according to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2020). The research success indicator was determined if at least 80% of students obtained a score of  $\geq 75$  and demonstrated increased speaking activity during the learning process..

### 3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Result

This classroom action research was conducted in two cycles with the aim of improving the speaking skills of eighth-grade students through the application of group discussion methods in Indonesian language subjects. Each cycle consisted of planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. Prior to implementing the action, the researcher conducted a pre-cycle phase to determine the initial level of students' speaking skills. The research subjects were 32 students, consisting of 17 boys and 15 girls. The material used in the study was expressing opinions during discussion activities. The speaking ability indicators assessed included: (1) fluency, (2) speaking confidence, (3) clarity of opinion, (4) appropriate use of language, and (5) ability to respond to others' opinions.

##### A. Pre-Cycle Results

The pre-cycle phase was conducted through observations of Indonesian language learning that took place before the intervention was administered, as well as an initial test of students' speaking skills.

Based on the initial observations, several problems were identified, as follows:

1. The teacher still predominantly used the lecture method.
2. Students were rarely given the opportunity to speak.
3. Most students were passive during the lesson.
4. Students lacked confidence speaking in front of the class.
5. Students had difficulty expressing their opinions coherently.

When the teacher asked students open-ended questions, only a few students dared to answer. Most students lowered their heads, avoided eye contact with the teacher, and showed fear when asked to speak in front of the class.

The results of the initial speaking skills test indicated that students' abilities were still low.

**Table 1 Pre-Cycle Speaking Ability Results**

No	Description	Results
1.	Number of students	32
2.	Average score	67,5
3.	Students who completed the course	14
4.	Students who did not complete the course	18
5.	Percentage of completion	43,75%

Based on these data, classical completion has not been achieved because it is still below the target of 80%.

##### B. Results of Cycle I

- During the planning stage, the researcher prepared various learning materials needed to support the research. These materials included teaching modules, lesson plans (RPP), observation sheets, speaking skills assessment rubrics, discussion materials, and group student worksheets (LKPD). Furthermore, the researcher divided students into groups of 4–5 students each. This grouping facilitated the implementation of the

group discussion method, allowing each student to actively participate in speaking and discussion activities..

- Implementation of the Action, Cycle I was carried out in two meetings. In the first meeting, the teacher explained the group discussion rules and provided a discussion topic regarding the importance of protecting the school environment. In the second meeting, students discussed the given topic and then presented the results of their discussions in front of the class. At this stage, students began to show an increase in confidence, although many still appeared shy when speaking..
- Results of Observations of Student Activities in Cycle I

**Table 2 Student Activities Cycle I**

No	Observation Aspect	Percentage
1.	Actively participating in discussions	70%
2.	Courage to express opinions	65%
3.	Respond to peers' opinions	60%
4.	Group collaboration	75%
5.	Confidence in presentations	62%

The results of the observations showed that student activity began to increase compared to the initial conditions.

- Results of the First Cycle Speaking Ability Test

**Table 3 Learning Outcomes of Cycle I**

No	Description	Results
1.	Number of students	32
2.	Average score	75,8
3.	Students who completed the course	22
4.	Students who did not complete the course	10
5.	Percentage of completion	68,75%

There was an increase compared to the pre-cycle, but it had not yet reached the research target.

- Reflections on Cycle I showed that the implementation of the group discussion method was not yet optimal. Several obstacles were encountered during the learning activities, including some students remaining passive in participating in discussions. Furthermore, some students lacked the confidence to express their opinions or speak in front of their peers. The group discussion process was also not evenly distributed, with only a few students actively participating. Furthermore, time management during the learning process was still suboptimal, resulting in several activities not being fully implemented. Therefore, the researcher made various improvements in Cycle II to ensure a more effective learning process and better achieve the research objectives.

### C. Results of Cycle I

- During the planning stage, several improvements were made to enhance the effectiveness of learning through group discussions. The teacher provided more intensive motivation to students to increase their confidence and active participation in speaking activities. Furthermore, discussion topics were selected and structured to be more engaging, thereby increasing student interest and participation during the learning process. The division of tasks within each group was also made clearer so that each member had equal responsibilities and opportunities to participate in the

discussion. Furthermore, the teacher awarded active groups as a form of appreciation and encouragement to encourage students to be more enthusiastic in participating in the discussion activities.

- During the implementation phase of cycle II, students discussed the impact of social media use on adolescents. Throughout the activity, students appeared significantly more active than in the previous cycle. Nearly all groups were able to engage in active discussions, demonstrating improved collaboration among group members. Furthermore, presentations also progressed as students began to express their opinions and present their findings with greater confidence.
- Results of Observations of Student Activities in Cycle II.

**Table 4 Student Activities Cycle II**

No	Observation Aspect	Percentage
1.	Actively participating in discussions	88%
2.	Courage to express opinions	85%
3.	Respond to peers' opinions	83%
4.	Group collaboration	90%
5.	Confidence in presentations	86%

Student activity increased significantly.

- Results of the Speaking Ability Test Cycle II.

**Table 5 Learning Outcomes of Cycle I**

No	Description	Results
1.	Number of students	32
2.	Average score	84,6
3.	Students who completed the course	26
4.	Students who did not complete the course	6
5.	Percentage of completion	81%

The classical completion target was successfully achieved.

#### D. Comparison of Results Between Cycles

**Table 6 Comparison of Speaking Ability Results**

Stage	Average	Completeness
Pre-Cycle	67,5	43,75%
Cycle I	75,8	68,75%
Cycle II	84,6	81,25%

There was a consistent increase from each stage of the research.

### 3.2 Discussion

The research results show that the implementation of the group discussion method has been proven effective in improving students' speaking skills. This improvement occurs because students receive more opportunities to speak actively during the learning process. Group discussions provide students with a space to express ideas more relaxedly in small groups before speaking in front of the class. This helps students reduce fear and increase self-confidence. These research findings align with Shoimin's (2021) opinion, which states that the discussion method can increase active interaction between students during learning. These results also support the research of Siregar and

Yunitasari (2022), which states that group discussions can significantly improve students' speaking skills.

Research by Haslinda et al. (2023) also shows that the discussion method increases students' active participation in Indonesian language learning. Theoretically, these research findings align with Vygotsky's constructivist theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in learning. Through group discussions, students construct knowledge through active communication with peers. Improved speaking skills are not only evident in test scores but also in changes in student behavior, such as increased confidence, active questioning, active response, and greater confidence in speaking in front of the class. Thus, it can be concluded that the group discussion method is effective in improving students' speaking skills in Indonesian language learning for 8th grade junior high school students.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the classroom action research conducted over two cycles, it can be concluded that the application of the group discussion method has proven effective in improving eighth-grade students' speaking skills in Indonesian. This improvement is evident in the results of the students' speaking ability tests, which gradually improved with each research cycle. In the pre-cycle phase, students' speaking ability was still relatively low, with an average score of 67.5 and a learning completion percentage of only 43.75%, or 14 out of 32 students meeting the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM). This condition was caused by teacher-centered learning, low student participation, and a lack of opportunities for students to actively practice speaking skills.

After implementing the group discussion method in cycle I, students' speaking ability improved, with an average score of 75.8 and a learning completion percentage of 68.75%. Despite this improvement, these results did not meet the established success indicators, so improvements were made in cycle II. In cycle II, the research results showed a more significant improvement. The average student score increased to 84.6, with a learning completion percentage of 81.25%, or 26 students achieving the Minimum Competency (KKM). Furthermore, student activity during learning also increased, indicated by students' courage in expressing opinions, responding to peers' arguments, and increased self-confidence during class presentations.

The results of this study indicate that the group discussion method can create more active, collaborative, and communicative learning, thereby optimally improving students' speaking skills. This method provides students with broader opportunities to practice speaking in a more comfortable and interactive learning environment. The implications of this study suggest that Indonesian language teachers can use the group discussion method as an alternative learning strategy to improve students' speaking skills. Furthermore, this method is also relevant for implementation in learning oriented toward developing 21st-century communication skills. Future researchers are advised to develop similar research on other Indonesian language materials such as debates, speeches, presentations, or drama, and to combine the group discussion method with digital media to achieve more innovative and comprehensive research results.

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